

ISSUES OF MODERN AFRICAN LITERATURE

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award
of Bachelor of Arts degree in English

BY
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

SATHYABAMA

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

Accredited with Grade "A" by NAAC

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this Project Report is the bonafide work of **Rachel Deborah.S** (38010013) who have done the Project work. She has carried out the project entitled "ISSUES OF MODERN AFRICAN LITERATURE" under my supervision

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DECLARATION

I **RACHEL DEBORAH.S** hereby declare that the Project Report entitled **ISSUES OF MODERN AFRICAN LITERATURE** done by me under the guidance of Mr. SENTHIL, is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts degree in Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology

DATE:

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ABSTRACT

In 1960s, much diatribe was exchanged by African literary artists within their caucus, and out of doors with different scholars interested in African literature. Wali demonstrates this disagreement. He comments, "... until these writers and their western midwives accept the fact that true African literature must be written in African languages, they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncertainty, and frustration." In reply to Wali, Achebe expresses, "...you cannot cram African literature during a small, neat definition. I do not see African literature as one unit but as associated units – actually, the sum of all the national and ethnic literatures of Africa". The disagreement is no longer conspicuous. However, the question that demands an answer is, "Have African languages become productive in African literature?" This paper argues that they need not, maybe, yet. It assesses this example, providing factors responsible. One of such factors is the non-development and underdevelopment of the African languages. Besides, the paper makes recommendations that can salvage the situation; one of which is instituting awards for literary works in African. It can now be seen that Achebe's writing extends over a tumultuous and important period within the history of the Igbo and West Africa generally. He was born at an important time. His memories return to the family accounts of his great-grandfather, the person who received the primary Christian missionaries therein a part of the country, while his own upbringing with a father who was a church teacher during a village divided between the new customs and therefore the old led on to his formal, European-style education at government college and university. After this came his direct experience of these central political events in modern African history, independence followed by disillusionment, leading during this instance to war. His novels, short stories and poetry embody this experience, examining during a sustained way its significance in terms of individual lives and cultural history. The coherence and continuity of this examination make it quite the sum of its parts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Literature across ages and continents have functioned because the embodiment and interpreter of a people's culture a conveyor of a people's language also as their philosophy, politics, psychology and national character. Nwachukwu, (2005) notes that literature whether cast within the type of agitation, negotiation or supported historical reconstruction or mythological recreation features slightly of identity. according to Bayo (2003:1) opines that Literature could also be a discipline that attempts to depict man and his environment. The creative imagination and thus the utilization of a specialized kind of communication medium-language and elegance make literature different from all other disciplines.

Furthermore, literature deliberately aims at re-creating the human society via the exposition of human experiences, religion and socio-cultural motifs of that society within the imaginative framework of arts. Literature is additionally a liberating force that frees us from the inherent ideas placed on us by society and it's categorized into three (3) generic forms; namely, drama, prose and poetry (Ibrahim and Akande 2000:3).

The African experience of literature dates back to the pristine age of man and equally precedes the literature of some European countries (Dada 2003:36). In Africa the actual fact is established that there is the emergence of literature as a neighborhood of cultural identity and revolutionary struggle against domination, marginalisation and political cruelty in African states like; Kenyan, Nigeria, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa Guinea Bissau etc. African writers within the last decade of independence constituted the cultural nationalist movements with a view of treating African indigenous literature in its title (Ojaide, 1992).

Dada (2003: 36) maintains that "African literature refers to works finished the African audience, by Africans and in African languages whether these works are oral or written". the talk about African literature over the use of language, diversity of culture and thus the question of literary identity indigenous to Africa are issues that has continued to urge significant interest ever since the emergence of recent African literary writings, thus, many scholars have made their inputs and positions.

One of the most issues in modern African literature is language. The multi-cultural character of African language and thus the stress on the protection of individual people's linguistic identity have emasculated the great dream of the whole institutionalization of recent African literatures. The question of identity and dignity in African literature within the writings of regional and national writers persists thanks to the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions within the continent and among the countries of the continent. Meanwhile, the language of African literature is another area of interests that has raised plenty of devastating issues among scholars and critics.

According to Armah, (2005) Africa is vast and requires an enormous language to put through all our ideals, which language isn't yet born". Commenting on the language of African literature, Armah posited that "we are presently suspended in linguistic neocolonialism while awaiting a decisive breakthrough, if an African language is adopted, it'll be a huge solution. the strain of internationality, the question of communication with the earth outside Africa and other issues like accessibility and marketability of African literature within the worldwide environment seem to possess poisoned the dream of an African linguistic identity among African writers.

Another issue to be considered in Modern African Literatures is that the range of culture which can be a dynamic phenomenon encompassing the totality of attitudes, behaviors, beliefs and world-views. it's an integral a neighborhood of each human society and each one social groups are characterized by it. In other words, it's that "complex pattern of behavior and material achievement which are produced, learned and shared by members of a community" (Ameh, 2002: 165).

Another issue of discuss in modern African literatures is that the decide to create a racial identity. The role of ethnic pride and linguistic self-consciousness isn't a high quality of only majority ethnic groups. no matter how small the group, the sense of identity enshrined within the language of the group persists. For Yakubu, (2001) African literature is an enclave of freedom where the African re-conquers his lost identity and dignity. This position seems to vividly capture the overwhelming impulses that characterize the motives of recent African literature writers.

1.2 Statement of the matter

African literature emerged out of a requirement to fill a vacuum; that is the gap in African literature is centered on voicelessness. for several years, the discipline of comparative African literature has been overshadowed by the study of literary influences. this is often actually because all African authors belonging to what's commonly called 'Modern African Literature' have come under the influence of Western – type schools of broadly two different categories namely; the study of analogy or literary affinities and thus the study of influences or indebtedness of diversity, language and culture has constituted a myriad of problem to African Literatures. it's against this background that the study seeks

to hunt out the issues in modern African Literatures with particular reference to African diversity, language and culture using some selected African literary texts.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to seem in the least issues in every literary work . Specifically, the study objectives include the following;

to examine the Igbo Folklore of cultural matrix with reference to the creative works of Chinua Achebeto analyze the hybridity of recent African Drama with reference to the works of Wole Soyinka and Sam Ukala

1.4 Significance of the Study

Over the years, many arguments have arisen on the existence of African literature. This study when completed will highlight the challenges facing African literatures from the pre-colonial past, to the colonial period, right to the present post-colonial age. it'll describe the lives of the traditional Africans, their practices, ethos and mores, analyzes the conflicts that colonialism engendered within the system and discuss the crises underpinning modern Africa literatures.

Furthermore, it's hoped that when the study is completed, it'll increase existing literatures and shut knowledge gap with regard to background of African diversity, language and culture. it'll also, educate, inform, entertain and document students, literary writers and educators researchers on the concept of the use of language and elegance in modern African literature. Finally, the findings which can be provided at the highest of this research are getting to be of great benefit to future researchers during this field of art and thus the humanities generally .

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study is restricted to examining some selected issues in modern African literature; specifically they include, the Igbo Folklore in Chinua Achebe's *Things disintegrate* and *Arrow of God*. It examines also, male and female conflict as themes in Mariama Ba's *goodbye a Letter* and Chiamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The study also analyzes the hybridity of recent African Drama in Wole Soyinka's *Death* and thus the King's *Horseman* and Sam Ukala's *Iredi War*.

1.6 Research Methodology

In completing this research, various materials and research tools were employed. This include; primary text which covered six different texts so on give the research an in-depth analysis. While, the Secondary source will contains library research during which published books, journals and thus the web are getting to be considered. within the method of data collection, the library was consulted before embarking on this project, there's need to determine what has been written on the subject so on guide the researcher on the general nature of the work and provides root of background to the study. Hence, any information gathered are getting to be used to perform proper work.

1.7 FATHER OF AFRICAN LITERATURE

Chinua Achebe

Achebe in blue cap at lectern

Chinua Achebe, in 1966

Born

Albert Chinualumogu Achebe

16 November 1930

Ogidi, British Nigeria

Died

21 March 2013 (aged 82)

Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.

Resting place

Ogidi, Anambra, Nigeria

Occupation

Writer and teacher—David and Marianna Fisher University Professor and Professor of African Studies Brown University (2009–2013)—Charles P. Stevenson Professor of Languages and Literature Bard College (1990–2008)

Nationality

Igbo of Nigeria

Period

1958–2012

Notable works

The African Trilogy,

Things fall aside,
No Longer comfortable ,
Arrow of God,
A Man of the People,
Anthills of the Savannah,

Notable awards

Nigerian National Order of Merit Award 1979

St. Louis Literary Award 1999

The Dorothy and Gish Prize 2010

Years active

1930–2013

Children

4, including Chidi and Nwando

Raised by his parents within the Igbo town of Ogidi in southeastern Nigeria, Achebe excelled at Government College Umuahia and won a scholarship to review medicine, but changed his studies to English literature at University College (now the University of Ibadan).[4] He became fascinated with world religions and traditional African cultures, and commenced writing stories as a college student . After graduation, he worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) and shortly moved to the metropolis of Lagos. He gained worldwide attention for his novel *Things fall apart* within the late 1950s; his later novels include *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe wrote his novels in English and defended the utilization of English, a "language of colonisers," in African literature. In 1975, his lecture "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" featured a criticism of Conrad as "a thoroughgoing racist;" it had been later published within the *Massachusetts Review* amid controversy.

