UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

AFRICAN AND AFRICAN DIASPORIC WOMEN WRITING: VOICES AGAINST PATRIARCHY IN AFRICA

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Abstract

The patriarchal domination of women in Africa is a fact of life based on the archaic assumption that men are naturally superior to women, therefore naturalising men as actors and beneficiaries of cultural practices which oppress women. Cultural practices in Africa which are assumed to be natural are sustained first, through socialisation, second, 'chattelisation', which deems female children as male property of their fathers/male relatives, and upon marriage their husbands, and third, 'patriarchalisation', the gender-based exclusionary practices foreclosed to women and girls but open to men and boys. The study uses African and African Diasporic women writing to resist, challenge, and disrupt the patriarchal domination of women inside Africa.

Pioneer African men writers' early work represented in this study, while resisting, challenging and disrupting colonial domination and the erasure of African male agency in colonial fiction, fictionalised men's domination of women, therefore, erasing female agency in the traditional context. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (*TFA*), alongside other selected writing including by Wole Soyinka and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, leads the textual mis/representation of women. Pioneer African women's writing of Flora Nwapa, Ama Ata Aidoo and Grace Ogot, are read as resistance to men's (mis)representation of women through counter-narratives, writing back, projecting women's voices and perspectives. African women's writing highlights the persisting institutional patriarchal domination of women into the twenty-first century, suggesting the males' inheritance of females' domination.

The study shows how African diasporic women writing in the United Kingdom demonstrate that institutional African patriarchal domination of African women is absent since both African men and women face institutional racial domination. Further, the study argues that African diasporic women writing disrupts African patriarchy through demonstrating that African women's crossing or crisscrossing of boundaries initiates and forces the transformations of patriarchy over three recognisable stages – Vestiges/Flashes of Patriarchy, Diminishing/Visible Demise of Patriarchy and the Total Demise of Patriarchy, discursively headed as Patriarchal Vestiges/Flashes, Visible Demise, Total Demise.

This study differs from other work on the domination of women in Africa in the breadth of fiction studied, focusing on the examination of the literary representation not only of men's domination of women but also the domination of men in colonial fiction, and the impact of the latter on pioneer men's writing and their characterisation of women in fiction. No study has extensively critiqued Achebe's *TFA* silencing and demeaning of women as comparable to the work which he vociferously castigates as doing the same to African men, Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness*.

The study examines pioneer men's early writing which depicts the emasculated, feminised, and silenced African men characters to illustrate how the colonially traumatised and subjugated male characters simultaneously subjugate African female characters. The thesis identifies white women, as 'notional or honorary men' of white patriarchy who are rewarded with the power to dominate African men who then assume feminine positions as senior 'notional African women'.

The 'chattel principle' underpinned the ownership and practices (chattelisation) which oppressed enslaved African men, women and children. The fiction studied shows that African women's patriarchal domination pivots on the 'chattel principle', which assumes male ownership of females resulting in chattelisation practices discussed as hallmarks of patriarchy including child-marriages and wife-inheritance. The study shows that while the chattelisation of women in the United Kingdom stopped in the nineteenth century, today men continue the practice in parts of Africa. Therefore, the study concludes that African women as a group cannot rely on collaboration with, and approval of, African men as a group to achieve equality due to men's unreliability and indifference to the needs of African women.

The thesis provides a new approach to reading and interpreting African and Africa diasporic women writing through a critical framework that draws on cultural, historical, political, and literary contexts. It exposes the myth of African men's natural superiority by using the historical events of colonisation and Trans-Atlantic enslavement of African men, as liberatory tools.

Chapter 1

Introduction

African women have been oppressed for centuries within African patriarchal societies. Nevertheless, there were always women who negotiated their way or succeeded in defying the status quo. Early works of pioneer African men writers presented female characters as docile and lacking in agency, yet African women had varying roles where they exercised agency. Women's mobilised resistances to colonisation operated from within existing cultural spaces. According to Sheldon (2017), colonial intrusion led to the emergence of women:

> …as local leaders, activists who roused their compatriots, and strategic organizers. They relied on existing roles as spiritual adepts, market-place managers, knowledgeable farmers, and neighborhood coordinators…. The movements against colonialism succeeded as a result of the important involvement of women from varied class, ethnic, religious, and other backgrounds (p. 167).

Africa women's performance of varying roles enabled them to locally mobilise to meet the new challenges from the colonisers. According to Sheldon, "The increased colonial intrusions into their [women's] lives in the form of new taxes, pass laws and other bureaucratic measures motivated them to act. They focused on problems particular to women, and they contributed to broader actions that had an impact on their communities" (Sheldon, 2017, p. 167). Amadiume (2015) adds that: "African women have a tradition of formal or informal socio-political organizing in which they excel" (p. 188). Pioneer men writers ignored such women in their early works. Equally, whereas women featured significantly as performers, socialisers, and transmitters of societies' cultural frameworks (Achebe, 1988; Ngũgĩ, 1981), literature, the new art form, eclipsed women's role. Pioneer women's writing repositioned African women to a visible position in literature (Nnaemeka, 1994; Busby, 1996).

The pioneer African men's early writing, through their female characterisations, predominantly trivialised or marginalised African women, leaving a permanent image of women as docile and lacking in agency. These men writers were responding to the debilitating image of African men in colonial literature but lacked the courage to

directly confront the colonisers or colonial power. Instead, they exercised indigenous patriarchal power over women in their early texts. Consequently, there are permanent frozen images of the inept African woman and the subhuman African man as 'a dog on hind legs' in canonical writing by a pioneer African writer and a white colonial writer, respectively Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), henceforth *TFA* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) (*Darkness).* Achebe (1988) admits that he wrote *TFA* as "a novelist responding to one famous book of European fiction: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* which better than any other work that I know displays that western desire and need which I have just referred to".[1] (p. 2)

Achebe's *TFA,* arguable the most widely read single book from Africa, is a counter-narrative, a writing back to *Darkness*, which worried him and no doubt other elite African men. He was not born when *Darkness* was published in 1899[2], yet he claims that it fosters "age-long" and "continuing" "dehumanization of Africa and Africans" (Achebe, 1988, p. 8); he calls Darkness "poisonous writing (Achebe, 2018, p. 30 [1997]) and continuously attacks the text.[3] So, a text can assume 'a living' form, survive for decades and replicate its positive or negative messages and images to generations. Ironically, in the bid to counter *Darkness*, *TFA* achieves the same damage by its messages and image of African women, specifically Igbo women. Therefore, through othering and denial of full humanity, *Darkness* and *TFA* silence their targeted groups. If colonial writing silenced African men, it equally silenced African women, who were mostly silenced in men's early writing. *TFA* has generated criticisms from varying perspectives (Ato Quayson, 1994; David Borman, 2015; Uche-Chinemere Nwaozuzu and Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, 2019, even Andrea

[1] Achebe (1988) argues that there is "the need - in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, a place of negation" (p. 2). In other words, paradoxically, Europeans, including colonial writers experienced Africa as a place remote in human evolution but familiar as a stage of human evolution which Europeans have since bypassed. Europeans perpetrated the worst atrocities which Africans ever saw assisted with colonial machine guns and other weaponry. In *TFA*, the colonial massacre of the village of Abame, traumatises the survivors and people in the neighbouring villages. In *Darkness*, Africans are casually killed.

[2] *Heart of Darkness* was first serialised in 1899 in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and then in Conrad's *Youth: and Two Other Stories* (1902) see Warney (2024). 'Novella by Conrad', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Heart-of-Darkness

[3] Phillips, Caryl (2003) 'Out of Africa: Interview with Achebe', *The Guardian*, 22 February 2003. https://amp.theguardian.com/books/2003/feb/22/classics.chinuaachebe
Phillips writes: "What I find difficult to fathom is just why Conrad's short novel, *Heart of Darkness*, should exercise such a hold on him [Achebe]?'

Powell, 2008, a 'western scholar', criticised polygamy in *TFA*).[4] Other "male authored first novels," with Achebe's *TFA* leading, left female characters "subdued and voiceless" (Ohale, 2010, pp. 1, 2,3, 8).[5] The study argues that *TFA's* canonical status has single-handedly given permission to non-Africans to comment at will about African women. Thus, the approach to *TFA* in this study differs from previous criticism.

The awareness of the power of writing as a means of communication and misrepresentation was first mastered by the colonisers[6] and used against the colonised (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1991; Frantz Fanon, 2001; Edward Said, 1994; and Elleke Boehmer, 2005). Given that colonial education favoured African males, they were the first to access western literary tools which they used to start challenging the debilitating messages and images of African men such as those in *Darkness.* In line with colonial patriarchy at the time, white women were to be seen and not heard in contrast with African women who were neither meant to be seen or heard either within colonial patriarchy or in indigenous patriarchy. In *Darkness*, African women did not feature as distinct human beings, apart from the unnamed "Amazon", described as "savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent" (1994, p. 87), who Conrad deliberately interjected to titillate centuries-old white men's interest in the bodies of enslaved African women. Nonetheless, the point is made that a powerful negative text continues to 'live' spreading its negative messages and image. Ironically *TFA,* which in the bid to counter *Darkness*, achieves the same from its message and image of African women, hence the recurring reference to *TFA* in this study.

[4] Powell (2008) 'Problematizing Polygyny in the Historical Novels of Chinua Achebe: The Role of the Western Feminist', *Research in African Literatures*, 39 (1), pp. 166-84. This 'western scholar' conveniently ignores the fact that the plantations of the west benefited from the Africans' polygamous traditions which produced the industrious enslaved African women whose persons and labour were appropriated by the white slavers for western wealth creation.

[5] Ohale (2010, p 2) states that "Chinua Achebe, the best known and best read African author, who has been acclaimed for having restored a sense of pride to Africa through his novels has been at the centre of this criticism for, critics contend, creating "back-house, timid, subservient, lack-lustre" female characters, particularly in his historical novels – *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* (Chukwuma 2)." African women critics criticised Achebe's early texts in Ohale (2010); see also Rose Mezu (2006). But a male critic Simon Gikandi (1991) presents unapologetically biased praises of Achebe's historical novels as imbued with "ideologies" and "theoretical reflections" which reposited African peoples' cultures from their imprisonment imposed by colonial realities (p.3).

Who are the Pioneer Women and Pioneer Men Writers?

This study is interested in exploring how women challenge and disrupt the indigenous patriarchal power base through which the early works of pioneer African men writers silenced women. In this study, 'patriarchy' refers to the culturally specific structures and systems of oppressions used against females – girls and women. hooks' (2015a, p.5 [1984]) definition of oppression as "the *absence of choices*" is adopted but from the discursive perspective of patriarchal cultural restrictions imposed on females. Of interest are African women's literary resistances through strategies and counter-narratives to men's writing by which they voice themselves and women in general. Of most importance is the pioneer African women writers/writing of the 1960s-1970s, Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, 1965 (*Dilemma*) Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, 1966 and Grace Ogot's *The Promised Land*, 1966 (*Promise*), who initiated women's literary resistance. The courage and influence of these pioneer women and texts are hardly celebrated together[7] as a collective force in African women's writing, as is done in this study. A historical road-map approach is utilized to survey and evaluate the succeeding writing generations of African women between the pioneer era of 1967-1979, and then from 1980s-1990s and 2000s-2020s.

Pioneer African men writers initiated the literary oppression of women in their early work despite some men's attempts to remedy the harm done, in their subsequent writing, for instance Achebe/*TFA*'s.[8] Eustace Palmer (1983), a contemporary male critic of pioneer men writers, names "Achebe, Amadi, Ngugi, Ousmane Sembene, Laye, Beti, Armah and Soyinka" as novelists who sidelined women. Palmer states:

> These male novelists, who have presented the African woman largely within the traditional milieu, have generally communicated a picture of a male-dominated and male-oriented society, and the satisfaction of the woman with this state of things…. [They] have portrayed women who

[7] Nwapa was the first published African woman novelist, but many, including myself until this study, are unaware that Ogot, popular in Eastern Africa, also published in 1966.

[8] Such remedial attempts are not relevant to this study since the original decapitating image remains. *TFA*'s reach has expanded. Whittaker and Mpalive-Hangson (2007) published the eve of 50th anniversary of *TFA* further captures the various criticism for and against TFA. The gendered lopsided view of the novel was not an issue until women started raising it. See Stratton (1994) Stratton in effect accuses Achebe of subverting racist oppression with patriarchal oppression.

> complacently continue to fulfil the roles expected of them by their society and to accept the superiority of the men … (pp. 138-139).

Implicated in Palmer's critique is Achebe's *TFA*, Ngũgĩ's *The Black Hermit* (*Hermit*) Soyinka's *The Invention*,[9] and Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (*Poor)*, discussed in Chapter 3. While *TFA*, *Hermit* and *Poor* trivialised and marginalised women characters, *Invention* completely erases the indigenous African woman from the text. These writers are from cultures where male patriarchalisation (male-specific customary practices) and socialisation (everyday practices) convey the natural superiority of men over women, the inferior 'Other'. While growing up in institutionally patriarchal African, Nigerian and Igbo societies, this author observed entrenched men's superiority, but this is absent in the United Kingdom diaspora, challenging the assumed naturalness of the earlier environments. Even in Nigeria, institutionalised patriarchal structures were absent in the lives of white people residing in Nigeria; so, in effect, 'white' African women are exempted.

Sindiwe Magona's (1998) examination of social hierarchy notes that "there was a six-layer system – white male, white female, Indian/Coloured male, Indian/Coloured female, African male, and African female" (p. 49). Although Magona captures the position of indigenous women in the apartheid South African context, the structures apply to relations between African women and the west or with African men. Racist colonial constructs relegated African men to the bottom where they were stifled alongside their women.[10] Ruby Hamad (2021) states that in the eighteenth century, "The racial hierarchy in Spanish America was so rigid that there were no less than sixteen categories in the *casta* system" (p. 217). Unsurprisingly, white Europeans born in Europe were at the top, followed by Europeans born in the colonies. The last two *casta* were "…mulattos (mixed African and European), followed by negroes (blacks)" (p. 217). Again, racialised constructs of enslaved African men were at the bottom with their women – an animate-chattel class. Yet in Africa, even when realities questioned the validity of men's superiority, they

[9] It was first performed in the United Kingdom in 1958 at London Royal Court Theatre, and first published 2005.

[10] This was the colonial scenario for settler-colonised Africans where Indians were invited as middle - buffers. Otherwise, the white occupied the top position, then African men, and women at the bottom. Dadzie (2020) points to similar racialised structures in the plantations of the Americas.

remained the actors and benefactors of cultural oppressive patriarchal practices; hence, perpetuating the myth of naturalness of these suppositions.

The thesis examines the chattelisation of girl-children and economically dependent women in African societies, a male practice comparable to chattel slavery active in the Americas during slavery. Chattelisation is a concept associated with white male behaviour towards enslaved African women that refers to their usage (including sexual exploitation) and disposability during Trans-Atlantic slavery. According to Ramona Biholar (2022), in relation to enslaved Africans in the new world "the concept of chattel slavery is used to refer to chattelisation, a dehumanising process aimed at stripping human beings of their dignity and personhood" (p. 65). Chattelisation thus involves, amongst others, the displacement and commodification of enslaved Africans, both male and female. The 'chattel principle' enable the property right in enslaved Africans to be passed on to their next buyers (Walter Johnson, 2004).

Chattelisation in the study refers to the sale, merchandising or commodification of girl-children under the guise of marriage, in exchange for bride price, which broadly defined includes other benefits like family rents and food for the brides' family. It equally applies when girl-children are given in child-marriages to redeem various types of debts. Within African and British societies, females were subjected to indigenous patriarchies, with varying degrees of chattelisation of females. Such comparison is rare in contemporary studies of African patriarchy by Africans or white women who seem obsessed with women's domination in Africa. The comparison shows that the supposedly 'civilised' white men were not averse to the chattelisation of white women until African men offered their women as alternatives. Most crucially, it also shows the African women that not until the 1830s when white women vociferously resisted white patriarchy in an organised manner from the 1830s did their gradual march to equality with their men begin (Lerner, 1986). That said, to date, the complete equality of the sexes has not been achieved.

African patriarchal operation which fundamentally supports the natural superiority attached to male babies continues in the 2000s just as it was in the 1940s.[11] The myth concerning men's superiority which underlies the unnatural

[11] In Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood,* (*The Joys*) set in the 1940s*,* a grieving woman, Adaku, who lost a baby son tells Oshia, her co-wife's son), who reminds her that she still has her

cultural patriarchal practice is reinforced by common sayings and views within the cultural environments of Africa. While this study contributes to the destabilisation of such views, more work is needed due to the entrenched nature of the male views. For instance, African proverbs which capture the worldview, beliefs, common knowledge, and cultural philosophy of societies have proverbs which are derogatory to women in general in most African societies (Schipper, 1992; Chikwelu, 2019). Scholarly works have identified proverbs as capsulating the subordinate position of women in concise, often memorable, languages. Examples include Irene Salami (2005), and Anthonia A. Dickson and Donald Mbosowo (2014) who discuss the derogation of African women in general. The derogation of women in specific cultures is explored by various writers, for example, Jeylan Wolyie Hussein (2009) who focuses on Ethiopian, Kenyan and Sudanese women; Charles, Gyan, Eunice Abbey, and Michael Baffoe (2020) explore the practice in relation to the Akan women in Ghana; Alugbin (2022) and Balogun (2010) are concerned with Yoruba women in Nigeria; while Mmadike (2014) and Chikwelu (2019) focus on Igbo women in Nigeria. Indeed, most patriarchal African societies have derogative proverbs about women, which when used publicly socialise children who assimilate these sexist views as normal wisdom and truths. These reinforce women's second-class positions. In recognition of the way proverbs reinforce women's second-class positions Salami (2005) states:

> Patriarchy has played a major role in the formulation of many African proverbs. They are commonly used in Africa to construct feminine identities, perpetuating the subordination of women to men". Phallocentric undertones are evident in these proverbs…. (p. 27).

Thesis Aims and Context

The central question of the study is whether African men's assumed authority over African women is naturally (from nature) or cultural (constructed) and how have pioneer African men and women and subsequent women writers contested this

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daughter, Dumbi, alive: "You are worth more than ten Dumbis" (p. 128). The statement devalues the female child and overvalues the male child, which continues predominantly to this day.

question. This study aims to make compelling arguments concerning the unnaturalness of African patriarchy and the structural oppression of women as a group by men as a group, embedded within the cultural practices of Africa. Equally, through analysis, it aims to deconstruct the unnaturalness of the notion of superiority attached to African men in Africa. It shows that African men, including pioneer writers, are fully aware of men's humiliating experiences of structural colonial domination, which resembled patriarchal domination, yet post-colonial independence, men continue indigenous dominating practices adding to these the colonial practices which they inherited. Finally, the study argues that if African women are serious about significantly erasing patriarchal oppression and achieving the equality of the sexes for themselves and the future generations of females, then collaborating with men, approving, and adopting conciliatory, timid tones or strategies is unhelpful. The unreliability and indifference of African men (as a group) to the needs of African women (as a group) can be inferred as men were predominantly implicated in the historical international enslavement of African women during the Trans-Saharan, Indian Ocean, and Atlantic slave trades, which pioneer women writers Nwapa and Aidoo highlight but which is still inadequately explored in fiction writing. Women must fashion their own destiny. Indeed, according to Ohale (2010), Achebe stated in an interview that: "the woman herself will be in the forefront in designing what her role is going to be, with humble cooperation of men" (Ohale, 2010, p. 8, citing Anna Rutherford,1987).

Methodology

The study approaches the above aims through the textual examination, analysis and critique of selected African and African diasporic women writing that project the voices of women's resistance and challenge of African patriarchy. Critical analysis is integral to the interrogation and extrapolation of views, understanding or perspectives proffered in the women' texts as well as historical contexts which undermine men's claims of superiority. The United Kingdom is the diaspora context of this study; therefore, the African diaspora women's writing adds to the voices against patriarchy and its cultural practices inside Africa. The United Kingdom diaspora women's writing is usually not considered as part of continental African

women writing, but it is central to this study because the diaspora women who return to the continent face oppressive environments. Moreover, African women, regardless of where they find themselves, are invariably racially regarded as belonging to the bottom of social hierarchical structures. It is therefore in the interest of diaspora women to join the continental resistance and address the 'in-house' female-oppressions to focus with less impediments on globalised prejudices encountered collectively as black women.[12]

Chapter Arrangements

Chapter 1 introduces the work, the assumptions underpinning women's domination, and the contexts of study as Africa and the United Kingdom diaspora. The initial focus is on the early work of pioneer African men writers which damaged the image of African women, especially Achebe's work.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review and Theoretical Framings for the thesis. The chapter highlights that writing is a mode of resistance which contributes meaningfully through sharing knowledge, raising consciousness on specific issues, and sharing strategies. It also examines Post-Colonialism, Patriarchy and Feminism(s) as its theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 examines the domination and subjugation of African men/men characters. Part 1 examines the silencing of African men in the colonial writing of Conrad's *Darkness* and Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* (*Johnson)* 1995/1939), another colonial work which is regarded as a "caricature" (Lindfors, 1997, p. 13).[13] Part 2 analyses the early work of the all-male titans of African literature named earlier.

Chapter 4 focuses on the historical milestones and thematical progression, which I term the roadmap, of African women writing resistance in the continent. The Foundational literary fighters 1960s-1970s, have texts set in pre, colonial and earlier

[12] The African woman is the image of the enslaved black woman and thus the conventional western/global image of degraded black women. Those who look like her, irrespective of identifying as Africans or not, are treated as black women.

[13] According to Lindfors (1997, p. 13), Achebe and Soyinka commented on Joyce's depictions of Nigerians. Achebe states: "I was angry with his book *Mister Johnson,* which was set in Nigeria…I said to myself, this is absurd. […] To me Mister Johnson doesn't live at all; I mean he is merely a caricature" (p. 13). Soyinka declares: "Precisely, I know Mr Johnson is a caricature…." (p. 13).

post-colonial Africa which represents voices and voicing of early resistance and counter-narratives to men's textual mis/representations of women. Thematically second-generation writers, Personalised Literary Fighters of the 1980s-1990s and third-generation writers, Millennium Taboo-less Fighters (2000s), continue women's patriarchal resistances and counter-narratives with some progress. In the former, individual female characters challenge the patriarchal status quo which impinges on their lives. The latter portrays female characters who address multiple women-oppressive subjects including gender role-reversals, adoption as alternative to polygamy and previously taboo area like explicit sexually exploitation of child brides.

Chapter 5 investigates the manifestation of African Patriarchy in the United Kingdom Diaspora for first generation migrant women. The women characters by working through their sense of home and self, become part of resistance to, and defiance of, patriarchy in Africa. Emecheta's and Aboulela's texts are analysed for this purpose.

Chapter 6 investigates how African diaspora women writers write against African patriarchy. All the women in this section have African fathers, so, by paternity they are Africans, but they lack experiences of African patriarchy.

Chapter 7 examines the debates surrounding African male writers' canon that silenced women. It explores the central issues about the power of the written word in propagating false constructs and challenging and countering them. African patriarchy and European colonisation are identified as two similar oppressive phenomena in terms of their underlying bigoted ideologies, domination strategies, and negative impacts on the 'Othered'. It proposes a review of canonical criteria. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis drawing out key significances of the work.

Hallmarks of Patriarchy

Hallmarks of patriarchy entrenched within social structures are demonstrated by the treatment of women and girls. These include female chattelisation and commodification; replaceability and disposability of wives through polygamy; payment of bride price which some men interpret as sale of girls/women; vilification of childless women; male/son-preference; devaluation of females/daughters and only female-only family and widowhood humiliating practices. In this regard, Chapters 2,

and 4 are an examination of patriarchy's practice of chattelisation and commodification of women and girls. Chattelisation is a practice of treating married women as the properties and possessions of their husbands which starts even earlier in the community where girls are viewed as their fathers' properties (Ogundipe-Lesile, 1985). Whereas chattelisation encourages the acquisition of wives which is endorsed under polygamy, the idea of commodification that is embedded in this practice is the giving away of girls or forcing girls into marriages especially child-marriages predominantly for the benefit of men or senior women in limited cases.

Senior women are older women who act as 'honorary men', have limited powers within patriarchal bargains of their societies, for example, birth mothers, or mothers-in-law with power over their sons' households. These women have 'accrued power' by age (Deniz Kandiyoti, 1988, pp. 279, 283), which Boyce Davies calls the 'reward of seniority' (1994, p. 69). 'Senior women', through their roles, support, monitor, police, or enforce patriarchal expectations, thereby further entrenching patriarchy. Women in this category as discussed in Chapter 5, are Mahasen, Sammar's mother-in-law in *The Translator*; Madam Kaduna, Kehinde's older sister-in law, in *Kehinde*, while they are referenced in Chapters 4 and 7, by the roles of Omu, the women leader in *Wazobia Reigns!* (*Reigns*) and Sadiku, Chief Baroka's oldest, most senior wife in *The Lion and the Jewel* (*Jewel)* who helps her husband to seduce the naive village girl, Sidi. This study agrees with Kandiyoti (1988), Davies (1994), and Ogunyemi (1996) who suggest that women are used by men to continue forcing other women to comply with patriarchal dictates. As the study has shown, women like Badua, Mahasen, Madam Kaduna, Sadiku and Omu perform their roles consciously or unconsciously without any formal or reflective awareness.

Chattelisation is embedded in society's values concerning the men and the position of their wives as objects bought to be used, oppressed, and beaten at will. The cultures condition the boys and the girls to accept the contradicting positions of the power of the sexes, which promote the exercise of patriarchal power and domestic violence that demeans women. These are exemplified in Chapters 3, 4 and 7 where the relationships between men and women are discussed. They include: Okonkwo and his wives in *TFA*; Niam and his unnamed wife in *Mission to Kala* (*Mission*). Ntep Iliga and his wife Ngond Libii in *The Power of Um* (*Power*), Man and

Woman (both unnamed) in *Reigns!*, Jeremiah and Ma'Shingayi in *Nervous Conditions* (*Nervous*), and Nqwayi and Mankwinji in *I Want to Fly* (*Fly*).

The reduction of women to disposable and replaceable articles through polygamous marriage as a practice encourages men to acquire as many wives (women and girls) as possible and to replace them whenever they desire (Akaenyi, 2024; Chick Ndi, 2021, p. 90 in Bruey, ed.). Modahunsi and Michael (2022, p. 84) which cite Adefarasin 2018, state that in some parts of Nigeria, 12- or 13-year-olds continue to be given in marriage to much older men; this is happening in other Africa countries. Patriarchy demands marriage of its females. McGinn (2018), while referring to the British societies of the past, notes that married women were accorded the most respect, followed by widows, while "never married women" were scorned, especially unmarried mature women. The status of unmarried mature women, especially if financially independent, appears to challenge patriarchy, for they are not answerable to any man. Specifically in the African context, unlike old women, such matured unmarried women are not old enough to qualify as honorary men. Besides, in some cases, their lack of motherhood militates against their full value as individuals. These 'never married' women's positions remain ambiguous in an African patriarchal society.[14]

As this study has shown, today in Africa, "never married women" are still not as respected as their married contemporaries; hence, some women who seek respectability do not mind being the tenth wife to a man. From her personal experience, Adichie (2014) discusses the position of un-married women in Nigeria.[15] From fictional narrative, in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wife*, (*Secret*) Shoneyin writes that at 23 years, Iya Segi's mother is very worried she has not yet married and says to her: "'…You need one [husband] to bear children. The world has no patience for spinsters. It shuts them out.'" (p. 101). In *Ogadinma,* Madame Vonne, a successful businesswoman, is disrespected due to her single status. She remedies her dilemma when she procures a young husband for herself, financially funds the marriage costs, and becomes a married woman (p. 240). In this regard, Vonne

[14] Their sons are mostly not part of their mothers' kinship where paternity defines membership.

[15] Adichie (2014), discusses a Nigerian "unmarried woman …who, when she goes to conferences, wears a wedding ring because she wants her colleagues to – according to her – 'give her respect'"(p. 29). Adichie also adds that she knows of "young women who are under so much pressure – from family, from friends, even from work – to get married that they are pushed to make terrible choices" (p. 30). Adichie says that as a female, she is also "expected to aspire to marriage" (p. 29).

reverses the performance of marriage role by paying for a husband the way men paying for bride price and related costs claim they pay for wives.

Madam Vonne's story underscores women writers' contestation of the patriarchal status quo since it is traditionally accepted that older men can marry any girl, irrespective of her age, as demonstrated in *Louding* (*The Girl with a Louding Voice*). The additional trouble for African patriarchy in marriages like Madam Vonne's is that they are for procreation of children, especially male children to continue the lineage. Older mature women brides may not fulfil this fundamental requirement which is likely to displease the husbands' kinship families. The study theorises that African societies, including mine, disapprove of marriages like Madam Vonne's because age is associated with wisdom and authority; older wife and young husband disrupt the visual power display. In most patriarchal societies such as the Igbo in Nigeria, due to their age and notional wisdom from lived experiences, old women are respected as old men are too. In some cultural contexts, such old women can participate in male-oriented rituals within society; for instance, as I witnessed twice in my village, they are offered limited participation in the important masquerade events. Ordinarily, women are completely banned from Igbo masquerade participation, which is the domain of 'patriarchalisation' for male children/men.

The practice of bride price is one of the hallmarks of patriarchy which treats girls as transferrable or exchangeable goods for their owners, mostly their fathers or other men with authority over them. The girls' value, their wombs, materialise in the form of bride price or dowry they fetch for the relief of family needs. This is seen in Chapter 4 where, in *Louding,* the writer narrates the experiences of Adunni and Kike both 14-year-old girls, and Khadijah when aged 15 years. Similarly, in *Fly*, Ngwayi, the 18-year-old Yinka's father, sells her into forced marriage for 10 cows. He also sells his 12-year-old son, Thusi, into child labour. Whereas the study finds that while on one hand, child-brides are forced to marry men old enough to be their fathers or grandfathers, on the other, boys are immune from being child-grooms since they would become toy objects of women who are old enough to be their mothers (see chapter 4). The cases recorded and cited in the Human Rights Watch reports of 2013, 2015, and 2022 highlight child-marriages as detrimental to the physical, emotional, and mental health of child-brides as well as thwarting the child-wives' ability to reach their maximum potential, especially educationally. They show that

sixteen out of the nineteen countries in the world with the highest incidents of child marriages are from Africa as shown in *Louding* and *Hailstones on Zamfara* (*Zamfara*), set in Nigeria, a country which ranks amongst the highest of Africa's child-marriage perpetrators. This is also evidenced by the characters within the texts discussed in this study whereby, once married, Adunni, Kike, Khadijah and Junior Wife have diminished or no chance of returning to education. The life experiences of the child-brides interviewed by Human Rights Watch show parallels with experiences of fictional child-bride characters in the texts studied. In this regard, the study reinforces the broader continent-wide perspective on the issues and the young lives impacted to assist wider reimaging of solutions.

Previously, according to Rowbotham (2014), while privileged white women were useless in terms of having no gainful preoccupation, poor women were busy eking out living and toiling like their men. Therefore, for such poor white women, men's superiority was only in their physical strength, not their wealth (p. 33). However, this was not completely the case because poor women were also dominated by their poor husbands. The point, however, is that patriarchy worked/work differently for different women in Europe and Africa today. Poverty in Africa points to the economic as opposed to natural conditioning of patriarchy (Steady, 1993). As discussed in Chapter 4, poor families are more likely to sell their younger daughters for food as seen in *Louding*, unlike educated upper-class or middle-class families such as those in *Zenzele: A Letter for My Daughter* (*Zenzele*) and "Let's Tell This Story Properly" (*Story*). Thus, within this study, there is an interface between the toxic trio notions of chattelisation, commodification and appropriation to inform the idea of normative femininity where women's wombs are controlled by patriarchy.

African women, unlike white women in the UK, remain in the position where marriage not only binds the wife to her husband but to his family/kin too, who expect children in return (MacFarlane, 1987). Nyanzi, Emodu-Walakira and Serwaniko, 2011 reinforce the link between bride price and the wife as owned by the husband's family from the perspective of widows. In such cases, males in the immediate families or clans of the deceased, depending on cultural specifics, may inherit the

widowed wives, as possessions of the deceased.[16] As cynical as this may sound, this study argues that the women/girls in the texts examined culturally feel the pressure for their wombs to produce, especially male children (son-preference).[17] In what Davies (1994, pp. 69-70) has defined as the 'normative femininity' of African womanhood, women and girls are socialised to believe that marriage and motherhood are women's life goals, crowned with production of children especially male in patriarchal societies. Davies extrapolated the expectations of womanhood from Aidoo's *Anowa,* where Badua, Anowa's mother (and her husband, Kofi) mostly articulated this view. Hence, Anowa's jettisoning of her society's norms is deemed transgressive.

Just like women with no male child are vilified, childless women are denigrated as they are deemed to be failures in their basic, natural role of motherhood. From the beginning, pioneer women writers tackle the issues of childlessness and women's control of their reproduction by either subverting these expectations or exposing them and showing their impact on women. Subsequent women writers continue focusing on these themes by employing strategies which contrast with the pioneer women writer's approaches.

Widowhood has traditionally been a location of trauma for women in Africa. According to Ohale (2012), "African women have continually endured exclusions and restrictions…But by far the most unconscionable acts of injustice against African women appear to be the cruelty and restrictions that are handed out to them when they become widows" (p. 1; see also Sossou, 2002).[18] That there are gradual changes being made to widowhood practices as rural and modern women continue to contest their practicality is shown by the introduction some codified legislations outlawing dangerous widow abuses, for example in parts of Igboland; all these point to the social constructions of widowhood rituals.[19] The widowhood rituals, show the

[16] Such practices have declined but continue in parts of Africa among certain social classes.
[17] In *Ogadinma*, following the birth of Ogadinma's first child, Mama Iyabo, a neighbour, tells Ogadinma: "'You don give your husband male pikin, now you go get peace of mind. Even if you born ten girls, e no matter again because you don pay the price wey you own your husband' (p.200) echoing Adaku's internalised realities in *Joys*.
[18] Sossou (2002) uses societies in Nigeria, Ghana, and Ivory Coast to exemplify the "social, economic, psychological and human rights violations" (p. 201) and "deprivation and dehumanisation" of widows (p. 202); while other African patriarchal cultures have similar or variant constructs including dictates from Islam for Muslim African widows as seen in Ba's text.
[19] See Goitom, Hanibal (2012) 'The Peril of Widowhood' *In Custodis Legis: Law Librarians of Congress*. https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2012/01/?gca=31

widows that without their husbands, they are nobodies in their marital family; this is where son-preference practice is reinforced. Widows with adult sons, especially if economically resourced, can offer a degree of protection to their mothers through liaising with their kinsmen/women. According to Ogunyemi (1996) "[i]n many Nigeria cultures the most humiliating treatment is reserved for widows" (p. 88). The most censured are young widows or widows who have no sons who experience the worst offensive treatment that includes the accusation or 'voicing of' suspicion that the widow "killed off her spouse in order to be free" (p. 88).

All the scholarly work on widowhood in this study identifies at least some or most of the degrading, humiliating and dehumanising practices shown below, as per the culture's specificity.[20] There are the pre- and post-corpse interment ritual periods; the intensity of suffering is highest in the first, while some mourning restrictions occur in the latter, whether indigenous or Islamic. Practices include physical confinement/restrictions pre- and post-internment, and dress codes which announce the widows. There are humiliating requirements which may include: prescribed modes of wailing/weeping to show grief and siting on the floor, either clothed or naked to signify the widow's new low status and to humiliate her. Other abusive practices include desexualising the widow's body through defacement with 'dirt' (using ash, mud, or something which the widow would ordinarily not use), tapering with the widow's head (woman's supposed glory) by shaving, loosening and/or covering, or shaving all bodily hair (armpit pubic); sadistic punishment - through imposed poor hygiene, restricted nutrition and/or mode of food presentation. Other extreme practices include - "mortuary rites" where the widow is forced to sleep in a room with her husband's corpse, to drink water used to wash the corpse, or sexually cleansing the widow by specified male-in-law(s). Conspicuously, widowers do not go through the same humiliating rituals as widows but may shave their head and wear mourning clothes; they can have sexual intercourse any time without sanction; a widow is forbidden sex by choice until after her mourning period.

[20] The specified indigenous mourning period can be up 12 months (or as prescribed in Islam, 4 months and 10 days or 9 months if the widow is pregnant). In my lifetime, my Igbo village has shown shifts in patriarchal practice by moving the mourning periods from 12 months to 6 months, from black to white mourning clothes; and the strict widow confinement has moved from at least 6 weeks to 1 week; allowances have been made for women who must work to feed their children. Shaving of hair, food, and the length of home restrictions continue. I did not witness the era of the other harsh ill treatment or widow inheritance. Today widows choose who to befriend or marry.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Bâ's, Liking's and Makumba's texts fictionally depict widows' ill-treatment, while Onwueme's *Wazobia Reigns!* discursively references the requirement for the king's wives to dance naked "in the marketplace as final mark of their innocence regarding their husband's death" (p. 19). Contrastingly, that in Aboulela's text, while in Scotland, the widow's mother-in-law who is in Sudan could not accuse her face to face for killing her son, and the widow's African widowhood experience did not start until she returned to Sudan with the deceased's corpse, points to widowhood protocols as embedded in Africa. Through Wazobia in *Reigns!* the female writer questions the subjugation of women through senseless rituals and puts an end to them, equally showing that these can end in Africa. As discussed in the thesis, logically there is no connection between the stigmatising practices that humiliate widows and the burial of a dead man other than to subjugate women at the point they lose the rulership of a man.

Defining Patriarchy for the Study as a Constructed Domination like Other Dominations

There is instability in the conceptualisation of patriarchy as natural or men as the natural actors of patriarchy because empowered women can act in the exact same manner which influences the conception of patriarchy in the study as constructed. The study adopts Gerda Lerner's (1986) definition of patriarchy which combines Thomas A. J. McGinn's (2018) and Sylvia Walby's (1992) interpretations of patriarchy and captures my own reality of patriarchy whilst living in Nigeria as it acknowledges the existence of women with power, but not structural power. It covers Amadiume's location of patriarchy within African cultures and recognises the ongoing challenges from patriarchy to women's lives in Africa. Lerner defines patriarchy as:

> …the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does *not* imply that women are

> either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources (p. 239).

Lerner's proposal captures the application of patriarchal domination which is ongoing in the contemporary contexts (globally too). It shows that the concept of patriarchy goes beyond the personal/individual patriarchy of the father's authority dominating the household, which no longer operates structurally in the United Kingdom, or within many of the African elite and educated classes; however, it still plagues the poorer classes.

Conclusion

Racism and African patriarchy when examined show that each is a social construct, applicable within socially conducive environments. It also becomes clear that racism as a social construct dominates African patriarchy wherever the two face off. In Africa, the racism of colonisation reduced African men and women to the status of children. In other words, the racism of colonisation infantilised and emasculated African men. Within this state of emasculated infantilism, colonial masters were in positions of *locus parentis* to African men, a patriarchal parent, treating African men as male children, savage children for that matter. African women are doubly patriarchalised, the foreign and the indigenous patriarchy going on simultaneously. Therefore, African men's claims of natural superiority as biological males is fragmented through colonial emasculation; this should expire the myth of male superiority and naturalness of African patriarchy.

Equally, the white women's position of authority over African men questions the men's claim of superiority over women; for, even Asian and coloured women of South Africa ranked as 'superior' to African men. This introduces the debate concerning the nature of African patriarchy and whether it is colour-specific to African women on the continent but withdraws when faced by white women in Africa or the United Kingdom. Migration is seen as another factor that fragments the myths sustaining African patriarchy. In this study, migration to the United Kingdom threatens the survival of the myth of African patriarchy and its naturalness. Matriarchy in the sense of women holding power in equalitarian relationship with

men was the case in the earliest form of life. Women contributed to food gathering and used their wombs to produce new members of the community, putting women in acknowledged important position later downgraded under patriarchal social system.

Within Africa, women's oppression and domination still operate at personal as well as corporate level in terms of the way actions of the countries' governments negatively impact women. At the personal levels of oppression, the males within the family oppress and dominate the women because even today they have culturally recognised power to determine the fates of women and girls. However, in the United Kingdom, at the basic family level, women and girls are no longer under individual patriarchal oppression, instead the oppressor has mutated into the 'cooperate patriarchy' whereby male-conceived state institutions work in ways that dominate women. Lola Olufemi (2020, p. 23) discusses the United Kingdom under: "The Sexist State" where state provisions, allocations, and oversight of these converge to suppress women's freedoms and agency in ways that replicates gender oppressions. Whereas in Africa more locations of oppression exist for women.

Strangely, colonisation, the phenomenon which significantly damaged Africa and its peoples, provides a tool with which to resist, challenge, contest and begin dismantling African men's claims to superiority over women which underpin African patriarchy. White men's enslavement of African men (and women) in the Americas and European colonisation all show that there is nothing natural about superiority of African men or natural about the practices which sustain African patriarchy. It is time for a new narrative of colonisation as a liberatory tool for women in Africa to be considered, otherwise, the same men who were colonised are themselves continuing the legacies of colonial domination and colonial patriarch as well as domination within cultural context.

Overall, the practice of unmasking African patriarchy has been shifting as shown in Chapters 5 and 6, but its survival and entrenchment are dependent on women's complicity, especially senior women (Chapters 4 and 5) on whom patriarchal oppressive practices do not equally apply. The study has observed that some women have the resource to mitigate the harsh realities of patriarchal practice, which implies that there can be 'discriminatory' patriarchal applications depending on women's social-economic status and education levels (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Migration by a woman from her marital village, her ‘epicentre’ of patriarchal force, begin to disruption patriarchal hold (examined in Chapter 5).

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The patriarchal domination of women in Africa is a fact of life and an area which has received attention from African men and women writers fictionally as demonstrated in this study. Equally, Africans and non-African critics have addressed this issue in various ways and as Hernandez et. al. (2011) note: “Resistance is undoubtedly more powerful when it is collective” (p.8). The sense of ‘collectiveness’ can assist solidarity amongst African women (including diaspora women) from different backgrounds to work towards achieving basic freedom for girl-children in Africa. This chapter will show that ‘once upon a time’, white British girls who belonged to the poor class were, within the legality of male-controlled laws and society, chattelised, then sexually pawned or trafficked; or were married off at 12 years.[21] The work of Hernandez et al. (2011), which centres women residing in Africa, involves Africa-born women residing in Africa and the diaspora working together. The section below, ‘Centring the Continental Woman and her Experiences’, focuses on Bouanga, whose resistance to, and overcoming of, patriarchal widowhood constructs add to women’s writing as resistance.

Pioneer men’s writing discussed in Chapter 7 examines the image of African women as docile and lacking in agency. Pioneer women’s writing discussed in Chapter 4 challenges such views through telling women’s stories from the women’s perspective and showing that despite patriarchal oppression, some women challenge and disrupt patriarchal narratives. Meanwhile, from reading *TFA*, by far the most famous and influential of pioneer African men’s texts, the reader is left with the impression of silent and muted voices of African women. Within Nwapa’s novel, *Efuru,* women’s voices are heard pursuing and discussing matters of their daily lives with other women, and making comments on men, or, about their lives with men. Both novels, set in the pre-colonial and colonial Igboland of Nigeria, respectively,

[21] White women’s collective resistances not only freed these girls but guaranteed the same freedom to future generations of poor white girls. What was once the lawful oppression of girls become unlawful. Today African diaspora females benefit from the laws.

exemplify how writing can be selective in telling 'his story' or 'her story' (Lerner, 1986). In *Efuru*, written in 1966, the female protagonist, Efuru, defies patriarchy and fails, ending up an outcast. In *Efuru*, written in 1966, the female protagonist, Efuru, defies patriarchy and fails, ending up an outcast. Nonetheless, Efuru and her creator Nwapa are among the pioneer African women who show why women's stories must never be left for only men to tell; they also head textual resistance against what Veronica Fynn Bruey (2021) describes as "…the continent's male dominance [which is] fierce, violent, and unrelenting" (p. 2).

Men's writing fails to reverse the domination, violence, and humiliation of colonisation for men and women. Instead, the men's stories constitute the resistance in writing back, at times poking fun or criticising the white man's supposedly superior ways, behind their backs, thus disrupting the colonial narratives of the natives as dumb or stupid.[22] According to Ashcroft (2001, p. 16), such resistances are harder for the coloniser to repress. In this way, pioneer men's writing did not fail any more than pioneer women's writing or subsequent women's writing failed. In the case of the United Kingdom, white women writers also wrote within patriarchal oppression and domination, which did not immediately reverse the women's situations. Nonetheless, the female positions were exposed. Scholarly works by women such as Wollstonecraft (1792) exposed women's subjugated positions and pleaded that equal education for boys and girls would serve women better as human beings, companions to men and as mothers. Such pleas meant the writer's disagreement with the inferior or narrow education afforded women and girls from privileged families; education to make such women adorable objects of wealthy men.

Fictional and critical writing became a tool of resistance for Africans resisting colonisation and for the formerly enslaved black people in the United States resisting racist legacies of slavery, just as white women used it to resist patriarchal oppression in the United Kingdom. African women writers use their texts to compare the actions

[22]In Oyono's *Houseboy*, the Commandant's young wife, Madame, who recently arrived in the colony gets into a rage and verbally denigrates her four African male domestic servants, treating them like boys. She hurls insults like: "Idle creature! You lazy idle loafer!" to the washerman, and "old baboon" to the cook (p. 74). Madame threatens violence against them through her lover, the cruel and sadistic prison director, M. Moreau who said that Africans need "the big stick", connoting the routine violence against Africans. Madame physically assaults the washerman, Baklu (p. 74) without retaliation. The servants only get back by making fun of the couple, their use of condom, and Madame's infidelity.

of female characters across generations. For groups subordinated including by colonisation, patriarchy, and racism, writing as part of "intellectual resistance" (Hill, 2019, p. 10) or "resistant knowledge production" (p. 11) contributes to intellectual activism inside and outside the academy (p. 12). Echoing the concept of "intellectual resistance", Okeke (1997) asserts that indigenous African women "scholars, activists, poets and women organization" inside and outside the continent should address the complexities of women's lives in Africa in ways meaningful to the latter (p. 5); this involves writing or documentation aimed at sharing of knowledge and strategies.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1985 and 1993), Okeke (1997), Okereke (1997), and Tamale (1999), among others, address the issue of patriarchal domination of women. They specifically focus on cultural practices such as women's oppression, exclusion from national politics, marriage, or widowhood practices. Others, for instance, Azuah *et al.* (2017), Manala (2015), Olukenlu (2015), Durojaye (2013), Ezeakor (2013), Nyanzi (2011), Nwoye (2005) Sossou (2002) and Ntozi (1997), engage with the humiliating widowhood practices. Within this writing, specific African indigenous groups including the Igbos, the Yoruba, the Luo, the Xhosa, and the Zulu are discussed. As noted in the Introduction, whenever writers' comment on the oppressive use of proverbs which undermine women, the focus tends to be on the specific indigenous groups. For instance, Chikwelu (2019) writes that "Proverbs in Igbo African culture have perpetuated the mainstream oppression and subjugation of women in Igbo society of Nigeria. Like in many other African cultures, proverbs help in defining moral consciousness, thought and belief" (p. 13). He further notes that "Women, through Igbo proverbs have negatively been portrayed as senseless, devilish, childish, weak, and morally debased" (p. 14). As well as affirming that proverbs which feature in most African cultures invariably portray negative images of women as embodied in the cultures' beliefs systems, his focus on the Igbos of Southeastern Nigeria demonstrates how the patriarchal issue of derogating women through proverbs is localised and yet Africa-wide.[23]

Salami (2005), using two male dramatic texts, *Imaguero* by Evbinma Ogie and *Dance on his Grave* by Barclays Ayakoroma, provides an interesting prism to view

[23] It ought to be noted that there is hardly any patriarchal society globally including the United Kingdom where men have not constructed derogatory proverbs or sayings about women.

the patriarchal manipulations of power and proverbs over women and a woman writer's conscious subversion.[24] Based on her reading of these texts Salami shows how intricately proverbs are woven into language. For instance, in *Dance on his Grave*, King Olotu plays the 'bride price' card aiming to instil fear in his wife, Queen Alearo who had mobilised the village women to rise against men who instigate or wage wars forcing the women's sons who go to war to die. This strategy is usually used to curb women's agency. Salami (p. 33) states that:

> Paying 'bride price on the head' is very significant in patriarchal ideology - it means bought over completely. For example, in exasperation of his wife's behaviour, the chief says, "You are my wife; that is why I paid bride price on your head. Once you have sold your fish at the market you can't expect to have them back and keep the money" (ibid: 23).

King Olotu's use of the proverb reminds his wife that she has been completely sold and has no rights to question her 'buyer.' By this expression, Olotu articulates a patriarchal ideology which celebrates masculinity. As the wife tries to challenge him, he reinforces his earlier statement, re-asserting his authority:

> You are not here to reason woman! I didn't pay all that bride price on your head for you to come here and reason for me! I do all the reasoning for you and every other person in this house! (p. 33).

Salami (p. 34) adds that the King's companions, Chiefs Apodi and Osima also derided the women with comments about women's inability to "put on thinking caps" and that they possess the capacity for "haggling in Zarama market" but not for governance of the village. In the foregoing context, the fish can be deemed to represent the Queen as a female person, and/or her virginity the priced article the King purchased with bride price. The King's statements show society's expectations of women to be totally subservient to their husbands who have paid their bride

[24] Salami (2005) also integrates theoretical underpinnings in her fictional text.

prices. Thinking is not the domain of women, and neither are they expected to challenge their husbands or to mobilise women to rise against men. These are anti-patriarchal expectations of women or the normative womanhood of the village women. The comment, 'A woman I paid for with my own money' is a usual phrase men use when women try to be assertive or question by action or word their husbands' directives or expectations as seen also in *Wazobia Reigns!* The character, MAN, wants to beat his wife, "a mere woman that I married and paid to get" for challenging him (p. 22). This is usually a tactic to silence women just as dismissing women's trading skills.

The African women's effectiveness as traders, particularly the collective powerbase of the market women in West Africa is well known.[25] Amadiume (2015) refers to the marketplace as the centre of women's power (p. xvi). In general, women's participation in trade at times sustains their children and husbands; yet men use proverbs which trivialise market women and their trading skills to undermine women including their economic agency (Salami, p. 34). Importantly for this study, Salami (2005), like other contemporary African women critics, subverts proverbs presented by men by giving them a feminist twist, especially in her work, *The Queen Sister*s. Since embedding negative images of women in everyday language normalises their subjugation, Salami shows that women writers resist, protest, and subvert such patriarchal tactics. She states, "I seek to undermine patriarchy by expressing the issues surrounding it. I preoccupy myself in *The Queen Sisters* with the task of exposing the subtleties of patriarchy and undermining the institutional forms of exclusion." (p. 36) Salami's work thus aligns with the textual analysis of women's writing which challenges the views seen in patriarchal constructions or patriarchal performativity presenting learned gendered roles as natural (Judith Butler, 2006 [1990]).

Other Scholarly Works

This study adopts a kaleidoscopic view which entails projecting localised patriarchal practices that dominate and subjugate women and girl-children. The focus on

[25] See House-Midamba, Bessie and Ekechi, Felix K, eds, (1995) *African Market Women and Economic Power: The Role of Women in African Economic Development* (West Port, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press).

practices described as the hallmarks of patriarchy teases out their operation from texts set in different parts of the continent or in the United Kingdom diaspora. Nigeria features more in the discussion because as the most populous country in Africa, it consequently produces more women's literary work. Texts from some internationally renowned Nigerian (Igbo) women writers like Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, and Julie Okoh who addresses girl-child exploitations (Imo, 2018) are not included in the study to minimise the Nigerian presence. Nigeria is also one of the countries with the highest rate of child-marriages in Africa and globally. Such marriages represent the vilest, oldest, and easiest form of patriarchal control at the personal level, which then limit the girls as individuals and future women. Finally, it is the country where I lived and observed experiences of African patriarchy, until my migration to the United Kingdom, and whenever I visit Nigeria my experiences and observations resurface and reconfirm patriarchy's persistence.

Although some African women writers have argued that women have a social complementary status to men, especially in Yorubaland (Oyěwùmí 1997) and Igboland (Amadiume, 2015), experiences of marriage and widowhood practices in these two societies show that such claims are not accurate, for women are still the subservient group. Amadiume refers to alternative gender markers in Igboland where women can perform the gendered role of men by marrying a woman. Although she identifies other cultures with woman-to-woman marriages or similar arrangements in Africa, often such situations serve patriarchal purposes when there is no male child to continue the family lineage; a woman cannot reproduce as expected of her; or a woman is deemed to be acting like a man. As shown in Amadiume (2015) and Acholonu (1995b), both Igbos like Achebe, by paying the bride price, female-husbands also appropriate their wives' wombs and children.[26] Such wives may get pregnant with men of their choice or as agreed pre-marriage (Wairumu Nguruiya Njambi and William E. O'Brien William, 2005). Some women prefer this arrangement to being married to men, thus subverting male rulership. This study argues that the same situations expose patriarchy as socially constructed, and not natural.

[26] Amadiume (pp. 46-48) recounts how Eze Okigbo's wives became female husbands and/or wealthy. For instance, Nwambata Aku, an inherited wife, married "about 24 wives" whose labour made Nwambata rich and created wealth for the wives too. Childless Iheuwa "married a woman Onudiulu, who bore three sons", so, legally these are Iheuwa's sons. Acholonu's (1995b) short story illustrates how a female character, Oyidya, whose male issues keep dying, marries, and disposes of wives while seeking an heir. The female sex is often at the end of exploitation.

On the one hand, Oyěwùmí's (1997) *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Discourses* disputes the existence of gendered hierarchy in Yorubaland, insisting that gender hierarchy is a western phenomenon externally derived from slavery and colonisation. She argues that prior to these events, seniority and age were markers for hierarchy in Yorubaland. On the other hand, Tola Pearce's (2014) *Dispelling the Myth of Pre-colonial Gender Equality in Yoruba Culture* (pp. 315, 316, 327, 328) argues that "the Yoruba had an unequal gender framework prior to colonial construction… [While there were] pockets of female power", that did not mean gender equality (pp. 316, 327). Pearce's assertion is based on her reading of Nathaniel Fadipe's (1939) unpublished dissertation, which she claims captures the indigenous gender constructions and inequalities including childhood socialisation among the pre-colonial Yoruba. She contends that the published and commonly consulted version of the dissertation, edited by Okediji and Okediji (Fadipe 1970) accurately represents Fadipe' gendered inequalities but fails to capture Fadipe's social socialisation and social reproduction processes. For instance, Pearce refers to polygamous marriages where men appropriated women, their children, and services. Equally, patrilineal marriage arrangements show wives from different social status as: "regular/freeborn wives, gift wives, pawn-induced wives, levirate wives, and slave wives" (328).[27] In other words, the arrangements show the chattelisation of women as the subordinate group. This study finds such arguments representative of Oyěwùmí's and Pearce's disagreement as distracting attention from the main issue facing women in Africa. Younger generation scholars like Luqman Muraina and Abdulkareem Jeleel Ajimatanraeje (2022) focus on the debate concerning the existence of gender neutrality in Yorubaland in the past, whereas patriarchal practices which still blight the lives of women and girls continue in Yorubaland and other parts of Africa. Discourses at this stage should be focusing on how to dislodge patriarchal situations in Africa, through harnessing writing and practical conscious raising and activism, so that future generations of girl-children do not face similar problems.

[27] The varying types of 'marriages' evoke the chattelisation and disposability of women/girls discussed in chapter 1 as the Hallmark of patriarchy. Wars are waged to gather or provide slaves, with female slaves joining the domestic rank of abused females. Pearce (2014) states that Fadipe was "the first sociology PhD in Yorubaland (p.15). Also, he was part of the indigenous population who encountered colonial intruders.

In patriarchal African societies, including Yoruba and Igbo, men have always married women but not the other way round. Men continue to provide the bride price and dowry while women leave their birth families to join their husbands. The marital oppression of women by in-laws and kinship in-laws are still practiced today. Women accept that marital bargain involves venturing into the unknown in various ways, dealing with unknown personalities and family cultures. Attempts to mitigate such unknowns can be seen in the cultural practices of diligent families who enquire about the family lineages of the brides' suitors. For instance, they investigate whether there are family cultures, a history of domestic abuse, theft, or laziness, and so on.[28] Economically poor women and girls bear the harshest brunt of patriarchal oppression in all cultures. Steady (2006), using Sierra Leone as an example, posits women's collective actions as the way forward to a continent-wide female emancipation from economic and other barriers that affect women.

Non-African writers have also examined the patriarchal domination of women either specifically focusing on African women or on African women as part of the larger context of black women, women of colour or women across races as 'sisters' who are oppressed by men of all races in patriarchal societies. But African women's contexts differ from those of African American women and other women of colour in the diaspora, because raids and uncertainties during the Atlantic slave trade, a period followed by colonisation, had lasting effects on women's experience of patriarchy. Also, the male relatives of African women were predominantly the slave merchants in Africa, although some women, such as Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba in present day Angola may have invested in slave trade.

Non-African writers whose cross-cultural work involving black women in different cultures or location include, among others, Boyce Davies (1994) and Kandiyoti (1988), focus on patriarchy across the Middle East, Asia, Africa and including Muslim women. hooks and other African American women scholars, including Angela Davis and Audre Lorde, made race an issue to be taken seriously in women's oppressions because during colonisation, African women experienced the impact of racism inside Africa and continue to do so in their western diaspora countries. Mohanty's (1991) work touches on Third World women within which

[28] Some families who are predominantly interested in the material relief which bride price or dowry will bring to them do not bother with such enquiries and leave their daughters to their fate.

African women's situations are discussed. In addition to these writers, a good example of cross-racial sisterhood is by the white woman writer, Robin Morgan (1985) whose anthology, written from the western women's liberation movement perspective, recognises that women, as a category, are dominated by men. It does not focus on race and class as specific locations of oppression of black women as subsequently identified in the intersections of oppressions (Crenshaw,1991). Morgan's edited book has entries from Nigeria and other African countries and the focus of entries from African women show examples of the concerns for women at the time. For instance, Ogundipe-Leslie's entry addresses issues of patriarchy, its impact on women and their resilience, African men's understanding and fear of feminism, and men's belief that feminism is not as applicable to African women who are contented with their positions in life.

Of particular interest is Hernandez et. al. (2011) writing mentioned earlier which seems to be a response to Okeke (1997). Okeke calls for multiple collaborative work involving African women in Africa and diaspora with joint interest in matters affecting women on the continent, which ensures that the voices of continental women are heard and addressed in meaningful ways. Equally, Steady (1993) suggests that "…female models for societal change should have at their core the articulated aspirations and agendas of women from economically and socially oppressed groups of society" (p. 90). The women contributors in Hernandez *et. al.* (2011) highlights the complexities of African women's life, resistance, hopes, and aspirations conveyed in fiction, poems, life stories, and interviews. Issues identified as facing African women include health and educational resource challenges, continuing subjection to patriarchal norms which limit women's achievement of their full potential, domestic violence, marital rape, and child marriage (p. 4).

