# THE WOMAN'S VULNERABILITY AND CHOICES IN SELECTED WORKS OF OUSMANE SEMBÈNE

**Ibiene Evelyn Iboroma**
University of Port Harcourt

**Abstract**

The African woman has been represented as one that has an unchanging vulnerability. Drawing on Naila Kabeer's definition of vulnerability, and locating our study within the framework of radical feminism, this paper demonstrates that though the African woman may appear weak and vulnerable, she has strength of character. The paper recommends that this misrepresentation be interrogated so that African women can contribute meaningfully to the development processes of their communities.

## Introduction

A growing body of research argues that early male-authored novels represent the African woman as one that has an unchanging vulnerability. She is seen as one who is inescapably bound to the performance of her patriarchal defined roles of wifehood and motherhood. She is incapable of making choices when dissatisfaction sets in. Gloria Chukukere for instance posits that "the ideal female created by male writers in fiction often acts within the framework of her traditional roles as wife and mother… the respect and love which a woman earns is relative to the degree of her adaptations to these roles" (7). Siendu Konate adds that "women are viewed as objects in terms of motherhood and wifehood. In clear words, while destroying the civilized/savage or colonizer/colonized hierarchy some male writers have tended to build another one: male/female or subject/object" (2). Iniobong Uko admits that the woman is recreated as an "unthinking, uncritical and a helpless being" (83) walking behind her husband. G. Sankar and T. Rajeshkannan aver that "women have been represented as the "weaker sex or the "second sex" and stereotyped with negative qualities such as sensitive, emotional, fragile, indecisive, submissive etc." (196). It is against this backdrop argues Ohale Christine that "the epochal explosion of African female writers unto the world stage has been received with much excitement because they have dared to challenge the status quo of male domination by redirecting the course of female character in the African novel" (2). Toeing this line of argument, Konate asserts that

> female writing emerged out of the need for women to speak up for themselves, to have a voice, to counteract the idealization and romanticization of the African woman in male-authored works in African literature…their works are intent on subverting the patriarchal and socio-cultural constructs that reduce the African woman to motherhood and wifehood (8)

Female writers such as Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Mariama Bâ, Aminata Sow Fall, Nawal el Saadawi, Bessie Head and Ifeoma Okoye begin to oppose this patriarchal flow of discourse in their works. They "are determined to entrench new feministic sensibilities in the African novel by casting the African female character in a new light and in ways hitherto unknown" (Ohale 2). They are according to Omolola Ladele "compelled to negotiate new sites in which *they* articulate more viable and acceptable self-images" (70). This marks a significant shift from the status quo. However, female writers are not alone in this struggle. Early African male novelists such as Ousmane Sembène, Henri Lopes, Ayi Kwei Armah and Ngugi wa Thiong'O also join the crusade. Ousmane Sembène is "one of the earliest African male novelists to break free from the danger of offering his audience only 'heroic' male protagonists" (Chukukere 81) and it is some of his works that this paper wishes to isolate for discussion.

The nub of this study is to explore the woman's vulnerability and choices in marriage relationships in some of Sembène's works namely *L'Harmattan* , *Véhi Ciosane* and *Voltaïque.* The paper adopts Naila Kabeer's definition of vulnerability in the analysis of the selected texts and also makes an attempt to interpret the choices the women characters make through the theoretical lens of radical feminism. Kabeer defines vulnerability as "… a dynamic, multidimensional concept that relates to the choices that people can exercise and the capabilities they can draw on in the face of shocks and stresses" (2).

**Radical Feminism:**

Central to the philosophy of radical feminism argues Rose Acholonu "is the quest for a complete overthrow of patriarchy and all it stands for – male supremacy and female subjugation" (155). This coheres with Ifeoma Onyemelukwe's submission that "radical feminism like other species of feminism advocates for women liberation from all forms of oppression and exploitation in a patriarchy" (269). Biodun Jeyifo's definition of "radical" throws more light on this brand of feminism. To him "…to be radical is to be predisposed to considerable departure from what is usual or traditional, it is to desire to work for extreme or drastic changes in existing views, habits, conditions and institutions" (qtd in Opara 69). Taken together, radical feminism is a radical dismantling of patriarchal structures that supervise the oppression and the dehumanization of the woman. The extent to which the women characters' actions fall into this framework will be delineated as the study progresses.