When the region of Biafra broke faraway from Nigeria in 1967, Achebe became a supporter of Biafran independence and acted as ambassador for the people of the new nation.[citation needed] The war that happened over the territory, commonly referred to as the Nigerian war , ravaged the populace, and as starvation and violence took its toll, he appealed to the people of Europe and therefore the Americas for aid. When the Nigerian government retook the region in 1970, he involved himself in political parties but soon resigned thanks to frustration over the corruption and elitism he

witnessed.[citation needed] He lived within the us for several years within the 1970s, and returned to the U.S. in 1990, after a car crash left him partially disabled.[5]

A titled Igbo chief himself,[6] Achebe focuses his novels on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and therefore the clash of Western and traditional African values during and after the colonial era. His style relies heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folks stories, proverbs, and oratory. He also published an outsized number of short stories, children's books, and essay collections.

Upon Achebe's return to the us in 1990, he began an eighteen-year tenure at Bard College because the Charles P. Stevenson Professor of Languages and Literature.[citation needed] From 2009 until his death, he served as David and Marianna Fisher University Professor and Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University .When Chinua Achebe died in March, he was mourned round the world, proclaimed because the “Father of African Literature,” because the author of up to date classics like *Things fall apart; the center can hold* , and as a perennial Nobel prize candidate. But he was much more than that.

For many years, Achebe served as advisory editor to Heinemann’s African Writer Series, which served as a forum for a generation of post-independence writers, while also providing the texts needed by African universities to assist redress the colonial bias that had been prevalent within the teaching of literature. To many, it had been their only window into African publishing.

As described by Philip Gourevitch within the New Yorker , “the incontrovertible fact that [Achebe] must be remembered as not only the daddy but the godfather of recent African literature owed a minimum of the maximum amount to the decades he spent because the editor of Heinemann’s African Writers Series. therein capacity, Achebe served because the discoverer, mentor, patron, and presenter-to-the-world of numerous of the now-classic African authors of the latter half the 20 th century. The series’ orange-spined, generously inexpensive paperbacks carried a stamp of excellence that drew readers everywhere to essential works by writers as varied as Kaunda , Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Dennis Brutus, Tayeb Salih, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Ousmane Sembene, Wole Soyinka, and Gordimer , to call but a few: it’s a unprecedented legacy.”

But: what proportion of that reverence towards Achebe is strictly from a non-African perspective? during a recent interview with Sahara Reporters, Wole Soyinka questioned

both Achebe's role as "Father of African Literature" also because the validity of the African Writers Series:

After noting that Achebe himself repudiated the "title," as "Father of African Literature" he went on to mention that, "it may be a tag of either literary ignorance or 'momentary exuberance' — a la [Nadine] Gordimer — to which we are all sometimes prone. those that seriously believe or promote this must be asked: have you ever the sheerest acquaintance with the literature of other African nations, in both indigenous and adopted colonial languages? What must the francophone, lusophone, Zulu, Xhosa, Ewe etc. etc. literary scholars and consumers consider those that continue such a historic absurdity? It's as ridiculous as calling WS father of African drama! Or Mazisi Kunene father of African heroic poetry . Or Kofi Awoonor father of African poetry. Education is lacking in most of these who pontificate.

"As a brief move such corrective, i like to recommend Tunde Okanlawon's scholarly tribute within the Sun (Nigeria) of May 4th. then , I hope those folks within the serious business of literature are going to be spared further embarrassment.

"Let me just add that variety of foreign 'African experts' have seized on this silliness with glee. It legitimatizes their ignorance, their parlous knowledge, enables them to circumscribe, then adopt a patronizing approach to African literatures and creativity. Backed by centuries of their own recorded literary history, they assume the condescending posture of midwiving an infant entity. it's all rather depressing."

And regarding the African Writers Series, Soyinka continues:

"I must tell you that, at the start , i used to be very skeptical of the Heinemann's African Series. As a literary practitioner, my instinct tends towards a suspicion of 'ghetto' classifications — which I did feel this was sure to be. once you run a regional venture, it becomes a junior reference to what exists. Sri Lanka n literature should evolve and be recognized as literature of Sri Lanka, release after release, not entered as a series. You place the books on the market and allow them to begin from there. Otherwise there's the danger that you simply start hedging on standards. you are feeling compelled to bring out quantity, which could compromise on quality.

I refused to allow my works to seem within the series — to start with. My debut happened while i used to be Gowon's guest in Kaduna prisons and permission to publish "The Interpreters" was granted in my absence. Exposure itself isn't a nasty thing, mind you. Accessibility. Making works available — that's not altogether negative. Today, several scholars write their PhD theses on Onitsha Market literature. Both

Chinua and Cyprian Ekwensi – not forgetting Henshaw et al. – published with those enterprising houses. It had been outside interests that classified them Onitsha Market Literature – not the publishers. They simply published.

“All altogether, the chances come down in favour of the series — which, by the way, did undergo the first phase of sloppy inclusiveness, then became more discriminating. Aig Higo – who presided sometime after Chinua – himself admitted it.”

Even so, Soyinka ends by praising Achebe: “Chinua’s place within the canon of world literature? Wherever the art of the story-teller is widely known, definitely assured.”

CHINUA ACHIBE EDUCATION

In 1936, Achebe entered St Philips' Central School, within the Akpakaogwe region of Ogidi.[16][17] Despite his protests, he spent every week within the religious class for young children, but was quickly moved to a better class when the school's chaplain took note of his intelligence.[18] One teacher described him because the student with the simplest handwriting in school, and therefore the best reading skills.[19] He also attended Sunday school hebdomadally and therefore the special services held monthly, often carrying his father's bag. An issue erupted at one such session, when apostates from the new church challenged the catechist about the tenets of Christianity. Achebe later included a scene supported this incident in *Things Fall Apart* (1958).[20][21]

University

Street in Ibadan, 2007

In 1948, in preparation for independence, Nigeria's first university opened.[22] referred to as University College (now the University of Ibadan), it had been an associate college of the University of London. Achebe was admitted as a serious Scholar within the university's first intake and given a bursary to review medicine.[22] It had been during his studies at Ibadan that Achebe began to become critical of European literature about Africa. After reading Joyce Cary's 1939 work *Mister Johnson* a few cheerful Nigerian man who (among other things) works for an abusive British storeowner, he was so disturbed by the book's portrayal of its Nigerian characters as either savages or buffoons that he decided to become a writer.[23] Achebe recognised his dislike for the African protagonist as a symbol of the author's cultural ignorance. One among his classmates announced to the professor that the sole enjoyable moment within the book is when Johnson is shot.[24]

He abandoned the study of drugs and altered to English, history, and theology.[25] Because he switched his field, however, he lost his scholarship and had to pay tuition

fees. He received a government bursary, and his family also donated money – his older brother Augustine gave up money for a visit home from his job as a official so Chinua could continue his studies.[26] From its inception, the university had a robust Arts faculty; it includes many famous writers amongst its alumni. These include Nobelist Wole Soyinka, poet and playwright John Pepper Clark, and poet Christopher Okigbo.[27]

In 1950 Achebe wrote a bit for the University Herald entitled "Polar Undergraduate", his debut as an author. It used irony and humour to celebrate the intellectual vigour of his classmates.[28] He followed this with other essays and letters about philosophy and freedom in academia, a number of which were published in another campus magazine, The Bug.[29] He served because the Herald's editor during the 1951–52 academic year .[30]

While at the university, Achebe wrote his first story , "In a Village Church", which mixes details of life in rural Nigeria with Christian institutions and icons, a method which appears in many of his later works.[31] Other short stories he wrote during his time at Ibadan (including "The Old Order in Conflict with the New" and "Dead Men's Path") examine conflicts between tradition and modernity, with an eye fixed toward dialogue and understanding on each side .[32] When a professor named Geoffrey Parrinder received the university to show comparative religion, Achebe began to explore the fields of Christian history and African traditional religions.[33]

After the ultimate examinations at Ibadan in 1953, Achebe was awarded a second-class degree.[34] Rattled by not receiving the very best level, he was uncertain the way to proceed after graduation. He returned to his hometown of Ogidi to sort through his options.[35]

Teaching and producing

While he meditated on his possible career paths, Achebe was visited by a lover from the university, who convinced him to use for an English teaching position at the Merchants of sunshine school at Oba. it had been a ramshackle institution with a crumbling infrastructure and a meagre library; the varsity was built on what the residents called "bad bush" – a neighborhood of land thought to be tainted by unfriendly spirits.[36] Later, in Things disintegrate , Achebe describes an identical area called the "evil forest", where the Christian missionaries are given an area to create their church.[37]

As an educator he urged his students to read extensively and be original in their work.[38] the scholars didn't have access to the newspapers he had read as a student, so Achebe made his own available within the classroom. He taught in Oba for four months, but when a chance arose in 1954 to figure for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS), he left the varsity and moved to Lagos.[39]

Lagos in 2007

The NBS, a radio network started in 1933 by the colonial government,[40] assigned Achebe to the Talks Department, preparing scripts for oral delivery. This helped him master the subtle nuances between written and speech , a skill that helped him later to write down realistic dialogue.[41]

The city of Lagos also made a big impression on him. an enormous conurbation, the town teemed with recent migrants from the agricultural villages. Achebe revelled within the social and political activity around him and later drew upon his experiences when describing the town in his 1960 novel not comfortable .[42]

While in Lagos, Achebe started work on a completely unique . This was challenging, since little or no African fiction had been written in English, although Amos Tutuola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) and Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the town* (1954) were notable exceptions. While appreciating Ekwensi's work, Achebe worked hard to develop his own style, whilst he pioneered the creation of the Nigerian novel itself.[43] A visit to Nigeria by Queen Elizabeth in 1956 brought problems with colonialism and politics to the surface, and was a big moment for Achebe.[44]Also in 1956 he was selected at the Staff School travel by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).[citation needed] His first trip outside Nigeria was a chance to advance his technical production skills, and to solicit feedback on his novel (which was later split into two books). In London, he met a novelist named Gilbert Phelps, to whom he offered the manuscript. Phelps responded with he could show it to his editor and publishers. Achebe declined, insisting that it needed more work and great enthusiasm.