Women 'speaking out' and writing about their challenges display a form of resistance since they "[create] visions of a more positive future, using writing to bear witness to oppression, to document opposition struggles, and share successful strategies of resistance" (p. 3). The interview of the seventy-one-year-old Bouanga, the mother of one of the editors, is particularly illuminating as it contains a real-life account and shows the strength of African women which goes unsung. It also shows that whether children follow a matrilineal or patrilineal system of reckoning lineage or passing inheritance as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, women as widows experience

a culturally constructed oppression.[29] Following Bouanga's husband's death, her in-laws invade their home, taking everything from the family home, and seeking to seize the house too. This would have left her nine children and the co-wife and her five children homeless. The condition for the women to keep the family home is for the widows to marry men chosen from the family by the in-laws. This enacts the practice of wife inheritance, where women are passed as chattel from one man to another which in this case means that the in-laws will continue to control the wives and their children as their kinsman's property.

Since, as Bouanga explains, culturally the children of her husband do not belong to him or his family, but to the wife's family, this case reinforces the constructed nature of patriarchy. In most cases children belong to the fathers and their families, so, Bounga's point presents a different construct around marriage, an institution where women are oppressed. Bouanga's life story concretises the findings of Radcliff-Brown and Forde (1950) on the Bantu matrilineal belt where different social marriage arrangements exist with matrilineal systems of lineage and inheritance. The only fictional hint of this matrilineality is in *Anowa* (p. 75) [30]; Anowa belongs to her maternal family, with power residing in her maternal uncles regarding marriage matters.

Bouanga disrupts the patriarchal script around widowhood and oppression of widows. She fights and stops her in-laws from taking over the family home by seeking help from the police, the case ends in her favour. So, she keeps the family home and her widowhood. Because of challenging patriarchy, Bouanga's much younger co-wife is not forced to choose a husband, instead, she remarries after two years, by her choice. Interestingly, the co-wife, leaves her own children with Bouanga who then has fourteen children as a single mother. With hard work, farming, and trading activities she raises and educates the children.

Bouanga represents so many strong women in Africa who work hard to offer better lives to the next generation. Her story highlights that change is possible in stopping oppression of women and the role which law enforcement can play.

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[29] In *So Long a Letter, Wazobia Reigns!* and *The Power of Um*, women in patrilineal patriarchal societies face oppressions as widows. Notably, the widows are living amongst their husband's people not the women's people.

[30] Badua disapproves of Anowa's choice of husband in Kofi and wants Osam to join in 'fixing it' by dissuading Anowa from the marriage (p. 75).

Usually in Africa, the police loath intervening in what are deemed domestic matters or customary law affairs, so men continue to control both private and public spaces. This accounts for the reason customary laws and national laws run in parallel in matters of marriage in Igbo land of Nigeria (Ezeakor, 2013); also, in other African societies, where additionally Islamic sharia law operate for African Muslims. Bouanga's case shows that even male structures and attitudes can be instrumental in supporting women as opposed to reinforcing their oppression. When asked what piece of advice she can give to today's women, Bouanga stated, that "Girls must go to school to be educated. A woman […] single, married, or widowed, must free herself and […] take on any profession. […] rights of widows must be recognized in Africa, especially in [Republic of the Congo]" (p. 38). Bouanga's account of an African widow's negative experiences and a polygamous marriage show that these hallmarks of patriarchy discussed in Chapter 1, operate within matrilineal and patrilineal patriarchal systems.[31] The drawback in Hernandez *et al*. (2011) edited collection is the lack of analysis of the women's stories as part of the wider theme of issues affecting African women. Nonetheless, Bouanga's story widens African women's collective voices against patriarchy, becomes part of the collective resistance from the sharing of burden, freedom, and strategies. It shows that constructions to male power in matrilineal and patrilineal societies are assumptions and not natural.

Diop (1989) and Amadiume (2015) point to African societies' matrilineal systems as indicating a matriarchal past but there is no evidence of a period of matriarchy in Africa in the sense of 'mother rule' and mother right as patriarchy is 'father rule' and father right. Equally unclear is the fact that the traces of African societies' matrilineal systems indicate vestiges of a period of matriarchy as social system in Africa, which is different from having African women who rule as queens, rulers, or spiritual leaders. Besides as Ogundipe-Leslie (1993) points out, even in matrilineal African societies, maternal uncles hold the power as males, instead of the birth fathers. The history of the evolution of patriarchy in Africa is also inconclusive, as traces of patrilineality and matrilineality existed before external influences of Islam

[31] As a widow, Bouanga's husband's family took away everything in the home, leaving her, the younger wife, and their children homeless. Bouanga's situation happens to widows in patrilineal patriarchal African societies too.

and colonisation, and still exist despite erosions of such cultures from the two external factors (Oduyoye, 1995; Diop, 1989; Hernandez et. al., 2011).

When Islamic and European patriarchal world views were introduced to Africa indigenous patriarchal practices and cultures were synchronised, imposed on, or superimposed on by the new practices. This shows the mutability and malleability of patriarchy as an organic situation which is sustained with socially constructed practices. If, as noted earlier, Africa was originally matriarchal but is now patriarchal, it can change back to the original again; this changeability undermines any claim of naturalness to patriarchy in Africa. In the United Kingdom diaspora, where racism is the social construct that negatively impacts African men and women, it disrupts African patriarchal social constructs of the superior African man.

Child marriages and humiliating widowhood practices can be tackled and dislodged culturally in different parts of Africa if the personal patriarchal exercise of power over girls-children and women is aborted. This study contributes to such a resistance through unmasking the arbitrary, socially constructed nature of African patriarchy that helps others to understand and support the dismantling of patriarchy. Such a thematically mapped continent-wide project, going on simultaneously, forces internal or inward gazing at women's position in Africa and confronts the source(s) of women's ongoing subjugation in Africa. External gazes at colonisation and neo-colonisation can be suspended because this rhetoric makes no difference to women/girls at the receiving end of personal patriarchal abuses from African men.[32] Colonisation is, however, raised in the study to show that alongside women, African men were once dominated and subjugated inside Africa.

Post-colonialism, Patriarchal deconstruction, and feminism(s)

Women's resistance is examined within texualised contexts of selected writing including women's biographies and other textual material. These are subjected to analysis, although correlations and cross-referencing where applicable will be made

[32] Equally needed (but outside the scope of the thesis) is continent-wide, collective themed activism as well as practical support such as mentioned in Hernandez *et. al.* (2011) and envisaged by Okeke (1997).

or extrapolated between women lived and the textual experiences of their fictional characters. Post-colonial and patriarchal discourses encompass the domination of the 'Othered', the colonised, and the women under the dominator's construction. European colonisation in the nineteenth century was globally far reaching, and brutal in its establishment in Africa. Childs and Williams (1997) note that by 1800, the western powers were in control of 35% of the world, 67% by 1878 and 85% by 1914 (p.10). It is estimated that by the 1930s, European colonisation was in operation in "84.6% of the globe" (Loomba, 1998, p.15). At the forefront of the operation were "the British and French empires [which] by no means obscures the quite remarkable modern expansions of Spain, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Italy … (Said, 1994, p. 9). The diaspora context of this study is the United Kingdom, the centre of one of the largest empires. Furthermore, resistance is an integral part of post-colonial counter-narrative and African women are part of the colonised Africans' collective resistance.

Post-colonial discourses are interested in seeing or presenting the reality and experiences not with the lens of the colonisers, for instance the British colonialists, rather from the perspectives of the colonised, the 'Othered' such as the pioneer African men/their writing. For Derrida, as Barbara Johnson writes in her translator's introduction to *Jacques Derrida, Dissemination* (1981) "The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or generalized scepticism, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not meaning but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another" (p. xiv).[33] Derrida rejects that there is a plain, clear or unambiguous meaning from reading a text, which means the rejection of any dominant 'assumptions', 'truths' deemed to be signified. This concept is of interest to this study which, in effect, is re-reading Africa's patriarchal social systems as social scripts. The study borrows Derrida's (1997) deconstructionist framework to examine how the 'Othered' African men's writing which protests colonial silencing and subjugation of African men, dismantles the naturalness, 'assumptions', 'truths', about African patriarchy/men's superiority. Feminism embodies the resistance of male domination from purely feminine perspectives,

[33] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (1981), Translated, with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Barbara Johnson, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.

which in Africa women's lived experiences or history involves resisting the domination of white colonial men, African men and white women who acted as 'notional or honorary' white men.[34] According to Lener (1986), for white women who are not of lower class[35], 'the "reciprocal agreement" [with men] went like this: in exchange for your sexual, economic, political, and intellectual subordination to men you may share the power of men of your class to exploit men and women of the lower class' (sic) (p. 218). The "agreement" explains the bargain between the ruling white men and their women, so that the women who were dominated exercised power over the lower whites, and the enslaved and colonised Africans who occupied the lowest class in social hierarchy.

Feminism also shows that white married women, oppressed yet privileged, and mostly regarded as non-legal persons and chattels of their husbands under the coverture law[36], launched a successful women's rights movement. Stretton and Kesselring (2013) show that coverture, an English legal doctrine, was replicated with stricter application in the British's American colonies.[37] Although women in England had established avenues for redress under ecclesiastical and equity jurisdictions still adjugated by men, women in America lacked these. Hence the relevance of feminism to this work is mainly from the American pioneer feminists' perspective, as initiators of the nineteenth century feminist movement and brutalisers of enslaved African women, their children and men. The historical evolution of patriarchy shows how, in African societies and in the United Kingdom, its social construction is based in its flexibility and malleability as opposed to being fixed by nature. The constructions around girl-child's age of marriage and of consent to sexual

[34] In patriarchal arrangement women are given male authority in specific circumstances, formally or informally. Nonetheless, as women, they still experience patriarchal domination in other areas of their lives.

[35] White women who ended up in colonial Africa or who owned enslaved African wo/men were from the middle class upwards. Poor white women, struggling to survive, were 'Othered' too although they shared white racial privilege.

[36] This legal principle denied legal personhood to married women in the United Kingdom and The United State colonies of Britain. The western marriage concept of 'two becoming one' was stretched under the patriarchal construct which merged the woman into the man, so the man becomes the 'two', so the woman was 'legally non-existent'. See Stretton, Tim and Kesselring, Krista. J. (Eds.). (2013). *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World*. McGill-Queen's University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt32b7jq. See review in Gail Savage, G. (2016).

[37] In the colonialised American colonies women lacked access to other established avenues sympathetic to women's situations such (review this) as under equity and ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

intercourse[38] shows similar shifts. Whereas Suzanne Petroni, Madhumita Das, Susan M Sawyer (2018, p. 1) delineate the difference between the age of sexual and the legal age of marriage in the British legal system, in Africa where similar to previous practices in Britain, child-marriage is predominantly the norm these are conflated. When the British government set the girl-child's marriage age at 12 years, this was the age of sexual consent hence 12-year-old white girls were prostituted in the UK on the ground of their legal capacity to consent to sex. The British government from 1875 started shifting the ages of marriage until 2023 when the marriage is 18 years, but the age of sexual consent is 16 years. African societies have continued with child-marriages, at time by chronological age or 'menstruation' age which announces the female is readiness to procreate; hence Zainab at 11 years married a 60-year-old man and had a baby at 12 years (see *Not That Woman* (*Woman*) Chapter 4).

Experiences of colonisation are important in contextualising colonial realities for the colonised Africans and the post-colonial discursive engagement with these as part of post-colonial theory, within which the views of Fanon, Said, Bhabha, Spivak, Ashcroft, and Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin are centralised in the study. These views assist in highlighting the comparative positions of African men under European colonisation with that of African women under African patriarchy. 'Post-colonial' as a concept does not mean after colonisation has demised, rather it is flexibly used to indicate "the contestation of colonial domination and legacies of colonisation" (Loomba, 1998, p.12). All colonised persons became 'prisoners' or 'slaves' (Fanon, 2001) in their homeland but colonisation has many iterations such as direct rule, indirect rule, settler colonisation, or protectorates.[39] For Africans, 'the contestation of colonisation' started immediately. The initial stage of the Africans' post-colonial resistance was mostly existential, through physical acts against the foreign intruders[40] which the latter brutally crushed (Ashcroft, 2001; Ngũgĩ, 1981; Fanon

[38] Suzanne Petroni, Madhumita Das, Susan M Sawyer (2018) "Protection versus rights: age of marriage versus age of sexual consent" Viewpoint, pp. 1-7. https://creaworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Age-of-Consent_LancetCAH_Madhumita-Das.pdf

[39] According to Loomba (1998, p.2), the Third World people share a history of colonial exploitation: "Colonialism was not an identical process in different parts of the world but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history." This shows the practices which created experiences of colonial writing and post-colonial discourses. See also Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen (2007) for postcolonial concepts.

[40] African men's actions unwittingly exposed their people's vulnerabilities; Europeans took advantage.

2001). Physical skirmishes continued sporadically while physical wars for political independence were necessitated in some African countries with entrenched settler-colonisation (O'Gorman, 2011). In the writing of pioneer African men, under colonisation African men occupied a low position (alongside women); in pioneer women's writing, the women's status was low.[41] Colonisation and African patriarchy embrace the concepts of 'sameness' and 'differences' in their application of domination. African patriarchy's sameness lies in the domination of women as a group, but practices vary in exact details[42] and experientially.[43]

Equally, violence was a recognised tool which the dominator used to control the dominated, within colonial and African patriarchy, since the dominated resisted. Forms of resistance, in the form of literary resistance by Africans, began following access to the colonial education, initially by African men "[s]ince boys were given preferential treatment in acquiring Western education" (Ogunyemi, 1996, p. 32). Political resistance on the international stage, which contributed to colonial resistance, was through the Pan African movement (Lennelle and Kelly, 1994), which sought to unite all oppressed black people against their common oppressor – the white man (and woman).[44] Following political independence for African countries, Africans have engaged in literary work targeted at reclamation and re-appropriation of histories, identities and cultures destroyed and voices silenced during the colonial encounter. Unfortunately for women, pioneer men writers' early work projected men's voices as representative of Africa's voices, thereby further silencing women's voces which the latter are reasserting through writing.

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[41] African men and women are 'Othered' and subjugated under colonisation; women are 'Othered' under African patriarchy. Colonial and patriarchal domination share a lot in common.

[42] Exact details of African patriarchal practices vary across centuries, countries, within countries at different times and status of women, rich or poor, royal, and so on (see Loomba, I998, p.18).

[43]Okonkwo's third young wife, Ojiugo, is reported as living in perpetual fear of him, so her experience is different. Okonkwo beats Ojiugo and Ekwefi the second wife but Ekwefi is the wife who chooses Okonkwo by leaving her first husband. Only Ekwefi challenges Okonkwo, mocks his hunting skills and he shots at her, narrowly missing. The first wife, named Nwoye's mother, has learnt how to survive, and to keep silent before Okonkwo. See chapter 3, where African men also keep quiet under colonial abuses.

[44] "Pan-Africanism was the attempt to create a sense of brotherhood and collaboration among all people of African descent whether they lived inside or outside of Africa". From The Pan-African Movement | AHA (historians.org) which cites the above information to be [From: African World Supplement, September, 1921, pp. xi-xix, "West Africa and the Pan-African Congress" reprinted in J. Ayodele Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 375-379.] White women derived their authority over the colonised from white men.

African Men's Unwitting Invitation to Colonisers and Colonisers' Acceptance

There is a reluctance on the part of African women scholars to hold African men collectively responsible for the enslavement of African women during the Trans-Saharan, Indian Ocean, and Atlantic slave trades. African men, as the predominant traders and collaborators with Europeans in the hideous slave trade,[45] facilitated the funnelling of Africans especially to the plantation of Americans where African royalties and paupers were treated alike, as sub-humans (Dadzie, 2020). Consequently, for the Europeans, Africans became "one burdensome colour black…" Maraire (1996, p. 80)[46] with cheap, disposable lives suited for economic exploitation. This situation invited the colonisation of Africa/Africans when the human trade became untenable.[47] The 'natural' progression necessitated enslaving Africans in their own land, no wonder Fanon (2001) calls colonised races "slaves of modern times" (p. 58). Achebe (2018 [1997]) notes that: "[t]he vast arsenal of derogatory images of Africa amassed to defend the slave trade and later, colonization gave the world a literary tradition…[and] also a particular way of looking (or, rather, not looking) at Africa and Africans that endures…" (p. 20). African men scholars hardly take responsibility for the slave trade and its lasting impact for Africans.

Colonisation was justified under imperial ideological constructs riddled with binaries with the negatives attributed to Africans and the positives to the colonising white power. Africans, like other colonised peoples, were derogatorily represented as: "*people* [who] required and beseech domination" and associated with terms like "'inferior' or 'subject races', 'subordinate peoples', 'dependency', 'expansion', and 'authority'" (Said, 1994, p.8). These constructs are part of the colonial ideology of superiority and control. European colonisers set out to impose their assumed 'superior' mental framework casting the colonised as 'lazy', 'aggressive', 'irrational' 'thieves', 'sly' (Said, 2003; Ngũgĩ, 1981). Within such contexts, the colonised, African men and women became the marginalised, the "subaltern" masses who could not speak or spoke but were not heard by the centre (Spivak, 1988). African men became 'the subjugated' showing the constructed, unfixed nature of power which

[45] Pioneer African women texts of 1960s-1970s – *Anowa (p.97)* and *The Joys of Motherhood* (pp. 10-11) highlight the roles of Kofi and Ogbuefi Agbadi respectively in procuring women for enslavement through purchasing them as slaves or via village raids.
[46] Nozipo Maraire's novel, *Zenzele: A Letter to My Daughter* (1996, p. 80).
[47] From slave trade, the white men arbitrarily decided to start a different trade, this time a trade which enslaves all Africans making them human resources and their land the natural resources for Europe.

backs domination.[48] Hierarchically, within the colonised subaltern groups where men were the dominant, colonised women were placed under double or multiple layered yokes.[49]

Similar to patriarchy, colonial experiences are an integral part of the identities of the writers who write about their/other peoples' experiences of domination.[50] During the colonial period, the men who claimed superiority in indigenous contexts had another group of men claiming superiority over them; this was textually reinforced.[51] African men resented the unprecedented nature of colonial domination, for instance forced domestic taxation, forced labour road projects[52] and forced conscription to European World War 2 (Emecheta, 1979).[53] Whereas, previous forms of colonisation were pre-capitalist and the colonised territories paid tributes to their colonisers, European colonisation reconstructed the colonised and the colonies into economies which allowed the free flow of human resources and raw materials to service the colonisers (Loomba, p. 3). So, this structure enabled more intensive exploitation of the colonised. For a white minority to achieve the seamless exploitation over an Africa majority necessitated the subjugation to be intrinsically linked with violent control, designed to instil fear of 'the white man' (Ashcroft, 2001; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1991; Fanon 2001) and to denigrate the black man (Fanon, 2008).

The imperial power, linked to colonisation,[54] was not averse to the display of power including the massacre of human obstacles (Child and Williams, 1997, p. 54).

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[48] African men only will be used to reinforce the image of the subjugated 'superior' man.

[49] Even within the double-yoke scenario, there were hierarchies amongst women, so there were social constructions relating to women's positions.

[50] See chapter 3. Some of the selected works of pioneer African wo/men writers examined, depending on their themes, evidenced that colonisation negatively impacted the lived experiences of both sexes, simultaneous to indigenous patriarchy experiences of women.

[51] See chapter 3. Textually, African men characters who physically abuse their wives like Okonkwo in *TFA* and Toundi's unnamed father in *Houseboy* are afraid to directly confront the white people. This is similar to the women's relationship to their domestic abusers. But in *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, a wife fights back with a kitchen implement fatally wounding her husband, but this is not the solution.

[52] In Igbo land of Nigeria, domestic colonial taxes were foreign in nature. Taxes allowed the colonisers to funnel African resources back to Europe and charge colonised people for colonial infrastructures built to enable more efficient exploitation of the colonised.

[53] In *The Joys of Motherhood*, p. 145, Nnu Ego's husband, Nnaife goes to work, and is kidnapped with other men (they were ambushed and put in a lorry) taken for compulsory health check-up. Nnaife was deemed healthy to join the British World War 2 efforts. Nigerian men did not revolt.

[54] Said (1994) explains Imperialism and Colonisation: "…'imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonisation', which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlers on distant territory. As Michael Doyle puts it: 'Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the

Colonised men and women were brutalised. However, textually, colonial narratives projected colonial violence and savagery to inferior colonised African men. Pioneer African men writers' counter-discourses challenge the colonial scripts; for instance, Achebe's *TFA*, Oyono's *Houseboy* and Beti's *Poor* portray various colonial violent acts against African men and entire communities. At the same time these male writers create male characters who beat their wives and blame the women for their violence. The colonial violence towards African men is comparable in purpose and intent to African men's violence towards their wives/women within patriarchal social systems.[55] Whereas the fictive depictions of African men's subjugation alongside women greatly undermine any claim of the natural superiority of men, assumptions of their natural superiority have persisted and are captured in pioneer men's writing. It is against this background, experiences and legacies that pioneer African women's textual resistance started in Africa from 1965 and continues to this day.

Postcolonial theory's[56] dialectics of knowledge and power, the politics of representation and domination (Foucault, 1980; Said, 1994; Said 2003) of the oppressed by the oppressor, which characterised the colonised and coloniser relationship are useful conceptual tools in examining the representation of the female voice silenced by patriarchal practices in pioneer men's African literary work. The tools are used in critiquing African female authors writing to voice themselves or women through their female characters and move them from the margins to the centre as fictional or textualised women of Africa. Through these women characters, African women writers centralise and project their own voices against the characteristic silencing of women within African patriarchal cultural contexts. Although Nnaemeka (1997) tries to distinguish between African women's silence from oppression (lack of agency) and silence by choice (exercise of agency), there is no doubt that men silenced women and continue to do so today (see Bruey *et al*. 2021; Uchendu and Edeagu, eds. 2021). Women in Africa have also responded with strategies not dissimilar to the men's strategies against a more powerful colonial opponent.

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effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence…' (1994, p.8).

[55] This is intended to instil fear, compliance and reprisal as seen in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (TFA).

[56] This is a 'form of talk' as suggested by Ashcroft (2001).

African diaspora women in the United Kingdom do not experience Africa patriarchal practices in the way their counterparts in the continent do; instead, they experience intersections of racism, sexism, classism and with limited or in some cases no impact from African patriarchy.[57] Consequently, their writing contributes to the resistance against and challenge of African patriarchal practices operational in Africa. Colonial and African patriarchal domination are like two sides of a coin – both are constructed as representing natural superiority to the 'Othered'; each centre controls and employs violence and is resisted.

African Patriarchy: Nature or Nurture

This study departs from the usual approach of framing patriarchy solely as the domination of women as a group by men as a group. Firstly, it contextualises Africa's post-independent patriarchal state, the historical evolution of patriarchy in Africa, and the United Kingdom's patriarchal systems which were imposed on colonised African peoples. This approach assists in understanding whether the origins of British colonial patriarchy (imposed on Africans) which African men inherited, and African indigenous patriarchy were natural or nurtured. Secondly, the section investigates the process of patriarchal constructions in action in the United Kingdom, which contributes to the question of nature and nurture regarding patriarchal practices. Thirdly, it discusses the child-marriage as a form of patriarchal control over girl-children in some African countries today. The working definition of patriarchy relevant for the study is already discussed in Chapter 1.

In Nigeria, the assumption of the 'natural' superiority of males continues to persist; at times it is either emphatically verbalised or couched in gendered euphemisms of the expectations of each sex.[58] Throughout this study, not a single country in Africa is identified where men do not control women. Bruey *et. al.* (2021), and Egodi Uchendu and Ngozi Edeagu eds. (2021), both multidisciplinary works, focus on the negotiation of patriarchy and gender in Africa. Colonial education and job opportunities in urban areas gave boys/men more advantages over women, who

[57] This is discussed in chapter 5.

[58] I grew up in an Igbo patriarchal society where male children come at a premium. It was my migration, as a young woman, to the United Kingdom that presented a different social construct where the overvaluing of male children was absent.

in the post-colonial era have more locations of subjugation than when women and men were illiterate residing in the rural settings (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993). Post-independence, African men became the undisputed inheritors of colonial structures of domination and opportunities (Maraire, 1996, p. 9). Maraire (1996) gives a woman's perspective on the social mobility of village men in post-independent Zimbabwe where indigenous and colonial patriarchal cultures favoured such mobility.[59] Whereas pioneer men writers show young men heading to the cities to make their way in life,[60] pioneer women writers show women joining the men in the cities where the latter become the white man's slaves (Emecheta, 1979). Clearly, colonial, and indigenous patriarchal apparatus programmed men to be the elites of the newly independent African countries (Fanon, 2001, p. 30). Tamale (1999) identifies how the colonial training system was "a class of elite young men who would inherit entrenched social and political power over the decades" (p. 13). After independence, the previously subjugated African men became free and in charge as the new leaders, who had neither the intention nor the capacity to dominate the white man (Tikumah, 2023; Fanon, 1967).

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) raises the issue of Africa's "elite group exploiting its own country" as "collaborators in oppression" with its "industrialised partners" (p. 25). The reality is that almost all post-independent African countries, including Nigeria, have been ruled by men in much the same way.[61] There is no doubt that colonisation disadvantaged women; African men who monopolised power are responsible for African nations' disadvantaged position in so far as they refuse to share power with women for collaborative working or to create a fair society. Whereas women on the continent fought physical wars of independence with men, post-independence, their conditions did not change; since they were expected to return, or were ordered back to their pre-war domesticity, more disadvantaged (O'Gorman, 2011; Tanya Lyons, 2002). This shows lack of empathy and self-centeredness from men about women's position. Perhaps African men's colonial subjugations by white men and women

[59] Women who "performed gendered assigned roles did not emerge as big 'businesswomen and cabinet ministers' because of entrenched biases which persist today. Women mostly stayed behind in the homesteads.

[60] Pioneer male fiction has a gamut of male characters leaving the village to the cities or for education as live pathways to success. See more details at chapter 7.

[61] The patriarchal domination of women continues in fictional works of women, challenge the status quo seen in women's lived experiences in their writing. At national level women continue to lag men, for instance, as heads of countries, cabinet ministers, and at local levels.

have left the former traumatised,[62] afraid to lose power again and as Ogundipe-Leslie suggests, with "hardened attitudes of male superiority and female exclusion" (p. 109). White women have bypassed this stage with their men, through their actions.

Western women pioneer historians and scholars such as Lerner (1986) and Miles (2001 [1988]) reclaim what they view as buried voices and stories of western women 'her-story', hidden in men's recorded accounts or men's stories, 'his-tory'. [63] The term 'her-story' is used by Robin Morgan (1984) to refer to western women who, as opposed to relying on 'his-story' passed down by their men, reclaim and tell their stories (see also Annette Kolodny's (1975) use of 'her-story')[64] Western women have traced the history of patriarchal oppression and concluded that this historical event is not natural. Lerner (1993) highlights white women's journey over the millennia to reach sufficient collective consciousness of their patriarchal victimisations, subsequently expressed as feminism. Lerner (1986) claims that western women had been under patriarchal domination (unevenly) for about 3500 years by the start of the feminist movement in the 1830s. This finding collaborates the prior accounts of men like Johann J. Bachofen (1861) and Lewis Morgan (1871), that the west started out with matriarchal systems which were later replaced by patriarchy as the societal system and modes of production began to change. Studies of the history of patriarchy in Africa still has a way to go. Pioneer African historians are reliant on western and Islamic historical records about Africa. Diop' (1989) is among pioneer African men historians who have researched African matriarchy and patriarchy, to project men's colonially silenced voice(s).[65] In his seminal book Diop (1989) discusses the theories around matriarchal reign from the works of Bachofen (1861),

[62] Some Africa countries are ruled by second and third generation post-colonisation men leaders; so, the impact of transmitted trauma exists. Trauma transition can have traces in some members of the subsequent generations. For the perspectives on transgenerational traumas see; Kizilhan, Jan Ilhan, Noll-Hussong, Michael and Wenzel, Thomas (2022) 'Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma across Three Generations of Alevi Kurds', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (IJERPH), 19 (81)*, no. page; Tufan, ipek. and Bayraktar, Faith (2020) 'The Predictors of Time Perspectives: A Comparative Study from Cyprus. *Nesne*, 8 (18), pp. 374-389; Johns, Aviva, N, Brown, Laura, S, Cromer, Lisa DeMarni (2022) 'Examining intergenerational transmission of Holocaust trauma as it relates to Jewish Identity, Communication type, and Mental Well-being', *Journal of Traumatic Stress,* 35(5) pp. 1497-1507.

[63] Lerner's work traces western women's oppression even before Greece and Roman civilisation, referred to by the west as 'antiquity' connoting very ancient times.

[64] Kolodny's (1975, pp. 3-9) the chapter on "Unearthing Herstory" discusses, amongst others, the feminisation of American landscape, its domination and plundering by the pioneer Euro-Americans explorers, settlers and writers. See Kolodny (1996) revisiting of the above from 'his-tory'.

[65] See also Diop (1955/1974). Pioneer men historians are in the same position as men literary writers.

L. Morgan (1871) and Friedrich Engels (1884, see Engels, 2020) and challenges the universalisation of the white European-based knowledge on matriarchy and patriarchy from Bachofen and Morgan.[66] Significantly, Diop notes the language communicating the superiority of patriarchy over matriarchy when Bachofen and Morgan discuss their perspectives on the rise of patriarchy and the demise of matriarchy in western civilisation. Patriarchy is linked to, and conceived as, masculine imperialism designed to totally subjugate white women.

Diop's account on matriarchy and patriarchy, albeit African-centred in perspective is nonetheless essentially from a patriarchal perspective, an African man's story, his-tory. The issue of African men, from a privileged patriarchal position, representing, speaking of/about and for women arises too. Using a zoning model (Southern cradle, includes Africa), Northern cradle (the western world) and a Zone of Confluence (Western Asia), Diop offers an Afrocentric perspective that Africa has always been matriarchal,[67] while the western world was always patriarchal. Western Asia has both occurrences from "…intermixes of influences and of peoples coming from both sides" (p. 84). Immediately, the occurrence of patriarchy or matriarchy among neighbouring peoples attests that neither is natural. Diop (p. 62) asserts that "African matriarchy existed on a continent-wide scale" in ancient times and currently in parts of Africa. He names some societies such as matrilineal empires of ancient Ghana and Mali, specific African peoples such as the Ashanti of Ghana, Tswana in Bechuanaland, Bantu people of Central Africa (1989, pp. 62-63). As a child, I directly witnessed an Igbo matrilineal family unit which was very strange to observe the control which the children's maternal uncle had when he visited.[68] Indeed, Steady (1981, p. 2) notes that in Africa "matrilineal societies exist in significant numbers". Angela Saini's *The Patriarchs: How Men Came to Rule* (2023, p. xii) is an interesting study by an Asian British woman, who provides a Map of Matriliny that shows

[66] Diop criticises Bachofen for showing no scientific evidence for his conclusions and for relying on the mythology from the Greek *Oresteia of Aeschylus* as "confirming the universality and precedence of matriarchy" (Diop, 1989, pp. 4-8, 12). While Diop concedes Morgan's observations on matriarchy based on the study of the Iroquois Indians group in America, he nonetheless challenges Bachofen and Morgan's conclusions and universalisation from the traces of matriarchy found in European classic antiquity literature and the conclusion from a specific Indigenous American group.

[67] Matriarchy "existed generally in Africa, in the ancient times, as well as the present day…" (Diop, p. 63).

[68] The children were at their best behaviour when this uncle visited. With authority he scolded the children or disciplined but also gave gifts; the parents did not intervene. Matrilineality is implied in *Anowa* (p. 75) when Anowa's father Osam intimates that Anowa's mother, maternal brother and uncles have the responsible for finding Anowa a good husband, while Osam's nieces are his.

examples of matriliny in Africa. The map seems to support Diop's claim only as far as traces of matriliny in Africa, but not necessarily matriarchy. Saini also presents matriliny within Indigenous American societies, parts of the Pacific islands and Asia. But there is none in Europe, which reinforces Diop's key criticism that Bachofen (merely) goes to ancient mythology to find traces of matriarchy amongst European peoples.

Diop (1989, p. 113) traces structures that favour decent and heritage through the birth father to Islam and Christian proselytisation and European's occupation of Africa.[69] This study shows how parts of Africa which were not Islamised had deep-rooted patriarchal structures before or at the start of European colonisation; this is evidenced in *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongquase the Liberato*r (1935, [2017]) henceforth (*Nongquase*) and *TFA*. So, it is erroneous to claim that external influences introduced patriarchy to African societies. Diop claims that in Africa:

> Matriarchy is not an absolute and cynical triumph of woman over man: it is a harmonious dualism, an association accepted by both sexes, the better to build a sedentary society where each and every one could fully develop by following the activity best suited to his physiological nature. A matriarchal regime, far from being imposed on man by circumstances independent of his will, is accepted and defended by him (Diop, p. 108).

Diop, like pioneer men writers, is blind to the structural inequality and absence of harmony if the female sex is overburdened to benefit the male sex.[70] Thus, Diop unwittingly confirms that in matriarchal African societies, gendered performative roles (Butler, 2006) inequitably burdened women as seen in contemporary women's writing. Besides, if matriarchy is egalitarian and men choose to comply rather than impose, then women are not in control or power, unlike patriarchy.

A lack of understanding of the woman's perspective is shown when Diop accepts that the gendered role divisions are skewed against women due to external

[69] Diop points to "religions of Islam and Christianity and the secular presence of Europe in Africa."
[70] Pioneer African men writers, speaking from their privileged positions also assumed that women were happy with their situation as Eustace Palmer (1983) challenged this.

changes. He states: “It is in fact unthinkable, for example, that an African should share a feminine task with his wife such as cooking or washing clothes or rearing children…” (p. 115). Women had the responsibility to provide for up to sixty percent of the food for the families, bear and nurse children while men’s limited roles were further diminished.[71] In effect, men expected the status quo to remain because women were “very happy. Moreover, this situation has been unchanged since ancient times” (Diop, 1989, p. 115). It is unacceptable to expect women to be happy because oppressive practices are embedded culturally. This highlights the need to centralise multiple voices and locations instead of being spoken for by the dominant party (Spivak, 1988).

African women scholars who proffer matriarchy want to present egalitarian images of men and women working equally alongside each other but this is not the case. Amadiume (2015, p. 189) wants structures which have ingrained the subjugation of women to be designated matriarchal due to having elements of matrilineal practices[72]; this amounts to using mythology like Bachofen. Amadiume argues that in Igbo culture, “*nkpuke*” (a female/ mother matricentric unit) represents the closest unit which every child belongs. Similarly, the female construct of “*umunne*” (children of mother/ children of the same mother) denotes the closest human bond in Igbo culture. In other words, female constructs within the culture destabilise the assumption of men’s superiority ideology and centrality. Similar to “*nkpuke* and *umunne*” Igbo female constructs of superiority include the paradoxical “*nneka*” (mother is supreme) adopted in Achebe’s *TFA*’s masculine society. This study argues that these female constructs do not equate to matriarchy or mother right in the sense of father/male rights or power; nonetheless, they evidence how women were not as inept as portrayed in early works of Igbo men writers (Achebe, Ekwensi and Amadi).

Other African scholars have mostly restricted their studies to their specific societies, with conflicting or incomplete accounts concerning the nature of patriarchy. For instance, Onaiwu Ogbomo (1997) limits his study to the Owan people of the mid-

[71] Diop (1989, p. 115) admits that men’s roles which covered tasks requiring “risks, power, force and endurance” diminished as societies became more stable (p.115) but condones men doing less.
[72] Amadiume, similar to pioneer men writers like Achebe, Elechi, Ekwensi belongs to an Igbo society. where women lived/live within oppressive structures; however, some women can subvert these and thrive. Amadiume presents no evidence of ‘mother rule’, mother right in Nnobi.

western Nigeria who, he claims, practiced egalitarian society, matrilineality, matrilocality, goddess worship and women controlling the land around the fourteenth century, making the society matriarchal. However, from the sixteenth century, settlers from Benin and Yoruba areas began introducing patriarchy while increased interethnic wars started diminishing women's power including over land, from the eighteenth century. Then, the British colonisers institutionalised male control through the appointments of male chiefs, where previously there were none.[73] Amadiume (2015), like Diop, contends that in her native Igbo community, Nnobi, in southeast Nigeria, men and women lived a complimentary existence, since each sex is valued for the role which they performed under their egalitarianism system until the colonial intrusion. Her analysis is based on the dual-sex socio-political systems of Nnobi which has other social constructs such as the fluidity of women performing male gendered roles, such as 'female - husbands' (women who 'marry' women) as mentioned earlier. There is an element of truth that women, especially as mothers, were valued and the complementary lives of the sexes, but just like other Igbo patriarchal societies, men were still dominant. Miles (2001) and Saini (2023) suggest that previously, the women's biological function, including the capacity to give birth to new members of society resulted in the mystery surrounding women and the commonality of female goddess worship, before men downgraded these functions as signs of weakness.

Another view of patriarchy in Africa is put forward by Oduyoye (1995) who argues that her Akan culture was not patriarchal but matrilineal.[74] Oduyoye discussing the complimentary existence of life between men and women, and their roles in decision making in her Akan society notes that "in the ruling hierarchy" (p.70), the Queen Mother's right is higher than the King's. She contrasts her premarital life experiences with her married experiences into "the patriarchal-patrilineal Yoruba of western Nigeria, [where] a wife is a member of the workforce in her "husband's' house," but not one of the decision-makers" (pp 7-8). Oduyoye and Amadiume do not provide evidence to show areas where women are structurally in power and control over men in matrilineal Akan/Ghana or Igbo/Nigerian society.

[73] Ogbomo's account does not covers pre 14th century.

[74] Oduyoye refers to her maternal grandfather as coming from Brong, a group "that seems to have escaped all patriarchal influences" (p.6) and she speaks of her traumatic experience encountering Yoruba patriarchy, through marriage.

Although Oduyoye speaks of the Queen Mother as senior to the King, one notes that this does not equate to power as the Akan were not a matriarchy society where political and social powers resided with women. It is a matrilineal society, which operates patriarchally because men marry women in Akan society and not the other way round.

While Davies and Anne Adams Graves' (1986; 1990) tackle African women's marginalisation by men showing how the subjugation of women is ingrained within patriarchal African societies, African women's fiction and critical work address this matter in various ways. For example, Modupe Mary Kolawole (1997) and Nfah-Abbenyi and Juliana Makuchi (1997) underline the marginalisation and voicing of women. Stratton (1994) observes that there are recurring themes of silencing, marginalisation and resistance to the oppression in African women's writing (p.15). This means a recognition of women's subordination to men and the addressing of patriarchal domination: see also the themes in Ogunyemi and Alan (2009).

Contextualising African Women's Writing Resistance and Quest for Equality with Men

The legacies of the Atlantic slave trade period remain relevant to the identities of African women whether in Africa or other parts of the world as that event shaped the narratives and perspective of African women as people controlled by the dominant white narratives. While the turbulence of that period remains part of African women's collective memory and reality, it solidifies white women's collective power, therefore, leaving them at the apex of the feminist hierarchy and conversely, African women as black women at the bottom. Feminism sought equality with white men in all areas in which the women considered that men instituted inequalities. Adopting this historical approach to feminism provides the foundation for understanding the prevalent abhorrence of the word 'feminism' amongst many African women and men. Some women who reject feminism can accept it if it is qualified with African experiences.

Crenshaw's (1989, p. 39) concept of intersectionality highlights "the multidimensionality of Black women's experiences [which] single-axis framework in antidiscrimination law…feminist theory and antiracist politics" distort by the ignorance

that racism and sexism interact or that "the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism…" (p. 140). Although 'intersectionality' has broadened the acceptance of diverse locations of women's oppression beyond the white feminist origin, African women, like other black women, continue to be impacted by racism which benefit white women including the feminists. Magona (1998) and Hamad (2021) highlight the low racialised hierarchical standing of African men and women against white or coloured people. Contemporary African-descended women scholars like Davis, Hills, and hooks insist that apart from race, 'class' is a location of oppression for black women.

White women with power will not voluntarily relinquish racist power or privileges. Apart from the appropriation of black women experiences, this power can also manifest in white feminists' obsession with categorisation and reduction of other women's experiences to Eurocentric paradigms which they can understand, and control (feminine orientalism). According to hooks (2015a, p. 5), white feminists, who consider themselves to be the brain and the theoreticians of feminism (as scholar/academic feminists), while black women's lived experiences provide them with practices/case studies to write about, have produced a lot of racist literature. Consequently, white women's appropriation of black women's knowledge and experience is mostly motivated by "careerism" (p.55),[75] that is, academic advancement. Mohanty (1991 [1984], pp. 51-53)[76] uses 'knowledge/scholarship colonisation' to describe white feminists' appropriations while Zakaria (2022) points to the authoritative/experts-status accorded to such white women. Non-black women, by which I mean Women of Other Skin Shades WOSS,[77] and white women themselves, have recently confronted the reality of white women's continuous benefit

[75] White women's writing on Third world women involves the "appropriation and codification of "scholarship" and "knowledge "about women in the third world" (Mohanty, 1991, p. 50). What then follows are "the production, publication and distribution, and consumption of information and idea" about third world women" (p. 55) which make the women "objects" (p. 72). Mohanty equates the purpose and ideological underpinning of white women's appropriation to those of white men under colonisation and orientalism – objectify the 'Other', then speak of/write about/of/for the object/Other.

[76] Mohanty, 1991, pp. 51-55.

[77] The term 'non-white women' centralises white women as the 'norm'. Women of 'colour' or Women of other skin shades WOSS who consider themselves not Africa/African-descended, for instance, Asian, Latinos, mixed or other heritages whose skin shades may appear white, but they neither regard themselves as white Europeans nor do the latter regard them as such. Women who reside in Australia, United States, United Kingdom are voicing against the racist privileging of white women in those countries. The WOSS argue that white feminists perform the roles of 'feminist saviours' within racial structural domination and then textually appropriated WOSS' practical experiences of domination and resistance.

from structural power and privileges (Rafia Zakaria, 2022; Koa Beck, 2022; Ruby Hamad, 2021; Robin DiAngelo, 2019). Hamad and Zakaira textualised their lived experiences of confronting white racist and feminist dominations. Only some WOSS seem to be coming to terms with this reality, which is old news to Black women.

Limited unambiguous links were made between the rise of feminism and the impending freedom for the enslaved African/African-descended women. White women were 'happy' to endure white patriarchal oppression as their 'bargain', so long as enslaved African women were at white women's disposal as the animate chattel to own, use, and sell for profit. Besides, white women did not want a scenario where the enslaved women were freed while their previous mistresses remained chattel to their husbands. No link is made to show that second wave feminism arose when privileged white women revolted against white patriarchal constructions which had re-confined them at home as housewives like their grandmothers, but without enslaved African women to own, use and sell. According to Betty Friedan (1963), "By 1962 the plight of the trapped American housewife had become a national parlour game" (p. 23). The trap she refers to is the women's ability to have free time with their children (Friedan, pp. 13, 15). Privileged women's psychological agony is the resentment of patriarchy which imposed men's vision of white 'motherhood' amidst material comfort but without the patriarchal bargain or rewards which their foremothers enjoyed – no enslaved African women to own, use for shopping, running their homes and so on or other needs (Stephanie Jones-Rogers, 2019).[78]

Feminism emerged within the context where oppressed white women, chattels of their husbands, as the men's mistresses or female relatives, oppressed African women and men (chattel of white women's husbands). However, Jones-Rogers's (2019) historical evidence-based research shows that some white women, while children, were deed-gifted enslaved Africans as Christmas, birthday presents; or wedding gifts or inheritances which white courts upheld. Some women owned and 'managed' enslaved Africans/African-descended people as masters (female-males).[79] Jones-Rogers portrays contrary information to the wealthy white male-

[78] 1960s white housewives were provided with labour saving devices at home according to Friedan (1963). It showed that owning an enslaved African was no longer possible.
[79] By 1804 "most of the northern states abolished slavery or started the process to abolish" ("Slavery in America" in History.com, updated 11 August 2023; Original 12 November 2009.

centred slavery-history which ignored white women's roles. The poor white class usually excluded in slavery history were benefactors from racial prejudice (Trevon Logan, 2019).[80] Dadzie (2020) provides the rare slavery narratives which re-imagined the often faceless 'slave women' as people from Africa like me and my contemporaries. Jones-Rogers and Godwin's work attests to the power of white women, feminist or not, over the enslaved, which goes beyond previous narratives. White women watched as their husbands, sons, and male coteries habitually raped and brutalised the enslaved females' bodies (and to a far lesser extent male bodies too). White women joined in the sadistic flogging of naked enslaved women/men (hooks, 2014 [1981], Davis, 1983). As 'masters', these women executed slave-management strategies of which bodily brutalisation and sales of babies and parents were used to instil fear, compliance, and deterrence to resistance. White women/men's slave-owner's power characterises Foucault's concept of power (1978, pp. 135-136, 144, 145). Foucault argues that monarchs exercise sovereign total power over their subjects; bio-power represents regulatory power over a population, as a 'social body'. According to Foucault (1995), individuals, by choice, can exercise disciplinary power over their bodies to control, manipulate and achieve the desired mastery "different from slavery [situation] because they were not based on relationship of appropriation of bodies" (p. 137). Enslaved African women's bodies were appropriated and brutalised as white men/women exercised disciplinary power to secure docility and maximise profits.[81] The point is that Amaduime's 'female husbands' discussed earlier and Jones-Rogers' 'female slave masters' behave as men hence the instability in naturalising men's behaviour noted while defining patriarchy for the study (see Chapter 1).

Apart from fulfilling their misogynist and sadistic sexual perversions, raping, or flogging naked women and men equates to white women/men exercising disciplinary sexualised power, to dominate and control the enslaved as a strategy of

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https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery. Although the process was gradual and varied and freed slaves still very significantly exploited, and saleable to the south if kidnapped.

[80] Godwin (2021, p. 1082) "challenges the archetypical accounts of sex, race, and slavery that claim white women played no meaningful role in the enterprise of slavery beyond passively managing antebellum households". The poor white class witnessed the oppression of slaves including lynching and participated where possible.

[81] Foucault (1995) states that "The classic age discovered the body as object and target of power" (p. 136). The power to self-disciple to achieve elegance, mastery such as an athlete, a soldier. A negative form of that power applied to enslaved women.

manipulating and compelling their compliance. Dadzie (2020) argues that the authority to denigrate enslaved African female bodies resulted in the academic misogynist and stereotype representation of these women as sexually "compliant – erotic mistresses or brazen hussies who pandered willingly to massah's sexual whims, so hopelessly promiscuous…." (p.7). When the enslaved women were not exterminated under their oppressions as the indigenous Americans were, they were derogatorily labelled as 'strong black women', meaning: 'unwomanly', strong field workers as men (Davis, 1983; hooks, 2014; 'unfeeling', accustomed to dealing with pain and adversities (Olufemi, 2020).

The special feminisation of power is seen in white women's appropriation of the wombs, babies, and lactating breasts of enslaved mothers whose babies were sold, dead or left without their milk. The breasts fed the white infants of the master/mistress' or other white infants as objects rented out (Jones-Rogers, 2019). White women's sense of superiority over African/African-descended women directly links to the enslavement of the latter which remained especially in the southern United States in 1848.[82] White women pioneers did not consider the women they oppressed, or, who served them as people, deserving equality with them and the white men; African users of the word 'feminism' should remember this. As oppressors, white women passed on their inherited sense of power and entitlement to their descendants, including the feminists. In contrast, the oppressed passed on legacies of resistance, bodily and psychological wounds, or scars. hooks (2015a) observes that "White women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as exploiters and oppressors of black people" (p. 16).

Subsequent generations of white women galvanised second wave feminism in the twentieth century (1960s) before women of colour, including Africans, began to feature in feminism discourse in any significant way (1980s). The fourth wave (2000s) renewed interest in feminism amongst younger generation African women interested in women rights.[83] hooks's writing has contributed to 'de-whitening' feminism through her visioning of feminism in generic terms as the: "struggle to end

[82] Women who were free ex-slaves in northern U.S. could easily be kidnapped and sold to southern U.S. as slave. In this sense they were still not free; they had mostly very low status serving white women and their families.

[83] The MeToo Movement, the fourth wave, generated internet, and social medial awareness that gender issues affect women across cultures even Hollywood's powerful women, and this renewed interest in feminism.

sexist oppressions" (2015a p. 26) or "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (2015b, pp. xii, 1.); this is an academic exercise because white women's structural power remains intact. Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014) where she uses her personal experiences as a born and bred Nigerian African and African diaspora woman in the U.S. to show instances of gender inequalities, she faced in both settings has been pivotal in influencing younger African women.[84]

Adichie, in effect, qualifies her feminism and demonstrates how feminist issues are live and practical to her as an African woman in ways not conceivable if she was white. Younger African women face similar experiences in these settings, hence, Adichie influences their perception of feminism in a new light, without clearly acknowledging feminism as a white racist concept. Adichie, thus, fails to employ Toni Morrison's (2019) concept of "rememory as in recollecting and remembering" to acknowledge white women's infliction of bodily wounds on African women, children and men. The negative or suspicious views of feminism are prevalent in Africa due to these visible "body marks of the past" (Kovács, 2021).[85]

The Marriage Trap and Women in the United States, United Kingdom, and African Countries

In the Declaration of Sentiments at the Seneca Fall Convention (1848), white women list of man-made inequalities included patriarchal subjugations that denied married women independent legal personhood. Therefore, subsuming them into their husbands' legal personalities (as possessions too like the women in *TFA*) and thus denying them the right to vote, own property, enter a contract, sue, or be sued, or own the wages they earn and so on. The Declaration shows double moral standards for men and women; for instance, the divorce law gave power to the men including

[84] The younger Afropolitan generation exhibits less ambivalence towards taking up an explicitly feminist cause. So, Adichie's call, "We all should be feminist", illustrates the attitudes of a new generation of feminists in and for Africa. See Paula Assubuji *et.al*. (2021) 'Editorial: African Feminisms Across Generations', *Perspectives*, 1(2021), pp. 4-6.

[85] Body wound-marks remain in the form of remembered traumas, histories, inequalities and disadvantages black women face, which Morrison revisits in her work through: "Rememory as in recollecting and remembering as in reassembling the members of the body, the family, the population of the past" (Morrison, 2019). Kovács (2021) observes that Morrison's "fictional narratives focused specifically on how African American women experience their blackness, how they remember slavery and its legacies, racism, and colourism" (p.161).

the custody of children like in patriarchal Africa. Additionally, men designed inferior education for women/girls, as white colonisers did in Africa and copied initially by African men upon political independence.

The Declaration of Sentiments clearly showed marriage as inimical to women's wellbeing given the adverse reversals of married women's legal and other status; yet patriarchal expectations demanded that women be married. In the United States, United Kingdom, and African patriarchal societies men set the rules of marriages. Davies (1994) asserts that marriage is a key normative femininity of African womanhood and explores this view in the textual analysis of Aidoo's *Anowa.*[86] In the United States, United Kingdom, and African contexts, 'never married women' transgress a key norm of patriarchy which is marriage and are sanctioned in diverse ways including through vilification and disrespect from their societies. Even women who are not under direct male authority, whether as never married or widowed, can still be vilified or targeted for ill-treatment. Unmarried men, however, were not targeted or vilified as women were. According to Rowbotham (1976 [1973]), women's weakened position was due to such a woman lacking male protection in the form of a husband in Britain: "A woman without a man was in a weaker position especially if she had a young child or was old" (p. 4). If the woman was young, she became prey to male vilifications, which could include the 'old spinster' taunts and society's disrespect for transgressing the expectation of marriage and submission to men's authority. If the woman was old, she could be an easy prey to the accusation of witchcraft, which had fatal consequences for some innocently accused old women. McGain (2008) confirms Rowbotham's assertion when he states that in Britain, 'never married women' and widows without male protection (husbands), faced the dilemma of facing vilification or marriage. However, unlike in Africa, the 'vilification and disrespect' constructed around 'never married women' is no longer the case in the United States or United Kingdom, and it exemplifies that patriarchy can be deconstructed, even if it is piecemeal. A minority of African women can now either choose to be unmarried for religious purposes or to have intimate relationships with men without marriage. While this makes them mistresses to men, a derogatory status in many African cultures, it also shows the gradual deconstruction process of

[86] See Chapters 1 and 4.

African patriarchal constructions. Within this study, the practice of vilifying 'never married' women can be identified in texts set in Africa such as in *Ogadinma*.

Adichie (2014) states that the expectations on her as an Igbo and a Nigerian are: "Because I am female, I'm expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important" (p. 28-29). Whereas today white girls/women are even more confident of their existence as independent persons, in Africa, some girls continue to be chattelised by their fathers as seen in texts[87] – such harmful practice to girls is not natural. Adichie (2014) also details examples of the pressures put on young women currently "from family, from friends, even from work – to get married…." (p.30).

African Women's Positions and Choices

African women could not have meaningfully featured in feminist discourses given the continent's turbulence mostly following independence. While African persons and their descendants in the United States all became officially free in December 1865, colonisation lasted from the 1880s to the 1960s, the "bumper" decade "for decolonisation on the African continent" with a wave of political independence (Jeyifo, 2004, p. 3). About thirty-five European-created African countries gained political independence, and the remaining gained independence in the 1970s to 1980s from Britain. Ghana and Egypt were independent in 1957 and 1922 respectively while the Ethiopians were not colonised. So, Africans as black people became free after centuries of subjugation by the white man and woman.

White men headed the oppressive structures with white women benefiting as 'senior women'/ 'notional men' of patriarchy and abused enslaved Africans. As discussed earlier, some women in the southern United States abused independently as female masters. Kandiyoti (1988) suggests that 'senior women' abhor relinquishing patriarchal power or structural changes which threaten their turn to exercise power. The abolition of slave trade threatened white women's established control over enslaved women/girls and the existing structures. In Africa, with European colonialism and imperialism grinding towards its end in the 1960s came

[87] See *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, *Hailstones in Zamfara* and *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives.*

the emergence of educated African women with global awareness, including contact with African American women in the 1980s. It is reported that African American/black women who joined the women rights movement in the nineteenth century faced white women's sex versus race 'separatism', with their race 'separated'.[88] Brown (1996) points out how this "has meant that the concepts, perspectives, methods, and pedagogies of women's history and women's studies have been developed without consideration of the experiences of black women…" (p. 453). As Scot (1996) highlights, "Not everyone accepted Sojourner Truth's argument in 1851 that she, too, was a woman - having borne and nursed thirteen children" (p. 5). Meanwhile, white feminists wanted to universalise themselves as representatives of 'women' which black and other women rejected over time, on the grounds of the 'differences' to women's lives, race, history/past and women's oppressions (hooks, 2015a; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Davis, 1983; Cowman and Jackson, 2003; Hennessy, 2003). Bhavnani and Coulson (2003) concur that white women cannot speak for all women just as white men cannot speak for all humans, hence, "Different women raised their voices, they insisted on the particular of their experiences and aspirations from positions which combined woman with 'race', class, coloniality, sexuality, disability, age, and other differences in a great variety of ways." (p.74)

The result of 'localising women's rights brought about variants and alternatives to feminism. Of relevance is Walker (1983), whose concept of 'womanism' is defined as,

> A black feminist, a feminist of colour….
>
> A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexual. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a

[88] According to Brown (1996), "When southern black women, denied the right to register to vote, sought help from the National Woman's Party, these white feminists rejected their petitions, arguing that this was a race concern and not a women's concern. Were they not, after all, being denied the vote not because of their sex but because of their race" (p. 454).

> separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist...Loves herself. Regardless." (Walker, 2000 [1983], pp. xi-xii).

Approached from cultural roots traced to Africa, universal in outlook, and inclusive of men and the community, Womanism centralises the experiences and needs of African American/black women. It recognises the intersections in women's struggles, including sexualities for non-heterosexual women (Raiam Prokhovnik, 2001, p.168). Hudson-Weems' (1994) Africana Womanism centralises women of African descent, has similar underpinning ethos as Walker's but not as a feminism variant, rejects feminism and lesbianism.

Most African women writers qualify the term 'feminism' with African perspectives thereby distinguishing their usage from white feminism. This signals the inadequacy or rejection of white 'feminism'; but perhaps it is an acceptance of feminism's broad emancipatory philosophy in the absence of a suitable indigenous term (Sotunsa, 2009). Kolawole (2002) views the linking of historical and cultural contexts as crucial in tackling gender equality in Africa, while the failure to do so "accounts for the misconception about the relevance of feminism in many Black African societies, including the rejection of feminism by some African scholars" (p. 92). Similarly, Steady (1981, 2005) points to the complex nature and links between African women's needs and oppressions, so economic, socio-cultural, national development, racist legacies interweave, not just sexism. Johnson-Odim (1991, p. 320) refers to white feminists' sole focus on gender oppression as a "single leg" approach; this is inadequate for most African women. Boyce Davies (1997) observes that feminism "often has to be qualified when used by most African or Third World women" (in Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, p.11). African women writers and critics like Nwapa, Aidoo, Dangarembga, Ogunyemi, Ogundipe-Leslie, and Emecheta reject white feminism (Stratton, 1994, p. 13; Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, pp. 7,12).

Emecheta, responding to white feminists' pressure to declare herself a feminist, states:

> Being a woman, and African born, I see things through an African woman's eyes…I chronicle the little happenings in the lives of the African women I know. I did not know that by doing so I was going to be called a feminist. But if I am now a feminist then I am an African feminist with a small 'f' (Buchi Emecheta, 1989, p. 178 quoted by Sail (2019, p. 32).

While Emecheta uses a small 'f' to 'separate' herself from white feminism, Adichie (2014) qualifies her feminism with her African experiences.[89]

Alternatives to White Feminism

Acholonu's (1995a) 'motherism' rejects feminism due to the role of white women in black suffering; additionally, she also rejects womanism due to its inclusion of lesbianism. She proposes 'motherism' as an Afrocentric alternative that is grounded in African cultural interests in community wellness and collaborative approach with men. Acholonu claims it is humanist, and it incorporates harmony with nature. Motherism centres Africa as the mother of humanity, and motherhood, Acholonu claims, includes men as mothers. Clearly, 'men' as 'mothers' is an unrealistic expectation within African patriarchy. Besides, the projection of Africa as the mother of humanity panders to colonial and patriarchal feminising tropes and constructs, which reduces Africa to an inferior object of male battery.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) bypasses using feminism by introducing her own model or paradigm, STIWA meaning Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. STIWANISM centralises women's transformation and inclusion in the process and thus acknowledges the oppression of women by men and colonisation. When Ogunyemi (1985) discusses 'Womanism'[90], she calls it African womanism which makes it a variant of black womanism and feminism (see Walker). Her concept is centred on African women's specific experiences and needs which underpin the philosophical perspective.[91] Ogunyemi contends that sexism, the sole focus of white

[89] Pioneer African women writers were not only subjected to white feminists' pressure to declare themselves feminists, but their work was subjected to western feminist interpretation and labelled feminist (Katherine Frank, 1987; Susan Arndt, 2002).