This paper is divided into two parts. The first examines female characters who are victims of arranged marriage and betrayal while the second explores female characters who are victims of polygamy and domestic violence.

Here, the major catalysts to the female search for options are arranged marriage and betrayal. The characters under consideration are Yacine in "Souleymane", Nafi in "Lettres de France" both in *Voltaïque* and Ngone wa Thiandum in *Véhi Ciosane.* Yacine's fictional universe is a Muslim one where arranged marriage is generally accepted. Consequently, her father gives her out to an old married man, Souleymane, as his fourth wife. She raises no objection to it. However, her agitations begin when Souleymane is unable to meet her sexual demands. " Des nuits entières, ne voyant rien venir, Yacine gardait les yeux ouverts" (147). (Yacine's eyes were wide opened for

several nights not seeing anything coming) She intimates her father about this, and also informs him of the possibility of her quitting the marriage if the situation does not change for the better. She says: "pere…je veux revenir à la maison. C'est que …j'ai peur de ne plus pouvoir m'entrendre avec mon mari" (148). (Father…I would like to come back home…I'm afraid I no longer get on well with my husband) But her father, for fear of reimbursing the bride price, pleads with her to endure. Hear him: "Souviens-toi ma fille, Soulaymane a énormément fait des dépenses, et sit tu le quittait sans raison – je veux dire sans raison valuable – il faudrait rembourser…J'en suis incapable" ( 148). (Remember my daughter, Souleymane spent lavishly on you and if you leave him without any reason – I mean without a good reason, I would reimburse…I cannot afford that.) Yacine not willing to entrust her self-fulfilment to the patriarchal and the religious dictates of her milieu, takes a radical step in seeking sexual pleasure elsewhere. She commits adultery with her husband's nephew and becomes pregnant for him.

Souleymane, aware of his wife's adulterous conduct refuses to give the child a name during the naming ceremony. He declares: "Je ne baptiserai un enfant qui n'est pas le mien" (151). ( I would not name a child who is not mine.) Displeased with her husband's conduct, Yacine leaves for her father's house and refuses to go back when the elders prevail on her to do so. Consequent upon this, she is asked to refund the dowry as custom demands. Not only that, she is also asked to give the baby to Souleymane. At this juncture, she breaks the silence and brazens things out with the elders. She bursts out to the surprise of everybody: "Je ne rien à te rembouser…si vous voulez et vous trouvez juste… je ne serai d'accord qu' à condition que Souleymane me rende ma virginité'' (54). I'm not refunding anything to you… if this is what you consider right… I'll accept it on the condition that Souleyman restores my virginity). Her ingenuity settles the contoversy in her favour.

Yacine, a rural illiterate girl, strides over her state of vulnerability and claims voice in a milieu where the female gender is muted and "claiming voice" according to Konate "is evocative of the will to power, the power to represent oneself rather than being represented by a patriarchal … biased voice…(2). She refuses to be presented by a patriarchal biased voice. Yacine's bravery calls to mind I.N.C. Aniebo's Janet's thesis in *The Journey Within*:

> Marriage is a place for doing battle for supremacy. Unless you decide to be the defeated, you do battle every day, every hour. Sometimes you lose, sometimes you win… Do not accept the position of a loser before you have lost… (174)

It also resonates with Flora Nwapa's argument in *Women are Different* that

> there are different ways of living one's life fully and fruitfully… women have options. Their lives cannot be ruined because of a bad marriage. They have a choice, a choice to marry and have children, a choice to marry or divorce their husbands. Marriage is not THE only way (188-189)

Yacine, desirous to live her life fully, flouts the conventions of her milieu and elects to toe the path of personal agency.