CHAPTER-2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature reviewed for this study, which incorporates books and articles that focus on the representation of women in African literature, in particular. Ruthven (1984), Kumah (2000) and Stratton (1984), for instance, have established that several distinct factors come into play in the depiction of both male and female characters in prose. Some of the literature reviewed reveals that the portrayal of characters in African literature is influenced not only by how writers see society and reflect it, but also by the literary environment that the writers find themselves in. Kumah (2000) advocates the popularity of works penned by African women writers and argues for an impartial critique on these works. The author (2000: 1) states that “the roles women occupy within the overall body of African Literature are all reflective of societal attitudes towards women.” She attributes the inadequate representation of female-authored works to the character of the African literary canon, where African women authors are marginalised by their male counterparts. As a result, Kumah (2001:1) argues that the literature of African women remains “unacknowledged or tokenised by literary critics.” The author further argues that in the case of African women writers whose works finally get recognised, such work is usually “explicated within an exclusively female designation, resulting in the marginalisation and sometimes stagnation of their work.” Kumah’s (2000: 3) states that literary authorship is predominantly a male preserve; however, she also recognises the existence of female-authored criticisms which are “gradually subverting exclusionary and marginalising practices.” A previous study administered by Blakesley-Lindsay (2001: 7) established that so as to pursue gender-oriented themes, African women writers tend to portray their Protagonists as female. The author’s review of Casenave’s “Rebellious Women: the New Generation of African Female Novelists” reveals that African women authors use female protagonists “to rebel against the dominant ideology.” Within the primary texts used for this study, the researcher has established that the protagonists and characters of prominence are female. The tendency, though, has been to portray these protagonists as struggling through life thanks to cultural expectations, education or lack of it, and lack of power. Various reasons for the subversion of female characters in prose are outlined in the reviewed studies. For instance, a study by Kaplan (1985) established that images of girls within the works of female authors are a mirrored image on the ways during which traditional practices perpetuate women’s oppression. The author states, however, that female writers’ own absorption of patriarchal values might cause them to create female characters who fulfil society’s stereotypes of girls. McEldowney (1999) examined the influence of male domination within the literary world and asserts that because African literature has more male writers, a publishing world that’s dominated by males and predominantly male critics, this tends to disadvantage women writers. The author has established that the African literary world is still very male-dominated which as a result African women authors have had to struggle to realize fairness. The researcher believes that each one the factors mentioned may have

an impact on how African women authors depict female characters. The study by Blakesley-Lindsay (2001) also established that male dominance of the literary world influences the portrayal of female characters in African prose. The author states that "some writers have skilled the marginalization of girls and women's writings by systematically favouring certain sorts of female characters that are typically marginalized." A study by Eagleton (2005) posits that the figure of the lady author features as a site of struggle and narrative tension concerning not only problems of Authorship, like authority, ownership and access to the literary field, but also wider problems with identity and gender. Stratton (1994: 29), referring to contemporary African women's literature, states that "African women writers and their works have been rendered invisible in literary criticism." In reading novels by African male authors, like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, one realises how Stratton's observation translates into the depiction of female characters that tend to be less visible in prose and are portrayed as secondary to their male counterparts. The author argues that "as if to reflect their social insignificance, women are marginalized within the text." Stratton (ibid) states, for instance, that in *Things Disintegrate*, Achebe doesn't reveal the names of Okonkwo's wives until the narrative is well under way. African male writers have attended write of themes that centre on political concerns like the ramifications of colonialism or corruption in neo-colonial Africa, for instance. within the study by Blakesley-Lindsay (2001: 2) it's noted that male writers of the 1980s almost exclusively wrote on corrupt African societies, but that ladies writers have taken a more positive approach. The author states that while African women writers have tackled problems with corruption, violence, oppression and suffering, they need searched "for possible alternatives to and how out of a desperately static and pessimistic mode of thinking." On the association between literature as a mirrored image on society and life, Dorn (1999: 2) quotes Ngugi wa Thiongo as stating that literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum. Literature is "given impetus, shape, direction and even area by social, political and economic forces in a particular society." The relationship between creative literature and therefore the forces mentioned above, consistent with wa Thiongo, can't be ignored. In thus far as literature reflects societal experiences, women are justified in their depiction of girls characters as observed in societal interactions. Dorn (ibid) gives the instance of wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood* to point out how the author depicts real-life experiences.

His literature. The novel is about the condemnation of neo-colonialist regimes that are characterised by betrayal and by corruption. Lindfors (1997: 135) on African literary criticism notes that "the literature of Sub-Saharan Africa within the twentieth century was influenced by politics." The author states that writers have served not only as chroniclers of up to date political history, but also as advocates of radical social change. He quotes Achebe as stating that one of the African writer's functions is to show and attack injustice; however, if new injustices come to the fore then a move onto discussion on such new injustices is required. Achebe argues for a move beyond racial injustices to other social issues of relevance that Africa experiences. Lindfors (ibid) reveals further that the work of African writers therefore reflects and projects the course of Africa's

Cultural Revolution . African women authors have moved on to themes and characterisations that reflect the condition of African women and in Lindfors and Achebe's argument then this could be the case. The notion that African male writers pursue themes as mentioned above, choose male protagonists as central to their writings and depict women characters within the periphery bears evidence to the marginalisation of girls . A study by Arnfred (2002: 1) validates the fact that women are marginalised. The author states that modern thinkers (presumably male) have described the woman's position according to "their androcentric models" which subordinate women. The author quotes Toril Moi as stating that during this way "one isn't born a lady but rather becomes a lady ." Stratton (1984: 15) highlights Ogundipe-Leslie's observation that the experience of marginalisation "is reflected in the thematic preoccupations of African women's literature, while men's literature tends to be filled with valorisations of the established order of male domination." The author argues that some men have attempted to transcend the sexual allegory and hence to resolve the issues of gender in ways in which run counter to the biases embedded in contemporary African male literary tradition. Mezu (2004:1) refers to these sorts of men as "gynandrists" and gynandrists are noted here for the role they play within the African literary world. The position of the African female character as secondary to her male counterpart remains prevalent in African literature. The study by Ruthven (1984) blames this on androcentric bias in patriarchal culture, which can still be found in representations of women in literature and therefore the visual arts. The author states that it's apparent that African male writers pursue themes and major characters that skip the contribution of females. Stratton (1984) argues that ladies writers have earned an area in African literature and have redefined the African literary tradition. The author further states that African women writers have uncovered gaps and exposed prejudices in the male literary tradition. This necessitates further study to demystify female character portrayal by African women writers. The researcher notes that there are instances where male writers portray female characters as protagonists. For instance , in Cyprian Ekwensi's novel, *Jagua Nana*, the feminine protagonist Jagua may be a prostitute who depends on males for monetary support in exchange for sexual favours. However, the study by Kumah (2000: 7) attributes this to a "prostitution trope which is exemplary of the debasement African women suffer at the hands of male authors." The author further states that this "nullifies the woman's agency and reduces her to mere physicality." She observes that this is history being rewritten at the expense of girls . Kumah (ibid) makes regard to Wanja, a female protagonist in Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood* as another example of the prostitution trope, where Wanja is also depicted as a prostitute. She states that this trivialises the complete scope of women's experiences, and argues instead for an outline of the truth of women's daily existence in literature. Women's characters within the examples given above are wont to convey a message, yet within the process they're degraded. Women writers generally prefer to write on prominent female characters; however, they face obstacles once they attempt to get published. For instance , during a study on eighteenth- Century women's literature, Poovey (1984) states that the tradition of writing freely within the eighteenth

