Post-Colonialism and Mainstream Anglophone African Novel [Ca.1970-2000]: A Comparative Approach

By

Melakneh Mengistu

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Addis Ababa University

July 2008

Post-Colonialism and Mainstream Anglophone African Novel [ca.1970-2000]: A Comparative Approach

By

Melakneh Mengistu

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Addis Ababa University

July 2008

Post-Colonialism and Mainstream Anglophone African Novel [Ca.1970-2000]: A Comparative Approach

By

Melakneh Mengistu

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Addis Ababa University

July 2008

Contents

Abstract

The production, mediation and critical reception of Modern African Literature was bound with the Eurocentric framework until the emergence of the post-colonial theory which fully crystallized in the 1980s. Since the appearance of *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) which ushered in a typological revision of critical theory, however, dogmatic universalism has been subverted in a bid for paradigm shift from a monolithic critical theory to polyphonic canons.

All the more, the Orientalists' defiance of the Eurocentric standard of literatures has triggered introspective indigenous authors to reclaim their history, language and culture. Bearing such assumption in mind, this study was designed to determine tne post-colonial trajectories as reflected in mainstream Anglophone African novel (ca.1970 -2000).

Structurally, the study is organized into four parts and eight chapters. In the Preliminary chapters (1-3), an attempt has been made to shed light on the matrices of and the major issues in the study of Modern African Literature together with the theoretical framework. The Second Part, where the bulk of the work is concentrated, deals with a contrapuntal reading of selected East, West and southern African post-colonial novels in that order under three independent chapters (4-6).

The post-colonial obsessions such as tyranny, exile, resistance and representation, endemic xenophobia, underdevelopment, economic dependency, rampant corruption, dominance of patriarchal ideology, ordeals of the intellectual and sycophancy of the clergy have been captured vividly in the novels cited.

These malpractices are coupled with other variations of oppression like the race-class metamorphosis, militarism, political atrophy and neo-colonialist patronage prevalent in the referent countries. The contemporary works reflect the spirit of the generation of 'angry young men' who are critical of the *status quo* and determined to put the record straight as aggressively as possible.

The perpetuation of such an anomalous phenomenon is primarily attributed to internal colonization, the ineptitude of African demagogues and mass/intellectual resignation rather than British colonialism *per se*. In spite of the gloom, however, the cosmic vision of these novelists is one of optimism that heralds the probability of a conditional change for the better, however, late.

The Third Part (Chapter Seven) dwells upon a comparative analysis of these novels with a view to determining their thematic convergence and stylistic parallelism which

traverse nations and regions across mainstream Anglophone Africa. The comparative approach, thus, reveals that all the novels in question except *Disgrace* (1999) invariably partake thematic and stylistic intertextuality as an expression of political resistance and cultural renaissance.

While the subject matter of Anglophone African Literature has commanded unanimity, the question of decolorising its medium of expression still engenders emotive debates between the adherents of appropriation and abrogation of English. After all, the dominance of English-some times described chauvinistically as-*The Chosen Tongue*-Moore (1969), has already impacted upon the African cultural productions.

Consequently, Anglophone African novelists who grapple with the language politics have ventured to decenter RS-English in favor of 'english' which involves editorial intrusions and deviations from the normative usage. Thus, one of the most outstanding achievements of the Post-colonial dialogue with or an act of writing back to the Imperial Center (Britain) is the empowerment of an alternative textual strategy without recourse to the traditional prescriptive rules.

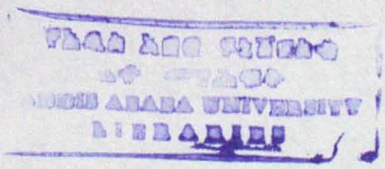
The Fourth Part, which draws upon its antecedents and recapitulates the findings of the study, is followed by its implications for post-colonial African writers, curriculum designers and Eurocentric literary critics. The major implications underpin the maintenance of Aristotle's "Golden Mean" and avoidance of extremes, which is believed to be compatible with the age of multi-culturalism and globalisation.

Thus, the third generation of Anglophone African novelists (ca. 1970 – 2000) has evolved an eclectic approach to the criticism of Modern African Literature in order to accommodate its peculiarities such as thematic 'parochialism' and cultural hybridity due to the accidents of history.

Dr. Melakneh Mengistu Workneh
Addis Ababa University
July 2008

Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of my parents, Yeshareg Wolde and Mengistu Workneh, who were selflessly committed to the cause of my academic career.



Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my cordial thanks are due to my thesis supervisor, Dr.Yimer Kifle, for his insightful guidance in spite of his over-stretched schedule both on and off the Campus. I am no less grateful to my co-advisor, the late Dr. Akalu Getaneh, who passed away before the fruition of this project. Had it not been for their critical input, the width and breadth of this thesis would have been a slim volume affair or far less than the standard set for it.

Apart from my resourceful advisors, I owe a debt of much gratitude to my colleagues Dr. Awol Indris, Dr.Yonas Admasu, Dr.Abiy Daniel, Yoseph Adera and Berhanu Gebeyehu (AAU) and Ayenew Guadu (Bahir Dar University) for their material support by way of lending me and purchasing resource books from abroad on my behalf.

I am also grateful to Dr.Berhanu Bogale, Dr. Nuru Mohammed, Dr. Gebremedhin Simon, Dr. Gessesse Tadesse, Dr.Bezabih Wolde, Dr.Beranu Mathwes, Professor Suba Rao (AAU), Berhanu Teshale , Dr. Abiy Yigzaw, Mesfin Awoke and Zewdu Emiru (Bahir Dar University) and Seife Hassen, Kedir Jemal, and Alemayehu Mekonnen (KCTE) for their constant moral support. The technical assistance of Berhanu, Guennet, Jerusalem, Mebrat, Milkias and Frezer is praiseworthy.

My sincere thanks are also due to the Librarians of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) and J.F .Kennedy Memorial Library for their unreserved co-operation in providing me with resource materials on demand.

Finally, I wish to extend my appreciations to the School of Graduate Studies and Research (GSR), Addis Ababa University, for sponsoring the project in spit of its limitations.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

The following non-universal and abbreviations acronyms are used Interchangeably with their referents indicated against each of them:

- **AAU=Addis Ababa University**
- **ALT=*African Literature Today***
- **AWS= African Writers Series**
- **E.C. = Ethiopian Calendar Year**
- **EAL=East African Literature**
- **ECAL=East and Central African Literature**
- **english=the variety of English used or appropriated by the former British colonies**
- **H.E.B. = Heinemann Educational Books**
- **MAL=Modern African Literature**
- **PASA= Post-Apartheid South Africa**
- **RS = Received Standard English (Anglo-American Version)**
- **SAL=Southern African Literature**
- **The EWB= *The Empire Writes Back* (1989/2002)**
- **The PCSR=The Post-Colonial Studies Reader (1995)**
- **TRC=Truth and Reconciliation Commission**
- **WAL= West African Literature**
- **WE= *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968)**

N.B All references to the dates in the subsequent sections are in the Gregorian calendar unless indicated otherwise.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Socio-Political and Historical Matrix

Unlike Western literature, which de-emphasizes the socio-historical context of cultural critique to the point of maneuvering a paradigm shift, modern African literature is definitely inseparable from the cultural evolution of the continent. The significance of this reciprocal relationship between modern African history and modern African literature is reiterated by influential Afrocentric writers and critics that the African writer appears to be more of a teacher than an artist proper entrusted with the responsibility of reasserting his/her historical, linguistic and cultural identity.

By the same token, Ngugi (1972) underpins the significance of such a framework for creative literature whether it is within Africa or in the other Commonwealth countries as follows:

> Literature does not grow or even develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society. The relationship between creative literature and other forces cannot be ignored, especially in Africa, where modern literature has grown against the gory background of European imperialism and its changing manifestations like slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism. Our culture over the last hundred years has developed against the same stunt dwarfing background (Cited in Cook and Okenimkpe 19).

This standpoint reveals that Ngugi does not dissociate African literature from African history, which, over the centuries, has been dynamic and eventful with the peculiar experience of slavery, the subjugation brought about by colonialism, and neo-colonialism in which case its natural resources were drained, labor exploited, national pride denigrated and traditional values disrupted. Thus, Post-Colonial Studies cannot afford to do without a consideration of their socio-political and historical settings.

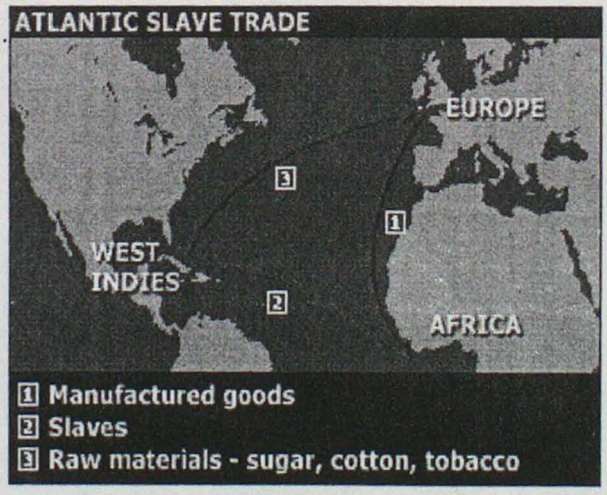
In fact, the chronicle of modern African history is so vast a field that could hardly be sufficiently covered in a single introductory chapter. Irrespective of such limitations, however, an attempt has been made to provide a cursory review of its watersheds ranging from the pre-colonial era to the post-independence period in order to evoke the socio-political atmosphere against which the contemporary

African literature in general and that of mainstream Anglophone African novel in particular is set.

1.1.1 A Glimpse of Pre-Colonial Africa

The 15th century was a significant landmark in the history of Africa as it marks the continent's contact with Europe for the first time. This contact had opportunities as well as challenges. On the one hand, it arguably brought about bilateral benefits in the sphere of commercial process whereby the continent was incorporated into the international trading system and exchange of expertise.

On the other hand, this encounter ushered in an era of a painful human tragedy or the wicked trafficking of fellow humans known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade which was the purchase and transport of black Africans into bondage and servitude in the New World. The slaves were one of the elements of the triangular economic cycle. The profits made from the global trade of sugar, tea and coffee were the major driving forces behind the triangular trade. For centuries, it provided substantial quantities of venture capital for the industrial revolution and the development of the European economy. The Triangular Trade and its infamous Middle Passage-which spanned from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries involved four continents and the lives and fortunes of over millions of people.(http://en.wikipedia.org//wki/atlantic-slave-trade).



Map of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Source: MSN Encarta)

The Slave Trade was attributed to the shortage of labor in the New World as a result of which European traders had to turn to Western Africa to meet the demands for labor. All the more, some historians argue that the Slave Trade led to a massive drain of labor like the contemporary brain-drain-vital means of production the loss of which retarded indigenous technology and productive activity.

In this regard, Rodney (1973:103) observes that 'to discuss trade between African and Europeans in the pre-colonial period is to discuss the slave trade.' The factors that played the greatest role in the abolition of the Slave Trade in the Eighteenth century range from moralistic concerns to the findings of scientific research which were in favor of the potential of Black mind or caliber. In spite of its temporal distance, the impact of slavery is strongly felt in the contemporary African literature that it marks the roots of cultural hybridity and racism to-date.

1.1.2 The Triple Burdens of Colonialism [19-mid 20th Century]

Colonialism is a term that refers to the political ideologies which legitimated the modern invasion, occupation and exploitation of inhabited lands by overwhelming external military powers. According to Davidson (1994), this term appeared in the context of Marxism-Leninism and became a cornerstone of the discourse of resistance during the 20th century. It was meant to counter the positive connotations attached to the use of "colonization" which was understood as a legitimate "civilizing mission" often reinforced by a religious agenda or evangelization.

Apparently, the exposure of Africa to Western exploration dates back to the end of the 18th century which paved the way for the Partition of Africa. At the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), these colonial powers defined their spheres of influence and laid down rules for future occupation on the Coasts of Africa and for navigation of the Congo and the Niger Rivers.

\In the Scramble for Africa, which coincided with the process of economic transformation known as imperialism, Britain had the lion's share across East and West and Southern Africa. Imperialism is an expansion of capitalism on a worldwide scale in the wake of Industrial Revolution (Lenin 1916: 64) via colonialism, which legitimated the modern invasion, occupation and exploitation of

inhabited lands by external military powers. For the local populations, however, it implied the forcible elimination of resistance, the imposition of alien rules, and the parasitic utilization of natural resources including manpower.

Colonialism was, thus, perceived as a totalizing event, which defined the world in terms of binary oppositions such as the relationship of the colonized to the colonizer, the margin to the centre. As Edward Said (1978) in his *Orientalism* pointed out that the imperialist powers had to create *another* or the Orient in order to define themselves as the center.

All the more, the inter-war policies of colonialism, in spite of their variance systematically programmed colonized people to perceive themselves as marginalized in relation to this psychological construct via paternalism and assimilation. These ideals found expression in the systems of indirect and direct rules (Crowder 1964).

The British model introduced the practice of decentralized administration as a result of which colonial officials and district officers retained the authority to evolve a system of government adaptable to local circumstances. The practice was, therefore, essentially empirical rather than uniform. Wherever possible, indigenous political structures were incorporated into the system of indirect rule designed to reduce tensions and minimize financial cost (Lugard 1965).

On the contrary, the French doctrine of association and assimilation implied that the African people were not free to achieve their own political independence but would be ultimately entitled to French citizenship provided that they were loyal to colonial authority and willing to embrace the metropolitan culture. In the mean time, the French education policy had become an important instrument of cultural assimilation through the establishment of schools with a colonial model curricula and the subsidence of local languages as the media of instruction.

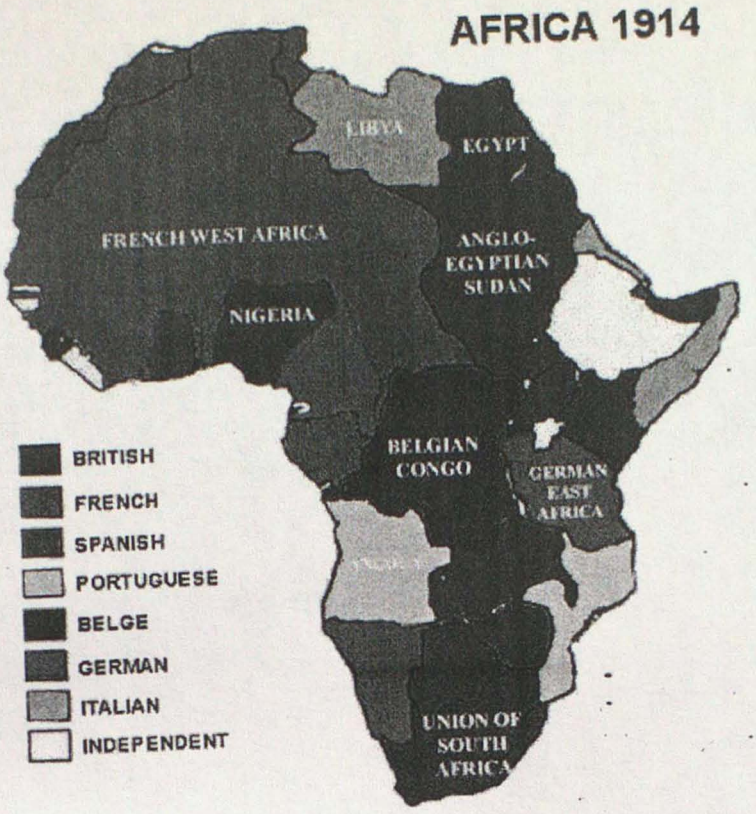
This psychological onslaught was, in spite of its futility, intended to maintain cultural hegemony over the subject people via economic and political control, which ensured power over the whole range of the cultural domain. However," The French Policy of Cultural Assimilation turned the attention of the assimile' back upon the one factor which the colonizer wanted him to forget- his blackness" (Nkosi 1965:7).

Regarding the pros and cons of colonialism, two noticeable viewpoints have emerged. According to Davidson (1964), a largely discredited view suggests that colonialism came about because of Africa's needs rather than those of Europe that direct colonization was deemed necessary to ensure the complete destruction of the Slave Trade and stimulate further progress within Africa.

The radical alternative to this view suggests that political and economic forces were manipulated by the imperial powers for their own benefit, as colonialism was a precondition for the expansion of imperialism which is believed to be the policy of extending the control or authority over foreign entities as a means of acquisition and/or maintenance of empires, either through direct territorial control or through indirect methods of exerting control on the politics and/or economy of other countries. Moreover, as Rodney maintains in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972:151),

The common factor underlying the overthrow of traditional African rulers in East, West, Central, North and South Africa was attributed to their resistance or disobedience to Europe's imperial ambitions. It was the only factor that mattered, with anti-slavery sentiments being at best superfluous and at worst calculated hypocrisy.'

He further asserts that the economic and political contradictions that produced Africa's underdevelopment and continue to plague Africa even today are rooted in colonialism. Among other things, colonialism laid the roots of neocolonialism in Africa by creating Africa's economic dependency on the international capitalist system. Thus, the triple burdens of colonialism are known to have aggravated the plight of Africa both before and after colonization.



(Source: http://www.fresno.k12.ca.us/divdept/sscience/podcasts.html)

1.1. 3 The Ideals and Challenges of Independence [1960s-2000]

Following the end of the Second Word War (1945), the European colonial powers were physically and psychologically waning as a result of which the balance of international power shifted to the United States of America (USA) and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Subsequently, there was a further development along the same direction, which heralded the birth of the United Nations instead of the discredited League of Nations, at San Francisco (April - June 1945) when the latter failed to deal effectively with international affairs. In compliance with the Atlantic Charter adopted by the USA and Britain (duly signed by Roosevelt and Churchill), the UN called for progress towards ending colonial rule or the formal achievement of independence.

As a result, African nationalism - essentially, one of the demand for anti-colonial change and independence - had already moved ahead across Sub-Saharan Africa. The independence struggle was vigorously waged against British colonialism, in East, Central, West and Southern Africa under the banner of' national sovereignty.'

The messianic nationalist parties were thus spearheading liberation movements envisaging a range of strategic ideals such as national unification, political stability, modernization, economic prosperity, universal suffrage and prevalence of social justice in the wake of independence. The vanguard of these movements like Kwame Nikrumak; Jomo Kenyatta, Milton Obote, Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe, Kenneth Kaunda and Nelson Mandela are ever memorable among others.

In fact, Ghana was the first Sub-Saharan African country to achieve independence in 1957 after a decade of protests, riots and clashes. Nkrumah, well aware of his status as the head of the first West African nation to emerge from colonialism, had a dream of leading the continent into a Marxist future. This required a Republican form of government, which Ghana achieved in 1960 under the presidency of Nkrumah.

However, Nkrumah's authoritarian rule, coupled with a collapse due to the national economic crisis, prompted a military coup when the President was in China for a state visit (1966). Subsequently, the country has witnessed the meteoric rise and fall of largely exploitative, neocolonialist regimes. Currently, however, Ghana seems to have restored a civilian government following Jerry Rawlings' consent to launch a presidential election campaign. Even recently, Ghana has gratifyingly enough, set an exemplary model for peaceful transition by relinquishing power to the victorious opposition Party which won the parliamentary election.

The independence of Ghana (1957) followed by that Guinea (1958) thus brought about a set off a chain-reactions of nationalist demands that more than seventeen sovereign African nations came into existence across East, West, Central and Southern Africa in a single decade. In the West, Nigeria (1960), Sierra Leon (1961) and Gambia (1965)-all former British colonies–joined the family of free and independent states. In the East, Somalia (1960), Tanzania (1961), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963) and Zambia (1964) also regained their independence.

Nigeria is another referent country which has suffered from the same problems like the rest of the African continent, particularly dictatorships, and political corruption. Nigeria's history is synonymous with coups and military governments or authoritarian regimes that from independence in 1960 until 1993, Nigeria has experienced six military coups and a terrible civil war. Problems such as endemic corruption and crime, ethnic and religious strife, particularly between Christians and Muslims in the northern half of the country, and sporadic clashes with insurgents in the oil-rich Niger Delta characterize Nigeria's political instability to-date.

In the East, Somalia, 'the problem child of the Horn', seems to have committed a national suicide. Following its independence from Britain in 1960, Somalia merged with the former British protectorate and formed the Somali Republic. Four years later, Somalia fought with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region (1977).

The country was run by a civilian government for the first few years, until the 1969 military coup of General Mohammed Said Barr who held power for more than two decades during which he attempted to regain the territories that the Somalis had allegedly lost over the years, including portions of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Two years later, a new constitution was adopted enforcing the rule of dictatorship with one political party. The years of military dictatorship had disintegrated the social fabric of Somalia during which its people had lost trust in the government and their chameleon' Patrons Saints.'

The collapse of the Siad Barre regime plunged Somalia into chaos, with many factions fighting to seize power. After fifteen years of power vacuum, the self-styled Supreme Council of Islamic Courts had assumed power by the barrel of the gun even though it has been ousted by the so-called Transitional Government with the military intervention of Ethiopia. The situation is still volatile that there seems to be no prospect of ending the crisis and restoring peace with political stability.

Kenya achieved its national independence in December 1963 through armed struggle and/or diplomatic campaign. Unfortunately, the hard-won independence in Kenya, as in many other neo-colonial African countries seems to have been abused that it is suffering from the pawns of imperialism through the agency of the new comprador bourgeoisie and the new ruling elite who have dashed the emancipatory promise of nationalist struggle. The national heroes of the Mau Mau revolt are

buried under the debris of society-men with a brave past and no future. Post-colonial leaders have been aggravating the conditions of the masses by alienating them and by turning vicious and dictatorial. The public reaction to the successors of Jomo Kenyatta has been no less reductive than *Not Yet Uhuru*! Perhaps to-date as has been observed in the recent post-election military crackdown.

The other East African country, Uganda, has long been a troubled place since independence from British colonialism 1962. Four years later; the constitution was suspended upon Milton Obote's seizure of power ushering in a one-party state system. The country has attempted to restore some semblance of political and economic order.

With Major-General Idi Amin's coup (1971), any vestiges of constitutional government and the rule of law disappeared. Tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of civilians were murdered in a programme of ethnically targeted terror. Britain suspended diplomatic relations in 1976. By the time Amin fled to Libya in 1979, Uganda was in ruins. Almost all the nation's potential and hope was crushed during his brutal misreign (1971-1979).

The Government of his rival, Milton Obote saw minimal improvements, culminating in another overthrow in 1985.Yoweri Museveni, who has held power since 1986, made many changes for the better but runs a one-party state and has in recent years plunged Uganda into the senseless and wasteful conflict in what used to be Zaire with the self-styled opposition known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In addition, Uganda was among the first and hardest hit countries to face AIDS in the 1980s, which has aggravated the social crisis.

In the recent past, Zimbabwe gained independence from Britain in 1980 after a protracted war of liberation that dragged for fourteen years and claimed more than thirty five thousand lives (D.Martin and P. Johnson 1981: 188). Socio-eeconomic crisis and neocolonialism are still plaguing Zimbabwe to-date.

The Republic of South Africa is another frontline country with a protracted peaceful struggle against the evils of Apartheid and its vestiges. The African National Congress (ANC) remained virulently opposed to Apartheid and, after they were banned by the South African Government in 1960, the ANC proposed establishing a

military wing to combat their prejudicial treatment. Due to international boycotts, the South African government revised the Apartheid policy during the late 1980s.

Subsequently, F. W. de Klerk was elected as the new South African President in 1989, promising a non-racist South Africa for the future. Accordingly, he lifted the country's ban on the ANC and released Mandela from prison in 1990 after 27 years of detention at Robben Island. Mandela and de Klerk negotiated the ending of South Africa's Apartheid policies and drafted a new national constitution jointly. In the early 1990's, Mandela led the multi-party negotiations that finally heralded the advent of ANC to political power

In 1994, Mandela won a landslide victory and became the first black President of South Africa. At Nelson Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's first democratically elected President, praise singers dressed in tribal finery recited the history of Mandela's Xhosa clan while supersonic jets droned overhead, painting the colors of the new country's flag across the African sky thereby heralding the dawn of a new era.

Thus, the former British colonies across East, West and Southern Africa regained a national status through armed struggle and/or diplomatic campaign. As nation after nation gained independence from their colonial rulers, beginning in the mid-twentieth century, a sense of euphoria swept through Africa as each country celebrated its independence from years of political and cultural domination

Ironically, however, when the African states attained independence, the dominant nationalist movements and their leaders installed themselves in a virtually permanent power such that the end of the colonial period ushered in a new era of rampant corruption, protracted fratricidal wars, war-torn economy, and undemocratic military-takeovers and rigged national elections culminating in utter disillusionment bordering on black despair.

Even worse, neocolonialism still plagues them under the mask of an uninterrupted paternalism and the fashionable globalization policy which has aroused mixed reactions that some regard it as a blessing while others are convinced that it is simply the old game of domination in disguise. Nkrumah in his forward to *Not Yet Uhuru* (1966: XV) observes that "Although political independence is a noble

achievement in the struggle against colonialism, neo- colonialism and imperialism, its effectiveness is superficial unless economic and cultural independence is also achieved."

Thus the young African states are so trapped in multi-dimensional problems that the post-independence euphoria and jubilation enjoyed a brief period of celebration due to the denial of expectations. In this regard, Lazarus (1990:3-4) asserts that 'The most fundamental aspect of post-independence Africa has been the illusiveness of development and thus independence has not managed to match its advance publicity" The view point held by Lazarus strikingly resonates with Fanons critical observation in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968:166):

> Before independence, the leader generally embodies the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people, the leader will reveal his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers impatient for their returns which constitutes the national bourgeoisie.

Similarly, the Ethiopian Diasporic novelist, Hama Tuma in, "The Role and Ordeals of the African Writer (2002:2) also corroborates this view with the following assertion:

> The great expectations of the liberation from colonialism were rendered illusory by the neo -colonial machinations and the fact that the patriots who allegedly led the struggles ended up being pawns of the past colonizers. The hopes and aspirations were short lived and crushed as the powerful killed the bearers and advocates of good days for Africa. From Lumumba to Cabral, and from Machel to Nkrumah, the fires were extinguished.

As a result, balkanization' has reduced the African states into hostages whose freedom of maneuver seems for the most part to be limited to the changing of alliances with Washington, Moscow, Peking, Paris or London as their 'Patron Saints' due to economic and political dependency in addition to internal insecurity.

Given the hard facts of African politics and the watershed of modern African history ranging from the colonial experience to the contemporary period, one may wonder whether the reaction of the post-colonial African writer is one of intellectual resignation or non-conformism with the *status quo*.

After all, a writer who observes all the robbery and treachery by a bunch of kleptocrats can hardly be indifferent to this Phenomenon. Consequently, the position of the post-colonial Anglophone African novelists proved to be one of commitment.

The committed African writer does not only experience a psychological shock and embarrassment at this state of affairs but is also embittered and angry that people who yesterday were hailed as messiahs during the liberation struggle have today' barricaded themselves in the house while the rest are abandoned in the rain', to borrow Achebe's metaphor. In the face of the entire stench, a writer with a conscience cannot pretend to practice art for art's sake.

Thus, Post-colonial African writers reflect the horrors of their countries. in works which are often imbued with a sense of despair and anger, at both the state of their nations and the black elite who replaced former colonial oppressors. Critics, including Neil Lazarus, have proposed that this sense of disillusionment, reflected in the works of such authors as Ayi Kwei Armah, marked the beginning of a major change in African intellectual and literary development.

When it comes to the risk- factor, the committed contemporary African writer who is critical of the *status quo* is subject to starvation and persecution and even detention and banishment to the North far away from the warmth of the celebrated African hospitality and the source of inspiration for his creativity. In sum, A frican history is believed to be the major celebrant of modern African literature in general and the post-colonial African novel in particular with which the novelists in question are obsessed and without which the African writer can hardly do just ice to it.

1.2. The Post-Colonial Discourse

According to (Ashcroft 1995:2), the "Post-Colonial Studies are based on the 'historical fact' of European colonialism, and the diverse material effects to which this phenomenon given rise. It addresses all aspects of the colonial process from the beginning to the end of colonial contact." Post-colonial discourse is thus fast becoming an area of rich academic debate. At the heart of coloniality and post-

coloniality is the contested authority of the Imperial power and its impact upon previously colonized peoples and their indigenous cultures. One may wonder why the post-colonial African novelists grapple with the imperial experience in the wake of independence.

In other words, the question of why the empire needs to write back to the center once the imperial structure has been dismantled in political terms begs the question. The answer lies in the paradoxical standing of Britain in the face of the industrially developed world or the Camp of G-8 countries. By implication, Britain, like the other dominant colonial powers of the nineteenth century, has been relegated to a relatively minor place in international affairs. In the spheres of politics and economics, and increasingly in the vital new area of the mass media, Britain and the other European imperial powers have been superseded by the emergent powers of the USA, the former USSR and the Orient. (Ashcroft 2001: 6-7).

Nevertheless, through the literary canon, [the body of British texts which all too frequently still acts as a touchstone of taste and value, and through **RS-English** which asserts the English of south-east England as a universal norm], the weight of antiquity continues to dominate cultural production in much of the post-colonial world.

This cultural hegemony has been maintained through canonical assumptions about literary activity, and through attitudes to post-colonial literatures which identify them as isolated national offshoots of English literature, and which therefore relegate them to a secondary position. Even worse, they are advertently bent on evaluating African literature by the universalistic standards of Western literary canons without considering the constituent sets of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices of the post-colonial paradigm.

On the contrary, Post-colonial Studies as a distinct area of interest has become more prominent ever since the late 1970s, in part triggered by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which called attention to the way that Western literary discourse about "the East" tended to define non-European peoples and cultures as an alien or "Other," not part of the universalistic culture of the West. Post-colonial novelists of the Orient have consequently launched a post-colonial dialogue with the centre in order to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal

relations of power, based on binary oppositions such as *us* and *them*, *First-World* and *Third-World*; *white* and *black*, *colonizer* and *colonized*.

Ever since the advent of the Post-colonial theory, which seeks to reclaim its culture, history, language and style, there has been an unprecedented flurry of critical anthologies on African literature. Amongst these general studies are *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, 1989), and *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995) which reflects on a range of post-colonial issues.

The *Empire* refers to the sum total of the British colonies which Britain lost with the coming to independence in the 1960s of nation–states from Africa to Sri Lanka." The Center" is Britain and the notion of "writing back" is crucial in understanding the various strategies of decolonization that Britain's former colonies have used to set the record straight. *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) is said to be an excellent overview of key issues in the post-colonial literary studies such as critical modes of post-colonial literatures and language politics.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Africa's fateful encounter with Europe and the post-independence anomaly has adversely impacted upon its language, popular culture, imaginative literature, artistic sensibilities and the cosmic vision of the writers. Consequently, research in Post-colonial Studies is growing because post-colonial critique allows for a wide-ranging investigation into power relations in various contexts. The impact of colonization on post-colonial history, economy, the cultural productions of colonized societies, feminism and post-colonialism, agency for marginalized people, and the state of the post- colony in contemporary economic and cultural contexts are some of the broadest topics in the field.

More specifically, there are other issues that are particularly pertinent to post-colonial literature such as language politics, target audience, typology, canons of post-colonial literary theory, the role of comparative literature, exile and maladjustment, cultural hybridity, displacement and the relocation Diaspora. Post-colonial literature most commonly suggests writing from former parts of the British Empire such as the literatures of African countries -Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, the Caribbean Islands, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore,

South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka- all of which are engaged with writing back to the centre.

The common denominator of these literatures beyond their distinctive national/regional characteristics is their emergence out of the experience of colonization and assertion of themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and thereby emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre (Ashcroft, B.1989:2).

Thus, if the empire was supported by concepts, which divide the world into neat categories or binary oppositions, the post-colonial world is perhaps characterized by the breakdown of such categories in favor of hybridity. The emergent culture is characterized by hybridity which is neither a pale mimicry of its conquerors nor a complete return to the past.

By implication, post-colonial literature is not simply a chronicle of conquests but a discussion and dissection of the consequences of colonialism such as migration, slavery, oppression, resistance, representation, difference, and responses to hegemonic discourses after political independence. It is rather an assertion of power, reclamation of experience, which embodies both cries of loss and proclamations of birth.

Given this background, the present project was designed to determine the extent to which the post-colonial Anglophone African novel has been suffused with the critical model of Post-colonial theory with reference to the Diasporic African novelists and the home-grown ones. To that effect, the present author has probes into the thematic and stylistic trajectories among East, West and Southern African novels (ca.1970-2000), thereby, to demonstrate how the process of intertexuality evolves through specific texts via a comparative analysis

The comparative approach aims at discovering and foregrounding common issues underlying the post-colonial Ugandan, Kenyan, Somali, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Zimbabwean and Post-Apartheid South African novels in question within the frameworks of the post-colonial paradigm (See, Chapter Three).

1. 4 The Research Design

The design of a piece of research refers to the practical manner by which the research was conducted according to a systematic attempt to generate evidence to answer the research question. Depending on discipline, project, personal inclination and a given trend of development, social science research projects may employ a wide range of empirical and theoretical strategies which could be as flexible or integrated as the case may be.

1.4.1 Method and Structure

The research method consists of a number of transparent steps that secure a high objectivity and optimal use of existing data. Qualitative researchers may involve a range of data-collection instruments such as the grounded theory practice, narratology, storytelling, classical ethnography, or shadowing. One of the methods employed in this study is a post-colonial reading strategy –a critical approach that involves a subversive reading of the selected texts- to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonization on literary productions.

In other words, it is a form of a deconstructionist reading strategy which demonstrates the extent to which the text contradicts its underlying assumptions. and reveals its colonialist ideologies and processes. The subversion of a canon, however, should not be mistaken for the replacement of one set of texts with another. It rather involves the redeployment of some hierarchy of values by reconstructing the so-called canonical texts through alternative reading strategies.

This strategy offers a contrapuntal reading of a cross-section of selected post-colonial novels against the critical models of post-colonial theory in order to determine their socio-political matrix and intertextual elements. A comparative approach to the contemporary African novel, thus, serves as a veritable weapon used to reject the claim of universalism made on behalf of canonical Western literature (Kehinde 2003).

With regard to its limitations, the study was conducted under trying circumstances such as financial constraint and inaccessibility to the novels published after the emergence of the post-colonial theory or the novels authored by the third-generation of Anglophone African writers.

Even Worse, the questionnaire paradigm designed for the precursors of post-colonial theory and the preplanned interviews with the leading figures in the area of post-colonial writing based in Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Accra, Harare and Cape Town, Kingston, the Far East, and New South Wales, Western Australia) was cancelled for financial reasons. Fortunately, however, I was able to bridge the gap via an alternative access to their vibrant works like *Orientalism* (1978), *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), and *The Post- Colonial Studies Reader* (1995) among others and the primary texts on which this project is based.

Structurally, the study is organized into three parts consisting of eight chapters. The first three chapters of Part I deal with the preliminary issues like the historical background, review of related literature and critical issues and the theoretical framework of the study. To begin with, an exploratory reading of related literature aimed at identifying the loopholes thereof was conducted in order to formulate an operational question or hypothetical conjecture.