Nafi like Yacine is also a victim of arranged marriage. She is parceled to France to meet Demba, a seventy-three year old man, as husband. The appearance of this man is

so repulsive to her that she confesses to her friend: "…Je le deteste au point que je hais mon corps… sa mort serait une déliverance pour moi (83). (I detest him to the point of hating my body…his death will be a deliverance for me.) Yet, when her friend advises her to divorce him she refuses saying: "Je sais que je suis mariée à la mode musulmane…"(90). (I know that I am married according to the Muslim rites) Thus, bound by religion, Nafi's consciousness slows down to adjust itself to the dictates of her religion to the point of having a baby for him. However, as the deplorable living condition palls on her, she elects to quit the marriage. She is resolved: "Non, personne ne peut prendre la décision à ma place"(112). (No. No one would decide for me) She intimates her friend: "C'était décidé…J'avait fait mes bagages… J'en peux plus"(112). (I have decided…I have made my baggages. I can't have it any longer.) She informs her husband: "Demba, j'ai décidé, je rentre au pays" (112). ( Demba, I have decided to go back home.) She walks out of the marriage with her baby and after fifteen days, Demba dies. At his death, she also asserts her individuality by refusing to mourn him according to the Muslim rites. She blatantly tells the older women who want to force her into it: "Je ne prends pas le deuil"(115). ( I am not going to mourn). Thus, Nafi regains her identity by making a choice. Total submission to husband and silence are considered as virtues of womanhood in Ngone wa Thiandum's Muslim world. Accordingly, she demonstrates "fidélité attachment sans borne, soumission totale corps et âme afin que l'époux maître après Yallah intercède en sa faveur pour une place au paradis" (31). ( unquestionable fidelity, total submission of both spirit and body to her husband-master after Yallah so that he would intercede for her for a place in paradise) This confirms Uko's assertion that "at adulthood and in marriage, the woman is assumed to have been properly grounded in servitude, muteness, invisibility and dependence, with a natural acceptance of a corresponding male superiority and dominance (130). However, Ngone's husband, Guibril Guedj Diop, despite her acquiescence, betrays her in a most disgraceful manner. He commits incest with their daughter, Khar Madiagua, which results to pregnancy. Guibril Guedj Diop's conduct negates Teresa Njoku's view that "patriarchy sets up the father as an epitome of moral in all spheres" (282). This incestuous act jolts Ngone wa Thiandum into consciousness. She begins to question the constricted moral codes she has been indoctrinated into right from childhood. She wonders: "N'avait-elle pas été docile? Soumise? bonne épouse? n'avait elle pas surveillé de près la conduite de son mari? … Et maintenant que disent les tenants de la morale?" (49). (Was she not docile, submissive? Good wife? Did she not take her husband as a role model? Now, what would the custodians of the moral values say?) She knows she has been a good wife "because she naturally fits into the mould shaped for her by patriarchy" (Udumukwu, 3) without any struggle. She realises that "elle n'avait vécu que prisionnaire d'un ordre morale faussement mensonger" (49). (she was but a prisioner to a false moral order). She names the unborn child, White Genesis, on her initiative and commits suicide thereafter.

Ngone wa Thiandum's disappointment with her husband's stinking immorality directs her choice of death over life. This clearly shows that a woman can choose her fate when confronted with shocks in the performance of her wifely and motherly roles. Her suicide underscores Helen Cousin's stance that "suicide is often the only perceived escape from the suffering caused by submission to wifely norms" (105). Chukukere on her part argues that "by her suicide, Ngone refuses to accept the unwritten traditional law

that a woman must resign herself to her destiny. Her sacrifice is therefore a purgation which makes possible a bright future founded upon sound moral principles" (83).