[90] Ogunyemi's womanism produces African feminists; Walker's produces black feminists/feminists of colour. Ogunyemi (1985) states that she arrived at womanism independent of Walker's concept.

[91] Ogunyemi's definition has assisted me in shaping my understanding of the womanist philosophy as the: "Recognition of the impact of racism, neocolonialism, nationalism, economic instability, and

feminism, is only one aspect of the continuing oppressions which African women experience from white-male headed institutions like globalisation and neo-colonisation. It also includes legacy impacts from previous oppressions such as colonisation and imperialism. Hence, womanists are feminists who seek communal healing, wholeness, and progress for all black people including men in Africa.

Other positions are Steady's African feminism, Nnaemeka' Nego feminism, Opara's Femalism, and Adimora-Ezeigbo's Snail-sense feminism; also see Bruey (2021) "varying strains of African feminist thinking" (p. 5). The variants of feminism depend on the adopted perspectives to issues and solutions to the complex cultural nature of African women's ongoing experiences (socio-political/economic) and oppression (foreign and indigenous). Also, according to Mikell it is recognised that despite decades of political independence in Africa managed by men, many women still face issues around "bread, butter, culture, and power" (1989, pp. 4-8).[92] Ogundipe-Leslie (1985) states that "All women in contemporary Nigeria are under the stress of living in a Third World, neocolonial nation ruled by an indifferent, oppressive, and wasteful black bourgeoise" (p. 503). The statement still applies to Nigeria and most countries in Africa today. Achebe (2018 [1997]) lists the disasters parading "today with impunity through the length and breadth of much of Africa: war, genocide, military and civilian dictatorship, corruption, collapsed economies, poverty and social chaos!" (p. 36). African men have predominantly been the rulers of post-independent Africa and have continued the oppressions of women, yet women are hesitant to collectively raise the issue of accountability, responsibility, and the historical sale of women with men. Emotive language which detracts from the above views is no longer suitable in the twenty-first century. Ogundipe-Leslie (1993, p. 114) asserts that "it is up to women to combat their social disabilities: to fight for their own fundamental and democratic rights, without waiting for the happy day when men will willingly share power and privilege with them – a day that will never come" (p.114). Mikell (1997) comments that it has been proven from the situations in the continent since political independence that African men are not capable of sharing power with women voluntarily. Indeed, Ogundipe-Leslie (1993) underlines that "Not even the

psychological disorientation on black lives, when superimposed on the awareness of sexism that characterizes black women's writing, makes concern about sexism merely one aspect of womanism." (Ogunyemi, 1985, pp. 71-72).

[92] Mikell intimates that African feminism focuses on other issues and is not obsessed with contraception, birth control and the female body as western feminist.

most politically progressive men are completely free from patriarchal attitudes and feelings of male superiority" (pp. 113-114). Africa has very few progressive men, which in effects means that a patriarchal worldview is passed on across generations inside Africa through the socialisation of children (hooks 2015a), indoctrination (Lerner, 1989) gender performativity (Butler, 2006) and patriarchalisation, as identified in the study.

Conclusion

Colonisation and patriarchal domination have been shown to be similar because they are vehicles of oppressions, of women/men and women respectively. Men writing from post-independence African communities occupies the 'Third Space' where they are no longer the colonised and the colonisers are absent (Bhabha, 1994). Prior to this, men's writing was from the perspective of the subalterns, the marginalised and those muted by the centre within the colonial context. Post-colonial theory acknowledges the multiplicity of voices and locations one can speak from unlike the colonial. It challenges the centre and the dominant discourse like the social deconstruction of patriarchy which entails 're-reading' the 'truths' or 'assumptions' about African patriarchy. The post-colonial projection of the muted voices can involve re-reading colonial works, interrogating authoritative views and assumptions, creating counter-narratives, and countering key male-centred ideas and tropes.

The postcolonial voice does not mask its position, rather this position is foregrounded while at the same time it recognises the legitimacy of other positions. Through destabilising the colonial centre-margin dynamic, the centre shifts. So, the colonised becomes the centre, narrator and subject of the narrative or her-story/history and not the margin, narrated and object as in colonial narrative and history. This is the point of intersection between postcolonial theory and African women writing resistance directed at countering African patriarchal narratives as the dominant authoritative master narrative on the position of African women. Yet it is no longer in doubt that the same indigenous masters were subjugated, so, their assumed natural superiority can only be applied selectively to indigenous women inside Africa. This points to the constructed nature of patriarchy under which subjugated men subjugate women. The process of patriarchal re/constructs of white

womanhood for purposes of sexual intercourse/marriage seen in the United Kingdom shows the shifting nature of patriarchy under pressure. Feminism shows a group of privileged but oppressed white women successfully dismantle from 1848-1920 patriarchal constructs caging them. By 1960, a new set of patriarchal constructs caged the granddaughters of the pioneer feminists, which white women fought as Second wave feminism. While being subjugated by their men, white women subjugated African women/men, but African women continue to face multiple forms of oppression and are fighting, dismantling indigenous patriarchal oppression is the most crucial.

Chapter 3

Silenced and Silencing in Pioneer African Men's Writing

Introduction

Fiction and critical works by individual pioneer male African writers demonstrate the effects of the colonial practices of silencing the African male during the colonial period. Colonisation, with its apparent suppression, was a system in which the claimed superiority of a dominant culture resulted in ignoring the Other. It was a system whose main strategy was to misrepresent and casually subjugate African men and, in the process, silenced the men. Silencing occurs in various ways, for instance, when colonialists speak of and for African men, dehumanise, negatively portray, or belittle them. Equally, men are silenced when voiced, but they end up parroting the colonisers' views of African men. Furthermore, the colonisers' casual use of violence or threat of violence physically silenced African men, elicited fear and/or acceptance of colonial violence without retaliation. Fanon (2001) highlights that the use of routine violence against the colonised, was meant to affirm "the supremacy of the white man" (p.33). This aspect of colonial impact on pioneer African men writers and their writing, has received scant examination.

In this chapter, African men's silencing in colonial writing is examined. It is argued that because pioneer African male writers were unable to directly confront their colonial denigrators in their writing, they copied and projected their experiences of colonial dominations on women. Just as colonial canonical work advanced and popularised the selected incapacitating images of African men as lacking in agency, the early work of pioneer African men writers accomplished the same in relation to the images of African women, especial the text which assumed canonical status. The discourse of the silenced African male or his silencing in colonialist fiction explains why the nuanced images of African women as silent has become so bound up in pioneer African male fiction. Nonetheless, debilitating images of silenced African men are etched in the memory, especially in the pages of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and to a lesser extent in Cary's *Mister Johnson*. The chapter is divided into two parts as explained at the Introduction. Part 1 examines African men's silencing in colonial writing while Part 2 analyses the early work of the three male titans of African literature - Achebe's *TFA,* Soyinka's *The Invention*, and Ngũgĩ's

Hermit (British colonised). Additionally, Beti's *Poor* is included to provide the perspective of a French colonised African. These texts all erased, muted, or marginalised the voice(s) of women while protesting colonial silencing of men.

Part 1.

The Silencing of African Men in *Heart of Darkness*: The African Man as a Dog on Two Legs and Three Men as "Scarlet Bodies"

The "Fireman" in Conrad's *Darkness* is 'animalised' and silenced by being denied a voice, while the unnamed "three men in scarlet bodies" are reduced to 'bodies' who spoke in unintelligible, inhuman language so are silenced. Speaking in a language which is not understood is not different from not speaking since the speaker and the listener fail to understand each other; so, this defeats the purpose of speech. The listener may interpret his/her own understanding of the sounds heard and the non-verbal communication seen; but these are not necessarily the speaker's. These African men characters are unnamed, denying them identity and humanity. Conrad not only singles out men for specific instances of colonial silencing, but at a time when 'the colonised' is synonymous with "male", he silences men as a group too (Fanon, 2001; Achebe, 1988). African men pioneer writers countering colonial narratives also consider themselves as Africa's representatives (Achebe, 1997 in Lindfors ed.). The silencing of women tended to be ignored or not noticed, by white or African men. The humiliating portrayal of the silenced black man is first achieved through questioning the humanity of an elite African man, a fireman, a crew member on the steamer boat which is taking the fictional character, Marlow, and others travelling along River Congo on a journey to the interior, the heart of darkness. Conrad (through Marlow) turns his attention to the:

> …savage who was fireman. He was an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me, and, upon on my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge with an evident effort of intrepidity - and he had filed teeth, too, the

> poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hand and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed; and what he knew was this – that should the water in that transparent thing disappear, the evil spirit inside the boiler would get angry through the greatness of his thirst and take a terrible vengeance. So he sweated and fired up and watched the glass fearfully (with an impromptu charm, made of rags, tied to his arm, and a piece of polished bone, as big as a watch, struck flatways through his lower lip (Conrad, 1994, pp. 52-53).

The nameless fireman is anonymised as a person, and this reflects the disregard for African men at the time. At no point are the fireman's thoughts or feelings about his job expressed through him. Rather, the author's character's assumption of superiority over this African fireman is both overtly and loudly proclaimed. There is no subtleness or ambiguity in the derogatory language used; the language of an author who is confident that he will not be challenged as the man is silenced. At its publication in 1899, when colonialisation was still being established and African men brutalised, Africans did not even know of their literary denigration and could not talk back to Conrad. First, reinforcing the enduring colonial imagery, the fireman is referred to as a savage, a common term for the colonised by the coloniser. This savage is improved, but he is still likened to a dog walking on hind legs. Fanon (2001) suggests that the dehumanisation of the colonised are evident from their constant referral in terms of bestiary (p.33), and animalistic allusions. Animal imagery is used to place the pioneer African fireman in his proper place as sub-human, no matter his accomplishment against European standards, which applies to other pioneer male including in literature, or history. Four months of training, representing the impartation of the white man's superior knowledge has transformed the savage into a higher specimen, while ironically denying him the power of speech even if in 'pidgin or broken English', a language he would have been instructed in.

The personal racist insults that litter the physical description of the Fireman pander to the derogation of the Africans' cultural practices as inferior. Conrad notes that the African man has filed teeth, three decorative scars on each cheek and hair which has queer patterns, these no doubt are presented to convey his primitiveness. The so-called "ornamental scars", which are assumed to be decorative, may signify a host of other things within his indigenous society. Facial incisions made in some African cultures can mean different things including markers of identity or belonging to families or clans, marks of honour or achievements within that society. Acholonu, (1995, p. 64) shows a photo of an Igbo woman with facial scarification reserved for men of honour. Typically, what the colonialists do not understand, approve, dictate, or control, they denigrate and belittle. Consequently, the colonised can become ashamed of their own cultures and accept the coloniser's culture which is exported as part of cultural imperialism (Said, 1994).

Regarding the Fireman, the classic colonial image/trope of the idle and lazy African is invoked, and common references employed as part of imperialist discourse. (see Fanon, 2001; Said,1994). This attitude subjugates this African man, who is portrayed as only useful because he has been instructed in the European manner of work; this is the only way he could have been positively and purposefully engaged. Africans are idle and Europeans make them work for the Africans' own good, so is the common colonial claim, even while colonised men, in this case Africans, are worked to death under the supervision of a white man with a loaded gun (Conrad, 1994, p. 24). The centralisation of the colonisers' way of life, law, culture, and thinking is exemplified in the assumption of a singular dominant way of life or reality, the colonial way. The fireman is busy, useful, and hard at work, improving his knowledge under the supervision of the white man instead of wasting his time frivolously "clapping his hand and stamping his feet on the bank [of Congo River, like his people]". The assumption proffered is that either Africans like animals cannot verbalise themselves, or, even if they speak, their African language is so unintelligible or deficient it makes no sense to the narrator, who of course is the judge.

The simplicity of the African man's mind is also belittled such that the working of the steam engine is broken down to rudimentary basics, secured by linking this white man's knowledge to his understanding of African witchcraft. The white author's misconception of the African man is evident in representing the man's "enthrallment"

as his awe of the European knowledge/technology represented by the boiler. The unnaturalness of such a device for the African way of life and the nature of the white inventors introducing this to Africa are enough to create uneasy marvelling too. The danger of one-sided voicing means that the African man is silenced while a white man talks, of, about and over him, making assumptions and insinuations. This results in deriding the African man's belief systems including that evil spirits wreak havoc in human lives and endeavours. The African's superstitious beliefs are ridiculed when the Fireman is shown to believe that an evil spirit resides inside the boiler of the steam engine and is appeased if there is water. Without water, the evil spirit is thirsty, making it vengeful. The Fireman is portrayed as a child for whom a complicated situation is oversimplified to aid his understanding. More importantly, the writer introduces the colonialist's belief that instilling fear is linked to compliance and control of the African man (and the colonised in general). The use of violence is the easiest way of colonial silencing seen in the texts discussed in this Chapter.

The Africa of *Heart of Darkness* does not speak for or of itself, rather a biased European narrator, does the talking. This is reminiscent of how Shakespeare almost silences Caliban in his play, *The Tempest*, which is reversed by Aimé Césaire (2002 [1969]) in *A Tempest*, his postcolonial revision of the play. In Césaire's play, Caliban speaks back to Prospero at every opportunity, including deftly refuting Prospero's claim that the latter has no language. Conrad's Fireman gets no chance to speak at all.

Conrad's description of the Africans encountered also have connotations of racist superiority. "We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there – there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were – No, they were not inhuman." (p. 51). The humanity of Africans is queried for which Achebe never stopped berating Conrad. The assumption of the centrality of European humanity makes the African a 'remote kin' to this centre, as if he is a stunted version of humanity. Further mockery of the Africans' humanity is shown from the descriptions of their communicative language as howling, leaping, spinning, and making lurid faces conjuring animalistic imagery. The most appalling aspect of the author's representation is the claim he is hearing or seeing 'clapping hand' and 'stamping feet' which are covered by foliage, at the same time admitting "we were far off". The story does not match because of the inconsistency and lack of logic,

but this of course does not matter to the narrator once they help to cement the negative image of Africa and Africans.

According to the author, the group of prehistoric people finally comes out from the wood and three men become the specific focus: “the crowd, of whose presence behind the curtain of trees I had been acutely conscious all the time, flowed out of the woods again, filled the clearing, covered the slope with a mass of naked, breathing, quivering, bronze bodies.” (p. 96) Further, he states: “They broke and ran …, they leaped … crouched …. swerved, they dodged the flying terror of the sound [….]” (p. 97). The crowds which the narrator senses are following and would have been monitoring the arrival of more Europeans which is bad news due to colonial violence and brutalities against Africans. Finally, the crowd comes out of the woods and as previously discussed, the writer resorts to reducing Africans to body parts (horned heads, feet, thousand eyes, mass of bodies, scarlet bodies), objectifying them. The three men are represented as “scarlet bodies” and portrayed as performing some form of ritual and when they speak it is “no sounds of human language” and the responses sound like a satanic litany. The author silences the voices of the three men when they are not understood. Colonial knowledge and understanding including language are centralised, and strangely, the Africans’ versions are not human versions.

The three men are further humiliated when the sound of the whistle and the panic which followed result in them falling “flat, face down on the shore, as though they had been shot dead”. The imageries reinforced are the powerlessness of African men and the flimsiness of their lives to the Europeans, as they could have been fired at and are truly dead. The presentations of African men as weak is complete. African men weakened, and so are their cultures, beliefs, and environment which all feed into a wider consolidated colonial discourse which silences them. Thus, Conrad ensures that African men are targeted and brought to the state of low-level humanoid: weak, controllable, without agency, silent or they only speak an unintelligible language with the same effect of muteness as it is neither heard nor understood by the colonisers.

The Silencing of African Men in *Mr Johnson*

Joyce Cary's *Mr Johnson* (*Johnson*) (1995 [1939]) is a colonial novel, a western classic just as Conrad's *Darkness* which is equally derogatory in its portrayal of African men. Whereas *Darkness* overtly queries and contests the humanity of Africans, *Johnson* accepts the humanity of African men, but as inferior juvenile humans at best, with physical animalistic characteristics too. Cary describes the protagonist, Johnson, in a manner alluding to his animalistic characteristics and is in this sense reminiscent of Conrad's African man characterised as a dog. Describing Johnson, Cary (1995) writes:

> He is as black as a stove, almost a pure Negro, with short nose and full, soft lips. He is young, perhaps seventeen, and seems half-grown. His neck, legs, and arms are much too long and thin for his small body, as narrow as a skinned rabbit's. He is loose-jointed like a boy, and sits with his knees up to his nose, grinning at Bamu over the stretched white cotton of his trousers. He smiles with the delighted expression of a child looking at a birthday table… (p. 7).

Johnson is objectified and his identity codified through a European 'knowledge' base in the phrase, "almost a pure Negro". If Johnson is "as black as a stove", is Cary himself 'as white as a dove'? Johnson's physical appearance is distorted; his descriptions are deliberate to convey that Johnson is not a proper human like Cary or other Europeans. He is crouching like a primate, with a small body and long neck, legs, and arms and his body is associated with an animal - a rabbit. The reader learns that Johnson does not walk, rather he "travels at high speed, at a pace between a trot and a lope. In his loose-jointed action, it resembles a dance. He jumps over roots and holes like a ballet dancer, as if he enjoyed the exercise" (p. 9, see also pp. 16, 18). The animalistic features which are given to Johnson mark him as less than a full human and is a form of silencing.

Johnson is a seventeen-year-old boy, hence my hesitation to even call him an African man. Even the author acknowledges Johnson as a boy from time to time.[93] He shows age-appropriate emotions. Nonetheless Cary confers the status of an adult man on the teenager, Johnson, who accomplishes feats which white boys his age would not have. So why would an African teenager who belongs to an inferior human group achieve these? This is where Cary's literary stylistic manipulation contrasts with Conrad's crude antics of denying Africans' humanity – Cary posits that the mature African man is a juvenile. This misrepresentation in effect is silencing the African man. The demotion in chronological age development is a mark of silencing as discussed in Chapter 2. For instance, pioneer African men writers such as Achebe in *TFA* lump 'women and children' together, thereby demoting women's autonomy as adults. This is a strategy used in patriarchal cultures to silence women, hence even Lord Chesterfield of the United Kingdom declared that women (white women) are children of larger growth (Rowbotham, 2014 [1974]).

Johnson, the teenage man, the junior clerk to two successive British District Officers, is imbued with skills expected of a mature man. Consequently, Johnson is seen dealing with and corrupting a colonial District Officer, his boss Mr Rudbeck, showing him how to embezzle funds. Johnson contracts a marriage to a local beauty, Bamu, without a single person, relative or friend. Instead, Johnson goes by himself to ask for Bamu's hand in marriage and bargains with Bamu's family members over her bride price, which provides the opportunity to caricature African marriage structures. These feats are so implausible for a teenager to achieve.

Johnson becomes the object through which Cary ridicules, humiliates and belittles African men generally and specifically elite African men. Johnson is an elite boy-man. He attended a mission school and received the highest level of western education for an African.[94] Education then mostly aimed to equip men with skills to fill white collar jobs including clerks. Johnson "talks good English to the District Officer, but in the clipped accent of one using a foreign tongue" (Cary, 1995, p. 19).

[93] For instance, while going through a stressful time, Johnson sees Mr. Rudbeck, who he considers his friend and Cary writes: "The very look of him now on the stoop gives him [Johnson] such a shock of joy that he burst into tears. Johnson, after all, is only seventeen and completely alone" (pp. 19-20).
[94] For instance, Moore (1971) states that Achebe and Soyinka attended Nigeria's premier university, University College Ibadan (then a college of University of London) with a secondary school certificate because there was no advanced post-secondary institution then. However, like all students, they had to complete preliminary studies before embarking on their university course. Soyinka left after his preliminary studies for his degree programme at Leeds University, in the United Kingdom.

Educationally, therefore Johnson is like other African elites of that period. For example, Lakunle, a trained teacher, in Soyinka's *Jewel*; Nwoye in *TFA* who Mr Brown sends to train to be a teacher; Amasa in Ekwensi's *The People of the City w*ho is working after completing secondary education; or, Mezda in Beti's *Misson to Kala (Mission*) who, though still in secondary school, is already regarded as an elite by his kinsmen. None of the above male characters played a key role in the way pioneer African male writers represented them.[95] Whereas Cary centralises Johnson, imbues him with qualities of a mature man, but these are mostly negative qualities designed to demean or ridicule African men.[96]

Cary's manipulation of Johnson's voice shows that a fictional character may be voiced, expressive but is still silenced if the character indulges in self-mockery and denigration of his identity and culture as inferior. Johnson shows exaggerated admiration of the white man and his ways, through saying and behaving so ridiculously, outrageously, insincerely, childishly, and irresponsibly. Johnson's negative misrepresentation achieves derogatory and belittling effects, without the overt rudeness of Conrad. Although Cary voices Johnson it is mostly so that Johnson condemns himself and caricatures his obsessive desire to mimic the white man and his ways. That the reader is told that Johnson speaks in English if he wants to make a "greater effect" (p. 31) reinforces Johnson's view of English as a superior language to his. He unashamedly claims that '"I Johnson – I belong for government. I belong for de King…"' (p. 32). Ironically, Johnson knows the king of England as his king, but he cannot point to anyone as the king or queen of his country. Cary makes a caricature of perceived political fragmentation of African polities pre-colonisation.

Violence as a tool of Silencing of African Man

After the loss of his clerical job, Johnson is employed as a second storekeeper by a white store owner, Sergeant Gollup.[97] When in the domestic, private, or casual paid or forced unpaid employment of the white men such as road building or similar projects, African men were most vulnerable to physical

[95] Mezda who is sent on a rescue mission continued to be treated as a youngster by his parents and relatives.
[96] According to Achebe (in Lindfors, 1997), neither he nor his male peers at university identified with Johnson who was regarded as a caricature.
[97] A little old man who understands the privilege accorded him by his colour in colonised Africa.

violence. In this private employment, Johnson witnesses and experiences violence, from Gollup "a little man pale old man, an old soldier" (p. 121), basking in white privileges. To the narrator, Gollup, who '"struts about like a little king" claims that stupidity causes him to lose his temper and then he is ready to use his fists or feet, or any weapon to hand. Gollup's violence is directed at Africans who would be afraid to hit him back due to the consequences from the colonial administration who wants to ensure a deterrence for assaulting a white person. For example, Johnson watches Gollop violently abusing Ajali, his shopkeeper, therefore one of his servants, "for failing to understand that 'Over there on the right, you silly bastard' really means 'On the left, four shelves from the bottom.'" (p.122). Gollup represents an example of how white men, once in Africa find themselves with enormous power and privilege based on their skin colour. The psychology of such random violence is to make African men nervous around white men because of the unpredictability of white violence. Whereas in their homes, African men may rule with violence, at work they are on the receiving end of white violence, thus effeminising men (hook, 2015a; Davis, 1983).[98] Gollop intimidates Johnson into silence as to what he witnesses:

> He [Johnson] does not see any more kicks, because Gollop, having given this one with an unexpected power and dexterity which moves Ajali visibly into the air and causes him to utter a loud squeal, turns suddenly to Johnson and says, 'You didn't see anything, did you?'
>
> 'What, sah?'
>
> 'You didn't see anything 'appen just then — to Ajali's trousers? Because if you did, you better not. See. Unless you want something to 'appen to your trousers, only more so.'
>
> 'Oh, yes, sah. I see, sah.'
>
> 'No, you silly baboon — you didn't see. See?'

[98] African-descended men in the United States of America became used to white domination in their "workplace" from the slave era, centuries before Africans' colonial experiences.

‘No, I didn’t see. Mister Gollup.’

‘That’s it. You don’t see and you take bleeding good care not to see. Neither. I know the law as well as you do, Mr. Monkeybrand.’

‘Oh, yes, sah. I see, sah.’

(pp. 122-123)

Although Johnson witnesses an assault of a young African man, he is too intimidated to say the truth. Johnson soon gets his own violence:

Nevertheless, half an hour later, when Johnson in the midst of some plan to make his fortune and buy Bamu a real diamond watch out of a store catalogue, buys a hide full of worm holes at the price of a sound one, Gollup sets up a scream, rushes at him and gives him a punch on the nose which jerks the boy’s head backwards like a punching ball.

[….]

‘What ’appened to you then?’

‘I don’t know, sah.’

‘Yes, wot ’appened? Spit it out.’

‘My face got a blow.’

‘Wot?’ raising his fist again.

‘No, sah, I don’t know.’

‘A haccident — you see — that was a haccident. You got a haccident to your nose.’

‘Yes, sah, an accident.’

‘All right, you remember that, young fellermelad, or you’ll get such a norrible haccident as you won’t be no more good to your mammy than the backside of a billiard ball.’

Like Johnson and Ajali who settle into an abusive domestic relationship with Gollup, some women are silenced into not leaving. In this sense, the former become Gollup's 'women' who he can batter at will. Although Johnson finally confronts his constant physical assailant who is "amazed" to see this unexpected fight-back, his fears of repercussion conditioned him to accept the 'powers' dominating him - racist and economic. Similarly, some women fear men's culturally assumed powers. Johnson, who represents colonially dominated African man, fights back to be free, so must the dominated African woman. Fighting back has repercussions.[99]

Part 2.

The Silencing African men in *Things Fall Apart*

It is befitting to start pioneer African men writers' representations of the silencing of men characters with the most celebrated work by an African, *TFA*. Many people are not aware that Achebe's voice projected through the text could have been silenced forever, quashed before publication due to colonial control and publishing gatekeeping in place in 1957/1958. The only original handwritten manuscript of *TFA* would have been lost forever, but for the intervention of a white woman, Angela Beattie, the boss of 27-year-old Achebe.[100]

The writer and his manuscript were subjected to a two-stage colonial publishing gatekeeping - colonial typing pool stage and the publishing stage. The typists in a typing pool agency in London ignored the manuscript on the assumption that no work of note could come from an African and would likely have disposed of the manuscript eventually if not for Beattie's intervention while on annual leave in London. This resulted in Achebe's manuscript typed and a copy returned to him. Colonial publishers also assumed that there was no interest in a story by an African. With much misgiving but based on the single sentence recommendation of a white man, Donald MacRae, Heinemann published 2000 copies of *TFA* in 1958. From its success, Heinemann started African Writers' Series (AWS), with Achebe's text as its first publication.

[99] Johnson is dismissed from his job after the incident, the reason he has been enduring abuses.
[100] *Things Fall Apart* turns 60 - *The Mail & Guardian*. https://mg.co.za/article/2018-10-05-00-things-fall-apart-turns-60/
Jonathan Kandell (2013) "Chinua Achebe, African Literary Titan, Dies at 82" *New York times*, 13 March 2013. Chinua Achebe, Nigerian Writer, Dies at 82 - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

Achebe became an editorial adviser to the series for 10 years (1962-1972), making him the literary father of modern African literature by merit through his text and by his role which made him a publishing gatekeeper. That the text nearly got lost, or unpublished under the control of a colonial typing pool underscores the colonial power to silence.

Certainly, *TFA* is like no other text I read growing up in Nigeria as it painted the life of my people, an Igbo village which borders with Achebe's birth village of Ogidi; thus, the Umuofia village of the text is a familiar setting. Packaged within this text are knowledge and information 'resources' covering the Igbos' historical encounter with white colonisers and missionaries, showcasing Igbos' 'pagan' religion, culture, customs, and ceremonies. This provides anthropological knowledge and includes the governance structures of Umuofia which furnishes the reader with some sociological content on the Igbos, thus presenting an authentic and previously unknown African world to the literary world.[101] All these are projected from masculine perspectives, which I was not aware off when I first read the novel as a child. Due to the exclusion of women's perspectives in this work, it has attracted the interest of women studies especially for scholars with interest in cultural exclusion of women. The text has featured amongst books with world-wide reputations underscoring its canonical status and the spread of its messages.[102]

Silencing of the Masculine Elders of Umuofia in *Things Fall Apart.*

[101] Adichie (2010) points to *Things Fall Apart* and Achebe's two subsequent texts, *Arrow of God* and *No Longer at Ease*, which completed his trilogy as the only work from which she learnt of her great grandfather's, grandfather's, and father's times. *TFA* is therefore a valuable multi-faceted resource.

[102] *Things Fall Apart* has featured in a number of listings of books of world-wide reputation for instance in Penguin's website listing of books which "broke boundaries and challenged conceptions" amongst other headings.
Sarah McKenna (2022) "100 must-read classics, as chosen by our readers" in *Penguin Website,* 26 May 2022. https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2022/05/100-must-read-classic-books
Hogeback, J. (2023). "12 Novels Considered the "Greatest Book Ever Written"". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/list/12-novels-considered-the-greatest-book-ever-written
Clara Strunck (2023) "The top 10 books to read in your lifetime", *Bazaar*, 19 July 2023. https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/culture/staying-in/news/g21806/10-books-you-should-have-read-before-18/
McCrum Robert (2003) "The 100 greatest novels of all time: The list" *The Guardian*, 12 October 2003. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/oct/12/features.fiction. Though the novel is removed in McCrum's 2015 revised list.

Achebe's protestation of colonial denigration of African men, continues European practice when the silencing is shown. However, exposing the perceived injustices to men becomes a way of naming the problems men faced as part of their resistance – naming and showing become part of contestation. Interestingly, Achebe goes on to silence women in the same work where he is protesting men's subjugation. Equally as Chapter 4 shows, women writers subsequently applied the same technique of exposing and naming men's injustices (oppressive patriarchal practices) against women, as part their resistance and contestation, but some male critics, like Ade Ojo (1983) and some females like Ogunyemi (1996) interpret this as women self-flagellating.

Achebe presents a masculine image of men in the novel to counter the colonial denigration in the colonial characterisations of African men. Nonetheless, when the masculine elders encountered the white District Commissioner, they were physically silenced. Enoch's challenge of the established authority of the all-male elders of Umuofia ultimately resulted in the latter's silencing. Enoch is an overzealous Christian convert, "the son of the snake-priest who was believed to have killed and eaten the sacred python" (p. 131), committing his first religious sacrilege. Enoch's next sacrilegious act happens in public. During Umuofia's annual ceremony which takes place to honour the earth deity, Mother Earth, dead ancestors of the village buried in the earth would come out of ant holes as *egwugwu* masquerades which are revered in Umuofia. Since the masquerades are all males, it means that the spirits of women are excluded and discriminated against both in the temporal and spirit worlds of Umuofia. Achebe, explaining the gravity of Enoch's action states:

> One of the greatest crimes a man could commit was to unmask an *eqwugwu* in public, or to say or do anything which might reduce its immortal prestige in the eyes of the uninitiated. This was what Enoch did.... The other *eqwugwu* immediately surrounded their desecrated companion, to shield him from the profane gaze of women and children and led him away. Enoch had killed an ancestral spirit. Umuofia was thrown into confusion (p.131).

Such was Enoch's crime that:

> That night the Mother of the Spirits walked the length and breadth of the clan, weeping for her murdered son. It was a terrible night. Not even the oldest man in Umuofia had ever heard such strange and fearful sound, and it was never to be heard again. It seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was coming - its own death (p. 132).

Enoch's action undermines the core of his society's belief. Enoch is cast in the mode of Cary's Johnson in *Mr Johnson*, Oyono's Toundi aka Joseph in H*ouseboy*, Beti's Denis, in *Poor*, and to a lesser extent Soyinka's Olakunle, in *Jewel,* all of whom are young male characters. They all have limited white man's education and /or have proximity to the white man in a domestic servitude capacity. Consequently, they all come to embrace everything about the white man as superior to the African way of life. These young male characters see themselves as civilised above their pagan or savage peoples and traditions: through them colonial denigration and silencing of the cultures are achieved.

Enoch's Christian conversion gives him 'civilised proximity' to the white man, Mr Brown, the first priest at Umuofia, believes in dialogue with his host community on their religious beliefs and strange ways of life, hence he bridles the zeal of converts like Enoch. In contrast, Brown's successor, Mr Smith, in his zeal to save Africans' souls, despises and denounces Umuofia's cultures which he does not understand or agree with as demonic. Enoch becomes emboldened and unrestrained in his zealousness to discredit his people and their religion (p. 130). Consequently, Enoch unmasks an *eqwugwu* masquerade in public, unheard of by anyone alive in the village.

When *egwugwu* masquerades and the men followers decide to destroy the church, the symbol of white man's religion which gives Enoch the audacity for his sacrilegious action, Mr Smith faces them. Ajofia (meaning Evil Forest) and the rest meet Mr Smith, and through the Interpreter, Ajofia tells him that they will "not do him any harm", however, "his shrine which he built must be destroyed. We shall no longer allow it in our midst. It has bred untold abominations, and we have come to

put an end to it.... Our anger is great but we have held it down so that we can talk to you" (p. 134). In response he "said to his interpreter: 'Tell them to go away from here. This is the house of God and I will not live to see it desecrated'" (p. 134). The white man's arrogance is reinforced, when as a single man (with his interpreter for communication purposes) he boldly faces off angry men and spirits representing Umuofia and orders them to go away from their own land. In the knowledge of his identity as a white man, who the natives regard as the brother of Mr Brown and District Commissioner with power, Mr Smith expected to be obeyed. As mentioned earlier, Cary's Gallop, a little old white man, abuses Africans without consequence. To the indigenous people, all the white men, whether colonialists or missionaries, were "brothers". Although Mr Smith tries to assert his authority, he is ignored. *Egwugwu* masquerades and their followers destroyed the church. Mr Smith promptly reports the incident to his 'brother' the District Commissioner who rallies around Mr Smith.[103]

The political and religious exploitation of Africans went hand in hand as illustrated by the close partnership between colonial administrators and missionaries (Achebe, 1977, 1988; Ngũgĩ, 1981; Kerr, 1987). The missionaries and colonial administrators are collaborators; the former pass on information about the natives to the latter who in return protects the former (missionaries) from the natives as seen below.[104] According to *TFA's* narrator, the white man's massacre of the Abame village people left a permanent trauma in the psyche of the neighbouring villages including Umuofia. Umuofia men are determined that they will not be decimated without a fight like the Abame people hence the men carried weapons. The scene for the humiliation of the elders, the manly men of Umuofia is presented by Achebe who does not flinch from showing how childishly the men are treated by the white men and their African collaborators. The following scene presents to African men their humiliation as part of strengthening their protestations and contestations for freedom, like women presentation of images of women's oppression. Umuofia's elders including Okonkwo go to meet the District Commissioner who deceives them by

[103] Mr Smith is the equivalent of Cary's Mr Rudbeck, the District Officer, who would no doubt be on the side of Gollop, their 'brother', against Johnson.

[104] This is also evident in *The Poor Christ of Bomba* where Mr Vidal, the Administrator, visits Father Drumont after an attempted assault on the Father and says: "'Good day, Father! I've had that fellow locked up by the police of the nearest chief. Yes, he is in the sub-division prison right now. My goodness, what a swine!'"(Beti, p. 100). Achebe 1977, 1988; Ngũgĩ, 1981; Kerr, 1987; Taikumah, 2023 amongst others make the same point.

saying he needs to call in African men (from other ethnic groups) who he relies on for interpretation, meanwhile these are court officials with a pre-mediated purpose:

> 'Wait a minute,' said the Commissioner. 'I want to bring in my men so that they too can hear your grievances and take warning. Many of them come from distant places and although they speak your tongue, they are ignorant of your custom. James! Go and bring in the men.' His interpreter left the courtroom and soon returned with twelve men. They sat together with the men of Umuofia, and Ogbuefi Ekwueme began to tell the story of how Enoch murdered an *egwugwu.*
>
> It happened so quickly that the six men did not see it coming. There was only a brief scuffle, too brief even to allow the drawing of a sheathed machete. The six men were handcuffed and led into the guardroom (p.136).

The way the masculine Umuofia men are disarmed like children mirrors the humiliation of African men who are the leaders of women and men. This reinforces the colonial image of African men as children and emasculated by colonisation. Also highlighted is how colonisation further entrenches the domination and exclusion of women because the District Commissioner usually has palaver hearings with leaders who are men, giving men power and control over women on colonial platforms, adding to men's indigenous power. Most distastefully, the scene solidifies how African men, as white men's surrogates, are complicit in the colonisation and historical enslavement of African women (and men)[105] thereby silencing the victims.

Achebe represents the physical silencing of African men who are now sullen, and unresponsive as a white man lectures them and explains that they are under the unsolicited protection of a great queen who endorses the brutalisation of the colonised to prevent the colonised brutalising themselves. The handcuffed leaders of Umuofia are lectured by the District Commissioner:

[105] African men become the colonisers' surrogates, who similar to slave gatherers and procurers in the international enslavement of Africans, do their bidding in humiliating, and silencing their people.

'We shall not do you harm,' said the District Commissioner to them later, 'if only you agree to cooperate with us. We have brought a peaceful administration to you and your people so that you may be happy.

[…] we will not allow you to ill-treat others. We have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice just as it is done in my own country under a great queen. I have brought you here because you joined together to molest others, to burn people's houses and their place of worship. That must not happen in the dominion of our queen, the most powerful ruler in the world. I have decided that you will pay a fine of two hundred bags of cowries. You will be released as soon as you agree to this and undertake to collect the fine from your people.

[….]

The six men remained sullen and silent, and the Commissioner left them for a while. (p.136).

The imposition of colonial rule, by bullet and the Bible (Ngũgĩ, 1981) means that the men must abandon their own laws and submit to the authority of this stranger. African men servants of the white man, further humiliate the leaders. The final humiliation of the six elders unfolds with forced shaving of their hair. For, "[a]s soon as the District Commissioner left, the head messenger, who was also the prisoners' barber, took down his razor and shaved off all the hair on the men's head. They were still handcuffed, and they just sat and moped." (p. 137)

Usually in some African cultures including the Igbos, widows are mandated to shave their hair, symbolically announcing dethronement as the widow's glory and protector, her husband, is no more. Shaving of the leaders' heads signifies reinforcement of their dethronement from authority; the white man is now in charge. Umuofia male leaders are turned into 'widows', their former selves as men no longer exist. As 'widows' the leaders are thus exposed to abuses and control of other men

(white men and their black surrogates).[106] The leaders' voices are physically silenced, and even when they hit their heads with a heavy stick, they remain silent; this sums up their colonial humiliation. Clearly, the brave men of Umuofia experienced colonial trauma which can silence even if initially before any fight back.

Silencing of African men in Soyinka's *The Invention*

Soyinka's representation of the silencing of African men characters in his lesser known first play text, *The Invention,* is not expressly stated but mostly needs to be teased out from the author's words, stage directions or inferred meanings from the text. The play addresses the silencing of Africans in a generalised form, focusing on the racial apartheid regime in South Africa. *The Invention* represents Soyinka's attack on racism through satire and the mockery of white people, especially the white groups who he considers the most extreme – South African white settlers, the Southern United States whites and the British.[107] Having said this, Soyinka's attack against the white race is not directly confrontational. While Larson (1971) and Motsa (2005) state that Soyinka's experiences of racism in Leeds contributed to the play, Moore (1971) states that it "was inspired by an account he [Soyinka] had heard of some of the scarcely credible methods employed by the Nationalist Government of South Africa to detect the hidden 'natives' in their midst" (p. 8). Soyinka was politically aware of Africa's colonial domination as young Nigerians of similar education then were. It is reported that Soyinka:

> … used to sell anti-apartheid pamphlets …[in] the years 1954, '55. '56. This was the time when apartheid was coming down with great impact on the black community and the liberal whites … And he [Soyinka] tells his account of the racism he encountered in Leeds where he describes how

[106] Ezeigbo (1996) uses similar imagery to discuss Umuofia men; this study uses the disempowering of the leaders as silencing of men replicating what men do to women.

[107] Racist southern United States is represented by Mr BRIKLIMAINE. Soyinka makes the link between South Africa's openly apartheid government and the covertly apartheid southern United States. The latter is notorious for its brutal slavery laws, derogatory Jim Crow laws and racial segregations which targeted Africans/African-descended people as enslaved or previously enslaved. Racist British landlords/ladies and landowners are represented by MRS HIGGINS.

> he sat down next to a white passenger and that white passenger moved to occupy another seat" (Motsa, 2005, pp. 2-3, quoting Gibbs, 1995).

Rather than target racism in Britain, Soyinka focuses on white settlers in South African whose brand of formalised racism under apartheid policies terrorised and dehumanised the African indigenes far more structurally than Soyinka's experiences of racism.

For a play set in South Africa, *The Invention* has only one African character, a man, Bishop Kalinga. That no African woman features in the play, shows the complete erasure of the African female voice. All the other characters are white men who are scientists working in a laboratory or as 'security' personnel. These include a Director, a Public Prosecutor, Guard or Security Personnel. There are unseen characters described as "The Guinea-pigs (Voices)" as follows: 1st VOICE: A FARMER; 2nd VOICE: PRIME MINISTER'S BROTHER-IN-LAW; 3rd VOICE: A WOMAN". These are not Africans as it later emerges from the content of their speeches. Soyinka immediately, from the characterisations, shows the erasure of Africans, men, and women, which in effect silences them as their voices are neither heard as voiced characters nor as characters seen on the stage. The whites are voiced, and they dominate the dialogue. The stage directions at the start of the play describe the setting and state that the white characters' faces are to be disfigured and greyed as much as possible. This is an attempt to portray the white characters as inhuman and strange, mirroring Conrad's blurring of Africans to become 'strange beings' who are unearthly. The very first speech in a Prologue is given by the man who identifies as Bishop Kalinga, dressed "in a black cassock and cleric hat, [he] sets up his portable lectern, and begins to gesture with both arms in the manner of one who is telling the audience to come closer. He delivers the prologue expressionlessly." (p. 20). The significance of the Bishop's opening speech establishes the African man as the indigene of the land, the son of the soil, despite the alien settlers controlling African men. Equally, the colour of the cassock as black and not white reinforces the image of a black man, who is soon seen dominated and treated unjustly.

In the Prologue, the Bishop tells the audience the events resulting in the obsession of his countrymen, for characters' names are in capital letters in the text and so capitalised when used in that context. A bomb from the United States of America goes astray and lands in South Africa, causing skin mutation such that Africans become white. It is problematic for the white government and the scientists. The fears of the white South Africans can be seen from GLU:

> GLU: Oh my God! Do you realise what this means? We are no longer the first citizens of the state.
>
> ...
>
> GLU: My God! This is the end of the world!
>
> BYTRON: Nonsense! They said the same when the bomb was dropped. And here we still are, alive although redundant.
>
> GLU: And did they not speak the truth! When human beings became so mutated that it becomes impossible to distinguish between black and white - is that not the end of the world? (p. 27)

The panic about losing the position of first citizens results in the laboratory experiments aimed at inventing a testing device which will detect the natives posing as whites. Coming to the laboratory for testing amounts to murder because of the varying methods the scientists are developing. This is where Soyinka interjects a mockery of whites, whilst highlighting the casual brutalisation of African men (and women); this equally foregrounds Soyinka's sense of powerlessness.

The domination of African men characters is implied throughout the testing and the imagery is that of abuses of the African populations in the poking into their noses and pulling out their hairs. This weaponisation of "whiteness" applied under apartheid South Africa and was used to silence the indigenous South Africans. Soyinka, therefore, uses the play to satirize the very punitive use of race as a central pillar of apartheid by the Nationalist Party government of South Africa to harm the indigenous Africans and other non-European ethnic populations socially and

psychologically. The silencing of Bishop Kalinga is shown in the fact that before he finishes his monologue, the PUBLIC PROSECTUOR interrupts him, asks him if he is black or white, his name, and on learning that the name is BISHOP KALINGA, he becomes a suspect black man parading as a white man, a crime as dictated by the white government (p.21). He is subjected to a fast-track trial, "[t]he jury found him guilty in three seconds" (p. 46) showing the structural silencing of the Bishop. Africans are not meant to be seen, or they would be apprehended as suspects; this domination silences men as Soyinka implies. The Bishop's voice is never heard again, instead he is spoken of and about as the PUBLIC PROSECUTOR, THE DIRECTOR and others discuss him (pp. 46-49). The Bishop's punishment is death by the donation of his person and body to research as a guinea pig. The DIRECTOR refers to the bishop as the scientists' "equipment" (p. 46).

The trivialisation and disposability of this man's life is clear even to him and his powerlessness to stop this, mirrors women's writers who present oppressed women who are powerless to effectively fight patriarchal structures. In this case, this African man sees no point in protesting and becomes physically and symbolically silenced. He watches impassively, a defeated silenced man. Soyinka's racialised silencing of Bishop Kalinga is complete and is comparable to Soyinka's patriarchal silencing of South African women by erasing them from the play reinforcing that colonisation and patriarchal achieve similar effect on the 'Othered'.

The Invention[108] shows the racist physical and symbolic silencing of an African man and his defeatist attitude of not fighting back. The trivial basis for his death indicates the valuelessness attached to Africans' lives. The play unwittingly juxtaposes the double standard of Soyinka lamenting white racist structural silencing of African men while cementing African patriarchal structural silencing of African women. Biodun Jeyifo (2004), commenting on Soyinka's writing phases, notes that in "theoretical and meta-critical writings in all three phases, there is no discussion, not even a passing reference, of any female African writer in the capacious body of these writings" (p. 58). This early work testifies to Soyinka's conception of Africa/Africans as masculine/male.

[108] Published in 2005 but written in 1957 and produced in 1959 in London, the play was not as well received as the subsequent plays, *The Lion and the Jewell* and *The Swamp Dwellers.*

Silencing of African Men in Ngũgĩ 's *The Black Hermit*

The Black Hermit was performed as part of Uganda's independence celebration in 1962 before the first published novel, *Weep Not Child* (1964) of the then James Ngũgĩ. The play addresses colonial silencing and its extension to neocolonialism when the new African all-male leaders continue colonial practices. Equally colonial cultural silencing is highlighted when an individual man abandons his cultural responsibilities and follows the white man's way of life. Ngũgĩ grew up in a colonially emasculated space featuring "degrading and infantilizing structures that habitually infest relations between the colonised and the coloniser" (Fanon, 1967, p.102). The colonial structures degraded indigenous structures/systems which were seen or perceived as challenging or countering colonial cultural perspectives. Degradation is achieved through the:

> …destruction or deliberate undervaluing of people's cultures, their art, dance, religion, history, geography, education, orature, literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser (Ngũgĩ, 1981, p.16).

The above are structures which imbed domination and silencing, for instance in how colonised Kenyans' structures and ways of life are replaced or disrupted. In the text, Ngũgĩ focuses on the silencing of African men which is not necessarily graphically shown but referenced or inferred from discussions, that is, through use of language not actions. For instance, when the Marua tribe[109], represented by the all-male elders/leaders, complain of non-representation in the new Kenyan government of the Africanist Party, this implies that the elders feel as silenced as when under the white man's rule. However, Remi's action of choosing the white man's ways when he abdicates his cultural responsibilities to his "tribe", his mother Nyobi, and inherited wife Thoni, silences his culture, "tribe" and women. Ngũgĩ ignores or adds to the women's silencing by his preoccupation with the men's plight. Although Nyobi is voiced, she is significantly marginalised within the "tribe's" patriarchal structures, while Thoni is in a worse situation as men's wives rank lower than their mothers within African patriarchy (Ogunyemi, 1996; Ogundipe-Leslie,1983).

[109] Ngũgĩ uses the word tribe. I put this in quotation marks due to its colonial derogatory meaning.

Nonetheless, the play attests to Ngũgĩ's early concerns about colonial and neocolonial silencing. Perhaps Ngũgĩ's personal experiences of domination[110] heightened his early awareness when his personal and political life converged. Abdullahi (2023) and Gikandi and Wachanga (2018) provide links between Ngũgĩ's personal life and his writing (creative and academic)[111] over the decades. Ngũgĩ (1981) echoes Fanon when he expresses that the colonised were dominated which will continue in new forms (neocolonialism) unless stopped. Fanon cautions against the former colonised on attaining independence settling for "pseudo-independence…with an economy dominated by the colonial pact" (1967, p. 105). He further argues that a united national politics is an essential precursor to ex-colonial countries (such as Kenya) embarking on deconstruction of colonial constructions; additionally, the imperative must be to sever ties with the old masters avoiding any ruse. Ngũgĩ's disappointment at the return to "tribalism" in post-independent Kenya as opposed to Pan-Africanism is mirrored in Remi's dialogue with the Elders (p. 41). In *Hermit*, the fighting and clamouring for political independence are over, *Uhuru* (freedom) in the form of independence has finally come. Therefore, encounters with the white man, where African men are directly subjugated are absent, instead, references and inferences are made to these. The tasks ahead in *Hermit* revolve around African men, the leaders of the new independent Kenya, rising above tribalism, despotism and forming a national government which would prioritise meeting the national interest of all the factions of the new nation. The country comprises of "tribes" which are cobbled together arbitrarily and without their consents by colonisers, without consideration to age-old rivalries, distrusts, enmities or peoples who simply do not get along. The new nation faces a huge challenge for its survival and peaceful co-existence.

Fictional writers, mostly write from their own lived, cultural, and historical experiences, real or imagined. For example, despairing of how tribalism is rearing its head after Kenya's independence, Ngũgĩ's character, Remi, exclaims: "'Never!

[110] Ngũgĩ and his poor family experienced both colonial and African to African domination. In his seminal work, *Decolonising the Mind* (1981), he comments on his degrading colonial experiences as a schoolboy and on working alongside other children "in the fields picking the pyrethrum flowers, tea leaves or coffee beans of our European and African landlords" (p. 10).

[111] Abdullahi's (2023) summaries note some key markers in Ngũgĩ's writing life such as his introduction to Franz Fanon's views and Marxism. Ngũgĩ's authorised documentation of his life and work, *Ngũgĩ: Reflections on His Life of Writing,* edited by Wachanga and Gikandi (2018) covers different areas of his writing and influences.

Never! Has our nationalist fervour that gave us faith and hope in the days of suffering and colonial slavery been torn to shreds by such tribal loyalties?" '(p. 41). Remi's statement (and Ngũgĩ's) that intimates how various "tribes" were subjugated and dominated under colonisation acknowledges colonial silencing of the "tribes". Remi reinforces the awareness of colonial tyranny when he tells his white girlfriend, Jane, why she cannot go to the village with him: "you have not experienced what I experienced" (p. 47).

Speaking about cultural belonging and identity as an African, Ngũgĩ (1981) states: "I was born into a large peasant family: father, four wives and about twenty-eight children. I also belonged, as we all did in those days, to a wider extended family and to the community as a whole" (p. 10). Therefore, as Ngũgĩ belongs to an immediate, extended, and wide community (tribe) so does his fictional character, Remi. This is why the tribe claims him as their son. For instance, The Elder (unnamed male) who visits Remi's mother, Nyobi, tells, her: "'…Remi, your son and ours/Is the only educated man in all the land…'" (p. 9). In fact, the village Pastor (unnamed male) who visits Remi tells him "Your learning is not your learning, /It's for all the people" (p. 43). There is a collective sense of identity and belonging based on tribal identity. This reinforces the cultural expectations of responsibility and respect from Remi towards his tribe (represented by the elders) and the tribe's responsibilities and protection towards him.

Ngũgĩ's personal statement mentioned above also implicitly acknowledges the mothers' role as culturally quantitatively and qualitatively different from the father's role within a polygamous family, further explaining Remi's responsibility to the mother. For instance, it is difficult to imagine how one father could play any more than a peripheral role in the lives of twenty-eight children. The children's mothers would have been expected to bear the responsibilities for meeting their children's day-to-day needs, ensuring their feeding, safety, and nurturing from babyhood to at least early childhood, the most impressionable years (assisted by 'other mothers/mothering' structures that may be in place). Ngũgĩ captures this understanding in *Hermit* when Remi tells his white girlfriend, Jane, that his mother was "'always over-anxious about the well-being of her children. Remi, my child, you look tired to-day. You are not eating your food. Remi, what's worrying you?'" (p. 25). Ngũgĩ further draws attention to fatherhood and motherhood within polygamy in

terms of burden of care and nurturing from what the Pastor reminds Remi of while trying to convince him to return to his mother (pp. 42 - 43).

The appeal to save and serve his mother is what stirred Remi to eventually decide to return to the village after his years of abandonment, not the appeal from his tribe's elders to return and serve them, though this planted the seed. It goes to show the importance of mothers to their sons, as Ogunyemi (1996) observes. Yet Remi abandons his for years, an action which is deemed culturally unnatural by his mother and the elders of the tribe. Remi himself presents to Jane the picture of a mother (his) tending daily to her son's needs (him), whereas his father is not mentioned. An Igbo proverb says that a chick does not forget who plucks its feathers to rid it of worms during the rainy season when vulnerable to disease and death. Ogunyemi (1996) vouches that African men revere their mothers, but oppress their wives, an observation which is confirmed by the fact that there are hardly any negative or derogatory proverbs in Africa directed at women as mothers.[112] Yet, the colonial way of life afforded Remi an alternative way of life which enables him to reject the cultural expectation for him to respect and honour his mother. His rejection in effect silences this aspect of his culture. Without the white man's education and city to escape to Remi would most likely have stayed in the village fulfilling his cultural expectations (p. 39), including living with Thoni who he married as an inherited wife.

Silencing of African Men in Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba*: Colonial "Widowhood" of African Women

The silencing of African men in this novel is first portrayed through the colonial silencing of an African woman publicly in a church by no other than the Father Superior Drumont, a French Catholic priest. As discussed in Chapter 2, in many African cultures especially during the colonial period, widows were treated badly on the patriarchal assumption that their husbands, the women's protectors, were no

[112] Women as wives, girls, unspecified females, or old women are the targets of proverbs which become masculine constructs of the verbal denigration of the female persons (see Chapter 1).

more.[113] For the colonisers, African men are 'figuratively deceased', symbolised by their inability to protect their women and effectively confront the white man. Drumont seems to regard the women attending his church as 'widows' which arguably extends to all women in Africa with emasculated men. Before the church service starts, Drumont demonstrates that he can single out any African woman in his church, physically assault and publicly humiliate them without any challenge from any man in the church.

The novel starts with Drumont intimidating men and women in his 'spiritual court room', as he suspends starting his sermon to berate men and women who are already sitting down instead of standing: "'So you are so tired, you can't wait a few seconds before sitting? Jesus carried his cross right to the end, and he wasn't tired. Get up at once!'" (p. 3). Here, the solitary white man controls a crowd of African men and women who obey him. The narrator, Drumont's mass serving boy, Denis (fifteen years old), informs the reader that everyone knows that Father hates seeing people sitting when they are supposed to be standing or standing when required to be kneeling; men especially flouted these expectations to anger Father, while women generally obeyed (pp. 3-4). Unbeknown to Drumont the men use passive aggressive civil disobedience as a form of protest since they feel unable to directly challenge this white man.[114] The impression is that perhaps men attend out of some form of compulsion or feel the church is a safe space to "passively challenge" the white man without group repercussion. Nonetheless, demonstrating his power:

> .. the Father [Drumont] plunge[d] right in among the women, striding over the wooden benches furiously. Then he came back to the central aisle, dragging a woman along by her left arm. He pulled her before the table and forced her down on her knees…. Only then did the Father decide to

[113] Over the decades there have been changes tempering some vile widowhood practices. See Chapter 4. The widow Ngond, who could have been buried with her abusive dead husband, Ntep, refuses to even mourn him.

[114] Weaker parties in a conflict tend to avoid direct confrontation with more powerful opponents for fear of being squashed as happened to Africans who faced the superior fire power of the colonisers with their inferior traditional weaponry of machetes, arrows and bows, spears and limited European guns. After Africa's physical conquest, civil disobedience became one form of fighting back before 'hit and run' guerrilla war tactics were used by freedom fighters to terrorise European lives.

> climb the wooden staircase to the pulpit, but very slowly, and casting heaving glances all around the church (p. 4).

Drumont starts his sermon, with an African woman on her knees in front of the congregation, men and women silenced by one white man. Equally, when Drumont uses the words “My children”, he berates, commands and infantilises men and women in a manner that downgrades their chronological ages.[115] He views African men as children at best, but arguable if he sees them as adults, perhaps they as ‘dead’ men/husbands. The children in the congregation witness the white man’s reference to their parent(s), elders/leaders as children, so, consciously, and unconsciously they see and learn the superiority of one white man over them and their people.

Father Drumont and Sanga Boto: The Colonial and Indigenous Religious Battle

Sanga Boto, an African man who performs the indigenous spiritualist role for his people, practices in Ekokot, which Drumont is visiting as part of his tour of the larger Bomba mission area under him. The spiritual battle between a colonial priest, Drumont, and the indigenous priest, Sanga Boto, results in humiliation for the latter, including the cultural and African world which the latter represents. After the battle, Santa Boto reflects that:

> He had let himself be pushed about and humiliated simply because the father was a white man and because his brother Vidal, the Administrator, was a terror to the country. He was far more frightened of Vidal, who might throw all of them in prison, than of father, who was just another sorcerer like himself” (Beti p.89).

[115] In a similar manner, African men silence and infantilise women by lumping ‘women and children’ together (see Chapter 2). As argued earlier in this section, Cary, through downgrading Johnson’s chronological age to seventeen years, positions African men as adolescents.

Drumont, who in contrast, is aware of his enormous power in Africa tells the Vidal: “I found myself among men who obeyed the slightest motion of my little finger. I played the aristocrat, throwing them orders which they instantly obeyed” (p. 154). The men’s contrasting perspectives before their battle foreshadow the outcome; one sees himself as a weakling while the other anticipates victory based on his white privileges.

Drumont sees Sanga Boto as a competitor for African ‘souls’ and the wealth such souls would provide to him/the church. As Sanga Boto puts it, they are both sorcerers. Sanga Boto holds a regular ‘court’ at his base and business is thriving from the Africans patrons; similarly, Drumont holds ‘court’ at his base (the church), but his business is not as buoyant in the Ekokot area**.** Drumont sees Sanga Boto as the obstacle misleading the souls he converted to backslide, and limits further harvests of ‘fresh’ souls. Drumont wants to accost and humiliate his competitor and stop his business, but he needs African men as stooges to enable to him achieve his goal.[116] In recognition of this truth, Fanon (1967) perceptively states that “…the enemy of the Negro is often not the white man but a man of his own color” (p. 17). So, Sanga Boto typifies a man whose real enemies were his fellow African men, who provided information about him.

Drumont diligently gathers from his loyal African men the information he needs about Sanga Boto before accosting him:

> The Father was asking mainly about this famous Sanga Boto when he questioned the catechist and the monitors after dinner: ‘Do many people go to consult him?’ he asked.
>
> ‘Father,’ said the catechist, ‘they look on him as on a god.’
>
> ‘And what does he tell them?’ (p. 67).

[116] The District Commissioner in *Things Fall Apart* relies on to African men as court messengers and guards who use his authority to traumatise the male leaders of Umuofia.