Secondly, the chronicle of modern Africa with an accent on the post-colonial context has been surveyed as briefly as possible in order to establish the historical-background and evoke the atmosphere against which the study is set. This historical context is deemed necessary for modem African literature is unavoidably grounded in the history of the continent.

This is followed by a brief survey of related literature on modern African literature aimed at providing the reader with conceptual problems, the predicaments of the African writer and major trends in the development of Anglophone African novel in a historical continuum.

The Third chapter sets out to establish the *Theoretical Framework* of the study by way of reviewing conceptual issues like post-colonial literature and the critical models of Post-colonial theory, the methodological imperatives of Comparative Literature, and other constituents like intertextuality, resistance and representation and Magical Realism.

The Second Part where the bulk of the work is concentrated comprises three chapters (IV, V and VI) each of which foregrounds the regional literature of East, West and Southern Africa with reference to selected novels. Accordingly, Chapter

four deals with the East African chronicles from Kenya, Somalia and Uganda in that order. Chapter Five takes up the West African allegories with reference to Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1970) and Achebe's recent novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Chapter Six dwells upon the Southern African post-colonial discourse with reference to Hove's *Bones* (1988) from Zimbabwe, Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2000) from South Africa.

Chapter Seven, where the comparative model is applied, undertakes to critically examine the selected post-colonial East, West and Southern African novels with a view to determining their thematic and stylistic intertextuality.The conclusion recapitulates the comparative critique of the novels from the triad in order to establish their reciprocity, variability or the matrices of vertical and/or horizontal intertextuality and any other borderline case. The recapitulations and the conclusions drawn are followed by reflective observations, and implications for the stakeholders of post-colonial African literature.

1. 4 .2 Bases of Selection

Even though the novel in Africa is a twentieth-century phenomenon, it is the type of genre par excellence that records the polyphony in the context of post-colonial discourse. The novel more than any other genre is a "dialogic" medium-one in which many voices are contained within a single book, and in which authors frequently write in response to other novels.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the interplay between the classic, colonial fictions of the West and the post-colonial responses of the former empires. Novels like Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* worked to manage, organize, and naturalize imperial relations as they evolved over the modern era, providing colonizer and colonized with blueprints for the social, cultural and economic architecture that sustained unequal power relations.

The post-colonial novels like *The Heart of Redness* (2000) and *Season of Migration to the North* (1970) on the other hand, reveal how the empire writes back to the centre by drawing upon imperial models and devices to challenge the precepts of their antecedents and thereby to envision new sets of relationship between the East and the West. That is why the present study focuses on a comparative approach to the post-colonial African novel rather than any other genres or subgenres.

One of the problems cropping up at the beginning of this study was the question of defining its scope given tens and scores of post-colonial novels across East, West and Southern Africa. Consequently, the preliminary selection was rather ambitious consisting of twelve novels amongst which were *This Earth, My Brother* (1971), *Season of Anomy* (1973), *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Season of Migration to the North (1970).*

However, when the list was revised, some of the novels in question, which proved to be thematically parochial or irrelevant, were dropped at the end of the day in order to avoid an undesirable duplication. The definitive selection was made on the basis of the following post-colonial paradigms:

1. 4.2.1 Periodization

This marks the post-colonial spatio-temporal setting spanning from the early 70s to the turn of the century. Chronologically, the post-Independence Period I covers the first decade of Independence (1960-1970), while II (roughly the period from the appearance of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* to the publication of Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness)* spans from 1987 to 2000. Within the framework of periodization, other supportive parameters like feminism, canonization and novelty have also been considered as pointed out hereunder:

1. 4.2. 2 Post-Colonial Motherism

Feminist criticism has a particular relevance to the post-colonial context. Though both colonialism and patriarchy are historically entwined, an end to formal empire-building does not mean an end to the oppression of women in the former empires. Consequently, Feminist criticism extends the reappraisal of colonial texts to include the representation of women in colonial and post-colonial literature.

This is intended to challenge assumptions and stereotypes about women in both literature and society. In effect, the trend seems to have changed from the mere criticism of female oppression to the creation of memorable and vigorous female characters in the recent novels.

1. 4. 2. 3 Canonicity

Canon is a body of writings recognized by authority. The canon of a national or regional literature is a body of writings especially approved by critics or anthologists and deemed suitable for academic study. In this context, Armah's *The*

Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1970) and Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah (1987)* are considered to be representative selections.

1. 4. 2.4 Relative Originality

Six contemporary novels from East and Southern Africa, which have received lesser critical attention than they deserve in the post-colonial context, are found to be more appropriate than the rest. After all, certain contemporary novels from Somalia. Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and post -Apartheid South Africa appear to have been overshadowed by seminal works, at least, so far as the Ethiopian readership is concerned. What follows is the definitive list of the selected post-colonial novels from East, West and Southern Africa in a chronological order:

A.K. Armah (1970) T*he Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born.* Meja Mwangi (1973) *Kill Me Quick.*
Nuruddin Farah (1979) *Sweet and Sour Milk.*
Chinua Achebe (1987) *Anthills of the Savannah.*
Chenjerai Hove (1988) *Bones.*
J. M. Coetzee (1999) *Disgrace.*
Moses Isegawa 2000) A*byssinian Chronicles* and
Zakes Mda (2000) *The Heart of Redness.*

The novels mentioned above are selected on account of the fact that they are quite representative by all standards of Post-colonialism. The omission of women writers is attributable to the fact that gender issues have been sufficiently addressed by the male novelists to the advantage of the former. In most cases, the regional distribution has been delimited to two or three novels. When it comes to the national literature, however, a single novel has been considered from Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe as the selected novels far outweigh a dozen others from the same country

The South African literature is justifiably, a special case attributed to the polarity of literary dynamics of the post-Apartheid novels, which are more varied than fingerprints, and the relative novelty of the novels in question. The regional designation is deliberately delimited to mainstream Anglophone Africa rather than ramble about Francophone, Lusophone Africa for the following reasons:

Firstly, it is impossible to delineate such an ambitious field once and for all.
Secondly, considerations of space and time would allow only a limited number of works to be examined in sufficient depth for the present purpose. More importantly,

a body of literature can be understood best by considering a cross-section of works which *prima facie* exhibit thematic variety, artistic maturity and aesthetic impact. In contrast, Central and Northern African novels are omitted for obvious reasons. For one thing, they are prone to the Arabic literary tradition that most of the works from these regions do not fit well into the Post-colonial paradigm.

For another, Central and North African novelists' dialogue with the West appears to be not as stringent as that of East and West African writers. More over, the literary output of Central and Northern Africa in English is found to be scanty.

At any rate, the selected works illustrate the scope and variety of Anglophone African novelistic productions that have inspired African writers since the 1970s.

1. 5 Significance of the Study

The question of significance could be viewed from literary, psychological and academic perspectives. The findings of this study would most likely contribute towards

- reinforcing the need for a paradigm shift from monolithic to polyphonic theories like post-Colonialism to decentre the hegemonic rigidity of the West,
- foregrounding the peculiar characteristics of national, and regional literatures and, thereby, discovering shared characteristics/ thematic and stylistic parallels which traverse nations and regions
- provoking constructive arguments and counter- arguments among literary critics with a fresher insight into the problem surrounding critical theory and typology of African Literature and
- launching Comparative Literature based in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (AAU) in order to foster multi-cultural/cross-cultural communication.

This would, hopefully, contribute towards a polyphonic perception and reception of the African novel, thereby leading to curricular and typological revisions.

Chapter Two: Critical Issues in MAL

The discussion of modern African literature raises a number of complicated issues such as the conception and scope of African literature, language politics, basis of periodization, target audience, critical theory, resistance and representation, the prevalence of folkloristic details, the ordeals of the African writer and thematic parochialism. The foregoing account provides the staple for the discussion of generic, conceptual/ideological, linguistic and readership issues with reference to the genesis of modern African literature that could be briefly sketched out as follows.

2.1 A Bird's Eye-View of Indigenous Literary Traditions

Africa's written literature could easily span close to five thousand years, depending on the persuasion of various commentators. Thinkers in the Afrocentric tradition trace the antecedents of African written literature to such touchstones as the scribal tradition of ancient Egypt, the Arabic poetic tradition, which began roughly with the Arab conquest of Egypt in the seventh century C.E., the spread of that tradition to the Maghreb and West Africa from the ninth century C.E., which culminated in the development of Hausa/ Islamic/Arabic verse ever since the seventeenth century.

With regard to Sub-Saharan Africa, discussions of written literatures tend to take the late nineteenth century as a rough starting point. Indigenous language literatures evolved as a consequence of missionary activity during this period. Missionaries established churches and schools and introduced forms of orthography into local languages to facilitate translations of religious literature. As a result, indigenous language literatures blossomed in western, central, eastern, and southern Africa in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries.

Though the written literatures in African languages antedate in origin their European counter-parts, they are discussed after the more widespread modern Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone literatures perhaps because of the Western bias against African literary art. Nevertheless, Albert Gerard (1990) has mapped out a general historical overview that allows readers and students to gain a sense of the literary history of Sub-Saharan Africa as outlined below.

The earliest of these waves of literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa prior to the advent of colonialism is that of Ethiopia where written works which antedate the earliest literatures in the Celtic and Germanic languages of Western Europe have been discovered (Gerard 1990: 47).The earliest extant literary works in *Ge'ez* are believed to be translations of Christian religious writings from Greek, which may have influenced their style and syntax.

From the seventh century to the thirteenth, literary activity was on a downward spiral due to political disturbance until the revival of *Ge'ez* literature with the advent of the so called Solomonid Dynasty in 1270. The subject matter was mostly theological or strongly charged with religious considerations.

While much of this heritage involves hymns, hagiographies, and moral teachings, it also includes the development of unique literary forms that continue to influence today's writers. *Ge'ez* may be a dead language that is not understood by a majority of Ethiopians, but it is certainly alive in the sense that it is still widely used for liturgical purposes, and aspiring church leaders must master the literary forms associated with it.

The most prominent of these is (*Qene)*], a highly structured polysemantic form of poetry, composed in both *Ge'ez* and Amharic, which some scholars consider the definitive shaping force in Ethiopian culture(Levine (1965). The most popular work of this period was the *Kebra Negast* ("Glory of the Kings"), a combination of mythical history, allegory, and apocalypse, the central theme of which was investing an aura of political legitimacy, thereby to discourage the Zague Dynasty from aspiring for throne.

In the sixteenth Century, the assault of *Gragn Mohammed* had destroyed the *Ge'ez* literary heritage even though much of it survived and was preserved. In fact, Ge'ez was in marked decline as a literary language during that period and had long ceased to be vernacular despite its continuity as a literary language.

Amharic supplanted *Ge'ez* eventually, though the latter is distinctively liturgical as it is partly used in sermons and, wholly in periodic masses. The earliest extant texts in Amharic date back to the 14th century. Amharic has been considerably influenced in its grammar and vocabulary by the neighboring Cushitic tongues.

Currently, Amharic is the official language of Ethiopia spoken by overt 20 million people excluding Diasporic Ethiopians.

(http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/A/Amharic.asp).

Even though the critical thrust of the new Ethiopian literary trend was disrupted for the second time by the Italian conquest of 1936, the decade between 1950 and 1960 is said to be the golden age in the history of Amharic literature. More specifically, it was a decade of the flowering of the Amharic novel that nearly all the masterpieces and didactic works dealing with such issues as prostitution, corruption, acculturation, historical themes, alienation and political satire against the *status quo*, and the predicaments of intellectuals in their endeavor to cope with maladjustment problems and the repressions of family and state saw publication within the span of this decade.

The post-Revolution Amharic novel is, perhaps, best represented by Berhanu Zerihun's trilogy (*Ma'ebel Yabiot Wazem*a, 1972: *Mebatcha*, 1973: *Magist* 1975 E.C.), which serially chronicles the stormy heyday of the defunct February Revolution and its aftermath in the form of reportage. His contemporary, the late Be'alu Girma also deals with the reportage of the reign of White and Red Terrors as reflected in the bloody conflict between the Provisional Military Administrative Council (*Dergue*) and civilian wings like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP).

Ever since the advent of the incumbent Government to power, Amharic literature seems to be in a state of retrogression due to the situational shift in public focus from reading imaginative literature to scanning politically motivated tabloids and topical and pornographic magazines. In spite of this, the revival of Amharic literature in the mode of poetry and prose narratives is observable except drama which appears to be overshadowed by the emergent cinematography.

The second wave of indigenous literacy is believed to have evolved from the spread of Islam across North Africa through a series of *jihads*, or holy wars. From the seventh century on, Arab influence was prevalent on the east coast of Africa, where Arab traders and slavers were active .The Islamic exodus to Sub-Saharan Africa which had a colonial essence resulted in the emergence of mixed races due to intermarriage. The Arabic script was eventually adapted for Swahili, which

served as the *lingua franca,* of Central and East Africa. Early writings, by Muslim scholars and clerics, consist largely of celebrations in verse of religious figures. The first important modern Swahili writer was Tanzania's Shaaban Robert, who wrote in prose and verse, praising his traditional culture. The Islamic invaders who conquered and converted northern Africa in the seventh century had also influenced the Hausa literature of what are now northern Nigeria and southern Niger. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Islam was introduced into the Kingdom of ancient Ghana as a result of which the religion continued to move eastward through the nineteenth century (Owomoyela 1979: 23).

The third wave of literacy is that of Southern Africa or Xhosa literature whose history is linked to the Glasgow Mission of the 1820s. In addition to the *Bible*, one of the texts the missionaries translated for instruction was John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678 and 1684). This moral allegory provided the model for the first South African works of fiction, Thomas Mofolo's *Moeti Oa Bochabella* (1906) whose English version is *The Traveler of the East* (1934). Thus, some traditions of literary expression in African languages cultivated their own literary aesthetics and traditions while the others were only just emerging and taking on an increasing importance.

In conclusion, Dathorne (1975:3) maintains that there are approximately seven hundred African languages out of which only forty-nine have been employed as the medium of literary expression. However, I presume that this figure must have reasonably grown over the last three or four decades.

2.2. The Polemics of Conceptualizing MAL

Modern African literature was born in the educational systems imposed by colonialism, with models drawn from the European literary traditions. It covers the whole range of Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone creative writing over recognizable phases of development. However, the problem of definition has been confounding the Afrocentric as well as Eurocentric scholars interested in African Studies ever since the Dakar Colloquy (1963).

2.2.1 The Afrocentric Perspective

As a point of departure, African writers and critics have been grappling with the fundamental challenge of determining the parameters of African writing on various occasions. This issue was revisited by Anglophone Writers at the "Conference of African Writers of English Expression" held in Kampala, Uganda (1963) whose topical agenda was 'What is African literature?' According to Ngugi (*Decolonizing the Mind* 1986:6) the agenda of the debate was misdirected for the 'Conference of African Writers of English Expression' out rightly excluded African literatures in indigenous languages.

The high point of the ensuing debate was the famous essay by Obi Wali, "The Dead End of African literature" (*Transition* 1963), in which he declared that the literature written in European languages does not qualify as African literature. Although Achebe countered Wali's position, Ngugi embraced it, transforming the call for a return to African languages into a critical crusade that has lasted for more than four decades. Thus, Ngugi and Wali are bent on decolonizing African literature as aggressively as possible unlike Achebe who is a mid-fielder. It was a rather momentous and comprehensive meeting ever convened by the continent's major writers on the decolonization of the African literature.

By the same token, Abiola Irele (1981:10) also maintains that

> The term Africa appears to correspond to a geographical notion but we know that in practical terms, it also takes in those areas of collective awareness that have been determined by ethnic, historical and sociological factors, as they affect and express themselves in our literature marking off for it a broad area of reference. Within these areas of reference, then, and related to certain aspects that are intrinsic to the literature, the problem of definition involves as well a consideration of aesthetic modes in their intimate correlation to the cultural and social structures which determine and define the expressive elements of African peoples and societies.

Without prejudice to aesthetic beauty, they seem to capitalize on the socio-historical matrices of MAL rather than its medium of expression. However, Chinweinzu et al. (1983:11-12) who grapple with basic issues classify African literature into two paradigms and appear to oversimplify the complex problem of defining African literature.

As a result, they assert that

> It seems quite clear that works done for African audience by Africans, and in African languages whatever these works are- oral or written –constitute the historically indisputable core of African literature. Works done by Africans but in non-African languages and works done by non-African in African languages would be among those for which some legitimate doubt might be raised about their inclusion or exclusion from the canonical works of African literature; and it is for these works that some procedural decision [operational definition] would have to be established.

They seem to hold the view that the definition of African literature is unproblematic which is not the case. On the other hand, Abiy (1998) adheres to the geographical and historical approaches to the definition of African literature instead of other parameters like medium of expression or the biological identity of the writers. The geographic approach has to do with regionalization of African literature into East African, Central African, West African, Southern African and Northern African literatures.

The historical perspective, on the other hand, is believed to be the major celebrant of African literature over the years and involves the successive trends of development ranging from pre-colonial African literatures to those of the post-independence period. The proponents of the Afrocentric view, thus, advocate indigenization of the conception of African literature in spite of its historically conditioned peculiarities characterized by the resultant hybridity.

2.2.2 The Eurocentric Chauvinism

In contradistinction to the Afrocentric partisanship, there is a strong Eurocentric temptation to conceive modern African literature as an extension of European Realism. This is a chauvinistic tendency that reduces Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African literature into a mere appendage to European literary heritage. It seems that the emphasis is laid on the colonial language at the expense of literary subject matter in the post-imperial world. However, the colonial language alone cannot be singled out as the sole determinant of the literature of the second largest continent characterized by multilingualism and cultural hybridity.

Due to the problematic nature of the subject, European critics contend that African writing in European languages is more of a sociological and anthropological document than it is literary. Thus, Zell and Silver (1972) assert that African literature is nothing but a tool for a literate African arrogation of the essence of his cultural heritages or an assertion of the excellence of a black culture on a white dominated world as was the case with Negritude poetry. This kind of standpoint must have perhaps stemmed from an advertent evasion of the socio-historical matrix of modern African literature.

Likewise, Jahn Janheinz (1968) has evolved a chauvinistic theorization of African literature. He maintains that Black literature is characterized by regional style rather than any other literary canon (*A History of Neo-African Literature* 1969).His argument rests on the assumption that "Literature can only be classified by style and by the attitudes revealed more precisely by studying the individual works, analyzing their styles and attitudes and grouping them accordingly, and then fitting them into a tradition of similar styles and attitude" (Ibid: 21-22)

His assertive view presupposes the thematic parochialism of modern African literature and the implied stylistic inferiority of African writers reiterated by European literary critics. However, if African writers are 'accused of' drumming upon prevalent social and behavioral wrongs in their newborn countries or regions, the European notion of panorama does not appeal to the committed African writers.

All the more, whether it is lofty or inferior, style characterizes the individuality of a writer rather than the local color of a national/ regional literature. Jahn's s argument implies that the foreign language command of black African writers by Anglo-American standards is far less inferior which is not the case with many of them like Achebe, Armah, Ngugi, and Soyinka who have demonstrated their ability to write in a flawless or near perfect English.

2.2.3 An Operational Definition

In spite of the polarity of views between Afrocentric and Eurocentric critics on the conception of MAL, there is still room for an operational definition. In this regard, 'The Second Conference of African Literature and the Universities (1963)'' hosted by Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, had also adopted a motion in an attempt to

provide an operational definition. Accordingly (Wastberg 1967; Zell. H.M and Helene, S. (1972: VIII) provides that

> The Conference, being aware of the difficulty of defining African literature did not attempt to do so, but for the purpose of its own deliberations, agreed that the term should cover 'Any work in which an African setting is authentically handled or to which experiences originating in Africa are integral.

This operational definition apparently underpins the inherent value of the work rather than the biological identity and color of the writer or to the medium of expression employed. Thus, modern African literature is a new brand of world literature with its authentic and original themes, which are the direct results of colonization and the post-colonial anomaly. Nadine Gordimer (1973: 320) also asserts that

> African Literature is writing done in any language by Africans themselves and by others of whatever skin color who share with Africans the experience of having been shaped, mentally and spiritually by Africa rather than anywhere else in the world".

Having surveyed both sides, MAL may be conceived primarily as an imaginary cultural production composed of an African experience in a European or an African medium of expression and literary technique. An African experience, among other things evokes the bitter memories of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, culture-shock experienced by the been-tos, the triple burden of colonialism [viz. Western Christianity, economy and bureaucracy],cultural assimilation, problems of maladjustment and conflict of generations, the trials and tribulations of liberation movements, the evils of Apartheid, post-independence disillusionment and neo-colonialist structures implanted across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chinua Achebe, however, repudiates such a conception of African literature for its inadequacy. Achebe contends that such a definition of African literature is an over-simplification of a complex problem for African literature can not be cramped into a small neat definition but the sum total of all the "national and ethnic literatures through out Africa" (Wastberg 1967:11). He seems to be concerned with the various oral treasures plus written literatures in indigenous languages. Achebe's concern is shared by Abiola and Gikandi (2004) who, in their preface to *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature,* maintain:

> In conformity with accepted practice, therefore, the term "African literature" has been taken here to mean the literature that has been produced on the African continent, whatever the specific provenance of the oral or written text and of the corpus being considered, and whatever the language of expression of the text in question, the particular modes it employs, or the conventions to which it conforms.

Thus, Africa is viewed in geopolitical terms, covering both the Sub-Saharan regions habitually associated with black populations, as well as North Africa, including Egypt, inhabited today predominantly by Arab people. Thus, the operational definition constitutes not only the traditional as well as modern vernacular African writing but also the post-colonial African literature which has grown out of the ruptures created within Africa's history as a result of the scramble for Africa and its aftermath (Gordimer 1973).But whenever the need for qualification arises, the conception of African literature could be defined in terms of its medium of expression or periodization.

The other problem with the term 'African literature' is the morphological confusion between the pan-Africanist concept of '*African literatures'* and its singular counter-part. According to Chapman (2002:1), the former is preferable:

> There are good reasons why the plural form African Literatures should be preferred... African Literatures remind us that Africa is far from homogeneous in language, culture, religion, style, or in the processes of its modernity. Rather, it is what Ali A. Mazrui describes as something of a "bazaar".

This is to foreground the fact that multilingualism and cultural diversity characterize Africa as distinguished from monoglossic and homogenous societies. Martin Tucker (1967), for instance observes that African literature exists in several languages such as English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and German, Arabic, Amharic, Xhosa and so on. Thus, the plural form of African literatures helps us chart the range and the variety; the singular form helps lend coherence to the field of study. To polarize politics and art, for example, does a disservice to both African literature and African literatures. Whichever is employed, however, it all depends on the implied contextual meaning.

2.3 Literary Interventions

African Literature is characterized by partisanship to the masses while Western literature is said to be self-sufficient. As a point of departure, Kihende (2004) categorically states that African writers have an enduring propensity for social and political commitment as their works mostly reflect and refract the socio-political events in their respective societies with regional implications.

Mphahlele (1962) in his *African Image* also observes that the writer is the sensitive point in his community to foreground the fact that the African writer is in the forefront of the popular voice. Similarly, Ngugi makes a clear statement of belief that African intellectuals must align themselves with the struggle of the African masses for a meaningful national ideal, for a form of social organization that will free the manacled spirit and energy of our people in order to build a new country and sing a new song (in Nkosi 1968:256).

Nkosi, also notes that the role of the writer within the community has been drastically reversed following what he calls "the destruction of African values by European imperialism and the concomitant Christianization of Africans".(*Home and Exile*, 1965:104) .

Thus, Achebe (1964) contends that African societies had traditional wit and wisdom, which was but lost during the colonial period. He reiterates that the role of the writer in newborn nations is not to beat these mornings' headlines but to 'help his people regain what they lost and where the rain began to beat them. (See Killam 1973). In the same vein, Soyinka also maintains that "the African artist has always functioned as the recorder of mores and experiences of his society and as a voice of vision in his own time" (Wauthier 1978:334).

A similar sentiment is shared somewhat more trenchantly by Chinweizu and Madubuike (1975:78-79) as reflected in their observation:

> The function of the artist in Africa, in keeping with our traditions and needs, demands that the writer, as a public voice, assume a responsibility to reflect public concerns in his writings, and not preoccupy himself with his puny ego. Because in Africa we recognize that art is in the public domain, a sense of social commitment is mandatory for the artist...It demands that his theme be germane to the concerns of his community.

Apparently, these polemics and the near unanimous position of African writers and literary critics reflect the predicament of African writers in general and post-colonial novelists in particular who seem to have been entrusted with a patriotic mission and vision of championing the cause of freedom, good governance and cultural relocation thus employing literature as a means to an end.

Thus, writers like Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka, Aluko, Awoonor, and Armah, whether they are alienated or not, tend to stress the communal vision and purpose of their writing. This standpoint presupposes that

> An African creative writer who ventures to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up with complete irrelevance -like that 'absurd man in the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames (Achebe, March 1969:80).

Thus, the role of the African writer is one of socio- political commitment unlike that of the Western writer concerned more with aesthetics than the didactic value of literature. With regard to its historical evolution, Palmer (1979: 153) asserts that

> The African novel is a reaction to the consequences of the imperialist occupation and exploitation- a historical process that comprised three phases: The phase of imperialist conquest with consequent erosion and disruption of traditional of African values, the phase of anti- imperialist rebellion coming next; and the period of post- independence, largely one of readjustment intended to rediscover lost values.

More recently, Kehinde (2004:228) has also corroborated the widely held view that African literature has always been chained to the experiences of the continent over three recognizable phases:

> Initially, African literature was a tool for celebrating the heroic grandeur of the African past. Later it was used for anti-colonial struggle. Presently, it is being employed as a veritable weapon for depicting the postcolonial disillusionment in African nations.

In fact, African writers after the 1970s have moved far beyond the stage of disillusionment and the post-independence mourning to the extent of demanding change. This is shown in a brief survey of major trends of development in the history of Anglophone African novel.

2.3.1 Idealization of the Past (1911-1940s)

African literature in English, which exists in a historical continuum, has been dominated by the historical and hence nationalist themes across East, West and Southern Africa. In its early phase of development (the 1930's), thematic emphasis was laid on works of art whose function was to refute the colonialist view that prior to the contact with the outside world, Africa was ignorant of any history and culture worth speaking of.

The first work written by an African about Africa to be published was *Ethiopia Unbound* by Joseph Casely-Hayford, a Sierra Leonean of Ghanaian descent, in 1911. Prose narratives by Africans of this period were thematically concerned with cultural conflict in which case the writer's nostalgia for the heroic past is evoked. It was characterized by the drive to explain the past and to relate it to the present in anticipation of the future.

The first generation of African writers was generally intent upon re-writing the colonial history and sociology of Africa, with a view to addressing such issues as how and why the continent was overrun by foreign rulers, what the consequences of this invasion were, whether pre-colonial African societies were characterized by savagery and thus needed the "civilizing" guidance of colonial Powers. African writers of this period contend that Africa had advanced systems of economic organization, quasi-democratic political arrangements and well-developed cultural institutions.

Perhaps, this phase was a reaction to what is most familiarly phrased as "the White Man's Burden" as a result of which the introduction of Western model curriculum intended to train civil service personnel for colonial bureaucracies replaced traditional initiation practices by tribal chiefs.

In sum, the first products of this new literature were devoted to the affirmation and validation of a unique and valuable African identity and the articulation of grievances and complaints against the entrenched order. In fact, the pros and cons of colonialism remain to be highly contentious issues to-date among scholars.

2.3.2 Protest against Colonialism (1950-1960s)

Contemporary African writing of all genres was inextricably rooted in the experience of colonial rule as the key tenet of imperialist ideology was to view

indigenous cultures and peoples as possessing no values of their own worth perpetuating, thus rendering them prime candidates for the 'civilizing mission' of Europeans. Once the cultural nationalist theme was dispensed with, African literature of the late fifties and early sixties began to expose the disastrous socio-economic and cultural impacts of colonialism on the African psyche.

The second-generation writers moved away from the semi-biographical Afro-centric presentation of the past into straight autobiographical presentation of the clash of cultures and themes of colonial injustice. Examples are Peter Abrahams (*Mine Boy*, 1946), Camara Laye (*The African Child*, 1955) and Kenneth Kaunda (*Zambia Shall Be Free*, 1962) etc.

Other second-generation writers continued with the tradition of protest but did this by purely fictional devices. Examples are Mongo Beti (*Mission to Kala*, 1954), Ferdinand Oyono (*Houseboy*, 1956/1966, *The Old Man and the Medal*), Chinua Achebe (*Things Fall Apart*, 1958), T.M. Aluko (*One Man One Wife*, 1959) Sembene Ousmane (*God's Bits of Wood*, 1960) Alan Paton (*Cry the Beloved Country* (1946) Alex La Guma (*'A Walk in the Night'*, 1962) Ngugi (*Weep Not Child*, 1964).Their literature is referred to as committed writing, since they are entrusted with a creative re-interpretation of history.

For instance, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1970), for instance, writes back to or engages in a dialogue with English writers. His novel demonstrates how Post-Colonial writers challenge the English writers' cultural, racial, and gender assumptions and misconceptions about distant peoples and their lands as well as how they voice new visions of human relations between Europe and its former colonies like the Sudan.

This phase marks the end of the search for roots or the promotion of cultural nationalism and the beginning of political satire. The first two generations of modern African writers thus aimed at establishing the validity of African culture and creating a new heroic myth of the ancestral past

2. 3. 3 Post-Independence Disillusionment

In the wake of WW II, the thematic emphasis of modern African novels, shifted to the criticism of the inadequacies of the new governances and the social dilemma in

which independent African States found themselves. The literary themes of this period include the legacy of colonialism, social problems such as corruption, economic disparities in newly independent countries, and the rights and roles of women- unforeseen problems which further compounded the older ones.

Particularly, the post-independence generation of West African and East African writers often constitutes a violent indictment of the political depravity that has become the norm in many countries of the continent. This indictment, which sometimes takes the form of a pungent satire, is all the more striking in view of the fact that the number of writers who choose to deal with the themes of corruption, nepotism and the ineptitude of African demagogues seems to be increasing by the day.

The major impulse in the novels at this stage was towards satire as reflected in Cyprian Ekewnsi's *Jagua Nana* (1961), Soyinka's *The Interpreters (1965),* T.M. Aluko's *Chief, the Honorable Minister (1965)* and Achebe's *A Man of the People (1966).* To begin with Ekwensi, *it should be stated that* he paints a somber picture of Nigerian political life. The heroine, an ageing prostitute, persuades a politician to have her young lover who has supposedly jilted her murdered by his party assassins. This is a bitter indictment of the nepotism of politicians who meddle with the private affairs of civilians.

Another prolific Nigerian writer of this period is Wole Soyinka. Soyinka's novel, *The Interpreters,* is concerned with the bunch of Nigerian intellectuals trying to make something of their lives and talents in a society where corruption and consequent cynicism, social climbing and conforming, give them alternate cause for despair and laughter.'

One of them, the engineer, Sekoni, has his project for a power station rejected by a European technician. This provokes a scandal from which an African dignitary profits by obtaining damages on behalf of a company at the head of which he has placed his own niece. Another character, Sagoe, quickly discovers how his newspaper is being used for the purposes of blackmail. Egbo, who is in a sense, the leader of the group is skeptical (Wautheir 1978).

Similarly, T.M. Aluko's *Chief, Honorable Minister* (1965) recounts the rise of a parliamentarian, Alade Moses, to a ministerial position only to become a resigned

observer of the widespread corruption at the heart of the government, and the intrigues of foreign embassies against the internal affairs of Nigeria. Consequently, a rigged election provokes a bloody conflict or battle between the pro-government armed bands and supporters of the opposition party. As in many Sub-Saharan African countries, the story ends with a declaration of military take-over by the armed forces.

Chinua Achebe is no less ironic in *A Man of the People* .The 'man of the people' in question is the Minster of Culture, the semi-literate Chief Nanga. He seduces the girl friend of a young teacher, Odili Samalu, who out of spite joins a revolutionary group whose activities terminate in bloodshed. *A Man of the People* (1966) is a disillusioned story of political corruption and intimidation in independent Nigeria. Almost all Nigerian novelists attack the collapse of optimism and morale as opposed to the pre-independence promises, which were prematurely nullified in spite of their extravagance.

It is not only the Nigerian writers who were disillusioned with the political life of their country. Ghanaian novelists like Cameron Duodo also attack the economic and social absurdities of the post-Independence period. Cameron Duodo's *The Gab Boys* (1967) is a portrayal of Ghana as experienced by the semi-literate but intelligent youth nick-named 'gab boys' for wearing gabardine trousers. Most of them spend their time in idling and reflecting upon the political events unfolding in their country

Besides, Armah's *The Beautyful Ones are Not Yet Born (1970)* is a somber account of the corruption of Nkrumah's regime. The hero, a railway employee, refuses to take part in the rampant corruption, in spite of the reproaches of his wife and his mother-in-law, who consider him to be over-scrupulous. When the Osagyefo falls, the first reactions of his colleagues suggest that a new race of profiteers will soon take the place of those who have had their fill. It is the most pessimistic, novel with the finest treatment of corruption with which contemporary Ghana was ridden. The socio-political setting of the story spans from Nkrumah's civilian government to the military *junta*, which ousted his Convention People's Party from power in 1966.

Another Ghanaian writer, Kofi Awoonor, has also published two novels the first of which is *This Earth, My Brother* (1971). The title of the novel derives from a

traditional dirge which mourns on the grave consequences of withdrawal from reacting against the ravages that have befallen post-colonial African countries amongst which is Ghana. The strand of the novel deals with the new nation represented by a baby on a dunghill believed to be the source of both rot and regeneration, corruption, graft, stagnation, imported practices and notions, empty and shallow intellectuals and shallower rulers (Awoonor 1971).

Another contemporary embittered with the hollowness of the post-independence body politic is Kenya's Meja Mwangi. Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* (1973) exposes a hidden world of backstreets and wretched humanity. His work provides a representative view of the literature of the country as a whole, reflecting its main concerns and the direction of its evolution. The other two novels belong to the same tradition of social engagement.

In *Going Down River Road* (1976) Mwangi introduces the themes of social class stratification and its dire consequences like poverty and break- up of families and a destitute crowd, striving for survival under conditions of near slavery with no prospects for improvement.

Beneath the layer of apathy, a few workers retain some capacity for human compassion and a trace of the hostile world. *The Cockroach Dance* (1979) centers on the city slums as an additional citadel of human degradation and on the strangely carefree subordination of the slum-dwellers to their surroundings.

2.3.4 Contemporary Trends of Development in EAL/WAL

The 1970s ushered in a new direction of African literature with defiant writers forging new forms of expression reflecting more assertively their own thoughts about culture and politics in their works. The preoccupation with current political and social problems became pervasive in a number of contemporary African writings.

This stride is attributed to the ferocity of the conflict and the degree of viciousness and the losses in lives and property caused by civil wars which, in turn, convinced certain sensitive African writers that the comic phase of African politics was over and the tragic one had begun. In other words, the collapse of civic order and constitutionality was total and the arbitrariness of an age of militarist adventurism imperiled everything.

Consequently, the state of affairs had affected young ideologically radical intellectuals and artists who mounted a critical opposition against entrenched tyranny. The detention of Wole Soyinka, the exile of Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the death of Christopher Okgibo and Saro-Wiwa are but a few examples of the repression of the non-conformist intellectuals or the impetuous sons of Africa!