In this section, women characters who are victims of polygamy and domestic/psychological violence are delineated. They are Noumbé in"Ses Trois Jours" in *Voltaique* and Ouhigoué in *L'Harmattan*. In Noumbé"s milieu, each wife according to Islam, has rotating rights of three days to have her husband to herself. Thus Noumbé, though very ill, makes all preparations to make her husband, Moustaphe, comfortable in her home for her legitimate three days. She prepares "un plat rare" (a delicacy) in order to "réssusciter les fastes d'antan, faire que son gosier garde le saveur du plats des lunes et des lunes et oublie la cuisine de ses autres épouses'' (45). (to revivify the good old days ; to ensure that his appetite will retain the taste of her food from moon to moon and to make him forget the food of the other wives.) This corroborates Carole Boyce Davies' argument that " the excesses of polygamy … include the man's prerogative to be catered for by several women, the fact that he usually has a *choice,* the rejection of women and the competition between them which his choices generate'' (563). Unfortunately, Moustaphe without prior notice elects to spend Noumbé's legitimate three days with his newest wife. She waits desperately all day wondering who "lui voler ses trois jours… lui laver ses heures de tête-à-tête" (51- 52) ( who has stolen her three days…depriving her the hours of tête-à-tête) with her husband. She is so obsessed with her husband's visit that "toute son entrain était nourri de cette joie: Moustaphe viendrait ce soir, affamé et serait à elle seule (52). ( her entire being is consumed with this joy : Moustaphe would come this evening, starved and she would have him to herself alone.) But, Moustaphe fails to turn up. " Elle se tourmentait, se posait des questions. Où est-il? …chez la première? Non, elle etait bien àgée…La deuxième…Donc, chez la quatrième? Dans ses réponses à elle, elle trouvait des plis d'incertitudes, de doutes" (55). (She was tormented, she began to ask herself some questions. Where is he?...with the first? No, she has become very old…The second…or with the Fourth? Attempting to find answers to these questions begin to build in her anxiety and doubts.) Disappointed, she begins to question the "thingification" of women by men to use Udumukwu's words. Hear her: "Pourquoi accepton-nous d'etre le jouet des hommes? ( why do we accept to be the plaything of men?) Felix Odonkor and Richard Bampoh-addo identify Sembene's voice in this question. They aver that "Noumbé is Sembene personified, i.e., a voice against injustice" (122). From this point, a new woman is being born. She moves from being vulnerable to regaining self. She begins to review her life and the life of other women in similar situations. Thoughts of divorce begin to run through her mind: " I'envie de sortie du cercle du polygamie achemina sa pensée…" (61). ( The desire to quit the polygamous circle ran through her mind.) However Noumbé unlike Bâ's Aissatou (*Une si longue lettre*), is unable to weather the storm. Rather, her feminist consciousness slows down to adjust to the dictates of religion and patriarchy. Helpless, she consoles herself: "Moustaphe viendra quand même". C'est sa dernière nuit à elle" (65). (Moustaphe may still come. This is my last night). Ikonne's observation about women in similar situations is in perspective: "…they suffer in silence with torment of their repressed dream of self-realization squeezing and splitting their psyches" (233). This also calls to mind Rose Acholonu's assertion that

> polygamy constitutes the pivot of women's subjugation in the African culture as it not only exposes them to serious forms of domestic violence and abuses but also subjects them to great psycho-mental torture and physical degradation ("Women in" 99).