century in Europe was impeded by continuing social resistance. Women who wanted to urge published encountered prejudice, and as a result, some writers such as Mary-Ann Evans (George Eliot) resorted to the utilization of pseudonyms (Uglow: 1987). According to McEldowney (1999), Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions*, was rejected by four publishers for portraying black females negatively. The author further mentions Buchi Emecheta, a female writer from Nigeria as another example, where she (Emecheta) was disowned by African male authors and critics for her bold portrayal of girls characters. Literature is claimed to mirror society; therefore the depiction of girls in African prose has got to be a sensible picture of society within the era that it reflects. A study administered by Ojo-Ade (1983: 138) states that literature may be a function of life which "fact feeds fiction." As a result, the author argues that it's only natural that female African writers should depict the "travails" of female characters. The author further asserts that the creator of a writing "exhibits deep empathy for her heroine, who to an outsized extent may be a mouthpiece for her personal notions in life." Achebe (1988: 98) questions the notion of art for art's sake and asks why African writers should be told the way to write or what's or isn't appropriate to literature. For instance, the author argues against so-called "literary legislators" who pass laws telling writers what social and political roles artists may perform. From Ojo-Ade and Achebe's points of view, African women authors are justified in their character portrayal of the lady sufferer, if indeed the truth is such. The representation or misrepresentation of women is documented in a study by Ruthven (1984) entitled "Dismantling Androcentric Assumptions". The author reveals that to a certain extent African women writers have aspired to represent female characters who, although not always altogether admirable, are depicted as realising the got to improve themselves. For instance, Lucia in *Nervous Conditions* begins as an uneducated and disrespected member of Babamukuru's extended family; however, she eventually realises the necessity for an honest education and enrolls in class so as to further her education. Furthermore, her support for the women in her family and her outspokenness eventually gain her respect. Tambu, the protagonist in *Nervous Conditions*, eventually realises that she ought to not emulate anybody but depend upon her own innate beliefs if she is to realize her goals. Lucia has aspirations for education and is empowered by the respect she earns from others, whilst Tambu is self-empowered by her convictions. In a study by Moyana (1996), the author observes that Dangarembga portrays men and women who are antagonistic towards one another which the ladies especially are portrayed differently from those in earlier Zimbabwean literature in English. The author further observes that the woman's voice in Dangarembga is new and revolutionary as *Nervous Conditions* heralds the birth of a replacement woman in Tambudzai. The lass is claimed to understand that in her mind something began to "assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed." Moyana (ibid) further quotes Dangarembga as saying that she deals with women who break free from oppression. Bruner (1993), writing on North African literature, observes that despite the region's cultural and non secular constraints on women, a couple of women writers have achieved wide recognition. The author gives Egyptian Nawal el Saadawi as having been acknowledged as a number one feminist through her

campaign against clitoridectomy , among other things. El Saadawi is a writer of note on women's concerns and the themes she writes on are generally inclined towards issues concerning women. This, she reflects in her novels, for instance , *Woman at Point Zero* and therefore the *Hidden Face of Eve*. Studies by Ruthven (1984), McEldowney (1999), and Stratton (1994) have established that African women writers realise that culture plays a neighborhood within the oppression of girls . This is reflected in their depiction of female characters as suffering due to adverse cultural practices and beliefs. Ruthven (1984) explored the consequences of cultural practices and established that, traditionally, women's lives have been considered in reference to

men's lives, for instance , as daughters, mothers, mistresses and wives. The African woman's role, during this respect, tends to be a supporting role that serves to uphold the male's position within his community. Patriarchy often contributes to the denigration of girls therein it allots them a standing lower than their husbands' and in this manner it's deemed to be oppressive. Lewis (2003: 3) argues that fictions of custom "bolster patriarchal goals and desires, while perpetuating the servitude of women." The author further asserts that such fictions carry "a charged emotional force because they're linked to a way of loyalty among those with a shared history of misrepresentation and cultural marginalisation." Lewis' study concludes that it's these fictions of an undiluted African culture that are weapons for enforcing women's obedience, with the "charge of westernisation being used against many ladies publicly realms dominated by men." The background to the present study and therefore the literature reviewed clearly reveal that the literary world is biased against women which such an element may influence how African women depict female characters. Stratton (1994: 134) reveals that there is a derogatory comparison of female to male-authored texts "which appears to have acquired the status of convention within the annals of African (male) literary criticism." This convention she finds "functions to exclude women writers from the canon." In light of the above, African women authors may be thought to either depict female characters that are pleasing to the critic or as reflective of real world .Mezu (2004) encourages a move beyond mere socio-gender protests against marginalisation and voicelessness to a phase in which women are aware of options open to them, which is a much-desired phase of dynamic socio-political, intellectual activism and self-actualisation. of these , the author says, cause a recovery and an efficient use of the feminine voice. during this instance, women would feature during a positive and autonomous capacity as women struggling to foster change. It can be deciphered from the review of literature that generally the studies done consider African women and literature in its holistic sense. for instance , Kumah (2000) directs her study to the representation of women in literature whilst Stratton studies the politics of gender in African literature. the first purpose of this study was to further examine African women's depiction of female characters in terms of the three variables given: culture, education and power. This chapter of past studies and research on African women and literature leads directly into the study on how African women authors depict female characters in prose. The following three chapters will examine how women are depicted in terms of culture, education and power. Ultimately, conclusions are going to be supported how women

characters are depicted and whether such depictions adhere to expectations of male-dominated publishing houses or reflect reality as.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEPICTION of girls IN RELATION TO CULTURE

This chapter investigates the depiction of girls in prose by African women writers in reference to culture. Culture is defined under key concepts as how of lifetime of a people: their norms, traditions, beliefs, language, food and tools, for instance . By extension, culture can be viewed as a response to a way of life as evidenced in societies that continually adopt traditional practices that better their own, and eventually take them to be a neighborhood of their culture. During this way culture is seen to be dynamic and always changing and adapting new ways of life. Motherhood and marriage are upheld as positions of status for ladies in African culture and as a result women are socialised to value such attributes. Oyewumi (2003: 1) states that motherhood occupies a special place in African cultures and societies and mothers are seen as the essential building block of social relationships, identities and society. Brown (1981: 51) states that, culturally, the importance of a woman's physical maturity meant that she was now ripe for marriage to anyone her uncle selected for her and who stood to grant her uncle a necessary advantage. The author further asserts that the "humanity of girls is defined on the idea of a highly specialised usefulness – the power in touch sons." It's expected that a girl will get older , marry and bear children, especially sons who will continue the family name. It is deemed culturally imperative that young women be socialised from an early age to aspire to married life and motherhood; they are thus taught how to handle marriage and motherhood from a reasonably young age. In African literature, for instance , the barren woman is denigrated either by male writers looking to uphold tradition or by women writers seeking to reflect the suffering of girls in society who cannot bear children. A study by Owomoyela (2002: 11) states that, in patriarchy, the revered woman is married with children, or is preparing for marriage and childbearing. The author exemplifies this through Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* where the most character, Nnu Ego, in search of the thrill of motherhood has many children yet dies alone by the roadside, destitute and demented. Owomoyela (ibid) notes that Nnu Ego realises that although nurturing children brought her status in Igbo society, it didn't bring her personal fulfilment. Initially within the *Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego cannot bear children and is abused by her first husband. In her second marriage, however, she has several children, boys and girls. In her bid for cultural recognition, Nnu Ego is happy to continue bearing children, and takes pride in them, especially her sons. The eldest son, Oshia, goes to high school in America and it is traditionally expected that, upon his return, he will take care of his parents and siblings. This doesn't happen as he eventually takes a white wife and never supports his family financially. Moore and

Coulehan (1994) state that Nnu Ego's younger son follows in his older brother's footsteps, as he doesn't take care of his mother either. Nnu Ego bears sons and daughters for her husband; nevertheless, her life is marked with loneliness, poverty and strife. Kumah (2000) reveals that the African tradition is restrictive to women which so as to measure up to cultural expectations and thereby be accepted by the community, women have had to place up with adverse societal practices. Muyale-Manenji (1998) argues that culture is dynamic and that at every moment people are transformed and always growing. This notion by Muyale-Manenji proves true within the writings of contemporary African women and Unity Dow's *Far and Beyond* (2002) may be a case in point, as in the novel the most character, Mosa, during a position is ready is in a position to awaken up fellow students to face up against sexual and emotional abuse in a society that prefers to stay abuse quiet. A people's culture deemed oppressive will remain so if it's not challenged and resisted by those who find it oppressive.