Thus, the third phase had to go beyond disillusionment to the point of launching mass mobilization against the national cancers due to the failure of satire to affect the insensitive politicians and their cohorts like the parasitic national bourgeoisie. On the contrary, corruption escalated, political repression increased and violence which was sporadic at the time of independence became institutionalized in private armies of thugs recruited by political parties for the sole purpose of harassing opposition groups and driving them out of political competition.

Military dictatorships and totalitarian regimes in most African countries swept away the nascent, multi-party democratic experiments in the new states. Nigeria, the Sudan, Congo (Zaire), Chad, Somalia, Burundi, Uganda, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Liberia have experienced the horrors of civil war. Major African writers are well represented in this phase through works like Wole Soyinka's *Season of Anomy* (1973). Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) plus Devil *on the Cross* (1982) Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979), Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). And Moses Isegawa'a *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000)

In *Season of Anomy*, (1973), Soyinka depicts the state of anomy as the worst and most dangerous condition into which any society could degenerate, or be driven. As one can deduce from the title, it is a time of lawlessness chaos and disorder. The plot follows a variety of characters including an artist named Ofeyi, a cold-blooded assassin named Demakin, and a utopian community called Aiyero in a narrative that is thematically linked to the myths of Orpheus and Eurydice. It is set against a period of National aberration when relationships between men and men (and men and nature) have been warped into destructive patterns of hostility

The order of the day appears to be the pervasive presence of anarchy where the rule of law should have prevailed. The section-headings of *Season of Anomy*-from

"Seminal" to "Buds" to *"Tentacles"* to *"Harvest" to "Spores"*- suggest a general movement from natural birth to fruition and then to a distributive rebirth. The *harvest* may be seen in this sense as having been reaped prematurely when it was not ripe enough.

It is a profound meditation on, as well as a terrifying account of entrenched tyranny, attempted resistance and its defeat with guarded optimism. An anonymous reviewer summarizes the socio-political atmosphere that this story evokes in the blurb as

> When corrupt power- economically dominant and militarily maintained-- is challenged by those whose idealism is humane and principled, the ancient scare tactics of ethnic rivalry are unleashed against the would be liberators. Their resistance is crushed when the madness of an 'ethnic cleansing' drive takes hold of the majority of the population

The other contemporary work is Achebe's latest novel, *Anthills of the Savannah (1987)*. Set in the fictional nation of Kangan, the plot revolves around the fate of two prominent intellectuals victimized in a military crackdown orchestrated by the Nation's president-for-life who is their childhood friend. The editor of the *National Gazette* is assassinated by the security officers while demonstrating students and workers are shot dead in cold-blood. Narration shifts between these two characters and their female colleague, Beatrice, who works in the Ministry of Finance.

Achebe projects powerful insights into the reality of many African republics, grappling with corruption, natural disasters, poverty, and illiteracy, lack of national consciousness and influence of former European colonizers. The novel evokes the images of vast African savannahs and tropical rainforests, the humor of the people and their deep love for one another. The crux of this novel is one of topical urgency in Nigeria's as well as Africa's, chequered political history.

The solution proffered at the end of the novel suggests that this must be taken as the author's latest contribution to the burning issues of violence, inhumanity, injustice and instability in Sub-Saharan Africa. Achebe appears to affirm that the ultimate national/regional salvation lies beyond polarities, in the fusion of opposing forces and their co-operation and the dire need for a populist coalition against internal tyranny and external maneuvers.

Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977) is another contribution to the post-colonial African novel. It deals with the inequality, hypocrisy, and betrayal of peasants and workers in post-independence Kenya. It is a damning indictment of the corruption and greed of Kenya's political, economic, and social elite who, after the struggle for freedom from British rule, have not returned the wealth of the land to its people but rather perpetuate the social injustice and economic inequality that were a feature of colonial oppression. In addition to criticizing this neocolonialism, the novel is also a bitter critique of the economic system of capitalism and its destructive, alienating effects on traditional Kenyan society.

In 1980, Ngugi published the first modern novel in Gikuyu entitled CAITAANI *MUTHARA-INI (Devil on the Cross-)*. What is central to this novel is the neo-colonial economic factor remote-controlled by foreign businessmen. More specifically, they handed the economic machinery over to their servants through whom they maintained their stranglehold.

The Biblical parable of the talents is taken up by Ngugi and re-interpreted in the novel. The good servants who make profits for their master in the Bible story become the neocolonial comprador bourgeoisie of *Devil on the Cross* and the bad servant who buries his talent becomes the good nationalist fighting against neocolonial exploitation of the economy.

With regard to Somalia, the most famous Anglophone writer to emerge from this country has been Nuruddin Farah. His trilogy later published as *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship* (1979) comprising *Sweet and Sour Milk, Sardines* (1981), and *Close Sesame* (1983), is concerned with dictatorial power. The first two novels revolve around the authority of fathers over their sons.

The title of the first set of novels, *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship*, follows the gradual disillusionment with General Siad Barre's regime on the part of those who had vested their hopes in the Military Government. Generally, it reflects the hopelessness a nation feels in fighting against a tyranny it had helped to create while the questions raised are panoramic in scope.

Farah's *first* trilogy was followed by his *Blood in the Sun* trilogy, composed of *Maps* (1986), *Gifts* (1992), and *Secrets* (1998). *Maps* (1986) which is set against the 1977-78 Ogaden war considered by the Somalis as an act of betrayal, portrays the agony of people who live in a country whose borders have been haphazardly demarcated by colonialists after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 which culminated with the Partition of Africa. The Soviet Union had ditched its former client, General Siad Barre, in favor of the former Marxist regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile- Mariam of Ethiopia while the United States, having "lost" Ethiopia, stepped in as Somalia's backer.

In *Gifts* (1993) and *Secrets* (1998), Farah extends his territory beyond Somalia and the Ogaden to an international playing field where foreign food donations have created a buffer zone between corrupt leaders and the starving masses. Foreign food donations also sabotage the African's ability to survive with dignity and freedom. Farah conjures a strange and densely spirited world of Somalia in 1995 when the echoing gunfire of clan violence and civil war was creeping into the capital - Mogadishu.. As a whole, they are tales of civil conflict that has dominated Somalia for over three decades and portrayals of a besieged nation which is abandoned by the world.

A similar development was also unfolding in Uganda as reflected in Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000), which recounts the disillusionment of Ugandans under Idi Amin Dada's regime. *Abyssinian Chronicles (2000)* is as much a history of Uganda's post-colonial past, as a chronicle of the country's bloody cycle of excesses by one wretched leader after another, which could be well styled as one of the worst cycles of the abuse of power Africa has ever experienced.

Abyssinian Chronicles, which runs from the 1960s Sixties through the 1980s, describes the fate of a young man from the provinces and the members of his extended family. In fact, the plot structure is stranded into a saga of a troubled family and the chronicle of a troubled post-colonial nation under the grips of the Obote-Amin Changeover with all its social, psychological and economic implications. This particular period thus marks the stride of Anglophone novelists from pessimism to optimism, from intellectual resignation to mass mobilization and from critical observation to signposting the way forward.

2.4 The Peculiarity of Ethiopian Literature in English

Ethiopian literature in English which evolved 1n the early 1960s, is concurrent with Amharic literature. In the wake of WWII, English supplanted French as the official second language of Ethiopia and was adopted as the medium of instruction, much of the business sector and the diplomatic sphere. (Gerard 1986).Upon the inauguration of Haile-Selassie I University (what is now AAU) in 1961,the Department of Foreign Languages was able to maintain high standards of competence through a number of literary publications like *Something ,Mennen, Addis Reporter* and *Ethiopia Observer.*

Even though the cultural production of Ethiopian writers in English can not be subsumed under the post-colonial canon, a couple of Ethiopian prolific writers who are already famous for their Amharic works have also published novels in English. All the more, they are engaged in the common cause for the common good alongside their fellow Anglophone African writers that their works partake pan-Africanist issues like recreation of traditional culture, corruption, protest against fascist invasion, culture-shock, power struggle, critique of military dictatorships, abuse of power, and political satire against the depravity of post-colonial governances.

2.4.1 Literary Genres

A cursory survey of Ethiopian Literature in English reveals that our writers have contributed a kaleidoscopic spectrum of literary genres. To begin with, playwrights and poets like the late Tsegaye and Mengistu are famous for their respective tragic and comic geniuses. Tsegaye, who was the contemporary of the late Poet-President Sedar Senghor, has published a range of poems laden with overtones of the Negritude movement in addition to his inspiring historical plays. In "Theodros" (*Ethiopia Observer* IX (1965), Poet-Laureate Tsegaye recreates the rise and fall of the eponymous king of Eighteenth century Ethiopia in a chronological order from his prime age down to his heroic fall at Maqudella spanning over a period of thirty years. His play "Oda Oak Oracle" also features the conflict between Christian values and traditional animistic beliefs which linger to date in some parts of the country and attacks the stereotypical public perception of artists in general and vocalists in particular.

His contemporary, Mengistu, has among others, has composed two plays in the tradition of comedy of manners entitled *The Marriage of Unequals* (1970) and *Marriage by Abduction* (1972) both of which were subsequently rendered into Amharic. *The Marriage of Unequals* deals with the problem of social class discrimination and generation gap including the predicament of the been- to in the context of traditional *status quo* while *Marriage by Abduction* recreates the traditional mock-heroic practice of abducting girls, thereby, to enforce marriage much against their will

Apart from poets and dramatists, it is worth considering the pioneering novelists. Ashenafi Kebede's *Confession (1965)* is believed to be the first Anglophone Ethiopian novel .It deals with America's racial prejudice against immigrants in such a manner that resonates with the Apartheid era in which case inter-racial marriage was forbidden by law. The other slender volume, which deals with the theme of colonial invasions, is Wolde Haile's *Defend the Name* (1969) although it is organizationally defective to qualify as a coherent work of art (Debebe 1980:80).

Sahle-Selasse's historical novel *The Warrior King* (sic. 1974) which evokes the socio-political atmosphere of Modern Ethiopia characterized by power struggle between the emergent Theodros and the decadent nobility backed by the clergy. *The Warrior King* is an historical novel, which recounts the rise of Theodros II to the political arena of 18th century Ethiopia with two grand ideals-national unification, and modernization - against many odds such as the concerted intrigues of the clergy and the nobility. (Taye 1980:80). Thus, Theodros has become a legendary figure and source of inspiration for many Ethiopian novelists, dramatists and poets.

Abbe's *Defiance* 1975) is another historical novel that recreates the fascist invasion of Ethiopia. (1935-41).The *Adwa* complex, whether it meant the symbolic victory of the Black race over Italian Fascism or a vengeful counter-offensive by the latter, is a turning point in the Euro-African conflict. Thus Italy, after forty years of military build-up rose grudgingly against Ethiopia in 1935.

The Occupation Period lasted for about five years. (1936-1941). Despite military and diplomatic efforts both at home and abroad to the point of appealing to the League of Nations, the fascist army under Graziani's command carried out reprisal

actions in Addis Ababa ranging from raping and duels to massive onslaught.

The other slender volume by the same author is *Afrsata (1968)* named after the traditional Ethiopian institution of crime investigation. The pivotal point of the story is the burning of a hut in a certain Gurage village, which entails an attempt to track down the suspect through traditional inspection mechanism. *Fire Brands* (1978), another novel by Sahle-Selassie, appears to be a political satire directed against the corruption -change - corruption cycle of pre-Revolution Ethiopia.

Moreover, Dagnachew's *The Thirteenth Sun* (1968) is a strong social satire directed against the socio-economic conditions of pre-Revolution Ethiopia, which ironically stands for thirteen months of darkness, poverty, and stagnation.

The title of the novel is drawn from a promotional poster copyrighted by the former Ethiopian Tourism Commission, which runs:

> **Beautiful Ethiopia!**
> **Thirteen Months of Sun Shine!**
> **Smoke *Nyala*! Smoke *Kittle-worq*!**

by way of advertising the local brands of cigarettes in question. The uncanny Thirteenth Month-Pagumen- is at once a hyperbolic and ironic representation of the impenetrable darkness with which the Ethiopian masses had been shrouded under the monarchy.

What is even more ironic about such ventures, however, is the fact that both the defunct February Revolution and the quasi-democratic rhetoric of the incumbent governance have backfired upon the dreams of the populace thereby allegedly plunging the nation 'from the frying pan to the fire'. Because what is visible on the ground is an aggravation rather than an alleviation of socio-political and economic problems .This is coupled with parochialism and divisive tendencies emanating from Ethnic Federalism for which there seems to be no historical precedence.

Stylistically, *The Thirteenth Sun* is characterized by imagery of decadence. The imagery is of perceptual nature visual, auditory, and olfactory, generating stagnation, corruption, dwindling and degeneration. The recurrent images of cleansing via spring water, holy water, *Koso*, rain, flood, thunderstorm scavenging animals, fire, conflagration and the color-red are instrumental in the removal of the

stinking decay (Taye 1994:747).Dagnachew fits well into the post-colonial paradigm due to his textual strategy such as introducing editorial intrusions in which case translated and untranslated vernacular diction is incorporated into his novel with a glossary.

Over the last four decades, the Western media have associated Ethiopia with horrifying images of famine, disease and mass starvation due to natural and man-made disasters. Yet, Ethiopia's history and culture are far greater than the sum total of those tragic events. In Africa's colonial history, Ethiopia was much less a victim than an astute player in the imperial game, able to wring territorial concessions out of otherwise haughty European powers like fascist Italy.

However, the country has experienced a bloody political strife between the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC/*Dergue*) and civilian wings like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). Coupled with the ''reign of White Terror and Red Terror' under the military rule were lack of good governance and rural/urban poverty. Such national issues are known to have triggered novis Ethiopian writers like Nega Mazelikia and his contemporary Eyasu Alemayehu who have published widely acclaimed satirical novels.

Nega Mezlekia's *Notes from the Hyena's Belly* (2000) confidently plumbs these contradictory impulses of Ethiopian history. It is a memoir that magnificently transcends the genre. His evocation of the landscape of despair and violence is informed by uncommon insight. He tells of the disintegration of his family, his own flight, first to the Netherlands, then as an exile in Canada. He also dwells on the hideousness of power, the militarization of his country, the perils of war, and the sabotage of Carter's Administration for imposing a military embargo on Ethiopia during the Ethio-Somali border Conflict of 1977-8.

Similarly, *The Case of the Socialist Witchdoctor and Other Stories (1993)* by Eyasu Alemayehu who writes under a pseudonym (Hama Tuma) is yet another anthology of satirical essays directed against socialist revolutionaries and the war-torn history of post-Revolution Ethiopia. 'The first half consists of satirical stories set in a court of law where such dangerous criminals as queue-breakers and incurable hedonists are tried. As case follows case in the courtroom, the most topsy-turvy arguments

lead to more and more bizarre conclusions.

Give Me a Dog's Life Any Day : *African Absurdities* II (2004) by Hama Tuma, is an anthology of satirical articles on the double standards that exist, the follies of governments and politicians, the endemic problems of Africa, and the ineptitude of African demagogues and failures of governance and the entrenched tyranny via the prism of irreverent satire.

Hama Tuma's anthology has made a significant contribution to surfacing many of the contradictions that afflict the Africa from within-leader and political systems- and from without a colonial mindset and economic relationships-that still mirror the vestiges of imperialism and neo-colonialism, as well as globalization which has come back in a new dress. On top of all these, he ridicules African governments' dependency on foreign aid and their subservience to neo-colonial masters, which is the national/regional cancer of Africa.

In the recent past, he has also published another work entitled *Democratic Cannibalism-African Absurdities* III (2007) which is the third anthology of satirical articles lashing at tyranny and double standards pervasive in Africa and the world at large. Hama Tuma writes with his usual irreverence and biting satire on the foibles of tyrants and the tragedy of the world with emphasis on Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur self-styled saviors of Africa, the hide and seeks between Bush and Osama. He has also incorporated articles specific to Ethiopia and another section to cast a light on his views on the role of the Africa writer. Currently, it is gratifying to note the flowering of Diasporic Ethiopian novelists in English obsessed with pan-Africanist and universal issues.

2.4.2 Cultural and Historical Peculiarities

Ethiopian cultural identity is inveterately intertwined with a uniquely African Christianity that traces its ancestry directly to Early Church traditions, rather than arriving via Europe. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, originating in the fourth century and functioning as the State Church until it was disestablished by the *Dergue in* 1974, continues to wield heavy influence in both political and cultural spheres (Levine 1965).

Consequently, modern Ethiopian literature in English does not conform to the rest of black African literature for obvious reasons such as religious antiquity, the long

standing literary tradition, and political sovereignty. Firstly, wherever Christianity is treated by Ethiopian writers, it is never portrayed as an alien culture but as a deep-rooted heritage, which has been cherished ever since the 4th century A.D.

The other black African writers, however, perceive Christianity as an intrinsically alien and destructive culture which has arguably lured the people away from traditional gods or idols. Consequently, they hardly acknowledge the fact that Christian values have offered spiritual development over the traditional animistic practices. Accordingly, for other black Africans, to be a convert is to be damned; not saved. Gordimer (1972) maintains that this attitude sets on its head the traditional white view of Christianity leading the Dark continent into light though the issue is disputable.

Secondly, unlike many other African countries, Ethiopia has not only its own alphabet but also a rich literary tradition, including translations from ancient Greek, Arabic and other languages into *Ge'ez* and Amharic. The classical language is *Ge'ez,* though over time *Ge'ez* literature became the domain of a small portion of the population. Most of these writings had a religious or mythological character, whereas secular literature mainly dealt with historical topics

For instance, with the restoration of Ethiopian independence after the Italian occupation of 1936–41, a great impetus was given to Amharic literature, with Emperor Haile Selassie encouraging authors to produce various literary genres on didactic and patriotic themes. Irrespective of this legacy, a couple of Ethiopian writers have published works in English to win international recognition and to salvage our literature from fossilization.

The other dominant theme of polemical African literature is protest against colonialism that the novels set in colonial Africa reveal much more than a study of the traumatic effects of colonialism on the subject people across the continent (Wauthier 1978). Among other things, it involves protest against the triple burdens of colonialism (viz. cultural imposition, economy and bureaucracy), coupled with the infamous Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

On the contrary, the treatment of the theme of protest against colonialism in Ethiopian literature is not as strident as is the case with the rest of Black African literature. Because the political history of Ethiopia differs markedly from much of

the rest of Africa. A brief summary of the country's exceptional status must include the fact that it has never experienced the yoke of European colonialism. This is a tribute to the symbolic victory of *Adwa* (1896) over Italian fascism spear-headed by Menelik II. In fact, the annals of history have chronicled a number of bloody confrontations between our avowed enemies and our motherland on a number of battlegrounds.

However, the colonial aspirations of 'Greater Somalia' the Turks, the Dervish, imperial Egypt and fascist Italy were defeated on a number of occasions. Thus, Ethiopia has never experienced the yoke of colonialism except for the five -year occupation period (1928 -1933 E.C.) characterized by diplomatic campaign as well as armed resistance against Italian fascism.

Thus, Ethiopian writers have ventured to employ English as an alternative medium of expression, perhaps, to salvage Ethiopian literature from fossilization. However, the view that they have opted to write in English in order to circumvent censorship is unjustifiable by any standards. Because the Secret Service of this country across the governances of the past thirty or forty years was conversant with English.

2. 5. The Temporal Distance and Thematic Incongruence of SAL

The experience of Southern African novelists markedly differs from that of their East and West African counterparts. While East and West African writers of the post-independence African states grappled with the problems of new Africa, the Southern region (viz., South African, Zimbabwe and the former Portuguese territories like Angola and Mozambique) was still contending with colonialism.

However, even though the independence of Zimbabwe and South Africa is a recent phenomenon, the writers from these countries are no less obsessed with the socio-political anomaly pervading their region.

2. 5.1 Land and Gender in the Zimbabwean Novel

Three significant developments are identifiable in the post-colonial Zimbabwean novel. The first one is "the increasing importance of women writers and the consequent focus on women in society, and the second is historical fiction that comes down on the side of the people against politicians and oppressors. The third one concerns the question for land tenure. Though the three developments are

highly visible strands in Zimbabwean writing they are often treated independently. The Zimbabwean Liberation Movement was celebrated by the country's literature both in indigenous as well as in foreign languages. The historical novels draw on a tradition of writing, which includes women's testimony of the struggle for liberation and the literature foregrounding gender and the hidden histories of the war.

In *Nehanda* (1993), the eponymous heroine and the spirit mother of the Zimbabwean Nation, is executed by white settlers in 1896-7, but remains a death-defying icon, taunting the settlers even as they slip the noose over her head. She is said to be the legendary source of inspiration for freedom fighters and nationalists.

Moreover, this erosion of divisions is made explicit in a number of "crossover" texts, which include Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* (1988) and Vera's *The Stone Virgins (2002). Bones* is the first novel in Zimbabwean literature to focus on African reaction to colonialism from the point of view of gender. It is about Marita as a wife in a rural community, as a laborer on a vast commercial farm, as a mother whose only son opts to fight for freedom, and finally, as a woman whose experiences symbolize those human aspirations which revolve around the need for freedom and self-fulfillment.

Similarly, a perusal of Vera's works like *Stone Virgins* (2000) reveals a consistent theme: the ills that women experience as they struggle to break free from male domination. Part: I. (1950-1980) covers the first four chapters while part II (1980-1986) ranges from chapter five to seventeen. Shortly after independence from the Smith regime, Zimbabwe experienced a period of political uncertainty as it came under the assault of disgruntled dissidents. This is the time when the two sisters' lives are changed forever, thrust from the life they knew before into a path of darkness that is drenched in blood and madness. The story then climaxes as it traces the remaining sisters' tale of survival in the complex city.

The Shona word *Zimbabwe*, which means " stone house " is most certainly not lost on the author of a novel featuring carved stone virgins which have silently witnessed years of devastation and loss and have outlasted them. So do the Stone Virgins whisper that Zimbabwe may yet survive these man- made problems provided that communities can be restored, history remembered and the nationals

are selflessly committed to the cause of freedom and justice.

2. 5.2 Anti-Apartheid Reportage

South African literature has been a fragmented and divided subject, categorized by race, language, ethnicity, and geography into multiple, mutually isolated streams of literary histories. This multiplicity is the result of the complex history of colonization and domination in South Africa.

The white minority government of the National Party, in power from 1948 until 1994, further encouraged the fragmentation of South Africa into segregated areas under Apartheid. They established a policy of censorship, which not only prevented the publication of many books by authors within South Africa, but also effectively kept works written by authors in exile from circulation within the country.

In spite of such inconveniences, however, South African writers have produced a vibrant and accomplished corpus of novels. Early novels of this period were Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1946), Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy* (1946). Richard Rive's *Emergency* (1964) is a gripping tale set against the background of the Sharpeville Massacre and the first South African declaration of a state of emergency in 1960). This was followed by Alex La Guma's haunting prison novel *The Stone Country* (1967).

One of the literary genres in which such views are expressed is the autobiography. It is useful as a means of protest and a very appealing one to the South African blacks so much so that the autobiographies out number the other novels. In depicting his past reminiscence and impressions, the autobiographer gives a panoramic social, economic and political view of life in South Africa.

Among many others, Peter Abrahams' *Tell Freedom* (1954) is the leading example of such works. It was the chronicle of people struggling against the burdens of colonialism such as industrialization and the consequent exploitation and oppression of the proletariat. Thus, after the Sharpeville Massacre and the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-African Congress in 1960,most of the black African writers left their country either to escape the clear threat of arrest or because they were expelled after their release from detention.

Nearly almost all famous writers like Peter Abrams, Ezekiel Mpahlele, Bloke Mondisane, Alex La Guma, Dennis Brutus and Lewis Nkosi had their books banned under the censorship laws or of the suppression of Communism Act. The former were enforced by a commission which censors books regarded as subversive to state security and good morals while the latter allowed the so called Ministry of Justice to ban the reproduction of speeches, and writings of any person suspected of subversive activity.

But the Diasporic African writers found their nostalgic inspiration in the increasingly a distant memories of their country and in their wandering lives. The very title of their books such as Nkosi's *Home and Exile* (1965) and Mphalele's *The Wanderers* (1970) evoke this nostalgia .The generation of writers at home after the Sharpeville massacre, however, has not produced any outstanding novelists due to rigorous censorship.

Incidentally, Lusophone African Literature produced during the last days of the Salar regime, consisted of the works of detainees, guerrillas and political exiles. Amongst them, Agosthino Neto of Angola, Kenneth Kawnda of Zambia and Amilcal Cabral of Guinea Bissau were more popular, at least until the end of the colonial era when poetry and revolution seemed to be synonymous. Thus, writing from Portugal's former colonies is found to be the least extensive and popular of African literatures in European languages.

Portugal's African Empire was small compared with the Empires of France and Great Britain, and Lusophone works are not as readily available in English translation as are Francophone works. The new trend in Lusophone African literature manifests itself mainly in poetry and combines an interest in issues of identity, ethnicity, alienation, and language politics (Gikandi 2003).

2. 5.3 The Post-Apartheid Dynamics (1990-2000)

South African novels published after the first democratic elections of 1994 are commonly referred to as post-Apartheid literature for this event marked the abolition of legalized racial segregation. The end of Apartheid witnessed the emergence of new social problems which captured the attention of writers. One can identify two dominant approaches in the post-Apartheid literature: the presence of

certain striking features of Apartheid writing and the emergence of new modes of writing that are free from the ideological determinism of the past.

The dynamics of the new South African literature has thus been polarized into the advocacy of cultural hybridization, essentialism and post-Apartheid resistance. In fact, there has been no sudden post-Apartheid resistance in spite of the persistence of the ghost of Apartheid. In a recent article in the *New York Times*, Rachel Swarns (June 2002) examines the increasingly visible world of the black South African writer.

While Apartheid-era literature was largely preoccupied by the theme of violence against the blacks by the ruling white minority, black writers in the post-Apartheid South Africa have seized the initiative in writing stories about more complex issues beyond racial politics like vengeance, criminality, homosexuality, economic protection, problems of readjustment and the spread of the pandemic HIV-AIDS.

Some of the most vibrant and original novels in recent South African writing include Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), and Mda's *The Heart of Redness (2000) and* Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow (2001). Disgrace* is about the downfall of a Cape Town academic, David Lurie, who pursues and seduces Melanie, one of his students though he is unwilling to apologize publicly or accept counseling as result of which he is dismissed from his position and takes refuge on his daughter's farm in the Eastern Cape.

For a time, his daughter's influence and natural rhythms of the farm promise to harmonize his discordant life. But the balance of power in the country is shifting. Shortly after becoming comfortable with rural life, he is forced to come to terms with the aftermath of an attack on the farm in which his daughter is raped and impregnated and he is brutally assaulted. Disgrace (1999*)* is a representative post-Apartheid South African text, reflecting the effects of rapid change in a country previously known for its stoic adherence to tradition.

On the contrary, Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, an allusion to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, represents a reversal of the colonial perspective by embracing traditional Africa. The *Heart of Redness* (2000) thus depicts characters coming to terms with post-Apartheid life, of which the struggle to hold on to traditional

African values in the face of the new South African politics and Western materialism is an important theme.

In *The Heart of Redness,* Camagu is a former exile who has to contend with the socio-political and economic scenario of the new South Africa where former freedom fighters have become corporate figures.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow (2001) is set in the melting pot of the city of Johannesburg in which the author employs a lyrical language to portray decay, xenophobia, frustrated hopes, AIDS and issues of urban/rural dichotomy. Phaswane Mpe seems to be disinterested in racial problems and prefers to talk about AIDS and xenophobia, two of the major themes of his novel.

The plot concerns the lives of a couple of lovers and the people around them as they travel from the villages of the Limpopo province to the roughest inner-city neighborhood in Johannesburg. Mpe features not only the characters who are struggling to move from poverty and Apartheid to prosperity and education in a democratic South Africa, but the society around them.

Each novel documents and portrays humankind's seemingly insurmountable urge to construct systems of collective identities and alterities 'us' and 'them', and to erect borders which exclude, negate, or subjugate others outside their own cultural or ethnic group. The novels both offset these tendencies by portraying individuals who have moved beyond the camps of identity and alterity and are located in a "third space" (Bhabha 1994) of cultural hybridity.

However, a closer examination of each novel reveals that the writers are obsessed with different post-colonial dynamics. By implication, it could be argued that post-liberation fiction has embarked on a journey towards the new horizons offered by various new pressing issues. By dealing with the current problems of their society, these writers attempt to transcend race in order to construct a national identity that promotes the country's cultural diversity.

Now that South Africa has entered a new era in its history, South African literature and literary study are being revised and reconsidered. Questions about the construction of a South African national literary canon and its periodization are central to a rethinking of South African literature.

Thus, Anglophone African novelists could be classified into three categories on the basis of their position or reaction to contemporary socio-political malpractice. These are the griots or conformists and praise-singers of the ruling political elites, those who are concerned about the plight of the marginalized masses and the scandalous rape and plunder of the resources of their various countries by the governing class and those who are hostile to the ruling elites in their writings and in their political declarations with a reformist and/or revolutionary agenda. At any rate, the distinction between Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone literatures is superficial in spite of regional peculiarities.

2. 6 Literary Scholarship

Due to the ambitious scope of Modern African Literature, it is practically impossible to provide the reader with an exhaustive review of literature. Such an attempt would perhaps prove to be not only futile but also encyclopedic in scope. However, a cursory review of traditional critique, foundational publications and local endeavors would be presented so as to shed light on the ever-growing field of post-colonial African Literature.

2. 6.1 African Literature and the Curriculum of Universities

African literature as an academic discipline was neglected in the curricula of African Universities until the Convention of the Dakar- Conference (March-April, 1963), which was gravely concerned with the place, and value of African literary studies. The Dakar Conference recommended that "the literature of Africa should be integrated into the literature syllabuses of all universities in Africa, and that the study of this subject should be pursued immediately with the utmost vigor across universities concerned with the study of literature (Moore 1965:141).

What is more, the liberalization of immigration policies in 1965 has also led to gradual demographic shifts in the United States, as increasing numbers of non-European immigrants have been allowed to settle in the country, while a growing proportion of the students enrolled in American colleges and universities are from formerly colonized nations in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean.

For these and other reasons, American universities have increasingly integrated the study of the histories, the literary, artistic, musical and intellectual traditions, and

the economic, political, and social institutions of the non-European world into their curricular offerings. Since then, universities outside Africa like. Brown, Colombia, Athens, Singapore, Australia, and Washington have displayed a keen interest in the study of 'African Literature.'

2. 6.2 Review of Sample Studies

Following the incorporation of African literature into the university curriculum, research into the whole field of literary activity, and the documentation and study of local material seems to have been encouraged. The preparation of a bibliographical guide to and bulletin of creative writing in English (excluding British and American literatures) like *A Reader's Guide to African Literature* (1972) and *A Guide to Negro-African Writing and Related Studies (1965)* are also believed to be the seminal endeavors in this regard. Furthermore, writers became implicated in the early process of elaborating a critical tradition by engaging critics or themselves in debates ranging from the question of critical standards to the role of the writer in society.

Chinua Achebe's *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975), Wole Soyinka's *Myth, Literature, and the African World* (1976), and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986), *ALT* Series, and *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* including monographs such as *The Black Mind* (1973),*The Black Interpreters(1972), A History of Neo-African Literature (1969), African Literature and the Universities (1965)* and *The Breast of the Earth (1973)* are some of the most important contributions to African literary criticism.

When it comes to the endeavors of academics, a number of African and non-African scholars have produced commendable contributions. One of these is Hugh Web, who has published *Passionate Spaces: African Literature and The Post-Colonial Context* (1991) in which he considers a range of genres such as novels, plays and poetry from both periods set against their historical context and concludes that the study of Black African writings in the Period 1956 to 1975 is a contribution to the developing field of post-colonial cultural debate.

The historical era involved seems to be a key narrative moment in the shaping of post-colonial patterns of response and in the re-shaping of connections between literature and social context. These literary 'passionate spaces' vibrate with political meanings that urgently need to be heard.

Similarly, Web's contemporary, Garry Gillard has undertaken a rigorous examination of a more precise problem framed as "Handling Action: Formal Aspects of Fictive Narrative in Africa" (1977/96) in which he treats a kaleidoscopic selection of Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone African novels, short stories, plays, and narrative poetry with reference to formal elements.

His study reveals that significant works of African literature have been shown to be capable of achieving a high degree of artistic integration and a successful projection of aesthetic values. Such works may be judged not merely as accomplished works of African literature, but as being comparable on an international scale with other literary works of art. This would contribute towards bridging the gap between 'African and Western literature' in a number of ways.

Derek Wright's *Contemporary African Fiction* (1997), which dwells upon African fiction since 1980-with sections on East, West and Southern Africa covers twelve writers. Similarly, Ker David, in his monograph entitled *The African Novel and the Modernist Tradition* (1997) also examines key African novels in English alongside British and American modernist novels comparing Wole Soyinka with Henry James, Kofi Awoonor with James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, Ngugi wa Thiong'o with Conrad and A. K. Armah with William Faulkner on the basis of their craftsmanship, stylistic features and cosmic vision.

Besides, Caminero- Santangelo in his African *Fiction and Joseph Conrad: Reading Post-Colonial Intertextuality* (2004) also explores how African authors engage with a wide range of historically specific ideologies generated by particular histories of national independence and the development of post-colonial nations.

The shift in focus away from a single colonial moment enables Caminero-Santangelo to detect a complex interweaving of convergence and divergence between Conrad and African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Nadine Gordimer, Tayeb Salih, and Ama Ata Aidoo, who use Conradian intertexts to intervene in repressive situations in late-twentieth-century Africa.

By emphasizing the need to contextualize acts of writing and rewriting in precise historical terms, the author points to the limitations-even the dangers-of the standard cultural binary division like (Western-colonial/African-post-colonial) and the static

dialectic of colonial domination and postcolonial resistance embraced by recent cultural studies. The value of this work lies in its demonstration that postcolonial African literature goes far beyond 'writing back' to literary works by Western authors, Joseph Conrad being the prime example.

The Post-Colonial Theory has thus aroused great interest during the 1980s and 1990s. In effect, the contemporary literary theory seems to be undergoing a radical Empire-centered paradigm shift from the Eurocentric and Afrocentric views to a broader post-colonial spectrum. This trend has become so influential that it has captured not only the interests of Anglophone African writers and critics but also that of the other Commonwealth writers.

2. 6. 3 The Contributions of AAU Academia

In Ethiopia, a handful of compatriots have addressed the study of African novel in English from various perspectives. Chronologically, Debebe (1980) in his M.A. thesis entitled "Ethiopian Literature in English" surveys various genres and provides a running commentary on the thematic and formal elements of each.

Taye (1980) explores the representation of *Theodros* II in historical fiction with emphasis on Sahle-Selassie's *The Warrior King* (1974) with a cross-reference to Amharic folk poetry surrounding the meteoric rise of Theodros with two grand ideals - national unification and modernization. He also treats at length the heroic fall of Theodros at Maquedella as a result of the concerted intrigues of the nobility and the clergy aggravated by British aggression.