Disenchanted, she decides to divorce him. Hear her : "…c'était fini avec Moustaphe, qu'elle divorçait" (65). (I'm through with Moustaphe, I would divorce him.) Moustaphe eventually comes to her on the third day. Her latent frustration erupts in a verbal attack when he asks for food. Looking at him disdainfully, she unleashes her her pent-up anger in the presence of his friend: "as-tu laissé quelque chose en me quittant ce matin?… Y-a-t-il quelque chose qui t'intèresse ici…? (69-70). (did you leave something for me when you left me this morning? Is there anything here which is of interest to you? ) She shrieks out in pain and breaks the two plates of food she had earlier prepared for him. What a torture! The breaking of the plates of food symbolizes her cutting her umbilical cord from polygamy. She is liberated from the shackles of patriarchy and religion. Meanwhile, Moustaphe is indifferent to the psychological violence he has subjected his wife to. He does not feel obliged to apologise or to show some sympathy with her. Rather, he contemptuously remarks: "regardez ce qu'elle a fait cette folle. Un jour sa jalousie l' entranglera. Je ne suis pas venu le voir…deux jours seulement, elle crie comme un veau" (71). (Imagine what she did, this fool. Her jealousy would kill her one day. I didn't come to see her for only two days, she screams like a calf.) Moustaphe's unsympathetic response to his wife's agony gives credence to Sankar and Rajeshkannan's observation that polygamy is "the very tradition that installs man to male chauvinism and male hegemony (196). His unsympathetic attitude also corroborates Odonkor and Bampoh-addo's argument that "polygamy brings out the exploitative nature of the male-female relationship" (124). Godwin Okebaran Uwah concludes that Noumbé "reclaims her autonomy by revolting against her husband's culturally sanctioned arrogance thus demonstrating the importance of courage, even at the family level" (130). In Ouhigoué's patriarchal world, acceptance of male superiority and dominance is the bane of women's lives. Thus, she declares: "Nous les femmes nous n'égalerons jamais les hommes" (235). ( We, the women, we would never be equal to men.) This finds credence in Amina Bashir's view that

> women themselves are taught in the process of being socialized to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology so that they tend to be conditioned to derogate their sex and co-operate in their subordination (67)

Not only that, the female has also been brainwashed to accept wife-battering as her lot. Hear Ouhigoué: "Nous les femmes, c'est notre lot d'être battues. Aucune femme ne peut se venter de n'être jamais battue par son père ou par son mari'' (235). (We the women, it is our lot to be beaten. There is no woman who would boast of having never been beaten either by her father or husband.) Having internalized these norms, she endures the humiliation and domestic violence her husband, Joseph Koégbogi, constantly subjects her to. Sometimes, she has the urge to speak out in protest but is often crushed by the weight of patriarchy: "…elle baissa ses yeux tremblante… elle se taisait…elle garda sa posture viancue…" (162–163). (…she looked down trembling…she kept quiet…she retained her defeated posture.) Ouhigoué fits into Udumukwu's definition of the legendary good

woman. According to him, the "good" woman in sub-Saharan Africa happens to be that woman who suffers the effects of oppression, and neglect ; and who must maintain a silence and passivity in order to remain good. Silence and passivity are two principal features of the good woman" (3). Her smoldering consciousness however explodes into a radical action when her husband in the process of torturing their daughter, Tioumbé, calls her "esclave". (Slave.) She breaks through the walls of silence and passivity and confronts him openly: "Tu n'a pas de coeur! Tu es un homme et tu te conduit bestialement...'' (247). ( You have no feelings. You are a man but you behave like an animal…) She dramatizes further her deviationism by engaging in a physical combat with him. Hear her:

> …frappe!...frappe Koégboghi je ne dirais pas I'autre nom. Il n'ya que chez toi. Frappe …quand ta bouche s'ouvre c'est pour cracher son venin…frapper c'est tout ce que tu sais faire. C'est toi qui est esclave… (247).
> (beating…beating Koégboghi I cannot remember any other name. This is all you know. Beating…when you open your mouth, it's to pour out venom…Beating is the only thing you know best to do. It is you who are a slave.)

Martins Bestman's opinion of Ouhigoué's radical change is to the point. He says her reaction "…constitute I'expression plus explosive et la plus significative de la révolte contre I'homme…" (28). (constitutes the most explosive and the most remarkable of female's revolt against man.) Her reaction further affirms Chinyelu Ojukwu's observation that "… there is a limit to human endurance. There is an extent to which a woman would be subjugated, oppressed and intimidated and she would be forced to defend herself courageously" (116). Ouhigoué's well-calculated choice to dismantle her husband's oppressive and subjugating conduct, demonstrates her metamorphosis from her state of vulnerability to self-expression.