In reference to *Goodbye a Letter*, Mortimer (1990: 135) explains that the author, Mariama Ba, chooses the letter as a vehicle for recounting episodes of her heroine's past marital and motherhood experiences as she battles polygamy. After the loss of her husband, Ramatoulaye, the protagonist, reminisces over her life through a long letter to her childhood friend, Aissatou. Within the letter she recalls events of her life with Modou Fall, her late husband, and their twelve children and tries to place all the events of their lives into perspective. Ba's portrayal of Ramatoulaye, is of an educator who is educated enough to understand the ills in her society, especially in terms of culture. Ironically, she chooses to stay with a husband she feels betrayed her, so as to uphold cultural expectations and practice. Her friend, Aissatou faces a similar experience, however she decides to leave the polygamous relationship and opts to further her education and to relocate. The 2 women are depicted as facing similar problems embedded in their culture yet affect them during a different manner. So *Long a Letter* reveals the cultural effects of polygamy within an Jemaah Islamiyah, as Ramatoulaye relates the crisis in her life that began at the time when her husband decided to require a second wife. Stratton (1994: 138) notes that Ramatoulaye's crisis didn't come at the time of her husband's death but together with his acquisition of a replacement wife, after twenty-five years of marriage. Binetou, the new teenage wife, is actually a lover to at least one of their twelve children, the obstinate Daba. Ramatoulaye chooses to stay in a polygamous relationship so as to watch cultural and non secular belief. Aissatou faces an identical dilemma to Ramatoulaye's but she refuses to undergo prescribed categories while Ramatoulaye conforms to social definitions of her gender. Stratton (1994: 145) reflects that Ba portrays women realistically and grounds her female characters in society, thus making them subject to historical forces. The author quotes Ojo-Ade who contends with the portrayal of men in the novel as the author believes Ba portrays the men unfairly: as unfaithful husbands, womanisers and

Victimisers. This reinforces the researcher's statement of the matter, which alludes to a niche within the depiction of female characters within the prose of African women writers. Culturally, it's deemed inappropriate to react to a husband's marriage to a second wife by leaving him and this is revealed through Ramatoulaye's character. It is in Ba's depiction of Aissatou, however, that the possibility and actuality of leaving a polygamous relationship is reflected. Aissatou leaves her husband after he takes on a new wife; however, she not only leaves her home at the time but her whole community also, as she relocates to the US. Ramatoulaye, in marriage, is depicted as a lady who submits to her husband and by extension to her in-laws. The fear of being seen to oppose cultural expectation makes Ramatoulaye and her co-wife, Binetou, abandon their individuality and dignity so as to realize respect from members of their community. Newell (1997: 127) argues that the women in *Goodbye a Letter* "have internalised a socially constructed sense of self that causes them to accept, consciously or unconsciously, the role of second fiddle." Ba (1980: 12) gives a transparent picture of things within the words of Ramatoulaye: "and to think that I loved this man passionately, to think that I gave him thirty years of my life, to think that twelve times over I carried his child..." The protagonist, Ramatoulaye, chooses to endure an oppressive and polygamous marriage until her husband's death. She subscribes to a culture where a woman's quality is docility and therefore, in order not to lose respect in her community, Ramatoulaye opts to remain in an unsatisfactory marriage. It's through Ramatoulaye's ally, Aissatou, that Ba portrays a lady on top of things of her life to a point. For instance, when Aissatou's husband, Mawdo Ba, takes on a younger second wife, she divorces him, trains as an interpreter and leaves for the US with their four children. Her move to the United States, however, are often questioned, because it may be thought to be avoidance of alienation and embarrassment.

In *Daba*, Ba depicts a younger, freer woman quite unlike her friend, Binetou, who is pestered by her mother to enable them to maneuver to a better class by marrying a way older man. Ba juxtaposes two women whom she depicts as reacting to similar cultural constraints during a different manner. Daba marries her age mate who respects her and her individuality and who says of his wife: "Daba is my wife; she isn't my slave, nor my servant" (Ba 1981: 73). Ramatoulaye describes this young couple as identifying with one another and able to discuss everything so as to reach a compromise. Daba is described as a girl who reasons everything out; she is intelligent and lets her culture work for her, rather than the other. Mortimer (1990: 135) states that on the socio-political and cultural dimensions of polygamy, Ramatoulaye is a victim of a society that endorses and encourages polygamy. The question is to what degree she makes an attempt to beat obstacles as against bitterly reproaching the patriarchal structure. The researcher believes that it is in her bid to stick to tradition that Ramatoulaye, although filled with bitterness and proclaiming herself a victim, still opts to remain during a polygamous marriage. Consistent with Mortimer (1990: 144), Ramatoulaye maintains acquiescence, passivity and indifference although inwardly angry and incensed. The two

characters, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou, are depicted as intelligent women in their own right; however, they respond quite differently to their circumstances and thereby their culture. Marechera, quoted in Veit-Wild (1992: 356), sums up the novel as being about “women caught in the fetid purgatory of indecision, with one foot firmly planted on the pavement of progress and therefore the other equally firmly planted on the grave of custom and tradition.” This description is depicted not only in Ramatoulaye’s character, but also in her co-wife, Binetou, who submits to her mother and finally marries a way older man for prestige and position.

In *Nervous Conditions*, according to Moyana in Jones and Jones (1996: 25), Dangarembga portrays men and ladies who are antagonistic towards one another. The author states that women especially are depicted differently from the sort in earlier Zimbabwean literature. She further states that “the woman’s voice here is new and revolutionary...” for instance, *Nervous Conditions* is claimed to finish by heralding the birth of a replacement woman within the main character, Tambu, who it’s said finally reflects as follows: Quietly unobtrusively and very fitfully, something in my mind began to say itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story. it had been an extended and painful process for me, that process of expansion... whose events stretched over many years... (Dangarembga 1988: 204) The women in *Nervous Conditions*, for instance Tambu, Nyasha and Lucia, are deemed as rebelling against their cultural roles. Tambu is more the rebel as she resolves to plant maize to buy her school fees after her father decides she will not attend school for lack of cash. the choice to require Tambu out of faculty in preference of her brother was in fact influenced by the cultural belief that Tambu would eventually be groomed to become a wife and mother. consistent with Grady (1997), Tambu develops great aspirations for her personal education despite the obstacles she faces: race, class, and sex. She grows up to become a girl of note as she attains an education and is in a position to make her own decisions later in life. She defies the notion reflected within the novel that the daughters would eventually usher in cattle as dowry which would then enable fathers to work on their fields and the family to prosper (Dangarembga 1988:125). Nyasha, the daughter of Babamukuru and Maiguru, and Tambu’s cousin, is another major character in the novel who turns rebellious. She struggles against patriarchal thinking that demotes her to a daughter who should never stand up for what she believes in and who should accordingly never challenge her father. for instance, in an event where she reacts to social custom by staying out late in the dark after a faculty concert, her enraged father “condemns her to whoredom, “making her a victim of femaleness, even as (Tambu) had felt victimised reception within the days when Nhamo visited school and she or he grew maize” (Dangarembga 1988:115). during this quote, the 2 women who are Dangarembga’s main characters are revealed as victimised by a culture, which they create an attempt to defy. Nyasha believes that one has got to consistently get up for her beliefs and says that one has got to have conviction to not be an underdog (Dangarembga 1988: 117). The young woman believes that as an underdog, one would be trapped, as “they” would control everything she did. Her argument is that if one allowed herself to be the underdog it might

eventually seem acceptable. This translates into the very fact that although upholding cultural belief is important, to try to do so in spite of one's own values are often detrimental to one's character. Lucia, the younger sister to Tambu's mother, Mainini, involves the homestead to assist out when her sister falls sick. Initially she is depicted as uneducated and quite primitive in her demeanour towards others and intrinsically her input in family discussions is usually dismissed. However, Tambu reveals that the men never realised that Lucia was a serious person and that her laughter and temper were hearty and quick yet never superficial (Dangarambga 1988:153). Lucia is in a position to talk up against men who put women down and she or he rallies the ladies within the novel to face up for themselves. For instance, when she decides to go away the homestead, she invites Mainini along as she is conscious of her sister's suffering. In *Woman at Point Zero*, it is cultural expectation again that hampers the main character, Firdaus, from achieving high levels of power and education. She ends up sentenced to death for killing a pimp, yet despite the gruesomeness of this act, it's the one through which she finds her inner strength and power. She grows up a neglected child and is later forced to marry a sickly old man whom she detests. This is an example of how the cultural practice of marrying young women off is manifested.

Firdaus's uncle realises that they can't afford to keep her, thus convinces her that marriage to an upscale old man is Firdaus's only option. Against her will she obeys this, as she is aware that acquiescence is predicted of her, not only by her immediate family but by the community at large. In *Woman at Point Zero*, Nawal el Saadawi sought to reveal the challenges women face culturally. In her novel, the role of girls as social tools for men is depicted within the way Firdaus is persistently made to figure as a prostitute in order that the male pimps she answers to, get rich. In her bid for freedom she eventually opts to become a high-class prostitute who chooses her clients; however, during this way she remains seen as a woman of lowly status. Firdaus takes the reader through her turbulent childhood: the abuse that herself and her mother experience at the hands of her father, molestation by her uncle and therefore the taunting she receives throughout her life at the hands of men. For instance, she says that "my uncle would cuddle to me after a touch while, and cautiously lift the eiderdown under which I lay. Then his lips would touch my face..." (El Saadawi 1983: 22). In reference to her initial acceptance to marry Sheikh Mahmoud, the rich old man, she says, "a virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty was perfect obedience... One day he hit me with an important stick until the blood ran from my nose and ears" (El Saadawi 1983: 43). Firdaus at this point chooses to reject both households and to undertake and make something of her life; however, she comes face to face with the evil and violent world of pimping and prostitution. In African traditional practice, to consult diviners when one believes oneself to be bewitched is common practice. Dow's novel, *Far and Beyond* is about Mara, a mother who buries two of her sons in their early twenties and although the doctor whom they consulted tells her they died of AIDS, she believes it is related to witchcraft. Mara therefore consults a diviner who then blames a lover of hers for her son's death. A differing approach is depicted in terms of a generational gap as Mara's remaining Children, Mosa and Stan, disagree