Similarly, Akalu (1981) in his MA thesis" Comedy and Social Purpose: Two Plays of Mengistu Lemma" deals in particular with the social significance of *Marriage of Unequals* (1970) and *Marriage by Abduction* (1972) by the same author. His findings suggest that these plays are vivid and authentic documents of their contemporary socio-cultural milieu. He asserts that the plays in question not only do mirror the social, economic and political atmosphere of pre-Revolutionary Ethiopia under the scepter of the monarchy but also would appeal to the artistic sensibilities of posterity.

Abiy (1986) deals with the challenges and opportunities of the African writer in the context of Socialist Realism. In his MA. Thesis, entitled "Socialist Realism and Its Implications for the African Writer" (1986), he contends that Socialist Realism is

the most appropriate literary theory in the heyday of the contemporary Socialist Revolutions.

When it comes to literature pedagogy, Yimer demonstrates the role of the stylistic approach in literature pedagogy. His doctoral thesis "Stylistics, Pedagogy and Ethiopian Writing in English: An Activity –Based Approach to Teaching Literature in EFL (1990)" deals with a stylistic analysis of literary texts, and demonstrates the rewards of an integrated approach to literature and language teaching in a non-native context in general and the Ethiopian situation in particular.

He has thus brought to light the multiple benefits of employing the stylistic approach to Literature Pedagogy with reference to selected conversation (from Dagnachew's *The Thirteenth Sun*, 1968) and a dialogic scene (from Tsegaye's *Azmari*; 1965) as a cross-section of Ethiopian writing in English.

In the same vein, Abiy (1998) emphasizes the significance of the socio-cultural paradigm in the selection of learning materials so as to foster the learner's motivation with reference to the Freshman English, which has now virtually phased out. He argues that the introduction of the language-based or the communicative model of teaching English would mark an improvement over its traditional role as a medium of instruction. It appears to be one of the most crucial considerations in materials selection and syllabus design.

To the best of my knowledge, however, the significance of post-colonial theory with reference to the contemporary African novel from mainstream Anglophone Africa seems to have been neglected for one reason or another in our academia .The present study thus ventures to bridge the gap.

2. 7 Decolonizing the Mind

The question of language politics has continued to generate a heated debate ever since the emergence of African literature in European languages Perhaps the effects of language in a colonized country transcend the basic function of speech as communication and acquire a more cultural significance such as identity. Consequently, questions like whether writing in English suggests the betrayal of the mother tongue or the assumption of a new post-colonial identity in the post-colonial context have been raised time and again The bone of contention, which swings

from one extreme to another, is the type of textual strategy to be vigorously pursued by African writers.

Two major opposing camps can be isolated in African writers' views on the desirability or otherwise of English as the literary language of the continent. The first camp advocates the abrogation of the use of the language as the prime medium of African literature. Obi Wali is one of the exclusivist proponents of this school alongside Ngugi and Osundare.

On the other hand, the second group calls for the appropriation and reconstitution of English as a medium of African literature. With this, the group believes that the rigid hegemony of the language can be unmasked. According to Rao (1938), this method is an attempt to "convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1989: 39).

2. 7. 1 The Strategy of Abrogation

Ngugi wa Thiong'o presented a co-authored argument for the abolition of the English departments and the creation of a new department devoted to the study of 'African languages and literatures' in 1972. Ngugi first considers the reasons why English language and literature has been studied instead of African, and then calls to question the real importance of the former discipline.

He advocates a more centralized conceptualization of national identity aimed at reorienting Africans, placing Africa in the centre and then radiating outwards from within, if need be. Ngugi further compares English to a "cultural bomb" that continues a process of erasing memories of pre-colonial cultures and history and as a means of installing the dominance of new and more insidious forms of colonialism.

Ngugi's critique (*Decolonizing the Mind* 1986) centers on the political nature of the language and the role it plays in the process of cultural alienation and perpetuation of the neo-colonial-imperialist structure that the English cannot lay any claim to a cultural or political innocence or neutrality. Although his argument is relevant when considered in the light of post-colonial identity, the question of abolishing the departments of English is, however, an extremist position, which generates counter-arguments and counter-productivity.

In this connection, the Asmara-Hosted Conference under the theme "Against All Odds: African Languages and Literatures into the 21st Century" (January11-17, 2000), which was attended by over 250 writers, distinguished scholars, academics, cultural activists, artists and publishers from all regions of Africa, Europe and North America. It took up the legacy of the famous African Writers Conference held at Makerere University in 1962, and culminated with the formulation and adoption of the 'Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures'.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 'identified a profound incongruity in the colonial languages speaking for the continent.' It resolved that Africa must firmly reject this incongruity and affirm a new beginning by returning to its languages and heritage at the turn of a New Century and Millennium.

He stresses the need for decolonizing African cultures, including the return to writing in vernacular languages (2002:11). In his words: "I believe now more than ever that Africa must use its languages and peoples as a strength with which it can leap into tomorrow. African scholars and writers must lead the way as we enter the twenty-first century."

Thus, the conviction is that working within the confines of a 'world language' could only be a capitulation to European cultural standards crudely disguised as 'universalism.' Therefore, decolonization can only be meaningful if European languages are overthrown and the vernacular ones empowered though its feasibility remains to be seen. The second camp, however, has adopted a more practical approach to the problem as abrogation of English is virtually impossible.

This debate had also attracted the attention of contemporary Ethiopian writers like Berhane-Selassie (1982), Mengistu (1983) and Asfaw (1982a:1982b) although they have reached no deal over nomenclatures like, African literature, Ethiopian literature, National literature and vernacular literature in a multilingual society. Sahle- Selassie(1982) argues that the literary language of African literature, whether it is vernacular or foreign, does not matter- while the late Laureate Tsegaye maintains that writing in one's own language is a cultural right that should be protected.

The late Mengistu Lemma (1983) had also boldly asserted with a rather powerful language that "The whole uncritical acceptance of English or French as the inevitable medium for African writing is misdirected and has no chance of advancing African Literature. In other words, until these writers and their Western midwives accept the fact that any true African literature must be written in African languages, they would be merely pursuing a dead end which can only lead to sterility, to lack of creativity and frustration. Thus, Mengistu and Tsegaye are aligned with Ngugi while Sahle-Selassie shares the liberal views of Achebe and Okara.

Another challenge facing the proponents of abrogation is whether de-colonization is ever possible. Although Fanon is the 'founding father' of this sort of post-colonial theory, he wondered whether the native intellectual could escape the hegemony of colonizing (and/or neo-colonizing) culture. All the more, writers like Spivak (2004) have turned this question toward 'positionality' contending that if 'Third-world intellectuals' are educated in (and often teach and write in) the language of colonial masters, are they not complicitous with and co-opted by 'First-World' assumptions, values, prejudices, and exploitative practices!

It appears that breaking the deadlock over such predicaments is impossible. But a sort of deal on a relative interdependence without prejudice to the production of vernacular literatures as an expression of cultural identity could be reached. Besides, the counter-argument that would seem to dent the Afrocentric critics' contention is the fact that cultural plurality and globalization characterize the modern world. By implication, while the world is progressively becoming homogenous technologically, economically and culturally, African cultures are on the verge of retrogression, an irrelevant insularity that could only end in the obliteration of these cultures.

The question of empowering African languages is also compounded by the fact that many African countries have scores of vernacular languages, and that English, French and Spanish have continued as *lingua franca* for East, West and Southern African countries. Thus, absolute abrogation seems to be equally racist, retrogressive and virtually impossible given the current trends of international co-operation. Not only are authors themselves aware of a range of international

influences but the reality which they reflect is increasingly reshaped by the breakdown of previously distinct cultural boundaries into heterogeneity.

2. 7.2 The Strategy of Appropriation

Famous Anglophone African writers have read to the question of appropriating or abrogating the English language in the post-colonial context. To begin with, Achebe in *Hopes and Impediments* (1988) maintains that goals cannot be realized by a simple return to a pre-colonial African age. He is convinced that African society has been irrevocably changed by the colonial era.

Achebe prefers to write in English and uses Western forms of literary expression, unlike other African writers who reject the colonizers' languages. He also advises that the African writer should aim at transplanting English in such a way that conveys or imparts his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international communication would be lost.

Over and above, Achebe attempts to construct an image of Africa in a language that respects the national traditions of his native land while recognizing the demands of a cosmopolitan, international audience for African literature in English, like many other "post-colonial" writers from Africa, the Caribbean Islands and the Indian subcontinent.

Another Nigerian writer, Gabriel Okara also shares the views of Achebe and favors some sort of cultural hybridization. He maintains that some may regard this way of writing in English as a desecration of the language. This is of course not true. Living languages grow like living organisms, and English is far from a dead language. Why wouldn't there be a Nigerian or West African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thoughts and philosophy of life in our own way?" (Cited in *Ngugi* 1986:287).

These two West African writers agree that there is no use returning to a remote past. In order to successfully find a sense of identity, it is necessary to recognize the infiltration of foreign culture. Fashioning out English, which is at once universal and able to carry the writer's peculiar experience thus emphasizing the strategy of appropriation as a means to an end is -a standpoint with which I couldn't agree less. (See, Chapter Three for the details).All the more, in the age of globalization, African writers cannot afford to deny their works of wide readership; therefore, they

should consider the appropriation and reconstitution of English as a medium of African literature.

2. 8 The Critical Engagement with African Literature

Ever since the appearance of *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), the works of post-colonial African writers have elicited increasing critical attention. One of the most contentious issues in the study of modern African literature is the question of critical theory against which it should be evaluated. With the explosion of post-colonial and post-structuralist theories in the West at the end of the twentieth century, African critics became engaged in debating the appropriateness of applying Western canons to the critical evaluation of African literature.

Currently, there are two polarized viewpoints on the theoretical framework of African literature that Eurocentric critics rigidly insist upon the application of universal standards while Afrocentric critics are bent on decetering the Western hegemony so that the historical constituencies of African Literature would be recognized .In the following subsection, an attempt would be made to address the contention between the adherents of these viewpoints, viz. universalism and post-colonial theory.

2. 8.1 Dogmatic Universalism

The colonial/post-colonial socio-political matrix has inspired a host of novelists and literary critics across West, Southern and East Africa in a decreasing order of productivity. These writers frequently examine such issues as emerging identities in the post-colonial climate, neo-colonialism and new forms of oppression, cultural and political hegemonies, language appropriation, and economic dependency. During the last decade, their works have elicited increasing critical attention such that the reception of these polemical novels has become a vexed issue for its variability from critic to critic.

This is due to a predisposed attitude or what Afro-centric critics like Eldred Jones (1969), Solomon Ogebede (1975), Abeola James (1975) and Jacob (2000) in Chinweizu (1983) call the' tyranny of uniformity' or failure, on the part of Eurocentric critics, to consider the unavoidable historical constituents of modern African literature such as hybridity (African oral tradition plus European technique),

and the impositions of colonial situation. Chenweizu and others (1983:8) in particular assert that the Eurocentric criticism of African literature is based on the perception of the African writer as an apprentice European with no canons other than Western ones to emulate. This misconception has already resulted in the polarity of views on the typology and critical value theory of modern African literature.

Thus, metropolitan or Eurocentric literary critics like Jahn Janheinz (1968), Lindfors (1969),) and Roscoe 1971: X) and Posey (1972:97) Ulli Beier (1979) categorically brand African literature with unfavorable labels or stereotypes such as sociological, journalistic documentation, topicality, reportage, parochial or propaganda -ridden outcry or at its best an extension of European Realism by the standards of Eurocentric literary theory that does not concede the autonomy due to African literature.

Eurocentrism is the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing emphasis on European (and, generally, Western) concerns, culture and values at the expense of those of other cultures. It is an instance of ethnocentrism, perhaps relevant because of its alignment with current and past power structures in the world.

Apart from content, some African novels allegedly suffer from inadequate description, characterization, motivation, magnitude and awkward dialogic scenes (Lazarus 1990). Such arbitrary categories presuppose a bias against African literature. If the African novel is so stereotyped for its obsession with the legacy of colonialism and its aftermath, what is to become of works like Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind (1939), Forster's* The *Passage to India* (1984) and Tolstoy's War *and Peace (1865-9)* with a similar matrix?

All the more, the majority of metropolitan critics of African literature tend to capitalize on content and de-emphasize formal elements so that the critical focus was geared towards thematic parochialism of the writers at best and dismissal of literary techniques and regional peculiarities at worst. Such an attitude could be challenged on two grounds.

For one thing, the discussion of the novel cannot afford to dislodge the unity of content and formal elements The pre-requisite for a well-made novel thus appears to be the organic unity of life and pattern. Life refers to the fidelity of the experience reflected while pattern is associated with the abstract details of literary techniques like plot construction, mode of presentation, style and characterization.

Henry James (1884) in his memorable observation rhetorically dismisses the traditional dichotomy between the novel of plot and that of character as' what is character? but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?' (Cited in Martin 1987:56).

For another, it has been necessary to discard superficial observations about the incidence of local color, and indigenous African names and patterns, behavior, to concentrate attention on more subtle technical and thematic levels in recognition of the cultural, historical and political peculiarities of African literature. It appears that no justice can be done to the criticism of African literature within the framework of dogmatic universalism witch does not acknowledge its peculiarity.

2. 8.2 Afrocentric Deconstruction

In contrast to the Western literary canon, Afrocentric critics like Achebe (1988), Chinweizu (1983) and Lazarus (1990) who defend the Africanization of literary technique argue that the criticism of African literature against a European theoretical framework is incompatible with the pragmatic concerns of the committed African writer.

Especially, Chinweizu, Onwucheka Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike (1980) among others are far outspoken for condemning the overwhelming recourse to Western literary models and urging a return to African traditions reforming an Afrocentric value theory. Consequently, they contested the European charges on account of their failure to consider the by-products of colonialism like hybridity, constituency, and the impact of the colonial situation on the perceived role of the African writer.

Having long conceded the European binary construct of 'the same' and the non-European 'other,' Post-colonialism became a similar ideological construct that reversed this racial oppositional consciousness.

According to Abrams (1999:236-37) Post-colonial literary studies underpin

> The rejection of the master-narratives of Western imperialism in which the colonial other is not only subordinated and marginalized but also rooted out as a cultural agency and its replacement by a counter-narrative in which the colonial cultures fight their way back into a world history written by Europeans.

This position, however, should not be absolutely overstretched to the point of abrogating the seminal literary theories evolved by Western critics right from Aristotle down to the present. All the more, the methodological imperative for Comparative Literatures such as African, Oriental, Latin American or the Caribbean is hence to apply a systemic critique of centre-periphery strategy under a model of world systems theory in which case the hegemony of the West is likely to be contested but not rooted out. That is presumably why Palmer (1974: 118-119) contends that:

> It is a distortion to call these criteria Western criteria. If it has grown up alongside the development of the Western novel, it is most probably because the Western novel was the first to be seriously discussed. Otherwise, neither the novel itself nor its discussion as a form preening itself on social realism and psychological perspicacity in depiction of character can be said to have first emerged in the West. Thus critical criteria are not necessarily Western because of their origin and historical development.

While the production of the written novel is based on European antecedents, it would be a mistake to think of post-colonial examples of realist fiction as strictly arising out of a European background. Realism is not necessarily only a European form, and by extension, non-European realism is not necessarily derivative of the European form. The local color has been captured in storytelling, song, oral narratives, and proverbs for centuries throughout the world. Still, the colonial and post-colonial novel developed alongside Western narratives, influencing them as they influenced them.

This counterargument, however, does not preclude the writer's individuality as well as thematic and stylistic crosscurrents which are believed to be oscillatory. African novelists of the post-independence generation are, presumably, no exception to the rule. Evidently, the major concerns of the post- colonial African novelists seem to merge with the cross-cultural themes of world literature such as war, poverty,

famine, genocide, ethnic cleansing, migration, natural disasters, and protection of the echo-system, natural calamity, corruption, acquisitiveness, and human greed

Coupled with these are gender relations, the pandemic HIV/ AIDS, terrorism and the insolence of power, the will-power of women, drug-addiction, xenophobia, gender issues, crime and retribution, guilty conscience, and confession and expiation. In this connection, Chapman (2002: XXXIV) asserts that:

> After all, the West and Africa have experienced forms of exchange for over four centuries. Writers such as Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot and W.B Yeats and Jonathan Swift have had a formative influence on the African elite stream whether in Africa or the West. Popular forms in Africa clutch not only at local issues but also at elements of a pervasive international pop culture.

With this kind of cross-fertilization in mind, one of the outlets out of this linguistic gymnastics appears to be the acknowledgement of the historical matrices from which African literature springs as opposed to constituency of Western literature. One the other hand, there are extremists like Jacob (*Post-Colonial Mock-Epic Abrogation and Appropriation,* fall, 2000:13) who even wished that 'The word universal banned altogether from discussions of African literature, until such a time as people cease to use it as a synonym for the parochial Eurocentric view.'

Afrocentric critics contend that the solution for the problem is to disentangle African literature from the framework of 'Euro-modernist criticism.' 'African literature is an autonomous entity distinct from other literatures as it has its own traditions, models and norms. Its constituency is markedly different from that of the European or other world literatures. What is more, its historical and cultural imperatives impose upon it concerns and constraints quite antithetical to those of the European .Thus, the strategic trend is one of foregrounding the direction of cultural particularism which subverts European 'universalism'.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

The experience of colonization and the challenges of the post-colonial world have produced an explosion of new writing in English either by the accidents of history or as the by-product of the colonial agenda. This diverse and powerful body of literature is known to have established a specific practice of post-colonial writing across the former British colonies and has thus challenged both the traditional canon and dominant ideas of literary and cross- cultural studies.

Consequently, the sheer extent and duration of the European empire -building and its disintegration after WWII (1945) have led to widespread interest in post-colonial literature and contemporary criticism. The present theoretical framework offers non-exhaustive but critical insights which map out the discursive trajectory into the concept of post-colonial literature, post-colonial theory, the canons of comparative literature such as thematic and stylistic intertextuality and the tenets of Magical Realism.

3. 1 Conceptualizing Post-Colonialism

According to Bahri (fall 1996), the rise of Post-Colonial Studies in the Western academy dates back to the appearance of Edward Said's influential work, *Orientalism* (1978). The growing currency within the academy of the term "postcolonial" (sometimes hyphenated) was further consolidated by the appearance in 1989 of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. Since then, the use of cognate terms like "Commonwealth" and "Third World" that were employed to describe the literature of Europe's former colonies has become rather optional.

Its emergence is attributed to the inability of Euro-American theory to escape from false notions of "the universal." Euro-American historiography, philosophy, and literary study assume that many values and value-assigning practices, epistemologies, characteristics of language, genres, and psychological and social models apply across time and place.

These assumptions about the universal features of language, epistemologies and value systems are radically questioned by the practice of post-colonial writing. Post-colonial theory thus attempts to decenter such assumptions not only through

contesting them but also through developing (or rediscovering) indigenous theories of value and stylistic deconstruction in order to accommodate the differences within the various cultural traditions, and to describe the features shared across those traditions via a comparative approach.

The term 'post-colonial' is one of the most elusive concepts of the last three decades that many shades of meaning have been associated with it thus bearing testimony to its elasticity. The prefix 'Post' is a temporal marker that signals two parallel meanings, which are often confused with each other. These are the direct historical-chronological meaning- "after colonialism" and the more philosophical meaning, denoting a spatial location or position beyond colonialism, yet inextricably linked to it (as in post-structuralism)

By implication, it is a pointer to the challenge and subversion of what proceeds in the same manner as post-modernism subverts modernism as an improvement over its antecedent. More generically, the "postcolonial" is used to signify a position against imperialism and Eurocentrism.

The fluidity of the concept of "post-colonial" has given rise to lively debates among intellectuals. Some deplore its imprecision and lack of historical and material particularity while others argue that most former colonies are far from the colonial influence or domination and so cannot be post-colonial in any genuine sense.

In other words, the overhasty celebration of independence masks the march of neocolonialism in the guise of modernization and development in an age of increasing globalization and trans-nationalism; meanwhile, there are colonized countries that are still languishing under foreign control. The emphasis on colonizer/colonized relations, moreover, obscures the operation of internal oppression within the colonies.

Some scholars still argue that unless the concept of post-colonialism is strictly defined, or delimited to the study of the direct consequences of the historical colonization, it is bound to be lacking in focus. Others maintain that it is a reading strategy that could illuminate diverse contemporary and historical phenomena. Conceptualizing post-colonialism is as problematic as outlined by (Brains 2005):

> **First**, the idea of post-coloniality does not distinguish between literal colonization (as is the case with the USA and Latin

American countries) and cultural hegemony proper. The former is characterized by nominal independence and economic dependency–which is sometimes referred to as Coca- Colonization

Second, the concept of Post-Colonial is inclusive of colonial novels like Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1956) and Claude McKay's *Banjo* (1929) written while India and both Nigeria and Jamaica were languishing under the yoke of colonialism in that order.

Third, the term misleadingly implies that the era of colonization is over when in fact most of the nations involved are still culturally and economically subordinated to various forms of neo-colonialism.

Fourth, the definition of post-colonialism itself is Eurocentric in essence in that it singles out the colonial experience as the most dominant determinant at the cost of pre-colonial literary traditions like that of India which are viewed otherwise.

Fifth, many post-colonial authors do not seem to share the general orientation of post-colonial scholars towards engaging in a consistent critique of colonialism but shift from the indictment of British colonialism to the exposure of their national corruption.

Sixth, the label excludes Australian and Canadian literatures from the Post-colonial paradigm for it is believed to be the literature of European immigrants and is, therefore, a literature of privilege rather than one of protest. Further still, it excludes American literature even though America's identity was formed in contradistinction to that of England. After all, the USA is usually viewed as an epitome of a modern neo-colonial world-police imposing and enforcing its values, economic pressures and political ideologies on a wider range of Third World countries.

Paul Brains (2005) further contends that Anglophone Literature excludes the many rich literatures of Africa written in European languages other than English. While the out-dated "Commonwealth literature" is found to be too confining and Eurocentric. However, in spite of some two decades of definitional debates, this term remains a fuzzy concept stretching from a strictly historical definition to the more transcendental perspectives like the profound impact of colonialism on the social and cultural fabric of these societies.

The other linguistic gymnastics relates to the polarity of semantic implications, strategies and practices between *Post colonialism'* and *Post-colonialism*. The spelling of the hyphenated 'post-colonialism' has become more of an issue for its adherents since the hyphen is perceived as a statement about the historically and culturally grounded nature of the experience it represents (Ashcroft 2002:198).

In fact, there has been no clean break with the implants or the psychological and material effects of colonization to-date.

Although there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and the concept of the term "pos-colonial," it is conceived as the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period.

More specifically, Post-colonialism deals with a range of issues such as the stigma of colonialism: the dilemmas of developing a national identity in the wake of colonial rule, the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers; and the ways in which the literature of the colonial powers was used to justify colonialism through the perpetuation of images of the colonized to be inferior to those of the colonizer.

The conceivable canonical texts dominating the colonial model curriculum were instrumental in waging this psychological warfare. To that effect, binary oppositions used to justify a *destiny to rule* on behalf of the colonizer, (the 'white man's burden') were drawn between the 'Oriental' and the 'Occidental' (the latter being emotional; the former rational)

Post-colonial Theory is also associated with the concepts of resistance and representation. The concept of resistance implies of human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality, etc., which may not have been held in the colonized socio-cultural perception of humankind. Resistance literature employs the language of the cosmopolitan power to rebut their dominant ideologies

In other words, the colonized nation is "writing back", to the Imperial Center reacting against either the oppression or racism of the colonizers or the inherent cultural "better-ness" of the indigenous people. Thus writers from formerly colonized countries writing in the colonial language, particularly in English, have demonstrated the counter-discursive potentials of the tools appropriated from the colonizer (Tiffin 1995: 199).

Representation, on the other hand, relates to the portrayal of individuals, people or historical events. In the post-colonial context, representation linked to issues of bias

for or against, stereotyping and the influence of discourse. Stereotyping, in turn, is the representation of an individual in terms of the prejudices against the cultural *other* in which case the individual is perceived as a simplified type rather than a complex human being, thereby, dehumanized. In fact, no representation is ever neutral but a means through which it is constructed.

The paradox of marginalization and empowerment seem to underlie the ideas of representation and resistance. How does one then resolve this paradox? Tiffin offers another idea in the study and assessment of post-colonial literature. This idea involves a compromise between complete separation from the Empire on the one hand, and the complete dependence upon the Empire, on the other, for its existence. She states, "Post-colonial cultures are inevitably hybridized, involving a dialectical relationship between European ontology and epistemology and the impulse to create or recreate independent local identity." (Ibid: 95).

The Post-Colonial Theory is also built in large part around the concept of *otherness.* It denotes dualism, both identity and difference, so that every other culture partakes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture. Post-colonial critics such as Edward Said (1978) wonder why and how people label others or themselves.

In his influential work *Orientalism* (1978), Said argues that those representations (or the process of labeling) as well as ideas, cultures and histories can hardly be understood or studied without, their configuration of power which is 'being studied side by side. He states that the idea of post-colonialism presupposes the dynamics between itself and its colonizers in order to define its existence. In other words, the concept of '*Us*' or *we* makes no sense without the juxtaposition of its counter-parts like 'them' and' they' thus emphasizing the concept of cultural otherness.

In his later literary and cultural work, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said. suggests that nativism cannot be an effective answer to Western hegemony asserting that Afrocentrism is as flawed as Eurocentrism that adherence to Bhabha's 'third space'(1994) appears to be the only way out of this identity crisis. But it also means that, in many respects, colonialism is still with Africans and other Oriental countries which have experienced the yoke of colonialism.

After all, it was through the colonial system that most of the national borders in Africa and Asia were drawn up and demarcated, in many cases arbitrarily to the

effect that they have become explosive time bombs. But more than that are the effects of colonial language, the colonial state bureaucracy, and paternalist strategy of economic development. Thus, out of the Orientalists' quest for discovering the essential national or regional mentality, the methodological imperative of post-colonialism was born in the 1980s.

All the more, the employment of this kind of counter-discourse has facilitated the gradual disturbance of the Eurocentric hegemony of academic debate and has thus empowered post-colonial intellectuals to redirect their discussion towards a non-Western world. What is more, in contemporary literary scholarship, post-colonialism has been established as one of the most powerful instruments of re-examining the historical past and reconfiguring our multi-cultural world. (Ibid: 219).

For the sake of clarity, the distinction between post-colonialism and Post-modernism should be drawn. Post-colonialism has coincided with the rise of postmodernism in Western society thus leading to a considerable confusion and overlap between both trends of development. This overlap is attributed partly to the fact that the major project of Post-modernism-the deconstruction of the centralized homocentric, master narratives of European culture- is strikingly similar to the post-colonial project of dismantling the centre/margin binarism of the imperial discourse.

This involves, among other things, the decentering of discourse, focus on the significance of language and writing in the construction of experience, the employment of the subversive strategies of mimicry, parody and irony-which overlap with post-modernism (Ashcroft 2004:117). At any rate, post-colonialism is to be understood as a body of contesting formulations of the cultural productions of colonized people that could be employed as a theoretical framework for the analysis of contemporary novels from across former British colonies.

Thus, the term' post-colonial' in this study would be used as a *pis aller* up until such time when a better nomenclature is coined. In this study, the hyphenated Post-colonial is employed for consistency and its thematic significance.

3. 2 The Critical Models of Post-Colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory became part of the critical toolbox in the 1970s, and many practitioners take Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) to be its foundational text. It is one of the first post-colonial studies to reveal how Western discourse has created the idea of the "Oriental" as inferior. For the sake of convenience, post-colonial theoretical approaches could be divided into major models (Ashcroft 2002:14-32) as treated in the following subsections.

3. 2.1 National / Regional Models

A country or state is sometimes commonly referred to as a nation. But a nation is a much more complex concept involving apolitical construct than the mere presence of flags and anthems may indicate. It can be any political formation of people with shared, extensive and lasting ethnic, linguistic and historical loyalties and experiences attached to them.

National or regional models set against such assumptions emphasize distinctive features of national or regional history and culture which reinscribes history from the position of previously silenced indigenous peoples. Ideas about national literature as opposed to the European legacies were parts of the optimistic progression to nationhood in the wake of independence from British colonialism. This was consequent upon the emergence of newer literatures from former British colonies such as Anglophone Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India and so forth which could be described as national discrete formations or sources of a national image

The development of national literatures is thus considered to be the core of Post-colonial Studies as the rejection of the dogma of the centre begins with an aggressive pursuit of national literary traditions. In other words, had it not been for the development of national literatures and comparative studies between these national traditions, the emergence of post-colonial discourse would have been inconceivable (Ibid: 1989).

Moreover, there are larger geographical models, which traverse linguistic, territorial and racial boundaries such as the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and African literatures. Even within Africa, we can talk about North African, Central African,

East African, West African and Southern African literature in terms of regionalization. Despite such variation, the national and regional models have drawn a line between 'English Literature' and 'Literature in English'

3. 2 .2 Racial/Ethnic Models

These models identify certain shared characteristics across various national literatures such as the common racial inheritance in literatures of the African Diaspora addressed by the 'Black writing' model. They are not necessarily tied to an essentialist view of race but rather to the notion that "the idea of race" has been a major feature of Euro-American economic, political, and cultural practice.

The most familiar of these models concerns writing by non-African and African-Diasporic writers including exponents of the Negritude Movement and earlier expressions of Pan-Africanism. Even though the spring of Negritude is said to have run dry after serving its purpose, it has come back in a new dress as one of the canons of Post-colonial Theory.

According to Ashcroft Bill and others (1989, 2002: passim), the word *Diaspora* is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over) when applied to humans, the ancient Greeks thought of Diaspora as migration and colonization. By contrast, for Jews, Africans, Palestinians and Armenians, the expression acquired a more sinister and brutal meaning.

Diaspora (dI-ASP-er-ah, - is used without capitalization) to refer to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional ethnic homelands, being dispersed throughout other parts of the world, and the ensuing developments in their dispersal and culture. Thus Diaspora signifies a collective trauma and banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile.

Other peoples abroad who have also maintained strong identities have, in recent years, defined themselves as Diasporas, though they were neither active agents of colonization nor passive victims of persecution, presumably out of cultural incongruence. For that matter, all Diaspora communities acknowledge that the memories of their natal territory buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore haunts them intermittently.

There are five types of Diaspora: Victim (e.g. Jews, Africans, and Armenians), Labor (Indian, Chinese), Trade (Chinese and Lebanese), Imperial (the British), and Cultural Diasporas (the Caribbean). These days however, this kind of division seems to have been blurred since all categories invariably overlap with one another. An alternative taxonomy is the Diaspora of enslavement, of colonialism and that of post-colonial brain drain. In sum, Diaspora doesn't simply refer to geographical dispersal like the current refugee crisis but also to the vexed questions of identity, nostalgia and homesickness resulting from displacement and alienation.

3. 2.3 Comparative Models

The comparative model focuses on the pertinence of perceived thematic and stylistic intertextual elements as an embodiment of the post-colonial trajectories that traverse nations and regions. Henry Remak (1961: 3) maintains that 'Comparative Literature' is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand, and other areas of knowledge and belief such as the arts on the other.' More specifically, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression'.

Comparative models of varying complexity seek to account for particular linguistic, historical, and cultural features across two or more post-colonial literatures. This model usually stresses thematic and stylistic concerns that traverse nations and regions. According to Ashcroft (1989:19), three principal types of comparisons have resulted, thus forming a basis for a genuine post-colonial discourse. These are comparisons between countries of the white Diaspora-the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; Comparisons between areas of the Black Diaspora, and thirdly, those which bridge the gap between these groupings.

On the other hand, Afrocentric critics and writers like Moore (1969), Ngugi (1972) and Griffiths (1978) capitalize on similarities between writing within the Black Diaspora. Such an approach reveals thematic parallels among Diasporic literatures in English. Amongst these are celebrations of the liberation movements as in India, Kenya, Jamaica, Nigeria and New Zealand.

Besides thematic concerns, a range of technical and structural parallels such as allegory (Slemon, 1986), irony (New 1975), Magical Realism (Dash (1973) are observable in Diasporic literature –all of which could be attributed to the shared psychic and historical conditions. Thus the comparative approach is aimed at synchronizing the cross-fertilizations among East, West and Southern African post-colonial novels. Having explored the tenets of comparative literature, an attempt would be made to pinpoint elements of intertextuality in the following subsections.

3.2.3.1 Thematic Convergence

Comparative thematic studies focus on concepts such as the struggle against oppression and tyranny, exile, acculturation and hybridity, education and treatment of women, and uneven distribution of wealth and inequity of power. Indeed, as Fredric Jameson (1986:65-88) has claimed, 'all third-world literature ... is necessarily a national allegory' to foreground the view that post-colonial writers are obsessed with the wrongs of the *status quo*.

This kind of cross-fertilization determines the thematic intertextuality between or among two or more national or regional literatures. Intertextuality creates a discursive cross-culturality that would effectively reformulate the dominant Euro-centric perception of and approaches to the heterogeneous cultural phenomena.

The historicist assumes that a scholar can uncover an author's intentions, the sources of his/her ideas, and responses of contemporary readers. Key terms of this approach are "influence" and "inspiration." According to Beckson and Ganz (1990:129), such matters as influence, sources, allusions, and archetypes suggest how authors echo some elements of other texts in their own works.

The concept of influence was, however, jettisoned in favor of intertextuality for its inadequacy. Intertextuality is, thus, a way of accounting for the role of literary and para-literary materials without recourse to traditional notions of authorship. The shift from influence to intertextuality, however, does not totally bracket off the author-centered criticism, which takes into account the multifarious relations that are unavoidable.

The basic tenets of the theory were first elaborated in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Frye maintains that intertextuality "subsumes work of 'major' authors with that of 'minor' figures in a multiple positional typology based on relation and difference" (Clayton and Rothstein, 1991: 17). In the same vein, one of the crucial tasks of the Postmodernist critic is to foreground what might be called the "intertextual elements" in literary works. According to Peter Barry (Ibid.1995: 91), "Intertextuality purports to examine a major degree of reference between one text and another"

However, in the scrutiny of the reference, the postmodernist critic privileges the abandonment of the divine pretensions of authorship. M. H. Abrams (1981: 200) also defines intertextuality as

> A creative means used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text echoes, or is inescapably linked to other texts, whether by open or covert citations and allusions, or by the assimilation of the feature of an earlier text by a later text, or simply by participation in a common stock of literary codes and conventions.

The theory of intertextuality, despite its Western origin, is equally an African literary practice. In fact, African oral literature, among many other features, is marked by anonymity that it is communally owned and transmitted from generation to generation. In the words of Finnegan Ruth (1970: 36), "such literature was, for instance, supposed to be the work of communal consciousness and group authorship rather than of an individual inspired artist."

Kehinde (2003:1) also reiterates the relevance of intertextuality to African literature or the diversion away from the monolithic theories of literature to more synchronic ones due to the pluralistic nature of the contemporary world attributable to slavery, colonialism and globalization. This cross-cultural convergence of thematic and stylistic features is self-evident in the contemporary African fiction.

Commenting on the relevance of intertextuality to African literature, Izevbaye (1982: 1) asserts that it is a veritable weapon in the hands of literary historians and critics to "establish a relationship among a variety of writers and literatures, and help enhance understanding of literature as a human activity with similar aesthetic

and social functions in different cultures." Intertextuality is employed by critics and historians to examine the issues of cultural hybridity and diversity in literature due to the historical circumstances of slavery, colonialism and imperialism. Firstly, there is the culture of the colonizer (Euro-American culture), which the people imbibed through a colonial school system, religion, mass media and the like.