**Conclusion**

Sembène joins forces with the vulnerable women of his milieu to stride over the traditional and religious inhibitions and encumbrances to which they appear to have been inescapably bound. He succeeds in demystifying the stereotype of the African woman as one who is weak and vulnerable, cut out to suffer willingly and silently. He gives his women the right to choose the way they deem fit to live their lives. All the wives delineated take radical steps to depart from the male perspective in search of identity. They make difficult choices to arrive at self expression. Yacine for example takes the bull by the horn and goes into extra-marital affairs with another man when her husband fails to meet her sexual demands. Nafi walks out of her marriage when she can no longer endure. Ngone wa Thiandum elects to commit suicide when confronted with the disgraceful situation of incest committed by her husband. Noumbé cuts her umbilical cord from polygamy by willfully breaking the plates of food she prepares for her husband. Ouhigoué engages in a verbal and physical combat with her husband to dismantle the humiliating structure of wife/daughter battering supervised by patriarchy. The assertiveness of these women put to question Sankar and Rajeshkannan's assertion that the "African woman has no identity of her own. Her life has to be constantly governed by the whims and caprices of her father or even her husband …She becomes

totally non-existent, non entity; a complete annihilation of self and her self-identity" (198) Sembène's women are resilient in forging for themselves a new identity when confronted with the double-fold tyranny of the Muslim religion and patriarchy. They subvert "the order that endues the men with such power and authority but which conversely categorizes women as weak, trivial and merely sentimental" ( Ladele 81-82).

The study demonstrates that the African woman is not a monolithic bloc incapable of waging war of liberation against the traditional myths and religious practices that stand on her way to happiness in marriage relationships. All the women characters delineated make difficult choices to arrive at self-identity in the face of shocks and stresses. This gives credence to Udumukwu's observation that "the images of women usually found in literature have been created by men without any true reference to the peculiarity of women's experiences" (5). The study therefore concludes that the patriarchal definition of the African woman as one that has an unchanging and fixed vulnerability is a concept that largely contributes to her marginalization both in private and public spheres of life. This is because it makes the case for male protection. The paper therefore recommends that this myth be dispelled so that African women would be free to contribute meaningfully to the development processes of their families and communities.

**Works Cited**

Acholonu, Rose. *Family love in Nigerian Fiction: Feminist Perspectives.* Achisons Publications, 1995.

----------"Women in the African Novel and the Quest for Human Rights." *Beyond the Marginal Land: Gender Perspectives in African Writing,* edited by Chioma Opara, Belpot (Nig.) Co. 1999, pp. 93 – 109.

Aniebo, I. N. C. *The Journey Within.* University of Port Harcourt Press, 2005.

Bâ, Mariama. *Une si longue lettre.* Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1960.

Bashir, Amina. "Language, Gender and Society: Anti-Female Sentiments in Two Nigerian Novels." *Woman in the Academy Festschrift far professor Helen Chukwuma,* edited by Seiyifa Koroye and Noel Anyadike, Pearl Publishers, 2004, pp.66 – 74.

Bestman, Martins. *Sembène Ousmane et L'esthétique du romans négro-africaine*. Editions Naaman, 1981.

Chukwuma, Helen. "Women's Quest for Rights : African Feminist Theory in Fiction." Forum on Public Policy, 2006, pp. 1-13. forumonpublicpolicy.com/…/chukwuma… Accessed 18 Oct., 2016.

Chukukere, Gloria. *Gender Voices and Choices: Redefining Women in Contemporary African Fiction*. Fourth Dimension, 1995.

Cousins, Helen. "Submit or Kill Yourself…Your Two Choices: Options for Wives in African Women's Fiction." *New Women Writing in African Literature,* 24, edited by Ernest Emenyonu, Africa World Press, 2004, pp. 104 – 114.

Davies, Carole Boyce. "Some Notes on Feminism." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory,* edited by Tejumola Olaniyan & Ato Quayson, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011, pp. 561-569.