Drumont hears the methods which Sanga Boto uses to get information, money and so on and ironically believes that Sanga Boto is a scammer whereas Sanga Boto sees Drumont, similarly, as scamming the population. Indeed, Drumont's church machinery is 'fleecing' the people not only from church fees, levies, presents from the villagers but also through Drumont's *sixa* which exploits soon-to-be-married girls in the guise of preparing them to be Christian mothers. The girls are forced into domestic servitude, forced labour, and some are physically and/or sexually abused, the later by African men. The *sixa* adds to the indigenous patriarchal exploitation of girls given the absence of a *sixa* for boys. It also shows African men abetting European men's (priests) exploitations of African females.

Both 'priests' share other similarities apart from being exploitative - they are revered as gods. Drumont carries himself as "Christ" before Africans who see the likeness between Drumont and Christ's photograph which falsely shows a white man. Both men are materially wealthy. Sanga Boto's wealth is confirmed when Drumont talks to the monitor:

> …Is it true that people give him lots of presents?'
>
> 'Oh, fantastic presents,' said the monitor. 'They really heap them on him. Why, I know a chief, some ten kilometres from here, who was so delighted with Sanga Boto's services that he gave him his daughter as a recompense.' (p. 68)

A satirical comparison of both men is made when Beti compares Sanga Boto to David of the Bible whose exploits were so great that King Saul gave him his daughter to marry. This mockery indirectly raises the issue of Drumont's manhood. As a Catholic priest Drumont is supposed to be celibate, which in a culture where procreating and continuing one's family line are fundamental will puzzle his African converts. Speculations about his sexuality is not an area Drumont would welcome his followers to dwell, nor would he relish comparison with Sanga Boto who has "more than a score of them [wives]" to Drumont's none as his followers believe. This African man who is about to be humiliated has many wives and under African

patriarchy he is the lord in the home with the power of physical and other abuse towards the women which silence them. Beti, like Achebe, Soyinka, Ngũgĩ, while focusing on the injustice inherent in the colonial silencing of men shows disregard for his/his society's domination and silencing of women. Amid discussing the impending humiliation of an African man, Beti interjects the denigration of a girl as an inferior object used for payment, a gift-wife (Pearce, 2014, p. 328) and who, with the other wives, are objects of Sanga Boto's controls.

Drumont has personal reasons to discredit Sanga Boto, and the easiest way is by humiliating and mis/representing the latter to his own people as a scammer. Drumont's actions while accosting and humiliating Sanga Boto denigrate key elements of the Ekokot people's religious and cultural beliefs through which they make sense of their African world. This is seen below as Denis, who sees himself as part of the white community explains:

> We surprised Sanga Boto in his very nest of devilries and lusts. [….] He was wearing a cotton singlet and a lappa, tied very loosely around his haunches. When we swept into his large room he looked up with an expression of astonishment, if not fear, eyes staring, mouth hanging open and face crumpled up….
>
> The Father demanded of the assistant catechist: 'Is this Sanga Boto?
>
> The assistant nodded, and without a moment's hesitation the Father seized this limb of Satan by the arm and dragged him clean out of the house. Sanga Boto made no resistance but had difficulty in following the Father's breakneck pace and kept stumbling over his slippers. He was terrified and began whining: 'Father, Father, what have I done? Why treat me like this? What have I done? ...' (p. 73).

Beti makes several points in the above extract: African to African betrayal for the benefit of the white man (here Drumont) is exemplified when an African man confirms Sanga Boto's house and person. Fanon's (1967) earlier warning about

'negro to negro threat' and Ngũgĩ (1981)'s claims about colonial teachers' normalisation of betrayal amongst schoolchildren[117] resonate in this instance. Another point is that a white 'priest' confronts an African 'priest' in his own home and drags him away for practising his indigenous religion. In effect, the white priest's act criminalised this indigenous practice before the villagers. Furthermore, Beti uses suggestive imagery of the black devil overpowered by the white 'Christ' of Bomba, as Drumont pulls this 'big, slim, very black' African man along the village path, almost naked, publicly humiliating him.

Even though Sanga Boto is voiced, his resistance is as docile as that of Bishop Kalinga in *The Invention*. Drumont's action and nonverbal response silence him. Beti, through Denis, states:

> But the Father pursed his lips and ignored him, pulling him by the hand. He was leaping along with great strides and Sanga Boto came skipping after him. And soon I saw that he had lost his slippers and was finding the path painful to his feet, but the Father just kept blasting along. His lappa began to slip and he grasped it with his free hand, striving to pull the other from the Father's grasp so that he could re-tie it, but the Father hung on like a vice. The lappa fell off and Sanga Boto was dragged shamefully through the village in short cotton drawers. He cried out that he was naked and couldn't enter the village like that, but the Father kept striding on, and a crowd of women and children gathered laughing behind us. Some men also began laughing, but these were all young ones. The older men came from their houses and watched us from their courtyards or verandas, with a surly expression.
>
> [….] The Father told them to beat the drum for High Mass, although it was early. He rushed into the church, threw Sanga Boto on

[117] Colonisers rely on Africans as betrayers and collaborators. Kerr (1987) asserts that the "missionaries or anthropologist whose manifest or latent commitment to the goals of imperialism led to severe misunderstanding or distortions" of cultures and African ways of life (p 1.) Ngũgĩ claims that as schoolchildren his teachers normalised the practice of betrayal. The vernacular language was banned in school even in the playgrounds. Each culprit was made to carry "I am a donkey" card round his neck and pass this to the next culprit. At the end the teachers asked schoolchildren to identify who gave them the card so all who spoke vernacular were then known through children betraying one another.

his knees before the Communion-table and went to put on his vestments.

Sanga Boto knelt there weeping. He wept silently… (pp. 73-74).

The extract shows that the white man who drags an African woman to her knees in his church does the same to a big African man; both are humiliated and on their knees before the same white man.[118] Worst of all, the man is dragged through the village, almost naked while African men, who claim to be naturally superior under African patriarchy, due to fear, watch silently, powerlessly. According to Sanga Boto, his fear of retribution from the Vidal immobilised him from fighting back.

Both, the colonial and patriarchal control employ violence and mis/representation as strategies to control and denigrate the 'Othered' which underscores the ideology of superiority. To Loomba (1998), "Ideology …includes all our mental frameworks, our beliefs, concepts and ways of expressing our relationship to the world" (p.26). Drumont's handling of Sanga Boto is designed to sow doubts in Africans about the mental framing of their African belief systems which the latter represents while reinforcing white superiority. Conversely, Soyinka, Achebe, Ngũgĩ and Beti's denigration of women characters reinforces the patriarchal ideology of male superiority, which is useless against a white man as Sanga Boto finds.

While kneeling in front of the church in his under wear, with his head lowered, likely traumatised; "One of his wives came to give him clothes: a blue shirt, a pair of khaki shorts and leather sandals. She was also crying…" (p. 74). An African woman intervenes to alleviate her husband's distress and cover his 'nakedness', even though it cannot be guaranteed he would do the same for her.[119] Sanga Boto is decently dressed as many villagers come to the church, "many pagans… as if awaiting a wrestling-match or an unfamiliar play" (p. 74) between the two 'priests'.

[118] The image is that of a big African man whose ego is shattered publicly but he is too afraid to fight back. This man is the lord over a dozen wives.

[119] I agree with Ogunyemi's (1996) point that African women's tendency to cover the nakedness of fathers (which can mean males in authority) result in maintaining their status quo as the oppressed. However, in this case, Sango Boto's shame if left in his cotton under pants before the church becomes a collective shame. The imagery can do untold psychological and identity damage to child-observers.

Sanga Boto is absolutely subdued as the white man commanded and controlled him: Denis states:

> Then the Father bellowed at him: 'Get up!'
>
> He did so, still keeping his head down, and the Father bellowed again: 'Come here!'
>
> He came fearfully towards us, looking much smarter in his new clothes. He's such a funny fellow that I can't be certain he was really scared; perhaps he was just ashamed, or perhaps he was just playing the fool (p. 74) …
>
> Sanga Boto stood before the Father like a schoolboy expecting punishment (pp. 74-75).

In front of everyone, Drumont gets Sanga Boto to confess that he is a scammer tricking people with his workers: "At first he was mumbling and the Father told him to speak up. Immediately he did so, like a child" (p. 75) and "admitted everything" and "explained many things" (p. 75). This reinforces the colonial image of the child-like African man. Nevertheless, the humiliated man gives away his secrets so his ordeal and shame can end quicker. The final humiliation is when the father asks him if he has been baptised, his baptismal name and immediately calls him his colonial name:

> 'Well, Ferdinand, God has pardoned you. Go now…I shall help you, you'll see. But, first of all, you must release your wives and abandon your sorceries' (p. 76).

The white priest has achieved his purpose of discrediting his competitor before his people, silencing the latter who becomes a 'project' to be helped and the former a 'saviour' who continues to monopolise religious sorcery. The villagers are also silenced if Sanga Boto's spiritual services cease; this aspect of their culture becomes

disrupted, with Catholicism at hand to fill it. It is difficult to see how, after such a momentous humiliation, Sanga Boto can practice with much credibility. Asking Sanga Boto to release his wives shows the white man's objectification of African women and the characteristic reductionist approach to what he does not comprehend – the weight of traditional African marriage. In the end, a white 'priest' drives an African priest out of his ancestral land where he previously basked within African patriarchal superiority.

Conclusion

From colonial writing about the subjugation of African men characters and pioneer African men's resistance writing about the colonial injustices towards African men characters in their ancestral homes, African men's superiority upon which patriarchy is constructed breaks down. African pioneer men's writing discussed in this chapter provides evidence of the colonial emasculation, infantilisation and silencing of African men. The subjugation and silencing demystify the aura of natural male superiority over women prevalent in African cultures. This is a social construct which Father Drumont deconstructs when he drags an African woman and a big African man to their knees before his church with no one coming to their rescue. This Chapter underscores the argument that African pioneer men writers replicated and projected their experience of subjugation to women. Critical to this discussion is the way African women are excluded from Soyinka's early writing, women as leaders and elders of Umuofia and Marau are excluded by Achebe and Ngũgĩ respectively. Beti, while writing about an African man who a white man subjugated and left weeping silently before a whole church, injects and trivialises the 'chattelisation' and 'commodification' of a girl whose father 'gifted' to the same disgraced man. This signifies that the latter still has power as a man, despite his public humiliations by the white colonialist. Hence, pioneer African women writers who have been criticised by some African men and women writers or scholars for showing women characters who are oppressed under patriarchy, or those who fought against patriarchal practices but were defeated, plagued with madness, or even died, are responding to the realities of structural powers just as the pioneer men writers.

Chapter 4

African Women's Writing Resistance: Historical Road Map

Introduction

African women's writing is not fundamentally anti-African males but a literary practice that seeks to challenge the misrepresentations and silencing of the female voice initiated in the early writing of colonially silenced pioneer men writers/writing. This literature also seeks to project female-centred world, perspectives, and narratives, as well as countering, revising, or re-reading existing male texts. Women writers use women characters to expose, rebut, critique, challenge, resist, and subvert male domination, and in the process, the brutal sides of structural patriarchal practices that affect women are shown. Chukwuma (2007) states that: "Colonisation has its merits but it's new culture of ascendancy through education, white-collar jobs and money-driven economy relegated women down the ladder" (p. 1). Further, she asserts that systems in pre-colonial times which helped women to "maintain a voice" were eroded. Noticeably, pioneer men's early writing discussed in this study did not represent such systems.

When African men monopolised creative writing, it became part of 'patriarchalisation', a culturally gendered practice, like the Igbo masquerade cult,[120] foreclosed to women. Women's writing was perceived as encroachment, comparable to if women were to encroach the *egwugwu* masquerade activity in *TFA*, therefore, swift male attacks and rebukes were inevitable (see Chapter 2). Just as within some Igbo cultures, masquerade cults occasionally invite old women as guests, as post-menopausal, post-reproductive beings who are nearer the end of life and in transition to the ancestral realm, in several cultures old women are regarded notionally as men. Tamale (1999) refers to similar attitudes to older women in her Baganda/Ugandan culture. Pioneer (young) women writers encroached the literary space presenting women's perspectives, thereby ending the 'orientalisation' of men's fictional writing, where men speak of/about/for African women.

Aidoo in 1965, Nwapa and Ogot in 1966, from Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenyan, respectively, initiated women's fictional writing, and entered uninvited the literary

[120] Patriarchalisation' is a gendered practice foreclosed to females but open to males; if a female participates, it becomes an anomaly.

male-dominated environment and their writing soon exposed the incomplete nature of men's writing through addressing females' patriarchal and gendered oppression from women's perspectives. Ever since, women's fictional writing has continued to address issues around structural male domination and oppression of women/girls. Bruey *et al*. (2021) and Uchendu and Edeagu, eds. (2021) show that the domination of women by men remains a fact of life in Africa, which is based on the biologically derived assumptions of male superiority popularised by Goldberg (1973). The structural male-control of women in African societies, even where women thrive or subvert these, shows practices which seem to have become male cultural inheritance and male inherited; hence the trans-generational continuity of 'patriarchalisation'.

This Chapter argues that pioneer African women invited themselves into the exclusive literary domain monopolised by men. They entered as the 'Othered', a role they share with the women characters in men's writing. Women lived within oppressive male-controlled societies, even if matrilineal by descent and inheritance (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993; Ntiwunka and Nwaodike, 2021). Women had degrees of autonomy within customary "patriarchal bargains" (Kandiyoti, 1988) which expected women to work hard fending for their children's needs, especially in polygamous families. Although African women's hard work, unfortunately, made them the "ideal subject[s] for slavery" (hooks, 2014, p.16), it propelled them to the literary 'farmland' too. Nwapa's Igbo culture is known for operating a dual-sex system within which women managed women's affairs separate from men, unlike western women (Amaduime, 2015; Nzegwu, 1994; Okonjo, 1976). The dual-sex system necessitated and normalised female leaderships; hence, Igbo women mobilised with other women for the Aba Women's war against British colonial authority in 1929.[121]

African pioneer women writing threatened the grand narratives about African women by white feminist, white racist colonial patriarchy, and African patriarchy.

[121] The women's mobilisation was within this context and not in a vacuum as the British colonists assumed, believing illiterate African women to be incapable of such mobilisation. L Bastain (2002, pp. 260-281) while discussing the British inquiry into the Aba women's war highlights some of the women's witness statements about the sense of colonial injustices including in the disruptions to their markets which is described as "our main strength…When market is spoiled, we are useless…" (p. 267). Also see Sheldon (2017, p. 167) about women's significant contributions and participation in community activities during colonisation, from already existing structures.

These pioneers unintentionally[122] entered the white feminists' 'arena', where the latter retained historically derived power over the former, as the 'Othered'. Meanwhile, African women's patriarchal experiences differed significantly from those of white women of First and Second wave feminists, the latter complained of identity crisis and of being caged by white patriarchal constructs (Friedan,1963, p. 25).[123] White women's responses to African women writers or writing was initially dismissive "on the pretext of their ignorance of it" (Ogunyemi, 1985, p. 70). This was followed by the quest to control the writers and their writing and reduce the later to what makes sense to the white woman as a means of control. White feminists already controlled African-descended women in the west and their attempts to control African women writers and their writing were typified by insistence on imposing western values and categorisations (see Katherine Franks, 1982, 1984, 1987; Susan Arndt 2002). Nfah-Abbenyi (1997, p. 10), just like other non-African women, is critical of white feminists and is suspicious of white feminism and control-seeking feminists. She cites Aihwa Ong who posits that: "When Western feminists look oversea, they frequently seek to establish their authority on the backs of non-western women, determining for them the meanings and goals of their lives".

Pioneer women's writing challenges white racist colonial patriarchy and its racist and derogatory (slave-legacy) slurs of African women as 'black' women (Higginbothan, 1996, p. 193 in Scott, ed.).[124] Writing, as a colonial platform, imposed new situations to further subjugate the women. Compared to their pioneer male counterparts, women's writing encountered multiple issues from its inception (Margaret Busby in Umeh, 1996). The obstacles in the way of pioneer women's writing, and their bravery in venturing into the literary domain occupied by men writers (and fictional men' characters) who were wounded and/or recuperating from colonial subjugation, are often ignored. Until 1965, African literature was a gendered exclusive practice open only to males. Stratton (1994) reinforcing layers of obstacles to women's writing, argues that "women's texts are being assessed on the basis of

[122] African pioneer women writers started writing after decades of colonial domination by white men (and their women).
[123] See Declaration of Sentiments of 1848 (Chapter 2).
[124] Higginbothan, drawing from Jordan (1977) explains that black women's bodies epitomise "centuries-long European perception of Africans as primitive, animal-like, savage. In America …[even] Thomas Jefferson [a president], conjectured that black woman mated with orangutans" (Higginbothan, 1996, p. 193). Such was the grossness of the racist slurs heaped on African women from Africa as the first black female slaves.

standards established first by western texts then by African men writers" (p. 5). Furthermore, as Aidoo declares, when it comes to literary criticism which promotes writers' visibility: "Women writers have a double problem of being women and being African" (in James, 1990, p. 12). Additionally, while she cites no critics by name, Aidoo declares that the descent of non-African opportunistic critics "who do not care for Africans or what they are writing…[rather are interested in] making a name for themselves" (p. 13) result in an overload of literary criticism which can stifle literary creativity. She indicates that this situation affects women more. Ogundipe-Leslie (in James, 1990) notes that African men are "usually patronising and legislative" on what women should be writing about (p. 72) and in effect muting women. This prompts Aidoo's assertion:

> Well, the question of the woman writer's voice being muted has to do with the position of women in society generally. Women writers are just receiving the writer's version of the general neglect and disregard that women in the larger society receive…. It is not unique (p. 11).

Nwapa (in James, 1990, p. 114) echoes Aidoo's views regarding African men writers' treatment of women writers. Men are seen as a "load" or obstacles (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993),[125] since, apart from selecting degrading versions of women's lives, and as critics, after initially ignoring women's writing they attacked it. Stratton (1994, pp. 133-135) details the attacks on early women's writing, from Frederick Ivor Case, Abiola Irele, to Ojo-Ade after Bâ's *So Long a Letter* (*Letter*) won the First Norma Award. As if incensed, they launched attacks on women's writing. In summary, Case indicates male assumptions of the right to define a novel format for women to adopt. For example, Irele claims that a male writer, John Munonye's *The Only Son*, portrays African women's position with more depth than Aidoo, Nwapa, Bessie Head or Emecheta. Ojo-Ade derogatively groups women writers as the 'old guards' (Aidoo, Nwapa, Ogot, Sutherland) who complain of patriarchy but accept it and 'fake [feminism]' (of Emecheta and Ba). Perhaps these male detractors prefer

[125] Ogundipe-Leslie (1993) describes men collectively as a group, as one of the six loads on women's backs.

uncomplaining traditional femininity. The very thought of having African women's writing resulting in consciousness raising, which can contribute to women successfully exiting men's domination, scares some men who assume that white feminism is taking them or their writing over (see Ogundipe-Leslie, 1985).[126]

African male critics and male writers' joint venture in muting women writers/creative writing represented a two-pronged attack which shaped pioneer women writers' writing strategies. This was a subtle beginning of a literary revolution that communicated radical messages without openly antagonising the men. This strategy is like what Mgamis (2017) refers to as "peaceful revolution" (literary) of Wollstonecraft (1792) which challenged white patriarchal biases without using visibly aggressive language, hoping to evade attacks. Nonetheless, Mgamis argues that Wollstonecraft was personally attacked, and called a "hyena in petticoat"; this reinforces men's general desire for the status quo to remain. According to Nwapa: "A woman who says she is oppressed and then has a son and treats him like a king, such a woman is perpetrating the problems we are complaining about" (in James, 1990, p. 114). Nonetheless, men and some women perpetuate the status quo underscored by Nwapa's point that her attempts to socialise her young son differently, for instance, telling him that kitchen work is not a female only role, is challenged by her mother-in-law. Therefore, tackling women's collusion is crucial to women's resistance to patriarchy. Nwapa's responses to Adeola below reveal the nature of oppression she sees in Nigeria (applicable to most African countries):

> Adeola: To be black and to be a woman is a double ill-fate? What is your response?

[126] Ogundipe-Leslie (1985, pp. 501-502) starts her essay with the poem, 'Letter to a Feminist Friend'. Ogundipe-Leslie's male professor friend, Malawian Poet Felix Mnthali claims his "world has been raped, looted and squeezed by Europe and America" then the women of these places after castrating the men, want to come between him (representing African men) and Ogundipe-Leslie (representing African women) who "were slaves together, uprooted and humiliated together rapes and lynching…". This shows that the trauma of slavery lingers for some African men, additional to subjugation under colonisation by white women. Feminism is seen as threatening the status quo and men fear that white women will corrupt African women to seek change and equality when men want the status quo to remain. See the poem in Petersen, Kirsten Holst, (1984) "First Things First: Problems of a Feminist Approach to African literature", *Kunapipi*, 6(3), https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol6/iss3/9

> Flora: In Britain, America and Europe, it is not so. But in Nigeria that statement is relevant. You are oppressed at home, you are oppressed at work. Your husband oppresses you, your employer oppresses you and then your society piles upon you double, if not treble suffering (Nwapa, in James, 1990, p. 114).

Nwapa's statement is that of a woman whose lived experience in Scotland in 1958 impressed on her that African patriarchal structures are constructed given the significant absences of these in western diaspora. Instead, while in the diaspora African men as the oppressed, occupy low social positions alongside women, in Africa successive generations of men continue to oppress women.

The first three women writers discussed in this chapter are of key importance as the Foundational literary fighters and radicals of their time, 1960s-1970s. Their texts are set in pre, colonial and earlier post-colonial Africa: *Dilemma* is set around 1964[127] while *Efuru* and *Promise* are set in the 1940s-1950s and 1930s, respectively. 'Pioneer-era' women writing refers to 1970s' women's writing with thematic continuations of the folklore underpinning *Efuru*. These texts include Aidoo's *Anowa* set in the 1870s, Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* (*Anansewa*, set in 1950), and Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood,* (*The Joys*, set 1930s-1940s). Aidoo is included above as this second text centralises an indigenous African woman unlike the first text which centres an African American female protagonist. Second-generation women writers like Liking, Bâ, Dangarembga, Aidoo, Dike and Maraire are discussed as Personalised literary fighters of the 1980s-1990s. Individual characters are voiced challenging the patriarchal status quo which impinges on their lives. Aidoo is also included as she addresses the taboo issue of marital rape. The chapter ends with an examination of Millennium women writers, Oyedepo, Moyo, Jobi-Tume, Onwueme, Atta, Shoneyin, Dare, Uwakwe, and Makumbi, who, as taboo-less fighters without boundaries address multiple subjects, including child marriages where adult or older men sexually exploit child brides. The Personalised and Millennium writer are discursively integrated.

[127] The play was first performed in 1964 and published in 1965.

Pioneer Women Writers as Foundational Literary Patriarchal Fighters

Aidoo, Nwapa and Ogot draw from African oral literature where women featured significantly as performers, socialisers, and transmitters of societies' cultural frameworks (Achebe, 1988; Ngũgĩ, 981; Nnaemeka, 1994).[128] The odds against these writers included patriarchal gatekeeping to publications, predominantly by African and/or white males.[129] Publication was a major problem for most African women up to the 1990s, especially under apartheid in South Africa. Sindiwe Magona (1998) states that it was her brother who helped her to find a publisher since "[s]he knew nothing about the publishing business (p. 48).[130] While Emecheta points out that Bessie Head being in Africa and her publishers in Europe could have contributed to her financial suffering before her death (in James, 1990, p. 41), Micere Mugo states that although it is easier for known published male authors like Ngũgĩ, African women generally face publishing difficulties.[131] Given the barriers, "some of the younger and unknown writers ... have a great problem in getting anywhere near a publishing house" and those writing in an African language face more complex process (Mugo in James, 1990, p. 97). According to Umeh, Nwapa reported that her country of origin resulted in her experiences of: '… "multiple marginality" with her Western publisher who regarded her as a "minor writer" … [Consequently,] Heinemann's placing her in the literary backwaters resulted in the piracy of her books in Africa and the death of her voice globally' (Umeh and Nwapa, 1995, p. 22). This means that overcoming the publishing hurdle is not the end, but the effective dissemination strategy is another battle. Nonetheless, pioneer women writers forged ahead with creative writing, disrupting male literary monopoly.

Ogunyemi (1996) states that in the first two decades,1960s and 1970s, women tell the stories of their rural, illiterate parents. Equally, that the configuration

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[128] Nnaemeka (1994, p.137) explains that women moved from "speaking subjects" of orature to "written objects of the imperialistic subject and the patriarchal subjects".

[129] Chapter 3 shows that although as a man Achebe encountered hurdles trying to publish *Things Fall Apart,* in 1956/57, if he had been a woman, he would have faced more barriers. African women later started setting up their own publishing companies: for example, Nwapa's Tana Press in1977, and Emecheta and Ogwugwu Afor's Acholonu AFA: *A Journal of Creative Writing* in 1982.

[130] Magona (1996, p. 48) explains that during apartheid one needed a sponsor who knows people from the white side.

[131] Adeola James asks Mugo about the reported publishing difficulties for Nigerian and Kenyan women writers. Zimbabwe writers didn't have similar problems because, as Mugo explains, the Zimbabwe "Government declared socialism as its policy…even the publishing houses are very, very careful not to thwart any line that the government has officially committed itself to (p. 97).

of the rural not only as a geographical place but also as a character-type, doomed early women's writing as ruralism has its constraints. Ogunyemi further asserts:

> The later decade [1980s] has made the transformative jump to the urban. Here the writer has firmly established that there are identifiable problems linked with woman (sic), no matter what her status. The new novel marks a shift to the self … the pressing need for the writer to tell her own story, the story of the elite women in Nigeria, and to tell it straight in the hope that change at this level will filter down to their rural mothers (p. 91).

While the study agrees with Ogunyemi's perceptive thematic distinctions in the writing of different periods, it disagrees with her anti-ruralism and anti-illiterate jibes since Africa was predominantly rural before the colonially created cosmopolitan cities. Besides, as I discuss later in Chapter 7, men's early writing depicted mostly the rural setting (Stratton, 1994; Amadiume, 2015)[132]; hence, as Palmer (1983) notes, that women were dominated "largely within the traditional milieu" (p. 138).

That women started with the rural environment shows their sensitivity to indigenous aspects of womanhood, through constructing women characters against various dimensions of womanhood in African cultures which men neglected by fixating mostly on one dimension. Drawing from her knowledge of her Igbo society and the study of women in other African cultures, Acholonu (1995a) argues that: "African cosmology identifies six dimensions of womanhood":

> the woman as wife
>
> the woman as daughter/sister
>
> the woman as mother
>
> the woman as queen, priestess
>
> the woman as goddess [religious-wise]

[132] Amadiume (2015, p.48, also pp.42-47) recounts examples in Igbo society where women, through hard work, achieve economic power and positions, more than their husbands.

the woman as husband (p. 24).

These six indigenous dimensions of womanhood can be referred to as intersections of Igbo/African womanhood[133] which Amadiume (2015) concurs with through various examples. The sixth domain is operational in specific cultures including some Igbo cultures. However, Achebe's early work, like that of other African men pioneer writers, focused mainly on the 'woman as wife', the space where women are most oppressed whether in patrilineal or matrilineal African cultures (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993; Ogunyemi, 1996). Acholonu explains that a wife's "life is one that calls for constant sacrifice" (p. 25). The society places a high demand on a wife, expecting from her self-sacrifice and unflinchingly supporting to the male authority as fathers, husbands, elders. A wife is almost always a 'stranger, foreigner' in her marital family, yet the "society depends so much upon her strength and resilience as the matrix of life in its varied dimensions, it places on her the burden of embodying the two opposing qualities" (Acholonu, 1995a, p. 24).

Seen as 'goods' bought with bride price for a life of service, so much is expected from a wife. However, the same woman becomes a mother whose service to her children differs fundamentally from her services as a wife. Conceivably this explains why Ogunyemi (1996) argues that: "[w]omen especially wives become obvious targets of male frustrations" (p. 12), while the same men mostly revere their mothers (p. 12). Syed Hajira Begum (2016) suggests that African men split women into nurturing/powerful (mother) and suffering/insignificant (wife). This means that "[w]hile Mothers are revered as creators, as providers, cradle-rockers, nurturers, and goddesses, they also inspire awe and reverence, because they are known to wedge huge powers in their children's lives. The idea of self-sacrifice emphasizes the centrality of motherhood in African society" (p. 16). In contrast to the above, "the trope of 'Mother Africa' valorizes nurturing and caring aspects (sic) woman's personality…[while sanctioning the] sufferings of women in the roles of wives, which ultimately make them 'faceless' and insignificant." (2016, p. 16).

[133] Achebe, Acholonu, Amadiume and I belong to the Igbo cultures where the six dimensions existed in precolonial times.

Women as mothers become mothers-in-law to their sons' wives; and as mothers-in-law women become 'senior women/notional men' of patriarchy, this being 'the reward of seniority' (Davies,1994; Kandiyoti, 1988). Nwapa and Ogot started writing as wives (not senior women), while Aidoo was unmarried. Men's early writing was fixated with women as 'wives', while their status as 'mothers', is "undertexualised" (Jeyifo, 1993)[134] and underrepresented. As shown below in this discussion, the silencing of Okonkwo's mother is transgressive since not all women in Okonkwo's birth family are nameless, faceless, denied identity and humanity.[135] The study holds this view supported by adopting Amadiume (1997) centralising the "mother-child bond" as predominantly the most enduring, represented by *nkpuke* "mother/child unit" in Igbo culture.[136] This female construct subverts the patriarchal male construct by signifying mothers' superiority, since *nkpuke* units are the location of children's early nurturing with women/mothers in charge.[137] Perhaps this superiority of mother is what Jeyifo intimates when he posits that Okonkwo's fear of his mother transfers to the fear of women, masked by being aggressive and disdainful towards women.[138] Jeyifo (1993) characterised Okonkwo's situation as a "brand of misogyny and neurotic masculinist personality" (p. 848), though he diplomatically withholds the same labelling to Okonkwo's creator.

More importantly, in many African patriarchal cultures, mothers' people are usually protective towards their daughters' children. For the father's people, the same children are also competitors for family communal resources such as land; hence, the father-side is more fractious. In Igbo cultures, when the father's people reject their children, the mothers/mother's people usually accept them, leading the Igbos to say *nneka,* 'mother is supreme', as Achebe explains in *TFA.* This female construct used to convey the protectiveness of mothers when compared to fathers

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[134] Jeyifo, (1993) uses "undertexualised" to specifically refer to the silencing of Okonkwo's mother in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart.*

[135] Okonkwo's wives Ojiugo and Ekwefi are named, and their underdeveloped stories are used to advance Okonkwo's story. Given the belief that African men generally revere their mothers (Ogunyemi, 1996), such mothers would have been subjected to and negotiated institutionalised patriarchy to meet their children's needs, especially in polygamous families.

[136] An Igbo proverb says that *Eke sia na obi, eke na nkpuke* (after sharing in the father's dwelling there is sharing in the inner mother's unit). This signifies *nkpuke* as the smallest unit for maternal siblings, womb full siblings (*nwanne afo*) as different from paternal half siblings.

[137] Even in polygamous families, despite communal care, women catered obligatorily for their children.

[138] Jeyifo (1993) uses the story, of why mosquitoes buzz in human ears which Okonkwo's mother told him as a child, to indicate a "putative female superiority" and which may have contributed to his fear of women. The female 'Ear' disdains her male suitor 'Mosquito'.

who can have dozens of children from multiple women. Even African characteristic misogynistic proverbs praise mothers (see Schipper, 1992, pp. 37-41), though mothers are enjoined to make self-sacrifices.[139] Okonkwo's father's people (his village) rejected and exiled him for seven years after an involuntary manslaughter, so he goes with his family to his dead mother's people (maternal family) in another village where they are received and supported, therefore confirming the essence of *nneka*. In Igbo cultures, children who share 'wombs', are *nwanne or nwannem* (child of mother or child of my mother) a term signifying the second closest human-bond after mother-bond, unlike those who are 'seeds' from the same men, *nwanna* or *nwannam* which refers to paternal half siblings and wider clan men. *Nwanne* can apply to non-blood relationships to show a closeness resembling the maternal blood-tie, so again a female construct is used to convey superiority of relationships.[140] Equally, in polygamous families with several children, sometimes *nwuru ofu ala* or *sina ofu* afo (suckled one breast or from one womb) is used to identify who are full siblings. In Buganda, children from the same womb are called *babbeere* or those who suckled the same breast (*bbeere* is breast).[141] These images of maternal links indicate strong ties. However, mothers (and fathers), through everyday socialisation, elevate maleness (male children) above femaleness (female children), while fathers, through patriarchalisation, induct male children into the exclusive male activities foreclosed to their mothers/sisters. By drawing on women's writing, this study challenges both situations as entrenching patriarchy.

Nwapa and the Patriarchal Challenging and Subversion.

Nwapa's *Efuru* is a version of the traditional story of a headstrong girl who, refusing suitors chosen by her parents (usually father), chooses her husband who turns out to be a devil, an evil man, a ghost, or a half-human half-spirit. Through such folklore, African men and women participate in socialising their children that females cannot

[139] Schipper's (1992) proverbs for Mothers has as no 1: "Mother is gold, father is mirror. (*Yoruba Nigeria).* "A mirror is fragile and unreliable because it may break any time. Gold is solid and stable – just as the mother is, closer to the child than the father is expected to be." (p. 37). No 5. "The child's mother grabs the sharp end of the knife (*Tswana, South Africa/Botswana; Sotho, Lesotho.* She 'll take risk to protect her child" (p. 37). There are others proverbs mirroring women/mothers' expectation to suffer for their children.

[140] See Nneka Okafor and Felix Murove, 2016, on *nnanne* concept.

[141] Drawn from a conversation with Professor Sam Kasule on 20th March 2024.

make good decisions whereas fathers have the right to choose and make wise choices. Many girls would have heard and/or even re-told the popular folklore by 1966. Nwapa uses *Efuru* to attack, resist, counter and subvert the ingrained patriarchal 'wisdom' behind the folklore.

Efuru introduces a shift in focus – that a young African woman has the power to choose two husbands entirely by herself. Efuru is presented with agency. She claims a male space, reversing the roles; hence, she can walk away when her marriages fail. When she marries the economically poor Adizua, Efuru is in charge. She refuses to join her husband in the farming village, stating "'I am not cut out for farm work. I am going to trade'" (p. 10). Efuru subverts the expectation of a wife to follow her husband or to be in the village while the man is in town. The author tells the reader: "That year the man went to the farm while his wife remained in the town" (p.10). Thus, at the beginning of the text, the author announces her intention to contest some of the patriarchal assumptions in men's writing. Efuru remains in town trading and Adizua subsequently abandons farming and joins her. Interestingly, when the second husband, Gilbert, asks Efuru if she will marry him, she responds, "I will marry you. You are pleasing to me" (p. 126). The second sentence indicates the sense that Efuru is making the choice, not the other way round. Both husbands respect Efuru, which portrays marriages where the wife is not in the inferior position. The fact that Efuru's two marriages failed is perhaps Nwapa's ploy to soothe her society's fragile male egos[142] because if Efuru lives 'happily ever after', Nwapa may be deemed to be abdicating her responsibility and/or inciting parental disobedience from young girls. While male chauvinism remains a reality in Nigeria to date, it was more grounded in 1966. Emecheta (in James, 1990) referring to the male-control in Nigeria, states that because she lives in England, she speaks her mind about Nigerian situations unlike Nwapa. "I don't blame her because she lives in Nigeria," she states (p. 38). This indicates structural oppressive situations which women face in Nigeria which Nwapa also refers to earlier in this Chapter.

Whereas previously confined to folklore, Nwapa, through Efuru, introduces ideas and narrative threads that there are young African women who insist on choosing their husbands. The warnings from folklore, like Efuru's, are usually not told

[142]Like what Mgamis (2017) refers to as "peaceful revolution" (literary) of Wollstonecraft (1792) noted earlier. Men, who supported women's position like John Stuart Mill (2017 [1869]) faced less hostility.

in a vacuum but are against existing behaviours deemed transgressive. A male-centred perspective would argue that women are not equipped with the power to make the right decisions, including marriage choices; hence Efuru's marriages fail. On the contrary, a female-centred interpretation highlights that Efuru's marriages fail because her husbands' unreliability, selfishness and self-centeredness lead them to desert her, after exploiting and benefiting from her industriousness. Efuru's situation sends a warning message to unmarried females about men's potential unreliability that subsequent women writing also explored. When Efuru refers to marriage as "a necessary evil for us [women]" (p. 97), both the author and character transgressively project marriage as oppressive, restrictive, and imposed. This subverts the patriarchal projection and esteem of marriage as the crowning glory of females in many African cultures (Begum, 2016; McFarlane, 1987).

Childlessness is traditionally deemed an issue solely for the African women/wives' which pioneer women writing starting handling about from *Efuru* to date. However, the contrasting approaches of the pioneer and new women's writing will be discussed in the chapter. Efuru is biologically not a mother since her daughter's death, but it may be possible that narratively Nwapa deliberately leaves her childless to show that women can have lives without children. According to Nwapa (in James, 1990), "…marriage is not the end of this world: childlessness is not the end of everything. You must survive one way or the other" (pp. 114-115). Nwapa's visualisation of the possibility of life outside of 'wifehood' or motherhood for some women is a subversion of the patriarchal prescription of marriage and appropriation of women's wombs. The emotional impact on Efuru of having no surviving birth-child is acknowledged as Efuru and her people consider barrenness "as a curse" and "as a failure", mirroring women's real-life experiences. Efuru's pains are alleviated by her brief experience of motherhood, for which she is thankful: "But thank God my womb carried a baby for nine months…it would have been dreadful if I had been denied the joy of motherhood" (p.165). Nonetheless, Nwapa ensures that Efuru's womb is not fully appropriated, which happens when wombs produce surviving fruits (children). These are radical themes which Nwapa introduces in *Efuru* while resisting and countering pioneer men early writing, also reflected in *Anowa*.

Nwapa introduces women-centred or patriarchal resistant themes that centralise the voices of ordinary African women within their own spaces and this

section reveals how radical Nwapa and Efuru the character is for the time. Efuru engages in varying trading enterprises and when in a market, the voices of other market women are heard discussing everyday matters and life-changing issues. Through this strategy, Nwapa provides female exclusive spaces as African female practice where men can be discussed. This may be the reason why men deride market women and their gossiping, a female exclusionary activity within a female space, which aggravates some men. Interestingly, the gossip also enables the author to create layered narrative threads. For instance, two women's gossip reveals to Efuru that Adizua's unnamed lover is a married woman who scandalises her family and community by her feminine transgressive behaviour, mostly associated with men. She leaves her husband, commits adultery, has a 3-year-old daughter with another man, neglects her daughter who she takes unannounced to the woman telling the story, the child's maternal grandmother, who represents mother's people as reliable and supportive (pp. 54-55). The woman exercises agency when she rejects the role of wife and mother, both patriarchal impositions on women through marriage. Unsurprisingly, the society and the woman's mother disapprove her behaviour; the mother calls her "a bad daughter" (p. 55). Although not every mother meets the *nneka* and *nkpuke* female constructs, Nwapa seems to use the situation to show women's complexities.

Nwapa introduces Eneke, the village storyteller, who narrates the story of a very rich woman who lives with her only child, a very beautiful daughter who defied her instruction. This narrative centralises a female only household (p. 106) and counters the usual male image of authority, wealth, and influence. Thus, in contrast to the invisibility of powerful women in early men's writing, Nwapa introduces an opposite female narrative. Efuru's father, Nwashike, tells Efuru that her deceased mother was a remarkable woman with many positive attributes.[143] Amadiume (2015) and Acholonu (1995a) argue that some Igbo cultures honour distinguished women[144] and have dual sex-systems for men and women. Nwapa fictionalises these realities which are absent in the earlier writing of Africa pioneer men who are Igbos - Achebe,

[143] According to Nwashike, 'Efuru's mother …was so rich that she became the head of her age-group. She spent a lot of money for her-age group. Then she took titles. She was about to take the title of "Ogbue-efi" when she died' (*Efuru,* p. 150). In 1958, only few African men studied post-degree in the UK, Nwapa achieved this.

[144] Acholonu (1995a, p. 64) has includes a photograph of an Igbo woman with facial scarification which in most Igbo cultures indication marks of initiation to a position of honour reserved mostly for men, at times these signify nobility or attainment to specific prestigious titles.

Amadi, and Ekwensi. Efuru's mother seems to have been honoured in her society (as a whole) and the women section of her age-grade.[145] Nwapa herself has the 'Ogbuefi' title, usually reserved for distinguished men in Igbo societies. According to Oluwayemi Adelakun (2022) after Nwapa returned from her study in Scotland in 1958: "She accepted the chieftaincy title Ogbuefi, which literally means "killer of a cow", in Oguta.

While Achebe's *TFA* has been silent on activities of Igbo women or shows women kneeling before men, Nwapa portrays contrary views including positioning social interactions between men and women in the same age-grade. Nwapa explains that: "In Ugwuta, women have certain rights that women elsewhere, in other parts of the country [and Igboland], do not have" (Umeh and Nwapa, 1995, p. 26). Whereas many Igbo cultures (including mine) forbid women from breaking kolanut in public in the presence of men, in Ugwuta, some women can, which shows altering of patriarchal practice relative to the kolanut. As Nwapa explains, a woman can: "if old…has achieved much or if she has paid the bride price for a male relation who is in the audience" (p. 26). The inference is that by paying the bride price, deemed a male role, a woman is accorded this restricted male power.[146]

The construct of *nkpuke* and *nneka,* a mother protecting her children is presented when Ajanupa, who "has many children…several boys and girls" verbally confronts the night-time thieves outside her home who intend to break in, while her husband is away (p. 184). Instead of being immobilised by fear, her threatening voice alerts her brother-in-law who then intervenes.[147] These are dimensions of women and mothers which early pioneer men writers sanitised from their work. Nwapa introduces African men's involvement and implication in slavery using the

[145]Nwapa uses Efuru and Gilbert's first meeting to inform the reader of how the dual sex system operated. For instance, Efuru and Gilbert "…were in the same age-group. As young girls and boys, they danced together…Years ago, both the men's and the women's section of their age-group were invited by the head of the men's section to dance and drinks. (p. 84). Male and female children join and remain in the same age grade, which has male and female sections (dual sex) but meet as one at times. Various age-grades make up the society.

[146] Old women are mothers to men who dominate society, so reverence of mothers applied to old women; also, such women are post-menopausal so like men reproductively and old age signifies nearing end of life to join the ancestors.

[147] Ajunapa's courageous verbal threats directed at the thieves include: "… am waiting for you. When you finish digging, come in. I will show you what a woman can do" (p. 178).

announcement of Nwashike's death, which other women writers can follow.[148] Modupe Olaogun (2002) argues that the introduction of slavery in the writing of "Nwapa, Aidoo, [and] Head" serves a broader purpose to "gender relations, and of the position of women in particular" (pp. 171-172). Taiwo Osinubi (2014) reads *Efuru* as drawing attention to Africa's historical realities including colonial subjugation, women's dominations within indigenous slave systems and Trans-Atlantic slavery, and African and Atlantic slavery. The latter reinforce the broader and extraliterary purpose to Nwapa's inclusion of slavery. Furthermore, *Efuru* makes references to everyday colonial control of African men, which contests men's superiority. For instance, men were powerless when they failed to stop the colonial banning of indigenous alcoholic drinks while Europeans had unfettered access to their own alcoholic drinks. The ban means that an industrious woman, Nwabuzo, who brews quality alcohol, finds her livelihood outlawed. She faces colonially induced economic hardships, thus reinforcing African women scholars' argument that colonisation further disempowered women (Umeh, 1996; Ogunyemi, 1985, 1996; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994, 1993). Nwabuzo resorts to subversive strategies to outwit colonial intrusion; she continues to brew but buries her brew when she suspects a police raid is imminent, thus suggesting some form of local intelligence gathering from her too (p. 9). The author highlights a woman's resilience and agency.

Nwapa foregrounds the foundational start of female educational disenfranchisement in Africa when colonial and African patriarchies converge in their preference for male education. Fathers frowned at girls joining colonial education. Whereas 16-years-old-girls start being pressured to get married, Gilbert (Efuru's second husband) starts his colonial education at 16 years and stopped after year five due to lack of funds (pp. 84-85). A dimension to educational disparity between males and females in Africa is shown fictionally from the colonial era and the impact of fees introduced. Gilbert and Sunday agree that "boys should be given the preference" to be educated where the families' resources are meagre. Gilbert expresses the male

[148] Nwapa using the announcement of Nwashike's death explains: "The booming of the cannon was announcing the departure of a great son, the last of the generation that had direct contact with white people who exchanged their cannons, hot drinks and cheap ornaments for black slaves" (p. 203).
The reader is further told: "The white slave dealers gave the people the cannons in exchange for slaves…. The cannons were owned by very distinguished families who themselves took part actively in slave dealing" (pp. 200, 201).

chauvinist perspective, which is still prevalent in Africa,[149] that a girl's education ends "[i]n the kitchen", therefore, "it is a waste sending them to school…as they get married before the end of their training and the money is wasted" (pp. 191-192). Nwapa introduces marriage as a possible barrier to girls/women's education; once married, the husband assumes the cultural right to control his wife which continues to date.[150]

Chattelisation imposes levirate marriages (Modahunsi and Michael, 2022 p.84).[151] So, wife-inheritance as the chattelisation of married women as widows, seen in *TFA* is confirmed as an Igbo culture when Nwashike states that he inherited his wives from his father except Efuru's mother who he chose and married for love (p. 23). Women become objects for men's multipurpose uses, inheritable if the men expire but they survive. Finally, the women's dimension as goddesses is introduced through the dignified Uhamari, who is described as "a great woman…our goddess and above all she is very kind to women" (p. 153). Uhamari and Efuru who becomes Uhamari's worshipper are not treated disgracefully as priestess Chielo humiliates the worshipers at her Oracle in T*FA*; (p. 14) who are forced to crawl on their bellies to get into the shrine.[152]

The humiliation of the priestess and those consulting her happens repeatedly. This woman with authority, albeit religiously derived, must crawl on her belly, like a lizard or snake, every single time she enters to consult the god she serves or to receive worshippers. Nwapa juxtaposes two sisters, Ossai, Efuru's quiet, less proactive mother-in-law, and her younger, sister, Ajanupa, who has agency, and is extroverted, vocal, hardworking, and kind. The narrator states that Ossai lacks the:

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[149] This is shown in *The Girl with a Louding Voice.*

[150] Nwapa pinpoints 'men and cultural practices within the institutions of marriage' as significant barriers to female education and the under-maximisation of females' potentials. She articulates this through what Sunday tells Gilbert: "You are right. But it is the fault of us men. We should allow them to finish their school" (p. 192).

[151] According to Modahunsi and Michael (2022): "Levirate marriage is a marriage in which the wife of a deceased man is obliged to marry the brother of the departed husband. In levirate marriage, exogamous marriage is frowned at. A wife of the deceased man is expected to remarry in the husband's clan, preferably the brother of the widow's husband. In this case, the woman becomes a property of the deceased, inheritable by the men in the deceased family" (p.84).

[152] Achebe writes, "The way to the shrine was a round hole at the side of a hill…. Worshippers and those who came to seek knowledge from the god crawled on their belly through the hole and found themselves in a dark, endless space in the presence of Agbala" (p14).

> …fighting spirit which Ajanupa possesses in abundance. So, when her misfortune came, instead of fighting against it, as Ajanupa would have done, she succumbed to it. She surrendered everything to fate. Ajanupu would have interfered with fate… (p. 79).

Nwapa by introducing multidimensions to women subverts the prior limited image of women mainly to the wife's domain. While men's early writing omits women like Ajanupa, Nwapa's strategy of juxtaposition introduces and helps understand her through comparing women's personalities and complexities which propel their choices/actions. Equally, Efuru, Ossai and Ajanupa's conversations after Adizua leaves Efuru, shows differing advice given to Efuru and Efuru's own perspective.[153] Stratton (1994) uses the term 'pairing' to describe Nwapa's juxtaposing of women characters, noting that paring can be applied to different situations - co-wives, wife/mother, sister/sister-in-law, female friends etc. Subsequent women writers have employed this technique too. Physical violence or threats in the home, against women as wives, is introduced as a tool which African men use in controlling women (colonisers used in controlling men). Nwosu (father to Ogea, Efuru's maid) threatens the use of violence against his wife Nwabata (pp. 98, 104). Nwapa's *Efuru* clearly spread subversive messages in 1966, which rudimentary reading would have missed. It is therefore unsurprising that *Efuru'*s/Efuru's (the character) fiftieth birthday was given visible celebration and the acknowledgment that: "Efuru stands for values of African womanhood […]. The creation of the woman Efuru is immortal, and the message for women defies time" ((Zayab Alkali quoted in Paula Uimonen (2020, p. 1).

Ogot and the Patriarchal Challenging and Subversion

In Ogot's *The Promised Land* (*Promise*) Nyapol, who is cast in the role of a traditional dutiful wife, made a lot of contributions to her husband, Ochola's wealth

[153] Ossai's husband had also abandoned her, but she stayed with her five-year-old son, Adizua, till the father returned years after, disappeared again and returned in his dying days. Ossai persuades Efuru to remain in the marriage after Adizua abandons Efuru. In contrast, Ajanupa advises Efuru to give Adizua, her nephew, time and if he is not back, to make her decision. She then berates her sister Ossai's choices after her abandonments (pp. 79, 83). This indicates that Ajanupa would not have waited unlike her sister.

and takes care of him when his health deteriorates. She is described as the ideal wife (p. 101); her marriage follows the traditional processes; she conceives in due time and had a son, the preferred sex, so she faces no anxieties related to fruits of the womb. Although neither Nyapol nor Ochola choose each other, they like each other from the start and subsequently fall in love. The latter refers to Nyapol as his "beloved wife" (p. 90). Perhaps this faithfulness to patriarchal script understates Ogot's criticisms of patriarchy in the text and contributes to the limited international recognition of the radicalism of this text (and Ogot) when compared with Aidoo's and Nwapa's texts. Stratton (1994) makes a similar observation in relation to Ogot and her body of work as generally being less recognised when compared to her two contemporaries.

Ogot, however, contests patriarchy within the framework of a patriarchal ideal marriage and engages with woman as wife. She draws on graphic imagery of language to send her message about marriage from the perspective of a young bride. For instance, the very first imagery of the novel is that of Nyapol, a new bride left home-alone in her marital home/village, feeling lonely and frightened (p. 8). Ochola and Nyapol's new home is isolated, but she does not feel this while her two bridesmaids stay briefly with her. However, the morning they left, Nyapol expects Ochola to be present, but she is left alone for a long time. This presents African husbands as uncaring and their expectation of the brides to adapt seamlessly. From a feminine perspective, Nyapol becomes physically and emotionally lonely and frightened by the reality of her unfamiliar surroundings as her new life sinks in. Ogot captures Nyapol's existential thoughts: "How could she exist in this isolated village…her only companions were three old women?" (p. 8). The bravery it takes for young girls/women to leave behind all that is familiar to them to go to their husbands' family and community, wherever this may be, is rarely contemplated upon. Ogot not only foregrounds this issue, but also through Nyapol's inner thoughts envisions marriage as "a form of imprisonment in which the master would lead you where he wished" (p. 46). The marriage-prison imagery represents Ogot's subtle attack on the bedrock of patriarchy which benefits men while women as wives expect to work hard, fulfilling men's purposes whether in patrilineal or matrilineal cultures. Ogot also uses Nyapol's feeling of abandonment to criticise the colonial displacement to rural life illustrated by the trending unprecedented number of wives abandoned in the

villages fending for themselves and the children, performing the roles of both sexes, while their husbands migrate to the cities in search of white men's jobs. Increased male migration to the towns is illustrated in Ngũgĩ's *Hermit,* Soyinka's *Dwellers*, and Abrahams' *Mine Boy* discussed later in Chapter 7.

Soon after their marriage, just as Nyapol fears, despite her protestations, even "threatening him with her fingers, a thing she had been told never to do to a husband even when she is annoyed" Ochola makes the decision to relocate from Kenya to Tanganyika without consulting her. Nevertheless, Nyapol eventually follows Ochola due to patriarchal expectations to obey one's husband (p. 26). Ochola tells her: "You are coming with me. When I married you, you promised to obey me" (p. 27). As Modahunsi and Michael (2022) put it, women face: "patriarchy hegemony in the guise of submissiveness to their husbands as custom demands" (p. 86). Nyapol is socialised to obey her husband, so she is unlikely to be welcomed back to her home if she ends her marriage instead of obeying her husband. Nonetheless, the patriarchalisation script which expects a wife's docility, silence and obedience is rejected by Nyapol who continues to express her feelings and disagreement with Ochola's plan to uproot her by force. Her assertions eventually result in violence from Ochola when he: "slapped her on the face twice because he was provoked beyond control. But Nyapol did not cry. She sat where she was as stubborn as a mule, as though nothing had happened" (pp. 47-48). A young man replicates learned behaviour of the use of violence to control his wife at a time when white men use violence to control African men too (see Chapter 3).

Ogot introduces the moral duplicity and sexual exploitation of African girls by European men including priests who claim to be celibate, unlike most indigenous priests, highlighting the double oppression colonised girls faced, often overlooked. After Father Ellis squeezed the breasts of Nyapol's younger sister, Apiyo, causing her painful bruises, Nyapol advises Apiyo: "Make sure you keep your mouth shut, Apiyo. You'll never get married if the boys know that the white man has touched you" (p. 51). This reinforces the image of a female child as merchandise, which if soiled by a male African or European, will have no buyers. Apiyo's acceptance of Nyapol' advice suggests the sisters' understanding of the double patriarchal domination by both colonialists and African men. Finally, Ogot introduces the guilt and silence imposed on females while the males who sexually exploited them go

free, which contemporary writers continue to address.[154] Bolat (2022) posits that the normalisation of double oppression under colonisation made African females more vulnerable to the culture of silence when oppressed, due to feeling there is no redress. The culture of female silence continues in contemporary African societies. Even Nigeria and African male rapists of girl-children go unpunished as the victims "keep incidents of rape hidden to protect themselves from shame and public embarrassment and their parents keep silent" Nkiruka Akaenyi (2024, p. 10). Akaenyi makes the link that "global societal stigma attached to rape" merges with the cultural stigma as deterrents to victims speaking up in Nigeria (p. 10)[155] and Africa in general.

Although writing from a different East African cultural environment, Ogot's character Nyapol seems to be harnessing the domain cognate with *nneka* 'mother as supreme' in her actions. For, when Nyapol is alone and frightened, she remembers and relies on her mother's life coaching lesson. The narrator states: "Her mother had always said, "If you're frightened don't sit still, keep on doing something. The act of doing will give you back your courage" (p. 8). Nyapol starts "doing something" which assists her to overcome her first personal post-marriage crisis. Nwapa's Ajanupa similarly did not stay still but did something while frightened. Mothers' reliability and indeed superior stature to their young children is reinforced. The narrator equally uses information about the death of Achar, mother of Ochola and Agar, his younger brother, to reinforce the impact of motherlessness on children, mother's reliability, and the opposite for the father. Achar's death when Ochola was 10 years results in his father, Owiti, marrying a young woman from Achar's clan "to be mother to his two children…The newly married stepmother was unkind to them" (p. 32). This unnamed wife refuses to be used as a surrogate mother as per patriarchal assumptions of her role, so instead, "[s]he beat them [children], called them names, made them work hard in the fields without food" (p. 32) and taunted their dead mother. The narrator states: "Sometimes Owiti heard these outbursts, but…instead of quarrelling, he walked away to find peace by herding his cattle on the plains" (p. 33). This portrays a

[154] If the local boys reject a girl as a marriage-choice, this confines such a girl to permanent ridicule since marriage is seen as a compulsory destination for girl-children. The sisters are therefore silenced in the face of Father Ellis's sexual assault.

[155] Iwabi Abraham Modahunsi and Ademola Michael (2022) explore how fictional writing deals with the bondage of the female-child, which includes child-rapes, child-marriages, levirate-marriages, and male-child preference, all issues in Nigeria/Africa. There is no equivalent fiction showing the same traumas for the male-child.

neglectful father who priorities his own needs over his children's needs for care and protection. Equally, "[w]hen the children tell him of their sufferings, he simply bowed his head and wept" for his dead wife (p. 33). Ogot casts this father as weak and unprotective, thus subverting the image of fathers as strong whereas Ochola has memories of his mother's protectiveness.[156]

Owiti's kinship members step in to protect the children, but not by supporting them themselves but by pressuring Owiti to marry again, that is, to 'buy' another wife who will serve him and his children. Indeed, the third wife Chila, becomes a surrogate mother to children who begin to blossom again. Ogot pairs or juxtaposes the co-wives' approaches to the imposed expectations to be 'mother' to the motherless children. She also highlights the father's people's self-centred support which contrasts with the maternal grandmother personally caring for the 3-year-old daughter who needed support. Ogot points out that the first stepmother is from the clan of Ochola's father, implying relationship through the father's side as opposed to the mother's side, *babbeere* or *ofu ala* extended relations.

Ogot highlights a young wife Aziza's subversive behaviour of 'not listening' as her resistance to total male-control which is infuriating her much older husband who routinely beats her, uses her as a domestic and sex slave; this is a critique of society which condones such unequal marriages.[157]

Aidoo and the Patriarchal Challenging and Subversion

Like Nyapol's assertiveness in the latter part of her marriage, in Aidoo's *Dilemma*, Eulalie as a wife, takes control of her womb, the organ which men and their relatives believe is purchased with the bride price. In this context, however, what strengthens Eulalie's claim to control her womb is that no bride price is paid, specifically because she is from the USA where African American women do not have to deal with

[156] The reader also learns of Ochola's reverence for his deceased mother who will always be in his thoughts. (p. 39). Ochola compliments Nyapol, "You cook just like my mother used to, when she was alive" (p. 126) is an acknowledgment of his mother's role.

[157] The abusive husband tells Aziza that hers is to serve him, by looking after his things. 'How often have I tried to knock this into your head, and you still won't listen to me.'" (p. 125). The much older husband, described as the Medicine man, beat his wife, Aziza, described as a "very small and thin" young woman (p 91). Poignantly, when beaten, Aziza would give a "terrified cry…[but] never cried for long, simply because there was nobody who could go to her rescue" (p. 124 -125). Ogot indicts her society for allowing this.

African-style patriarchal customs. While polygamous marriages are prevalent in Ghanaian cultures, the norm in USA is monogamy, so multiple women are not competing for one husband. Eulalie, who says that African women are silenced but she will not be, is Ato's equal in their personal relationship. In an argument after Ato scolds Eulalie for minimising the importance of hers/his university degrees, Eulalie would not allow Ato to silence her, reminding him she is born to speak, and challenging Ato who then admits that African women speak but "they don't run on" as Eulalie does.