Secondly, there is the "other" culture, that of the colonized - the Africans' own culture, which they acquire through local or oral traditions. Kristeva (cited in Kihende 2003) also asserts that the question of intertextuality is, perhaps even more important in that it assumes interplay of content instead of form alone. The notion of content is to be understood as a multifarious gist or moral traceable to various points of origin whose ultimate meaning would oscillate between the original and its extension.

3. 2. 3. 2 Stylistic Parallelism

Theories of literature such as post-colonialism emerged from a view of language grounded in an assertion of the importance of practice over the code or the variant over the standard, (Ashcroft, B. 1989:181). It is concerned with not only how English (or other European languages) supplanted indigenous languages (Ngugi 1986), but also how English (or other European languages) metamorphosed into a 'nation-language' via the process of linguistic pidginization and its creative use in literature as in Achebe's novels.

The Imperial education system or the colonial model curriculum installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities. Consequently, the imperial language became the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' becomes established. It involves the perpetuation of the metropolitan/colonial axis-British standards in school readers, subjugation and linguistic alienation or silencing, linguistic displacement of pre-colonial languages by English. (Ashcroft 1989: 8-9).

During colonization, colonizers usually imposed their language on their subjects, which in effect, marginalized or obliterated the mother tongue. In reaction to the systematic imposition of colonial languages, some post-colonial writers and

activists advocated for a complete return to the empowerment of indigenous languages. Others seize the language but to counter a colonial past through de-forming a "standard" European tongue and re-forming it in new literary forms.

Though British imperialism succeeded in the spread of English across the globe, the distinction between what is proposed as a standard code (English) and the linguistic code, (**english**) which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world has become the subject of contention.

In practice, the history of this distinction between *English* and *english* has been between the claims of a powerful 'centre' and a multitude of intersecting usages designated as 'Peripheries'. The language of these 'peripheries' was shaped by an oppressive discourse of power. And yet they have been the site of some of the most exciting and innovative literatures of the modern period and this has, at least in part, been the result of the energies uncovered by the political tension between the idea of a normative code and a variety of regional usages.

Typologically, Ashcroft (1989) identifies and describes three types of language communities, namely the monoglossic, the diglossic, and the polyglossic. Monoglossic communities, corresponding roughly to old settler colonies, are places where "english" (the lower-case "e" in "english" denotes local, non-standard/British usage) is adopted as a native tongue.

Diglossic communities, by far the most common of the three, occur where Bilingualism has become an enduring societal arrangement as in India, Africa, the South Pacific, as well as for the indigenous populations of settler colonies, and in Canada, where Quebecois culture has created an artificially bilingual society. (Ibid: 39) Finally, polyglossic societies] occur principally in the Caribbean, where a multitude of dialects are interwoven to form a generally comprehensible continuum.

The emphasis is thus laid 'More on english than English' in the post-colonial context. This is an indication of the various ways in which the language has been employed by different linguistic communities in the post-colonial world. Thus, post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of 'English' by using the language to signify difference while maintaining similarity without affecting international communication. This is achieved by employing language variance, the

'part' of a wider cultural whole, which assists in the work of language seizure whilst being neither transmuted nor overwhelmed by its adopted vehicle.

It also deconstructs spatial metaphors such as centre, margin, and periphery, local and metropolitan. It asserts that the syncretic and the hybridized nature of post-colonial experience refutes not only the privileged position of a standard code but also the monocentric view of human experience which entails both the abrogation of the essentialist assumptions and the Imperialist centralism.

Appropriation, on the other hand, is the process by which language is taken and made to 'bear the burden' of one's own (Rao 1938: VII). A vital issue when approaching post-colonial texts concerns the adaptation of the English language by post-colonial writers to suit their purpose. It also refers to the seizure and its placement in a specific cultural location without prejudice to the integrity of that *otherness,* which historically has been employed to keep the post-colonial at the margins of power, of 'authenticity' (see, *The EWB,* 1989:77).

Strategies of appropriation in post-colonial writing involve editorial intrusions, untranslated vernacular diction, syntactic fusion, pidginization and incorporation of folkloristic details. Besides, glossing (parenthetic translation - refers to authorial intrusions in a cross-cultural texts as in, "He went to his *obi* (hut)." It also involves the provision of a lengthy glossary of terms as in Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000).

Similarly, Interchange refers to the generation of inter-culture' by fusing the linguistic structures of two languages to characterize the genuine and discrete linguistic system by learners of a second language. The concept of an inter-language reveals that the utterances of a second-language learner are not deviant forms but part of a separate and genuine system and thus should be tolerated. It is more like the interference of the mother tongue with the second language.

For instance, Amous Tutuola (1952:7) writes, as "I was a palm-wine drunkard since I was a boy of ten years of age. I had no other work than to drink palm-wine." This expression is influenced by the structure of the vernacular language. Vernacular transcription is another strategy, which involves "the transcription of dialect forms or radical variants informed in one way or another by a mother tongue or by the

exigencies of transplantation. However, Pidgin remains to be a dominant mode of discourse across mainstream Anglophone Africa. In Kofi Awoonor's *This Earth, My Brother* (1971:123), we come across the following example:

> Amamu neither sat in the living room not exactly sober nor
> exactly drank. Yaro came in.... His master had called him thrice.
> Yes sah,masa.
> You no finish outside?
> No, sah.
> Finish quick and come clean inside. We get party tonight.
> Big people dey come. Clean for all de glass, plate, fork, and spoon,
> knife everything. You hear?
> Yes, sah

The use of pidgin asserts the fact that a continuum exists between the various linguistic practices, which constitute English usage in the modern world. Although linguistically the links between English and the various post-colonial englishes in use today can be seen as unbroken, the special status of English needs to be questioned. In this connection, (Ashcroft 2002:221) maintain that "The process of cultural decolonization has involved a radical dismantling of the European codes and a post-colonial subversion and appropriation of the dominant European discourse."

3. 2 .4 Wider Comparative/ Hybridity Model

Hybridity or the wider comparative model is "an important concept in post-colonial theory which refers to the integration of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. The wider-comparative /hybridity model of the same school which deconstructs the binary opposition of center vs. periphery, savagery vs. civilization, master/servant, and the colonizer/the colonized, mainstream/margin relationships is characterized by the prevalence of spatial metaphors.

In fact, Homi Bhabha (1994; 1996) developed the term 'hybridity' to capture the sense that many writers belong to both cultures that an absolute essentialism nor alterity is impossible. For Bhabha, hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized (the *other*) within a singular universal framework. Hybridity is positioned as an antidote to essentialism. In post-colonial discourse, the notion that any culture or identity is

pure or essential is disputable (Ashcroft. *et al* 1995). Bhabha himself is aware of the dangers of fixity and fetishism of identities within binary colonial thinking when he argues that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity' that an invariably fixed identity is rather idealistic.

This new mutation replaces the established pattern with a 'mutual and mutable' (Bhabha 1994) representation of cultural difference that is positioned *in between* the colonizer and the colonized. For Bhabha, it is the indeterminate spaces in-between subject-positions that are lauded as the locale of the disruption and displacement of hegemonic colonial narratives of cultural structures and practices (Bhabha 1994; 1996). Post-colonialists emphasize the eclectic nature of post-colonial writing in terms of thematic and stylistic features rather than considering a given text as a reflection of a dominant or a resistant culture.

By the same token, syncretism denotes the process by which previously distinct linguistic categories, and, by extension, cultural formations merge into a single new-form. It is at this juncture that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being: the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place.

A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by *dislocation,* resulting from migration, and the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labor. Even it may have been destroyed by bicultural *denigration*, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model.

Alterity is to be understood as lack of identification with some part of one's personality or one's *community... "Otherness"*. These models not only examine how colonial contact hybridizes culture and its representation but also explore the ricocheting effects of alterity (Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin 1998:169-71).

These models, which seem to overlap slightly with comparative model proper, argue for features such as hybridity and syncreticity as constitutive elements of all post-colonial literatures. They often operate as assumptions within critical practice rather than discrete schools of thought. Thus, any number of them could be employed simultaneously in the discussion of post-colonial novel.

3. 3. Magical Realism

Western Realism (as a period or non-period concept), which was once popular that it seemed nothing would ever supplant it, is under attack by post-colonial critics. Many critics indict *Realism* on the grounds that it lends itself to an imperializing function because it does not appear overtly to question the normalization and naturalization of otherness in its representation of the quotidian or the conventional

While this is an understandable fear, it does not take into account the many recent uses of Realism by writers from formerly colonized countries who actually use the form to present a critical depiction of objective reality in spite of, or in reaction to, its antecedents. One of these developments is the emergence of *Magical Realism*

3. 3.1 The Emergence of Magical Realism

Magical Realism is a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that otherwise maintains the 'reliable' tone of objective realistic report designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of Realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folk tale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance. In effect, Magical Realism stretches the boundary of Realism in order to stretch the definition of reality.

The term was first applied to the realm of fiction in the 1960s by a Venezuelan essayist and critic Arturo Uslar-Pietri. In fact, it came into vogue after Nobel Prize winner Miguel Angel Asturias used the expression to define the style of his novels. Even though Magical Realism is often regarded as a regional trend restricted to Latin American writers who popularized it as a literary form, it is a mode of writing that has been a revitalizing force in the post-colonial context.

This Latin American phenomenon has become not only a definite international trend of the second half of the 20th century but also a major component of post-colonial African literature. Thus, since such thematic and stylistic features are pervasive in the contemporary Anglophone African novels in question, the treatment of its implications for the African writer, whenever it is appropriate, appears to be quite justifiable.

3. 3.2 Literary Techniques

Magical Realists incorporate many techniques that have been linked to post-colonialism. Some of the thematic and technical features that characterize Magical Realism in creative writing are outlined below.

- The first one in spite of its order is authorial reticence. It has to do with the lack of clear opinions or ambiguity about the accuracy of events and the credibility of the worldviews held by the characters.
- Characters accept rather than question the logic of the magical element.
- As a literary mode, Magical Realism also aims to seize the paradox of polar opposites like life and death, waking and dreaming, civilized and wild, male and female, mind and body, the pre-colonial past versus the post –industrial present, urban and rural, Western and indigenous.

According to Zamora (1995), Magical Realism involves the fusion of the real and the fantastic or the amalgamation of realism and fantasy.

- The plots of Magical Realist novels involve issues of border dispute, mixing and change. Authors deliberately construct such plots to reveal a deeper and truer reality than conventional realist techniques would illustrate, which is, a crucial purpose of Magical Realism.
- Magical Realists are equally obsessed with iconoclasm or breaking the image of ideals cherished by their contemporaries or ancestors. It is also inherently political for it challenges assumptions of order unlike Realism which presents its version of the world as uniquely true or objective.
- It further encourages variety, diversity and relativity. Many writers employ the conventions of Magical Realism to attack the *status quo* under which they exist. If they cannot expose the social and behavioral wrongs freely, their metaphors and hyperbolic expressions serve to reveal their sentiments.
- The idea of terror overwhelms the possibility of rejuvenation in Magical Realist novels. Authoritarian figures such as soldiers, police and sadists all have the power to torture, harass, assassinate, crackdown and dehumanize

innocent civilians. Such a psychological onslaught is pervasive in Anglophone African novels published since the 1970s

- Moreover, it presents events from multiple perspectives and employs hyperbole or an intentional exaggeration of an element until it appears to be magical and defamiliarised (as a source of awe and wonder so as to revivify and expand our sense of the real). The real is defamiliarized by means of expansion, transformation, metamorphosis, and juxtaposition of elements.
- Magical Realism blurs the distinction between myth and reality and achieves an implicit suspension of disbelief on the part of the target readership. At any rate, however, Magical Realism no matter how elastic its definition may be, remains grounded in the phenomenal world unlike fantasy, which is set in the unreal world
- Cyclical repetition of time -is another conspicuous theme of Magical Realism, which is frequently displayed as cyclical recurrence instead of linear progression. What happened once is destined to happen again as history repeats itself. As a result irony and paradox stay rooted in the recurrent social and political aspiration.

Thus, Magical Realism is a deconstructionist strategy intended to decentre the assumptions of European Realism.

3. 3. 3 The Prevalence of Folklore

The prevalence of folkloristic details is another feature of Magical Realism. Although the word *folklore* is more than a century old, no exact agreement has been reached as to its precise conception. The common idea inherent in folklore is that of traditions and oral treasures handed down from the past. Maria Leach (1950:403) provides twenty-one definitions of the term folklore, which are not identical for lack of standardization. One of these has been reproduced below to illustrate the magnitude of its scope.

> Folklore is that part of a people's culture which is preserved, consciously or unconsciously, in beliefs and practices, customs and observances of general currency, in myths, legends, and tales of common acceptance' and in arts and crafts which express the

temper and genius of a group rather than of an individual. Because, it is a repository of popular traditions, and an integrate element of the popular "climate", Folklore serves as a constant source and frame of reference for more formal literature and art, but it is distinct there from in that it is essentially of the people, by the people and for the people.

The above definition reveals that folklore designates the wider social heritage of mankind embracing the whole panorama characteristic of preliterate societies. Among others,

- Social folk custom (secular and religious observances characterized by group interaction rather than individual performance),
- Physical folk life (which is synonymous with material culture),
- Performing folk arts (involves an actual physical movement- parts of or the whole body- as deemed necessary by a group on a particular social occasion) and
- Folk literature (the verbal heritage of mankind transmitted from generation to generation by word of mouth are the sub genres of folklore.

Unlike their European counterparts, African novelists, justifiably incorporate folkloristic details like proverbs and mythological stories in their modern narratives. One cannot study African literatures without studying the particular cultures and cultures upon which African writers draw for their ideological and formal elements.

Folk literature has flourished in Africa for many centuries and takes a variety of forms such as myths, epics, funeral dirges, legends, praise poems, and proverbs. Creation myths, usually "explain causation or the genesis of natural and social phenomena which entail an implied moral sanction".

In traditional African cosmologies, the spoken/performed word animating the creative process is considered to have special powers to evoke spiritual and communal forces and ferment inner life. One of these forms is probably the proverb, a short witty or ironic statement, metaphorical in its formulation, which aims to communicate a response to a particular situation, to offer advice, or persuade.

African proverbs and stories draw upon the collective wisdom of peoples, express their 'structures of meaning, thought, and expression,' and thus serve a range of social and ethical purposes.

Folktales tend to focus more on the temporal adventures and fortunes of individuals rather than nations or souls, although supernatural villains and magical helpers often appear. Legends are associated with real people or places or historical events. These labels have been used very loosely in different times and places that we find wide variations in stories called myths or folktales or legends

The relationship between oral and written traditions and in particular between oral and modern written literatures is one of great complexity and not a matter of simple evolution. Modern African literatures were born in the educational system imposed by colonialism, with models drawn from Europe rather than existing African traditions. The modern African writer thus uses tradition as subject matter rather than as a means of effecting continuity with past cultural practices.

Almost all African novelists invariably incorporate folkloristic elements in their modern narratives in which case Achebe stands out as an outstanding practitioner. This is intended to reclaim or assert lost traditional values and react against the colonizer's rhetoric of a civilizing mission.

In summary, Post-colonial studies designates a critical analysis of the history, culture and literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France and other European Imperial powers. In spite of its fluidity, it is abidingly concerned with:

> **I)**The rejection of the master-narrative of Western imperialism-in which the colonial 'other' is not only subordinated and marginalized but in effect deleted as a cultural agency and its replacement by a counter-narrative as a result of which the colonial cultures fight their way back into a world history written by Europeans,
>
> **II)** Disestablishing Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values, and expanding the literary canon to include colonial and post-colonial writers and
>
> **III)** The role of the subaltern (post-colonial writer who employs a foreign languages as medium of expression) as an agent of resistance against, rather than of compliance with the very discourse that has created its subordinate identity (Abrams 1999:237).

Thus, historians, literary critics, and social scientists employ the idea of post-colonialism to examine the ways, both subtle and obvious, in which colonization affects the colonized society. All post-colonial theorists and theory admit that colonialism continues to affect the former colonies after political independence that such a resistance becomes an effective post-colonial weapon used to reject the claim of universalism made on behalf of canonical Western literature.

In the light of this framework, an attempt has been made to determine the titular matrices, strands of disillusionment, the representation of the intellectual figures and African women, the impacts of xenophobia, the novelists' ideological positioning, textual strategy and cosmic vision and elements of Magical Realism in the selected novels treated under three independent chapters that follow.

Chapter Four: East African 'Chronicles'

Modern East African literature (embraces among others the national literatures of mainstream Anglophone countries like Kenya, Somalia and Uganda. In this chapter, an attempt would made to address a range of post-colonial issues as reflected in Meja Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* (1973), Nuruddin Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk (1979)* and Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles (2000).*

This is carried out with a view not only to discerning the spirit of the national literature of each country but also to mirroring the resultant regional image against the critical models of post-colonialism charted out under the theoretical framework.

4.1 Kill Me Quick (1973) Kenya

> If the sun must set for me,
> If all must come to an end,
> If you, must be rid of me
> The way you have done with all my friends,
> If you must kill me,
> Do so fast.
> KILL ME QUICK

According to Kurtz's *Urban Fears, Urban Obsessions: The Post-Colonial Novel* (1998), the development of the Kenyan novel in English reveals historical contingencies affecting the production of literature in Kenya, and how succeeding generations have drawn from and expanded the thematic repertoire established by the "first generation" of writers in the 1960s.

Whereas the earlier East African writing focused on conflicts surrounding the integration of Western and traditional ways of life or on issues of national building following the colonial experience, beginning in 1970 there developed a veritable explosion of novels with an exclusively urban setting and dealing particularly with the vagaries of city life

Meja Mwangi, whose work provides a representative view of the literature of the country as a whole, reflects its main concerns and the direction of its evolution. He was the first to deal with the themes of the underworld in the post-colonial Kenyan cities like Nairobi.

4.1.1 The Metaphorical Matrix of the Story

In contemporary Kenya, the consumption of alcohol has become almost a national pastime, and so, many Kenyans have been driven to heavy drinking due to the problems of inflation, weak currency and their low *per capita* income leading to a growing sense of frustration. The metaphorical matrix of the title novel, *Kill Me Quick,* suggests an alcoholic beverage which has become a boon to the neo-colonial regime.

Kill Me Quick is an apprentice novel dealing with the trials and tribulations of Meja and Maina who migrate from rural Kenya to Nairobi in pursuit of employment and social security in the wake of their graduation with a high school diploma with all the privileges pertaining thereto. Ironically however, they are destined to an underworld life in supermarket dustbins grabbing for food among the rotting leftovers of the nearby shops and backstreets whereby they join a gang of petty criminals nick-named Razors.

At one juncture, desperate and fond of sanctuary, Meja returns home to his rural village upon which he meets his young sister who throws her arms and carols him happily thinking that he must have come to hand over the promised blue necklace so as to fulfill his promise of supporting his younger siblings' with school fees. Mortified with shame, Meja realizes that he had forgotten his promise and subsequently flees his parents after writing his name on the dust out of humiliation

Maina also returns home as a last resort only to find that his parents had disappeared. He learns from the new owner of their farm that they had squandered all their money sending their son to school. (Mawangi op.cit: 134). Ultimately, Maina is convicted of murder while Meja languishes in prison for a crime he has not committed. They realize that the dream of prosperity and opportunity promised by the native elite is broken thereby leading to despair and disillusionment with the new body politic.

Structurally, the plot appears to be linear but becomes bifurcated when Meja and Maina part company for a while during which time Meja was hospitalized while Maina was aligned with Razor's gang. This is a transitional period in their lives, which marks a new stage in their quest to pass through the thorny paths of the

world. But the reunion of Meja and Maina in Chapter Eight once again renders the plot linear. In fact, *Kill Me Quick* has its climax in the very first sentence. The rest of the story falls away from this high point of astonishment in one long expiring sigh, punctuated by a series of sub-climaxes.

It clearly projects their story as the most representative one that Meja Mwangi dedicates the novel to "... all those little Mejas still in the back streets of the city, destined to stay there until they come of age, when the green van will come and whisk them off to Number Nine" which is their habitual prison cell.

4.1.2 The Socio-Economic Index

Jomo Kenyatta, in his *Suffering without Bitterness* (1968:212) reiterates the aspirations and yearnings of the Kenyan people from the Mau Mau war:

> Our march to freedom has been long and difficult. There have been times of despair, when only the burning conviction of the rightness of our cause has sustained. Today, the tragedies and misunderstandings of the past are behind us. Today, we start on the great adventure of building the Kenyan nation.

After independence, however, the aspirations of the people have still not been met. The pervading socio-political climate is inundated with disillusionment and lack of fulfillment. The hard-won independence has turned a curse, because:

> The majority of Kenyan peasants live in a state of poverty [. . .] the life of the urban poor is made worse by appalling housing conditions and poor urban services. The misery of the poor in Kenya is highlighted by the extravagance of the African nouveau riches [...] the socio-economic position of Kenyan masses is desperate (Tamarkin 1978:314).

4.1.2.1 Not Yet *Uhuru*

Mwangi borrows ideas from contemporary history to pass comments on the social ills of the Kenyan society. Actually, an excessively materialistic and vain society often experiences a terrible level of moral decadence and spiritual vacuity. The living conditions are often dehumanizing and existence becomes cheapened.

Although political independence has been ultimately achieved, nothing tangible has happened to resolve the crises of land tenure.

The economic structure still reflects the interest of the imperial power and the associated dominant groups that new forces and ideas come to the fore, presaging major social and economic changes. These characteristic social and economic structures created by colonial rule are the prosperity of the minority and the impoverishment of the broad masses under a capitalist mode of production.

Ironically, the Black Nationalist leadership of Kenya, which had promised the masses political liberty and national dignity, has failed to concretize the gains of independence. Jude Agho (1993:121) in this regard maintains that

> Post-independence Kenya, like many other countries in Africa, is faced with horizontal rift dividing the ruling elite from the mass of the people. Contemporary Kenya has not only witnessed the frustration of the peasants who had hoped for a better life after independence but also their deepening impoverishment and exploitation. At the end of the emergency, the ends do not justify the means. The loss was simply too much to justify the efforts. This is a betrayal of ideals and trust.

East African writers, like their colleagues in other areas of the world, have responded to the question of social class stratification and the gulf between the rich and the poor. This utter uselessness and senselessness of the anarchy has become the major preoccupation of contemporary East African writers such that they regularly exploit this "neo-colonial" problem as a quarry for their thematic focus. In other words, they bitterly respond to the disappointment and strive for authenticity and legitimacy by identifying themselves with the lot of their countrymen.

The recurrent dilemma of the boys in *Kill Me Quick* reflects the political and social failures of the post-independence Kenyan nation in particular and the entire African continent in general. The social injustices of neo-colonialism like class stratification constitute the driving dynamics of the novel as. captured vividly in

> Meja sat by the ditch swinging his legs this way and that. A few people passed by engrossed in their daily problems and none of them gave the lanky youth a thought. But the searching eyes of Meja missed nothing. They scrutinized the ragged beggars who floated ghostly past him as closely as they watched the smart pot-bellied executives wrinkling their noses at the foul stench of backyards. And between these two types of beings, Meja made comparison (Mwangi, op.cit: 1).

The major characters in the novel (Meja and Maina) are typical of the African unemployed school-leavers. Mwangi dwells on the sordid details of the locations. Meja Mwangi, in *Kill Me Quick,* paints a grim picture of the social displacement of rural youth in big cities. Through Meja and Maina, Mwangi exposes the complex problems confronting the Kenyan State, the suffering of the populace in the midst of plenty and the inability of the State to cater for its citizens.

The protagonists of the novel, Meja and Maina, cannot get the type of job their academic qualifications entitle them to, not even when they agree to sweep and wash dishes and chop wood. When, in their desperation, they overlook the warning sign- "NO VACANCY, *HAKUNA KAZI"* (Ibid: 5) only to be overthrown out of offices by bouncers.

In the white man's farm Maina and Meja are forced to wage a kind of guerrilla warfare with decrepit boy. At times, Maina consoles himself with superficial escape mechanisms like talking and laughing. His excursions into his own mind reveal a repetition of mental imbalance that is symptomatic of frustration. Even though the boys offer to undertake odd jobs for survival, they are cheated, exploited and maltreated by the employers

Thus, the residents of the land and the occupants of the trenches constitute what Frantz Fanon (1968) refers to as "the wretched of the earth." A dearth of infrastructure, broken-down shanties, and a disordered pattern of settlements, filth and squalid lives- all signify the habitation of the common man. All the more, the lives of the members of the Razor's gang depict the common plight of the masses.

Mwangi's thematic focus centers on the portrayal of the post-colonial disillusionment. As a naturalist, he observes the panoramic view of his society and fictionalizes it as it is. He exposes his society's filth, decay, contradictions and conflicts with a view to presenting a true picture. His excremental vision of the society is analogous to the kind of picture painted by Armah in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1969).

The neo-colonial African society depicted in *Kill Me Quick* is in a stage of stultifying poverty. The wealth is in the hands of a privileged minority, which surrounds itself with country houses, cars, washing machines, television sets, and all

the consumer durables that are associated with an acquisitive middle class. On the contrary, the economic position of the peasants is extremely precarious (Griffiths 2000) while living standards are steadily deteriorating under neo-colonialism aggravated by insufficient wages and an acute degree of unemployment that the incipient earners have to suffer.

Life for the masses of the dog-eat-dog world of the Nairobi back streets (symbolized by Meja and Maina) is Hell- on Earth characterized by an extremely limited horizon, since there is little chance of upward mobility. People have to live in this atmosphere of indifference and psychological tumult leading to paranoia, criminality, kleptomania, and the like.

In fact, the epic grandeur of the perseverance and nobility of soul of the downtrodden can endure endless suffering; their patience sometimes attains epic proportions. As a result of the struggle by members of the society for survival at one extreme and accumulation of surplus at the other, the emergence of class conflicts becomes inevitable.

However, the novelist is able to tone down his portrayal of the wretchedness of the masses through the employment of humor. For instance, the neo-colonial rulers are lampooned through the use of humorous tags. "*The Ministry of Economic Misplanning and Underdevelopment*" (Ibid: 33). The novel centers on the plight of the Kenyan masses that have been brutalized by social stratification. They could no longer sustain themselves, since the economy is in the hands of foreign interests whose concern is the production and exportation of food grains at the expense of domestic food self-sufficiency.

Mwangi's novel also reveals that in African neo-colonial societies, the seeds of disharmony, mediocrity and macabre corporate distrust have been sown; corruption and rampant scarcity of personal integrity have replaced the hitherto peaceful existence. In fact, the novel has altered the traditional map of African fiction beyond recognition because of this undisguised depiction of postcolonial decadence and the harshness and abruptness of its style (Griffiths 2000).

4. 1. 2.2 From Rural Poverty to Urban Squalor

Urbanization is arguably the most significant social phenomenon in postcolonial Kenya. Established as a depot and later administrative center for the Uganda railway at the end of the 19th century, Nairobi became the capital of British East Africa in 1907, and has continued growing rapidly through the postcolonial era. Class and race segregation was structured into Nairobi's design during the colonial era, and many of these built-in disparities persist to-date.

Meja Mwangi's novels of Kenyan life depict its urban areas with a searing intensity. Oftentimes his characters struggle to come to terms with the rapid changes that took place in Kenya after its independence, and some of his best works contrast the once-idyllic traditional life in the countryside with the desperate squalor of Nairobi and other cities. In the novel, Mwangi dwells perceptively on unemployment, which is one of the most formidable problems the post-colonial African nations are faced with. In Kenya, for instance, there were fewer than one million jobs for the population of about ten million (Mashanga 1970).

Actually, when Meja and Maina find their rural community too myopic and claustrophobic for their job-seeking souls, the Nairobi city suddenly drags them to its bosom. There they become victims of dehumanization and gross exploitation. Kurtz (1998) explores the relationship between the novel and the city, and how generations of Kenyan writers have responded to urbanization. One of the common denominators is a marked emphasis on the city, particularly Nairobi. The city is used by novelists as both the site and the symbol for a range of obsessions and fears about post-colonial society. The urban area is presented as a corrupt place, which would potentially destroy its aspirants or immigrants.

Meja an ambitious and polite youngster arrives in Nairobi wishing to get employment commensurate with his educational qualification. Unfortunately, however, his career in the city turns to a downward spiral of degradation such as imprisonment, criminality and dependence on dustbins for his survival. His companion, Maina, also arrives in the city in his struggle for survival and undergoes similar trials and tribulations.

Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* is realistic description of the contemporary urban world of Nairobi There is a concentration on the perennial dissonance among individuals, especially as this discord manifests itself in the area of prime interest to the novelist – social classes, races, genders, religions, politics and domestics. It presents a harsh account of urban life in postcolonial Kenya.

His novel reveals one major unfortunate problem that runs though the (neo) colonial African societies, namely frustration or betrayal of trust. Before long, these young people will end up in the shanty towns of the cities and become social parasites.

Urban life as opposed to rural idyll is marked by artificiality, eroticism, marginalization, dreadful individualism, loss of pristine being, and aping the Western values. The rural –urban drift that is a thematic preoccupation of this novel signifies that independence has marginalized the rural setting.

This creates a town- bound migration of school leavers (like Mejia and Mania) and other able-bodied men and women from the rural areas. The frustration of Meja and Maina, signifies the multitudes of problems faced by the younger generation in neo-colonial African societies. Their days are spent writing job applications that pile up in the administration's filing cabinets.

Thus, life in the cities seems to be the hot bed of pains and conflicts. These cover the experiences described in *Kill Me Quick* of bad habitation, malnutrition, unemployment, distress, agony, starvation, cold, alienation, ill health and misery. In this novel, the shanty town, where the deprived masses live is used as an objective and concrete index of the characters and their material impoverishment. There is indeed a correspondence between individuals and their physical environment. The teenagers experience everything that negates joy.

"The boys fetched food from bins, slept in bins and lived in the backyards, in bins" (Mwangi *op.cit*: 9). Meja Mwangi's urban novels offer a riveting account of the constant struggle for survival that marks life in Nairobi's poorest sector. *Kill Me Quick* recreates landscapes of stinking back alleys, ramshackle dwellings, and the severe social problems that accompany them: inadequate accommodation and jobs, nonexistent waste removal services, corrupt officials, alcoholism thieving and juvenile delinquency.

4.1.2.3 Juvenile Delinquency and the Custodial Malpractice

The protagonists, or the school-leavers, Meja and Maina, represent one of the major social problems of Nairobi like the growing number of orphaned destitute children who roam the streets of Nairobi surviving on handouts. Delinquency leads to involvement with street gangs and criminality.

The Problem of "street children" of the "parking boys' as they are sometimes known, is the one that occupies. Frustrated with penury, some of them join the underworld life of robbery and land in prison. The following chat among the prisoners reveals the frequency of their imprisonment and the nature of crime they have allegedly committed:

> On the extreme left is Chege,' Maina said.
> Two years in for the so-called rape,' Chege said. 'But I kept telling that monkey of a judge that she had agreed and…'
> Second in line is Ngugi, 'Maina went on, cutting the other's argument short.
> There years in for robbery with violence,' Ngugi said' I am glad to know Maina had a friend outside number nine.'
>
> Ninth time in for robbery without violence,' he announced. 'This time for two years and some patting across the bottom. And if that swine of a warder does not take it easy with the cane, I will not live long enough to make the tenth comeback. (Ibid: 139)

What is inseparable from this corrosive oppression is the partiality of the judiciary and the maladministration ranging from the harassment of street dwellers to the torture of prisoners. Pervasive in the story.

Given the torture of the frustrated boys, it is no surprise that very soon they resort to criminal acts and become paranoid. One cannot excuse Maina's, Meja's and their cohorts' sudden slide into crime, but the real issue is to see beyond their acts (which are only symptoms) and identify the circumstances that could have turned once normal and innocent young men into such recidivists. Thus, detention under the guise of enforcing law and order seems to have become fashionable:

> The warder did not speak to him. He took the prisoner's papers and got busy booking him
>
> ***NAME: MEJA MWANGI alias BARRACUDA.***
>
> ***AGE: 26***
>
> ***CHARGE***
>
> ***ONE YEAR AND SIX MONTHS.***

> The van driver folded the old police blanket under his arm and walked to his van. He drove out of the prison yard and back the way he had come to the highway that led back to the city.... When the door was closed behind him the prisoner stood in his new uniform and surveyed what was going to be home for the next one and a half years. (Ibid: 135).

The irony of life is shown by the comparatively improved living conditions in prison custody, which has dim electric light. This is reminiscent of Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* where we read a graffiti, which runs: PRAY FOR DETENTION! JAILMAN CHOP FREE (1970:106).The prisoners are provided with blankets, and are recognized upon being counted every evening and every morning. The world of the novel is where prison custody is even preferable to hostile freedom: "at least that was better than living in a quarry and burrowing in the rock for the rest of one's life" (*Ibid: 39*)

> They all seemed happy and contented with life in prison. He wondered whether he might eventually come to like it too. If all one did in prison was eat and drink and get himself locked up and counted like cattle, things were not very bad. At least that was better than living in a quarry and burrowing in the rock for the rest of one's life (Ibid: 139-140).

Commenting on life in prison, Remy Oriaku (1982:114) asserts that

> The prison scenes in *Kill Me Quick* indicate the high level of crime in the society. All kinds of young people are found in the prisons and there is much feeling of comradeship and contentment among the inmates. Even when they are released, they look forward to a quick return to prison and to their friends there.

Meja makes a similar observation when he ponders on the allegation of murder leveled against his friend Maina and the inevitability of capital punishment in which case innocent school-leavers become scapegoats

> Meja thought bitterly of his friend. In the newspaper headlines, flanked by two armed policemen he had looked tired and disheveled as though they had pulled him out of a swamp. But he did not look mad. And now they were going to hang him. Maina of the dustbins and backstreets. Innocent Maina who only knew how to laugh and smile. He was now a murderer. The newspapers had screamed so in the headlines (op.cit: 176).

In this regard, *Kill Me Quick* (1973) reverberates with Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977) from the same setting which is a damning indictment of the corruption and greed of Kenya's political, economic, and social elite who, after the struggle for

freedom from British rule, have not returned the wealth of the land to its people but rather perpetuate the social injustice and economic inequality that characterized colonial oppression.

The novel could be considered as a chronicle of the existential and societal realities of the neo-colonial Kenyan nation. This could validate Ahmad Aijaz's (1992:101) assertion that "All third-world texts are necessarily national allegories."

The theme of Post-Colonial decadence in the text thus becomes a metaphor for the history of neo-colonial African nations, which are encumbered with dislocation, alienation, depression and deprivation. What is resonating through the novel is an echo of the painful existence of the masses in the neo-colonial society, which delineates a motley array of failure and ridiculous figures.

In summary, the critical climate in African literary scholarship has thus come to favor fiction, which acknowledges and builds on Social Realism. Mwanig's *Kill Me Quick* is a statement both of faith and fact. The novelist chronicles the fact of suffering through decades of neo-colonialism and imperialism.

He equally foregrounds the faith in the masses' Spartan strength and will to survive. We observe in the struggle of Meja and Maina dreams transformed by tyrants into a nauseating mirage. The boys represent that the masses in pursuit of space are denied of, stifled and partially destroyed.