with their mother and refuse to believe that their brothers died thanks to witchcraft. The protagonist, Mosa, in *Far and Beyon'* and her brother Stan question the normal way of life in their community which their mother, Mara, embraces. A review by Richards (2002) compares the 2 youngsters to their mother, a member of another generation; where the mother seems stuck in an old culture and her children realise that times have changed. **The author poses two questions:** . to what extent do culturally accepted practices threaten the survival of the people that hold them dear and a couple of . how can people integrate new ideas into the rich traditions they need inherited from their family. If culture is to complement the lives of members of a community, then the author argues for the mixing of old and new traditions. Mosa, in *Far and Beyon'*, unlike her mother Mara who is depicted as a stickler for tradition, is portrayed as a confident young African woman who questions oppressive cultures. Mosa is a strong, intelligent and self-determined woman who challenges abuse by her schoolteachers. At the top of the novel, ironically, it's a young man, her brother, who commends her as he says, "Without you, Mosa, I don't think anybody of us would have survived" (Dow 2000: 196). Stan reminisces on how her mother went to rebuke Mosa by saying that a girl was not supposed to climb trees. This, Mosa's mother mentioned as "boy habits" and although she taunts Mosa about her boy habits, the lass doesn't listen and as a result avoids socialization from an early age (Dow 2000:194). At one stage Mosa comes into contact with a lawyer she seeks so as to seek out out how a lover can receive support payment and she or he is surprised at how young the lady is. In her wisdom, however, she already believes that the lady attorney is knowledgeable even though she may be a woman. Mosa further wonders at the challenges these women could also be facing as young female professionals. She is aware that in her culture, wisdom is believed to dwell the heads of very old men who have tons of experience in life. It is children, Mosa and Stan, disagree with their mother and refuse to believe that their brothers died thanks to witchcraft. The protagonist, Mosa, in *Far and Beyon'* and her brother Stan question the normal way of life in their community which their mother, Mara, embraces. A review by Richards (2002) compares the 2 youngsters to their mother, a member of another generation; where the mother seems stuck in an old culture and her children realise that times have changed. The author poses two questions: 1. to what extent do culturally accepted practices threaten the survival of the people that hold them dear and a couple of . how can people integrate new ideas into the rich traditions they need inherited from their family. If culture is to complement the lives of members of a community, then the author argues for the mixing of old and new traditions. Mosa, in *Far and Beyon'*, unlike her mother Mara who is depicted as a stickler for tradition, is portrayed as a confident young African woman who questions oppressive cultures. Mosa is a strong, intelligent and self-determined woman who challenges abuse by her schoolteachers. At the top of the novel, ironically, it's a young man, her brother, who commends her as he says, "Without you, Mosa, I don't think anybody of us would have survived" (Dow 2000: 196). Stan reminisces on how her mother went to rebuke Mosa by saying that a girl was not supposed to climb trees. This, Mosa's mother mentioned as "boy habits" and although she taunts Mosa about her boy habits, the lass doesn't listen

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this ideology that convinces Mosa that although the young lawyers were bright, they might need to undergo tons so as to form themselves heard. Unlike her peers, Mosa works hard at college and believes in herself and during this way she is in a position to confront to abusive teachers and to rally other girls to resist such abuse. Dow gives Mosa the character of 1 who has the power to face up against unfair cultural practices. for instance , Mosa learns from the feminine lawyer that being a beginner and a female she has no clout (Dow 2000:174). The lawyer refers to their situation as women professionals who aren't listened to. In response, Mosa wisely suggests that the lawyer should start questioning the status quo; she says that the lawyer should start questioning the way things are which maybe things don't need to be the way they're . She further suggests that the lawyer may need a defeatist attitude and therefore the lawyer is surprised that this might be coming from a nineteen-year-old (Dow 2000: 175). Through conversations with her brother, Stan, Mosa's character is shown to rebel against any cultural practice that she deems belittles women. For example, in one exchange she tells him why she is upset when Stan reminds her that she promised to respect other people's ways if they don't hurt her. To this, Mosa responds: Exactly my point, Stan. This harms me. i'm a lady and that i was embarrassed by the hoof ceremony (a traditional ceremony at weddings). ...The point is from start to end the wedding ceremony was about the degrading of girls . It was sanctioned humiliation. Women were portrayed as mere vessels to be used by men....Is it fair for the entire society to objectify me all the time? Is it fair that cows are paid to my father in exchange for my labour, both productive and reproductive? (Dow 2000: 152) In these questions, it's evident that Mosa may be a girl representative of these seeking to question the established order in terms of culture. Culture in and of itself may be a part of its people; nevertheless, if such culture renders members of a society as lesser people then it's necessary that the said culture be found wanting and be reviewed.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEPICTION of girls IN reference to EDUCATION

This chapter focuses on the depiction of women in relation to education. The researcher draws from the literature review that for an extended time, education was afforded sons over their female siblings in accordance with tradition. Subsequently, more and more

African males have received tertiary education as opposed to their female counterparts. The expectation is that after their acquisition of formal education, the males would then educate younger siblings or children of their siblings. Stratton (1994: 8) observes that the sex role distinction common to several African societies supports the notion that Western education was a barrier to a woman's role as wife and mother and thereby an impediment to her status traditionally. Peterson (1994) believes that lack of education hinders the progress of women and divulges that in *Nervous Conditions*, for example, the protagonist, Tambu, yearns for education so as to escape poverty and subsistence farming. For a long time she aspires to be like her educated aunt Maiguru; however, she eventually realises that the education her aunt acquired fails to free her. Maiguru is very educated yet she does not participate actively in house-hold decision-making. Nnu Ego within the *Joys of Motherhood* adheres to tradition as she first strives to teach her sons with the hope that the daughters will get older, marry and eventually be fended for by their husbands. Petersen (1994: 352) observes that educating a son fills high expectations, whereas the education of a daughter doesn't. This is often the rationale, Emecheta 1979: 146) writes that Nnaife, who is Nnu Ego's husband, reckons that "through his taking the plunge his sons Oshia and Adim would be educated. So also would be his brother's three sons reception in Ibuza..." Nnaife's sacrifice to figure under demeaning circumstances for the benefit of the boys' education illustrates the supposed importance of teaching boys instead of girls. Nnu Ego recognises the need for a basic education for her daughters. She says "Everybody accuses me of creating money all the time...I will spend the I even have in giving my girls an honest start in life...Nnaife isn't getting to send them away to any husband before they are ready" (Emecheta 1979: 168). As she makes money through petty trading, she determines that not only her sons should benefit from this endeavour in terms of education, but that her daughters should too. It's however, apparent that both Nnu Ego and her husband subscribe the notion of teaching boys before girls as Nnu Ego believes the women need basic literacy skills as against the boys who are meant to be sent abroad to acquire a profession. Nnu Ego's son, Oshia (p180) says in conversation together with his sister, Kehinde "You know the difficulty with you, Kehinde, you're too clever for your age and too impulsive. you've got not stayed long in class. If you had, then, you'd know that you simply aren't allowed to try to do exactly as you wish." Richards (2002: 1) examines the issues that pregnant schoolgirls in Dow's *Far and Beyond* need to affect. Sometimes these students are forbidden to continue with school, and if allowed back, they're "often preyed upon by the very school masters who should be encouraging them to review." In *Far and Beyond*, Mosa and fellow girl-students are constantly sexually harassed by male teachers. This goes unnoticed until the women take it upon themselves to show it. They effectively reveal what goes on at their school through drama, poetry and song at a prize-giving ceremony where the Minister of Education is guest speaker. Richards (ibid) argues that Mosa cannot change the planet in one novel; however, she does find how to affect sexual assault and to continue together with her [along with her]> together with her schooling and with her life. The author reflects that many young girls and women will

need to take many such steps to freedom which the novel does its share of encouraging them along their way and to point out the lads who care, how they can also help.

Some of the women in the primary texts are portrayed as educated. For example, Aissatou and Ramatoulaye in *So Long a Letter* hold tertiary qualifications. Stratton (1994: 146) states that one of the ideological functions of *So Long a Letter*, is to “foreground women’s education as an issue of contemporary African society and to refute the orthodoxies of male literary representation.” Other women are depicted as realising the necessity to accumulate an education, for instance , Tambu, Nyasha and Lucia in *Nervous Conditions*. In these two instances it's apparent that education may be a necessary facet of life and freedom. For example, Aissatou uses education to move out of a repressive situation. The topic of education and gender is an important facet of *Nervous Conditions* and education is used as a source of power by male characters in the novel. Although Tambu, the most character, has great aspirations for education, preference is given to her brother, Nhamo, to continue with primary and secondary schooling. Tambu strives to continue with her education by raising money from growing crops for sale. It is, however, their uncle Babamukuru who helps the family in such dire times as he first of all takes Nhamo to live together with his family and to attend mission school; tradition thus is shown in positive light. Nhamo’s death affords Tambu the chance to be taken to the mission to review . it's the selection of who is afforded the chance to relocate to their uncle’s place and access to the Mission school first that sets the 2 siblings apart in terms of gender. A general lack of educational opportunities for ladies in Africa is reflected within the male attitudes towards females in *Nervous Conditions*. for instance , Babamukuru, Tambu’s father and Nhamo all tend to encourage decisions on educating the boy as against the girl, as they subscribe the notion that education for ladies isn't important. Even so, women in the novel such as Maiguru, Tambu, Nyasha and Lucia do attain an education and it is through their depiction in these terms that one recognises the importance of education.