Ikonne, Chidi. "The conception of the Woman as the Weaker Vessel: It's Implication for National Security." *Security, Social Services and Sustainable Development in Nigeria*, edited by Chidi Ikonné, Ime Williams & Eucharis Nwagbara, University of Port Harcourt Press, 2005, pp. 233 – 243.

Kabeer, Naila. "Violence Against Women as 'Relational' Vulnerability: Engendering the Sustainable Human Development Agenda." Human Development Report Office, 2014, pp. 1-46. www.undp.org/sites/.../kabeer_hdr14. Accessed 12 Aug. 2016.

Konate, Siendou. "Discourses of Power and Gender: A Sampling of *Things Fall Apart, Gods Bits of Wood, Changes: A Love Story. So long a Letter and Women at Point Zero. The Anthroglobe Journal*, 2006, pp.1-17. www.escholarship.org/uc/item/8xwOn6j6. Accessed 12 Oct. 2016.

Ladele, Omolola. "Reconstructing Identities Through Resistance in Postcolonial Women's Writing: A reading of Ezeigbo's *The Last of the Strong Ones.*" *Nebula,* Vol. 6, no.3 2009*,* pp.70-84. www.nobleworld.biz/images/Ladele. Accessed 12 Oct. 2016.

Njoku, Teresa. "Patriarchy, Gender, and the Early Plays of Tess Onwueme." *Woman in the Academy,* edited by Seiyifa Koroye & Noel Anyadike, Pearl Publishers, 2004, pp.277 – 287.

Nwapa, Flora. *Women are Different*. Tana Press, 1986.

Odonakor, Felix and Bampoh-Addo, Richard. "Positive Portrayal of Women in African Prose: A Cursory Look at Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood* and Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences,* Vol.4*,* no. 11*,* 2014, pp. 121-127. www.iiste.org/Journals/index.../13275. Accessed 15 Oct. 2016.

Ohale, Christine N. "The Dea®THY of Female Presence in Early African Literature: The Depth of Writers' Responsibility." Forum on Public Policy, pp.1-11, 2010, www.oldhamcounty.com/.../ohale. Accessed 10 Nov. 2016.

Ojukwu, Chinyelu F. "Dreams, Aspirations and Realities: The Female Situation in Tsitsi Dangaremba's Nervous Conditions." *Beyond the Marginal Land,* edited by Chioma Opara, Belpot (Nig.) Co. 1999, pp. 110 – 122.

Onyemelukwe, Ifeoma. "Radical Feminism in Four Francophone Novels." *Feminism in Francophone African Novels,* edited by Sam Ade Ojo, Signal Educational Services Ltd., 2003, pp.262-300.

Opara, Chioma. "A House Integrated: Reflections on the Nuances of African Feminism." *Critical Issues in African Literature: Twenty-First Century and Beyond,* edited by Chinyelu F. Ojukwu, University of Port Harcourt Press Ltd., 2013. pp. 57-76.

Sankar, G. and T. Rajeshkannan. "Representing the African Culture in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price – A Study." International Journal of English and Literature,* Vol.5, no. 8, 2014, pp.194-198. DOI:10.5897/IJEL2014.0642. Accessed 11 Nov. 2016.

Sembène, Ousmane. *Voltaique.* Présence Africaine, 1962. (Translations, mine)

____ *L'Harmattan.* Présence Africaine, 1964. (Translations, mine)

____ *Véhi-Ciosane*. Présence Africaine, 1973. (Translations, mine)

Udumukwu, Onyemaechi. *Signature of Women: The Dialectics of Action in African Women's Writing.* Onii Publishing House, 2007.

Uko. Iniobong. "Transcending the Margins." *ALT* 25. 2006, pp.82 – 92.

____ "A Failed Sexual Rebellion: The case of Ama Ata Aidoo's *Anowa." ALT* 24, 2004, pp.130 – 137.

Uwah, Godwin. "The Image of the Woman in Francophone African Fiction: Dignity or Subjugation?" *The International Fiction Review*, Vol.20, no.2, 1993, pp.127-132, www.lib.unb.ca/index.../15271. Accessed 10 Oct. 2016.