Undeniably, this novel is a public parade of crime and social alienation stemming from unemployment. This is no longer an external oppression, but an internal colonization in which certain privileged individuals oppress their compatriots. Thus, pain is a ubiquitous phenomenon in the human milieu. Unemployment is one of the most formidable problems facing the developing countries.

Often many able-bodied people scramble for the very few available jobs. The next crop of youngsters notice only those who have done well, not the rest who have drifted into slums. The Mwangian frustrated men are offered the worst jobs and often driven to live as pirates or parasites on the fringes of a hostile society. Their slide into crime in Mwangi's novel can thus be regarded as merely one dimension of a wider and deeper struggle between the exploiters and the exploited.

4.1.3 Mwangi's Ideological Thrust

Mwangi holds mirror to the fate of an impotent silent majority. He has a vision of life as hell. Human concerns like class and gender inequality are largely foregrounded in the novel. An objective analyst of the malaise of post-colonial African nations, Mwangi does not lay all the blame for the avalanche of pains in Africa at the doorstep of the colonial masters. He rather believes that the neo-colonial indigenous rules are even worse than the white colonialists.

The lives of Meja and Maina in the text suggest that independence in African nations has not been very beneficial to the masses. Therefore, there is a recurrence of undisguised bitterness against the black African rulers who have betrayed their nations as reflected in the characterization, tone and language of the novel. This phenomenon is corroborated by Edward Said's assertion (1993:19) that

> Blaming the Europeans sweepingly for the misfortunes of the present is not much of an alternative. What we need to do is to look at the matters as a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand.

Meja further reiterates this anomaly when he rhetorically asks his friend about the abuse of resources by the ruling elite:

> Have you ever wondered where the other half of our halved rations go? I am sure the white man has nothing to do with it. The 'Minister for Economic Misplanning and Underdevelopment' should answer that question himself. (Mwangi op.cit: 39).

Thus, the reader realizes the bitter truth that the neo-colonial African leaders are misruling their individual nations and subjecting the masses to hunger and social degradation because of their ineptitude, corruption and selfishness. They have consequently plunged the continent into perennial underdevelopment and stagnation. This is an index of unfulfilled hope. African literature of the past two decades has transformed this theme of disillusionment.

Where the colonizer was once the sole object of criticism, now African autocrats, cadres and government officials are depicted exploiting the masses they had promised to uplift as reflected in Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick.*

4.1.4 Editorial Intrusion

Kenya is a polyglot country where the vernacular dialect, Swahili, and English, the official language, are spoken. Mwangi, who is the contemporary of Ngugi who seems to be bent on decolonizing African Literature, has creatively used English by way of appropriation rather than abrogation. Some strategies of appropriation employed by Meja include: untranslated vernacular diction, Pidgin English and a transcription of Swahili idiom.

The variety of English spoken by the characters with an African bent is an instance of pidgnization. To cite but few examples of translated vernaculars: *HAKUNA KAZI (NO VACANCY, (Ibid: 6),* interlanguage, untranslated vernaculars, indigenous names throughout the novel, proverbial expression like, "East or West, home is best" (Ibid: 163), graphic description of the physical environment (Ibid: 148-150) are instances of Magical Realism though he is primarily a critical realist.

There are also some organic metaphors like the Razors, *Number Nine*, and the titular *kill me quick* itself. Apart from these, Mwangi juxtaposes the poor vs. the rich, urban squalor vs. rural poverty, tyranny vs. the Spartan endurance of the masses, police phobia vs. human rights, imprisonment and the aura of freedom, the upper class and the lower class, justice and injustice all of which are aspects of Magical Realism.

4.2. Sweet and Sour Milk (1979) Somalia

> Like a child in a cot being rocked to sleep by a woman who sings a lullaby in a language foreign to his ears; the child with eyes half-closed, his mouth moving as he sucks a pebble-not listening to the song, but feeling the rhythm of the lullaby. The woman resumes the rocking; the child bursts into a hysterical crying. The woman gives the child her milkless breasts Quiet a second or so, Enraged – the cry again. He does not even accept to play with the pebble or have his hunger filled with strange breasts. (Ibid: 111).

Farah is a Diasporic novelist who fled his home region of Ogaden three years after Somalia's independence(1963), following serious border conflicts with Ethiopia. The Soviet-backed tyranny of General Barr's 'Scientific Socialism' of the 1970s was the target of Farah's novels. He shared the brief hopes of the Revolution that attended Siad Barre's original coup in 1969. But disillusionment proved to be swift as the summary execution of opposition groups and an indiscriminate detention of citizens became the order of the day.

4.2.1 Synopsis of the Plot

In the late 1970s, a bunch of well-educated, progressive Somalis attempted to mount an effective opposition against the Government of Mohammed Siad Barre, here portrayed as a regressive, tribally- based dictatorship which was hiding behind the banner of 'Scientific Socialism. *Sweet and Sour Milk (*1979) features the story of Loyaan, a dentist, who is fatally confronted with the mysterious death of his twin brother, Soyaan, a journalist and high-ranking government official. In an attempt to unravel the deadly mysteries, Loyaan delves deeper and deeper into the life of his twin brother.

His brother was appointed ambassador to Yugoslavia but dies before assuming office. Subsequently, Loyaan, who is appointed to the same position, is kidnapped at the end of the novel. Farah bends the narrative form of the analytical detective novel, with its linear plot leading to a definite closure of demystification and the unraveling of the murder mystery, and brings it back in full circle to its beginning—as in an oral tale. Instead of unraveling the mysteries of Soyaan's death, he adds another mystery by confounding Loyaan's fate as that of the besieged People of Somalia in his trilogy,

4.2.2` Thematic Preoccupations

Nuruddin Farah is known as one of the most stimulating contemporary prose writers in Africa whose works typically address the theme of individual freedom in the face of arbitrary power that is prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nuruddin Farah is a contemporary Somali novelist concerned with gender issues, military dictatorship, the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology and related national and regional syndromes in post-colonial Somalia which are treated below.

4.2.2.1 Harassment and Disinformation

The defunct Government of Somalia had a hydra-like structure of detecting information through certain renegades. In a country like Somalia; the Secrete Service acquires information from the lumpen proletariat who are temporarily hired and join it to cope with their immediate economic problems. Since their low level of educational and political consciousness coupled with opportunism disables them from logical reasoning, they are inadvertently involved in an act of betrayal.

By implication, if Somalia is considered as a family, the betrayal is no longer that of colonialism but from within such that the cure must also be found within and "the finger should point unto itself". The state machinery involves the Security Service, the Police, and other organs of injustice under the guise of justice.

With regard to the Police, the Somalia Regime had to manipulate institutions such as the Security and the Civil Service to accomplish its mission. These institutions are rendered full authority over every citizen of the nation." The security deems it necessary to break this sandy city into these, have each house numbered, the residents counted- and every body screwed." ((Farah 1979: 89).

The corps of the Security Services in this country needs no warrant to arrest anybody. (*Ibid:* 136). For instance, Somalis who came from abroad were forced to confess that they had betrayed their country. Any communication with foreigners in this respect is considered to be an act of subversion that the Security Service takes action against the anti-revolutionaries.

From this point of view, the regime instills fear into its citizens who dissociate themselves from foreigners lest they should be implicated in espionage. The universal use of spies and informers is bound to create an atmosphere of

suspicion, fear and isolation – an atmosphere whose intensity is heightened by laws such as ban on the assembly of more than five people except at an Orientation Centre (which had to be attended by civil servants and their families thrice a week for economic security.

From this perspective, the Diasporic Somalis were regarded as traitors as a consequence of which they are indiscriminately cursed, imprisoned and tortured upon their arrival. In this regard, Farah underpins the hostile propaganda the contemporary Government wages against the Diaspora in order to divert the attention of the masses from the burning national issues.

The iron hand of the General does not relax its grip over the ruled in order to ensure the suppression of information and oppression of individual opinion and action. The rule of the game was imprisonment without trial and execution that few families or clans remained inviolate. The iron censorship was another threat to the freedom of expression along side the intelligence network:

> Any person who spreads or takes out of the Somali Democratic Republic printed, reading, spoken or broadcast matter, or persons in the SDR who display, distribute or disseminate information aimed at damaging the revolution and the sovereignty of the Somali nation will be liable to death (Ibid: 52).

The prisons are congested with people arrested without warrant and awaiting retribution.

The sabotage of the misdirected mass media, which could be described as the Devil's advocate for perpetuating tyranny by singing to the tune of the .repressive ideology is yet another grave concern not only in Somalia but also across Sub-Saharan Africa. The death of Soyaan is broken in a distorted manner that the sort of obituary, which appeared in the newspaper posthumously, blurs not only his martyrdom but also the cause of his death putting every thing upside down.

> Loyaan Keynaan whose photograph appears above has died serving the revolution. God bless him. And protect all those who loved him. Loyaan, martyr of the revolution, is dead but has left behind him a living legend of revolutionary vitality and loyalty to the highest of ideals. His last worlds were 'Labor is Honor' May he be remembered thus!" (Ibid: 76).

Such scandals are geared towards perpetuating the patriarchal ideology. In Farah's description, the newspaper also serves as the iron hand of the State in indoctrinating

distorted notions that are intended to solicit foreign aid but whose implicit target proves to be exploitative. By analogy, this kind of deception had been employed to spread a contrary impression about the drought, which struck Somalia in the 1970s:

> During the1974/75 famine here in Somalia, for example . . . plane loads of staving northerners were brought and made to settle in the greener southern regions. Others were forced to become fishermen. The Government's propaganda machinery explained this, the news was carried on the front pages of several international papers, and there were FAO delegations and UNESCO's aid mission and a planeload of tourists. When the government had collected as much money as could be got from raising hopes . . . the general lost his original enthusiasm (Farah, 1981:108).

In addition to disinformation, a range of tactical measures such as restrictions, sanctions, political marriage, bribery and mystification were evolved and exercised by the ruling junta. One of these is unmarking tombs in order to mystify the identity of the dead without a trace.

By implication, the families and relations of the deceased are deprived of the right to claim the body of the victims. Thus, facts remain confidential for political reasons while the masses are misguided so that their perception and vision of historical reality would be blurred.

These points can be illustrated as under "Persons executed by a firing squad for their political beliefs are buried in unnumbered tombs. No member of their immediate family is allowed to see their dead bodies (Farah op.cit: 94). One of Soyaan's letters unravels the political mischief of the government as well as its murderous acts a follows:

> They would not allow the immediate family go anywhere near the dead bodies. I watched the bodies collapse like mined buildings and the sky thundered a warning. But would he hear, would the general listen to any one but his Russian Advisors? The Grand Warder. The Grand Jailor of Somalia's Grand Jail (Ibid: 53)

The Regime concocts false stories by way of disinformation to avert ideological demonstrations which might cause civil unrest and civil war. To avoid such risks, bribing certain influential groups with economic benefits and political privileges became an alternative strategy of silencing defiant voices. For instance, Loyaan reflects upon the alliance of his father with the State:

> One of your cases died under torture . . . it created a scandal ... the general feared ... the tribe from which the dead man hailed would

> take revenge on this government of tribal hegemony. The prove that his own tribesmen were innocent, the General had all accusing fingers point at you ... having exposed you, he was left with no choice but to sack you ... A mean sum to unlock your rheumatic tongue and make your rusty jaws function so you can praise him (Ibid: 88).

Thus, disinformation, oppression, and summary executions, which are aggravated by the opportunistic Siad Barre regulars, are the characteristic features of dictatorship as reflected in *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979).

4.2.2.2 Patriarchal Ideology

Patriarchal ideology connotes variable assumptions in different parts of the world, depending upon what is being defended, and the gullibility of the audience. However, it is very likely to include such components as belief in male superiority, instruction from Allah, tradition, general interest, division of labor and disciplinary coercion.

Male rule over women is justified in terms of their biological and God-ordained superiority, especially in terms of intelligence. Many characters of Farah's novels are victims of patriarchal ideology. The idea of patriarchy favors a male partner to dominate a female partner who is always expected to be subservient to the will of her husband and the family as a whole.

This ideology has long been cherished by the society as a norm or natural way of living. In *Sweet and Sour Milk*, Qumman and Ladan suffer from the imposition of Keynaan, a character with a military background who symbolizes male chauvinism.

The perception of women as inferior to man is also observable. At times and to our dismay, women are treated a little more than beggars as reflected in the following observation:

> Honored President's visit. They had experienced it themselves, these beggars, they knew that the General's was a government which welcomed foreign delegations with the pomposity of red carpets while they, the beggars, had to be hidden and driven out of town-ugly sight that they were. Four more goats had been brought and slaughtered. Loyaan could tell that from the number of heads being buried, the intestines, and the plain and honeycomb tripe being washed and cleaned. This would be the food given to the women. What the women wouldn't eat went to the beggars. What the beggars couldn't bring themselves to eat was thrown to the stray cats and the master-less dogs of the district. (Farah op.cit: 9).

Moreover, various Quoranic interpretations are provided to show that God put men in charge and women are supposed to respect men's governance. Thus, the-deep-rooted religious dogma that the creation of Eve is an after-thought is a case in point. Consequently, there are many stereotypical representations of women reflecting deep-rooted prejudice against the women folk:

> Women are for sleeping with, for giving birth to and bringing up children, they are not good for any other thing, Said Kenyaan. They are not to be trusted with secrets. They can serve the purpose Allah created them for originally and no more (Ibid: 84).

Traditionally, men have always been in charge of administrative responsibilities as they are the breadwinners of their dependents. Thus under the guise of the commandment of Creation and cherishing tradition, the oppression of women by men is taken for granted in both Christian and Islamic societies. On the other hand, the prejudice against Margarita and Beydan in *Sweet and Sour Milk is* an indication of a subversive activity intended to set one family member against another. Thus, they sneer at her as follows:

> And on top of everything" she went on, "she wants us to give her husband a name. She will squeeze herself into the decency and respectability of our home. Then she will ask for a daily allowance. And more and more when she is only a half-caste prostitute. Isn't what she wants? To smear the memory of our Soyaan with the stains of her past? No, no that won't happen (Ibid: 71).

The prejudice is further aggravated when his mother declares that 'Beydan's and that woman's child are the devil's breed, that she does not want Soyaan's name linked with that Christian either, "(Ibid). To a greater or lesser extent, many countries are infected with institutionalized sexism, backed up by the patriarchal ideology. If the battle against institutionalized racial discrimination has been largely won, the battle against institutionalized gender discrimination is a recent phenomenon.

Some feminists cannot even contemplate the battle, and have instead attempted to set up feminist enclaves or alternative societies, supposedly outside the control of the patriarchal state. Paradoxically, the mother- figure also resents her son's obedience to women as reflected in the following extract:

> My son has abandoned me to the wolves of shame and grace he said. He has listened to the counsel of women. A man who seeks and follows women's advice is a man ruined (*Ibid*: 14)... A man of certain character such as Keynaan had been (The Grand patriarch rules, with the iron hand of male – dominated tradition, over his convoy of children and wives: Soyaan to Loyaan) didn't have the material possibility of knowing how it felt to carry within oneself an egg which broke in two gave birth to twins (Ibid: 54).

This is a deep-rooted belief in traditional societies. Polygamy or its variant, adultery, is another butt of satire in Farah's novel. For instance, women who are allowed to enter the political structure serve two purposes: as political advisors and mistresses of Ministers. Such superstitious perspectives derived from distorted scriptural versions and rationalism thus deceive the women folk into believing that these ideological assumptions are natural and inviolable. Consequently, they show their loyalty and/or obedience to their male partners without any resistance.

By tradition, the male-female dichotomy appears to be neither necessary nor desirable since the latter act for the general benefit of the whole family and the whole society. Thus, the male monopoly of decision-making has nothing to do with superiority and inferiority, but is merely part of a natural or convenient gender division of labor, which is found to be socially convenient by both parties.

A Woman's childbearing role gives her a naturally domestic location, leaving men to deal with public affairs. Insofar as women do not accept these beliefs, or rebel against them, we come to a final and rather different belief known as Feminism. With regard to discipline and coercion, man has been given the role (by God, tradition, law, society) of maintaining his authority over women, and to mete out physical or other punishment to women who are unwilling to yield to patriarchal authority.

The last belief is different because it is a 'last resort' belief. It reveals the need to resort to violence when patriarchal belief begins to slip, and patriarchal rule is challenged. Pervasive violence against women is therefore a sign of collapsing patriarchy, or of crumbling at weak points, and may give the pointer for strategic action in accelerating its collapse. All governments become more coercive and violent as its ideological legitimacy begins to slip.

In the African context, however, the dominant view held by the majority of writers and critics alike is at variance with Western feminists. Thus, the burning issue is cultural empowerment rather than the emancipation of women from domestic oppression. As reflected in the works of contemporary novelists, gender equity in Africa is inconceivable or a propaganda ploy at its best unless a genuine national/regional independence from the shadow of neocolonialism is achieved.

4. 2.2.3 Sycophancy of the Clergy

One of the "group-interests" seems to be that of religion, again presented as an inconsistency in the contemporary Somali political life. For the traditional religion of Somalia, Islam provides a firm cultural foundation for the society at large, a foundation, like tribalism, which is incompatible with a genuinely socialist superstructure. Yet the General has been able to distort his subjects' interpretation of Islam, bribing or coercing the Sheikhs to support his rule and to lead their followers in singing his praises and comparing him, grotesquely, with the Prophet or even with Allah.

In *Sweet and Sour Milk,* the dead Soyaan is posthumously turned into a "Hero of the Revolution" whose last words are given out as "Labor is Honor and there is no General but our General" which is no less than a perversion of the most fundamental tenet of the Islamic faith.

The Sheikhs who support the General are rewarded with stipends and honors while those who refuse are imprisoned, tortured, and even executed. The provision of an Islamic legitimacy for a dictatorial, Marxist-Leninist regime serves to ensure the passivity and, at best, the full support of the populace. Farah seems to be surprised at the General's attempt to intertwine two irreconcilable value systems: Marxism and the Holy Quoran. This co-existence between Marxism and Islam has been used as a means of masquerading the truth:

> On the one hand, the Blue Book of the General and Lenin's writings in improvised translations; in the other, the holy Koran. In one instant: We have blind faith in Allah's doctrine; in the same: we are Marxist – Leninist and Mohammedan… (Ibid: 133).

Although the Somali regime preaches solidarity with the clergy, it does enforce punitive schemes against them legally and officially as reflected under Article 12 of

their Provisions states that "Any person who uses religion for the purpose of breaking up the unity of the Somali people or weakening or damaging the authority of the Somali State shall be punishable by death."(Ibid: 13) Thus, the Security Service kills not only secular political activists but also Sheiks if they are critical of the *status quo*.

4.2. 3 Farah's Ideological Positioning

Farah partially blames the populace for its passivity and gullibility, which in effect, perpetuates post-colonial oppression. It seems that individuals or groups are more concerned with their private lives rather than with the well- being of their country. Farah baldly asserts this standpoint as follows:

> This country has no tradition of protest movements, trade unions or organized groups of any kind. There is no tradition such as there is in Egypt, Ethiopia, or Sudan, of student movements, which can help form or uniform governments or shape public opinion. So people, inarticulate with fear, prefer not to speak.' I have a wife and children to take care of,' one of them would say to you. 'I have an aged mother and family to care for, to maintain,' another would tell you. 'My neck is not longer than yours. Extend yours. But I won't. I have open mouths to feed. To feed these open mouths, I need to close mine. When not closed, my mouth helps me to masticate not formulate thoughts.' You hear these or variations of these (Ibid: 139).

In fact, the insecurity of the civil servants and the nationalist figures is threatened by the day that most of them have become resigned observers of the national anomaly not only in Somalia but also across Sub-Saharan Africa. Because dissident groups and popular figures of these countries have been silenced at gun point and state-sponsored military crackdown.

Another catalyst of the reign of terror is the sabotage within family circles. Oddly enough, the family emerges as the most menacing instrument of authoritarian rule as a metaphor for internal sabotage. In *Sweet and Sour Milk*, the betrayal is within the family. A case in point is the collaboration of Loyaan's father with the Regime at the cost of his revolutionary son's blood and integrity:

> A carrier of the Revolutionary Torch; the Standard-bearer of Scientific Socialism; an advocate of Justice and Social Equality; a Believer in the General's interpretation of the country's needs: Soyaan Keynaan, Allah bless him, died two days ago. He died a premature death. He died serving the Revolution. As has been the custom and is known from experience, the Revolutionary

> Government honors those who die serving her honorably. The Revolutionary Government, indeed, has pinned ribbons of honor on the bosoms of those who have served this nation's interest. Although it must be remembered that no reward and no remuneration, however great and however generous, can substitute fully for the vitality of the Hero of the Revolution. (Ibid: 99).

The text explicitly refers to the theories of Wilhelm Reich, according to which case the structure of the family is the microcosm of the Super Structure. "In the figure of the father the authoritarian state has its representative in every family, so that the family becomes its most important instrument of power" (Ibid: 97).

Farah sees the clash between traditional tribal and modern national awareness as a major flaw in the nation-building endeavor of the post-colonial leadership. Thus individuals, micro and macro-social institutions and tribal chieftains are advertently or inadvertently playing the role of the Devil's advocate. Further domination is also enacted by tribalism, which is used as a means of distracting the attention of the masses by sowing the seeds of discord and suspicion among its members in order to 'divide and rule.'

Farah is a pragmatic writer who asks his reader not to blame an individual for his tyrannical excesses or a foreign power for its domination without first asking himself whether the dealings at the highest state level are not just a replica on a larger scale of his or her own individual behavior.

The other mechanism of silencing potential dissidence is encouraging political marriages such that the ruling party resembles more of a dynasty than an ideological wing. A case in point is the marriage of Beydan and Kenyaan intended to avert a potential feud between the contemporary Government and other aspirants for political power:

> Women are like your shadow. "Loyaan remembered the Somali proverb: They follow who leaves them, they run from who follows them." A generalization, of course, like all proverbs. Would Keynaan go after Beydan if she decided to leave him? We are women, we are weak. When we are widowed, we cry softly lest the General hears, lest you return to take away those you haven't already imprisoned." Well put that, he said to himself. She had experienced the worst there was. Her former husband had died in the torture-chamber. He had been Keynaan's case. The General compensated: he ordered Keynaan to marry her in place of the murdered husband. Loyaan also remembered a conversation he once had recently been imprisoned. 'It is the cold wind falling on

> your ribs which makes you feel abandoned, it is the absence of warmth which renders life difficult (Farah op.cit: 153).

Thus, the post-colonial African regimes leave no stone unturned to prolong their reign of terror. The tactics include political marriage, detention, harassment, disinformation and a bloody military crackdown. The frustration of dissident forces is, thus, partly attributed to the sabotage of family, the sycophancy of the clergy and the incubation of opportunists in breeding grounds like ideological schools.

This implies that internal sabotage is more dreadful than external aggression in countries like Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe with all their implications for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa.

4 .2. 4 Stylistic Hybridity

This story of institutional hardship and personal betrayal is laden with symbolism. Scarcely do we find a chapter without an introductory frontispiece that embodies the gist of the chapter which is the case with the whole story of *Sweet and Sour Milk* For instance, from unit one of *Sweet and Sour Milk*; three symbolic vehicles can be identified: the Sate, the dominant ideology and the people. This part is the first projection of the author's social vision in which he draws an analogy with the Somali crisis as follows:

> Like two tyres of a bicycle that never touch never come together, to tell each other of a wish to retire from serving an ungrateful master- each remains isolated within its own limits of space, a system, a code of behavior that perpetuates and makes possible the serving (Ibid: 25).

The two tyres symbolize internal friction orchestrated by the Military regime to prolong its domination. Similarly, the 'ungrateful master' symbolizes 'the General or the dictator who intrigues against his rivals or opposition groups for fear of dethronement. In the subsequent chapters, we come across discordant juxtapositions like 'Mother' and 'Child', symbolizing the Nation and its subjects. Similarly, Chapter Two opens with the following frontispiece.

> Like a dry weed in the wind, blowing along with the breeze, light and skinny; a dry weed nodding in approval to the forceful wind blowing about; a dry weed bowing … something climatic runs havoc the weed, in the headlong rush, somersaults hurriedly towards the growth at the bottom of lone tree and breaks in two (Ibid: 38).

The forceful wind' symbolizes 'foreign influence' while 'a dry weed nodding to the forceful wind blowing about' represents the dictatorial government or the contemporary government which was the satellite of the former USSR. The author warns the Government against the consequences of neglecting national priorities in favor of its neocolonial masters.

Both 'the strong wind' and 'the weed' are responsible for the national disaster that has befallen Somalia. On the one hand, 'the lone tree' as well as 'the twigs' represent 'Soyaan' and his followers' who are doomed to suffer the atrocities of the Security Service. The same applies to 'Chapter Three' where emphasis is laid on the ordeals and martyrdom of Loyaan.

> Like an infant in the embrace of a garbage-bin, an infant barely a week old; abandoned; with the light of life seemingly spent like the cross- road hour of night and day; not a whimper; not a cry. A child of dawn conceived, given birth to and abandoned at the crack of it. With its birth, it filled the cupped hands of dawn with a human responsibility. Will the sun receive it; will it find it a home? (Ibid: 50).

The introductory part refers to Loyaan, who in the wake of his twin brother's death, has been plunged into difficult circumstances .A closer examination of his family also sheds light on the fate of Loyaan. The Security Service would keep track of him for political reasons. Hence 'Loyaan' and an infant exposed to the sun' are analogous. In Chapter Four, the frontispiece foreshadows the conflict imminent in Loyaan's family.

While that of Chapter Five underpins the dire need for self-criticism in order to cope with this grim political phenomenon. However, there is no a flicker of hope and any optimistic departure or hint throughout his first trilogy. In Chapter Eight, which is central to the story, 'milk – less breasts' symbolize the sterility of post-colonial Somalia whose wealth has been drained by foreign powers and that its economy is in shambles.

The situation is analogous with petals of blood that do not bear fruit. The bulk of the peasantry is alienated as 'Strange breasts' can hardly nourish the child. Thus, the hypocrisy of the State apparatus and the ultimate effect of this treachery are vividly captured in the following frontispiece, which is central to Farah's thematic preoccupation:

> Like a child in a cot being rocked to sleep by a woman who sings a lullaby in a language foreign to his ears; the child with eyes half-closed, his mouth moving as he sucks a pebble-not listening to the song, but feeling the rhythm of the lullaby. The woman stops rocking. The child opens his eyes. Both hear a cow's mooing and a goat's bleating approach. The woman resumes the rocking; the child bursts into a hysterical crying. The woman gives the child her milk less breasts. Quiet a second or so, enraged – the cry again .He does not even accept to play with the pebble or have his hunger filled with strange breasts. (Ibid: 111).

In like manner, recurrent spatial metaphors like 'westward direction', 'open-mouthed grave' and 'a burial mound' are the harbingers of a bad omen that would devastate the Nation and its citizens' or metaphorically the 'Mother' and the 'child. In one of the portrayals of the General's extreme lust for power, Farah employs a figurative language as a means to an end:

> You must groom it like a bride and love it like a god. You must fence it with care; you must lie about it, as one does about a person one loves so dearly, you must prefect it with false notions of grandeur. Power-oh, what a mistress- remains faithful. You can then wear it like a flower in your hair, or a medal pinned to your chest you must be patient as a famous person, and corrupting as hunger, and green as a novice (Ibid: 70).

Thus, the political power of the General or any other dictatorial leadership appears to be as inviolable as if it were divinely-ordained. However, it was ousted by a military coup in 1990, thereby, plunging the country into anarchism or power vacuum to-date.

As an instance of editorial intrusion, he also employs untranslated vernacular diction like *Allah, jaalle* (comrade), *Sheikh, ciao* and a range of proper names, which cut across the whole story. The influence of the Italian language on Farah's works is also quite evident. Thus, Italy's colonization of Somalia and his exposure to Italian culture have impact on his writing style. Words like *Marco, Margarita* and *Marxismo, Dottore! Dottor* Loyaan (Ibid.73) are recurrent.

4.3 Abyssinian Chronicles (2000) Uganda

It may be noted that Abyssinian *Chronicles* is a novel set largely in Uganda (and not at all in Abyssinia- i.e. ancient Ethiopia). The title is not a geographical or historical mistake but misleading attempt to catch readers' eyes in bookstores with a title that is more provocative than, say, "Ugandan Chronicles" might be.

The explanation for the title comes much later in the novel where the narrator confirms the only political statement that his father had ever made:

> It was during the depth of his suffering that Serenity came up with the only political statement he ever made. He said that Uganda was a land of false bottoms where under every abyss there was another one waiting to snare people, and that the historians had made a mistake: Abyssinia was not the ancient land of Ethiopia, but modern Uganda (Ibid: 469).

This explanation was augmented in his interview with *The Daily Monitor* (October 18, 2005) reproduced below:

> ***The Daily Monitor***: Why the title *Abyssinian Chronicles* yet the plot is more Ugandan than Ethiopian? To which Isegawa replies
>
> **Moses:** No, this is just playing around with the word abyss. Uganda in the seventies had quite a lot of problems, economic problems and plunder out of the political situation. It is just a metaphor of a land of pits. People were always struggling and falling in various pits; there were religious, personal and economic conflicts, which people were trying to get out of. When you combine it, then you have chronicles about the land of pits. That and not Ethiopia was really the idea.

4 .3. 1 Plot Construction

Mugezi's odyssey, from a small rural community to Kampala, takes the form of a long, winding journey and has two strands of narrative structure-familial and National. According to Paul Gray(2000), *Abyssinian Chronicles* is ostensibly, the coming-of-age story of its narrator, Mugezi, who is born in a tiny Ugandan village in the early 1960s and who grows up to witness firsthand his country's plunge into chaos under the dictatorship of Idi Amin in the '70s. Mugezi does more than set down his experiences.

He also gives intimate details of the wedding night of his father Serenity and his mother Padlock; notes the later occasion of his own conception and, near the end, provides a detailed account of his parents' deaths, even though their bodies are never

found and their friends have no idea of what happened to them. Mugezi and all the members of his extended family play out, in microcosm, the upheavals of postcolonial Africa: the Diaspora from stable rural societies into hectic cities governed by money rather than loyalties. Mugezi learns that he must be devious and tough simply to stay alive.

For a while, he idolizes Amin's power and intransigence. But this feeling fades, and the stroll he takes through anarchic Kampala, his adopted urban home, just after the overthrow of Amin in 1979 becomes a harrowing hell. As they extort money from the unprotected on the cusp of the Amin-Obote changeover, retribution and vengeance are unleashed while the civil war is protracted.

Muzegi's narrative captures a surreal period, at times resembling the Biblical Armageddon, before finally an exhausted nation arrives at some sort of stasis - only to be confronted by the ravages of the Aids pandemic. Rootless and bitter, Mugezi flees, finally to Europe from a country whose traditions have been destroyed and whose name he can no longer bear to use. He calls it *Abyssinia* instead.
Structurally, this ambitious novel of four hundred and ninety-four pages is an anthology of seven books each of which is followed by a subtitle except *Book Two*. Accordingly,

Book ONE 1971 (Village Days) recounts a Magical Realist memoir of the protagonist under Milton Obote's regime, followed by the military take over of January1971in which case' General Idi Amin, backed by his British and Israeli allies overthrows his former benefactor, Prime Minister Milton Obote, who had spearheaded the independence struggle of Uganda. against British colonialism.

Book Two: The City deals with Idi Amin's military coup of January 25, 1979 and the consequent socio-political turmoil which characterized Kampala in particular and Uganda in general.

Book Three: entitled ***Amin, the God Father*** -which is the follow of up Book Two, reflects the protagonist's hero worship As Mugezi struggles to survive the parental dictatorship, he finds his admiration for Amin swelling by the day. Since Amin had exhorted every citizen to walk tall, to act proud and not to let anyone deny them their rights, their dignity or their self-worth. (Ibid. 129).

Book Four: Seminary Years is an extended iconoclastic commentary on the hypocrisy of Catholicism. Mugezi after his expulsion from the family into a catholic Seminary discovers the age-old cycle of bullying, how the victims become the perpetrators. He is mesmerized by the power machinations of a rich, white European priest and adept at making his own Machiavellian maneuvers in order to prosper much against the dictates of Christian morality.

***Book Five: April 11*, 1979** (pp.283-364): recounts the retaliatory overthrow of Idi Amin and the subsequent ascension to power of Milton Obote after eight years of guerilla warfare.

Book Six: Triangular Revelations (pp.365-444): This part deals with resurgence of guerilla warfare in the triangular warfront or barrack cyclically controlled by whoever is mightier. It is so called because it is landlocked by Lake Victoria in the south, Lake Kyoga in the north and Lake Albert in the west.

Book Seven: Ghettoblaster The Ghettoblaster is a metaphorical matrix of the state of *Abyssinia* in the wake of Isegawa's flight to the Netherlands. The ghetto resembled Uganda during the guerrilla war: the day belonged to the forces of law and order, the night to pirates and their minions and victims. *Abyssinian Chronicles* is analogous with Foden's *The Last King of Scotland* (1998) except for the marginalization of the reign of Obote. The eponymous king of the title is none other than the late Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin.

4. 3 .2 Thematic Preoccupations

The post-colonial issues with which modern African writers are preoccupied range from the critique of the entrenched abuse of power to the reclamation of their lost values and identities. Thus, with the end of colonialism, the Ugandan populace had envisaged a prosperous country where democratic rights and socio-economic justice would prevail.

Ironically, however, the situation turned out to be the hot bed of tyranny, instability, anomy, protracted fratricidal wars, and brain drain thus threatening the very survival of the nation. Perhaps the Ugandan crisis represents the bloody cycle of political tradition on the African continent as a whole where civilian governments are toppled down by a military junta .

4.3.2.1 Tyranny and Political Instability (1964-1980s)

It seems that the rule of the game in post-colonial African societies is 'Might is right' irrespective of the public disenchantment or universal suffrage. A case in point is the protracted power struggle between Milton Obote and General Idi Amin between 1971and1979.

Obote was in the vanguard of the Ugandan People's Council (UPC), which spearheaded the liberation struggle against British colonialism. His civilian Government was, however, overthrown four years after independence by Idi Amin helped by his Israeli and British allies. As stated in the novel, General Amin provided 18 reasons to justify the coup:

> On the night of January 25, 1971, General Idi Amin, helped by his British and Israeli friends, seized power in a military coup. He overthrew his former benefactor, Milton Obote, the prime minister who had led the country to independence and had gone on to suspend the constitution. General Idi Amin gave 18 reasons for the coup, among them corruption, detention without trial, lack of freedom of speech, and economic mismanagement of the country (Ibid: 85).

Irrespective of the nominal independence, British neocolonialism has always been casting its paternal shadow over countries like Uganda via their national stooges who are more concerned about the aspirations of their colonial masters than the national priorities of their own countries. Foreign interference in the internal affairs of Uganda to the point of imposing imperial economic and ideological structures is whispered by one of the citizens in the story as a reflection of national insecurity:

> Grandpa had expected the president. Milton Obote would lead the country down the red road of communism or socialism. He had expected to see the nationalization of Indian businesses and the British military intervention to protect the interests of British capitalists. The British would force Obote to rescind the nationalization plans; banking on Russian or Chinese help, he would refuse, and he would be taken out in the name of anti-Communism. (Ibid: 122-123).