On another level, Eulalie's boldness over her right to speak challenges and unnerves Ato, forcing him to make a concession to Eulalie's request that she "needed a couple of years to settle down" (p. 27) after marriage before having children, unheard of then in the African context.[158] That Eulalie makes the decision to get pregnant shows that Aidoo is advocating for a woman's right to manage her body and choose when to subject her body to the rigours of pregnancy and childbirth. Ato's concession to delay pregnancy is significant – it shows his willingness to change his perspective, meaning that men can change. However, it is questionable from the text whether Ato's people can do the same. Aidoo, like Nwapa and Ogot, seems to be highlighting the concept of *nneka,* 'mother as supreme' in the sense that Eulalie, who is missing her mother says "I wish you were not dead…I wish you here right here… (p.24). She wants her mother who suffered for her to share her joy.[159]

It is unrealistic to expect Eulalie not to face obstacles from both African men and women. Aidoo uses the idea of a woman without a tribe to reinforce the constructed nature of African tribes and female oppressions especially of wives within tribes. When asked about his wife's tribe, Ato tells Nana, grandmother: "She has no tribe. My wife comes from America" (p. 17). Eulalie's 'tribelessness', which liberates her from some of the shackles of African traditions, also proves negative for Eulalie when Ato's family members lament that he married a slave (p. 18), or when the village women refer to her as "Black-white woman. A stranger and a slave" (p. 22). Possibly, in this state where she is neither an African nor a white woman, Eulalie is in Bhabha's 'third space' (1994), which is conceptualised in post-colonial

[158] A baby is expected after 9 months or within the year at the latest.
[159] Eulalie remembers her mother's sacrifices, toiling in domestic cleaning jobs, to fund her education, while in Ghana, Ato has two male servants to see to their domestic chores. Eulalie wanted her mother to have experienced this with her.

discourse as negotiated space, neither the coloniser nor the colonised space. Indeed Abou-Agag (2017) likens Ato and Eulalie's cultural relationship of African and African American, to West (European) and East (Oriental) cultural relationship.[160] Each relationship is fraught with peculiar difficulties with one-party claiming superiority; Ato's people, Africans, and the west respectively. But Eulalie's in-between or "third space" position enabled her to challenge African patriarchal imposition unlike a socialised indigenous woman could.

By returning Eulalie to Africa, Aidoo, like Nwapa, introduces Atlantic slavery using imagery suggestive of the British involvement and Africans' complicity (Helen Gilbert, 2001, p. 98). African men predominantly orchestrated women's degrading sufferings (hook, 2014; Davis, 1983). In *Anowa* set in 1870s, a pre-colonial version of *Efuru*, Aidoo focuses on the traditional African bride, Anowa who challenges the docile representation of female characters. Anowa, like Efuru, is very beautiful; many men want to marry her; she marries for love a poor young man (Kofi) who cannot pay her bride price, and the marriage fails after Kofi has economically exploited her. The difference is that Anowa and Kofi died tragically. Interestingly, Anowa's insinuation that Kofi is impotent, caused by selling his manhood through slave trading, drives him to suicide as his manhood is stripped.[161] Aidoo, as well as castigating male slave dealers or collaborators as lacking manhood, also contests the blaming of women as solely responsible for childlessness. Anowa and Efuru, due to their cultural socialisation are perceptively open to their husbands taking other wives to produce children, especially male children. Both Anowa and Efuru's treatment by their respective husbands communicate to young girls/women, that when folklores end with the 'headstrong' bride realising she married the 'devil', evil man, ghost' this is a metaphor to show what some husbands can become in marriages. Unlike pioneer men, pioneer women writers discussed in this study create more female rounded characters with agency who challenge patriarchal assumptions in various ways.

[160] Indeed Abou-Agag (2017) seems to liken the East/Oriental and West/European cultural relationship to Ato and Eulalie's relationship, of African/American, each relationship is fraught with difficulties.

[161]Impotence is as shameful as barrenness; hence men prefer to place the blame for childlessness on women not themselves.

Finally, through Eulalie, Aidoo sows the idea of the western diaspora as a potential liberatory environment for African women. Nwapa's stay in 1958 in Scotland no doubt resulted in consciousness that there is nothing intrinsically superior about African men since racism would have levelled African men and women to second class position. Although Eulalie's foreign status creates extra biases contributing to her unemployment, Aidoo highlights that African women can face this too.

Sutherland and the Patriarchal Challenging and Subversion

Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* (*Anansewa*) represents a contemporary repackaging of a common folklore as a means of exposing new forms of patriarchy in modern Ghana. The folkloric theme addresses the old patriarchal issues of marrying off young women/girls and the question of the father's assumption to determine the marriage choice. Thus, young women/girls who insist on choosing their husbands transgress patriarchy and society. A common feature of African folklore is the use of an animal trickster character (tortoise, hyena, hare, or spider) in moralising behaviours like greed, wickedness, trickiness which usually back-fires. Mireku-Gyimah (2013) explains that in Akan folklore, Ananse is the witty spider known for trickery/cheating while Sutherland's addition of an English name - George Kweku Ananse, is part of the modernisation of the folklore. 'George' can also be interpreted as the author's perception of European colonisers in Ghana as trickers.[162] In the play, the human trickster is Ananse, Anansewa's father and the author uses allegory and comedy to make the text's critique of Ananse and the contemporary society accessible to the audience. Hence, the author, narrator, and audience laugh at Ananse as his trickery unravel while morals and serious messages of the society are affirmed.

Ananse makes a great effort to attract the richest suitor for his daughter, reinforcing the image of daughters as chattel which fathers leverage as goods for

[162] European colonisers also believed they were wiser than Africans who were tricked into giving their away land. Achebe states in *TFA,* that Africans had the land and the Europeans the Bible, Africans closed their eyes to pray, on opening their eyes, they had the Bible and Europeans their land. For non-fictionalised discussions of Africans' and other indigenous peoples' land taken, such as via purported treaties, doctrine of discovery, see Bonny Ibhawoh, 2023; Robert J. Miller and Olivia Stitz, 2021). Treaties with peoples who did not understand European languages or legal practices, and Europeans' right to keep 'discovered land' along with the inhabitants.

bride-price and other benefits to them. Several critics including Baidoo (2022), Annin Felicia and Abrefa Amma Adoma (2015) and Mireku-Gyimah (2013) agree that Anansewa is exploited and dominated because Ghanaian patriarchal structures enable her father to do so. Sutherland cleverly creates a comical twist so that instead of a headstrong girl transgressing patriarchal expectations, it is the father plotting the marriage, employing trickery and emotional manipulative strategies over his daughter. The earlier female constructs of fathers as unprotective, seen with Ochola's father is reinforced by Ananse's self-centred and exploitative motive towards Anansewa, who is motherless.

Sutherland raises the twin issues of 'girl-marriage' and high bride-price or bride-wealth which make the bride/wife, and her family feel indebted to the son-in-law (Baidoo, 2022). Although Baidoo focuses on girl-child marriage, at 20 years, Anansewa is not a child but her economic dependence on her father places her notionally in a girl's position and equally exposes her to chattelisation by a poor parent. Chapter 2 also shows that economically poor white girl-children were objects of sex-trafficking in the United Kingdom, hence the study argues that economically poor females are most exposed to patriarchal oppressions due to the limited resources to cushion the impact unlike their economically wealthy contemporaries. Hence, as discussed in Chapter 2, African women (feminists, womanists) tend to link economic emancipation of women to addressing gendered issues. Ananse 'betroths' Anansewa to multiple potential older husbands, in a polygamous marriage, in effect a criticism of father/male authority in modern Ghana. The timing and manner of Ananse's execution of his plan indicates that he has contemplated it beforehand but waits for the most opportune timing. He uses the threat of not finishing her education to manipulate Anansewa. Thus, a modern twist and new location of patriarchal oppression is linked to the education or lack of for girls/women.

Like Anowa, Efuru, or Nyapol, Anansewa is also a beautiful girl. Beauty is used by women writers to highlight that it is such females who men/husbands most desire to possess and control in the institution of marriage and use as trophies. These young women, including Eulalie, are all vocal, although they face entrenched patriarchal structures. Ananse, a poor man, is initially commendable for sending his daughter to a secretarial school for post-primary education, although it is

demonstrated later that his motive is to get good bride price.[163] The narrator cautions that his plan "to select a husband for his daughter, and at the same time as a means of getting maintenance for both of them, [the plan] is full of snares" (p. 28). Anansewa questions and confronts her father, "…Oh, my father is selling me…. I will not let you sell me like some parcel to a customer (pp.19- 20). The sale alludes to her distaste of bride-price which conveys how a girl can feel "bought", feeling which men are spared in society. The key message is that Anansewa raises her voices against male oppression. Whether she is heard or structurally overridden is another matter, but voices of protests must continue to be raised. This is part of telling the female story because Hernandez *et al*. state: "…if we don't tell our stories who will speak out for us… (2011, pp. xx-xxi). Ananse's actions show a father's economic maximisation of his daughter as human chattel to the highest buying husband.[164] It is unsurprising that Efuru, Anowa, and Eulalie choose poor African men, and Nyapol marries one too, subverting the fathers' preference for wealthy sons-in-law.

Finally, according to Mireku-Gyimah, in Akan folklore, Ananse has four sons, no daughter, and his wife is the only female he relates to in his personal space. In Sutherland's version Ananse has only a female child; four females who he relates with are: "Anansewa, Christie, Aya and Ekuwa instead of the only woman Afo … known as Ananse's wife" (Mireku-Gyimah, 2013, p.179). Although Mireku-Gyimah's observations are from the perspective of Sutherland's creative process, these represent Sutherland's subversion of the patriarchal underpinning to this perennial Akan folklore. The patriarchal messages that males and sons are worth more than females and daughters are reversed and subverted by replacing four sons with one daughter. Furthermore, instead of entrenching the male image of Ananse in folktale as "scheming to possess and control all the wisdom of the world", Ananse, the human, is exposed as a weak, shameless, and deceitful father who during his mental disorientation relied on two women's actions (Christine and Anansewa) to save him. Equally, Sutherland provides the audience with a female-child only family, without a stepmother and half-siblings as commonly happens in Africa, as such fathers marry

[163] The Secretary Schools which offered typing and office related skills were a much cheaper alternative to post-primary education to secondary school in Africa before the 1980s. They were introduced to Ghana in 1952. Equally because of the higher school fees and longer course duration of secondary school, many patriarchal families invested in their sons but not daughters who were expected to marry as soon as permissible.

[164] See Chapter 2. While in the past fathers in the UK contracted marriages for their daughters from 12 years, today the practice has stopped but it continues in Africa.

again. A woman-centred interpretation of the play is that if men, as fathers, care only about themselves – women should not expect their husbands, unrelated to them, to be different. This is a warning to African women feminists/womanists seeking the consent and collaboration of men, as a group, the same group oppressing women trans generationally.

Ending the Rural Heroines of the 1960s/1970s: Buchi Emecheta.

Arguably, Emecheta is a literary icon in African literature who happens to be female, from the timing of her work, impact, quantity, quality, breath, and locations (diaspora and Africa) and this is why she is given more space in this chapter and study. Emecheta in an interview with Ezeigbo (1993) commented on the women from her culture and male writers who have misrepresented African women in their works: "Igbo women survived despite all odds. Achebe is an excellent writer, but I feel bad about his women and all those other male writers who are creating colourless women" (Ezeigbo 1993, p. 16 quoted in Ezeigbo, 1996, p. 23).

Emecheta's writing, over time, has challenged Achebe's *TFA* the most, through providing a varying picture of Igbo women's lives erasing some of the dented images of docile Igbo women. Her fiction, especially *The Joys* exposes the callousness and emasculation of pre and colonial African men characters respectively. These are also the men characters in pioneer men's early texts. Emecheta, as a person, epitomises an Igbo woman who survives against all the odds from patriarchal oppressive conditions, discussed in Chapter 5.[165] Emecheta created some women characters who: "…were able to overcome the limitations of their positions in patriarchy through their intelligence, resourcefulness and business acumen; through the 'checks and balances' in the socio-political and economic system…" (Ezeigbo, 1996, p. 19).

Patriarchal institutions which oppress women operated in Nigeria the 1970s and continue today to varying degrees.[166] Emecheta indicates her experiences, witnesses, or observations of patriarchal oppressive environments when she

[165] Emecheta's personal life is chronicled in her first novel, a semi-autobiographical, *Second Class Citizen*, written in the United Kingdom which charts her own life from Nigeria to the United Kingdom.
[166] Some women and girls are oppressed daily still within their families while many face faceless structural limitation.

explains in her autobiographical work[167] that her life experiences contribute to her writing. As a writer whose life traverses Africa and the United Kingdom diaspora, she is in a unique position of seeing the 'two worlds' of African women. Influenced by Nwapa's writing, Emecheta's early texts follow her own life and that of her family members.[168] For instance, for her own life-story is seen *In the Ditch* (1972) and *Second-Class Citizen* (1974); her mother's story is in *The Slave Girl* (1977), while *The Bride Price (1976)* highlights the chattelisation of females.

T*he Joys* challenges and criticises African, particularly Igbo patriarchal assumptions by showing the ugly side and contra-wise journey of motherhood. *The Joys* shatters the African patriarchal illusion of motherhood as the ultimate joy of every woman (Begum, 2016; Stratton, 1994). Nnu Ego's reality of motherhood contrasts with the idealised normative version. When Nnu Ego declares: "I don't know how to be anything else but a mother" (p. 222), this is a patriarchal trope, which rings hollow given her sufferings. She spends years chasing motherhood and dies disappointed. Her first failed marriage is due to childlessness, for which her first husband, Amatokwu, treats her cruelly. She endures an arranged marriage to a stranger, Nnaife, who physically disgusted her at first sight. Her father, the great Agabdi, chose Amatokwu and Nnaife, so Emecheta contests the wisdom of this great man and other men doing the same. After seeing Nnaife, Nnu Ego "felt like bursting into tears", and returning home but she knew her father would not welcome her (p. 43); some brides similarly would have felt obligated to stay married out of cultural pressure. Consequently, she accepts Nnaife, "a man with a belly like a pregnant cow, wobbling…short…jelly of a man" (p. 42). Nnu Ego likens Nnaife's physique to "living with a middle-aged woman!" (p. 42; in contrast Achebe portrays an ultra-masculine image of Okonkwo). Nnu Ego despises Nnaife's job as the white master/mistress, the Meers' washerman, a feminine job (p. 47).[169] Indeed Emecheta, by showing African men as servants to the colonial masters, positions them in feminine spaces thereby contesting the natural superiority claimed by

[167] See Emecheta's *Head Above Water*, 1986, p. 1.

[168] Emecheta in both *In the Ditch* (1972) and *Second-Class Citizen* (1974) shows where Emecheta's husband, Sylvester, and the character Adah's husband, Francis, burnt the first novel, *The Bride Price,* which Emecheta and Adah wrote. The husbands burnt the manuscripts on the basis that women do not write. Both Emecheta and Adah challenge their husbands with the fact that Flora Nwapa is a woman, and she writes.

[169] Nnu Ego feels humiliated by Nnaife's job and does not hide her disgust. He washes "…all manner of articles, towels, women's nightdresses and what-have-you…" She asks him to "find a more respectable job" (p. 47).

men.[170] Cordelia, whose husband, Ubani, is a cook, surmises that: "…Men here are too busy being white men's servants to be men…Their manhood has been taken from them… they don't know it… They are all slaves, including us. If their masters treat them badly, they take it out on us" (p. 51). This reinforces the argument in Chapters 2 and 3 that colonisation disrupted men's claim of natural superiority and men lashed out at women. This disruption is further seen when Nnaife and other men are forcibly conscripted to the British World War 2 effort; he was away for five years (pp. 146-147).

Ego becomes a mother with Nnaife. Tragically, she loses her first baby, a boy, the preferred sex, over which she attempts suicide but survives (pp. 7-9); the action highlights her desperation for motherhood, the patriarchal ideal. She soon realises the price to pay as wife who is also a mother. Nnu Ego then has seven children, three sons and four daughters and within a life of constant toiling, on the edge of poverty, she provides an *nkpuke* which discriminated between her male and female children. She prioritises, as does Nnaife, the needs of the male children including educationally while her daughters have no formal education[171] as they are girls who would marry out. This mentality perpetuates the educational deprivation of female children and elevation of males in the new colonial context. Her pride and first son, Oshia, gets a scholarship, goes to study science in the United States, and forgets his mother and family. Nnu Ego's hopes of reaping the 'rewards of seniority' (Davies, 1994) through a prosperous educated elite son fails to materialism. She invests in the patriarchal constructs which overvalue male-children and consider them the family's future saviours but finds these to be illusions. This contests the patriarchal constructs of motherhood. Although Oshia's behaviour runs contrary to the expected behaviour towards one's mother, Okonkwo and Achebe first showed this possibility through the degrading silencing of Okonkwo's mother. It becomes clear during Nnaife's court trial that at a point, "she [Nnu Ego] was doing nearly all the providing…" for her children.[172] Even Nnu Ego's son, Adim, tells her: "You have

[170] Nnu Ego and Cordelia's reactions to having feminised husbands will be shared with some wives.
[171] Nnu Ego's twin daughters Taiwo and Kehinde, "did not go to school" (p. 203). Nnu Ego says to them: "But you are girls"! They are boys… (p 176). She believes that sons go to school then lift the family and continue the family name.
[172] When Nnaife's attempts to kill his daughter's boyfriend lands him in court, his lawyer in presenting his good character also claims he cares for his family. However, the prosecuting lawyer questions Nnu Ego who tells the court the extent of her direct contributions - she pays for Adim's school fees, provides food, clothing especially while Nnaife was away for 5 years on forced conscription to the

worked too hard all your life" (p. 222). Despite her hard work her family lived on the poverty line.[173]

Although Nnu Ego was not "physically poor; her daughters sent her help once in a while" (p. 224); her sacrifices, plus the emotional disappointments from her sons' neglect result in her mental breakdown and "[s]he died quietly by the roadside, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her" (p. 224). Emecheta, thus, challenges the Igbo/African patriarchal worldview that having many children, sons fulfil a woman and brings her joys (Ezeigbo, 1996; Palmer, 1983; Shalini Nadaswaran, 2012). Perhaps, the image of a mother's death, especially in Nnu Ego's circumstances, rancour with some women critics who respectively claim that Emecheta "punishes" or "sacrifices" her female protagonists (Stratton, 1994, p. 5; Umeh, 1996, p. xxxiv). Nadaswaran (2012,) suggests that the portrayal of females' characters as successful or unsuccessful "does not constitute reward or punishment of characters" (p. 147). The study agrees as Emecheta also presents women, just like herself and Adaku, Nnu Ego's co-wife, who worked against the odds to succeed.

Pairing or juxtaposing co-wives, Adaku and Nnu Ego, highlights their choices albeit within restricted circumstances. Adaku is a young woman, one of the three wives who Nnaife inherited;[174] the senior wife, Adankwo, describes Adaku as ambitious, men's early writing mostly omitted such women. On facing oppression within the home from Nnaife and Nnu Ego, Adaku leaves the family with her daughters (p. 168). She vows to educate her daughters when girls' education is deemed of no value (p. 166); she puts them in a convent school when she becomes a successful businesswoman, and generously supports Taiwo's marriage, Nnu Ego's daughter (p. 221). In contrast, Nnu Ego continues accepting inferior status for herself and her female children (p. 186). Adaku's choices equally introduce a new way of looking at girls as valued, future wives and mothers. It is not surprising that Palmer (1983) comments that Adaku "resolutely rebels against convention and the restrictive

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British army for World War 2. (p. 217). Nnu Ego tells the court that because Nnaife owns her, anything she does is him doing it.

[173] Nnu Ego is not consistently trading. As Ona's daughter, her father Agbadi's deceased true love, he pampered Nnu Ego who did not expect hardship in life.

[174] Nnaife inherits three of his older brother's wives including Adaku, a young pretty woman with one daughter of 4 years. Adaku's first baby with Nnaife, a boy, died before she has two daughters with him. Adankwo, senior wife, refuses to join Nnaife in Lagos and arranges for a 16-year-old wife for him (a middle-aged man). The second wife who has no child decided to return to her home citing mistreatment, a view that is welcomed by her in-law since she is deemed to be troublesome.

nature of an unfair polygamous system and determines to make her own way in this male-dominated world" (p. 49). He considers Aduaku as a forerunner of "female liberation and emancipation" (p. 49). Ironically, the woman making such significant changes is chattelised as a widow, inherited as a property in levirate marriage.

Unsurprisingly, widows who are mothers tend to accept levirate marriages mostly likely to protect their children as part of the *nneka* principle, otherwise they leave without the children who belong to their fathers' family. Adankwo refuses to join Nnaife's family, rather she buys herself out by procuring a 16-year-old-girl wife for Nnaife to replace her; so, an older woman chattelises a girl to save herself and a poor man gets another wife. Diop (1989), a male authority on African patriarchy/matriarchy, adumbrates that African women were happy within patriarchal arrangements, which includes husband-sharing. However, Emecheta exposes Nnu Ego's feelings of humiliation and anger, forced by culture to share a husband when she prefers a monogamous marriage.[175] She is frustrated at the expectation that she plays the 'strong, silent, cheerful 'senior' wife including preparing the matrimonial bed for the husband and his new wife (p. 23). This is like Ochola's father's expectation that whoever he marries will dutifully play the role of mother his two sons. Emecheta, as a woman, connects with Nnu Ego's inner-feelings, despite any outward presentation, while Achebe, a male writer, in *TFA* glosses over wife-inheritance as an inconsequential female experience, rather to show Okonkwo is self-made.

The manner of Adaku's arrival shows gross disrespect to Nnu Ego, who comes home one day and sees Adaku and Dumbi, her daughter on her doorstep. Like Emecheta as a child, Dumbi experiences her mother being inherited. In this situation a man inherits a young woman, sleeps with her the same night on the bed he shares with his now 'senior' wife. Adaku's arrival immediately means that marital sex goes on rota thereby solidifying male supremacy and sexual double standards of men having sanctioned multiple sexual partners unlike their wives. In presenting this relationship in the novel, Emechata portrays the inherent irresponsibility in wife inheritance custom because Nnanife, a poor man, inherited wives he cannot care for. So, from her diaspora space in the UK, Emecheta takes a more objective view of

[175] Emecheta highlights that while some women do not want polygamous marriages others are happy with the arrangement since they regard it as beneficial to their independence.

Igbo patriarchal norms, culture and cosmopolitan urban context focusing mostly on the dimension of women as wives, then mothers and daughters. Emecheta points to Aduaku's daughters as the future while reflecting on the acculturalisation and socialisation which chained Nnu Ego to her father's image of African womanhood, subconsciously dictating her decisions.

Ogunyemi (1985) critically describes Emecheta's writing as uncharacteristic of African-centred womanist novels when she states that "Emecheta's destruction of her heroines is a feminist trait that can be partly attributed to the narcissism on the part of the writer" (p. 67). While I agree that Emecheta does not write as the typical Nigerian writer of her time, Ogunyemi's negation and trivialisation of Adah's triumphs against African patriarchy and diaspora racism that resonates with the author's experience are misunderstandings of the latter's literary strategy. Ogunyemi's womanistic perspective on women's rights, which some women continue to share, demands collaboration with, and approval from men (see Chapter 2). However, such a view is problematic as it resolutely minimises men's ongoing oppression of women and men's historical roles as architects of women's derogation in internal and international enslavement and other cruel cultural practices. Women must seek to secure themselves from degradation so their daughters can have different experiences. The men do this for their sons, who generationally inherit the domination of their female peers. Emecheta, having had personal negative cultural patriarchal experiences including as a poor girl-child in Africa, explores the negative and cruel impacts on women, the additional burdens from colonisation, women who resist, survive, or are crushed. Umeh states that: "[b]y focusing on women issues, Emecheta exposes oppressive relationships that are sanctioned by myths and customs…" (1996, p. xxvi). The study argues that the assumption of men's natural superiority, which fuels patriarchal practices, is the biggest myth. Emecheta's *The Joys d*emonstrates her views of the potential harms to girls/women from African patriarchal practices based on myths and it is for women to adapt strategies to resist and overcome.

Personalised Fighters and Millennium Women Writers: Taboo-less Radicals without Boundaries.

Personalised women writers create women characters who, amongst others, challenge personalised patriarchal oppression like widowhood (Liking, Bâ, Makumbi), female education disenfranchisement (Dangarembga) and marital rape[176] (Aidoo). Millennium writers through gendered role-reversal contest gendered performativity (Oyedepo, Onwueme), girl-child marriages as legalised rapes which link with female-child educational disenfranchisement and other forms of rape. The personalisation of patriarchal resistance in a setting where pressure for cultural conformity is most on women is widowhood as discussed in Chapter 1. Liking's *Power* demonstrates a rural woman's revolt against widowhood rituals, which could have culminated in Ngond being buried with her husband, Ntep (p. 49).[177]

Liking's character, Ngond, maintains her refusal to undergo widow ritual processes that are significant since these bring equilibrium to the society. Before Ntep's death, Ngond, although, aware of her victimisation but remains in the abusive marriage because of her socialisation and cultural normalisation of wives' pains under patriarchy. To her, the villagers murdered Ntep when they imprisoned him in their "wretched traditions…exploited him in the name of tradition…[and] lived on him like parasites" (p. 39). In the end, when Ntep dies, she refuses to perform widow rituals. The character, Old Man, volunteers to take Ngond's position so that catastrophe does not befall the village: "Put a mourning dress on me. I am the widow of Ntep…" (p. 31) subsequently he wears this (p. 49). The author raises the question why women should be subjected to humiliating rituals when there is an alternative or in the absence of the equivalent rituals for widowers.[178] Perhaps, Liking, through Ngond, suggests that the men and society expect the oppressive

[176] As chattels, white women in the UK like African women belonged to their husbands and upon marriage were presumed to have given a lifetime consent to sex. This practice in Ghana (and Africa) is challenged by Aidoo in *Changes* (1991). The practice was outlawed in the UK in 1992. See Law Commission (1992) *Criminal Law: Rape within Marriage* (Law Com. No. 205). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-law-rape-within-marriage and 'SW v United Kingdom' (1995), Judgement, Application No 20166/92, A/355-B, European Court of Human Rights [ECHR]. https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-57965

[177] The widowhood rites include that she is stripped naked and rubbed with ashes, excluded from interaction with other women, lying naked on the bare floor, and sometimes being buried alive beside her late husband. The village's influential character THIRD MAN plans that the custom of burying husbands with their favourite wives will apply to Ngond, Ntep's only wife. (p. 49).

[178] Although the argument may be that a man with several wives may have to go through this ritual several times, but why not if all the widows are expected to do so for one man.

practices to continue because women do not challenge practices enough or other women force their compliance. For instance, the Old Woman chides Ngond, “Don't you know tradition anymore, oh! wife of Ntep, or do you violate it or purpose to deride it. Are we performing a ritual for the dead, a mourning rite, or ritual ceremonies? ... have you decided to deprive us of everything.” (p. 36). This woman is more interested in Ngond keeping tradition. Similarly, Omo, the 68-year-old women leader in *Reigns!* insists on the king’s widows completing rituals including dancing naked in the market square to protest their innocence over his death because it is “…tradition as we meet it. Tradition as handed down to us”. Female regent Wazobia, 30-years-old, vetoes this practice. Ngond challenged the villagers.

In many African cultures, the-in-laws often accuse widows of killing their husbands, putting wives on the defensive. Pre-emptively, Ngond scoffs at such accusation with: “Oh yes! I, slave girl, wife of Ntep, I have killed my husband” (p. 28). Ngond is treated and viewed as Ntep’s slave, the former is a noble (p. 36). Transgressively, Ngond challenges the villagers who expect her compliance: “Bury him! Hurry up, before he starts decomposing. He was dirt. He does not deserve to be mourned. Bury him! Hurry up, you will have your feast” (p. 30). The clan’s sycophantic relationship with Ntep is mocked with the promise of a post-burial “feast”. Ngond voices her challenge of patriarchy in her refusal to mourn a husband who treated her badly while his clan condoned this, especially men, honoured him and revelled in his generosity, the latter from appropriation of Ngond’s wealth and health (p. 30). She accuses the society of collusion in her oppression: “All of you here have seen me climb the palm-wine …. All of you here have seen me clear my farms, and all of you here have spent at least one whole day with Ntep [as]...gossips, idlers and drunkards …” (p. 34).

In a role reversal, Ngond labours with manly tasks while Ntep gossips, deemed women’s practice.[179] The chattelisation of wives as men’s property bought with bride price legitimises husbands’ abuses of wives for some men (Tasara Muguti and Nyasha Mlambo, 2021, p. 68.) Chattelisation equally legitimises the image of wife as the object of a husband’s frustration (Ogunyemi, 1996). Ngond highlights

[179] Agofure (2021, p. 128 in Uchendu and Edeagu, eds.) applies the Marxist-feminist argument asserting that the toiling wives/mothers are not seen as workers to women’s disadvantage. He posits that: “Patriarchal ideology which merely views women as wives and mothers rather than as workers, disinherit, render them property-less and perpetuates male domination” (p. 28).

that she was beaten (p. 34), “made to produce ten children” while toiling (p. 36) and concludes that "he [Ntep] exploited my health and myself…” (p. 36). She bravely confronts the villagers.

In contrast to Ngond, Bâ’s Ramatoulaye in *Letter*, at fifty years (p. 69) accepts the oppressive widowhood rituals imposed on her. Bâ’s *Letter* juxtaposes two women, Ramatoulaye, the protagonist, and Aissatou, her best friend, thereby visually contrasting their choices as seen with Nnu Ego and Adaku. Whereas the latter are illiterate, rural women, whose arranged marriages take to the town, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou are city educated women. After choosing and marrying their husbands, Modou and Mawdo respectively, for love and as equals, they lived materially comfortably until the men traded them in for younger wives; Aissatou leaves her marriage.[180] Unlike the rural Efuru and Anowa who are open to second wives, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou resent the second marriages, showing that educated women’s desire equality in an exclusive relationship[181] but unfortunately the educated men are still surrounded with the paraphernalia of patriarchal privileges which are strong to resist. Crucial to the dynamics of these relationship is the issue of Efuru and Anowa childlessness, making them societal failures as wives. In contrast, Ramatoulaye has twelve children (fe/males), and Aissatou has four sons, the preferred sex. Bâ uses twelve children and four sons to show the unreliability of men and that women wearing their wombs/bodies with multiple childbirths make no difference to men who want polygamous marriages. Bâ also makes the point that childlessness or all female-children is not the core reason when such women are oppressed, rather men’s internalised modelling of wives as disposables from their patriarchalisation, socialisation, or indoctrination. Chapter 1 discussed that Islamic religion impacted on Africa indigenous cultures. It codifies that men can marry up to four wives at a time, a man can easily divorce and replace wives as often as desired; educated Muslim men/women know this. Bâ raises awareness for non-Muslim

[180] After thirty years of marriage and twelve children, Ramatoulaye’s husband, Modou, marries a second wife, Binetou, the friend of Ramatoulaye and Modou’s daughter showing how low men can stoop, for younger flesh. Aissatou’s husband, Mawdo, happily bows to the pressure from his mother, Nabou, to marry another wife, also Nabou. He is ready to maintain a polygamous tradition but not Aissatou. Nabou’s (Mawdo’s mother) behaviour shows how women can collude in supporting the oppressive practice against their sex.

[181] Nnu Ego’s situation is different in so far as a patriarchal structure imposed three wives on Nnaife which he was happy to accept. He did not go seeking his inherited wives.

African women that their Muslim sisters can face triple patriarchal oppression – Islamic, colonial/post-colonial, and indigenous instead of the last two.

Employing *nneka* mother-protectiveness, this study re-reads Ramatoulaye's decision to stay in her marriage as an action to protect her children.[182] Leaving could have left Ramatoulaye's children, particularly those in secondary and primary schools worse off if they faced financial and accommodation difficulties (pp. 71-75).[183] With a demonstrable self-centred husband in possession of the house deeds, if Ramatoulaye had left, Modou could have claimed the house or sold it giving Ramatoulaye none or insufficient funds to buy a similar affluent house to live in with her children. He could have given the fund to Binetou (his new wife and former friend of his daughter) and her greedy mother, derogatively called Lady-mother-in-law, who chattelised her daughter for material wealth like Anansewa's father.

The above view on *nneka* is supported using conversations between mother and daughter in millennium writer Makumbi's *The First* Woman (*First)* (pp. 146-148). Nnambi complains to her mother that her husband, Tom, imposed on her the care of Kirabo, his child with another woman, an imposition she rejects. Mama explains why she stayed in a very abusive and humiliating marriage with Nnambi's father as - going back to her father's house with eight children was not an option, nor abandoning them to another woman; besides petty trade would not have sustained the children; while in staying her children benefited as he was "a good father to you all" (p. 147) and Nnambi was his father's princess. As Nnambi's marriage deteriorates due to her refusal to play the expected surrogate mother role to Karibo, Tom orders her: "Tomorrow, pack your bags and go back to your parents…Take whatever property you wish, but don't touch my children" (p. 152). This completes the persisting image of wife as objects to be used and returned if a problem arises. There is no mention of bride price return though. Most wives will find unwelcoming parents, especially fathers, due to the stigma of failed marriage and pressure to return bride price but, according to Nnambi's mother, her father wants her to leave if unhappy as no man should make his princess cry (p. 148). The author introduces a

[182] Even domestic animals and birds like dogs, cats, chickens protect their young against humans until they leave the 'nest' to fend for themselves.

[183] For instance, mentioning of the following indicates Ramatoulaye's ongoing mothering roles - Ousmane is 6 years, Omar 8 years, Mawdow Fall is in secondary school, twins Amy and Awa are still young, and three adult children leaving with their mother; besides Dada the oldest who is married (p.71, 72, 75).

new mindset for men/fathers, or this daughter reminds him of his beloved mother given that Ogunyemi (1996, p. 76) argues that fathers love their daughters who they see as "extensions" of their beloved mothers; a wife, predominantly holds no blood connection.

In *Ogadinma*, Ogadinma's experiences confirm that lack of support for wives outside marriages and number of children can chain wives in marriages. The study finds that the fewer children rendered motherless if a mother leaves, the less guilty the mother feels, so the more likely to leave abusive marriages. The first time Ogadinma's husband, Tobe, beats her, she returns to her father, Osita, the next day (p. 139), but he brings her back to Tobe, indicating that Ogadinma, a chattel, now belongs to the former. Although angry with her father for prioritising her marriage continuing over her safety, she returns (pp. 141-142, 146). As she becomes more fearful of Tobe, Ogadinma believes that: "she could never run; there was no place to run to; there was no one to run to" (p. 173). After nearly killing her and inducing forced labour, her baby son, is saved by emergency caesarean (pp. 195-197), Ogadinma makes up her mind to leave. She eventually leaves (pp. 202, 203), mirroring Ogadinma's own abandonment as an infant by her mother.[184] Even in the UK, domestic violence and homicides against women by men of all races, remain a major concern (Smith, Williams and Mullane, 2014).[185] Patriarchal societies are harsh towards wives like Ogadinma and her mother, who leave voluntarily because they transgress normative wisdom, set 'bad' examples, which if others follow, can upend society. A good wife endures oppression, "writhes in the servility attached to wifehood, the older woman relishes the newfound power over her sons' household and the community" (Ogunyemi, 1996, p. 46). The reward of motherhood comes with adult children, especially sons, hence son-preference partly derives from this situation. Comparably to Ogadinma, Aissatou leaves her marriage unlike Ramatoulaye, Ngond and Nnambi's mother with 12, 10 and 8 children respectively.

[184] According Ogadinma, if her father did to her mother half of what Tobe put her through, she would no longer blame her for leaving.

[185] Smith, Williams and Mullane (2014, p. 1) state that: "Domestic homicide of women by their intimate partners remains the biggest single female category of homicide" Jane Monckton Smith, Amanda Williams, and Frank Mullane (2014) *Domestic Abuse, Homicide and Gender: Strategies for Policy and Practice*. Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan.

Smith, Williams and Mullane (2014).

Makumbi presents a modern widowhood, devoid of specified widow rituals showing some societal progress, nevertheless, the young widow, Nnambi (discussed earlier), had a harrowing experience following her husband Tom's death. Already she is alienated from her in-laws for refusing to care for Kirabo (p. 341).[186] Nnambi's in-laws, especially the women descended on her matrimonial home in town following the news of Tom's death, enacting patriarchal women to women domination. They take over the couple's home as owners, some women accuse Nnambi of Tom's murder (pp. 335-336) the usual widow's aspersion. Meanwhile, "[s]he [Nnambi], her family and friends hurried and locked themselves in the main bedroom" (p. 335), an action which solidifies Nnabi's status as a visitor. Nnambi is verbally intimidated, especially by Tom's sisters who are described as "stamping their authority on the house, on Nnambi and the children" who they referred to as "our children" (p. 342). Tom's father intervenes (p. 343) and "a frightened looking Nnambi" comes in (p. 344). He tells her, "'You need your family around you. My daughters might eat you'" and Nnambi's sisters join her (p. 344). Women-in-laws, with paternal grandmother's tacit consent verbally oppress an already traumatised wife. Makumba thus extends Liking and Bâ's discussion of widowhood to a modern context. Aidoo's *Changes* introduces the marital rape of Esi, a professional woman, as a personalised violent male-control, hardly acknowledged wife-violation. Esi ends the marriage thus she rejects the patriarchal assumption of wife as a man's property or who consents to be used anytime. In Dike (1998) *So What's New*? (*So What*), female resistance voices and writing back are through the creation of female-only private spaces, sanitised of male physical presence but sanctioned the objectification of men when the all-female characters talk of/about/for men.

[186] Tom had Kirabo at 17 years with an unnamed teenager (who later turns out to be Nnambi's sister). The teenage unmarried mother rejects Kirabo who is brought up by her paternal grandmother, until without agreeing with his wife, Tom brings Kirabo to live with the family which Nnambi vehemently objects to. Nnambi had no idea that Kirabo is her sister's daughter as the mother and family deleted her existence. Previously, 'illegitimate' pregnancy represented shame to families and such girls can be married off to any willing male including very old men as happened to Ogadinma's aunt, Okwy, married off to an old widower (*Ogadinma,* p. 146) and in Human Watch Report of 17 January 2022 an Igbo pregnant teenager is forced to marry the 60-year-old teacher who impregnated her.

Voicing the Girl-Child Against Patriarchal Biases

Thematically, from the 1960s to the 2000s, women writers link female educational deprivation to fathers' and men's views of their daughters as their chattels, their 'male-rewards' from the wombs purchased with their bride price. Thus, education is seen as a hindrance or delay to reaping these rewards. Female educational deprivation is also linked to several patriarchal oppressions. It communicates diminished self-worth, exposes girls to patriarchal servitude from a young age, heightens the risk of child-marriage, chattelisation, unfulfilled potential, recycling and entrenching of generational maternal poverty. Within an already weak group of females, girl-children are the weakest, a point reiterated in (Akaenyi, 2024); women also dominate girl-children.

Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (*Nervous*) has multiple themes, but this discussion focuses on the centralisation of the voice and perspectives of Tambu, a girl-child and daughter, who experiences patriarchal educational oppression unlike her brother, Nhamo, older by just one year. Tambu's experiences show that this issue from the colonial era, referenced by Nwapa and Emecheta earlier continues in the 1980s (and 2000s too). Tambu, like Taiwo and Kehinde, is denied education in favour of her brother.[187] Similar mindset is portrayed by Tambu's parents, in line with son-preference. However, the author harshly subverts their agenda for Tambu by removing the obstacle permanently through death, enabling Tambu to rise educationally. Dangarembga is a bold, new generation writer who does not need to be as careful in wording her patriarchal resistance as the 1960s pioneers.

This boldness is projected on Tambu whose voicing starts the novel: "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologising for my callousness, as you may define it…" (p. 1). The author/the character's comments are culturally, femininely, and even humanly transgressive, but then Tambu is especially upset about being withdrawn from school to make way for her brother and all the associated repercussions for her. Just as Gilbert and Sunday discussed in *Efuru*, that when family resources are limited, boys' education is prioritised, this happened

[187] In Emecheta's *The Joys*, Nnaife has no interest in his daughters' education, in fact he has no interest in his baby-girls from birth, as shown in the novel. He sees Taiwo and Kehinde as future wealth through their bride prices. Nnu Ego tells her daughters who protested: "But you are girls! They are boys. You have to sell to put them in a good position in life, so that they will be able to look after the family. When your husbands are nasty to you, they will defend you" (*The Joys*, p. 176).

to Tambu.[188] Tambu's mother, Shingayi, overworks herself but could raise money for one child's fees, her son; Baba (Jeremiah) the father is too lazy. Tambu explains: "My father thought I should not mind … [asking her] 'Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables'" (p. 15). Baba sees his daughter's eventual destination as a wife toiling for her husband/family, and without numeration (Agofure, 2021).

At 8 years, gendered discrimination conveys a sense of female worthlessness to Tambu and turns Nhamo from a brother to a proud, bullying chauvinist, misogynist in the making, with a sense of entitlement. Nhamo is quick to taunt Tambu: "Don't you know that I am the one who has to go to school?" (p. 20); "'I go to school. You go nowhere'" (p. 21). When Tambu, tries to understand why, he states: "'It's the same everywhere. Because you are girl.'…. 'That's what Baba said, remember?' (p. 21). As a wife/mother limited by excessive oppression, Shingayi advises Tambu to accept her situation, reasoning that: "This business of womanhood is a heavy burden…When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them … you have to start learning them early (p. 16). Shingayi further discouragingly adds: "'And do you think you are different, so much better than the rest of us? Accept your lot and enjoy what you can of it" (p 20). However, Tambu refuses to accept this fatalistic view of womanhood as an alternative model is seen in Babamukuru's wife, Maiguru.[189] Tambu proactively comes up with a plan to farm on the family's fallow land, sell her produce and save for school fees, then return to school. Baba scoffs dismissively at her. Invoking the *nneka* mother protection principle, albeit in restricted sense, Shingayi intervenes, convincing Baba: "Let her see for herself that somethings cannot be done' (p. 17). Tambu believes her mother feels sorry for her and wants her to experience failure as a lesson of reality. In

[188] Previously, Tambu's paternal uncle Babamukuru paid the school fees for her and Nhamo till the former goes to London to study for five years and the school funds dwindle.

[189] Tambu reasons that Babamukuru's wife, Maiguru, is educated yet she does "serve Babamukuru books for dinner" (p. 16). Equally: "My mother said being black was a burden because it made you poor, but Babamukuru was not poor. My mother said being a woman was a burden because you had to bear children and look after them and the husband. But I did not think this was true. Maiguru was well looked after by Babamukuru, in a big house on the mission…" (p. 16). To motivate future female generations, the power of positive female modelling of realities is needed fictionally and in lived experiences, alongside painful realities.

subversion of patriarchal expectation of failure without male support, Tambu works hard, her garden flourishes.[190]

While Nhamo's educational path is structurally paved for him, Tambu fights to pave hers and returns to school. The school keeps the money to deduct her school fees from, Again, Baba threatens her daughter's destiny by demanding Tambu's money from the school: "'That money belongs to me. Tambudzai is my daughter, is she not? So, isn't it my money?'" (p. 30). Baba sees Tambu as chattel whose entire worth belongs to him until he sells her to her husband. He counters Mr Matimba's encouragement to invest in girl's education with: "She will meet a young man and I will have lost everything" (p. 30). Such attitudes from colonial times continue and underscore female education deprivation as a modern cultural oppressive practice in Africa. Through pairing/juxtaposing of wives married to two brothers, Dangarembga assists Tambu to question and subvert patriarchal constructs. Tambu gains awareness that 'power' is behind her brother's demeaning behaviour towards her and her younger sister which intensified as Nhamo starts Babamukuru's mission (secondary) school.[191] So, an image of a callous, self-centred boy is in place when the author kills him aged 14 years.[192] This mirrors the situation in post independent African political or leadership contexts which demonstrate patriarchalisation (male exclusive) and where women have the opportunity to become heads of their nations or national governments following the deaths of the male occupants. Hence "[i]I 2005, Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the first female president to be democratically elected on the continent of Africa" (Bruey, 2021, p. 2) and this remains the case to date. The people elected President Sirleaf, not ascendancy through male-instituted bureaucracy including parliamentary members votes where men in effect give consent for female participation in the space. Nhamo's demise gives Tambu an opportunity which is deemed to be naturally his.

Babamukuru regrets "that there is no male child to take this duty, to take this job of raising the family from hunger and need … Tamudzai – must be given the opportunity to do what she can for the family before she goes into her husband's

[190] While trying to sell her maize with the support of her teacher, Doris, a white woman gives the teacher ten pounds for Tambu's school fees. The school keeps this to deduct her fees from.
[191] Nhamo ordered them around "to demonstrate to us and himself that he had the power, the authority to make us do things for him" (p. 10).

home" (p. 56). Again, female marriage is seen as a waste, once married. The study considers that the continuation of bride price, even symbolically, conveys the view of women as bought. Women can confidently argue that without bride price, they cannot be transformed into a resource purchased to service their husbands/in-laws. Bride price, especially if exorbitant, silences wives. Some wives spend their lifetime paying it back in services.

On another level of awareness, living with Babamukuru, Tambu finds that Maiguru and her mother are trapped within patriarchal constructions of male-control, albeit in different ways, even the couple's daughter is trapped. Maiguru responds to Babamukuru with subtle ongoing battles while Nyasha has a mental breakdown. This underlines Ogundipe-Leslie's observation that "Not even the most politically [in this case educationally] progressive men are completely free from patriarchal attitudes and feelings of male superiority" (1993, pp. 113-114). Dangarembga's contribution is to the shattering of the muted voices of girl-children across Africa, whose educational ambitions are stifled because of their sex.

Patriarchal re/construction of womanhood for purposes of sexual intercourse/marriage: Girl-Child Marriages.

Similar to the foregoing discussion, Dare and Attah show the link between female-child education deprivation with child-marriage and the associated ills.[193] In Africa, men who should be convicted paedophiles and child sex offenders in the United Kingdom freely marry and have sex with child-brides. Dare, in *The Girl with the Louding Voice (Louding)*, shows the societal awareness of oppression from the discussions of two poorly educated and uneducated 14-year-old girls, Adunni and Kike. The girls, consigned to child-marriages as their lived realities, dissect the realities of patriarchal oppression they and other girls face in their village, Ikata.[194] Such a marriage finally ends Adunni's dream of being a teacher, already significantly derailed when her mother who pays her fees died. Adunni who is bold wants to have the loudest voice: her mother told her that her 'schooling, that is education, is her

[193] See Chapter 1, Human Rights Watch 2013, 2015, and 2022.
[194] Kike tells Adunni: "'…I wish I am a man.'… 'Because think it, Adunni,' she says, 'All the mens in our village, they are allowing them learn school and work, but us the girls, they are marrying us from fourteen years of age'" (p. 65).

voice' (p. 21). However, after her death, Adunni's father, Papa, marries Adunni off to Kike's father, Morufu, his age mate, telling Adunni her education is useless to him while her marriage provides money, food, rent and ten thousand naira extra, if Adunni has a son (pp. 22, 23).[195] Morufu finds a husband for Kike and plans to use her bride price for his needs.[196] Two 14-year-olds, who occasionally played together in the village assume a stepmother/stepdaughter relationship, which hardly occurs with males. The colluding middle-aged men laugh and joke, discussing amongst others, "Boko Haram [terrorists] stealing plenty girls from inside a school" (p. 24); thus, indirectly undermining girls' education, united in their male supremacy over Adunni. Morufu's callousness in disposing of Kike in a buy-one-sell-one mentality underscores the entrenched perception of daughters as chattels. Older/old men who marry child-brides treat them as children, thus it is not surprising that Morufu speaks openly of flogging his wives Labeke and Khadija and the same awaits Adunni (pp. 32, 36).

Unsurprisingly, Kike does not go to school because Morufu says that a girl's education is a waste, but: "I want two boys children,'…. 'If I have my boys, I will send them to school. Girls are only good for marriage, cooking food and bedroom work…" (p. 37).[197] Such a statement from a father degrades his daughter's sense of self and identity. The domination of poor girls continues with Khadija, Morufu's second wife, who, at 15 years, is given in marriage in exchange for food for her family (womb-for-food).[198] Khadija says that after the amputation of her father's leg she stopped attending school, for he could no longer work. The opportunistic Morufu exploits the family's economic challenges, and the female-child is sacrificed for her family's survival; therefore, echoing Shingayi's perceptive advice to Tambu that women are called to sacrifice. Khadija's situation further underscores the chattelisation of a female-child motivated by poverty and wombs as baby-machine.

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[195] Papa announces "'tomorrow, Morufu will bring four he-goats…fowls too. Agric fowl, very tasty. Bag of rice, two of it. And money. I didn't tell you that. Five thousand naira, Adunni. Five thousand. I have a fine girl-child at home. At your age, you are not supposed to be in the house…'" (p.22). He further says: "'There is no money for food talkless of thirty thousand [naira] for community rent. What will becoming teacher do for you?'" (p. 23).

[196] Morufu declares; "'I have already find Kike a husband. I will use her bride price to repair my car window, maybe buy more chickens for my farm, because I used too much plenty money to marry my sweet Adunni'" (p. 37).

[197] Exact grammar exactly from Morufu.

[198] According to Khadija: "'Morufu was helping us but he got tired and say he must marry me or no food. He buy my family five derica of rice, and my father bundle me into Morufu car and wave me bye-bye. We didn't even do any wedding party like you... "(pp. 39-40). Grammar as used by Khadija.

Apart from girl-children, young women without economic independence can also be chattelised for food or any debt. Iya Tope in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives (Secrets)* states that nine years ago, "I was compensation for the failed crops. I was just like the tubers of cassava in the basket. Maybe something even less, something strange – a tuber with eyes, a nose, arms and two legs" (p. 82). She is used as a physical commodity given to Baba Segi to make up for the missing farm products.[199] Unmarried at 23 years, Iya Tope is deemed too old and "decaying" to be suitable for marriage, so she is given to Baba Segi. "'I have made my decision and it's final' he [father] said'" (p. 83). Likewise, in *Hailstones from Zamfara* (*Zamfara*), Attah continues the exploration of the connection between female-education deprivation and child marriage, which in this context means the withdrawal of a girl from school for marriage involves an unnamed 14-year-old bride, named Junior Wife by the unnamed Senior Wife. Forced to marry, Junior Wife cries, misses her education, in particular mathematics, a fact that underlines the unfulfilled potential ended by marriage. In defiance, she runs away only to be threatened and brought back by her father. The impact of her forced marriage and unreadiness for childbirth results in mental breakdown. She does not bond with her son, Abu, saying, "his head almost killed me" (p. 111). She progressively becomes disoriented in behaviour and finally announces: "Unfortunately he is dead" (p. 111). Like a damaged parcel, Junior Wife is sent back home. Senior Wife, now 32 years old, was also married at 14: her daughter, Fatima, is the same age as Junior Wife (p. 105) thus, replicating Adunni and Kike's situation. Significantly, Senior Wife fears that a son from Junior Wife may disrupt her daughter Fatima's education (p. 107) as the preferred male son's needs will be prioritised, while the birth of a daughter, another girl, leaves the status quo unchanged. Fatima's father, like Morufu, plans to educate his son who he hopes "will attend university…become a doctor…be president of Nigeria (p. 112). The absence of such dreams for girl-children underscores their structural oppressions as daughters, before being transferred to their husbands.

Zamfara presents Islamic Northern Nigeria with an established child-marriage practice inferred by Senior Wife's comments that men in Zamfara split "young bones on their wedding nights. By the time their brides were as old as me [32 years], their

[199] Baba Segi contracts Tope's father as a 'lease farmer'; the previous year there were plentiful harvest (p. 79), the next year's harvest was poor. Tope is gifted to Baba as compensation.

wombs were rotten" (p. 107). The imagery of adult men having sex with girl-child brides who, still immature, are forced to carry babies in their wombs, is graphically illustrated by Zainab's case from Northern Nigeria in *Not That Woman* (*Woman*). The reader learns that Zainab "was only eleven years when she was given in marriage to a sixty-three-year-old man…She became pregnant almost immediately" (pp. 59-60). Her labour was over 15 days, managed traditionally; by the time the decomposed baby was brought out, she suffered severe damage resulting in an incontrollable bladder and rectum, divorce and destitution (p. 60), until Madam B offers her refuge.[200] Zainab's chattelisation and disposability reinforce society's oppression of girl-children. According to Modahunsi and Michael, (2022, p. 84 which cites Adefarasin 2018), in some parts of Nigeria, 12- or 13-year-olds continue to be given in marriage to much older men. Other forms of rape occur as part their patriarchal control and female objectification, with no consequences for the males.[201]

Interestingly, family poverty becomes a patriarchal accelerator of feminine oppression, whereas family wealth proves a cushion to such oppression. In *Zenzele: A Letter for my Daughter*, Zenzele, the daughter of upper class parents, Mr and Mrs Shugu, from Zimbabwe, protests when an uncle in the village teases her about getting married to his son.[202] Whereas Zenzele's mother, Shiri, reassures her that the old man's comments are a traditional way of complimenting her. The uncle's statement is not an innocent compliment in contexts where child-marriage is practiced, and Zimbabwe, like Nigeria, practises child marriages. Such statements reinforce in girls their impermanence in their birth home and importantly, their unknown marital homes.

Zenzele, like Tambu in Dangarembga's *Nervous* is a vocal girl who challenges her educated mother's acceptance of patriarchal constructs including

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[200] Madam B runs Succour for Women Refuge that supported Folake as she had multiple surgeries to address "an extreme case of VVF. Her urethra, bladder and virginal wall were completely eroded" (p. 60). Folake "can never bear a child again". The 63-year-old man divorced Folake as she smelt badly.

[201] Nkechi, Folake's colleague in the refuge, in *Woman;* Ogadinma in *Ogadinma*, Bolanle in *Secret* were raped as young girls - respectively at 15 years by her father, at 17 years by a lawyer who was assisting her; Bolanle at 15 years by a stranger. Similarly, in *Secret*, Iya Femi is raped by her mistress's son from 21 years (p. 124). All the rapists faced no consequences, reinforcing male power in the society.

[202] Sekuru Isaac exclaims "'Ah! She grows ever more beautiful, Amai Zenzele. You shall have to give her to one of my sons soon. He-he. She shall be a daughter-in-law I can be proud of.' Zenzele responds '…Mama! How could that horrible old man say such things" (Maraire, 1996, p. 8). Men have no idea how irritating such teasing can be perceived by some girls because it reinforces to them their impermanence in their families and the unknown.

bride price: 'I will never be bought! Mama, how could you possibly accept some cattle and cash in exchange for my freedom? (p. 32). Her mother tries to rationalise the practice: 'It is not a purchase, Zenzele. It is an expression of appreciation of how well we have brought you up.' (p. 32). Unconvinced Zenzele states: "'Mama, you are defending a custom that identifies women as property, transferred from father to husband. It is dreadful. I shall have none of it'" (p.32). Maraire, through Zenzele, critiques the continuation of bride price as sale of girls/women making the wives seem like human beings bought to serve their husbands and children. Crucially, the author shows that the way forward to dismantling patriarchy includes daughters growing up emboldened without the fear of being forcibly married to older men. Unsurprisingly the couple have two-daughters; yet there are no plans to marry or adopt a son, mirroring Sutherland's positioning of Anansewa discussed earlier. Zenzele's wealthy parents prepare to send her to Harvard in the USA to continue her studies, not forced marriage. Even middle-class educated Ugandan parents send unaccompanied their daughters, 16-year-old Nnambassa and 14-year-old Katassi to the UK to study and work to survive, creating a different problem but not forced marriage;[203] while ultra rich Ugandan parents send their children too, fully materially catered for in Makumbi's *Let's Tell this Story Properly*. The point is that child marriage should not be an inevitable life path for any African girl.

In contrast to the foregoing fictional texts, Moyo's *I Want to Fly* (*Fly*) subversively resists female exploitation through the reversal of her character's condition; instead of a female child's education deprivation, a male child is deprived. However, that school fees are not funded by parents but a scholarship from the Catholic church (p. 102) indicates how an alternative sponsorship is needed to support the education of females from poor families. Yinka is 18 years and in school while Thusi, her 12-year-old brother is not. She would have been forcibly married off, but her father, Nqwayi, is grudgingly waiting for her to finish her education which he believes enhances her *lobola (bride price)*. Yinka's parents, Nqwayi and Mankwinji, share characteristics with Tambu's parents Baba and Shingayi. The fathers are lazy and seem to subscribe to the patriarchal assumption that wives are purchased with

[203] The issue concerns failure to condone the practice of leaving young females without parental control in a hostile environment. Nnambassa discusses hers and Katassi's psychological trauma facing racism in the UK: "She [Katassi] was unprepared for that disgusted gaze that questions your humanity…" (p. 70). The gaze of disgust is the gaze of racism.

bride price to be exploited. The mothers toil endlessly to serve their husbands/family. Nqwayi additionally beats Mankwinji who fears him. Yinka is vocal like most young female protagonists previously discussed. The fathers' interest is merely the daughters' bride price but not their education; similarly, mothers prefer to educate the sons while forcing the daughters to keep to their culturally normative female status. Yinka's dream of joining the pilots' college aggravates Nqwayi who admits: "…the word 'college' makes me sick" (p.115). When Mankwinji suggests to Nqwayi to borrow money and send Thusi to school with the hope of using "Yinka's (lobola) dowry to repay it" (p. 105), the betrayal of the girl-child is obvious to the reader; indeed, Yinka's future lobola is the security that cements the parents' perception of Yinka as a commodity. As Nqwayi, like Ananse, schemes to get Yinka married off to a wealthy man he settles on Shumba, his own sister' Sihle's wealthy husband. The couple are in their late forties but with no child.[204] Shumba, a man with entrenched patriarchal views will certainly end Yinka's dreams. For instance, on hearing of Yinka's ambition to be a pilot, he scoffs: "Who is going to pay your tuition? Besides, that is a male-only profession" (p. 105). Shumba, focusing on Yinka's family poverty and patriarchal biases to challenge her dream, reminding her that: "From time immemorial, a woman's place is in marriage. You may as well be my second wife" (p. 104). Nqwayi's description as he asks Shumba to marry Yinka is typical of a hawker selling a commodity. "Ten [cattle] … one she is educated, two she is a virgin, and three she is not barren ... snap her before others do," Ngwayi states. (p. 120).

Interestingly, Nqwayi enlists the support of his usually obedient and fearful Mankwinji to persuade Yinka to get married: "'I know she will listen to you, that is why I am asking you to persuade her to get married'" (p. 115). The Igbo *nneka* principle is echoed in Mankwinji's opposition to the marriage and she warns Yinka to escape (p. 119). Yinka, rejecting 'flight', chooses to 'fight'. She confronts Nqwayi: "'No absolutely, I am not getting married to that old man. Father, you have sold everything else'" implying her too (p.121). The author, therefore, advocates for the confrontation of oppressions/oppressors instead of escape. Nqwayi, like Ananse, uses emotionally manipulation to secure Yinka's agreement by threatening to send her mother, maternal grandmother, and brother away. Yinka marries Shumba but

[204] Sihle already has a daughter but hides this from Shumba. In Africa, having prior child(ren) can deter some men from marrying the women; equally, some women give away children born out of marriage to increase their chances of marriage.

drugs him on the wedding night, humiliates him, and leaves him begging for life. He is saved by Shile who makes him permanently indebted to her including agreeing to an unconditional promise to stop forcing fertility treatment on her (Shile). He had previously restrained Shile forcing her compliance while Yantonto, the old woman, performed traditional fertility treatment (p. 107). Yinka, Mankwinji and Thusi leave Nqwayi, his power is dismantled. In an unexpected twist, Mankwinji's brother, whom she had told Nqwayi died years ago, is their destination. This means that Mankwinji maintained a self-preservative escape route for such a day.