Tambu looks up to her aunt Maiguru, Babamukuru’s wife, who was educated in England alongside her husband and who holds a Master’s degree. The lass aspires to become like her aunt; however, she realises that although her aunt is educated, she does not exercise any control over their household decisions. Maiguru subscribes to culture naively then leaves decision-making on family issues to her husband. She is depicted as very demure and submissive towards Babamukuru. Lucia, who has been overlooked by other members of her family, especially the males, regains her voice when she returns to high school . She is in a position to talk for her oppressed female sister, Tambu’s mother, who has resigned herself to accepting the established order . Lucia is portrayed as a character in development, through whom we see a positive change which will be attributed not only to attaining an education but also to realising the necessity for change. it's at this time that she persistently encourages members of her family that decisions need to be received through dialogue and not by Babamukuru or his younger brother, Tambu’s father, making decisions for the entire family. Maiguru, Tambu and Nyasha have the power to question the status quo; however, while Tambu

and Nyasha do, Maiguru decides to evolve to tradition and to relinquish power to her husband. It's the 2 young women who take a path to self-discovery and who are depicted at the end, like Lucia, to have grown in character. Maiguru evidently represents the African woman who submits to cultural oppression as she considers it knowing do so or is unable to place up any resistance. Tambu equates a scarcity of education to poverty and misery and harbours an ambition to overcome her current circumstance of strife, unlike her mother who is depicted as resigned to her fate. The difference in the depiction of the two is that one uses education to free herself whilst the other resigns herself to suffer as a black African woman. Veit-Wild (2005) states that the portrayal of the five different women allows the author to analyse her central concern: the way to avoid the standard entrapment of girls, to return to a real sort of emancipation yet at an equivalent time avoid self-destruction.

Dangarembga's main character, Tambu, believes that the attainment of education will free her from dirt, which is how she refers to her home. Consistent with Veit-Wild (2005) this illustrates a woman's inner conflict, as throughout the novel, education is claimed to be synonymous with escaping from dirt. Tambu says in reference to furthering her education at Sacred Heart School, "I was to take another step upwards in the direction of my freedom. Another step away from the flies, the smells, the fields and therefore the rags, from stomachs which were seldom full, from dirt and disease..." (Dangarembga 1988:183). Veit-Wild (ibid) states that it's in Tambu's pursuit for the sort of education she gains, ironically, that she notices the "antiseptic sterility of the planet without dirt" and senses its falseness and its artificiality. In this way, Tambu gains her first presentiment of the conflicts she is to face on her journey to education in terms of her identity. In *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus is shipped to the town to measure together with her uncle, and to enrol for primary schooling. Although she excels, her uncle refuses her a chance for higher education on the idea that she cannot attend an area where she is going to be side by side with men. It's with this reasoning that Firdaus is ultimately forced to forfeit education and get married off to an old sheikh who abuses her physically and emotionally. Firdaus is thus resigned to finish formal education despite her proven intelligence. During this depiction of Firdaus, the importance of education is again shrouded by the normal belief that a lady only requires basic literacy skills which the tools that equip her for marriage and motherhood are far more important. Firdaus's lack of education renders her a victim of a distorted practice that frowns upon women's need for an education alongside their male counterparts. She is therefore resigned to the fate of prostitution for subsistence and it's this trade that contributes to her ultimate death sentence. Education in Firdaus's community is predominantly seen as a men's domain. During a conversation that she has together with her uncle she tells him that she would like to travel to high school at El Azhar like him, whereupon he immediately informs her that the varsity is merely for males. In reflection, Firdaus says that El Azhar was an awesome world peopled by men which her uncle was one among them, a person (El Saadawi 1983: 21). Although Firdaus loved

school, it had been already predetermined by her gender and culture that she was destined for a position beneath that of her uncle. As a male, her uncle was afforded an education whilst she lost all opportunity for the empowerment and freedom that it brings. Firdaus says, "Sometimes I imagined that i might become a doctor, or an engineer, or a lawyer, or a judge...I kept imagining myself as a great leader or head of state. I knew that ladies did not become heads of state..." (El Saadawi 1983: 25). This inequality in terms of a chance for education renders Firdaus disempowered. In the Joys of Motherhood, Nnu Ego is depicted as eager to attain status in her community by subscribing to cultural practices that frown upon higher education for women . According to Newell (1997) quoting Chukuwuma, Buchi Emecheta's heroines adopt a positive view in crisis and don't succumb to self-pity. Brown (1981) states that Emecheta's is intense and direct in her description of sexual inequality and female dependency in prose. Generally, the women in the novel are primarily mothers and wives who adhere to cultural expectations like the education of boys over girls. Nnu Ego, for example, seeks to educate her sons at the expense of the daughters whom it's hoped will eventually marry . Her sons don't however end up as she had expected. they're educated abroad, marry women they meet there and don't return home to require on their culturally expected roles until their mother's death. As a result, the education Nnu Ego's sons received didn't benefit their family needless to say . Her daughters, whom it had been thought, would desert their own home to become members of the families they married into, ironically save Nnu Ego at her time of need. So Long a Letter presents three women who are educated, are aware of their social circumstances and as a result have the capacity to react to their situations.

Ramatoulaye, a teacher, and her friend, Aissatou, an interpreter, are highly educated women who, even so, fall victim to traditional custom; however, the 2 women answer the victimization differently. Whilst Ramatoulaye seems resigned to get over it and save face within her community, Aissatou chooses to further her education and to relocate to a different country. Ba depicts Daba, Ramatoulaye's daughter, as a more independent-minded and educated girl . At just one occasion Daba pleads together with her mother to divorce her father after he takes the young girl's friend, Binetou, as a second wife. She says: "Break with him mother! Send this man away. He has respected neither you nor me. Do what Auntie Aissatou did; separate him...I can't see you fighting over a person with a woman my age" (Ba 1981: 39). Nevertheless, Ramatoulaye reacts differently to Aissatou as she chooses to stay with her polygamous husband so as not to be castigated by her community. Ba portrays Daba within the class of girls who are undoubtedly fearless and decisive in their approach to life; for instance , she gets married to a person who respects her and treats her as an equal. Both use their education to free their minds as Daba's mother had told her it might . Ramatoulaye states that "If your opinions are to hold weight, they must be supported knowledge backed by diplomas. A diploma isn't a myth. it's not everything, true, but it crowns knowledge..." (Ba 1981: 73). Ramatoulaye further describes Daba as someone who

reasons out everything and this depiction reflects a generation of thinking women who base their decisions on reason. Daba is depicted as an independent-minded and self-willed young woman representative of a replacement wave of African women. She doesn't shun her culture but approaches it with sense and reason. It's from such an outline that Ba juxtaposes the positive attitudes of a number of the feminine characters to the resigned negative attitudes of those that prefer to blame instead of to act. Ramatoulaye, although knowledgeable

woman, chooses to offer this aspect of her life little attention and to specialise in her status as wife and mother. There is a similarity between Daba in *Goodbye a Letter* and Mosa in *Far and Beyond*, therein both girls are young women, looking forward to personal independence that stems from the attainment of education. They question oppressive cultural practices as opposed to conforming to them so as to be recognised as adhering to societal expectations. Both bravely seek a change for the betterment of the woman's cause culturally and recognise education as a pathway to overcoming oppression. In *Far and Beyond*, Mosa differs together with her mother on most societal practices: for instance her mother, Mara, believes it's witchcraft that killed her two older sons whilst Mosa believes they died of AIDS. Richards (2005) during a review of the novel states that *Far and Beyond* is a tale of how education and a changing world can drive a wedge of confusion between a mother and her children. The researcher believes this to be a case of a special generation hence different approaches to a drag .

CHAPTER-5

Themes of African literature

Literary works of the African continent. African literature consists of a body of labor in several languages and various genres, starting from oral literature to literature written in colonial languages (French, Portuguese, and English).

See also African languages; South African literature.

Oral literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions, is usually employed to teach and entertain children. Oral histories, myths, and proverbs additionally serve to remind whole communities of their ancestors' heroic deeds, their past, and therefore the precedents for his or her customs and traditions. Essential to oral literature may be a concern for presentation and oratory. Folktale tellers use call-response techniques. A griot (praise singer) will accompany a narrative with music.

Some of the primary African writings to realize attention within the West were the poignant slave narratives, like *The Interesting Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789), which described vividly the horrors of slavery and therefore the slave traffic. As Africans became literate in their own languages, they often reacted against colonial repression in their writings. Others looked to their own past for subjects. Thomas Mofolo, for instance, wrote *Chaka* (tr. 1931), about the famous Zulu leader, in Susuto.

Since the first 19th cent. Writers from western Africa have used newspapers to air their views. Several founded newspapers that served as vehicles for expressing nascent nationalist feelings. French-speaking Africans in France, led by Lépold Senghor, were active within the *négritude* movement from the 1930s, along side Léon Damas and Aimé Césaire, French speakers from French Guiana and Martinique. Their poetry not only denounced colonialism, it proudly asserted the validity of the cultures that the colonials had tried to crush.