This fear was not groundless that some of the predictions were fulfilled in the wake of Obote's advent to power.

Worst of all, the premature democratic tradition seems to have compounded the political instability and the paternalist interference of foreigners in the internal

affairs of African countries.

> The exiled dictator returned. He contested and won the elections. There was disagreement among the foreign observers as to whether the elections had been rigged. The innocents, who believed that the observers had the power to tell one political tree to plant itself in the sea and one political hill to move to another location, got slaughtered. Amin had proved such innocence to be fatal; the hopefuls should have known better. Guerrilla war broke out. Aunt Lwandeka's National Reform Movement was among the first fighting groups to join. The hurricane-lamp-and –moth's syndrome had started all over again: all that luminescence, all that death. (Ibid: 364).

What is ironic about such take-over is the repetition of history by the so-called progressive forces, which had vowed in all intent to outshine the former governances. To make matters worse, the internal instability of Uganda was aggravated by the resurgence of the Ethio-Somali conflict over the Ogaden region, smuggling on the Kenyan –Ugandan border, the incursion of Anti-Amin guerilla warfare on the Tanzania-Ugandan border for the final showdown. (Ibid: 305)

This state of affairs and projection of a bleak future is once again reiterated by the narrator:

> It was clear that Tanzania was finally ending his exile and using him to guarantee payment of war costs. Inside the country, expectation was low, disillusionment surging. Democracy built on old forces promised to be no bed of roses, and even at this early point there were rumors of impending civil war. The tidbits aunt got from her colleagues pointed to a murky future as the infighting in the government mounted (Ibid: 339)

Though military discipline is said to be the secret of political popularity and winning public confidence, the behavior of the militia and regular army proved to be an armed anarchism. This is manifest in the truancy of the soldiers in flag-waving convoys. In *Chronicles* (2000), the acts of brutality occur on all levels. Among the worst is the gang- rape of one of Muzegi's aunts by troops. This perpetual fear on the part of the public during the civil war is chronicled memorably as follows:

> The day belonged to the government and the army and the night to the guerilla and its sympathizers....The army, composed mainly of northerners and easterners courtesy of Obote II government policy, found itself fighting in strange and hostile circumstances. The troops were drawn into lethal campaigns in ominous valleys and on isolated hills, in gigantic swamps, endless grasslands and dark

> forests, and they had a hard time hitting mobile targets. The mathematical configuration of death, the triangle, which had first appeared in 1978, returned to haunt us. Ours was now called the Luwero Triangle, hundreds of square kilometers of land locked between the three lakes: Victoria in the south, Kyoga in the north and Albert in the far west. The core of the Triangle was a sparsely populated grassland area of massive papyrus swamps, huge marshes and thick forests. (Ibid: 368).

In addition to military anarchism, smuggling was another by-product of the political instability intended to exploit the economic chaos of the troubled nation. As one of the narrators observes:

> Young people discovered a way of making quick money, without having to go to school. They smuggle coffee across the lake to Kenya and exchange it for American dollars. They come back laden with consumer goods: bell-bottom trousers, radios, Oris watches, wigs, all that junk, and behave like maniacs... All those boys are gamblers. Anti-smuggling patrols are killing them in ever-increasing numbers. Others kill their colleagues when they see so much money and greed sets in. It all seems to make the survivors more reckless. They come home, spend the money like lunatics, go broke and go back. Most survive only a few trips before getting killed. Most of the boys who used to take my coffee are dead (Ibid: 301).

Consequently, the post-war Ugandan economy was in shambles leading up to inflation, and spread of black markets.

Demobilization of veteran soldiers and their mental derangement is another harvest of the civil war. Ironically enough, those who paid in blood for the independence of their country are neglected. The narrator draws an analogy between veteran soldiers and the conscripts of WWII. It resonates with the condition of the maimed Abdullah in *Petals of Blood (1977)* and Homeboy and Kofi Billy of Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1970)* all of whom were veteran soldiers doomed to the same fate.

It seems that neither the power -mongering rebels nor the troubled nation has benefited from this conflict. All the more, the legacies of the senseless guerilla war are found to be impoverishment, bloodshed, demoralization, refugee crisis, underdevelopment and national aberration.

4. 3.2.2 Hypocrisy of the Clergy

Church and State in Africa have almost always operated hand-in-glove, the former meddling in secular and political affairs against Christian morality whose mission is supposed to be strictly otherworldly. This kind of unholy alliance between the ruling elite and Church/Mosque is one of the butts of satire in *Abyssinian Chronicles.* The author describes the neutrality or the opportunistic stance of the Church: 'The Anglican Church had taken a middle-of-the road course and had not been openly critical of Amin's Government (Ibid: 309).

He also reiterates: 'The Anglican Pope is inviolate as he is Archbishop not only of Uganda but also Rwanda, Burundi, and Zaire. He is an international figure that Amin dare not touch him. (*Ibid*: 310) But 'His Holiness' failed to influence the dictator at least by way of mediation, if not by moral sanction.

Muzegi's interior monologue reveals the hypocrisy, the neutrality and the sycophancy of the clergy in midst of national agony, which ravaged Uganda during Idi Amin's regime. Had it not been for their double-dealing, Church and Mosque could have exerted their influence on the warring parties to pacify the bloody conflict and promote a democratic tradition or a peaceful transition.

Unfortunately, however, every Muslim was behind Amin, every Catholic behind the banned Democratic Party and every Protestant behind the hibernating UPC (Ibid.). Isegawa's iconoclasm becomes much more embittered with the opportunism of the clergy when he totally dismisses the worth the clergy as they have become advocates of corruption.

> What use was a priest? And those ludicrous cassocks! Celibacy was definitely not for me. I had already decided to marry three wives in the future. With the earnings of a lawyer, I was sure that I could easily give my trio a comfortable life. The Church, in my estimation, needed ball-less people like the shatters, not me, who was ready to follow General Amin's calls for self-advancement. Amin did not like the Church and accused the clergy of meddling in politics, as they had done in the past, while doing nothing about the corruption inside the Church. (Ibid: 183)

The discredited clergy could have cleaned up their acts or else abdicated from the holy throne of spiritual leadership. In fact, the alliance of the Church/the Mosque with Amin was not only fragile but also unpredictable depending on Amin's frame

of mind. Both institutions were subject to dismissal if they would flinch an inch from the agenda of political gambling. This precariousness is once again reasserted as under:

> Many Christians think that the Muslims have been immune to Amin's interference and are therefore safe. Nobody is safe. Look, Amin created the Muslim Supreme Council to control Muslim affairs, and he has not hesitated to depose council leaders when it suited him. Some even lost their lives. So if he plans to interfere with the Christian churches, it is because he sees it as the only solution to his political problem (Ibid: 310).

This paradox appears to be the predicament of the clergy in post-colonial Africa where the borderline between temporal and otherworldly issues seems to have been blurred. Isegawa's satire is directed not only against the clergy but also the other religious institutions like the Seminary which is not the holy garden of Anglican children but lowly bastards, orphans, derelicts, truants and bullies plucked from the dirty and sinful world.

With its sycophant leadership at the top, the HYDRA at the heart of the autocracy commonly known as the Seminary bore three venom-laden heads: brainwashing, schizophrenia (mental disorder) and good old-fashioned dictatorship. (Ibid: 197-8). He further makes fun of this autocracy with reference to the dormitory nomenclatures named after holy places like Vatican City, Mecca, and other geographical designations such as Cape of Good Hope. I wonder why they were not interested in holy shrines like Jerusalem and Bethlehem, any way.

4.3.2.3 Racist Expulsion of East Indians

There is a strong sense of apathy not only towards British colonialism, but also the Indian business group, which is said to have controlled the economic sector. Though the era of colonialism is over, the post-independence agenda failed to materialize the motto "Uganda for Ugandans!" The first victims of such expulsions were the country's Indians against whom the natives had developed a sort of apathy for economic and psychological reasons.

Isegawa recounts that when his childhood fantasy comes true, and Amin expels the nation's shopkeepers, indeed all Indians, he wins his bet that the West won't intervene in the internal affairs of Uganda.

Consequently, all are delighted with the deportation of the agents of British colonial oppression:

> All the Indians were leaving. Already, there were rumors of suicide: people setting themselves on fire, eating poison, and drowning. . Grandpa felt happy that the British could, this time, not escape the boomerang of race, which Amin was sending them. He was putting thousands of Indians on their doorstep, many of whom had been kept out of Britain by the Immigration quota system. The irony was that the British officers had promoted Amin, and Britain had had a hand in his coup, and now the bastard was paying them back. (Ibid: 125-126)

The Indian exodus equally hammered the British, the American and the German expatriate Staff in which case some of them were deported within 24 hours. One of the victims is Dr Wagner, a German Medical Doctor working in a Catholic hospital. She reflects upon her maltreatment by the soldiers at the Entebbe Airport in one of her letters to her housekeeper:

> The soldiers at the airport stole my money. They also wanted to steal my watch, but I wouldn't surrender it. I advised them to ask General Amin for a salary raise if they believed they deserved more money for terrorizing people. One of them tried to butt me with his rifle but his colleague held the gun from behind. This makes me wonder how you are going to live in that kind of environment.... Take care of you yourself, and remember: Ugandan soldiers are very dangerous. (Ibid: 289).

In fact, the Germans themselves are said to be more xenophobic than black Africans on account of their Aryan blood. Conversely, the scope of xenophobia includes not only the black hatred for the white but also the hatred of White Americans for Black Americans.

> I hate those black American mother-fuckers, she said in her very American accent. What she really meant was that she hated the black American man who had crossed her path, raised her hopes and then dumped her. On the day before they were scheduled to leave for Houston, she got the shock of her life: Ritchie disappeared, leaving her bankrupt, jobless and without a house. At first, she thought he had taken a walk to inspect the ghetto for the last time, but then she realized all his things were gone. She looked for him under the bed and behind cupboards. She asked neighbors if... She went from apartment building to apartment building checking in case he had got confused by the strange names. It was a wild goose chase. The motherfucker left me high and dry, Eva sighed (Ibid: 465).

Thus, the political, the social and the moral foundations of the Obote-Idi Amin era

has been attacked with the pungent satire of Moses Isegawa who draws an analogy between contemporary Uganda and any conceivable abyss on Earth.

4.3.2.4 Representation of the Women Folk

Moses Isegawa seems to uphold the traditional view about women and gender issues in general as his focal point is the challenges of nationhood in the wake of independence from British colonialism. In *Chronicles,* we come across both female freedom fighters as well as victims

For instance, Padlock's sister, Lwandeka, joins the resistance movement after being tortured by the thugs of Amin regime and was gang-raped by the country's Tanzanian liberators during the political turbulence. The exposure of women, both young and old, to social problems such as prostitution and adultery is of one the backdrops of broken families and political instability.

As in other African countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Zaire, and Liberia, the Sudan and Somalia, the women folk fall prey to sexual predators in the military circles. This kind of gang- rape results in the spread of AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, the psychological trauma of the victims.

Western stereotypes about Africa are also unmistakably reiterated in Eva's causal dialogue with Muzegi. This lady is reminiscent of Dickens' Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*. (1965). In her confessional outburst, she appears to contradict her feminist viewpoint. Her attitude towards Africa is equally distorted and no less stereotypical than that of the white racists:

> Eva's impression was that all women in Africa were infibulated, and that Africa was one and the same from Egypt to South Africa. You torture women, for Christ's sake, she said in her American accent. And I guess you would have liked me better if I had been circumcised.
>
> Of course, I replied immediately. This was not a woman to inform that I did not even know what a circumcised woman looked or felt like, and that I would not care to find out. She had saddled me with the cross, and I was ready to carry it with a smile on my face. There are 29,999,996 circumcised women in Africa. If you and your mother and sisters had been born there, you would have made it a cool 30 million, ha, ha, ha. Her body shook with laughter…
>
> All the wars, all the death of babies, all the backwardness, she moaned while changing her tune….. (Ibid: 462).

In fact, the observations of this lady about African politics can hardly be dismissed as stereotypical. Because her criticism of the war cost incurred in the civil wars and cross-border conflicts including the amount of property and human lives such conflicts did claim across sub-Saharan Africa is a hard fact. All the more, harmful practices like female circumcision, early marriage, polygamy, fratricidal wars, and parochialism are but the stigmata of Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.4 Editorial Intrusion

One of the strategies of appropriation is the transcription of African vernacular diction by way of editorial intrusion. What follows is a complete list of these examples:

Boubou: a kind of wide garment for a man (West Africa)
Busuti: a kind of woman's garment (central Uganda)
Kandooya: torture method whereby one's elbows are tied together behind one's back
Katonda wange! : My God!
Kibanda: black market
Kibanda Boys: Kampala mafia
Mamba: poisonous snake
Matooke: plantain
Mpanama: hydrocele
Mtuba: an African tree
Muko: brother – in-law
Muteego: AIDS
Nagana: a tropical cattle disease
Panga: large cleaver
Posho: corn bread
Shamba: plantation (See the glossary section of *Chronicles*)

There are also instances of borrowed expressions from Dutch and Arabic such as *"Ossify toy nib?"* (How are you, madam?" *Bluing sabot"* (All right, sir), the voice replied. We were standing in a corridor between two pagodas. Suddenly she said, "*Allah akbar*!" (*Ibid*: 194) and untranslated idioms like 'they danced around shouting "*Amin, Oye, oyeeee! Amin ju, juuuu'!* (*Ibid:* 290).

This style is consistent with the view that African writers in European languages like English can no longer operate within the Eurocentric prescriptive framework of language use and the purity of 'the chosen tongue'.

Of all the organic metaphors Isegawa employs to embellish his expression, HYDRA is the most significant one in the sense that it uncovers the hideous structure of the

Seminary. The metaphors are onomatopoeic as in, for example, "Uganda was in a state of siege, writhing like a dying moth on the floor. The Bugles of defeat were poised, waiting to blow the walls down. The inside of the country was like a grenade whose pin had already been drawn." (Ibid: 305).

Owing to the poetic flavor of Isegawa's language, *Abyssinian Chronicles* is characterized by genre-border crossing. Besides, Isegawa employs spatial metaphors like *Abyssinia, Ghettoblaster* and the *Triangular Revelation, Seminary* and so forth.

4.5 Instances of Magical Realism

Not many novels begin with the narrator's father disappearing into jaws of a crocodile. It is an opening, which may cause a sigh of anxiety that the reader is exposed to a heavy dose of whimsical Magic- Realist adventures.

> Three final images flashed across Serenity's mind as he disappeared into the jaws of the colossal crocodile: a rotting buffalo with rivers of maggots and armies of flies emanating from its cavities; the aunt of his missing wife, who was also his longtime lover; and the mysterious woman who had cured his childhood obsession with tall women. The few survivors of my father's childhood years remembered that up until the age of seven, he would run up to every tall woman he saw passing by and, in gentle voice trembling with unspeakable expectation, say, Welcome home, Ma. You were gone so long I was afraid you would never return .Taken by surprise, the woman would smile, pat him on the head, and watch him wring his hands before letting him know that he had once again made a mistake. The woman in his father's homestead, assisted by some of the villagers, tried to frighten him into quitting by saying that one day he would run into a ghost disguised as a tall woman, which would take him away and hide him in a very deep hole under the ground…. (Ibid: 3).

Any novel that begins with a man on the brink of being swallowed by a crocodile stands a good chance of engaging a reader's attention. Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* not only opens with such a bang, or crunch, but also manages to sustain the narrative fireworks over a long, complex haul. Moses Isegewa's opening also sets the tone for what would follow as in the unfamiliar quirks of a country full of snakes, crocodiles and scorpions and a culture combing tribal traditions and superstitions with fanatical Catholicism, Protestantism, despotism and Islam.

The other instance of Magical Realism is the reproduction of a creation myth, which provides an explanation for the genesis of the black man's burden from a moralistic point of view. It appears to be warning against atheism and thus imposing moral sanctions. He seems to argue that colonialism was not triggered by Imperial ambitions but due to God's wrath against sinful humanity as recollected by the narrator:

> The white man, thinking that he was God, came, subjugated the land, imposed his laws and way of life on the people, and sat back to relax and enjoy the fruits of his iniquity. He had Indian assistants to help him milk the resources of the nation. Together they shared the milk and honey God gave this nation. They made laws to protect themselves from the wrath of the people. They built bigger and bigger castles. They built higher and higher Monuments. They amassed deadlier and deadlier weapons. They flaunted their political, economic and social power. Until God decided that enough was enough. He stirred the formerly docile people. He turned the white man's black collaborators into his worst enemies. He cut the white man with his own sword. He crushed his huge empire I His fist. White men started looking over their shoulders as they drove through the city, as they walked their dogs, as they went to their godless temples. The white man was no longer absolute master. The white man was no longer in control. The white man had been defeated by Jesus' words: he who gets much will have such demanded of him. He finally turned tail and absconded like a thief in the night (Ibid: 349).

The misfortune of the Indian, which is attributed to self –indulgence, is also attacked with strong Biblical overtones:

> The Indian, imprisoned in his greed, did not heed God's warning. In 1971, god raised a new sword, flashing with a new wrath. A year later, the Indian was bleeding, whimpering, wallowing in his sorrows. God took away his home, his security, and his peace of mind. God turned his former ally, the white man, against him. Suddenly nobody wanted him. He was kicked from border to border like a dirty ball. The black man rejoiced: God had judged in his favor. Instead of learning a lesson and turning to God, the black man took everything for granted. He took over the booty left by the Indians. Muslims and Christians took to eating, drinking, fornicating and indulging the flesh like the white man and the Indian bore them. Castles built on sand never survive big storms. The house built on godlessness was shaken by internal storms, and by the wrath of God's sword was dislodged. But as soon as the sword stopped flashing, the people reverted to their old ways. The nation had not repented or learned from the past. Kasawo, you and the nation have not learned and have not repented and will once again be put to the test. (Ibid: 349-50).

He seems to underline the dictum that the fear of God is not only the beginning of wisdom but also the source of bounty and opulence as provided under the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament.

In addition to creation myths, other tenets of Magical Realism like the prolonged period of terror (as reflected in the power struggle between Obote-Idi Amin –Obote changeover (1971-1979), polar opposites like urban and rural areas, civilian and military governments, Muslims and Christians, an aura of war and peace, cyclical repetition of Uganda's political history are juxtaposed.

Thus, the East African novels treated above are found to be the repertoire of the post-Colonial trajectories in terms of their thematic preoccupations, evocation of the socio-political atmosphere and the empowerment of an alternative textual strategy. In particular, Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* and Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* appear to be identical in their thematic obsession and the socio-political atmosphere they evoke.

Chapter Five: West African Allegories

Anglophone West Africa whose writers have been responsive to socio-economic and political anomalies such as corruption, oppression, militarism and moral decadence is a self-contained literary region. The most productive of Anglophone West African countries are perhaps Ghana and Nigeria. In fact, without Nigeria, African literature in English would have been a slim-volume affair

Similarly, Ghanaian writers have managed to publish canonical novels like Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1970) and Kofi Awoonor's *This Earth, My Brother* (1971) which are said to be the landmarks of Modern African literature. In this chapter, Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* from Nigeria would be treated against the critical models of Post-Colonial theory in that order.

5.1 The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1970) Ghana

... New People, New Style, Old dance (p: 157).

To begin with the illustrated title of the novel, it is a dismissive commentary, which reflects Armah's utter disillusionment with both Nkrumah's CPP and the military junta that ousted it. The metaphorical matrix, *The Beautyul Ones,* in the title of the novel with a deliberate graphological deviation from the conventional spelling implies the altruist, responsible and genuine body- politic for which black Africans languishing under the yoke of colonial humiliation have been yearning. Thus, the title of the novel is at once found to be the embodiment of the central theme and the bleak atmosphere that pervades Sub-Saharan Africa.

5.1.1 Plot Structure

The allegorical story of the failure of African ruling elite depicts the life of an anonymous railway office clerk, simply called "the Man," and his daily struggle in the slums against poverty on the one hand, and material greed on the other. He is pressurized into the rampant corruption which is otherwise called the national game by his acquisitive family and his colleagues.

Structurally, the fifteen chapters of the novel could be sub-divided into four schemes:

Part one (ch.1-4) The Wake of Independence: It establishes the background of the story by way of self-reflective contemplations via the Man's wanderings. The narrator reflects upon the Man's daily routine, the resignation of the passengers, the symptoms of the national aberration in the aftermath of independence mired in the legacy of colonialism.

It also covers the whole range of events such as the premature death of post-independence euphoria and the new body-politic, the agenda of anti-corruption campaign headed by a Professor from Legon University, the timber dealer's attempt at bribing the Man and the Man's temptation-resistance cycle to the timber dealer's offer. Besides, the Man's chance encounter with Koomson, Oyo's theorization of driving which foregrounds her triumphant reprimand of her husband's ambivalence by identifying him with the *Chichi dodo* are also featured in this part of the story.

***Part Two: (ch.*5-8): The Present versus the Past**

This part comprises the ideological core of the novel. It draws upon the Man's endless contemplation and inward struggle between integrity and temptation to corruption, his journey towards the Teacher's home, the fate of Kalil Gibran's disciple, Rama Krishna, and its implications for the honest ones.

The ensuing dialogue between the Man and the Teacher about the vices and virtues of corruption with reference to Oyo's theorization of driving followed by the allegory of Aboliga the Frog which completes its life cycle from birth to death within seven years, is another component of this part.

Armah reflects upon the spread of drug addiction, the propaganda ploy of the former black nationalists, and the broken promises and the Teacher's black despair. The recurrence of corruption and the implications of the graffiti and pornographic scribbling on the walls of the toilet and the role of Nkrumah's Party School (Winneba) are attacked towards the end of this part.

Part Three (Ch.9-*12):* The Koomsons

This juncture could be considered as the stage of complication. Under the same circumstances where the national game is rampant, preparation of the reception party in honor of Joseph Koomson, incidental arguments and counter-arguments for and against corruption and the hypocrisy of socialist revolutionaries, the vanities

and extravagances of the upper class and the boat deal are portrayed. Long before the Man's family could taste the fruits of the boat deal, Koomson's Cabinet was ousted by the military junta.

Part Four (13-15): After the Coup

Chapter Thirteen marks the climax of the story after which the fortune of Koomson's life changes for the worse even though it doesn't appear to affect the Man and the country. Thus, the coup was not greeted with enthusiasm except by some opportunistic elements. In fact, it was accompanied by forced mass rallies and empty rhetoric, as is the case with many dictatorial African governments. The news of the military coup is also announced towards the end of Chapter Thirteen:

> When the sun had gone up there was the sound of some commotion in the street outside. A man who had been a trade unionist for the overthrown government rushed into the office announcing the coup as if he had himself accomplished it. Then he ordered people to go out and show their loyalty to the new men of power. With a silence that spoke everybody's shame, the men in the office went out singly to join the crowd outside. In the same manner, they had gone out in fear to hear the farts of the Party men (Ibid: 158).

In the wake of the military coup, the reader witnesses, the orchestrations of opportunists, Koomson's refuge in the man's house, their escape through the shit hole and finally Koomson's flight to Abidjan as if by piracy. This crisis further descends into a sort of partial resolution with the Man's journey back home in the course of which a vicious circle of corruption is widespread as a living testimony of the fact that' the beautyful ones are not yet born" irrespective of governments change-overs. By the way, Ghana has experienced about four military coups since 1966.

Such strands of narrative structures thus mark intertextuality among *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Gulliver's Travels, Abyssinian Chronicles* and a host of other novels, which draw upon journey motifs though the itineraries of Gulliver and the Man are not identical.

The departure of each traveler happens to be his respective sweet home and is cyclically traversed over protracted points of destination where they make critical observations upon the socio-political phenomena. Especially, Gulliver's voyage to

Laputa confronts him with inhabitants crazed with scientific pedantry. He lashes them with a pungent satire bordering on that of Armah and attacks their fundamental principles.

If the Laputans are crazed with scientific and philosophical pedantry, African demagogues are crazed with self-indulgence and kleptocracy. His necromancy with the dead philosophers and historians and conquerors could also be compared with the existentialist monologue and dialogue of the Man in pursuit of moral values-sincerity, integrity, altruism, faithfulness and the worth of it all in a society blinded with material aggrandizement.

More over, the Man's dissociation from the materially profitable national game (corruption), perhaps, resonates with Gulliver's decline to rejoin the human race or his preference to remain in the land of rational horses (Houyhnhnms) for the rest of his life.

5.1.2 Social Alienation and Ambiguity

The African novel, in dealing with the question of alienation, has depicted two types of heroes, namely the conformists and the non-conformists with the status quo. The protagonist of *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is a downtrodden Morse operator in the Railway Corporation at Takoradi. His anonymity designates both his social obscurity and, partially, his symbolic quality.

In spite of his ambivalence, the Man represents non-conformists who do not sing to the tune of the rampant national game. He is despised by his wife and mother-in-law for his moral integrity which prevents him from abusing his position and education to get ahead like his former classmate, "His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plenipotentiary, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labor' (Ibid: 56). His virtues go largely unrewarded that his wife mistakes him for a foolish sleepwalker in the face of the fast drivers:

> What were you afraid of then? The woman asked.
> But why should I take it?
> And why not? When you shook Estella Koomson's hand, was not the perfume that stayed on yours a pleasing thing? ...With a silent gesture she sent the children back inside. We don't care. Why pretend? Everybody is swimming toward what he wants. Who wants to remain on the beach asking the wind, How ... How...? How? (Ibid: 44).

His stubborn refusal to compromise on basic principles of integrity goads him to general obloquy and familial contempt. At times, he is equally plagued with his own ambiguity as well as public gossip.

> How could he, when all around him the whole world never tired of saying there were only two types of men who took refuge in honesty- the cowards and the fools? Very often these days he was burdened with the hopeless, important feeling that he was not just one of these, but a hopeless combination of the two. Thoughts and images rose of the lonely man trapped at a bar, who does not drink but feels for more confused than all the masquerading drinkers, and when the images came closer to merge with his own self, he was the careful man refusing to gamble with his life, and therefore feeling the keen-eyed reproach of those closest to himself. And all the time the eyes that could never be avoided just stared steadily and made it terrifyingly plain that in these times honesty could only be a social vice, for the one who chose to indulge in it nothing but a very hostile form of selfishness, a very perverse selfishness. (Ibid: 51-2).

Corruption appears to have been incorrigibly institutionalized that personal integrity and morality have become symptomatic of abnormality. This gesture is rhetorically underscored:

> Was there not some proverb that said the green fruit was healthy, but healthy only for its brief self? …What then, was the fruit that refused to lose its acid and its greenness? What monstrous fruit was it that could find the end of its life in the struggle against sweetness and corruption? (Ibid: 145).

The indictment of political corruption is a strong thematic concern of many modern African texts. Instead of praise-songs of freedom, there are angry literary expressions of protest. It is a defiant protest on behalf of ultra- sensitive selfless citizens. The Man is disgusted with the symbolic physical environment such as *The Rail Way & Harbor Administration Block or* the *banister* which is the reflections of the degenerate body-politic whose redemption seems to be far-fetched.

Behavioral and social wrongs, broken promises and the post-colonial national syndrome which are pervasive in the new nation are the butts of the Man's biting satire and his inward struggle oscillating between integrity and corruption, alienation and familial contempt, decent life and poverty, resistance and temptation which are capable of crushing pure souls like Gibran's disciple Rama Krishna.

The Man is critical of the hypocrisy of the new leadership dismissively described as "Deceivers all". No saviors. Only the hungry and the fed (Ibid: 90).

It seemed that the national game has reached its climax as reflected in the dialogue between the Man and the Teacher. Aye Kwei Armah achieves the personalization of contradictions through the figure of the Man. The Man in a tone of black despair reiterates the characteristic disappointment with post-independence African politics as follows:

> For those who had come directly against the old power, there would be much happiness. But for the nation itself, there would be only a change of embezzlers and a change of the hunters and the hunted (Ibid: 162).

Apparently, the advent of an indigenous political leadership is not greeted with enthusiasm but instantly dismissed as yet another turn of a drearily-familiar pattern, since 'they come like men already grown fat and cynical with the eating of centuries of power' (Ibid: 81).This kind of decent life enjoyed at the expense of the majority starving to death due to stultifying poverty is the butt of Armah's satire:

> The Man, when he shook hands, was again amazed at the flabby softness of the hand. Ideological hands, the hands of revolutionaries leading their people into bold sacrifices, should these hands not have become even tougher than they were when their owner was hauling loads along the wharf? And yet these were the socialists of Africa, fat, perfumed, soft with the ancestral softness of chiefs who had sold their people and are celestially happy with the fruits of the trade (Ibid: 131).

Armah portrays Koomson as the latest in a long line of indigenous exploiters, beginning with the chiefs who collaborated in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and ending with the demagogues of the new Africa. By implication, the House of Representatives or the Parliament symbolized by Koomson is considered to be the dumping ground of dead souls and the shit of the country singing to the tune of the autocrats. The dialogue between the Man and the Teacher reveals the rampant world of opportunism with a critical attitude as follows:

> Oh, you know the ideological thing. Winneba.' True. That is where the shit of the country is going nowadays, believing thing, but saying they believe everything that needs to be believed, so long as the big jobs and the big money follow. Men who know nothing about politics have grown hot with ideology, thinking of the money that will come. The civil servant who hates socialism is there, singing hosanna. The poet is there,

> serving power and waiting to fill his coming paunch with crumbs. He will no doubt jump to go and fit his tongue into new arses when new men spring up to shit on us. Everybody who wants speed goes there, and the only thing demanded of them is that they be good at fawning ... No difference at all between the white men and their apes, the lawyers and the merchants, and now the apes of the apes, our Party men.... Women, so horribly young, fucked and changed like pants, asking only for blouses and perfume from diplomatic bags and wigs of human hair scraped from which decayed white woman's corpse? Whiskey smuggled in especially for the men who make the laws (Ibid: 89).

This is a biting satire directed against the greed, the irresponsibility and the immorality of the so-called parliamentarians. It also sheds light on the futility of political reform, revolution or change as experience has proved that the new is the replica of the old.

Apart from aggrandizement of private property, the moral degeneration of these parliamentarians who can hardly live up to the expectations of their electoral constituencies is attacked in *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born.* A case in point is the drank Attorney -General who mockingly responds to the professor's discourse addressed to the Parliament. He draws an analogy between the stages of economic growth and that of booze to our dismay:

> You have told us, Professor So-and –so, of the stages of growth. We thank you very much for having told us about your specialty." The Attorney General swayed, being drunk as usual, and went on. Now we shall share our special knowledge here with you. We present... the stages of booze! I tell you, no one was going back to sleep. The Attorney General opened his red eyes from time to time and chanted:
>
> Stage One- The Mood Jocose.
> Stage Two- The Mood Morose.
> Stage Three - The Mood Bellicose.
> Stage Four - The Mood Lachrymose.
> Stage Five - The Mood Comatose.
> Then the Attorney General fell down. He was in the final stage himself. We all said "yeaaaah yeah". It was a fine day indeed.'(Ibid: 133).

Such chronic malpractices mark the premature degeneration of the body politic. The ambiguity of the novel is further confounded with the paradoxical events pervasive in the story. This is evident in the imagery of leaping-leaping that predictably ends

in self-defeat. For example, Rama Krishna's isolation from life by practicing *Yoga* in order to remain unpolluted finds him at death more decayed than those who have already been infected with the national cancer like Koomson, the Yamoas and the Zachariah Lagos. Rama Krishna's unsuccessful attempt to escape corruption reminds one of the futilities of such efforts according to Armah whose pejoristic philosophy is expressed in his novel:

> Was there not something in the place and about the time, everything, in fact that sought to make it painfully clear that there was too much of the unnatural in any man who imagined he could escape the inevitable decay of life and not accept the decline into final disintegration. Against the all too natural, such struggles- could they be anything but the perverse attempts of desperate hedonists to perpetuate their youth against the impending rot of age? (Ibid: 47-48).

Armah's disillusionment with the state propaganda ploy culminates with the sarcastic slogan 'End bribery and corruption. Build Socialism Equality. Shit! (*Ibid*: 154) re-echoed on the eve of the military coup at the end of Chapter Twelve. The ambiguity of Ghana's political future has been further corroborated by the replacement of the disturbing image of the solitary flower with a melodious note of the *Chichidodo*'s song.

5.1. 3 Post-Colonial Alterity

One of the colonial agenda was to implement the policy of cultural assimilation or to enforce cultural hybridity. This policy involves the nation-wide absorption of the indigenous culture into the metropolitan culture though certain social classes seem to be more susceptible to it than others. Particularly, members of the ruling elite seem to suffer from some sort of identity crisis resulting in alterity both in their life style as well as psychological make- up.

One of the symptoms of national syndrome appears to be an obsessive self-distrust and self-denigration in favor of cultural assimilation. Estella Koomson is a typical example a frail creature crazed with the fetishism of Western commodities and disgusted with anything of local inspiration. At one point Koomson supplements his wife's remark about imported drinks as 'Really, the only good drinks are European drinks. These make you ill' (Ibid: 132).

The nomenclature of the senior service 'Residential Quarters' inflicts incredible injuries on their names so as to force them into the most convincing double-barreled European equivalents. The results are predictably grotesque as reflected in the following observation:

> He passed by the gloomy building of the Post Office, and his pace quickened involuntarily as he began descending the steep little hill beyond that. Across the road at the bottom the street lamps perfunctorily gave a certain illumination to the shapes of the row of old commercial buildings and their light bounced dully off the corrugated iron shelters in front of the shop gates beneath which the watchmen slept. He passed by the *U.T.C.,* the G.N.T.C., the U.A.C., and the French C.F.A.O. The shops had been there all the time; as far back as he could remember. The G.N.T.C., of course, was regarded as a new thing, but only the name had really changed with Independence. The shop had always been there, and in the old days it had belonged to a rich Greek and was known by his name, A.G.LEVENTIS. So in a way the thing was new (Ibid: 9).

This kind of identity crisis or craving for every thing Western is further reinforced with another biting commentary by the Man on his way to the Teacher's shelter:

> As he got farther into the hills, the Man remembered bits of the same old show from the past. Young push-babies with frowning faces broke through hedges behind different kinds of carriages, turning down long, winding roads. Stewards in white uniforms moved swiftly around behind high hedges giving the intruder suspicious glances full of hate. Not everything was entirely the same, though. Here and there the names had changed. True, there were very few black names of black men with white souls and names trying mightily to be white. In the forest of white men's names, there were the signs that said almost aloud:
>
> here lives a black imitator. MILLS-HAYFORD-PLANGE-BANNERMAN...ATTOH-WHITE...KUNTU-BLANKSON.
> Others that must have been keeping the white neighbors laughing even harder in their homes. ACROMOND... what Ghanaian name could that have been in the beginning, before its Civil Servant owner rushed to civilize it, giving it something like the sound of a master name. (Ibid: 126).

It is a reflection of a self-inflicted cultural abasement, which borders on identity crisis resulting either from gross imitation or willful cultural assimilation

5.1.4 Philosophical Pessimism

The frequency or the cyclical repetition of military take-overs is so significant that within the space few years, the party men who spearheaded the revolution had sabotaged it.