Militant Role-Reversers

Oyedepo's *The Rebellion of the Bumpy-Chested: (A Feminist Manifesto) A Play* (*Rebellion*) takes the idea of women resisting and overthrowing male control to a higher level of radicalism. The women follow the resistance strategies from Bumpy Chested Movement BCM, a women's movement, under Captain Sharp's leadership, which advocates for the necessity of women's co-ordinated organisation against patriarchy. BCM's discussions re-orientate women against their socialisation as part of subverting patriarchal tropes. For example, it challenges men's assumption that women cannot organise with solidarity (p. 12); claims feminine weakness "is super-imposed on the psychological consciousness of women. It is not real…" (p. 15); insists that women drudgery ends, that "[a[new order must emerge" (p. 16); sees "parity [with men] if not dominance" as its goal (p. 17); believes that women's war is overdue and "will liberate us from the societal manacles..." (pp.12-13); reasons that the women "started a rebellion, because rights are hardly won by peace". The text presents female characters who engage in 'militarised' warfare to regain control from men. Women confront men in the homes leading to anarchy (pp. 72, 88). [205] Women also perform characteristic men's roles like palm-wine tapping (like Ngond), mechanic, taxi-driving. Women still give birth but decline to be the sole caregivers, shunning confinement to nurturing feminine roles as wives and mothers. Men argue that it is impossible for women to change the system or order of nature, for the status quo is naturalised (p. 58). Women undermine and counter the natural power of

[205] Jolomi, Falilat's husband lament that: "'Wives have assaulted their husbands, they have abandoned their children and babies. Indeed, there is much confusion in our homes now. The maelstrom in the home can be attributed to the B.C.M and nothing else…" (p. 72).

superiority ascribed to the penis by derogatorily describing it as “dangling muscle between the thighs”, “Nothing” and “Ordinary erectile tissue”.

Nonetheless, seeing a man, Akanbi, dressed as a woman, with a baby strapped to his back whilst hawking food items (p. 89), is shocking and disorienting even to the women as these are not normative images for men (pp. 86, 87, 93). This shows the depth of women’s patriarchalisation and socialisation and therefore the level of conscious raising needed to dismantle patriarchy.[206] Oyedepo’s comic handling of the situation suggests that she is not in support of women taking over and behaving like men; rather, mutual and equal co-existence of the sexes is preferred. The images equally imply the idea of gender fluidity as females are not born women but become so due to social conditioning (de Beauvoir, 1997). The author’s portrayal of a women’s leader contests men’s leadership monopoly, while Sharp’s presentation as a ‘manly’ lesbian woman who is power-hungry for personal reasons mocks men’s self-centredness and power monopoly in post-colonial African politics.

The study also reads *Rebellion* as Oyedepo writing back to the absence of identifiable female characters from Ngũgĩ and Mugo’s *The Trial of Didan Kimathi* (*Kimathi*), where not a single female character is named and given humanity, despite Mugo, one of the playwrights, being a woman and women being part of Kenyan’s struggles and war of political independence from the British. Instead, the two female characters are: Woman and Girl, while even male traitors are named. *Rebellion*’s female combatants are all named[207] and are not attached to, or defined by, their male partners. Just like Kimathi empowers Mau Mau Kenyan men/women to stand up against the British, Sharp’s BCM empowers women to stand up for themselves against men’s domination. The study observes that while African women’s struggles continue today, men’s subjugation ended with colonisation.

Whereas Oyedepo makes a straightforward reversal of roles, Onwueme demonstrates how a male construct is created to become the custom dictated by men when Wazobia a 30-year-old female Regent is referred to as ‘he’, ‘King’ our husband’ and she/he inherits the deceased King’s four wives, Queens Anehe, Wa,

[206] Salwa’s objection when her partner, Akins, wants to go out in women’s clothes reinforces her ingrained assumption of the ‘unnaturalness’ of such a situation. (pp. 86-87). Tara and Salwa consider their partners Akanbi and Akin have “gone mad” (p. 93).

[207] Mare, Salwa, Ikemi, Jeeni, Rade, Falilat, Ayi, Segi, Rebecca, Sabina, and Imokwa, Ashake, Sarah, Oyin, and Tina.

Zo, Bia; Anehe who is old enough to be her mother (pp. 29, 48). Onwueme creates the kingdom of Anioma, where following the death of a king, a regent is chosen from the maidens to rule for three seasons before a new king is appointed. Wazobia is chosen and although her family is materially poor, her educated status is highlighted as contributing to her composure and wisdom as the Regent. Wazobia uses the opportunity to reverse situations which oppress women. Wazobia's manifesto includes – equal rights for all (males and females) in education, pay, "inheritance matters of land and property!", and "representation in rulership and governance". Finally, there is "a decree" against "wife-beating, for none is a slave to another (pp. 33-34). Wazobia pinpoints the root of women's oppression as their perceived inferior, slave-like status, especially as wives bought with bride price. Interestingly, 'rights/equality for all and for women, seem synonymous in this situation (Walby, 2002).[208] Women are needed in strategic leadership positions for society to change is another message from the text.

Childlessness and New Women's Writing

New or millennium women writers' engagement with childlessness contrasts with the pioneers' strategies. Unlike pioneer writers' indirect references to male sexual misfunctioning, for instances, millennium writers directly confront male impotence; where the former consented to additional marriage/wife for children, the later seeks adoption of children only. Childlessness is a key theme addressed in Shoneyin's *Secrets* which follows the lives of Baba Segi's wives and through them depicts various female trauma and victimisation: Iya Segi,[209] Iya Tope, Iya Femi and Bolanle, the latest, who is childless. Nguwasen and Onyemelukwe (2022: 69) identify "eight factors of oppression of women and girls in a patriarchal African society […]: rape,

[208] This is what Walby (2002) means when she refers to globalist feminism as projecting the view of rights for women, as a group, to be considered as rights for all since women are the 'Othered' and while men, as a group, is the standard, the default.

[209] Iya is the mother's title. Bolanle is not a mother yet. Iya Segi is a successful businesswoman prior to marriage. She is born to an unmarried mother. Mother and daughter are successful traders, but the mother constantly worries about her daughter's unmarried state, lack of interest in motherhood and obsession with money (pp. 99, 100). Iya Segi's mother says to her: "'It is every woman's life purpose to bear children...'" (p. 101). Mama and her best friend Mama Alaro agree that their daughter and son respectively should marry. Iya Segi's money was given to Mama Alaro who gives this to her poor son, who marries as arranged (p.103); the couple later become Baba Segi and Iya Segi. Iya Segi says Baba does not know the source of the cash he received from his mother, but she Iya Segi knows the money belongs to her (p. 103). After two years of trading that money made Baba Segi rich.

child abuse, forced marriage, lack of inheritance rights for women/girls, polygamy/co-wives' conflicts, ex-wives' deadly conspiracy against the last wife, sterility-induced oppression and assault and battery" depicted in Shoneyin's novel.

In defence of the accusation of childlessness the women tackle Baba Segi's impotence. The first three wives hold their individual secrets as well as that of Baba's impotence, unknown to him and Bolanle. While they choose men to father their children, Baba brags about his virility, unknowingly making a mockery of himself before his wives. The wives do not mock Baba Segi to his face just as colonised African men did mock their colonial masters/mistresses or white people face-to-face as seen in (Chapters 2 or 3) due to the power imbalance in their relationship. The author alludes specifically to Baba Segi's impotence even mocking Baba Segi's belief that 'hammering his wives sexually' shows he is a man. Nonetheless, seen from the humiliating sex-on-rota, Baba still exercises power "…with freedom to choose whom to spend Sunday night with" (p. 48). In another context this would have solidified male supremacy, but Baba Segi's impotence diminishes his assumed sexual prowess. Baba's violent sexual hammering to force Bolanle to get pregnant shows self-belief in his prowess. The incident triggers Bolanle's "memory of being raped" at 15 by a stranger (p. 44), which resulted in various traumas for her including low self-esteem/identity crisis. The author indicates that Bolanle considers this incident as maritally rape. The violent abusive Baba who nearly choked Bolanle (pp. 58-59), is presented as defeated, emotionally broken and humiliated when he confronts his wives after learning he is impotent, the "barren maggot", and not Bolanle as he assumed (p. 241). Iya Segi performs to Baba's ego, while showing why the family should continue unbroken, since losing face in the society as impotent is worse for Baba (p. 241). Bolanle chooses to leave after the exposure that: "Baba Segi's big testicles were empty and without seed" (p. 242). Jolted from her emotional comatose, Bolanle realises that the rapist of her childhood cannot control the rest of her life.

Childlessness is also addressed differently in Moyo's *Fly* when Sihle suggests that instead of marrying another wife as pioneer characters have done, they should adopt her brother's sons. Notwithstanding, Shumba rejects Sihle's suggestion as he wants his biological son to inherit his wealth (pp. 98-99); so, adoption as an alternative to childlessness becomes a modern option. Whereas in *Woman*, the

author highlights how unregulated agencies can exploit young girls/women when she introduces Madam Peace's baby factory/illegal adoption agency, in *Louding,* Ken and Tia finally decide to try adoption after Tia's horrific abusive experience aimed at cleansing her of childlessness (p. 312). The author presents a scenario where a couple's childlessness is blamed on the woman while the man is seen as a saint for sticking to his wife whereas he is the cause of the childlessness. Ken, a medical doctor fully aware of his impotence, marries Tia in London without telling her other than that he does not want children. Tia, whose difficult relationship with her own mother puts her off having children for fear of replicating the same, agrees (p. 190). On their returning to Nigeria,[210] this agreement is tested like Ako and Eulalie's agreement made in the USA was in Ghana in *Dilemma*. Ken's mother visits monthly to ask Tia if she is pregnant yet: "Where are my grandchildren? (p. 197). Ken's mother pressures Tia to see a prophet she knows who will wash away her childlessness (p. 219), assuming the barrenness is Tia's fault, reinforcing patriarchal wife-blaming and husband exonerating and senior woman/honorary men intimidation of wives. To placate her mother-in-law, Tia goes to see the prophet where she was overpowered by the prophet's women-in-charge of cleaning, stripped, and savagely flogged her to a pulp (pp. 256-263); by the end "Tia is no more shouting and screaming," left bleeding, body, and face full of whip marks (p. 264). Adunni asks Ken's mother why Ken is not there getting beatings as it takes two to make babies (p.265). The ferocious women-women violence enacted is baffling, reinforcing women's collusion in theirs/other women's subjugation. The point is that women (Tia, Ken's mother, the women cleansers) collude to punish Tia for Ken's male-barrenness.[211]

Childlessness by choice is not an area pioneer women addressed. Whereas Aidoo shows Eulalie, an African America bride, who perhaps is aware of white feminist obsession with reproductive control, African brides are expected to get pregnant straight away to start repaying their bride price. For example, in *Louding*, girl-children (at 15 and 14 years) employ subversive tactics to retain control of their

[210] Adunni first meets Tia after she comes to her recuse when her new mistress, Big Madam, savagely attacked her while serving at Madam's party and all the other women saw nothing wrong with disciplining a servant unlike Tia.

[211] Ken goes free. Tia (by keeping Ken's secret), Ken's mother and the women cleansers (assume that the wife is at fault) all collude to maintain Ken's impotence secret. Other 'cleansed' wives mostly likely kept quiet out of shame, until Tia. 'Cleansing' involves the brutal flogging of 'barren' wives by other women to cast out the barrenness.

wombs. Khadija informs Adunni that following her forced marriage to their husband Morufu, she prevented pregnancy by using herbs but because Morufu was getting upset, she decided to have children and get this over with. Adunni requests the herbs as she is not ready for motherhood. Adunni is not pregnant as at the time she escaped from her marriage. Khadija's current pregnancy is fathered by her previous boyfriend showing her belief that Morufu cannot father a son. Both young girls courageously resisted personal patriarchal domination in the way possible for them.

Conclusion

A consistent message throughout this chapter is that Africa has been/is a hostile extra-literary environment for women. Aidoo, Nwapa and Ogot entered a hostile literary environment where men seemed to have assumed monopoly of writing as part of patriarchalisation. As women have thrived, negotiated and/or resisted patriarchal oppressive environments; so, in their literary response, pioneer women writers have left a solid foundation for successive generations to expand and adjust depending on new situations. They contested male narratives under different environments starting by contradicting presentations of women as docile and lacking in agency by showing industrious and vocal young women characters like Efuru, Anowa, Nyapal and Adaku.

These writers started contesting the fallacy that barrenness is solely a women's problem and ended by imposing female images in literature like Efuru and Anowa who chose their husbands thereby exercising this right often arrogated to fathers (or mothers to lesser degree), using strategies that subverted patriarchal images in folklore. As well as presenting images that helped to centralise female characters against the usual society's expectations, they boldly introduced men's complicity in women enslavement in *Efuru*, *Anowa,* and *The Joys*. The female characters within the early fiction are different and have complex personalities. Unlike the mostly timid images of early men's writing, these female protagonists, for example, Efuru, Nyapol, Eulalie, Nnu Ego are bold and vocal. Contrastingly, narratives like *The Joys* show African men in subservient positions to colonial masters, and emasculated men who, having been ill-treated by colonial masters opt to retaliate on their wives at home. Nnu Ego openly despises her husband Nnaife's

job as the white master/mistress washer man, not behind his back. In their writing, personalised and millennium writers draw our attention to the way reverse performativity can show women's understanding that patriarchal practices are performed by men not because of their natural superiority but as a result of their monopoly of social power.

Chapter 5

Dealing with the Manifestation of African Patriarchy in Diaspora

Introduction

The chapter functions as part of the tools of resistance and defiance against women's structural domination in Africa through demonstrating their significant erosion for African women in the United Kingdom diaspora context. The operations of African patriarchal systems, as known in Africa, seem to be suspended when African men and women, including married couples, arrive in the United Kingdom but re-emerge when they return to Africa. Highlighting this anomaly exposes the 'unnaturalness' of African patriarchal practices which continue to uphold the supremacy of men in Africa. The chapter notes that as much as patriarchy is a critical issue for African communities in African and the diaspora, in the United Kingdom, racism is the dominant social construct affecting African men and women.

The study identifies diasporic women writers who may or may not socially self-identify as Africans but are biologically Africans through their fathers' lineage as it happens in patriarchal societies. Nonetheless, even if women are from matrilineal society, they belong to the maternal clans with men, or, maternal uncles in authority (Ogunyemi, 1996; Oduyoye, 1995; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993). Diasporic women writers explored in the study have fathers from patriarchal cultures.

The discussion focuses on different categories of diasporic women writers and separates them into different categories depending on the characters' (writers') experiences of patriarchy. The texts in the first category present differential positions of female characters in relation to the operation of African patriarchal systems in the United Kingdom, and when they cross boundaries back to Africa. The texts in other categories show the incremental and gradual disappearance of African patriarchal practices, until the final section till when patriarchy is absent in the narratives. The generational difference between first generation women migrant writers from Africa are discussed in Chapter 5 while and second-generation women writers born in the United Kingdom to a first-generation African father examined in Chapter 6 is marked by the writers' style of creating characters or narrative content in their fiction. The writers in the second category are divided into three sub-groups, based on the African patriarchal impact on the women characters and presenting stages of

patriarchal banishment - Patriarchal Vestiges/Flashes, Visible Demise, Total Demise. The women writers' experiences, proximity, or engagement with African patriarchal societies and practices reflect in their women characters. Although living away from female-hostile institutional structures in the diaspora, some of the writers' have paternal full-siblings or half-siblings who still live on in Africa today.

This study sees autobiography as part of African women writers' identities formed from their lived experiences including from observations. So, a significant feature of women's writing discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 is the autobiographical content. Through autobiographical writing, African women can voice themselves and their experiences. Therefore, African patriarchal experiences have no business featuring in anyone's autobiography unless the writers have been exposed to them, directly or indirectly (including through written, oral, or visual/digital stories). There are personal autobiographies or memoirs which capture the writers' life journeys from which details of the anomalies and arbitrariness of African patriarchal practices can be extrapolated or seen as absent, such as Emecheta, *Head Above Water* (*Head*), Aminata Forna's, *The Devil that Danced on Water* (*Devil*), and Hannah Pool's *My Fathers' Daughter* (*Daughter*) respectively. There are semi-autobiographical fictional texts such as Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (*Citizen*), *In the Ditch* (*The Ditch);* Jackie Kay's *The Adoption Papers (Adoption)*, Forna's *Ancestors Stone* (*Ancestors*) and Bernadine Evaristo's *Lara.*

Autobiographies or semi-autobiographies become tools of expression, voicing the writers' experiences. Often these experiences are interwoven and linked with the writers' sense of identity at a specific time or as part of their identity over time. This means that identity is not fixed but is multi-faceted, fluid, changeable as phases of life and experiences change. The sense of identity is crucial in African women's writing in the diaspora, particularly so for migrant diasporans and is linked with their earliest sense of 'home' in Africa, maybe where they first experienced patriarchal practices. Davies (1994, p. 21) acknowledges the place of autobiography and the role of the home/home experiences in women's narratives.[212] Davies' observations

[212] Davies (1994, p. 21) acknowledges the place of autobiography and the role of the home/home experiences in women's narratives when she states: "The autobiographical subjectivity of Black women is one of the ways in which speech is articulated and geography redefined. Issues of home and exile are addressed. Home is often portrayed as a place of alienation and displacement in autobiographical writing. The family is sometimes situated as a site of oppression for women".

poignantly capture the complex notion of home for most women in Africa living under patriarchal systems. Home is where patriarchal practices which oppress the girl-child and favour the boy-child are introduced and normalised. Such gendered discrepancies in the treatment between female and male siblings can cause alienation and disaffection; and further still as the girls become young women who must leave the family home to another home with the same patriarchal conditioning. Migration can bring an extra sense of alienation exacerbated by racism in the case of the United Kingdom which Emecheta tells through Adah's narratives in both *The Ditch* and *Citizen.* At the same time, migration compels the forging of new identities, starting with the 'migrant' identity (see Stuart Hall, 1989 in his seminal essay, "Minimal Selves").

The discourse concerning the changeability of identity, as opposed to the fixed biological identity is underlined by Elgezeery's (2015) analysis of the character of the adopted black girl in Jackie Kay's *The Adoption Papers* (1991). In her discussion of identity fluidity, Elgezeery quotes Kay's statement that "identity's something that's fluid, it's not somethings that's static and fixed and I'm really interested in writing about identity and how fluid it is" (Kay, 2005). Similarly, Robinson (2007) comments on fluidity of self-identity with "identifications with multiple and often conflicting communities" (p. 8). In other words, lived experiences (existential configurations) expose people continually to the shaping of their sense of self, showing that identity is changeable, variable from individual to individual.[213] The views of the fluidity and changeability of identity in autobiographical work (full, semi-/partial biography) inevitably implicates the writers' sense of identity, within which is included the fundamental questions of biology, paternity, maternity, status and home and nature of experiences from these interlinked situations. Emecheta's autobiography *Head,* Forna's *Devil* and Pool's *Daughter* show shifting homes for them and the link as part of their identities. The use of semi-autobiographical fiction as a form of expression, equally draws from the women's autobiographies to varying degrees.

[213] Lived experiences vary and are continuous with new experiences. Robinson (2007) suggests that "reconfigured conceptions" create/sustain meanings to lives and identities (p. 8). Thus "The conception of a fluid-yet-fragile self-identity permits us to recognize that self-identities can be based on identifications with multiple and often conflicting communities" (p. 8).

While Emecheta and Aboulela, as first-generation diasporic writers, share similar experiences represented in the fiction, what separates them are their cultural backgrounds, the writing and the timing of their publications. Aboulela's personal history is materially worlds apart from Emecheta's who, through fictional woman characters, Adah and Kehinde deals with these issues in varying degrees in *The Ditch* and *Citizen, and Kehinde* respectively. Aboulela is from an elite Sudanese Muslim family where her education was prioritised, including in a private American secondary school. She graduated from the university at 21 before migrating to London for postgraduate studies, aged 23. She married an elite Sudanese (also British by birth as his mother was white English), and her family moved to Scotland in 1990 with two small children. While Emecheta's life trajectory is like the character, Tambu, in Dangarembga' *Nervous*, in terms of fighting for her education, Aboulela's trajectory is similar to Zenzele's whose upper middle-class parents are ready to send her to Harvard University in the USA (see Chapter 4).

First-generation Migrant African Diaspora Women Writers

Emecheta's (a Christian, with Nigerian parents) and Aboulela's (a Muslim Sudanese with Sudanese father and Egyptian mother) texts *Citizen* and *The Translator* (*Translator*) respectively provide in-depth textual analysis demonstrating the range of erosion in patriarchal domination possible for migrant diaspora women. The writers grew up in patriarchal societies which privilege males while disadvantaging females as discussed in Chapter 1. When these writers set their work in Africa, they include characteristics of African patriarchal practices, while these are either absent or significantly muted in their work set in the United. Equally, where their women characters return to Africa and join the structurally dominated group African patriarchal systems that dominate women resurface and resonate within the themes and actions impacting the women characters. If the same women characters return to the United Kingdom, however, there is cessation or significant mutation of such impact, thus indicating the disruption of patriarchy.

Emecheta and Aboulela construct female protagonists, Kehinde in *Kehinde* and Sammar in *The Translator*, who traverse African patriarchal spaces in Nigeria and Sudan and England and Scotland respectively. Whereas in Africa, men have

more entrenched control in the society's social structures/contexts, on migrating to the UK, Emecheta and Aboulela's characters leave these structures behind since these characteristics cannot be replicated in the same way in the UK; here racism overarches social constructs which affect African women and men causing them to negotiate new identities.

Emecheta, because of her harsh personal patriarchal experiences following her father's death, develops several layers of identities - for example her mother is inherited, her education is stopped, and engaged at 11 years she narrowly escapes child marriage. Apart from becoming a house servant to a relative's family in exchange for school fees, Emecheta proactively entered herself into a scholarship programme competition, won a scholarship to a prestigious mission school in Lagos. She eventually lifted herself out of poverty by working in an American embassy post-secondary school. By 16 years when she married, she was an orphan. When she joined her husband in the UK at 18 years, she had two children and soon after started experiencing physical abuse from her husband. Contrary to the Nigerian experience where Emecheta's father-in-law, Papa, was abusive because as the family's patriarch he had more decision-making powers, in the UK, her husband assumes new identities as the head of family and wife-abuser. After leaving her abusive marriage Emecheta becomes the head of her family with her children.

Emecheta's experiences and expressions of her identities are evident in her narratives in *Head, The Ditch* and *Citizen*. Her life experiences and that of Adah, the protagonist of *Citizen* and *The Ditch* are so interlinked that Adah has been described as "a thinly disguised version of the author".[214] This recognises the thin line between fiction and reality as applicable to this fictional work. Emecheta is bent on making her voice heard, the traumas and triumphs rather than keeping quiet as patriarchy expected of married Igbo women. Such textualisation of subjects reflects part of what Elizabeth Oldfield (2010 p. 1) claims when she asserts that: "[T]he 'African' woman's act of writing is simultaneously the creation of women's identities and a transgression of boundaries" (p. 1). In this situation, the 'African' woman who Oldfield refers to include the writers, and their women characters impacted by African patriarchal practices.

[214] William Grimes, *New York Times*, 10 February 2017.

Cessation and Restarting of African Patriarchy in the writing of Buchi Emecheta: Textualising Biography and Adah's rise from Obscurity

Home is important as Emecheta blooms in her new home when she becomes the head, free of patriarchal control as does Adah; both women become writers unfetter by controlling husbands upon exiting their marriages. Emecheta's experiences and expressions of her identities are evident in her narratives in *Head, The Ditch* and *Citizen*. Her life experiences and that of Adah, the protagonist of *Citizen* and *The Ditch* are so interlinked that Adah has been described as "a thinly disguised version of the author".[215] She textualises her autobiography through the life of the female protagonist, Adah, in *The Ditch* and *Citizen*. Emecheta is bent on making her voice heard, the traumas and triumphs of her life rather than keeping quiet as patriarchy expected of married Igbo women. Thus, her writing simultaneously re/creation her identity as a woman and transgresses boundaries (Oldfield, p. 1) of not keeping silent as a dutiful wife or well-trained African woman.

Adah, like her literary creator, was born at the time when African families predominantly sent male children to receive colonial education as discussed in Chapter 4. Adah, like Emecheta, dreams of going to school, and eventually to the United Kingdom to further her post-secondary education. She observes how those returning from the United Kingdom, usually men, like Lawyer Nwaeze from Adah's village, are deemed illustrious sons whose return home are celebrated by the whole village. The returnees end up with well paid jobs and comfortable lives. This reinforces why Nwapa received a title after her return from Scotland (Chapter 4). So, notwithstanding her material impoverishment, from a young age, Adah was dreaming of a better life. Images come to mind of so many 'Adahs' still living in Africa today and dreaming of better life, but without educational opportunities. Unfortunately for Adah, the death of her father means that her family becomes poorer, thereby putting her dream further out of her reach. As a female child from a poor family her chances, which were already slim, became smaller as seen with Adunni and Tambu in Chapter 4.

Critically, in line with the custom among the Igbos (Ibos), Adah's widowed mother becomes an inherited wife to Adah's uncle. Being poor, Adah's mother

[215] William Grimes, *New York Times*, 10 February 2017.

wants her to help in the home and get married as soon as possible, whereas her brother, Boy, as a male child, is expected to receive some education. Like most girls at the time, Adah is expected to learn how to do home chores, sacrifice her education for her male sibling and eventually be a good obedient wife. Fortunately for Adah, she gets the opportunity to continue her education when she goes to live with her maternal uncle, wins a scholarship for secondary education when most males were educated to secondary levels, and few had university education.[216]

A demonstration of the possible life-changing benefit of education is seen when Adah starts working and earning money within the colonial system. When the sixteen-year-old Adah marries Francis, she is earning more money than him, therefore, she financially contributes to their living expenses as well as upkeep for her husband's family. It is questionable if she is doing this willingly or because as a dutiful wife who, along with her resources, now belongs to the husband under Igbo patriarchy. From a patriarchal position, Francis' father, Papa, decides her fate and that of her children, and declares his disapproval of women going to the United Kingdom as a woman's place should be at home (as happened to Emecheta). This is a fundamental African patriarchal world view for women and raises the shifting 'home' for females. For, although home is not necessarily the physical structure of a house, these could equally feature from the memories and meanings one attaches to her lived experiences in these locations.[217] Papa unconsciously enacts the economic exploitation of women when he disapproves of Adah's travel with Francis since he would lose the income which he collects from her. Francis, by not challenging his father, gives his agreement too, even though Adah's salary will be funding his education in the United Kingdom. The underlining patriarchal attitudes demonstrated by Francis and his father are prevalent in Nigeria and parts of Africa where male family members decide the fate of their female relatives, especially wives. This attitude is not restricted to Nigeria only but other parts of Africa, for example, Nyanzi, Emodu-Walakira, and Serwaniko's (2011, pp. 300, 306) discussion of the Buganda practice in Uganda mirrors that of the Igbos, where 'my wife' 'our wife' refer to

[216] Third party education sponsorship for girls remains a needed resource today.

[217] For Emecheta, the memories of her lived experiences with her parents, her mother's levirate marriage, life with her maternal uncle/his family and boarding school, as a young married woman/teenager controlled along with her money, are experiences shaping her identities. Memories can engender a sense of belonging, oppression and so on.

women married into the clan as notionally married to all, practices that justify male control.

The act of denying Adah the right to join her husband with her children shows how African patriarchal values negatively affected Adah. She could have been prevented her from travelling and eventually fulfilling her potential as a world-known novelist. If Adah (by inference Emecheta) remains in Nigeria, she will live her life under patriarchal structures where both her husband and her father-in-law, dictate to her and her children. Adah realises who holds the power and sets out to work on convincing her father-in-law to let her travel. She achieves this through obedience and acts of generosity with her salary which is used to run the home in Nigeria and pay for her sister-in-law's education. Adah and their children eventually join Francis in the UK. The reach of patriarchal domination and the institutionalised power of men over women is varied and can be seen in different spaces such as home, work, government, religion, or education settings (Barrett, 1989, 1980; Hartman, 1979, 1981; Walby, 1992). However, in the UK, African men are not in control in these settings.

Adah in the Diaspora: Navigating Old Boundaries and Negotiating New Boundaries

Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur (2003) suggest that diaspora involves displacement and dislocation from people's movements and "diasporic traversals question the rigidities of identity itself – religion, ethnic, gendered, national" (p. 3), whether voluntary or involuntary/forced diaspora like enslaved Africans in the west. *Second-Class Citizen* shows Adah's arrival in the United Kingdom, negotiating old and new experiences. She experiences oppression and domestic abuse from her husband, Francis, who harbours views of women nurtured under previous African patriarchal structures. Adah quickly finds that she has left behind in Nigeria a life of relative affluence compared to the poverty she faces in the United Kingdom. Adah is frustrated in her new diaspora home when her husband regularly abuses her. She no doubt initially believes that African patriarchal oppressive structures are in operation in homes owned by Africans in the diaspora. While Adah struggles in her new home and feels trapped, Francis is confident that she cannot leave as she has

no one to go to. Most significantly, African patriarchal values of the Igbo that Francis was socialised on, schooled him to expect his battered wife to remain with him since Igbo women do not leave their children, much less a woman like Adah who has five children. According to the narrator, even if she left home after a beating, Francis is confident that she will come back and will not leave the marriage "because she can't bear to leave her children for long" (p. 167). Francis burns the manuscript of Adah's first novel (as happened to Emecheta) on the ground that she is a woman, and women are not writers, with Adah countering that Nwapa, a woman, writes. Francis' view supports the argument in Chapter 4 that men saw writing as part of patriarchalisation, a gendered activity foreclosed to women. Francis, relying on the 'all suffering, enduring mother who would do anything for her offsprings' tropes of African motherhood (Begum, 2016) which he learnt, has no idea, nor does Adah for a while, about the social support available to women in Adah's position in the United Kingdom to leave an abusive marriage. Adah starts realising the limitations of African patriarchal values in her life within the British context. During a domestic incident, Francis threatens to refuse Adah permission to seek employment, but she retorts: "This is England, not Nigeria. I don't need your signature to secure a job for me" (p. 171). This implies the existence of a situation in Nigeria where Francis could have withdrawn consent to employment for his wife. In *Woman* (2019), after Joyce, a lawyer, married Larry, he became physically abusive and stopped her from practising her profession, thereby creating dependency on him.[218] Initially Joyce stayed before exiting the marriage.

Whereas Adah admits to the thought of leaving the marriage, in her mind, she does not have anyone, anywhere or any support, until she learns that there are support resources are available. The narrator states:

> It was this girl who showed Adah that you could live on what was called the Assistance until your children grew up and you could get a job … If only she had known, she would have left Francis earlier. But she did not know (1974, p. 169).

[218] Joyce has to choose between staying in an abusive marriage as a dependent or leaving it to face the social stigma of a failed marriage and the label as a disobedient wife; she eventually chooses the latter.

When Adah realises that she can get assistance that would free her from the oppressive African traditions imposed by her husband, she leaves the marriage, her story continues in *The Ditch*. At that point, her concern is not racism but to end every form of patriarchal oppression in her personal space. Adah's main priority is her dignity inside her own home, for her and her children. While in England, Adah adapts to a society where she realises that her skin colour is a 'problem', which she has regarded as natural, but this colour makes her, her children and husband, second-class citizens with challenges that come with this. Adah is adapting to her new environment where racialised systems are paramount rather than African patriarchal systems.

After leaving her abusive husband, Adah gains self-consciousness after realising that African patriarchal oppressive practices do not have the machinery to sustain these outside Africa. In the context of thinking about her action, Adah reflects on the Igbo (Ibo) patriarchal norms: "Ibo people seldom separate from their husbands after birth of five children. But in England, anything could be tried, and even done. It is a free country" (*The Ditch*, p.11). Through reflective thought, the gravity of what she has done dawns on Adah. This not only shows Adah's increased consciousness and awareness of women's position in her country, but it also highlights how women are not free in a country where patriarchal pressures force them to remain in abusive marriages. Thus, Adah critiques the philosophical stance of the Igbos (Ibos) over the treatment of women in marriages. Nevertheless, even after Adah leaves her husband, she encounters another form of African patriarchal oppression outside her home when a Nigerian Yoruba landlord rents her a substandard one-room infested with rats and cockroaches which the landlord charges her double rent for (*The Ditch*, p. 8). On demanding that he disinfects the room, the landlord, still holding on to the African patriarchal privileges of the Yoruba culture, is upset because Adah dares to speak and ask for improvement. The landlord wants Adah to leave, starts intimidating her, and even resorts to using *juju* (fetishism) to terrorise her in her new accommodation.

As an African woman, especially a woman from a failed marriage, she is expected to be docile and grateful to the landlord. Interestingly, Adah, who would

have been intimidated and scared in Nigeria, instead realises that in this new diasporan space she is not afraid of *juju* anymore.[219] Adah believes that *juju* will not work in England due to the different norms and beliefs, unlike in Nigeria. Adah's thoughts indicate the view that African practices which oppress women are also norms peculiar to African societies. In England, different norm and practices apply. She also indicates that people in Africa, unlike those in the diaspora, accept these socially constructed practices, internalise them as the normal, and expect consequences if they are non-compliant. Already, Adah has done what few Igbo women her age could do back home – leave her husband aged 22 years and with five children. She is aware that different social systems are operable in London, and feels emboldened by the fact that the landlord, as a black man is also a second-class citizen like her. The Nigerian male landlord's *juju* pranks and other behaviour designed to intimidate and subdue a young single woman represent African patriarchal practices weaponised against women. Adah in her attempt to free herself from the clutches of African patriarchy dismisses his intimidation as antics, thus further manifesting her new freedom, critical consciousness, and critique of patriarchy. She rejects remaining part of the "collective bargain" of African patriarchy which men and women sign up to.

The United Kingdom provides Adah with 'immunity' from African patriarchal oppressions, and she states how her freedom enables to keep her job, children, and study. If Adah had been living in Nigeria with Francis, her father in-law and other in-laws would have prevented her from taking the children who are considered to belong to their fathers/his family in Igbo patriarchal societies as seen in *TFA.*[220] Adah would have had no option but to return the children or go back with them to her husband. However, in the United Kingdom, in Adah's case, there were no in-laws paying her visits to question her or demand the return of the children. In any case,

[219] The author explaining Adah's self-conscious raising thoughts writes:
"Why was it that she was not afraid? She wondered. Was it because here in England one's mind was always taken up with worrying about the things that really matter? But *juju* mattered to her at home in Nigeria alright; there, such a scene [as presented by the landlord] in the middle of the night could even mean death for some. Probably, she thought, it was because there it was the custom, the norm, and what everybody believed in. The people not only believe in *juju* but such beliefs had become internalised and it would not occur to anyone to think otherwise. But here, in north-west London, how could she think of the little man who was so familiar to her by day in his greasy second-hand lounge suit as a medicine man?" (*The Ditch*, p. 9).

[220] Francis, her husband, or his people can demand the children's return, and with customarily patriarchal law on their side.

the British courts would not award the custody of the children to Adah's husband since the law (won following white feminists' fights) supports young children residing with their mothers, except where this is not safe. Perhaps more instrumental to Adah's growth of consciousness is the pressure to redefine "what really matters" in her life - survival in London for herself and her five children, addressing their rat and cockroach infested room, and dealing with racism during a period of material poverty. Adah subsequently gets social housing within a dilapidated building, Pussy Cat Mansion where *In the Ditch* chronicles her heading her family.

Living between 'Homes': Kehinde Makes her Choices

Kehinde, like Adah, or Emecheta the author, who comes to join her husband, Albert, in England as a teenage wife eventually has a good job in the bank. Whereas Kehinde finds it positive that their marriage relationship is more of a partnership, unknown to her, Albert laments being limited in authority at home and in society. He yearns to be back in Nigeria and be in control like real men, feted and polygamous. *Kehinde*, structured in three parts, takes place different spaces. First, Kehinde and Albert in England is where the couple and their two children Joshua (14 years) and (Bimpe, 12 years), second generation diasporans whose boldness forces Albert to enforce his authority. Second, Kehinde and Albert in Nigeria which focuses on Albert and the children's relocation to Nigeria. This is initially funded by Kehinde, and it enables Albert to live affluently. Albert expects Kehinde to join the family after the sale of their London house, so she comes with more money. However, when she fails to sell the house, she goes home only to be confronted with a shocking reality. She learns that she has become a senior wife, like Nnu Ego in chapter 4, in line with traditional marriages practices. This is the polygamous marriage which he could not do in London. Rike, a young lecturer, has Albert's baby son and another baby on the way.

The divergent experiences of Kehinde and Albert illustrate Stuart Hall's argument on notions of identity and belonging in his seminal essay, "Minimal Selves" (1987); he argues that home is not a place, but rather, it is where the heart is. Home is not a permanent/fixed place, but rather something one carries within. It is a way of being and responding in the world. Albert on the one hand never felt at home in

England since he felt emasculated because he was denied the “patriarchal rights” to dominate Kehinde; but he is settled and at home in Nigeria where these are reversed. For Kehinde, returning to Nigeria means losing all the freedom to be an active self-determining human being that she is in England; she is reduced to sharing her husband and being imposed upon by both her husband and her sister-in-law. In England, Albert’s African sense of ‘home’ does not leave him; and in Nigeria, Kehinde’s England ‘home’ does not leave her either. Thus, as Hall suggests, “there is no home to return to. There never was” (1987, p 3). Home for Kehinde and Albert is a state of being in the world; it is not a place, hence their alienation in either home.

African patriarchal practices are suspended in the United Kingdom, in Kehinde’s home, but restart when Albert and Kehinde return to Nigeria, Albert’s home. Kehinde, humiliated and marginalised, escapes back to the United Kingdom. In order not to be stopped by Albert and his relatives, she secretly plans her return and a woman friend from the UK sends her the money she uses, signifying that women should support not oppress one another. *Kehinde* (1994) shows that apart from the absence of demanding and gluttonous in-laws in the United Kingdom, there are factors that contribute to levelling marital relationships.

There is no domestic issue noted between Kehinde and Albert, but Albert is aggrieved that to make ends meet he and the family depend on his wife’s earnings. In Albert’s world, being a ‘real’ man includes contracting a polygamous marriage, which he is unable to do in the United Kingdom. Albert’s plan to maximise his economic exploitation of Kehinde by the latter funding his lifestyle in Nigeria till she comes with the house sale money fails. Fortunately, for Kehinde, she escaped being exploited. To Emecheta, African men, like Albert, living in the United Kingdom realise that they live within a socio-cultural terrain different from that in Africa. In *Kehinde*, she captures this comprehension from the conversation between Albert and his friend, Prahbu. Albert who is from a culture where “people are more valuable than money” (*Kehinde*, 1994, p. 7), succeeds in convincing Kehinde to abort their third child, whose foetus turned out to be a male, the wanted sex. Albert’s reason is that he cannot afford for the pregnancy to ruin his wife’s chances of getting promotion to the position of a bank manager. But he only needs his wife’s money to assist him bring to fruition his long-harboured desire to return to Nigeria. Albert justifies his culturally transgressive act of killing his own unborn baby by blaming this on being

“in a strange land, where you do things contrary to your own culture” (p.15). Albert complains to Prahbu about the amount of money they have paid to child-minders over twelve years (p. 7) since their second child, Bimpe, was born. Albert, an African man and Prahbu, an Asian man, realise that women’s positions are different in their diaspora country compared to both their patriarchal countries of origin. Both men need incomes from their wives to make ends meet, and both want to stop their wives getting pregnant again. Usually in Africa, it is the women who take the initiative to stop having babies, but the reverse is seen here due to the cost of maintaining children in the UK. [221]

Albert is also aware of the rights of women in the United Kingdom regarding the home. Emecheta writes that Albert “was not unaware of the legal status of a wife here in Britain. In Nigeria, the home belonged to the man, even if the woman spent her entire life keeping it in order. She could never ask her husband to leave the house, as was done here” (p. 4). Both Albert and Kehinde are aware that African women in the UK diaspora can ask the men to leave the home if marriages break down especially where minor children are residing with their mothers. Continental African women do not have this option since a woman is seen as belonging to her husband and with this her property.[222] Albert as a man is yearning to return where the man has privileges enshrined through patriarchal practices, and a wife will “give her husband room enough to be a man” (p. 89). He marries Rike, a young lecturer, who is happy to be a second wife rather than face the social stigma of being unmarried. Kehinde, who has a relaxed, mutually respectful relationship with her husband in London finds out this is no longer the case once she is back in Nigeria.

Kehinde’s sister-in law, Madam Kaduna introduces and enacts patriarchal domination in place of her male relative. Madam Kaduna tells Kehinde which side of the family car to occupy even though the latter contributed money to the purchase and shipping of the car. She tells Kehinde that it is her right to be in control in her brother’s home which Kehinde can also replicate in her own brother’s home. Crucially, Madam Kaduna would not intimidate Kehinde and assume such total control if she was in the UK where social structures differ.

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[221] The two men discuss the reversal of situations. (See Emecheta, 1994, pp. 15-16).
[222] Nyanzi, Emodu-Walakira, and Serwaniko (2011): “Unless the wife dies or is divorced, she is considered one of her husband’s exclusive assets or possessions” (p. 301).

Cessation and Restarting of African Patriarchy

There is a cyclic experience of cessation and restarting of patriarchal domination seen as women move between the United Kingdom diaspora and their African countries. The agents of patriarchal control manifest in the form of male-centric structures instituted to monitor women, to ensure compliance, and to restore equilibrium and sustain the status quo that entrenches men as controllers, and senior women, as men's helpers (Elizabeth Jackson, 2010). These women, honorary 'auxiliary women-men', are women of senior age who help men to keep other women and girls in line with patriarchal norms, while they remain under patriarchal domination themselves in certain respects as discussed in Chapter 1. Emecheta shows this in *Kehinde* while Aboulela voices her criticism in *The Translator,* thus a convergence of views despite the women writers' generational difference, cultural and personal lived experiences; hence both views are discussed together in this section.

Aboulela, like Emecheta, comes from a patriarchal African country where the status of females is notoriously lower than that of males (Willian J House, 1988).[223] Additionally, Aboulela is a Muslim from Sudan, so she comes from a society where African women who are predominantly Muslims, face extra-patriarchal restrictions due to the imposition, or synchronisation of African-derived and Islamic-derived patriarchal practices. The stereotype images of Muslim women as passive, oppressed and lacking in agency are continuously active but especially exacerbated following the 9 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States (Nikki Keddie,1990; Haifaa Jawad and Tansin Benn, 2002; Asma Barlas, 2019; Ahmed, Leil, 2021). The veil, worm by most Muslim women is regarded by some people as the visible evidence of their oppression and diffidence (Mohja Kahf, 1999 and 2008). However, there is no doubt that some Muslim women are oppressed while others manage to subvert religious and patriarchal oppression. Whereas women are complex, oppressive environments increase the potential for their oppression, and structural oppression affects them differently.

Aboulela, through her female protagonist Sammar, deliberately deconstructs the operation of subjective patriarchal practices that dominate women. She can be

[223] House (1988) highlights the low status of Sudanese women (prior to Sudan's division into two countries in 2011. (Also see Ezeakor, 2013. Dominic E Azuh *et a*l., 2017).

interpreted as arguing that there is no reason why African women residing in the African continent should be expected to tolerate controlling patriarchal practices that do not bind their counterparts in the United Kingdom. Aboulela's fiction engages with the transgression of normative femininity and the male gaze in public and private spaces, and widowhood. There are points of intersections relating to Sammar's life which underline the impact of African patriarchal norms on her, and act as a barrier to her achievement and maximisation of agency. While these are absent in Scotland, they are heightened in her Sudanese society.

Migration to another country or culture can present African women with the opportunity to challenge patriarchal norms and expectations, especially if these norms are not obtainable in their new environment as is seen from the Somali women's experiences. As Somali women migrants to Nairobi and Johannesburg stated, while in Somalia, at times the line between African and Islamic practices can be blurred (Nereida Ripero-Muniz, 2020). Nonetheless, patriarchal practices, irrespective of their origins, result in norms and expectations which control Muslim women in Somalia. Ripero-Muniz, synthesising observations from the work with Somali women and from other writers, comments that:

> Members of diasporic communities keep certain beliefs and practices from the homeland while at the same time being exposed "to new networks with different beliefs [that] will serve to challenge one's established world view (Curran and Saguy, 2001:59). Transformation of practices and beliefs may occur due to the migrant's experiencing greater freedom far from her original social community and cultural norms (Yeoh at el. 2000). However, in the case of Somalis living in Nairobi and Johannesburg, the strong links they keep with their local and translocal communities also has an effect on the way women navigate their identities, as they are expected to follow certain customary and Islamic precepts. Women navigate these expectations by renegotiating their Somali and Muslim identities in relation to specific situations, and by doing so they exercise their agency and decision-making power within a context of displacement (2020, p.68).

Despite living in relative proximity to their Somali cultures than would have been the case if they migrate to the United Kingdom, Somali Muslim women, through dialogic engagement with the experiences and culture in their new environment are able to pick and choose aspects of their new environment to adapt and alter their previous positions. Away from home in Somalia, the exposures in their host countries, including opportunities to work and manage their lives, allow them to question certain patriarchal norms and expectations while renegotiating new identities for themselves. Examples of the type of questioning practiced by the women are seen when their behaviour is contrary to Somali patriarchal expectations. Transgressions include the women's decision to marry non-Somali men and attempts to re-set their own expectation at marrying 'Muslim men' but not 'Somalia Muslim men' as expected by society in Somalia. For Somali women, the most extraordinary example relates to the choice not to subject their daughters to female genital mutilation, which they had experienced, after realising that the practice is not the norm for all African or Muslims girls. The women also reflected that in Somalia, men interpret the Quran, especially the tenets focusing on the control of women, and the older women carry out the practice of imposing male-centric expectation on younger women, whereas Somali women in the diaspora read/could read the Quran and apply their own interpretation of the Islamic religious tenets. Indeed, Ripero-Muniz (2020) asserts that: "Many of these [Somali] women considered people in Somalia to be extremely traditional and religious, imposing strong rules of conduct upon their everyday lives" (p.69). It takes migrating to other African countries without the same or similar strong everyday rules for the women to realise the severity of their own man-made and socially constructed rules. Consequently, once this consciousness is raised through migration to the diaspora, be it Africa or Europe, the women start deconstructing aspects of their culture that impede their individual lives.

The exposure to new ideas or cultures is inevitable while living within migrant environments and on this premise, "the re-negotiation of identities is fundamental to migration" (Davies, 1994, p. 3). It is the position of this study that African women benefit from exposure derived through migration to the United Kingdom which offers them freedom. Prior to their migration, women were living in African societies with institutionalised male domination and female disadvantages, which cease or are

significantly eroded in the United Kingdom diaspora, although they face other dominating social constructs around racism.

The key difference this time is that African men equally face racism and experience a sense of displacement usually attached to being an 'alien'. The indigenous structures of patriarchy, which elevate the status of men in Africa; equally, benefits to men in Africa from colonial patriarchal legacy are not transferrable to the new diaspora environment. This point raises the issue of dual domination by traditions and colonial legacies, which women experience in Africa but not in the diaspora. They contend with a different social construct based on race. In relation to Indian women, Gayatri Spivak (1988) raises the differential experiences between men and women in relation to domination or oppression under British colonisation. Spivak observes that Indian women were already subjugated under indigenous patriarchy that benefited men. So, while Indian women and men were subjugated under European colonialisation, their experiences differed. Another layer of the differences is in the preferential position of men over women due to the patriarchal nature of the colonial enterprise. Indian women were disadvantaged in both indigenous and colonial patriarchal contexts. This was exactly the position of African women in Africa but not the UK diaspora because colonial legacies are embedded in African patriarchy. Interestingly, young African men are seen as physical threats by the law enforcement and white men in the UK which makes them vulnerable to institutionalised racism. Laura Robertson and John Peter Wainwright (2020) while discussing black males in the UK of which includes African males, re-affirms that in general "[b]lack boys and young men are over-represented in the youth and adult justice systems in England and Wales" and the formers' corresponding lack of trust in the police/these systems (pp. 2, 6, 7). Lord MacPherson report of February 1999 referred to institutional racism in the London Metropolitan Police organisation in relation to its racist mishandling of investigation into the murder of an African Caribbean young man.[224]

Migrating to a liberal environment helps African women to avoid the reach and stifling arm of African patriarchal cultural practices. Whereas for men, who are

[224] African males are part of the 'faceless mass' identified as black in the UK. Stephen Lawrence who was murdered by a white gang physically looked/could have been an African teenager. The law enforcement meant to protect them colludes in their oppression. Racism is attracted by black skin colour, and this remains the reality for Africans today.

already beneficiaries within patriarchal societies, migration to a liberal environment may not necessarily lead to fundamental altering of their world views, for women, the journey can be a dramatic shift in their lives, especially for women who are in employment. Boyd and Grieco (2003) show the possibilities of unaltered or altered and reconstituted patriarchy after migration (pp. 26-27). The latter is demonstrated in chapter 5 from Adah's and Sammar's greater personal agency in the UK compared to if they were in their African countries. As Boyd and Grieco explain:

> For some women, migration may mean an increase in social mobility, economic independence, and relative autonomy. This is especially true if women's moves are accompanied by increased participation in the labour market … For some women, new economic and social responsibilities may change the distribution of power within the family, leading to greater authority and participation in household decision making and control over the family's resources.
>
> [….]
>
> However, participation in the labour force does not automatically ensure lesser inter-familial equality … (p. 26).

The point is that opportunities for economic participation are present for some women unlike within the structures they left behind in African societies. Sammar, like Kehinde, has economic agency as two-family incomes are needed. Adah's economic participation is limited by childcare issues/costs, but she starts writing eventually as a career.

The importance of the economic participation of women is further highlighted by Benn and Jawad (2002) who notes how Swedish Muslim women who are involved in wider society are more likely to adapt to 'Swedishness' which means embracing western notions of gender relations (around equality) than Muslim women who "keep to patriarchal interpretations of social-religious and political matters" (p. xvii). In other words, African women involved in the workplace with other people are in better positions to embrace and adapt to the concept of gender equality, than

African women whose workplaces have people with the same cultural mindset and attitudes. A Muslim African woman who works in a factory where the owner and employees share the same culture and attitudes to women would be exposed to the liberal version, which then offers her alternatives, should she wish. However, by virtue of being in the United Kingdom diaspora, every African woman is no longer living in Africa where social structures are African male centred. For instance, there are many accounts of African women who work as care assistants, care workers (low cadre jobs in the United Kingdom), but manage to save, buy land, and build houses in their home countries, giving them greater independence. Whereas professional women in these countries may struggle to do the same on their earnings.

The benefit of migration to women, especially to socially more favourable environments can be seen in relation to the Somali Muslim women, who migrated from Somalia to Nairobi and Johannesburg (all African countries with patriarchal systems). Similarly, Sammar's migration from Sudan to the UK with her husband, Traig, represents a move into a vastly socially liberal environment compared to Sudanese patriarchal society, especially, as a Muslim woman.

Leila Aboulela and Sammar's Locations in *The Translator*

Sammar, in contrast to Adah, was born in London to a migrant student father and a homemaking mother (so she is British by birth). At the age of seven years, Sammar returns with her (parents and two-year-old brother, Waleed) to Khartoum, Sudan from London; this is her first migratory crossing. Sammar is, therefore, a child of two worlds. From seven years, Sammar lives in Sudan till she marries her paternal first cousin, Tarig, from a well-off family. Then her adult migratory boundary criss-crossing starts, initially as a spouse to a husband training to complete his medical training in Aberdeen and working as an interpreter at a local university. Sammar is thus situated in multiple locations in the novel. These locations are in Khartoum (Sudan), London and Aberdeen (England/Scotland, diaspora). She criss-crosses the boundaries of Africa and Europe multiple times, participating in a physical migratory process, which Davies (1994, p.3) argues facilitates the re-negotiation of identities for the black women involved, of which Sammar is one by virtue of her paternity and

nationality. Sammar's identity in Sudan is shaped by the norms of the African patriarchal society she grew up in. However, during her migratory journeys, Sammar must re-negotiate her identities as they shift constantly and are dependent on contexts and locations (Hall, 1987). Sammar's shifting identities are: a migrant, an African woman, a Muslim woman, a wife, a mother, and a widow, living in a racist but gender-liberal society in Aberdeen, a society markedly different from her natal Sudanese African society due to the visible absence of embedded African patriarchal structures. In Aberdeen/Scotland, Sammar is enabled to live outside the precepts she is bound by in Sudan.

Sammar and Tarig migrate to Aberdeen for the latter's medical training where they live till Tarig dies suddenly in a car accident. At the time, because it was appropriate for women to 'join' their men who are their relations abroad, African women mostly migrated to the west with the status of spouses. This practice is part of the patriarchal manipulations, which support the assertion that "African cultures have often inhibited the migration of females, including professionals, except as accompanying spouses" (Kevin J.A. Thomas and Ikubolajeh Logan (2003).[225] Women in patriarchal societies are seen as the wards of their fathers and later of their husbands (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1985). Sammar who grew up in a society with gendered bias towards women's sole immigration, becomes one of those women whose migration is tied to her husband just as her mother's migration was tied to her father's. Her second return home is when as a widow, with their son, Amir, who is nearly two years. This is when she leaves Aberdeen to go back to Khartoum, to repatriate Tarig's body and bury him, with the plan to live permanently in Sudan. Sammar lives with Tarig's mother, Mahasen, and his older sister, Hanan, and her family in Tarig's family home. After a major quarrel between Sammar and Mahasen, she falls out with her aunt/mother-in-law who tries to control her life, and so she flees back to Aberdeen, leaving her son behind.

On Sammar's third migration and boundary crossing from diaspora, Aberdeen to Khartoum, she travels alone. After four years living as a widow, single, and without her child, Sammar leaves Aberdeen in shame, with no plans of returning to

[225] Kevin J.A. Thomas and Ikubolajeh Logan (2003) 'African female immigration to the United States and its policy implications' in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*). The situation although focusing on the United States, mirrors African female migration to the west which has changed in recent times with single female migration to the west, more common.

Aberdeen after Rae, her white Scottish boss, rejects her marriage proposal. Sammar inverts the male gaze in a specific interaction with her male boss. In a reversal of gender performativity, Sammar ascribes to herself the role of the 'male' and assigns her boss Rae, the 'female' role, the object of her gaze and desires. The scenario plays out in Sammar's interaction with Rae where she proposes marriage to him, and pressures him to accept her, thereby performing the role usually ascribed to a man; her 'male gaze' takes her outside normative femininity expected of women in Africa or Europe. Sammar's proposal to Rae is shocking to most African women reading the novel as she has taken on a male gaze. This behaviour towards Rae can only be practiced in the UK (see Aboulela, 1999, pp 119-126). When Sammar reflects on her behaviour, she feels some shame due to unrequited love, not because she feels she has done anything wrong, even though her behaviour is not a model of normative femininity for Sudanese and other African women (Davies, 1994; Oldfield, 2010).

Sammar's behaviours show why there cannot be absolutes regarding the description of a group such as Muslim women, 'African women', or 'Third World women' as there are variations among a group. Whereas broad structural and institutionalised features can be used to designate a group, it does not mean that every individual is equally affected. Some people transgress the expected norms while others are repressed and forced to comply with practices or expectations (Keddie, 1990). In relation to the context of *The Translator*, fewer women, young or old, in the United Kingdom or an African country would have the courage to ask a man to marry them; but Sammar, a Muslim woman, does. Borrowing Judith Butler's (2006) suggestion, an expected male gender performative act of making a marriage proposal is ascribed to the male sex in Sudan but Sammar subverts this in Scotland.

Sammar's third boundary crossing from Khartoum/Sudan to Aberdeen/Scottland, happens after Rae comes to Khartoum to propose to her, this time taking the active role as a man, as expected in her patriarchal community. Sammar's acceptance of the proposal meets the expected African Muslim women's normative behaviour of waiting for the man to propose. On her third/final return to Aberdeen with Rae, just like her first migration with Tarig, Sammar is yet again a married woman, married to a man she loves. Sammar will be going back with Amir

and a non-African husband, to a life in Aberdeen which means a total elimination of African patriarchal dictates in her life, metaphorical and practically.

Prior to migrating to Aberdeen, Sammar already sees the United Kingdom as a land of freedom (Aboulela, 1999, pp. 24 and 99). Sammar's experiences of freedom in Aberdeen, where she can have her own home with her husband away from the shadows of her husband's family, differs from her reality in Khartoum while living with Tarig, his mother and sister in their family home. Tarig's untimely death marks the beginning of Sammar's encounter with major life challenges, whether in Aberdeen or Khartoum. Her sense and location of home, that is her 'here', shifts and is abandoned in search of an alternative better home, which is her 'there'. Consequently, Sammar criss-crosses Africa and Europe six times (once a child taken by her parents) seeking a secure, better home alternative. Home becomes for Sammar where her heart is, where she finds solace and security. However, it is a peculiarity of diaspora and home that diaspora individuals are always caught in between the tensions and pulls of home and diaspora, that sense of belonging to both 'here' and 'there' while not quite belonging to either.

In this sense, after her stable, secure home of a happy childhood in Sudan, Sammar struggles to find such a secure, stable, home after Tarig's death. Home seems a fluctuating illusion for Sammar, which she seems to carry with her (Hall, 1987). She finds herself living "in that in-between space that is neither here nor there" (Boyce Davies, 1994, p. 1) as she is no longer rooted in Khartoum. Since Sammar has access to Aberdeen, she has a 'there' location which beckons her to escape if she wants. The position reverses with Khartoum/Sudan beckoning her to escape when in Aberdeen/Scotland. Meanwhile, in Aberdeen, given the racist and/or 'Othered' perceptions of her as a migrant, Sammar cannot be totally at home in the United Kingdom diaspora. This is because diaspora identity is a shifting identity which insists on carrying or asserting part of the original home that came over. This is more so for first generation migrants with direct links to their original home and memories, especially if happy ones.

Sammar's lived experiences as she criss-crosses the boundaries between Aberdeen (Scotland) and Khartoum (Sudan) multiple times, provide the scenarios to analyse her control or lack of control of her personal space in each context. African

patriarchal practices essentially result in the marginalisation of women in the public space, whilst seeking to also control women's private space, with varying degrees of contestations from women. Contestations can result in patriarchal bargains, which are consciously, or unconsciously accepted customs or practices of a given patriarchal society which allow women-defined power within patriarchal systems (Kandiyoti, 1988). Each time Sammar is in Sudan, she feels and demonstrates a level of 'powerlessness' in relation to contesting patriarchal obstacles in her private space. In contrast, when she is in Scotland, she is in full control of her private space.