After war II, as Africans began demanding their independence, more African writers were published. Such writers as, in western Africa, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ousmane Sembène, Kofi Awoonor, Agostinho Neto, Tchicaya u tam'si, Camara Laye, Mongo Beti, Ben Okri, and Ferdinand Oyono and, in eastern Africa, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Okot p'Bitek, and Jacques Rabmananjara produced poetry, short stories, novels, essays, and plays. All were writing in European languages, and sometimes they shared an equivalent themes: the clash between indigenous and colonial cultures, condemnation of European subjugation, pride within the African past, and hope for the continent's independent future.

In South Africa , the horrors of apartheid have, until this , dominated the literature. Es'kia Mphahlele, Gordimer , Bessie Head, Dennis Brutus, J. M. Coetzee, and Miriam Tlali all reflect in varying degrees in their writings the experience of living during a racially segregated society.

Much of up to date African literature reveals disillusionment and dissent with current events. For instance , V. Y. Mudimbe in *Before the Birth of the Moon* (1989) explores a doomed romance played out within a society riddled by deceit and corruption. The Zimbabwean novelist and poet Chenjerai Hove (1956?2015), wrote vividly in English and his native Shona of the hardships experienced during the struggle against British colonial rule, and later of the hopes and disappointments of life under the rule of Robert Mugabe. In Kenya Ngugi wa Thiong'o was jailed shortly after he produced a play, in Kikuyu, which was perceived as highly critical of the country's government. Apparently, what seemed most offensive about the drama was the utilization of songs to stress its messages.

The weaving of music into the Kenyan's play points out another characteristic of African literature. Many writers incorporate other arts into their work and sometimes weave oral conventions into their writing. P'Bitek structured *Song of Lowino* (1966) as an Acholi poem; Achebe's characters pepper their speech with proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Others, like Senegalese novelist Ousmane Sembene, have moved into films to require their message to people that cannot read.

Chapter 6

Summary & conclusion

Summary

Achebe's fiction, poetry and essays answer a series of critical periods in Nigerian history since 1890 – the introduction and imposition of European culture and law in Eastern Nigeria; the unforeseen consequences of the attempt by Igbos to adapt that culture and its technology to their own needs and to stay 'the better of both worlds'; the amount just preceding Independence; the top of the primary Republic; the civil war; the series of military coups and therefore the struggle to know and resist dictatorship. Throughout all his works, his continuing concern has been 'the trouble with Nigeria'. His point of departure as a writer was the fiction of Joyce Cary who also sought to show 'the trouble with Nigeria'. In confronting Cary and therefore the tradition he belonged to, Achebe was aware that he was confronting a culture, a system of values, a posh of power-relations which produced and was produced by colonialism. Drawing upon the model of his own Igbo political and cultural system and its oral traditions, Achebe reconstructed an image and narrative of Africa and Africans caught especially moments of history. He also recreated the shape and technique of the novel 'to carry the complete weight of [his] African experience' with particular reference to the relation between author, subject and reader. For Cary, historical change was by definition a consequence of the encounter with Africa. Achebe disagrees with the definition, but in many of his works he does focus his attention on the interaction between Europeans and Africans and/or their cultures.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to look at young people's literature and women African writers, written by Africans for African with particular regard to Kenya. To be ready to tackle this subject effectively, we've had to look at the role of oral literature within the pre-colonial times, giving relevant examples. Similarly, we've had to look at the role of colonial and post-colonial literature.

From the overall body of our study, the subsequent factors have emerged. Oral literature as a part of folklore, played a crucial role in children and young people's literature within the pre-colonial period. Today it might appear that its function of image formation of the society has been reduced by the varied changes which have taken place. And to possess the consequences of oral literature felt within the present Kenya; it must be recorded from the varied ethnic groups in order that it are often made available to youths in schools.

The colonialists introduced written literature into Kenya largely to further their aesthetic and cultural influences and values generally and also to instruct the African within the more seemingly refined ways in which had evolved in their own country. The needs could be noble, but within the end of the day, they were detrimental to the indigenous people, therein they destroyed much that had been meaningful to them and which was a part of their cultural values. Needless to mention, it also happened that the European image projected through their literature took precedent over that of the African, which came to be considered inferior, and eventually came to be identified with all that was primitive and backward.

The post independent period is 'twilight'. A number of the African writers for youngsters and children have made positive attempts to portray the African image in their literary works with an outsized measure of success. Others have written about the past in an endeavour to ascertain literature for youngsters and children on reflection. Yet others have set themselves a task of writing for the African youth of the longer term. A number of the works are supported the theme that Africans must find their correct image, identity; (consistence with the overall and popular feelings of post-independence period).

Furthermore many African writers have written books for youngsters and children protesting against European Literature which gave the incorrect image and conception of the African world. A number of them have also produced literature whose themes, topics and plots embrace contemporary issues and development in both urban and rural

areas. They need successfully used this suggests to form the general public conscious of the social evils which have falsified the African image, and also revealed the results of the changes of which the African is but a victim. Nonetheless, the writers have stipulated in clear terms that the Africans, finding themselves in these situations, must examine themselves and their society and make genuine attempts at formulating a cure to a number of these ills. It's useless to still point accusing fingers at the colonialists. The traumatic period is now history, and must be buried as a stinking corpse from whose ashes and ruins new hopes for the longer term should be built:

.....the era when Africa's face is not any longer just towards the white world, but towards itself; when the hatred could also be a hatred not of Europe, except for other Africans, for what they are doing or don't do, or what they are doing to every other. It's going to be a reject on of certain things which have taken root in African society and not things which may be shrugged off as being imported by the colonial power. The hope could also be a specially African agony....¹

The desire to localise children and young people's literature evident an urgent necessity, but the means to understand this goal is fraught with difficulties. Nevertheless, it's an area during which the Ministry of Education can play an excellent part in making this desire into a reality. The Ministry could assist by fixing a search centre for local literature, with researchers whose main job would be to seek out the requirements of the faculties within the country and check out to possess or to organize suitable material to bridge the gap.

The participation and contribution of curriculum development centre, Kenya Institute of Education would increase the usefulness of such a project.

It is also important that the govt should encourage local publishers and writers to supply more books with local and familiar themes which might convince be more appropriate to the requirements of the people. There should be more literature within the various national languages which are spoken by the varied Kenya nationals. This is able to be necessary if the government's aim of eradicating illiteracy has got to succeed.

While it's a incontrovertible fact that Kiswahili is spoken by an honest cross section of the population, there are many of us in Kenya today who through no faults of their own can hardly speak a word of Kiswahili. Again, for the authentic Kenyan cultural heritage of her many ethnic groups to be preserved for the longer term generation, it's to be written in those languages of an equivalent people that have nurtured and developed it, passing its many facets down from one generation to the opposite .

To neglect the local languages of the varied Kenyan nationals is actually like ignoring and causing physical harm to those very people. As has already been said elsewhere during this book, a language may be a carrier of values and a few of those values are in fact valuable heritage which must be preserved for posterity. The assembly of more literature for youngsters in these indigenous languages must therefore be encouraged. Nonetheless, goodbye because the publishers of books for youngsters still be overseas based, controlled by long invincible strings; not much meaningful change are often expected within the near future.

The two national universities, because the highest seats of learning must take a lead in developing local literature. They ought to strengthen and expand the literature department quite has been done thus far , in order that they become a source of literature for the state . they ought to aim at educating the minds of the state . an equivalent goes for the teacher training colleges. It might even be desirable for the Ministry of Education to determine a literary association. The association would have many aims and objectives, but one such aim would be to further and broaden the understanding and development of literature for the state . It could do much through encouraging young and up-coming writers and inspiring others to record oral literature of the varied ethnic groups, and even do far more by supporting and promoting adult literacy campaign.

Children in East Africa or in Kenya today are growing up during a world different from that into which their parents grew up. Intrinsically they're not expected to be contented with the type of fabric their parents read and topics which satisfied the requirements of the older generation. There's much advancement round the children even within the rural areas. Changes that are inevitable are apparent everywhere in their homes and at college also . We therefore mention local literature bearing in mind the very fact that at an equivalent time these children must study other things outside their own immediate environment. They need to read literature from other lands that might widen their horizon. By advocating localisation of literature, we are merely stressing the necessity , first to market local literature, ranging from known and gradually getting into the unknown. We should always aim at giving an opportunity to both local and therefore the non-local literature to exist side by side without allowing foreign children and youth's literature to dominate the literary market as is that the case today. Again we advocate localisation of youngsters and youth's literature bearing in mind that the literature will need to be produced taking under consideration the new changes since literature like everything else isn't static. Now is clear within the folk tales. We not have people battering commodities but we've them buying and selling and using money.

In Pamela Kola's East African Why Stories, the hare takes his mother's body to the shops and sells it for money. His friend the lion follows his example and gets into trouble when he's arrested for trying to sell a body. So while we advocate localisation of literature, we also uphold the importance of modifying the literature to suit the conditions and changes that became a part of our existence in modern Kenya.

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