Altering Space: Sammar's Private Spaces

Institutionalised systems which support African patriarchy operate to subdue Sammar in Sudan. What emerges in the narrative is a positional alteration in Sammar's occupation and control of her personal space in her diaspora country, Scotland, in comparison to a subdued position when she is in Sudan, her African country. To gain a better understanding of how deep-rooted in culture the systems dominating women can be, the positions of kinship, lineage and marriage postulation need to be examined. In Sudan, these systems can directly dominate women like Sammar, but in Scotland, the systems cease or are significantly eroded, resulting in altering of positions for women in the United Kingdom. Thus, the altering of private space is an inevitable consequence of migration (Davies, 1994 and Repiro-Muniz, 2020). This is especially so if migration is to a liberal environment devoid of the social constructs which sustain African patriarchal norms. As such, the liberal environment necessitates the re-negotiation of identities, a situation which is applicable to Sammar.

New experiences from migration contribute to the emergence of the new sense of identities or re-defining of existing identities in the new location. Shifting identities can result in role performativity in the new environment, which alter or even transgress expected boundaries of the 'previous' location. Sammar's migration to Scotland provides her such opportunities – of new liberal experiences especially regarding gender relations and a renegotiating of her identities. The actions she is prepared or emboldened to take in Scotland unlike in Sudan, show her shifting sense of identities.

Gamal Elgezeery (2015) uses the concept of 'identity fluidity' to capture the lack of fixation of identity so that "[i]n this light, fluidity implies adaptability, personal quest, and an endless process of identity formation" (p.126). This explains how Sammar's sense of the norms she is to keep in Sudan moves and adapts to what she finds as her reality in Scotland. Elgezeery links identity fluidity to postmodern perspectives on identity, which "conceives of identity as a multiplicity consisting of many parts that do not have clear-cut boundaries" (p. 126). This suggestion of fluidity, mobility, and multiplicity, in relation to an individual's identity formation is relevant to understanding Sammar's differential behaviour in Sudan and Scotland based on her experiences in each location and the meanings she creates from her experiences. In other words, Sammar's life experiences in Sudan and in Scotland feed into the repertoire of meanings she creates as part of her identities. In Sudan, African and Islamic patriarchal norms, some coercive, contribute to shaping her identities and her responses. Whereas these norms are dislodged in Scotland, leaving Sammar to choose how to regulate herself concerning the already internalised norms she carries with her as part of her identity-history.

Identity fluidity or what this study also describes as 'identity shifts' can, therefore, be used to explain why, despite growing up in a Sudanese patriarchal African society, marginalised Sudanese women like Sammar can rise above these constraints in Scotland. This is because her experiences of burdensome African patriarchal social milieu in Sudan are not replicated in her social experiences in Scotland. Sammar not only adopts the more liberal attitude to gender relationships in Scotland, but she sees herself as equal to Rae, her white Scottish boss, who is her love interest. She goes even further by appropriating what she knows is a male role in Sudan, when she reverses the performativity of male marriage proposal by proposing to Rae. Sammar muses that in Sudan a lesser act of being seen alone with a man can result in violence towards her, including death from a male family member (Aboulela, 1999, p. 55). This is due to the male-dictated concepts of honour and purity attached to females as chattels, ultimately controlling them.[226] Sammar's musing foregrounds her awareness that her Muslim identity creates an extra layer of

[226] A woman being alone with a man in Sudan can damage the woman's reputation and honour for which "*your father will kill you…your brother will beat you* [author's italics]…Sammar watched Reputation (sic) lose its muscle, its vigour, shrink and fizzle out [in Scotland]"(Aboulela, 1999, p. 55).

patriarchal obstacles in Sudan, just as she knows these are not operable in Scotland.

Sammar, while in Aberdeen/Scotland, plays a significant and active role in seeking to bring about her personal longing and aspiration to remarry in Scotland. Whereas her longing and aspiration to remarry in Sudan are thwarted by Mahasen, her mother-in-law/aunt, who refuses to give her consent. Sammar is too timid to challenge her most likely prevented from doing so due to the impact of customs and cultural values she faces in Sudan, as discussed later in the section on Sammar's return home after Tarig's death.

African patriarchal cultures envisage a woman's identity only as it links to a man. In recognition of the cultural expectations of African women's perpetual subjugation to a male of some sort all through their lives, Azuah *et al*. (2017) and Ogundipe-Leslie (1984) note that women are defined in African patriarchal societies with reference to their relationship to a male, as a daughter to her father, mother to her son and widow to her husband and hardly in the woman's own right. Sammar, as a married woman, is no different so far as she is in Sudan. Following Tarig's death, in the novel, the next figure of authority in the family is Mahasen, her mother-in-law. In most cultures of Africa, in the absence of Tariq's father, another male figure of influence, with varying degree of power depending on the kinship structures, would have authority over Sammar.

However, Abouela vests authority within Sammar's marital family in Mahasen who then assumes 'male' authority over Sammar. Mahasen is cast in two positions, head of family and senior woman (Kandiyoti, 1988) with patriarchal power over her daughter-in-law, Sammar. While in Khartoum/Sudan, especially if living with Mahasen, she is the figure of authority over Sammar, as Tariq's widow and her daughter-in-law, but such power will cease if Sammar remarries. Mahasen's control over Sammar is multi-dimensional and anchored in patriarchal cultural practices obtainable in their Sudanese's society. As an African Muslim woman Sammar has additional Islamic patriarchal practices to cope with because of stricter attributes relating to a Muslim African woman of honour (Aboulela, 1999, p. 55; Kiddie, 1990, p. 89.). However, in Scotland these patriarchal constructs are significantly eroded and most noticeably cease.

Mahasen acts with 'male authority' when she first met 7-year-old Sammar in person. Mahasen announces publicly her interest in Sammar as a future daughter-in-law. This behaviour is in line with Keddie's (1990, p. 90) observations in Islamic cultures of maternal cousin marriages. Tarig is Sammar's paternal cousin, while to Tarig, Sammar is his maternal cousin. Mahasen's interest in Sammar is from the perspective of a paternal aunt and potential mother-in-law. However, Sammar and Tarig are too young to understand the coded transaction which enfolded that day. Recounting Sammar's first impression of her aunt:

> The woman who walked across the grass with an outstretched hand saying 'My brother….' And hugged Sammar's father first. Then the woman examined baby Waleed and squealed, 'He's ugly. What kind of creation is this!'. And everyone laughed as she pinched his cheeks and kissed his forehead. [….]
> 'This is the one who pleases me,' she said with a laugh to her brother. And she stood up, so tall she was, so much embroidered and bright folds. 'Come with me, Sammar.' She held her aunt's hand. Elegant hands that have never washed dishes, never scrubbed floors….(Aboulela, p. 47).

The scenario in which Sammar's father tacitly accepts his sister's proposal by raising no objection, is the public notification that Sammar is of interest to Mahasen, for her son, Tarig. The codes of language used will be clear to the adults but not to Sammar and Tarig.

Mahasen tenderly touches and surveys Sammar and is pleased with what she sees before signalling her intention. Mahasen, in this instance, performs dual roles; firstly, she adopts what amounts to an "active/male" gaze towards Sammar's "passive/female" (Mulvey, 1989, p. 19). She, in fact, turns Sammar into an object to be possessed ultimately by a male (her son, Tariq). Secondly, she acts as a bride or groom searching mother, as mothers are commonly more active in marriage matchmaking than fathers, according to Keddie (1990). Thirdly, Mahasen also adopts the position of a senior woman with power within the scenario of patriarchal bargaining of her culture. Aboulela, therefore, casts Mahasen as a figure of

patriarchal control over Sammar, from the moment aunt and niece meet. Sammar is a child bride, in a loose sense, as Mahasen chooses her at 7 years to be Tarig's wife, but Sammar and Tarig grew up surrounded by love from Mahasen, a point Zannoun (2019) also makes. The significant point in reference to Mulvey's concept of the gaze is that Mahasen also has a photo of Sammar at her side-table (p. 47) which she sees regularly. Mahasen is acting like a male voyeur objectifying, fixing, and appropriating the female body (Sammar) regularly; and she desires to possess Sammar when the time comes, even if it is for her son. Mahasen is thus a dual-mother figure to Sammar (as aunt and mother-in-law) and these roles carry a lot of power within their patriarchal Sudanese society.

At a religious level, as a Muslim woman from Sudan, Sammar has a Muslim identity signified by her veil which can symbolise the control of the female's choice. But this is where Muslim women must comply to this rule regardless of whether they agree with it or not. This is Aboulela's strategy of presenting the binary African-Islamic oriented patriarchal oppressive norms, for Sammar also faces Islamic-derived precepts/norms unlike her non-Muslim contemporaries. The two patriarchal systems have areas of synchronisation, such as a shared view on the low social status of women/girls, the valuing of male children over female children, and the practices of child marriages and polygamy. Islamic norms place extra burdens on women through the male-centric interpretations of the Quran and Sharia law. This results in other restrictive and control practices over women, for instance: the seclusion of women (the institution of *purdah*), the segregation of women from men in public spaces as seen at mosques, the commodification of women's sexuality and bodies through the concepts of honour and purity as dictated by men, and the control of women's manner of dress. The latter encompasses multiple practices of controlling women such as instructing and insisting that their heads, or, heads and faces, are covered when in public - this clearly indicates an absence of choice for the women who do not want these. Sammar is aware that in Aberdeen she has the choice to practice her religion without any hindrance imposed by her African Sudanese society. Instead, any impediment comes from her new migrant society, for instance, according to her, white people would be shocked if they saw someone kneeling and praying on the sidewalks whereas this is a common sight in Sudan.

Invariably, Sammar, while in Sudan, faces patriarchal norms within a social system which demands compliance thereby impacting on her agency. *The Translator,* this creates the dialogic struggle between the past African women's Islamic space and the present or future spaces, all of which form part of African Muslim women's identity, and therefore Sammar's too. Unlike Emecheta's non-Muslim female characters, Adah and Kehinde (Emecheta, 1974 and 1994), who mostly face African-oriented patriarchal biases in their private spaces, Sammar's Muslimness creates extra patriarchal obstacles for her. Sammar's lived experiences personify such struggles in the sense that while caught up in the realities of her Muslimness (past and present), she is yearning for different future possibilities as a Muslim woman in Sudan as she experiences in Scotland. This struggle results in contradictory models of behaviour for Sammar relating to her dual life as a Muslim woman in Khartoum, Sudan and in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Sammar's First Adult Relocation to Sudan after Tariq's Death

Sammar, while in Sudan, is within a patriarchal system which demands she seeks permission to plan her next stage of life as a widow. So, nine months after Tariq's burial, she wants to re-marry and feels compelled to ask for permission to re-marry. She asks Mahasen for permission which Mahasen refuses (Aboulela, pp. 28-29). Mahasen decides that Sammar does not need a marriage; moreover, even if she does, it should not be to a semi-illiterate with two wives and children her age. It does not occur to Mahasen that Sammar has her own reasons for wanting to marry that man and terminate Mahasen's control over her. Mahasen dictates that Sammar should work, support herself and her son, thus prescribing for her daughter-in-law a life as a single mother, and one where she will be forever a widow.

Nonetheless, it is ironic that it is Mahasen, the older woman, telling Sammar that she does not need a marriage, that what she needs is to work and focus on Amir, a point which Ghadir K. Zannoun (2019) perceives as reversal of expectations, even though Mahasen's motives are questionable. Mahasen is represented as a strong, vocal, and respected woman who is living without a man and who seems to be held in high regard by her relatives and circle of friends too. Sammar is cast in a position of diffidence to Mahasen even in the way she answers, "…her voice flat,

obedient, answering how Mahasen wanted her to answer" (p. 165). Mahasen has power over Sammar on all the intersections of their relationships – as Sammar's aunt of many years, mother-in-law and the head of her marital family. Sammar is a widow to Mahasen's son. Sammar does not stand her ground vociferously enough, even though Mahasen is not likely to listen, much the same way women feel they speak but are not listened to or are marginalised from speaking in African patriarchal cultures.

Mahasen even dismisses Sammar's reference to the religious dimension of Am Ahmad's proposal, that is he feels 'duty towards widows', a role towards widows which the Quran's encourages. It is further reported that when Sammar's suitor comes to speak to Mahasen, she not only stops and shames him but also dictates to him about what to do with his religious intentions. Sammar does not rebel against her aunt, nor does her suitor press to marry her. Instead, Sammar runs back to Aberdeen, because she knows that she will have freedom there and be out of reach of her aunt, Sudanese or Islamic constraints in her life. In the Scottish space, she will be/and was in charge in her private life, without her aunt dictating to her what to do.

Mahasen uses language connoting possessiveness towards Sammar and Amir. For instance, as well as telling Am Ahmad to 'keep away from us', she states, 'I will never give permission', ways that show that she is aware of the considerable power she possesses, but this power is limited to only while Sammar is in Sudan. The extent of Mahasen's possessiveness towards Sammar is further highlighted when Waleed, Sammar's brother, later informs Sammar that when Am Ahmad visited the family home for Eid and Waleed was also visiting:

> Mahasen suddenly turned on him and shouted, 'Don't ever set foot in my house again: Tariq's wife will never be yours…' And on and on…
>
> 'He's a good person,' she said [Sammar tells Waled]. He was a life-long family friend. When she was young, he used to lift her up to sit on top of his van, he used to give her sweets. She was never afraid of him. (Aboulela, 1999, p. 147).

Whereas in the above passage Sammar shows what she considers important as a woman, at this point of her life, Mahasen's behaviour, which represents male-centric attitudes to women's views and positions, dismisses her wishes. Again, Mahasen mirrors men's behaviour of controlling the public and private spheres of women while relegating them, especially if they are young women or widows, to the margins as 'minors' or possessions (Ogunyemi, 1996, p. 88).

Aboulela, through showing Sammar's dilemma at finding a space to live in, aims to demonstrate that within patriarchal societies, the women's status is bound to men, – their father, husbands, sons especially adult son(s), through whom they can access resources including kinship land. In many African patriarchal cultures, for centuries, land which is the greatest resource, was owned communally though the kinship system. That said, women do not usually inherit or get a share of kinship land when this is shared in their birth families, much less so in their marital families and kinship. So, while young men are encouraged and expected to build their own house among their kin, young women are not expected to do so as they are destined to move away and join other families and kins.

So, if Sammar had not returned to freedom in Aberdeen, she may have spent her life in Sudan, under her aunt's control, unmarried, and therefore having the permanent identity as a widow, unmarried mother or woman, against her will. The connection between Sammar's environment and identities as a married woman and a widow in Sudan and in Scotland vary, with reference to her control and agency in her private spaces. She lacks total control in Sudan but has full control of her personal space in Scotland (Aboulela, 1999, pp. 28, 32, 65).

Sammar Negotiating African Patriarchal Widowhood Practices

To fully understand Sammar's position in Sudan, it is necessary, where appropriate, to utilise an inter-textual analysis or cross-referencing of another text by an African woman writer, Mariama Bâ, whose novel, *So Long a Letter* (1980) – discussed in Chapter 4 - discusses the widowhood experiences of a Senegalese Muslim African woman, Ramatoulaye. This is not to say that Sudanese Muslim women and Senegalese Muslim women are the same as people and in experiences. Rather, the cross-referencing of *Letter* is to show clear fictional examples of liberatory

possibilities for Muslim African women during their mourning period. There is also the understanding that while details of practices can differ across societies in Africa, the broad expected Islamic norms are the same. An example of such broad Islamic norm is the required mourning period for both Sammar and Ramatoulaye under Sharia law of four months and ten days. The burials of their husbands are supposed to be within twenty-four hours of death, unless this is not possible as in Sammar's case, which disrupts some post-death practices.

As a Muslim Sudanese woman, Sammar, once Tarig dies, becomes a widow whose widowhood comes automatically under Islamic precepts and practices operating in Sudan; this is in addition to any other indigenous cultural practices which may be applicable to her. Whereas there is a universal absence of equivalent practices or remotely similar practices for men as widowers in Africa, or in premodern British societies (McGinn, 2008), the widowhood practices in Africa which are predominantly negative evidence some misogynist practices.

Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf (2021)[227] specifically addresses the position of Muslim Sudanese widows, highlighting the "religious and cultural inflections in the lives of Sudanese widows" (p. 116), meaning that indigenous influences form part of the cultural inflections. In recognition of the mixed influences on widowhood practices in Sudan, Abusharaf refers to the plethora of practices facing Sudanese Muslim widows as "stubborn structures rooted in religion, custom, and law" (p. 116). Additionally, she cautions that "[w]e must remember, however, that these laws did not appear out of thin air. Rather, they are cultural artifacts that embody misogyny as a matter of course" (p.119).

Focusing on two most debilitating aspects, Abusharaf (2021) states that the daily lives of Muslim widows in Sudan are impeded, punctuated, and rooted in

[227] It has been difficult to find material specifically on widowhood in Muslim Sudan. Rogaia Mustapha Abusharaf (2021) "Conundrums in the House of Wailing: Some Scenarios from Sudanese Widows" in *Differences* 32.3, pp.114-146 notes the paucity of literature about Sudanese widows even though various wars and conflicts have produced communities of widows since the country's political independence in 1956. He states that: "In the Sudan, there is no trove of literature on widowhood with which to compare and contrast experiences. I had to start this pilot ethnography from scratch starting with stories from the Muslim Arabized North. Except for three cases from Khartoum, the narratives come from my birthplace, Omdurman. For hours, I talked to widows, as well as to other women who had stories of their own to offer on the subject. Together they helped impart valuable knowledge about those who bear the brunt of the condition of widowhood. In spite of the particularities of any given context, many widows across the Sudan would recognize the stories in this essay intuitively and cognitively as similar to their own". This is Abusharaf's disclaimer to indicate the subjective position of this work.

traditions going back to the 7th century. This raises the prospects that the lives of twenty-first century Muslim Sudanese women remain static or near static in any case as it relates to widowhood practices in question. That the converging of legal and divine dictates can prove disabling in relation to women resisting oppression due to the reluctance to go against the will of God, is noted in Ripero-Muniz's (2020) work with migrant Somali Muslim women in Nairobi and Johannesburg discussed earlier in this chapter. Ripero-Muniz observes that while in their new migrant environment, Somali women are ready to challenge patriarchal norms which previously controlled them in Somalia, the norms challenged are those perceived as man-made as opposed to what is deemed divine. This tendency to hold on to the divine, while letting go of man-made constructs, is reflected in Aboulela's comments in an interview whilst speaking on her faith as a Muslim woman in Britain. According to Anita Shethi (2005): "For Aboulela a personal, religious identity provides more stability than national identity, 'I can carry [religion] with me wherever I go, whereas the other things can easily be taken away from me'". In other words, the personal religion relationship with God is portrayed as eternal, constant and reliable while all other things are temporary, changeable, and manipulatable by men. Sammar also echoes similar sentiments about her faith and fate (Aboulela, 1991, p. 71).

As discussed earlier with regards to Sammar's experience, another dimension of widow-oppression in Muslim Sudan, which Abusharaf (2021) highlights is the role of women in perpetrating male domination against other women, ultimately sustaining patriarchy. Other groups of women, not necessarily senior women, can be co-opted as agents of oppressions against widows in Africa. These women come in the form of daughters of, or women related or affiliated to, the widows' marital families, such as sisters-in-law or aunts-in-law, women cousin-in law of the deceased husbands, which are found in Sudan too. Elsewhere in Africa among the Igbos, these women are called *umuada* (Ify Amaduime, 2000 [1987]) meaning daughters of the family (immediate and kinship families), or literary, 'children who are daughters. Acting within the patriarchal bargain, these women believe they have power over the 'strangers', the widows who through marriage came to the immediate, wider or kinship family. They enforce patriarchal dictates by monitoring widows and ensuring that they comply with socially constructed norms which demean women. Of course, they choose to ignore the fact that in the future they may be at the receiving end. In

relation to Sammar, although Aboulela does not specifically address the matter of female-in-laws oppression against Sammar in *The Translator,* her mother-in-law/aunt, Mahasen, acted in 'phallocentric positions' when relating to Sammar in Sudan. Whilst married, a woman's life and identity are linked to her relationship to her husband; Sammar is Tarig's wife and after his death, Tarig's widow. She had been meant to be Tarig's wife for the rest of her life unless there is a problem. The death of a husband is one such problem as it causes a rupture to this structure of inherent control of a woman, such as Sammar, and places such a woman outside the direct control of a man. However, African patriarchal societies put in place various cultural practices aimed at socially controlling such a woman, to subdue her and keep her in check.

So, Sammar's experiences of widowhood resonate with the general African and specific Muslim Sudan contexts. Despite ongoing changes in widowhood practices, widows in Africa continue to be treated disgracefully on the pretext of tradition and religion. Extreme practices vary depending on the ethnic groups but may include: emotional and physical seclusions, ostracization for a specified period, the use of coded dresses to identify the widows, holding widows liable for the death of her husband, rituals enactments like ritual bath, sleeping with the corpse, and ritual sex to cleanse the widows (see Ntozi, 1997; Nwoye 2005; Ezeakor 2013; Manala 2015). Although one would have thought that Sammar's close blood and social relationship with Mahasen for many years prior to her marriage would have offered her some protection, her mother-in-law humiliates and berates Sammar. She blames her for Tarig's death in a car he is driving: "'You're a liar and you killed my son…You nagged him to buy that car'" (Aboulela, p. 166).

Conclusion

Emecheta and Aboulela, through their women characters, reveal real or deduced versions of truths of African women's lives in relation to the operation of African patriarchal in the diaspora. With the assistance of autobiography, Adah's journey shows her transforming from an object of patriarchal structures and control to the subject who takes control of her life and destiny in the UK. Adah's lived experiences since her father died reinforce the power of patriarchy in her personal space and it is

within this space that she won her freedom in the diaspora environment gradually but eventually. Emecheta's through Adah, her fictional character's voice, becomes an instrument of resistance and transgression, a voice that is no longer silent as African patriarchy demands.

Davies (1994) highlights that autobiographical writing is one way in which Black women articulate their experiences, starting from their homes which can at times represent a location both of oppression and dislocation, later due to women's geographical mobility usually induced by marriage. Davies' reflection on the multilayering of 'migration' by marriage - the person (from daughter/sister to wife), identities (re-negotiating of new life) and geographical (re-location even if only from one's birth family location to the husband's base, at times local, national or international) resonates with this thesis. Dislocation by marriage inherently involves issues around reconstitution of, sense of home and identity and it is within these contexts that the authors and their characters demonstrated that once transplanted in the UK, African patriarchal practices including the attached assumption of male superiority immediately suffers an initial sharp blow followed by erosion of control or potency.

In the novels discussed in this chapter, African women arriving in the UK realise the role reversal for men, from their assured 'superior' positions in Africa to the assumed 'inferior' position within a racist context. They do not face such huge structural dislodging as men in that women's 'assumed inferiority' remains, it only crosses and swops operational boundaries. For example, Adah notices, for the first time in her life that her colour is a problem for others in England, and so is Francis's colour. She realises limitations to Francis' ability to control her. Hence when Francis threatens to refuse Adah permission to seek employment, Adah quips: "This is England, not Nigeria. I don't need your signature to secure a job for me" (p. 171). Adah's negotiation of a new identity is in progress as she learns and engages with structural realities of her new migrant environment. Adah's struggles, fuelled by the man's internalised patriarchal worldview which men like Francis would like to keep alive in the new context, lead to the wife leaving the man, and marriage/home.

Similarly on crossing the boundary from UK to Nigeria, Kehinde re-enters re-submerged in African patriarchal practices. Within this context, Kehinde attains the

full self-consciousness of her immunities in the UK to such practices. She rejects patriarchal realities in Nigeria. The study shows these realities as social constructs which must be deconstructed for women in Africa.

Both Aboulela and Sammar, her character, demonstrate their awareness of fake, nonetheless stifling patriarchal barriers on women's lives. Sammar, a Muslim woman, stereotypically seen as passive due to the harsh imposition of Islam, breaks a social taboo for most women, even for white females, when she proposes marriage to her boss, a white man. Asma Barlas (2019) argues that the patriarchal oppressive realities of Islam are from men's interpretations and that the religion is not intrinsically oppressive. Leila Ahmed (2021) argues that Islam's patriarchal oppression dates to the 7th century and was no different in its oppression of women than those of the surrounding cultures, including African and British societies. Both women do not deny the oppression of women but argue that there are also bold women. Aboulela, through Sammar, shows that it is structural realities which impede women's agency as opposed to natural inferiority of females who are Muslims. Significantly, Sammar can be interpreted as signalling that she is an equal to the white man who historically brutalised African men during colonisation.

The 'criss-crossing of boundaries', re-emergence of African patriarchy is seen in Sammar's adult experiences as wife, as she moves between Sudanese patriarchal and Scottish racist structures. In showing this arbitrariness and reach of African patriarchy in the women characters' lives, the stopping of practices on exiting Africa and re-starting of practices on re-entering Africa (swapping patriarchal), the chapter functions as part of the resistance and challenging of women domination inside Africa as unnatural.

Chapter 6

African Patriarchy and the Female Voice in African Diasporic Women Writing.

Introduction

The chapter extends the functions stated in Chapter 5, as part of the tools of resistance and defiance against women's structural domination inside Africa through demonstrating the significant erosion of these same for African women in the United Kingdom diaspora context. The focus here is on the Second-generation women writers and their characters or writing. The chapter demonstrates that the women writers' experiences, proximity, or engagement with African patriarchal societies and practices reflect in their women characters.

In Africa, women engage tactics of resistance and survival in dealing with patriarchal control which in effect aims to silence and subdue them. As Uwakweh (1995) points out, "Silencing comprises all imposed restrictions on women's social being, thinking and expression that are religious 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). Men's domination over women leads to the silencing of the latter in public and private spheres and remains a continuing reality of twenty-first century Africa. In this chapter, the silencing of female characters by African men occurs minimally or not at all but if the women writers lived in African countries, this would not be the case. Racism occupies the women writers more than African patriarchy. Rose Sackeyfio (2021) notes that first-generation women writers, writing about/from diaspora from a broad gender perspective, may engage with issues around nation-state, neocolonialism, African behaviour at home and abroad. Third-generation writers "foreground perceptions of identity, race, class, and gender mediation and reposition African women's experiences...discomforting experiences of marginalization, otherness and liminality abroad" (p. 4).

In this study, women's writing is read as showing stages of patriarchal banishment which the study argues will not be the case if these women lived in African societies. The discussion below examines the three stages of African patriarchy: Stage 1: Patriarchal Vestiges/Flashes; Stage 2: Visible Demise; Stage 3: Total Demise. The chapter shows that the second-generation writing started the shift and rejection of African patriarchal impositions on diaspora spaces.

Stages of African Patriarchy in Second Generation African Diaspora Women Writing

Stage 1: Patriarchal Vestiges/Flashes: Janice Okoh. Flashes of African patriarchy are seen in second-generation women writers who would have been aware of African fathers/men assertions or attempts to assert African patriarchal values and control, and their mothers' tactics of resistance aimed at diluting the actions or behaviour constituting control. By observing both parents' interactions and comparing their lives with their non-African peers, such second-generation women writers have more objective views of African patriarchal interferences in the diaspora. They take their stance in relation to African patriarchal values.

Janice Okoh's play, *Egwusi Soup,* set in London, shows how a family of two adult daughters, Anne and Grace, who have left home go back to their parents' house to join their mother, Mrs Anyia, who is preparing to travel to Nigeria for the one-year anniversary of their father, Mr Anyia's death. Their re-gathering and preparation to travel to Nigeria present the girls and their mother's an opportunity to reflect on their past life while Mr Anyia was alive. The previous lived experiences discussed which allow the presentation of flashes of African patriarchy within the home are presented through the remembrance of Mr Anyia's seeming domineering and oppressive behaviour endured by Mrs Anyia and her children. Interestingly, the couple have two daughters and there is no mention of seeking another wife to beget a son. It is worth noting that the nature of male domination represented in *Egusi Soup* is not as extensive as that in Africa. In the play, the voice of the domineering father, the male voice, is deliberately cut out, as he is deceased. Instead, the women's voices (daughters and wife/mother) are heard discussing Mr Anyia, in effect speaking of/for and about him, the way men do when it concerns women in Africa. Another man in the play, Dele, Grace's husband, is from Nigeria and clearly has some of the patriarchal views, including the opinion that the man makes decisions in a marriage. Apparently, Grace, being aware of the man she married, made the decision to be on contraception without telling him.

Okoh deftly makes the male voice almost redundant and powerless, especially in the way she comically characterises the two male characters, Dele and Pastor Emmanuel, portrayed as Nigerian stock types. Both are entrepreneurs or business opportunists. However, while Pastor Emmanuel is very good at seizing

business opportunities in each event, the Dele is hopeless and unsuccessful in all his ventures. Both are caricatures. The women, on the other hand, are presented as serious and determined players who navigate life more successfully; this includes occasionally allowing the men to think that they are in charge when they are not. Mrs Anyia and Grace are better at this than Anne, who gives the impression of ignoring men or being unwilling to tolerate their domineering attitudes, including that of her father; hence, her decision to leave home and only return at the death of her father.

While Francis beat Adah in *Citizen* when he found she was using contraception, Dele, despite his pompous and masculine presentation, does not try to beat Grace. From the positioning of Grace in the play, it is unlikely she would allow herself to be beaten up by her husband since her voice is heard throughout the play. She gives the impression of someone in control of her destiny and of one who knows how to handle her husband. Ironically, Dele has been paying for and following an ineffectual fertility programme he purchased from Pastor Emmanuel. So, there are reversals in this play that include a man going through with fertility treatment instead of the woman; this is a reversal of cases in Africa. Grace is not the person solely blamed for the couple's childlessness yet, and unlike Aunt Sihle discussed in Chapter 4, she will not be forced to have fertility treatment without her consent. Dele keeps trying to take control in their marriage as the man, but Grace resists and is not likely to let that happen. Thus, Grace and Dele's marriage is a good illustration of the diminished authority of the man as he has less power and dominance in the relationship than his father-in-law had in his marriage. This is unsurprising though, since Grace is a second-generation African woman resident where African patriarchal structures are not entrenched.

Another example of the waning influence and dominance of patriarchy on African female characters in the diaspora illustrated by Okoh's play is how widowhood practices used in Africa to ill-treat women are not present in the play. The play does not show in any detail what happened after Mr Anyia died, other than passing comments about Anne sending money for the repatriation of his body back to Nigeria. Mr Anyia's relatives, for instance, cannot come to Mrs Anyia's London flat to harass her as they would have done had she has been living in Nigeria. Given the absence of interfering relatives and 'custodians of culture', the patriarchal practices of in-laws harassing widows cannot happen in the United Kingdom. The reader

witnesses Mrs Anyia and her daughter's discussion concerning the travel to Nigerian for the one-year anniversary of Mr Anyia's death.

In this play, similar to other works of fiction or drama that are set in the United Kingdom there are no widowhood rites imposed such as those evident in *Power* and in *Letter*. Ngond in *Power* is expected to be naked and rubbed with ashes, excluded from interaction with other women and so on. If Ramatoulaye and Modou in *Letter* had been living in the United Kingdom, her experiences would never have been as portrayed in the novel. Her husband's relatives could never have descended on her and taken control of her home, her husband's wealth and secluded her as they did in the Senegalese setting of the novel. And even if the in-laws had to travel to the UK, apart from getting visas, they would have had no legal rights to meddle or arbitrate in Modou and Ramatoulaye's affairs and post-death arrangement or be in the home to order the widow around. Under the law they would therefore have been regarded as intruders who could face prosecution for their interference if they insist on entering uninvited. But in the African setting of the novel these restrictions are not present; hence, Ramatoulaye is subjected to all manner of impositions and indignities just because she is a woman who has lost her husband. African women in the United Kingdom diaspora, therefore, are offered immunity by the geography of their location from such harsh African patriarchal practice. It is not surprising that the oppressive practices associated with widowhood in African societies are not detailed in African women's diasporic writing as these seem not to be replicated. As discussed in Chapter 5, whereas Sammar life in Scotland and her Scottish environment spare her the immediate cultural practices associated with widowhood, Ramatoulaye, another Muslim widow, must endure these in Senegal immediately after her husband's death is announced as his relatives take over.

Stage 2: Visible Demise: Ade Solanke and Bola Agbaje. The male voice is silenced, while mothers/women are free shown in the absence of patriarchy. African patriarchy's adaptation in the diaspora can be seen in Ade Solanke's *Pandora's Box (2012*) where a single mother, Toyin, who is raising Timi, her only child and son, on a London council estate, faces the problem of keeping him safe from gang culture. Toyin's experiences echo those of the unnamed single mother in Bola Agbaje's *Gone Too Far!* Timi has no father figure and is not only becoming unruly but is facing threats from a gang. That Timi's best friend had been murdered is having an impact

on him and his behaviour. The play opens with Toyin as she prepares with her mother, Pandora, Timi's grandmother, for a holiday trip to Lagos, Nigeria. At the end of their holiday, Pandora and Toyin's Caribbean friend, Bev, encourage Toyin to leave Timi in a Nigerian boarding school with the strict Principal Osun.

Throughout the play, there is no mention of Timi's father and no mention of Pandora's husband (Timi's grandfather) either; similarly in Agbaje's play, neither Yemi's nor Ikudayisi's father is mentioned. These fathers or male figures are absent, silent, voiceless, and written out or at best on the periphery of the narrative, very much like the position of women, especially in the literary works of pioneer African male writers as shown in Chapters 3 and 7. Equally, in Okoh's drama, Mr Anyia is voiceless as he is already dead; it is his wife and daughters who speak for and of him. The seeming absence of the male voice in the United Kingdom in these plays is striking and can be used to infer two things. The first and most significant, in the context of this chapter, is the fact that the United Kingdom setting by its very nature stifles or weakens the transplanted African patriarchy. In this way it succeeds in creating a liberating space for the female voice to speak, unencumbered by male domination. The female characters on their own make decisions about their lives or those of their children without interference from their silenced or completely excised male partners. These women are able within this liberating/liberated space of the diaspora to become mistresses of their own lives. What the plays make clear is that the absence of male characters seems to lead proportionally to the emergence of powerful female characters such as Pandora, Toyin and Bev in Solanke's *Pandora's Box*, Mrs Anyia and her daughters, Anne and Grace, in Okoh's *Egusi Soup* and the unnamed mother of Yemi and Ikudayisi in Agbaje's *Gone Too Far!*.

However, the nature of African patriarchy in the United Kingdom context should cause African women to question why behaviours and attitudes arising from patriarchy should continue to be tolerated in Africa. Remarkably, some of these patriarchal practices instantaneously lose their characteristic power over African women once the women arrive in the United Kingdom with their African husbands or partners. For instance, child-marriage is outlawed so any African who practices it is criminalised. Thus, an analysis of African diasporic women writing seeks to answer questions regarding both the operational and constructed nature of African patriarchy. The key argument will be that if African patriarchal practices are natural

as they seen or are purported to be in Africa, the practices cannot cease instantaneously or significantly diminish when African women and men arrive or live in the United Kingdom. The study is of the view that they do cease because of the absence of enabling African structures to sustain them in the United Kingdom, as well as because of the significant influence of racism on the lived experiences of both women and men in the diaspora context.

Stage 3: Total Demise: The Two Worlds of Aminata Forna. The writers in this group, Forna, Bernadine Evaristo and Jackie Kay, of dual-heritage and Hannah Pool, of African heritage, all deal with the problems associated with race, identity, social exclusion, and marginalisation which are often a direct fallout from experiences of racism in the UK – the diaspora realities. The discussion will start with Forna because more than Evaristo, Kay or Pool, her experience of having lived in Africa, where patriarchy was still in evidence, feeds into her autobiographical writing. So, in her writing there are echoes of patriarchy, even if it does not affect her, or her white mother directly. Her life is discussed in more detail to draw out the nuanced operation of African patriarchy in Africa in relation to white wives. An intertextual cross-reference is made between Forna's autobiographical experiences and those of, Evaristo's fictional Lara in *Lara.*

Forna was born in Scotland to an African father, Mohamed, a medical doctor from Sierra Leone, and Maureen, a white Scottish mother without higher education. Like Evaristo and Kay, Forna experiences racism once she returns to the United Kingdom. Equally, like Emecheta, Forna saw African patriarchal practices affecting other people, but not herself, due to her white mother. She also learnt of patriarchy from speaking to her aunts and the stories of some wives in her paternal family, including a wife who was not only inherited but was also less valued than her twin brother. Forna serves as a transitional writer whose African diasporic characters move between patriarchy and racism, while Kay and Evaristo's characters are firmly set within the domain of racial and identity politics of the diaspora.

This discussion is not interested in the political aspects of what was going on in Serra Leone, but the focus is on the perspective of the multi-dimensional life of a mixed-race girl in Africa, Scotland, London/England, and British boarding school. In all these locations, Forna's white mother and black stepmother's experience of

African patriarchal oppression is either extremely limited or non-existent. In relation to African patriarchy, which will be seen to have a minimal impact on the white women, even inside Africa, Forna's experiences are illustrative of the possible experiences of mixed-race children, with white mothers and African fathers in Africa, as well as those of white women married to African men living in Africa.

According to Forna's autobiography, by the age of six months, Mohamed and Maureen had taken her to Sierra Leone. A letter had arrived for her father from Forna's paternal grandfather in Sierra Leone asking Mohamed to come back following the death of Mohamed's uncle, his father's brother. From the beginning, Maureen is not like the other wives who were chattelised and bought with bride price. Forna's grandfather, Pa Roke paid Forna's father/family a visit and when in their discussion he asked his son how much he had paid for his white wife's bride-price, Mohamed told him he paid ten shillings. This was the cost of the registry marriage. The grandfather was pleased that his "son's wife might be white, but she had come at a good price." (p. 42). The old man also observed that "She was young; her breast hadn't fallen yet" (p.42) and this was after three children, so she is worth the price. This is the closest Forna's mother came to being considered as a chattel, bought by her bride-price when no bride-price was paid for her. Mohamed's response to his father, shows him balancing expectations of his culture with the reality of marrying a white woman. The question is: If this marriage was contracted without a bride-price in the traditional sense, why should patriarchal practices continue to tolerate the payment of money (bride price) on a woman's head, which some men take to mean that they bought the woman as their property. If bride-price or dowry payment is redundant for the white woman, should it not be abolished for all females in Africa?

For Maureen, the Africa-bound wife, Forna writes that "Nothing in her upbringing prepared my mother for the reality of the Africa with which she was now faced; these were not her people, and she did not share our father's passion or the political convictions that might otherwise have carried her through" (2002, pp. 95-96). Forna talks of people arriving at their home in the afternoon seeking help, upon which "Anyone known to the family goes to the house and keeps company on the back veranda. The others sit out front on the roadside. They come from Freetown and from the provinces in need of help" (p.10).

Forna captures vividly a typical scene in the home of an affluent African man including the typical demands of the African extended family system which are often alien to non-Africans.[228] Unlike white women married to African men, as girls, African married women are socialised to accept the extended family system in general. As part of the patriarchal bargains, they unconsciously sign up to their husbands' extended family system (Kandiyoti, 1988). Chapter 4 highlights how the African kinship system claims how husbands and wives are married into the immediate/kinship families. Forna recounts how her father, Mohamed, had been incensed when once his brothers came and her mother asked them to come back another time. Her father was angry that no drink or food had been offered to them. (p. 68). He refers to the offence caused to his family, through a transgressive action when his wife fails to follow boundaries or rules which are expected of her as part of the normative femininity for women in his culture (Davies, 1994). Whereas these rules are not written anywhere they are culturally embedded in patriarchal practices; for example, a woman is expected to 'serve' her husband's relatives and feed them. Maureen, Forna's mother, as a white woman, does not understand the cultural significance or expectation to entertain endless distant relatives who visit them. That this is a patriarchal bargain which Maureen has not signed up to, is reinforced by Forna's assertion that nothing in Maureen's upbring in the United Kingdom had prepared her for these cultural expectations in Africa. Conversely, as seen later, Forna's African stepmother, Yabome, her father's second wife after his divorce with Maureen, understood her husband's position and expectations on her and performs these.

Despite the offence taken by Mohamed and his family, Maureen gets away with her transgressive act of snubbing her husbands' relatives because she is a white wife; however, had she been an African wife properly indoctrinated in 'appropriate' patriarchal behaviour, she will have been compliant. Being white and from Europe shielded her and her children from the full weight of patriarchal impositions even as her husband navigated the delicate balance between the two – his desire to protect his nuclear family while fulfilling his responsibilities to the extended African family. Critically, patriarchy was not an issue for both Forna's mother as an African man's wife and Forna herself as an African girl-child. Other

[228] Indeed, relatives and non-relatives can come to seek help.

issues thus dominate her world such as her father's involvement in politics while she is in Sierra Leone and racism when she is in the United Kingdom. Forna points out her father's sisters hardly visited. Arguably, the male and female in-laws are unlikely to compel Maureen to entertain them or raise traditional disputes against her which the elders, usually men, would adjudicate often with male-bias in the rulings. As discussed in Chapter 5, in Emecheta's *Kehinde*, when Madam Kaduna, the sister-in law visits she assumes 'authority over the wife' as a member of the husband's family, thus entrenching women performing patriarchal roles, entrenching patriarchy. However, the point is that Forna's mother's situation regarding patriarchal imposition amplifies and shows that despite the constructed and selective nature of African patriarchy, it can be resisted successfully if concerted efforts to end it are made as it shows changeability.

Forna's life-story given in *The Devil* (2002) reveals several layers and intersections of her life experiences, which traverse different family compositions (mixed-race, white and black families), and shifting settings of Scotland, Sierra Leone, and England. For instance, she lived with her parents as a privileged mixed-race girl in Sierra Leone and with her mother as a single white parent whose children were discriminated against in Scotland. She lived with her black stepmother as a mixed-race girl in Sierra Leone and a single mother in London, England. She lived in a British boarding school as a mixed-race girl, her life in Sierra Leone as a daughter of a pioneer black doctor and a government finance minister, her life in the Lagos (Nigeria) diplomatic community as with her white mother and her white stepfather. Forna's autobiography sheds light on these areas of her life as it traverses African patriarchy and European racism. However, unlike racism, African patriarchy has no impact on Forna. Racism is an over-arching phenomenon defining, dominating, or oppressing the Africa man, his wife or partner and children. Contemporary critical race theory argues that race is an invention, used by Europeans to characterise the biological differences between themselves and the 'Other' peoples who they encountered, conquered, ruled, or dominated as marks of inferiority (Banton, 2015, Banton in Back and Solomos, 2000, pp. 51-63; Miles, 1982). Racism is the main issue of concern for Forna's family in the United Kingdom. Forna's father is considered an inferior human being in Scotland where he is studying medicine. Forna explains that her parents:

> Mohamed and Maureen were together for two years before her father [Forna's maternal grandfather] passed them on the other side of Union Street one afternoon. When she [Maureen] arrived home, she found him [maternal grandfather] maroon with rage. He told his daughter that he would not tolerate her seeing or being seen with a black man (p.26).

It is obvious that the key issue with Mohamed is his race. This shows race as impacting significantly on an African man's life rather than African patriarchal issues. When Mohamed visits Forna's maternal grandfather and grandmother to speak to them about his relationship with their daughter, and his hopes and aspiration for the future, the grandfather is not impressed. However, he goes on to say, "'I'm not prejudiced. I'm sure you've done well enough. But I won't have Maureen going about town with any man of a different colour" (p.29). Colour, a physical signifier of racial difference, is the problem and as Emecheta commented through Adah, her colour was never a problem until she arrived in London. Forna's grandfather's objections to his daughter, Maureen, dating a black man are reminiscent of the objections seen in Evaristo's *Lara* from Lara's grandmother Peggy. She calls Lara's father, Taiwo, "a…darkie, a …nigger-man" (p. 69) and objects to her daughter Ellen, Lara's mother, marrying him. Whereas Maureen's mother came around to accept her daughter's decision, it was Ellen's father who did.

Furthermore, after her father's first arrest, Forna recounts that when they returned to Scotland, the "first few weeks of the summer we lived with my grandparents" (p. 105). Again, to illustrate how racism against black people was the main problem in Scottish society (p.107), her mother struggled to find accommodation as landlords would not rent a house to a woman with coloured children, again clearly illustrating that racism against black people was the main problem in Scottish society (p.107). In the end, her mother gave up and bought a caravan near a park close to her parents. The family's situation changes after Forna's mother marries her second husband, Uncle Win, who had "collected the family from Scotland and he treated us all to a holiday in Yugoslavia" (p. 138). The relevance of the foregoing is that African women in the diaspora like Forna write

about issues such as racial discrimination against black people which dominate their lives or are more important to write about instead of patriarchal oppression and practices.

Forna recalls spending time with her white grandparents, together and separately (pp. 114-125). This is reminiscent of Lara in *Lara*, spending time with her grandmother, Peggy. Forna remembers going with her grandmother to Duthie Park and her grandmother also visited the caravan to help look after Forna, unlike Peggy, Lara's grandmother, who refused to visit her daughter Ellen at her home. The point is that the white side of the family can help to boost the identity image of the mixed-race girl like Lara who as a young girl feels her half-white heritage makes her superior to African children; indeed, Forna's mother as seen below tells her she is better. Lara decision, which she shares with her paternal aunt Beatrice, is that she is not black because her mother is white, but in response the aunt says that she is seen as black (p.128). Soon after, Lara begins to experience racism from her peers (pp. 119, 121, 122).

In Africa, the mixed-race child can get away with this sense of not being black, whereas in Scotland, this not the case as both Lara and Forna become aware of racism as white people do not view them as white. Forna explains that whilst she and her siblings were living with their mother and stepfather in a Lagos diplomatic house, four big African girls had been nasty to her which she told her mother who was doing her hair. Her mother said:

> 'I don't want you to talk to the African girls anymore.'…
>
> 'None of the African girls.' [Forna asked].
>
> No, not to any of them.' My hair finished now. My mother turned me round to face her and bent down placing her hands on my shoulders. She looked into my face. 'I want you to remember that you are half white.' She stroked my cheek. 'You're better than those girls. Don't you talk to them or play with them. And don't let them upset you.' (p. 146).

Here, Forna is being subtly indoctrinated by her mother that she is better than black African girls because she is half-white. Forna, says that after listening to her mother "I went back to school and ostentatiously turned my nose up at the black girls" (p. 147). She also recalls how once when upset with her stepmother "I called my stepmother an African" which earned her a smacking on her palms with a cane she was asked to go and get (p 157). In effect, she also assimilates the implied message that while she may be inferior to white children, she is superior to black children. This resonates with the notion of the hybrid who inhabits the in-between space in terms of their identity location/placement (see Bhabha, 1994, *Location of Culture*); thus, Forna is a neither-nor who constantly grapples with an existential question of who she really is and where she belongs. While on one hand, she may find herself belonging to no group, on the other, she may have to deal with perpetual inner conflicts of the neither-nor of the hybrid. From viewing privileges attached to his/her skin colour, the white child is socialised to feel superior to all children, whereas black children seeing the inferior position of their colour may end up feeling inferior when they encounter white people.

The effect of the type of social and cultural conditioning discussed above is that where it concerns marriages of African men and white women, patriarchal practices are absent for the white wife or the mixed-race children of that marriage. It is often a marriage of two like-minded or emotionally bonded individuals, even in a case where the man is a professional and the white wife has no university degree, as in the Forna's case. It is unlikely that any of Forna's uncles would have expected to inherit Forna's white mother, as a widow, a cultural practice in Sierra Leone at the time. Moreover, Maureen would not accept such a marriage. Forna says that during an argument between her parents, her mother deridingly said: "An African marriage, my mother pronounced with scorn, where the men and women do their own thing. She could not accept such a compromise, for she was a European woman who deserved nothing less than to be loved and cherished" (p. 129). In this context the white woman declares that she will be no party to the kind of marriages sanctioned by African patriarchy. She will neither share a husband nor be neglected in her monogamous marriage. If Forna's mother believed her mixed-race daughter was better than African girls who share her husband's colour, it implies that she feels she

is superior to her husband. These scenarios are further examples of the position of a white woman in relation to African patriarchy.

More importantly though in relation to the issue of patriarchy and racism in Africa and the United Kingdom diaspora, Forna says that before her mother left Scotland for Sierra Leone, her skin had darkened with each pregnancy, as some form of side effect. According to her:

> By the time we moved to Glasgow she was virtually a full-blooded Negress. People began to treat her the way they sometimes treated my father. They stared at her as she walked with me in the pram, my sister perched on the back and my brother following behind: they cast remarks under their breath, barbed like a fisherman's fly, deftly designed to land just within earshot.
>
> When my father was with us men would yell, 'Look at the darkie!' and spit the word 'whore' with guttural emphasis. (p. 39).

Forna presents a picture of the kind of racial abuse that her mother was subjected to in Scotland for she "had chosen a black husband and birthed black babies "(p. 147); moreover, her skin darkening with successive pregnancies. These pioneer white women married to African men must be women who are very strongly willed to defy all the abuses. However, in Africa, their lives changed; instead of being at the receiving end of abuses they became privileged. In the context of the dissertation, it is important to note that if the foremost concern of black people and their white spouses was the overt racist treatment they received from white people, it must have also dominated the social and mental universe of the mixed-race child growing up in Scotland. Unsurprisingly, racism and not patriarchy is a major concern for Forna as a black/African woman writer. For example, she explains that the time when her mother arrived in Africa with her father: "My mother was one of the only white people in Koidu. The only other one I ever saw was her boss at the Volkswagen franchise, Frant Stein, from Bischostauberville in Germany" (p. 37). Forna's mother stood out in

a privileged way as belonging to the white race which controlled Sierra Leone until independence, and even after independence.

Forna further notes that while living at Koidu, a community far from the city, when out with her mother: “Everyone recognised her. She was the doctor’s white wife. And there was only one white woman in Koidu. And only one doctor” (p. 42). Forna and her mother were revered because of their race and privileged life in Sierra Leone at that time. However, according to Forna her mother’s white skin which earned her deference also provoked contempt in equal measure, which the study argues is because of her identity as part of the colonisers. There is a contrast between her mother’s life in Scotland and Sierra Leone. This contrast clearly illustrates the underlying concerns and people’s outlook to life in the two locations; in Scotland, it is racism against black people and anything or anyone associated with them, whereas in Sierra Leone, there is no corresponding racism against white people, but rather deferential treatment which ironically includes the removal of the patriarchal maltreatment of women when it came to Forna’s white mother. However, where Africans are holding her in contempt can be described as prejudice, white people’s discrimination against black people, which backed by power, is racism. Hence, she observes that after the abuses in Scotland, on arrival in Africa, her mother was regarded as a privileged white person:

> White again, my mother was accepted, on certain conditions, into the ex-pat community in Freetown. She joined a Scottish dancing group that met at the Railway Club and at the exclusively white Hill Station Club. Before independence black people were not allowed up to Hill Station unless they worked in one of the big houses” (p. 41).

Thus, Forna’s mother’s white privilege meant that she joined the expatriate club but her African husband, Forna’s father, a doctor, could not, even though it was his country. As noted earlier, Forna’s mother did not have it all easy in Africa, for she says, that while her father’s visiting brothers were kind to her mother, the latter “felt frozen out by the wives of my father’s friends who, she thought, disregarded her,

though she could never quite put her finger on the problem because it lay in what was missing from their welcome rather than what was present" (p. 42). That African women did not see her as one of them infers the feelings of anger and resentment attached to her skin colour as part of the white oppressors. It is not hard to understand the reason for their resentment, for instance, while the African wives are subjected to patriarchal repressions and exclusions because of their gender, Forna's mother, it appears, is virtually given an exemption from this treatment as she is not affected by the restrictions the other wives/women face in the society. Ironically, when Forna (aged eight-nine years) goes to High Tree School boarding school in England (p. 214), she finds herself at the receiving end of racism. Like Lara in *Lara*, she is called a black person because her father is black. For example, Susan, another pupil, invites the entire class to her party, she tells Forna, that her father says she is not invited: "My dad doesn't like black people. He told me he won't have anybody black in his house. Sorry. Really" (p. 231). That Forna becomes a black person in England echoes what aunt Beatrice told Lara in *Lara*; "'They don't care whether your mother's (sic) white, green or orange…You're a nigger to them'" (p. 128). In Lara's case, she found herself called a "a nig-nog", "a nigger", a monkey mouthed at her (pp. 121, 122).

Forna further discusses witnessing the racial abuse by three white people in a red car who called a black man, a Rastafarian a monkey, also told him "'Show us ya face, monkey man!'" (p. 228). According to Forna, she felt that when the racist thugs noticed her, "which they hadn't so far, they might pick on me too. Our flat lay beyond the wasteland of the Earls Court Exhibition Centre car park on the other side of the Warwick Road. I still had quite a long way to go…I was now genuinely scared" (p. 228). This incident makes her aware of the risk of being racially abused as a black person. Relatedly, Forna also informs the reader that a report on the radio concerning racist comments made about Asians from Uganda arriving in the UK further alarms her since most people asked by reporters whether it was "right to call black people niggers, wogs and coon" mostly "thought it was just fine" (p. 229).

Elsewhere, Forna's description of other moments when she found herself the target of racist remarks also alluded to her father. She narrates an incident when, a blonde classmate asked the teacher, "Is it true that when children in Africa are born their parents drop them on their heads, that's why they can carry baskets and things

- on their heads - and we can't. Because their heads are flat?" (p. 227). In response, the teacher said she did not know, but it would be dreadful if this was the case. So, the girl insisted that it was true since both her mother and father had said it. But according to Forna, she spoke up saying: "'No, they don't, I SAID. Africans don't have flat heads. In Sierra Leone no one drops their babies on their heads, not on purpose." (p. 227). The girl asked how come the woman in her book could carry a child on her back and a stack of six to seven baskets on her head. Forna did not know the answer and when the girl maintained that her parents were right, the teacher agreed with her. In this context, it could be seen that racist propaganda was being spread in primary school classes in England. Forna also recalls the time the class watched minstrels dancing and entertaining, grinning at the audience.[229] A classmate asked Forna, "'Is that what your father looks like then'" (p. 227). All these moments reinforce the view presented in this thesis that racial issues are more pressing for Africans in the UK, irrespective whether a person is mixed race or African, than African patriarchy.

Forna's *The Devil* seeks to address what she considers important in her life, especially to clear her father's name following his framing and hanging for treason. In the process of seeking the truth about her father's betrayal, and the Sierra Leonean civil war, the novel gives insight into her childhood as a bi-racial child in Africa, her experiences of having two mothers, white and black. This shows how, like Emecheta's *Head,* Forna's life experience has shaped her writing. Neither Kay nor Evaristo could have written such a memoir steeped in Africa as both have no personal lived experiences to draw on, for Kay was brought up by white adoptive parents in Scotland and Evaristo never spent time in Africa.

Forna's first novel, *Ancestor Stones* (2006), shows, amongst other things, life mirroring fictional work as she draws on her paternal family history for the core content of the novel; thus, reinforcing Davies' (1994) observations about autobiography and the subjective voice it lends to women. *Ancestor Stones* traces the personal histories of four women who are cousins, Mariama (also called Mary),

[229] This was a racist performance caricaturing black people. "The first minstrel shows were performed in 1830s New York by white performers with blackened faces (most used burnt cork or shoe polish) and tattered clothing" (no page, see "Blackface: The Birth of An American Stereotype. Learn the history behind common African American stereotypes. #ANationsStory /explore/stories/blackface-birth-American-stereotype

Hawa, Serah and Asana, and through their voices highlight polygamous relationships. The cousins' mothers and six others (eleven women) were married to the same man, Gibril who is Abie's paternal grandfather. It is notable that the setting of the novel and the polygamous marriages are in Africa and not the United Kingdom where Forna lives when this text is written, and where the character Abie also lives before she visits home and hears the women's stories. Abie is married to a white British man as is Forna in real life, thus there is a merging of the writer and the chief female protagonist, evidencing an autobiographical influence similar to what we see in Emecheta's first two novels discussed earlier. This reinforces the importance of autobiography as a tool for Black women to voice themselves.

Abie receives a letter from home offering her their grandfather Gibril's coffee plantation, if she wants it as she is the only person within the family with the financial resources to run it. Abie leaves her husband and son in London and goes home to Africa where she meets her paternal aunts. Abie is Forna's alter ego (see *Ancestor Stones*, p. 9). Like Forna, she recalls her childhood surrounded by her extended African relatives and shows that she had access to education, to black and white TV at home, a room of her own, and a transistor radio of her own, like Forna did.

Ancestor Stones shows a writer drawing from her personal experience of an African way of life, cultural aspects which included extended family network and support, in the portraying of African life and characters. Asana's story mentions the practice of wife-inheritance when she informs Abie that her father, Abie's grandfather, inherited her mother from her uncle i.e. Gilbril's brother. Asana explains her mother's position: "After she was widowed, she could have returned to her own people as the other wives did. But she stayed and chose a new husband from the younger brothers. She chose my father. It goes without saying that she must have admired him" (p.16). This African patriarchal practice of inheriting women as property, and where a woman has no choice, is mentioned in *TFA* (p. 15) where Achebe writes that Okonkwo "neither inherited a barn nor title, nor even a young wife" (p. 15). Elsewhere in *Citizen*, Adah states how, following her father's death, "Ma was inherited by Pa's brother" (p.13). In contrast to some of the practices cited in the aforementioned novels, Forna's representation of the practice indicates that the woman has a choice which goes to show that patriarchal practices are not

always uniform in their applications. This underlines the constructed nature of the practice since in societies where wife-inheritance is practised, not every single widow is inherited (also See Chapter 4). Forna, through Abie, weaves in a fabric of life in Africa, some of which she has witnessed or heard of, while Evaristo or Kay have no lived experiences of Africa. Due to these differences in experience, identity issues are raised differently for Evaristo and Kay as writers/in their writing studied.

Through the narratives of Abie's aunts in *Ancestor Stones*, from women's voices and perspectives, African patriarchal practice or way of life surface in the novel. Asana explains that when her father married her mother who "had been the wife of a chief" (p.16), the father's first wife decided to leave the marriage as a second wife with high status will take the position of head wife. Forna, whose female character, the first wife decided to leave a marriage with her head held high, provide a counternarrative to *TFA* where African women are deemed incapable of decision-making. Interestingly, Asana, whose mother had married three times, further states, "…my mother had other children before, when she was married to another man. That happened in another place" (p.18). What this shows is that women of that culture can marry multiple husbands but not at the same time, like men in polygamous settings. Forna's narrative equally contrasts with Emecheta's version of wife-inheritance in *Citizen* (1972) and *Head* (1986).

Forna also highlights another key theme where the oppression of women in Africa can be located through Asana telling her story of how her twin brother was favoured and pampered by their mother, but when he died the mother transferred her love to Asana. Thus, the usual African theme (addressed in Chapter 4) of fathers, mothers and societies valuing male children over female children is also seen in Forna's writing set in Africa. It is clear from Chapter 4 that in Africa, it matters a lot if you have a son or daughter, or even a child; a lot of external and internal pressures bear on the women as wives in this regard.

In the United Kingdom these African external pressures are absent, and internal pressures are significantly reduced, for instance Mr Anyia had two daughters, Grace and Annie, and no other marriage to beget sons in the United Kingdom. Emecheta relates how her mother, the father and his father's people's disappointment when she was born a girl, and a premature girl for that matter too.

Comments were made about her such as: "'Ah, only a girl' "(*Head,* 1986 p. 9). However, her parents were proud of her younger brother from the beginning, though he was a "big baby boy" (p. 11) meaning he was a healthy baby unlike his sister. According to Emecheta, her paternal aunt led moonlight stories where the value of baby boys was extolled over baby girls and children innocently responded when asked their preferred type of baby, "A bouncing baby boy howling with life on a banana leaf" (p. 10). This illustrates how children in that patriarchal society are socialised (hooks, 2015a) through oral storytelling to internalise the society's values and expectations. In *Citizen,* when Adah nearly lost her son to meningitis, she wonders how to explain to a nurse in London that:

> …in her society she could only be sure of the love of her husband and the loyalty of her parents-in-law by having and keeping alive as many children as possible, and that though a girl may be counted as one child, to her people a boy was like four children? And if the family could give the boy a good university education, her mother would be given the status of a man in the tribe (p. 62).

Therefore, references to the valuing of male children in Africa in Forna's *Ancestor Stones* points to the African custom of putting more value on the boy child. In effect, Forna's closeness to her aunts in Africa provided her the material for her novel. Equally of note is that the setting of this novel with the African practices are in Africa, not London where Abie (Forna) lives. Forna's work discussed so far engages with the twin themes of a distant/non-affective African patriarchy and the racism of a United Kingdom diaspora.

Total Demise: Diaspora Realities of Racism and Identity Issues - Bernadine Evaristo, Jackie Kay and Hannah Pool.

The common thread that runs through the work of these women writers is the explicit or implicit acknowledgment of race and the way this affects them as writers and by extension, the characters and themes they create and address within the United

Kingdom. Elgezeery (2015) describes Kay's semi-autobiographical work as where "[d]ramatization, fictionalisation and lyricism cast the author's autobiography into an artistic form that has its own life away from the life of the author" (p. 127). Evaristo and Kay have utilised their autobiographies in their work. Kay's work highlights the identity issues including racist experiences for a black girl, the daughter, who, like Kay, realises that she is adopted by white parents. Indeed, Susanna Rustin (2012) writing about Kay's fiction highlights Kay's identity 'gap' and sense of alienation in terms of not knowing either of her birth parent, despite knowing the love of her adoptive parents. Although Kay stresses that her work is not autobiographical, rather autobiography mixed with fiction, critics like Peter Ross (2019) have commented on her identity gap and the search for her birth parents as an adult as significantly central to her. Unlike Forna and Evaristo, Kay has to deal with an extra layer in her sense of identity and home; for instance, Kay (2021) describes being adopted as "having a double life". The Daughter's life has no trace of African input, though if she was living with her father in Africa, she would have lived in an African patriarchal environment.

Lara mirrors Evaristo's life experiences of life with an African father and an English mother in a racist south London area. Lara, unlike the adopted black girl, is clear about her identities, and she is in touch with her white heritage (through association with her grandmother) and black heritage (while residing at home with her African father and white mother). Lara, like the adopted black girl, grapples with racism at school and in the community where she is regarded as a black girl and seeks affirmation within her home. Her white mother, like the adopted black girl's white mother, is ill-equipped to support her daughter with the tools to address racism outside the home despite the positive identity reinforcement given to her at home. Lara's family experienced racial abuses because of her father, so showing intimidation of all the family.

White mothers are subjected to different expectations in Africa, often they are not expected to understand the African cultures and already ingrained into African females from infancy. Moreover, white women/wives often return to the United Kingdom or their European or North American countries if marriages fail, and they depart with their dual heritage off-springs, depending on the circumstances. Even within the United Kingdom, dual heritage (Africa and white European) children do not

experience the level of racism shown to ‘mono-heritage’ African children. Overall, there is perceptibly diminished influence of a transplanted African patriarchy in the United Kingdom diaspora where it appears is totally attenuated and often irrelevant.

Racism is what Evaristo and Forna share and the fact of having white mothers and African fathers; however, there are aspects of their narratives which portray their access to white lived experiences and privileges partly through their mothers. Through their white grandparents, the mixed-race girls can experience and partake of ‘whiteness’ in ways which the other African women writers with two black parents (mono-black heritage) could never. Through the dual position, being a part of both cultures, Forna’s writing shows insight into life from both perspectives. Arguably, if Forna had herself married an African man and lived in Africa, she would most likely be more prepared for the reality of African life than her white mother ever was.

Hannah Pool’s *My Fathers’ Daughter: A Story of Family and Belonging* is a memoir which shows an African Eritrean baby, who was adopted from an orphanage in Eritrea by a white couple, returning to Eritrea to meet her father and siblings for the first time at age 30 years. She was in an orphanage following her mother’s death. A British man and his American wife who died before their return to UK were the adoptive parents. Pool was eventually brought up as “white” in the UK, with no African input in her life. If she lived in Eritrea her life would have been circumscribed by African patriarchal environment, practices, and attitudes. Pool becomes a successful journalist in the UK. She got information that her father and siblings were alive when 19 years, but it took her years to feel ready to meet them. Her journey, emotional and physical, are part of the subjects of her memoir. Pool faced the inevitable issues around racism for African/African-looking children in the UK and identity-related issues including as a child adopted by white parents.

Poignantly, Pool (2015), during an interview with Tsigye Hailemichael, referred to the complexities of her adoption. According to Pool, she spoke like ‘white’ people which alienated her from African children who were mean to her as well as white children’s racism and name calling. Therefore, she felt lonely as she did not have anyone who understood her to speak to. Interestingly, while meeting her Eritrean family, she felt British, even though these were her blood relatives. In her

interview, Pool explained that since meeting her father and family, she may not be "here or there but there is another identity." The phrase refers to lack of feeling British or Eritrean, so although she is African by paternity and maternity, she is a hybrid occupying the 'third' space. Although she is African and looks African, experientially she is not. According to Pool: "I know so little about Eritrea although my dad [adoptive] has written about it professionally". Interestingly, Pool makes the distinction between her two fathers. She explains that her work "was like writing a letter to my dad and my (biological) father." 'Dad' (a white man) has informal, familiar title, the other the formal father goes to her birth father.

Pool's situation reinforces that African patriarchal oppressive practices are socially constructed for here is an African woman who grew up 'white', without a vestige of African patriarchy in her personal space; she knew nothing of her biological African father or her country. Instead, Pool explains that adoption has "many issues involved: issues about identity, especially if you have white parents. There are issues of heritage, security, about knowing who you are…." African patriarchal oppression or limitations are not mentioned. Like Kay, identity issues are significant in her life in her own words.

Conclusion

African patriarchal practices that are used to dominate women are not a natural phenomenon. Although they are socially constructed and thrive in Africa, the practices mutate once subjected to white social environments in the United Kingdom diaspora. African diasporan women's writing can be read as disruptive to African patriarchy because the diaspora diminishes or even removes traces of patriarchal behaviours, world views or attitudes from Africa. This transformation goes through different stages including transmutation, nullification and/or neutering of African patriarchy in the diaspora. As demonstrated in the foregoing discussion, the women increasingly take control of their lives as African patriarchal control recedes. Therefore, I argued in this chapter, in relation to my rethinking of African patriarchy, the impermanence and constructed nature of patriarchy lends support to African women's real-life resistance and resistance-writing against African patriarchal practices, which still dominate and oppress women in Africa.

Chapter 7

African Patriarchal Images, the Power of the Male Canon and Renegotiation of Canonicity

Introduction

As the earlier chapter 3 has demonstrated, using texts of African male literary titans, that African men were subjugated and emasculated by the colonialists, in this chapter the central issues addressed are the relationships between pioneer African men's writing and the power of the written word in propagating, challenging, and countering false constructs and it includes other pioneer male writers. The chapter also interrogates and applies Achebe's own arguments against Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (Darkness) to his *TFA.* Achebe once asked if "a novel which celebrates this dehumanisation" and "depersonalises a portion of the human race" could "be called a great work of art" and his reply was simply, "No, it cannot".[230] Ironically, this is what is done by *TFA*. Achebe confessed that growing up, he regarded Europeans as having made marvellous things such as motorcars whereas his village people and their creations were considered inferior and disdained by Europeans. Africans, like his father who had converted to Christianity, pursued the ways of the white man, including European education.

Achebe bought into the above myth as a child, but no longer as an adult. He sets out to correct this in *TFA* and believes he achieved this, saying:

> Although I did not set about it consciously in that solemn way, I now know that my first book, *Things Fall Apart*, was an act of atonement with my past, the ritual return and homage of a prodigal son… (Achebe, 1977, p. 70).

Writing can be a weapon of oppression when it silences the Other. This study considers Achebe's *TFA* and Conrad's *Darkness,* which achieved iconic status and canonicity for the writers, as some of the most harmful literary texts written on Africa.

[230] Achebe, 1988, pp. 8-9

Ominously, canonicity comes with longevity, wider audience reach and more credibility. Therefore, both iconic fictional works continue to spread their damaging messages and images which centre on, or purvey, racism and sexism accusations to the present time. *TFA* has generated positive and negative criticisms as discussed in chapters 1 and 2 including (Ohale, 2010; Quayson, 1994; Borman, 2015; Nwaozuzu and Ezeugwu, 2019; Whittaker, David and Mpalive-Hangson Msiska, 2007).[231] The racist white audiences and sexist African audiences normalised the respective racism and sexism/misogyny of Conrad and Achebe, though the main interest for this study is Achebe. Achebe (1988, pp. 1-13) systematically challenges Conrad personally and *Darkness* as a work of art, pronouncing one as "a thoroughgoing racist" and the other, a racist work; and he provides compelling evidence from *Darkness* to back his views. Achebe's *TFA is as* sexist and misogynist as Darkness is racist but is not being challenged similarly. *Darkness* and *TFA* silence the 'Othered' group through denying them full humanity, both texts 'Othered' African women, they are two sides of the 'same coin' which erased African women's voice(s).

Power of Writing in Contested Colonial 'Spaces'

The coloniser and the colonised engage in the contestation of 'spaces' which legitimately belong to the colonised, but as oppressors, the former utilises writing as a weapon to propagate constructs which result in or justify their oppression or domination. Similar to the European colonisers, the oppressed colonised African men resorted to writing to contest and counter the oppressors' constructs, while propagating the men's constructs[232] about women. Ngozi Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015, p. 63) cites Chukwukere's view that "language can be an instrument of freedom and liberation as well as oppression and dominance" and can impact on perceptions of

[231] Whittaker and Mpalive-Hangson (2007) capture the various criticism against and for *TFA*, the latter includes the interpretations of the text as providing authentic information of historical and anthropological benefits to Africa and even seen as portraying a Marxist view on pre-literate African community. Despite being a fictional text, *TFA* is gaining relevancy for its portray of Africa now gone.

[232] While Ian Henderson and Philip Goodhart's *Man Hunt in Kenya* (Toronto: Bantam Books, (1988 *[1958]), has* a negative slant on the Mau Mau, deemed a terrorist group by the British authors, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (London: Heinemann, 1977 [1976]), presents the Mau Mau positively as the freedom fighters aiming to liberate Kenya from colonial rule and oppression.

identities.[233] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1991, pp. 3-4) posit that "Literature was made as central to the cultural enterprise of Empire as the monarch was to its political formation" (p. 3; see also Boehmer, 2005, p. 14).[234] The legacies of texualised African men's (and women's) humiliation continues from the pages of racist writing like *Darkness* (Achebe, 1975, 1988, 2018 [1997]). Cosmo Pieterse (1982, p.1 [1969]) cites 'protest' as the outstanding feature of African literature in its cradle and protesting men's writing like *TFA* denigrated women, leaving debilitating image frozen in writing like *Darkness*' image of African men. The possibility of men locked in transgenerational cycling of trauma, which induces insensitivity and lack of empathy for women's positions cannot be ruled out. Nonetheless, men's transgenerational cycling of the dominator/dominated status quo with women must now be broken for twenty-first century African females.

The recognition of various transgenerational traumas[235] including colonial-trauma is increasingly gaining scholarly attention (Abigail Ward, 2015) and specifically for Africans (Cajestan N. Iheka, 2014). Achebe berates fellow pioneer men for accepting the label of "racial inferiority" but nonetheless cautions that: "It would be foolish to pretend that we have fully recovered from the traumatic effects of our first confrontation with Europe" (1977, p. 44). If men were traumatised so were women and doubly so especially from upending women's daily systems of existence/being when colonial single patriarchal structures were imposed over indigenous dual systems (Umeh, 1996; Ogundipe-Leslie 1993).[236] The caution meant for fellow pioneer men writers omitted those men who orchestrated the trauma of profiteering from slavery internally (indicated in Emecheta's *The Joys*) and internationally (referenced in Nwapa's *Efuru* and Aidoo's *Anowa*), which resulted in

[233] For more on the identification of the colonised/oppressed with the negative images of themselves created by the coloniser/oppressor see Albert Memmi (1965), and Freire (2017). Ironically, Achebe who seems to understand the politics of colonial misrepresentation, turns out to play politics of sexual misrepresentations with women.

[234] Elleke Boehmer (2005) refers to Britain's reinforcement of the power and permanency of writing by arguing that current readers can textually experience the empire from the "nineteenth - twentieth-century novels and periodicals, travel writing, scraps of doggerel" (p. 14). Thus, twentieth century (and now twenty-first century) readers could experience the British empire textually from the arrays of writing produced. This implies the permanence of writing and its messages.

[235] Also see Caruth (1996); Kidron (2009); Tufan and Bayraktar (2020); Kizilhan, Noll-Hussong and Wenzel (2022); Johns *et al*. (2022); and Lee *et al*. (2023).

[236] Colonia interruption upended or diluted women's traditional systems of power and autonomy including dual-sex, submerged these under men, in some cases even created male warrant chiefs where none previously existed to reflect the patriarchal structure familiar to the colonisers (Umeh 1996; Ogundipe-Leslie,1993; Chukwuma, 2007)). Colonial tampering with women's market structures and impositions of taxes were going too far hence women's revolts.

the centuries of traumas for women. In addition to physical abuse, women were routinely sexually abused as part of slavery in any context.

African Patriarchy Images: From Literary Cradle to the Door of Canonicity

This section focuses on pioneer African men writers from different parts of Africa and their representations of African women. Writing in 1969, Clive Wake notes the emerging African writers, Achebe, Soyinka, Ngũgĩ, Laye, Beti, and Oyono, amongst others.[237] As pacesetters, these writers provided normative templates, precedents, and standards for future literary works by African men and women; the more successful they were, the more potent their models as a path to success.

It did not mean that these writers lacked knowledge of strong women with agency to be fictionalised, rather to serve their agenda of redeeming and projecting the emasculated male voice, they were selective in their representations. The texts are overwhelmingly male-centric in the following ways: overall theme is to liberate or project men characters, highlight colonial injustices, or tells his own story. Texts titles show the importance of men/males, for example, Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy* and Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy*; and in addition, protagonists are mostly male characters and where there is more than one protagonist, chief protagonists are males, and themes explored reinforce or highlight roles of men as important. Women-specific roles are downplayed. If a woman is the protagonist, as a central character, for example a prostitute as in Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana;* a concubine in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, she is reduced to male created stereotypes.

From South Africa, Herbert I. E. Dhlomo's *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongquase the Liberato*r (1935, 2017) (*Nongquase*) introduces the prospect of a central female character, Nongquase. However, in the end, this character is just a pawn used by the writer to showcase African men squabbling for power and supremacy on the one hand, and on the other, the colonial conflicts between Africans and Europeans who purport to bring civilisation, administrative orderliness,

[237] Clive Wake, in Cosmo Pieterse and Donald Munro (1982, p. 47, [1969], includes additionally, Peter Abrahams, Elechi Amadi and Cyprian Ekwensi as men whose debut works have contributed to shaping African literature and the images of African women.

salvation and so on. A central feature of the text is the exploitation, manipulation and control of a young woman and her vision about her people. This vision is hijacked by her father, Mhlakaza, the Great Xhosa witchdoctor, and Kreli, Paramount Chief of the AmaXhosa and used against opponents who disbelieve the vision, and to pursue the quest to conquer the white man (meaning European colonisers). Nongquase had seen a vision with messages including for the villagers to kill all their cattle and burn their crops as part of preparation for their ancestors to come and help them especially against their enemies, the Europeans. Equally featuring in the text are the colonial administration's failure to stop the killing of cattle and burning of crops in many places and the politics this generated on both the Africans' and Europeans' sides. Nonetheless, the latter cashed in on the disastrous famine which followed the destruction of livestock and crops. The starving and weakened Africans gyrated to dependence on Europeans' material and spiritual salvation, spearheaded by the Gaika Commissioner, Mr Brownlee and the character, Missionary (pp. 26-53). Therefore, the play reflects colonial conflict and solidifies the image of two men's domination and control of a young woman. Despite the text's title which centralises a female, after the first fifteen pages, Nongquase is only referenced in passing as opposed to stories told from her perspective as seen with the male protagonists to be discussed below.

At the very start of the play, Nongquase, is seen in seclusion, with other girls for company and a character called 'Old Woman' who is assigned to guard her and vet who sees her (pp. 2-7). The Old Woman informs that since the Lion, that is the Chief, became involved, Nongquase has been confined to her hut, supervised by her (Old Woman), guarded by the Chief's spies, and not allowed to roam about with her young friends (p. 13). The image is that of a person imprisoned, limited physically and in agency. The reader hears Nongquase complaining that she does not want her friends singing a particular song: "I hate it. I have to sing it each time father and Kreli bring people to hear of my vision" (p. 2). Nongquase intimates feeling under compulsion to sing and see people for vision-verification orchestrated by her father and the Chief. Without much warning, a character, Messenger, announces that Mhlakaza and Kreli, are visiting with some people who are coming to hear her vision. Nongquase is presented as powerless because, although she says, "I am tired of these frequent visits and what they mean…" (p.8), she still gets ready to receive the

visitors, thus showing lack of agency to determine for herself. It soon becomes clear why Nongquase is tired: she is expected to perform for the visitors. On arrival:

> KRELI
> Nongquase, I have here Mhala's doubtful men who will not kill their cattle only when they have heard you yourself tell the story of your vision… Proceed!
>
> *(All sit and watch eagerly.)*
> MHLAKAZA
> *(Giving her medicine to drink.)* Drink!
> *(He sprinkles another preparation over her body.) Speak!*
> *(Nongquase, feigning to be seized with a hysteromania-like trance, laughs, cries, spins round and falls down on her knees and hands – and acts what took place at the river, with additions proposed by Mhlakaza).*
>
> *NONGQUASE Nice water. Let me drink a little* (pp. 9-10).

Thereafter Nongquase starts her performance, in line with the men's expectations of her and which the writer already says is fake and with additions suggested by Mhlakaza. This is reminiscent of a circus animal directed to perform. Nongquase is thus manipulated by two men, who are in positions of authority over her, for their own purposes. The writer does not question or challenge the men's behaviour. This text introduces to African literature the acceptability of men's manipulation of women for selfish purposes. The lack of agency of Nongquase is heightened because from her reflections, she shows awareness of her manipulation: "…I did hear strange sounds –not voices – near the river. Father and Elephant [the chief] assured me, after using the bones and medicine, the sounds were the voices of our ancestors. But are their interpretations correct?" (p. 13). Two powerful men have provided their interpretations of an incident which a young woman is 'assured' is what happened, thereby silencing her voice/her version. The Old Woman warns Nongquase that she

can be killed for expressing dissenting views. This introduces the use of 'senior women' of patriarchy who unwittingly entrench women's oppression.

Peter Abraham's novel, *Mine Boy* (1945), is regarded as a major work from South Africa to highlight the impact of the racist apartheid regime on Africans. Although the title references a 'boy', the novel follows the life struggles of an adult man, Xuma, when African men were regarded as 'boys' by European colonisers. *Mine Boy* focuses on racist South Africa as the apartheid regime was becoming more defined and black Africans were discriminated against in their own ancestral homeland by European intruders. However, a feminist or womanist reading of the novel identifies the female character, Leah, as the central character, who has already moved in search of a new life for herself.[238] The novel opens with Leah already shown as owning a house which she rents out, including to Xuma, the newcomer. Leah's character is central to the survival of the black community, including Xuma's whilst he is still a fresh man to town. Xuma, on the other hand, looks out only for his own needs.[239] Leah through her services provides others a place to live in and have access to leisure, relaxation through the local brew, otherwise Africans, many of whom will not afford white man's alcohol, will go without especially at a time when local brews were outlaws by white men, just as reported in Efuru so as to starve the 'natives' or force them to buy foreign brew. The novel could have been titled 'Leah' or another title indicating her role as the chief protagonist given her agency, but she is denied a voice in drawing attention to the resourcefulness of an African woman due to Abrahams' patriarchal biases. Equally, a novel centring on an African woman character from Africa is unlikely to attract attention internationally, given the difficulty males like Achebe encountered trying to publish *TFA*.

Mission to Kala (1958)[240] centres around a young man, Jean-Marie Medza, sent to the village of Kala to retrieve his uncle's property, and this happens to be his uncle's unnamed runaway wife. She flees an abusive marriage where she is the

[238] Leah starts with self-interest, 'individual self', symptomatic of a feminist perspective.
[239] Leah's actions while interested in self, exemplified interest also in community cohesion which includes supporting women and men (womanist). Despite Leah's agency, the novel is still focusing on a man who is self-centred, and who initially relied on Leah and her human connections to survive his first encounter with white racist brutality.

object of violence for having no children, her plight is trivialised and ignored while the author focuses on Medza's escapades. Medza and his mother, are victims of physical abuse from Medza's father. Likewise, Ferdinand Oyono's, *Houseboy* (1956), like *Mine Boy* is narrated from the perspective of a young African male, Toundi, a houseboy to a white man, like Dennis. Oyono achieves his critiques through accessing Toundi's diarised experiences of the colonisers. The novel focuses on the voices of men, brutality experienced by Toundi from his own father, his white master and colonial brutality towards African men. Centralising the voice of a young man continues the theme of giving agency and visibility to men. Interestingly, *Houseboy* (p. 74) shows the Commandant's young wife, Madame, verbally abusing and treating her four Africa male domestic servants like boys (see Chapter 2, p. 21).

In Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, the symbol of power, strength, action, and agency are attributed to a male character, Baroka. Also described as 'the lion', Baroka is an older man of wealth while Sidi, denoting a female character and a beautiful virgin girl in the village is presented as the 'jewel', a symbol that signifies value, beauty, and fragility, indicating her objectification. The important point to make here with this manner of ascribing attributes is that the male character's qualities are active, dominators while the female ones are passive, dominated. Two men, Baroka (62 years) and Lakunle (23 years) who represent tradition and modernity respectively, are competing for the hand in marriage of Sidi who eventually makes her choice after Baroka tricks her and takes her virginity. Sidi's position in relation to the two rivals echoes Nongquase's standing with the two men who are also using her, although not sexually. Soyinka's play can be interpreted superficially as making a young woman one of the central characters and with agency to determine her future husband. However, a feminist reading challenges such an interpretation as Sidi is used as a pawn, an object fought over by two men and what they represent (traditional and modern, illiterate, and literate, albeit semi-literate). She is the object of desire and possession. The author's presentation of Sidi as a young woman who allows herself to be tricked by this much older man after initially seeing through his plan to get her, seems to be highlighting the fickleness of the female sex as opposed to her exploitation by this older man.

Soyinka allows the manipulation and objectification of a young girl by Baroka who is old enough to be Sidi's father if not grandfather, intimating that even educated men desire for patriarchal privileges to continue. This situation underscores Ogundipe-Leslie's (1993) argument that "Not even the most politically [educationally] progressive [African] men are completely free from patriarchal attitudes" (pp. 113-114). The play reinforces and normalises Sidi's experiences.

Pioner male writers centralise the male voice as the 'lions' or the 'young leaders' of Africa's future while the female voice is an appendage to males or is on the periphery of narratives, so a canonical text continues to spread this message.

African Patriarchy: Images and the Power of the Canon

Belonging to a canon, despite the controversies and politics surrounding its formation, remains being part of a powerful, and culturally influential body of work by which other works within its sphere are judged. A key argument, therefore, is that the canonical texts/classics are of central importance in shaping, sustaining, and disseminating cultural memory. As Charles Altieri (1983) suggests, "there are obvious social roles canons can play as selective memories of traditions or ideals" (p, 37), thus emphasising the power such texts have in helping to shape and maintain literary, social, and cultural understandings and memory. African canonical texts such as *TFA*, *Mine Boy, Weep Not Child, Houseboy, Poor, Mission* etc. have had the same power in writing back to colonial representations of Africans, as well as shaping perceptions of women and men in African societies.

The idea of a canon in literature has always been problematic and controversial, especially because of the often surreptitiously selective criteria at play in its formation. But that said, the idea of the canon cannot just be dismissed because it still plays a significant role in instituting and consecrating certain texts as the best that should be read and emulated by future writers within a culture, nation, or tradition. To understand the supposed influence of the canon in the cultural domain one needs to investigate the relationship between art works as literature and the idea of cultural memory. Significantly, this study reveals the crucial role which literature plays in the preservation, retrieval, and circulation of cultural knowledge.

Literature's role as a repository of, and a medium for, the representation of culture, and as a conduit for the transmission of cultural memory is beyond question.

As Camilla Nelson (2016) writes, "literature is not just a pile of musty old books. It is also a dense network of cultural and class beliefs".[241] Like every work of art that relies on the imaginative recovery or retrieval of cultural memory/archive by the author, literature neither emanates nor exists in a vacuum, but rather, as Osita Okagbue (2019) writing about Igbo masquerade theatre and performance asserts:

> through theatre and performance, one is able to have a glimpse of the complex patterns of social intercourse between people within society; that is, one is able to have intimations of the social processes, historical movements and cultural shifts that a society or culture has gone through in the past or is experiencing at that particular moment in its history… (p.33).

Literature performs the function of affirming the good elements of a society or culture as well as trying to criticise and thus correct the not so good aspects of that society. In "Literature and Society", Richard Hoggart (1966, p. 277) writes that "literature provides in its own right a form of new and distinctive knowledge about society". However, the nature of that knowledge is at the discretion of the writer because he/she selects what is represented in the work. In this context, the work of literature does not differ much from a historical narrative since history and the literary work are selected aspects by the historiographer and the literary artist. Thus, one should see a literary work such as *TFA* as Achebe's effort to capture the prevailing socio-cultural norms and patterns of thought and behaviours of his pre-colonial Igbo society. However, such a jaundiced view is problematic in so many respects in how women are treated in *TFA,* but none is as haunting as the Machiavellian, objectifying, treatment of a bewildered young girl in *TFA,* forever left nameless and faceless, callously and misogynistically treated as an object. Chimamanda Adichie's short

[241] Camilla Nelson (2016) "The Conversation". From https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-the-literary-canon-is-exhilarating-and-disturbing-and-we-need-to-read-it-56610 - accessed 16 April 2022.

story ‘The Headstrong Historian’ (2009) is a write back to Achebe’s single story, but the young girl is omitted too.

This study names this girl in Igbo _ *Kachukwukpeziem (*Let God adjudicate my case). The faceless and nameless, silenced young girl [Kpezie for short] is exchanged for the equally faceless, nameless, silenced dead ‘woman’, [given in this study the Igbo name *Chetanumum* (Please remember me, *Cheta* for short). Given the ultra-masculinity in *TFA*, with men as the only actors, it can safely be inferred that the men, not women, orchestrated the death of the deceased and made the decisions about the choices of sacrificial replacements.

Call My Name: The Forever Silenced, Nameless Dead Woman and The Young Virgin.

Further entrenching the elevation of maleness and male life over femaleness and female life, is the callous use of a woman’s murder [Cheta’s] to showcase an all-men village deliberation (showing colonial denigrators that there is orderliness and due process in an African village). The elders, all males or *ndichie,* met to deliberate on the action to take against Mbaino. Achebe writes:

> …in a clear unemotional voice he told Umuofia how their daughter had gone to the market at Mbaino and had been killed. That woman, said Ezeugo, was the wife of Ogbuefi Udo, and he pointed to a man who sat near him with a bowed head (p. 10).

Even in death, in what appears as a deliberate omission, Achebe denies this woman, [Cheta] an identity and humanity by referring to her in generically as “their daughter”, “that woman” and “the wife”, whereas her husband is named. A man, a husband could have been murdered at Mbaino but such death would not have yielded the narratives attached to a woman’s death and life. For instance, a replacement male will not be expected to marry the wife/wives of a murdered man unlike a replacement female. The incident illustrates the perception of wives as their husbands’

possessions and therefore chattels, so the husband is compensated for his property loss. In response to the killing, Mbaino is asked “to choose between war, on one hand, and on the other, the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation” (p. 10). Ikemefuna, a 15-year-old boy, named and a nameless young virgin [Kpezie] are the sacrificial replacements. The author’s emphasis on ‘young virgin’, suggests that she [Kepzie] is possibly younger than Ikemefuna. The author ensures that Ogbuefi Udo receives an unsoiled chattel as compensation (*TFA*, p. 11). The girl’s [Kpezie] key identity maker is her virginity/purity which serves patriarchal agenda.

Both females [Cheta and Kepzie] are permanently trapped at the level of objects to be possessed and/or used to enhance the image and/or status of the men they are associated with or their narratives. Achebe deliberately creates them [Kpezie and Cheta] as one-dimensional, muted, characters who lack humanity. Ironically, this is one of Achebe’s key criticisms against Conrad since the latter silences and vilifies Africans especially men whose treatment seem to concern Achebe. Whereas Achebe details the story of the boy, ending that the manner of his death is still told today in Umuofia, the girl disappears from *TFA* without even a basic form of identity, a name. There is no indication in the novel about the potential difficult existence this young girl [Kpezie] is likely to face, for instance, being a wife who is gifted to a man, forced into marriage in such a strange circumstance and in a strange land, with none of her family members around to support her. No mention of if/how she adjusted and at what price to her. The murder of a woman and chattelisation of the young girl become dots in the overall narrative designed to show the culture and politics in an African ethnic group in which men are in control. In one swoop, Achebe shows pre-colonial village politics, how inter-village wars can be started or averted and the restitution mechanism. This is a point where, just as Achebe labelled Conrad “a thoroughgoing racist”, it could be argued that Achebe is a “misogynist”. Also, just as Achebe accuses Conrad of using Africans (meaning men) as the backdrop and props in *Darkness,* arguably, Achebe uses them [Kpezie and Cheta] the nameless female-victims for the same purpose; as well as many women introduced to advance the male-centred narratives. Significantly, what Achebe does to the women in *TFA* is not different from what Conrad does to the faceless and nameless African men he created. That Achebe names Okonkwo and his father but leaves his mother nameless despite the Igbo culture’s social practice of respecting

mothers, as Ogunyemi (1996) asserts in relation to Nigerian societies generally, underlines how far Achebe is prepared to go to silence women.

Post *Things Fall Apart*, the Pioneers and Rethinking the Male Canons

After the devastating image of women created in *TFA* and works by other pioneers of the African canon, attempts to centralise the African woman in the novels of Achebe's Igbo kinsmen ended in extending her humiliation. Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966), which focused on an African heroine, Ihuoma, during the pre-colonial, peaceful period and also set in Achebe's Igboland, reduces the female protagonist to nothing more than a pawn in the hands of the gods. Although Ihuoma is stunningly beautiful, she is the wife of a jealous spirit husband who kills any mortal man who wants to marry her. She has no control over her life, either a physical husband/man controls the Igbo woman or supernatural husband/man, removing all agency from her. Thus, *The Concubine* which deviates from the male-centred focus of early men's novels, uses a reverse strategy to achieve the same negative portrayal of women. Instead of Ihuoma it could have been a man, Nnaoma married to a spirit wife who joins with fate and the gods to render the man useless. However, such a narrative would be contrary to the image of the African man as being in control. Even the word 'concubine' in the novel's title suggests mockery and indicates illegitimacy as it references the other woman, who is an attachment to the male, albeit a supernatural being.

No writing is innocent is the message emanating from the manipulations of colonial writing and early African pioneer men's writing to suit their purposes. Even work like *TFA* where Achebe, from the beginning states that he wants to show his African readers, current and future, that:

> I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them' (Achebe, 1988, p. 30 and 1977, p. 45).

Writing as a practice of reclaiming and contesting dominant narratives about Africans as demonstrated by Achebe, becomes part of the post-colonial fightback. Arguably, Conrad the author and *Darkness* the text intersects while also creating a relationship with Achebe the author who interconnects and dialogues with *TFA,* the text. Conrad wrote a novella that was evocative of the thinking at the time, including the racist colonial tropes about the colonised. Ironically, *TFA* owes a debt to, as well as angst against, *Darkness*, angst taken out on the image of African women, Igbo women specifically, leaving an enduring dent as the dent to African men's image which *Darkness* left. In the twentieth-first century, male-led African countries are seeking restitutions to colonial injustices of the past including cultural artifacts gained at the expense of African peoples. Literary misrepresentation which results in material and other prestigious gains equally constitute injustices. Osei-Nyame Kwadwo (2010) suggests that Achebe appropriated the ethnography of his people; this includes women whose images are denigrated to make points about their men's masculinity and achieve canonical status for the writers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter poses the question of whether these works, and particularly a novel like *TFA*, which erases and systematically silences women should continue to dominate the African canon and continue to wield their influence in shaping perceptions and understandings of Africa and African societies, especially in matters relating to African women. The foregoing discussion shows that it is time to review and perhaps replace the current canon with a balanced one that is not dominated by male writers as the current one is, a canon that admits of the multiplicity of viewpoints in the representation of Africa, and in particular, African women. This new canon should consider texts with African female characters who have successfully challenged their respective societies. They also managed to bring about changes in cultural practices of the past that contributed to disenfranchising women while entrenching, celebrating or glossing over male dominance and the still predominantly patriarchal African cultures and societies.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Pioneer women writers, Aidoo (1965), Nwapa (1966*)* and Ogot (1966) started voicing resistance, challenges, and counter-narratives to women's domination depicted in pioneer African men's early writing. Successive African women writers, including African diasporic women writing in the United Kingdom, whose works are read as writing back to patriarchy in Africa, have continued the literary battle as men's domination shows no sign of abating. The thesis has used compelling arguments to expose the unnaturalness of the superiority claim about African men, African patriarchy and the structural oppressive cultural practices which sustain them. The Introduction set out the context of the study which highlighted the hallmarks of patriarchal practices and identified African men who, under the false assumption about men's superiority, which amongst others, resulted in the 'chattelisation' of females, are the perpetrators and benefactors of the systems.

Bruey *et al*. (2021), Uchendu and Edeagu, eds. (2021), address patriarchal and gendered challenges to women in Africa and demonstrate that the domination of women by men, which remains a fact of life in Africa is anchored on the biologically derived assumptions of patriarchy. This assumption that African men are naturally superior to women results in a society which centralises male perspectives as its normal worldview, while the females are envisioned as the other, inferior and/or as chattels of men.

As I have discussed in the thesis, that the critical oppression of women today is comparable to chattelisation, a concept associated with white male behaviour towards women during the Trans-Atlantic slavery. Chattelisation in the study refers to the 'sale', commodification of girl-children in exchange for bride price (however defined so this includes other material benefits), in the guise of marriages and extends to the treatment of wives as possessions of their husbands. In this study I have shown that whereas boy-children are almost always immune from marriage-chattelisation with its reproduction and production exploitations they can be rented or leased for indentured servitude which can involve sexual exploitation. Usually, economically challenged fathers (or males in authority) contract such marriages, exercising Individual patriarchal power. I have discussed and conceptualised this

type of behaviour as patriarchalisation, which is linked to chattelisation. As a male-exclusive gendered practice it is foreclosed to females but open to males, entrenching patriarchy. This study shows through women writers' voices such as Nwapa and Emecheta that wife-inheritance practices in Africa where women, especially widows, become human possessions for inheritance by the male relatives of the deceased, are alternative practices of chattelisation and patriarchalisation. Contrary to Walby's discussion of individual and private patriarchy (1992) that focuses on the appropriation of women's labour in households by individual patriarchs, fathers, and father-figure heads, this study examines girls and women as persons appropriated by fathers, males in authority and 'notional men' or mothers and women performing the male role (referred to as personal/individual patriarchy in the study). Male domination of women in Africa is a practice which resembles an inheritance, which as part of patriarchalisation, is only passed through the male line. Apart from 'patriarchalisation', other means of entrenching patriarchal practices include socialisation where boys and girls learn everyday behaviour by society's actions, corrections, punishments (hooks, 2015a), like indoctrination (Lerner, 1986) or gender roles performativity (Butler, 2006).

African patriarchy is interested in confining females to the domain of wives, where African womanhood experiences the worst male oppression, starting with the appropriation of women's wombs, which are believed to have been bought by bride price/bride wealth. As I discussed earlier, Acholonu (1995a), whose ideas I explored in Chapter 4 identifies six dimensions of womanhood of African cosmology including the woman as wife, daughter/sister, mother, queen, priestess/goddess, and lastly female husband in some cultures. Whereas Igbo writers such as Amadiume (1997 and 2015) and Achebe (1958) *TFA*, are aware of the six dimensions of womanhood within Igbo cultures, Achebe's *TFA*, like the early work of most pioneer African men writers, focused mainly on the 'woman as wife'. The study finds that women 'as wives "become [the] obvious targets of male frustrations" (Ogunyemi,1996, p. 12), regardless of whether in patrilineal or matrilineal African cultures (Ogunyemi, 1996, Oduyoye, 1995, Ogundipe-Leslie, 1993 and discussed in Chapter 4). Since men believe that the bride-price they pay purchases the brides/wives, as Salami (2005) and Onwueme (2016) demonstrate in Chapter 1, woman the wife is almost always a 'stranger' in her marital family, yet her society expects so much from her.

The study compares the bride-price to a bill of sale, confirming the purchase of woman the wife and the appropriation of the wife's personhood and fruits - womb, children, and resources. Implicitly, this is the 'chattelisation' of girls and women as possessions of men – the father bought his wife and can sell his daughter as wife to someone. Hence, customarily the return or refund of part of the bride price is expected if marriages fail, while the children still belong to their fathers or maternal clan in matrilineal societies. In Chapter 1, the study shows that the payment of bride-price, even symbolically, is a practice which must end for twenty-first century females in Africa. Unsurprisingly, two of the first three fictions by African women subverts the bride price requirement. Aidoo uses Eulalie, an African American bride, to bypass the bride-price requirement, while Nwapa's Efuru (in her first marriage) chooses a poor young man. Both brides prioritised love which featured minimally in African marriages then (Radcliff-Brown and Daryll Forde, eds. 1950; see the discussions in Chapter 1.)

Fictional texts by pioneer women writers of the 1960s and 1970s, Aidoo, Nwapa, Ogot, are testimonies of women who are aware of men's fictionalised oppression of women but are prepared to face the unprecedented challenges as pathfinders entering the literary domain and challenge men who have monopolised this space for some decades. These women's writing, followed by Sutherland and Emecheta in the 1970s, communicated female constructs which subversively disrupt the assumed superiority of men/fathers. As discussed in Chapter 4, women's writing shows fathers as unprotective and unreliable through their inactions or actions which harm their children especially girls even if unintentionally. The mothers are absent either through the mothers' deaths or daughters' migration. The mothers of Efuru, Anansewa, Eulalie, and Nnu Ego are deceased and could not offer them assistance when needed. Nyapol is separated from her mother upon marriage and migration to her new home/community. When faced with her first marital crisis, Nyapol remembers and uses her mother's life coaching to cope. Ochola's mother is also deceased; he remembers her kindness and cooking, the abuses and starvation from his first stepmother and his father's failure to protect him and his brother. These points represent pioneer women's contesting the projection of superiority to males/fathers in society. This analysis borrows ideas from Amadiume (1997) who centralises the notion '*nkpuke*' or 'mother/child(ren) unit' as the predominant

enduring human bond in Africa, and Achebe (1958, *TFA*), who embeds the Igbo notion '*nneka*', 'mother is supreme' in his fictional work *TFA*. Both Igbo concepts represent an anomaly in that Amadiume's patriarchal society and Achebe's patriarchal fictional Igbo society in *TFA* subscribe to feminine constructs that undermine fathers'/males' superiority and underscores mother-superiority and mother-reliability. Pioneer women writers fundamentally contest female inferiority in men's writing, especially given their harsher extraliterary environment with extremely limited models of female successes unlike women writing from the 1980s onwards.

The study's critical framings are used to disrupt any assumption of naturalness or superiority relating to African men, African patriarchy and its practices. Conceptually, the study identifies postcolonial theory, African patriarchy (socially deconstructed) and feminism, read as resistance to white patriarchy by oppressed privileged white married women, as kindred concepts or phenomena linked by ideas of domination and resistance, challenging and destabilising the dominant-centred narratives. These align with African women writing resistance to the centred fictional narratives of pioneer African men's early writing. Furthermore, the post-colonial, patriarchal and feminist discourses encompass the domination of the 'Othered', respectively, the colonised Africans, African women, and pioneer white women/feminists. Perhaps, this is why de Beauvoir (1997) compared the position of enslaved African men to some white married women's perception of their subjugation under western patriarchy as akin to slavery. Although the study agrees with Ogunyemi (1985) that such comparison trivialises African women/men's experiences of slavery, it nonetheless makes a clear statement as to the changing social constructions about African men, who as the main architects of slavery in Africa, continentally and internationally, became themselves enslaved too. This situation extremely undermines any claim of superiority or naturalness attached to African men, their domination of their women and the practices (patriarchal) emanating from such assumptions. Pioneer women's writing also raises the usually avoided issue of African men as the orchestrators of women's internal and international enslavement.

The concepts and knowledge from critical/scholarly work and synthesising of these have contributed the perspectives and lenses used in re-reading and disrupting the assumptions and 'truths' about the naturalness of African men's superiority and African patriarchy. Colonisation is used to emphasise the

emasculation of African men in Africa, which challenges the mythology of the superiority that men arrogate to themselves, and which women acquiesce to knowingly, or unwittingly, through the acceptance of male-centric social constructions. Particularly insightful ideas extrapolated and applied are that African men are traumatised and are still recovering from the initial confrontation with Europeans (Achebe, 1977, 1988); that colonised African men were enslaved and brutalised like all colonised black people (Fanon, 2001); that African men can be likened to the subalterns within the colonial hierarchy (Spivak 1988); that the colonisers' ease in crushing physical resistances also happened in Africa and resulted in the passive resistance from African men as seen in chapter 3 (Ashcroft, 2001). Colonisers physically and textually controlled the colonised (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1991) as applied to African men who were deemed subhuman, adolescents or children as seen in chapter 3. These subjugated men then replicated their experiences of domination against women in pioneer men's writing, introducing new foreign dimension to women's domination. Consequently, pioneer African women scholars aver that colonisation as a project further disempowered African women by providing new dimensions of authority over women while simultaneously solidifying men's culturally biased power and authority (Ogunyemi, 1985, 1996; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994, 1993).

The study argues that the colonial encounter reduced African men writers and their men characters to feminine positions because they structurally lacked power within the colonial set-up. The study highlights that the similarity between pioneer African men writers and pioneer white women feminists is that while both were subjugated by European men, each group structurally subjugated another group. Therefore, an analysis of patriarchy reveals how African men's positions vacillate between their self-arrogated superiority and the ascribed inferior social constructions status as animate chattels, subhuman, and boys.

Kandiyoti's (1988) concept of "accrued power" and Davies's (1994) conceptualisation of the "reward of seniority" in relation to senior women refer to the conscious or unconscious patriarchal bargains, that is, women can have restricted powers in patriarchal societies, acting as 'notional' or 'honorary' men over other women in the patrilineal households. In such roles, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 4 women entrench patriarchy through policing, monitoring, or dominating other

women, especially younger women. As discussed earlier in chapter 2, within western patriarchy, privileged white married American women, the nineteenth century pioneer feminists, were chattels of their husbands under the coverture law, while enslaved African men and women were in turn the chattels of such women. White men and patriarchy gave their women the authority to brutalise enslaved African men/women, making such white women 'notional men' of white patriarchy. Thus, the women also participated in the sexual and other abuses of African enslaved females. Contrary to the male-centred slave history, it is now clear that despite the coverture law, some white women especially in the southern United States, bought, owned, and managed enslaved Africans as 'masters', performing 'male' roles of slave-management (Jones-Rogers, 2019; Goodwin, 2021). As with the slave contexts of the New World, during the colonisation of Africa, privileged white women ended up as 'notional men' of colonisation with the authority to control and dominate African men and women, irrespective of the ages, of the white women or the Africans, thus undermining African men's claim to superiority.

Colonial patriarchy, abetted by indigenous patriarchy, favoured the education of African boys and men, so mirroring the female educational disenfranchisement of pre-feminist Europe (Wollstonecraft, 1792; Ogundipe, 1985; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1985, 1994). This afforded men the literary edge and monopoly, which they utilised in entrenching male-exclusive literary domination of women. This resembled a form of 'patriarchalisation', or a gendered practice foreclosed to females but open to males. Men's advantageous literary position and succession to the colonial master's position are conferred on them, therefore, they are not natural. Even where men and women fought independent wars which propelled men to succession, men have continued to perpetuate patriarchal domination of women.

Chapter 2's investigation of the historical evolution of patriarchy aims to fragment the claim that African patriarchy is natural. Euro-American men and women scholars like Bachofen, Morgan, Lerner, and Miles agree that patriarchy was a historical event in the western world. Lerner (1986) also asserts that, although the pace of patriarchal establishment varied, overall, before the 1830s white women had been under patriarchal domination for 3500 years. That the evolutionary origin of patriarchy in Africa is inconclusive weakens the claim of its naturalness in Africa. Diop (1989) and Amaduime (2015) conceive Africa as originally matriarchal, but not

in the sense of mother rule/mother right and the oppressive nature of patriarchy. Instead, the societies which were egalitarian, but the study shows that women did not have power over men, even where descent and authority were reckoned through the female line. Nonetheless, if matriarchal Africa changed to patriarchy, it shows the socially re/constructed nature of patriarchy. Furthermore, although the binary colonial/Christian and Arabic/Muslim patriarchal structures introduced or imposed on colonised Africans were not natural, they have become part of practices within indigenous societies.

The study found that for centuries, 'civilised' white men in the United Kingdom practised child-marriages for girl-children from 12 years old, simultaneously as men in Africa. Girls, mostly from economically poor backgrounds, were trafficked for organised prostitution within the United Kingdom and across Europe confirming that poverty and patriarchy have a significant effect on female children. When men in charge of the British government resisted women's campaigns to raise the age of marriage, they implicitly consented to sex with girls; for the 1871 Commission's recommendation to raise girls' age to 14 years was delayed. However, the age of consent was changed in stages: it changed to 13 years in 1875, 16 years in 1885 (David, 2009), and 18 years in 2023. By citing these changes that show the dismantling of man-made patriarchal practices, the study aims to challenge African countries where men still practise child-marriages.

Chapter 3 demonstrates African men's subjugation and silencing in the colonial writing of Conrad and Cary and in early works of pioneer African male literal titans Achebe (1958); Soyinka (1957); Ngũgĩ (1964); and Beti (1956). Pioneer men's writing, the chapter argued, aimed to protest, resist and de-emasculate men characters, but, ironically, their treatment of African women simultaneously replicated their experience of being silenced by the colonialists.

Chapter 4 explored African women's strategy of challenging the misrepresentations and silencing of the female voice. Women's writing is not anti-African male, but it uses women characters to rebut and expose male domination. Women's writing is separated into three sections identifiable by selection, although some women wrote across periods. Group 1, Foundational Literary Fighters 1960s-1970s: this includes Aidoo, Nwapa, Ogot, Sutherland and Emecheta mentioned

earlier; the first three pioneers felt compelled to respond to men's negative literary portrayal of women. According to Nwapa, she started writing "to correct our menfolk when they started writing, when they wrote little or less about women, where their female characters are prostitutes and ne'er-do-wells" (Umeh and Nwapa, 1995, p. 27). This writing covers pre and colonial periods and shows that despite the brutal patriarchal practices some women thrived which pioneer men writers omitted. The discussion in this section examines texts that evidence aspects of men' domination under colonisation; further it shows how men's complicity in intra-Africa and Trans-Atlantic slave trade was a variation of men's practice of dominating women. Group 2, Personalised Literary Fighters of the1980s-1990s, focuses on writers who present women characters who challenge the patriarchal status quo that impinges on their lives. Liking, Bâ, Dangarembga, Aidoo, Dike and Maraire variously construct women characters who challenge or refuse to perform or endure expected traditional patriarchal practices including widowhood ritual; criticise Islamic widowhood practices and through this highlight the reality of triple patriarchal oppression (Islamic, colonial, and indigenous) for some women; portray a professional woman's assertive actions following marital rape, and the conflicted reality of professional African women. Group 3, Millennium Women Writers as Taboo-less Literary Fighters is about women writers who create radical work without boundaries. These include Oyedepo, Shoneyin, Moyo, Jobi-Tume, Onwueme, Atta, Dare, Uwakwe, and Makumbi. Their writing shows gender role-reversals where females mobilise, occupy male positions, and cross-gender performativity when a woman performs male kingship role and is addressed as a 'he', 'husband'. Other female issues like child marriages, female chattelisation, child-abuse, rape, marital rape, mandatory marriage or surrogate motherhood expectations for females, childlessness, adoption, feature with female subversive elements as part of the resistances.

There is a danger that with time, the achievement of pioneer women writers could be derided or forgotten by future generations of women; however, this needs to be prevented by successive generations having the foundational understanding that they are writing and voicing because some women paved the way. A critic like Ahuime (2022) who castigates pioneer women for being as derogatory to their female characters as pioneer men writers, needs to read pioneer men's writing (see chapter 3) and see how/if they promoted themselves against the colonial agents.

Resistance starts by exposing or articulating and engaging with issues of contention, therefore, successive writers should continue the resistance until victory is achieved. Whereas the colonial oppression of men stopped with the attainment of political independence, the patriarchal oppression of women still endures; hence, there is a need to focus on the source(s) of women's domination without attacking the pioneers who laid the foundation for literary resistance during the hostile literary and extra-literary environment. The study, however, agrees with Ahuime if the concern is framed from the perspective that more textual representation of women's achievements and victories is needed. It would be delusional to flood African women's writing with themes of success when girls/women, especially from poor economic backgrounds continue to bear the scourge of African patriarchy in Africa.

While Chapter 5 focuses on first generation African diaspora women writers from Africa, Chapter 6 examines writing by second generation African diaspora women writers, or individuals who were toddlers/babies at the point of their parents' migration or adopted as babies. Texts studied include fictionalised and non-fictional autobiographies/memoirs. Chapter 5, which focuses on Emecheta and Aboulelia, demonstrates how characters with Christian and Muslim perspectives reinforce the view that the migration of women has been vital to the disruption of existing configurations of patriarchal relationships in Africa. For instance, the study refers to the criss-crossing of boundaries and the swapping of patriarchy to describe the visible disappearance and re-emergence of patriarchal control as women characters move between Nigeria and England, and Sudan and Scotland. Widowhood, usually a location/period of trauma for most women in Africa is experienced differently by the same woman in Scotland and in Sudan once she arrives with her husband's repatriated body.

Chapter 6 reveals the transformation and attenuation of African patriarchy in the diaspora. The discussion is presented in three distinct ways: Stage 1: Vestiges/Flashes of Patriarchy: African women writers show a significantly weakened male voice and influence in the home: Okoh, Agbaje, and Solanke. Stage 2: Visible Demise of Patriarchy: Works of biological African women, of mixed-racial heritage (African fathers and white UK mothers) who may/may not self-identify as Africans include Evaristo and Forna. Stage 3: Total Demise of Patriarchy: The

woman writer or character has no direct experience of African reality, or patriarchy growing up due to her adoption as a baby by white parents as with Kay and Pool.

Chapter 7 addresses the power of the literary canon, the good or damage such work can do. The study sees literary works as part of a powerful, and culturally influential body of work by which other works within its sphere are judged and which speaks to successive generations due to their canonical status. The discussion draws on two canonical texts, a western male classic, Conrad's *Darkness* and an African male classic, Achebe's *TFA* exclusively devoted to the male voice(s) and images – as it protests and reclaims colonial injustices and damaged egos. Oppressors can utilise writing as a weapon to propagate constructs that justify their oppression. Similarly, the oppressed can resort to writing to contest the oppressors' constructs, previously pioneer men's writing and currently African women's writing due to ongoing domination.

Written texts matter, otherwise, Achebe, who was born decades after the publication of Conrad's *Darkness*, would not have labelled Conrad a 'thoroughgoing racist' and criticised his mis/representation of an African as 'a dog on hind legs'. While concentrating on showcasing African men as full human beings, Achebe replicates the accusations which he levels against Conrad of erasing the humanity of Africans and using Africans as props to show European civilisation. *TFA* therefore portrays African women, specifically Igbo women, as docile, timid, and lacking in agency; so in the bid to project men's voices, *TFA* erases women's humanity and uses women as props to show men's power and agency in this early writing. The study argues that while under the domination of European men and women, African men were no more docile or inept as they claim African/Igbo women to be.

As the discussion shows in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, the study argues that African women must separate and prioritise their desire for freedom from male domination. Ogunyemi (1985, p. 67) perceptively observes that white men are protective towards their women, in contrast "…the black woman, less protected than her white counterpart, has to grow independent". In other words, African women have mostly lacked the structural support of their men, who have demonstrated self-centeredness in selling their women into internal and international slavery. African women feminists and womanists or other affiliations who are seeking the approval of, or collaboration

with African men and their inclusion in women's rights advocacy and the dismantling of African patriarchy will wait for millennia, like white women waited, until a generation comes and rejects the status quo. Just as in the twenty-first century demands for reparations for injustices and historical wrongdoings have seen former colonial countries like Germany return stolen artefacts to the Benin Kingdom in Nigeria, African women ought to consider as part of their resistance a framework of equality framed as reparation.

I started the study as an African perspective feminism-embracer especially for its liberatory philosophy and not as an African womanist due to the latter's insistence on collaborating with men, the same group mostly responsible for women's structural domination. Furthermore, the articulation of a brand of feminism that is for everyone (2015b), the globalised annunciation of women's rights as human rights Walby (2000), and the exposition that we should all be feminists Adichie (2014), have combined to provide the acceptable faces of feminism. However, in Chapter 2, it is established that feminism developed out of extreme racism which implicates white women, especially the privileged class (Jones-Rogers, 2019). hooks (2015a) observes that "White women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as exploiters and oppressors of black people" (p. 16). White women continuously benefit from structural power and privileges from the slave era to date (Zakaria, 2022; Beck, 2022; Hamad, 2021; DiAngelo, 2019). Feminism as a word, is therefore tainted with the blood of the enslaved African females and males**.** While alternative indigenous terms to feminism are needed, it was worth examining it as a concept used by a group of oppressed white women to successfully challenge patriarchal domination which had lasted for millennia.

The study has made compelling arguments about the unnaturalness of patriarchy in Africa, of the superiority label attached to African men and of the structural domination of women by men which are culturally endorsed. Pioneer African men's early work including those of African all-male literary giants Achebe, Soyinka, Ngũgĩ, plus Beti give account of the colonial domination of men. The study has shown that in the bid to re-assert eroded masculinity, African men in their early work deliberately silenced women to project men's silenced voice(s). While Achebe calls Conrad a "thoroughgoing racist" for his portrayal of inept African males, feminist critics could describe representation of women of African/Igbo women as docile and

inept as misogynistic. Nwapa, an Igbo contemporary of Achebe, chiding him and other African writes states:

> …[Th]ere are many women who are very, very, positive in their thinking, who are very, very independent, and very, very industrious…The male writers have disappointed us a great deal by not painting the female character as they should be painted (Umeh and Nwapa, 1995, p.27).

The continuing trans-generational patriarchal domination of women in Africa shows the commodification of women's oppressions as a male object of inheritance. As the study has argued, the structural domination of women could last for millennia unless women mount targeted, sustained resistance, combining scholarly and practical activists. The UK diaspora context of the study attests to the various disruptions to African practices indicating that these are not natural but socially constructed and therefore they can be dismantled.

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Fictional and Lived Experiences of Child Brides mergers – Art merges with life

Stories 1 - Human Rights Watch Interview with Elina V, Mangochi district, Malawi, September 21, 2013, cited in www.hrw.org. "Ending Child Marriage in Africa: Opening the Door for Girls' Education, Health, and Freedom from Violence" December 9, 2015.

Story 2 - Human Rights Watch Interview with Pontinanta J., Yambo County, South Sudan, March 7, 2012, cited in "Ending Child Marriage in Africa: Opening the Door for Girls' Education, Health, and Freedom from Violence" December 9, 2015.

Story 3 - Human Rights Watch Interview with Aguet N., Bor County, South Sudan, March 15, 2012. in "Ending Child Marriage in Africa: Opening the Door for Girls' Education, Health, and Freedom from Violence" December 9, 2015

Story 4 - Human Rights Watch Report of 17 January 2022 has Interviews of child-brides focusing on 2 states in Nigeria, from the Christian Igbo south and Muslim north. Muslim, northern Nigeria has the highest incidents of child marriages due to religious cultures (and traditional attitudes too). Christian Igbo South is shown as forcing pregnant young girls into marriages to avoid family shame and stigma, so 'saving-face' outweighs the child's welfare. 15-year-old Rachel is married off with speed, within 2 weeks of knowing she is getting married, like the fictional child-bride Adunni.

15-year-old Obioma is married off to her 60-year-old teacher who got her pregnant and he faced no consequence. Adunni at 14 years is married a middle-aged man too.

From the Muslim state, 12-year-old Nafisatu is married off due to family poverty, her marriage no doubt reduced pressure on family resources and fetch some resources too. Hafsa at 14 years was married off to a 30-year-old man. 11-year-old Reema was married off to a 21-year-old man. She would run back home like the fictional 14-year-old Junior wife in *Zamfara,* but she was returned to her 'marriage'. In *Not that Woman, Folake was married off at 11 years to a 60-year-old man and*

pregnancy complications destroyed her reproductive and other organs. Child-marriages in fiction part women's resistance through exposing the perspectives of the child-brides often silenced by patriarchal oppressions.

Child marriages occur, involving a speed marriage within 2 weeks for a 15-year-old girl, like Adunni (at 14 years) in *Louding; another* 15 year old marring a 60 year old man like Adunni; 12 year old married off relieve family's financial and an 11 year old married off to a 21 year old, life Folake in *Not That Woman* who was married off at 11 though to a 60 year old man. This 11-year-old child-brides would run away like the Junior wife in Zamfara and would be taken back. Fictional Folake experienced pregnancy complications which destroyed her reproductive and other organs. Women's writing is part of the resistance to child-marriages especially through representing the perspectives and impact on child-brides who are silenced by patriarchy and men who, in the UK, would be locked up for sexual abuse of minors.