The Teacher reflects upon the broken promises and the hypocrisy of the ruling elite as follows:

> True, I used to see a lot of hope. I saw men tear down the veils behind which the truth had been hidden. But then the same men, when they have power in their hands at last, began to find the veils useful. They made many more. Life has not changed. Only some people have been growing, becoming different, that is all. ...All the shouting against the white men was not hate. It was love. Twisted, but love all the same. Just look around you and you will see it even now. Especially now. (Ibid: 92).

The pessimism of the novel is thus further deepened as reflected in the Teacher's response to the Man's inquiry about the possibility of evolving an alternative strategy:

> You're still hoping, aren't you, Teacher?
> Hoping for what?'
> Anything. An end to this.... A beginning to something else. Anything.'
> No, not hoping any more. Not hope, anyhow. I don't feel any hope in me any more... when you can see the end of things even in their beginnings, there's no more hope, unless you want to pretend, or forget or get drunk, or something. (Ibid: 60).

This image is an evocation of the sudden rise and fall of Nkrumah or the birth of Ghana and its unnatural degeneration into corruption. Not even a *coup d'etat* by soldiers shouting fresh slogans could wash it clean or change the state of affairs to a healthier direction.

The despair and the mental derangement of the demobilized veteran soldiers is another case in point. There are W W II veterans- those illiterate African soldiers who were conscripted to fight another man's war in the jungles of Burma and elsewhere. But "When the war was over, the soldiers came to homes broken in their absence, and they themselves brought murder in their hearts and gave it to those nearest them."(Ibid: 64).Consequently, they drifted about and dissipated themselves in an unfathomable despair. Armah tells us that:

> Some went simply mad, like Home Boy, endlessly repeating harsh, unintelligible words of command he had never understood... Some went very quietly into a silence no one could hope to penetrate, something so deep that it swallowed completely men who have before been strong. They just plunged into the silence and died' (Ibid: 65).

The word 'plunged' is a significant word in the arsenal of Armah's rhetoric in which bathos plays a crucial role. Kofi Billy, like Abdullah in Ngugi's *Petals of*

Blood (1977) is one of the victims of this demobilization or post-war neglect. After losing his leg in the war, Abdulla deteriorates and later commits suicide. In fact, the victims of mental derangement in Armah's novel were not only war veterans but also civilians like Sister Maanan.

What preponderates and gives form and meaning is rather the rhetoric in which words like rotting, decomposition, sickness, corruption, and decaying, shrinking, dwindling, death predominate over the symbols of regeneration. By analogy, Armah's Ghana resembles Dante's *Inferno*, and most of the events take place in the circle of the avaricious, the gluttonous, and the lustful, which contain sinners who are only appeased with dirt and filth and who consequently stink in the mire of their own corruption

The circular movement of the chichidodo bird away from the lavatory and back again to the lavatory resonates in the last words of the novel, as the Man "with thoughts of everything he was going back to" "walked very slowly, going home."(Ibid: 183). This marks pejoristically enough, the dead end of Africa's socio-economic and political scenario, and the never-ending plight of Ghanaians in spite of the rise and demise of governances from Nkrumah to the military junta.

5.1.5 Armah's Ideological Positioning

The ideological thrust for the unending suffering of the Ghanaian people and the nation is well grounded in the myth of Plato's cave reiterated by the Teacher. In Armah's novel, the reference to the allegory comes at a key moment in the narrative. Unable to comprehend the enormity of the corruption seething around him in the postcolonial Ghana of the early 60s, the "hero," simply called the Man, turns to his mentor, another character simply called the Teacher, for some kind of answer and companionship.

The Teacher, who now leads a life of inner contemplation and yoga practices, has actually withdrawn into himself in cynicism and bitterness at the failure of the promises of independence. In the context of that failure, he recalls Plato's allegory in order to foreground the ideological thrust that the former colonial masters are no longer to blame for our suffering as implied by the following myth:

> ... a story of: impenetrable darkness and chains within a deep and cavernous hole, holding people who for ages had seen nothing outside the darkness of their own shadowy forms and had no way

> of believing there could be anything else. And out of these, one unfortunate human being is able at last to break from the chains and to wander outward from the eternal circle of the lightless cave, and see the blinding beauty of all the lights and the colors of the world outside. With the eagerness of the first bringer the wanderer returns into the cave and into its eternal darkness, and in there he shares what he has, the ideas and the words and the images of the light and the colors of the world outside, knowing surely that those he had left behind would certainly want the snapping of the ancient chains and the incredible first seeing of the light and colors of the world beyond the eternal cave. But to those inside the eternal cave he came as someone driven ill with the breaking of the eternal boundaries, and the truth he sought to tell was nothing but the proof of his long delusion, and the words he had to give were the pitiful cries of a mad man lost in the mazes of a mind pushed too far out and away from the everlasting way of darkness and reassuring chains (Ibid: 80).

The Magical Realist device, which draws upon Plato's mythical story, is an embodiment of Armah's ideological positioning that the masses are invariably implicated in the perpetuation of the season of anomy or political atrophy. Because, the dwellers prefer eternal darkness to a broad day light for one reason or another even though they are aware of the probability of dawn. In a social system where autocratic rule prevails, the citizens themselves contribute to the perpetuation of tyranny across Sub-Saharan Africa because of their withdrawal from political struggle.

The Beautyful Ones Are Not yet Born is an outcome and an expression of that disillusionment. The "beautyful ones," comparable to Plato's incorruptible true philosophers, had not yet been born, but until they were born, society would continue to languish under tyranny. At the end of the day, they could be born, because in the Socratic character of the Man or his incorruptibility the probability of such a resurrection out of the decay, however, late is hinted at.

Coupled with this one are the juxtaposition of polar opposites like fast and slow drivers, the corruptible and the incorruptible, terror and military crackdown, the rich and the poor, the civilian and military governments, moralists and populists as well as irony, ambiguity, and paradox. What is paradoxical about it is Oyo's identification of her husband with a *chichidodo* a species of bird which 'hates excrement with all its soul but feeds on maggots- which grow best inside the lavatory' (Ibid: 44).

5.1.6 Modes of Appropriation

Even though I have not come across Armah's theorization of language politics, his work partakes aspects of post-colonial textual strategy. It involves the employment of strategies such as pidginization and editorial intrusions like untranslated and translated vernacular diction some of which are reproduced hereunder. To begin with, one of the citizens who was attending the political rally whispers to his colleague in Pidgin English as follows:

> Ah, contrey, so these fat yes sir-men in jokers' suits, they are the people going to lead us?'
>
> Aaah, contrey broke oo, contrey no broke oo, we dey inside.
>
> A few of the most desperate tried to see what they could do, thinking they would break if nothing was done. The 'yes sir-men' gave them gallons of the killing *akpeteshie* and the usual corned beef and gave them things to do to frighten white men (Ibid: 82).

Other examples of Pidgin English are '*Erm, wort cin I dew for* you...Eovatime sleps, yew mean? (Ibid: 24-25). The untranslated vernacular words in the following text designate types of dish and proper names like *fufu:*

> He would like some good fufu, but without a lot of meat, street fufu is miserable food, and with meat the cost will crucify a man completely. What he can afford there is gari and beans with palm oil, and in spite of the worrying thought that it is not called concrete for nothing, the man begins to enjoy it (Ibid.110).

Besides, Armah ridicules the black man's tendency of aping the white man's speech mannerism as follows:

> Five white men and three white women came down the road. Hidden in the group, in stiff white uniform, were two Ghanaian men with prosperous-looking bellies. Four little boys struggled behind them all, carrying their bags and sticks. As they went past, one of the black men laughed in a forced Senior Service way and, smiling into the face of one of the white men, kept saying, 'Jolly good shot, Himmy. Jolly good.'(Ibid: 125).

Similar examples of affectation or mimicry include the speech behavior of the black:

> He was trying to speak like a white man, and the sound that came out of his mouth reminded the listener of a constipated man, straining in his first minute on top of the lavatory seat. The white man grimaced and made a reply in steward by English: 'Ha, too good eh?' The black men both laughed out loud and the one who had spoken put both hands to his paunch. (Ibid).

Armah also employs the technique of interlangue in which case the structure and diction of the mother tongue is transferred to that of English. This is evident in the mother in-law's sardonic language when she was soothing away her grand son's pain:

> My poor husband!' said the old woman, over and over again. You have no shoes to wear, so your poor little feet get torn to pieces. Ei, my husband, you have nobody, nobody to buy you shoes, so your little toes will all be destroyed.' She went close up to the boy and peered down at his feet, looking for the one with the cut on it. Where is the wound, my husband? Where is it? You must know you have nobody; you are an orphan, a complete orphan. You mustn't run around, like people who have men behind them, to buy them shoes. My poor husband! (Ibid: 123).

In this context, the phrase *my husband*, is used instead of other conventional English expressions like 'Oh, my darling, or my lord', used to rock a baby. Apart from such editorial intrusions, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* abounds in spatial metaphors and journey motifs involving passenger trains, long distance and city buses, Koomson' s progress and Oyo's aspiration for material acquisition.

The Man is first discovered on a bus, and the theme of corruption is immediately introduced, in this context, with the bus driver's fascination with the rotting smell of the one Cedi bank note.

Then we are introduced to the Man who works for the railways, as one small cog in the machine that keeps Ghana's raw materials smuggled into one of the industrial powers described as ("to bring Tarkwa gold and Aboso manganese to the waiting Greek ships in the harbor" (Ibid: 24), a machine which, like the bus, is oiled with the lubricant of *kolami* (bribery).

A more complicated symbolic journey is the journey of the Man with Koomson, an ex-Minister of the Government after the military coup, as they escape through a latrine hole, and along the night man's circuit, to the cleansing sea. This can be read as a variation on the representation of birth, through the back passage, as the grossness of Koomson has to be squeezed through the hole and pulled out.

A political reading of the episode projects a forcible rebirth of the new out of the shit of the old, but with an abiding need for cleansing. All these trajectories are linear or unidirectional suggestive of change and progress.

In contrast, there are metaphors of circularity such as the night man's circuit, the return of the *chichidodo* bird, the recurrence of political corruption, and the closed structure of the novel itself, beginning and ending with the same *status quo*, the same bus, and the same dependence on bribery.

The central character, the Man, is a mediating term between these two kinds of movement, caught between progress and regress, and between hope and despair as the future of his country and life appears to be r unpredictable.

5.2. Anthills of the Savannah (1987) Nigeria

> The trees had become hydra-headed bronze statues so ancient that only blunt residual features remained on their faces, like anthills surviving to tell the new grass of the savannah about last year's brush fires. (Ibid: 31).

The other West African country which has suffered from endemic corruption and military coups as much as Ghana and Uganda is Nigeria that its political history is synonymous with authoritarian regimes. From independence in 1960 until 1993, Nigeria has experienced six military coups and a terrible civil war, a phenomenon, which has triggered African writers like Achebe, to novel writing after two decades of interruption (1966-1987).

The majority of Nigerian novelists, like those in other parts of Africa, belong to the category of testifiers and crusaders. Widely known as "the pioneer of the African novel in English," Achebe is one of the most significant writers to emerge from contemporary Africa with a literary vision that has profoundly influenced the form and content of modern African literature. In his novels,

Achebe has chronicled the colonization of Nigeria by Great Britain and the political turmoil following its independence. Bearing witness to the failure of social justice and democracy to take root in post-colonial Nigeria, he has once again dramatized the impasse in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

5.2.1. Plot Overview

Anthills of the Savannah (1987), deals with the problem of militarism in contemporary Africa, and is a continuation of the story laid out in *A Man of the People (1966*). It opens with the Conference of the regime's President and his Cabinet. Set in the imaginary African country of Kangan, ruled by the military regime established after the coup, *Anthills* is built around three major protagonists-Ikem, Christopher and Sam-the three old friends who have assumed important positions in the new system.

Sam is the President, Chris Oriko is the Commissioner of Information, and Ikem Osodi is the editor of the Government controlled newspaper, the *National Gazette.* His Excellency took power in a military coup that was intended to quash instability and restore democracy. However, he was unwilling to step down after his original

mandate had expired and turned to a full-fledged dictatorship. The propeller of the plot is the arrival of a delegation from Abazon - the northern province of Kangan devastated, like Nigeria's own northern regions, by drought - that has come to the capital city of Bassa to seek relief. Ikem has only recently written an editorial, his allegorical mock-praise 'Hymn to the Sun' that dries up the savannah, accusing the President (the Sun) of irresponsibility, and thereby, promoting the delegation's cause.

Sam at first feels threatened by the loud demonstrations outside his office, but when he learns that the delegation consists of only six elders and that the rest of the demonstrators are Bassa locals, he resolves to exploit this opportunity to purge his old comrades and to entrench himself in power surrounded by loyal henchmen such as Ossai.

Chris and Ikem do not realize what is going on behind the scenes - nor does the reader - until events get beyond their control. Within hours, Sam has Ikem arrested and murdered (though the official version is 'shot while resisting arrest for plotting "regicide"'); the Abazon delegation is thrown in prison while Chris is branded as an accomplice of both.

Chris himself has managed to escape, hiding out with friends and sympathizers and eventually in disguise traveling by bus past roadblocks to the Abazon province. Subsequently, he learns the mysterious disappearance of Sam after the military coup. Ironically, Chris is shot dead by a police sergeant while trying to prevent a girl from abduction and rape in the midst of riotous celebration at a roadblock.

Thus, *Anthills of the Savannah is* an evocation of the political and cultural crisis that marks the transition from the colonial system to the post-colonial social malaise under the military rule of the 'Big Man.' Achebe's satiric vision vividly illuminates the tangled and often corrupt world of Third World politics beyond Nigeria.

5.2.2 Internal Colonization

Achebe's *Anthills* of *the Savannah* (1987) deals with the experiences of Nigerian citizens after the end of British colonialism. In retrospect, nationalism spearheaded the resistance to colonialism, which subsequently led to the independence of many African countries. But following that, nationalism became problematic as it was

manipulated by the national bourgeoisies and their specialized elite, who replicated the old colonial structures in a new dress with social class stratification.

Thus, the narrator draws an analogy between the past prejudice against the black race and the contemporary prejudice against the poor in his reflective observation reproduced below:

> Isn't it a great thing about a VIP that his share of good things is always there waiting for him in abundance even while he relaxes in the coolness of home, and the poor man is out there in the sun pushing and shoving and roasting for his miserable crumbs? And the fool who oppresses him will make a particular point of that enjoyment: You see, they are not in the least like ourselves. They don't need and can't use the luxuries that you and I must have. They have the animal capacity to endure the pain of, shall we say, domestication. The very words the white master had said in his time about the black race as a whole. Now we say about the poor (Achebe 1987: 37).

Achebe portrays class stratification and the exploitation of one by another quite prominently. It is reflected in the Government's treatment of the Delegation from Abazon, in the relationship between Beatrice and Elewa, and in the interaction between Ikem and the taxi- drivers.

Outside the narrow power structure are the victims who bear the brunt of the misrule of the dictators and the corrupt bourgeoisie. Everyone is a victim except the victimizers who have the whip in hand. Peasants, workers and women are the demonstrable victims. One of the proverbs that featured prominently on both sides of the Nigerian civil war in late 1960s was "When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers". The proverb has become a metaphor for the internal strife in the novels of the third phase. The victims of the oppressive governments are the grass and the dictators of corrupt bourgeoisie who jostle one another for power are elephants.

Anthills of the Savannah (1987) has the dictator of Kangan in the center surrounded by his business front, his brutal intelligence service director and an array of puppets, saboteurs and opportunists. By analogy, the same problem of social class stratification, which has grown to epidemic proportions, was also reflected in Soyinka's *Season of Anomy (1973)* published fourteen years before the appearance of Achebe's latest novel.

The section of the *Anthills of the Savannah with* the narrative voice of Beatrice contains Ikem's statements about the role of women and argues against revolutionary politics in favor of reform. Ikem, who appears to be the mouthpiece of Achebe, argues that reform, rather than revolution, offers the only hope for Africa in his critical observation:

> Experience and intelligence warn us that man's progress in freedom will be piecemeal, slow and undramatic. Revolution may be necessary for taking a society out of an intractable stretch of quagmire but it does not confer freedom, and may indeed hinder it. Reform may be a dirty word then but it begins to look more and more like the most promising route to success in the real world... Society is an extension of the individual. The most we can hope to do with a problematic individual psyche is to re-form it. No responsible psychoanalyst would aim to do more, for to do more, to overthrow the psyche itself, would be to unleash insanity. No. We can only hope to rearrange some details in the periphery of the human personality. Any disturbance of its core is an irresponsible invitation to disaster.... It has to be the same with society. You re-form it around what it is, its core of reality; not around an intellectual abstraction (Ibid: 99).

Exemplified in the lack of governmental concern regarding the Abazonian drought, elitism and passivity adversely affect national unity and progress. Thus, Nigeria is suffering not only from the impacts of unbridled power but also the unbridgeable rift between the rich and the poor under the same banner.

5.2.3 Representation of the Been-to

This novel demonstrates Achebe's ever-growing ability to depict the challenges posed to African societies by modernism and Western influence. It details the plight of three intellectual- figures attempting to survive in an atmosphere of political oppression and cultural confusion. His protagonists are the been-to's and are comfortable tossing off literary references and cultural cues from the West. At the same time, each is proud of and clearly shaped by his/her African heritage.

Ikem, the editor of the national newspaper, is a crusading journalist from the remote province, who identifies with the problems of the nation and seeks solutions (to his peril). He is said to be the conscience of the country, an intellectual gadfly whose biting editorials had grown increasingly irritating to the President.

Christopher, the Commissioner for Information in the incumbent government, suffers from critical attitude. Beatrice, a thoroughly modern, intelligent and beautiful woman, is the girlfriend of Chris and friend of Ikem. Both Chris and Ikem returned from UK to Kanga hoping to build a vibrant democratic nation, only to get sucked into the web of corruption and authoritarianism that has been so typical of post-colonial Africa.

Both try to deal with the situation in their own ways. Chris is more pragmatic; rather than in open insubordination to His Excellency; he thinks that he can try to reform the situation from within. Ikem, on the other hand, openly criticizes the government policies in his editorials. Christopher calls his old friend into his Ministry of Information office to warn him against writing editorials that might risk his career or his life. If Ikem is always acting impetuously.

We understand that he has no choice given the urgency of his continent's problems. He is one of Africa's "impetuous sons," referred to in an excerpt from David Diop's "poem" Africa" that serves as an epigraph to Chapter Ten entitled 'The Impetuous Son" which runs:

> Africa, tell me Africa
> *Is* this you this back that is bent?
> This back that breaks under the weight of humiliation
> This back trembling with red scars
> And saying yes to the whip under the midday sun
> But a grave voice answer me impetuous son, that tree young and strong
> That tree there
> In splendid loneliness amidst white and faded flowers
> This is Africa your Africa
> That grows again patiently obstinately
> And its fruit gradually acquire
> The bitter taste of liberty… (Ibid: 134)

This is reminiscent of Diop's sense of commitment and devotion to disentangle Africa from the pawns of colonial exploitation during the Trans -Atlantic Slave Trade and Imperialism proper. It is a projection of Ikem's selfless involvement in the struggle against colonialism, the vestiges of neo-colonialism and internal colonization.

Relatively, Ikem is the most convincing and sympathetic character. While he openly criticizes the regime, he is no naïve revolutionary. There is a great scene in which he gives a lecture to a group of university students. While he urges them to vigilantly pursue their convictions, he also makes a few jabs at Marxist theories of Imperialism. Ikem appears to be Achebe's mouthpiece.

He faults the West for its general neglect of Africa and frequent embrace of its authoritarian leaders and places much of the blame for its predicament at the feet of its own corrupt, self-interested leaders. The unholy alliance of Western powers and their African puppets is s attacked vehemently.

It is a visit from members of the proletariat, which sparked Ikem to contemplate at length and consciously realize his intended role as the protectorate and voice of the people. More over, Ikem, transformed by the visit of the taxi- cab drivers, later feels a new connection to the common people and rationalizes;

> It [the cause of the unsuccessful government] is the failure of our rulers to re-establish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this country, with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being. (Ibid: 130).

Subsequently, Ikem seeks to bridge the gap between the rulers and the people by helping the people of his drought wrought homeland.

Despite his identification with the people, he is by no means disposed to offer them easy solutions, least of all revolutionary ones. When he is invited to address a student audience on the topic of "The Tortoise and the Leopard: a political Meditation on the Imperative of struggle," Ikem smiles inwardly at the prospects of challenging their shibboleths. Stating his affiliation with the "storytellers" of the world- an obvious reference to novelists like Achebe- Ikem challenges all threats to human freedom, either from the mosque or the party congress.

Despite Ikem Osodi's lack of connections to any organized mass movement other than as an unelected tribune, the Government sentences him to death during a crackdown against all dissidents. In the ensuing chaos, a soldier kills Christopher Oriko in a random act of violence for simple impudence. The President-for-life is also toppled in a subsequent coup. In other words, Kangan is following pretty much

the same trajectory as Nigeria and other West African nations for the past forty years or so. Despite Ikem's sympathy for the poor, he is out of touch with them. He regards them sympathetically from afar but is not organically linked to their struggles.

Apart from their revolutionary zeal, their Post-colonial alterity or cultural hybridity has also been treated. As a matter of fact, despite the changes in the government, the essence of the British attitude is still prevalent among the intellectuals or the been-to's. The British philosophy and lifestyle continued because the country's new leaders were products of the imposed European culture. Ikem, Chris, Sam, and Beatrice were all educated in British schools, and they modeled their lives and beliefs after the British lifestyle. Through these characters' flawless English Achebe subtly underscores their British backgrounds.

The characters' close affiliation with the British has resulted in the maintenance of the wide gap established by the British between the government and the common people. The Attorney General's praise for Sam reflects this artificial gap:

> As for those like me, Your Excellency, poor dullards who went to bush grammar schools, we know our place; we know those better than ourselves when we see them. We have no problem worshipping a man like you. Honestly I don't. You went to Lord Lugard College where half of your teachers were Englishmen (Ibid: 22).

The connections to the British do not end with education; the new black leaders also seek to mimic the British life style. The close relationship Chris and Ikem share with Mad Medico, the only white character, illustrates their desire to emulate the British. Ikem comments, during his first interaction with the British: "We were enslaved originally by Gordon's Dry Gin. All gestures of resistance are now too late and too empty. Gin it shall be forever and ever, Amen." (Ibid: 54).

One could sense that he believes, the British tradition has permanently permeated the Kangan elite culture and his life. However, of the three former schoolboy chums, it is Sam who especially admired his European predecessors as

> He was fascinated by the customs of the English, especially their well-to-do classes and enjoyed playing at their foibles. When he told me about his elegant pipe, which he had spent a whole morning choosing in a Mayfair shop I could see that he was not taking himself seriously at all. Of course one may well question the appropriateness of these attitudes in a Head of State (Ibid: 50).

In such an immoral and power-driven world, Chris and Ikem are clearly sympathetic characters. Similarly, whereas in Soyinka's *The Interpreters (1965)* intellectual resignation results in paralysis and a stultification of creative genius, the combativeness in *Season of Anomy* (1973) takes up the challenge of revolution and reform.

Even though the road is painful, bloody and uncertain, it is offered as the only sane course for the future under the given circumstances. Thus, we see the moral resurrection of the Been-to's in the recent Nigerian novels dealing with the role of the intellectual in the possible reconstruction of a society that has been afflicted with socio-economic malaise and political atrophy.

In this context, Achebe seems to draw upon his experience of postcolonial Africa, particularly its history of military coups, failed promises, and internal conflicts like the Biafran War. The men in this modern African state consistently fail to bring the persistent political incompetence under control. Sam is a variant of the Nanga type, the amoral, self-serving servant of power who does not foresee the consequences of his ruthless treatment of others. This naïveté of the tyrant is matched by the naïve idealism of the moral crusader, Ikem, and the naïve detachment of Chris and his diplomatic stratagem.

5.2.4 Post- Colonial Motherism

Anthills of the Savannah centered on the involvement of three old friends with the management of a fictional African state called Kangan deals on a variety of levels with Achebe's understanding of women's roles in a post-colonial nation. *Anthills of the Savannah* is a point of a departure for Achebe's perspective on feminism as he creates fully developed female characters and suggests that the women are sources of moral strength, tradition, and hope in the face of violence and deception.

A woman unequivocally takes the central stage in Achebe's fictional world but this must not be mistaken for the replacement of one domination by domination. The turning point in the novel is Ikem's realization of his prior perception of women. Though he had promoted liberal philosophy and attitude towards women, Beatrice repeatedly had accused him of having "no clear role for women in his political thinking" (Ibid: 83).

In the course of *Anthills of the Savannah*, he discovers inherent sexism within African culture. He realizes that, though there is no Eve parable as in Western myth, the sanctification of women through the idea of a supreme mother, one who is somehow removed, also functions as an attempt to liberate women from the matters of daily routine.

He argues that 'there is no universal conglomerate of the oppressed' (*Ibid*: 90). Each situation deserves its own unique attempt at a solution. Upon realizing the misconception about the status of women in the world (a point that resounds through the majority of postcolonial feminist theory, that universal sisterhood is essentially a falsehood, each of the world's cultures has its own visions of femininity), Ikem comes to a greater understanding about the fate of Africa as well:

> Society is an extension of the individual. Faced with a naming ceremony for Ikem's daughter, Beatrice insists on performing it themselves:" In our traditional society . . . the father named the child. But the man who should have done it today is absent . . . I think our tradition is faulty there. It is really safest to ask the mother what her child should be called"(Ibid: 206).

This break with tradition suggests a new beginning, a subverting of not only Western tradition, but African as well. In Beatrice, Achebe seems to be imagining a new role for women-not just in Beatrice's talent and education but also in her role as "the priestess of the unknown god." He transforms the traditional and conventional into something new so as to envisage a better future. In *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), speaking through his alter ego Ikem, a crusading journalist and writer, Achebe acknowledges that the malaise with which the African parties are confronted stems from excluding women from the scheme of things.

Beatrice, who has earned an honors degree from Queen Mary College, University of London, projects Achebe's new vision of women's roles and clarifies Ikem's hazy thoughts on the issue. Ikem accepts that his former attitude towards women has been too respectful, too idealistic. In the best Negritudinal manner, he has reverently put every woman on a pedestal as a Nneka, where she is just as irrelevant to the practical decisions of running the world as she was in the old days (Ibid. 98)

Beatrice who gives Ikem an insight into a feminist concept of womanhood, is articulate, independent, and self-realized, and re-evaluates women's position,

asserting that "[I] t is not enough that women should be the court of last resort because the last resort is a damn sight too far and too late!" (Ibid: 91-92).

Achebe strives to affirm the moral strength and intellectual integrity of African women via the portrayal of Beatrice. Urbanization and education have combined to broaden women s horizons. Therefore, Ikem tells Beatrice, "I can't tell you what the new role for Woman will be. I don't know. I should never presume to know. You have to tell us (Ibid: 98).

Achebe's newly envisioned female roles are to be expounded, articulated, and secured by the woman herself; and the modern African woman is doing just that. In sum, there is a progression in Achebe's depiction of women --a progression that reflects Achebe's growing sensitivity to women's issues, an attempt to move his female characters from voicelessness to voiced ones.

5.2.5 Achebe's Ideological Thrust

Years after independence and even longer, African societies continue to struggle with the legacy of colonialism. The villains are not Europeans but the opportunistic soldiers, politicians, and businesspersons who came to power after the departure of the colonizers. During the Question and Answer session at Abazon University, a student asks Ikem whether it was necessary to put the nation "under the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat" in the face of the impending crackdown. Ikem replies that he wouldn't even put himself under the dictatorship of angels and archangels.

Further, he does not even know what the proletariat of Kangan amounts to. Ikem warns them against facile solutions that leave backward social structures intact, He tells them that revolutions can be betrayed just as much by stupidity, incompetence, impatience and precipitate action as by doing nothing at all "To blame all of Kangan's problems on capitalism and imperialism as "our modish radicals do" is "sheer cant and humbug." It is like arresting the village blacksmith every time a man hacks his fellow to death (Ibid).

Anthills of the Savannah reveals the ideological implication of people who have secondary or "helping" roles in the support of someone else's political project. These roles raise questions about the nature of a vocation and the dynamics in the

relationship between employer and employee, government and people. Blaming leaders may be satisfying in the short term, but it does not change the power dynamics, which should be the first priority.

Thus, Post-colonial authors must make this political point clear in the context of secondary roles that everyone is implicated in the establishment and perpetuation of the social and political orders of our society. Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* articulates this theme in a Nigerian context. These taxi- drivers visit Ikem, who is a government official in post-colonial African nation (implied to be Nigeria) and disapprove the brand of car he drives for it is of substandard variety for a man of his status or protocol.

The dilemma of the public and its antidote is observed in the following monologue:

> What halfway measures could hope to cure that? No, it had to be full measure, pressed down and flowing over! Except that in dictatorships of the proletariat where roots have already been dug up and branches hacked away, an atavistic tolerance seems to linger, quite unexpectedly, for the stylishness of dachas and special shops etc. etc., for the revolutionary elite. Therefore what is at issue in all this may not be systems after all but a basic human failing that may not only be alleviated by a good spread of general political experience, slow of growth and obstinately patient like the young tree, planted by David Diop on the edge of the primeval desert just before the year of wonders in which Africa broke out so spectacularly in a rash of independent nation states! (Ibid: 127-128).

Ikem finds that he cannot fathom the massive changes necessary at all levels of society to prevent people from supporting social systems that oppress them. One of the messages of post-colonial authors, in their project to educate people on the complexity of relationships and power dynamics, is that the responsibility for the existing power structure is shared by all, and that getting rid of "the bad guys" does not purge the society of unwanted ideologies.

5.2.6 The Resonance of *La Luta Continua*!

Many critics and readers of *Anthills of the Savannah* are left with a sense of hopelessness at the end of the novel. Three of the novel's four main characters have died senseless deaths, and the country is left in the throes of instability. The downfall of one military regime would be succeeded by another, with no reason to believe that the new will be any better than the last one. Even so, Achebe weaves a

story that is not completely devoid of optimism; there are elements of hope and unity, but the reader, like the people of Kangan, must search for them. The subtle spirituality cutting across the novel is unmistakable as Achebe seems to contend that the spirit of the people is indomitable even under the pressure of a series of dictatorships.

By implication, since the post- independence regimes have plunged their countries into chaos and disasters, the time has come for change to dislodge the national bourgeoisie, civil and military, with governments of the workers and peasants and women and students and professionals, governments with the radical intelligentsia in the vanguard. What is advocated for is a populist coalition to replace the dictatorships and the corrupt oligarchies that operate the spoiled system described by some as a kleptocracy.

Chinua Achebe resolves *Anthills of the Savannah*, a tale of corruption and tragic violence with an almost utopian depiction of a community, newly solidified with the communal baptism of a baby girl with a boy's name, translated, "May-the-path-never-close." She is referred to as "Everybody's life!" with a unified "Isé," (or "*Amen*") signifying the shared future responsibility between the young and the old.

Ikem Osodi shares the traits of a nation ruled by passive elitists where alienation from the common man is usual and concern for proletariat plights is nonexistent. To remedy the disjunction, Ikem strives to rediscover his link to the people, slowly realizing that they are the bulwarks of the nation cherishing their traditions despite the radically changed post-colonial setting.

Ikem thus mirrors the nation's cognizance of the ability of the people to project optimism and look forward to the future and towards the future of renewal and rebirth suggested in the title of the novel and the undeserved efforts of anthills.

The concept of anthills serves as a lesson of perseverance so that the surviving anthills will continue to thrive and make those worlds better for everyone. Achebe's conviction resonates with that of Soyinka as reflected in *Season of Anomy* (1973) reasserting that the protracted season of anomy plaguing Sub-Saharan Africa is a temporary phenomenon that citizens should never despair.

It is, on the whole, a call for endurance and perseverance reminiscent of an English proverb," The longest day has an end."

5.2.7 Africanization of the Novel

With regard to Africanization of the novel, Achebe asserts that he and others will do "unheard of things" with English. Achebe who is famous for painting his narratives with local color recreates folkloric details in *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). In *Things Fall Apart*, he is "writing against the grain," so to speak, of the conventional Western novel that his works appear to be literatures of alteration as it would alter the aesthetics of writing and the politics of a society.

Chinua Achebe is perhaps one of the best examples of 'hybrid' writers who employ a language of wider communication for expressing indigenous ideas. In *Anthills of the Savannah,* he utilizes reflexification. In Chapter Nine, "Views of the struggle," Ikem, one of the central protagonists, is a young journalist among a traveling delegation of men from his village home, Abazon

The elders of Abazon celebrate the fact that one of their "sons," Ikem, is the chief editor of the *National Gazette*. "I had never read what they say he writes because I do not know ABC. But I have heard of all the fight he has fought for poor people in this land" (Ibid: 122-3). In the course of the gathering a certain elder stands up and utters a speech, which is filled with indigenous ideas. He alludes to customs and environments, which are conspicuously native to Abazon:

> How do we salute our fellows when we come in and see them massed in assembly so huge we cannot hope to greet them one by one, to call each man by his title? Do we not say: to everyone his due? Have you thought what a wise practice our fathers fashioned out of those simple words? To every man his own! To each his chosen title! We can all see how that handful of words can save us from the ache of four hundred handshakes and the headache of remembering a like multitude of praise-names. (Ibid: 123).

At this juncture, the words that the reader encounters are not meant to represent English speech. Achebe distinguishes between words that are actually uttered in English and those uttered in the mother tongue, using italics to represent words, which represent English. Achebe blends form with function.

If Achebe, like Ikem, is successful in conveying the ideas and experiences of the non-English speaking population of Abazon, then he is able to give voice to a native African experience throughout the English speaking world.

In a sense, no "participant" or communicator can claim fully to own any experience being communicated, but writers use creativity to bridge the gap. When a couple of members of the taxi-drivers union show up unannounced at his door one day to tell him how much they appreciate his support, Ikem is somewhat apprehensive at first.

After one driver tells him in Pidgin English how important his editorial columns are to the rank-and-file, he is deeply touched. Thus, the taxi-driver reaffirms the significance of his contribution:

> Ah. How I go begin count. The thing oga write too plenty. But na for we small people he de write every time. I no sabi book but I sabi say na for we this oga de fight, not for himself. He na big man. Nobody fit do fuck all to him. So he fit stay for him house, chop him oyibo chop, drink him cold beer, put him air conditioner and forget we. But he no do like that. So we come salute him. (Ibid: 135-6).

In Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* power, the power of language and the ownership of language, all-important kernels within the text, are drawn into the mosaic of mythological narrative. To mention but an example, here is a creation myth, which explains the genesis of female oppression:

> At first the Sky was very close to the Earth. But every evening woman cut off a piece of the Sky to put in her soup pot or, as in another version, she repeatedly banged the top end of her pestle carelessly against the Sky whenever she pounded the millet or, as in yet another rendering –so prodigious is Man's inventiveness – she wiped her kitchen hands on the Sky's face. Whatever the detail of Woman's provocation, the Sky finally moved away in anger and God with it (Ibid: 97).

Achebe refutes this myopic authoritarianism through the use of multiple perspectives and irony. In *Anthills of the Savannah,* he repeats the Igbo proverb "Where something stands, there also something else will stand" to expound his belief in the fluidity of perception, the duality of existence, and the adaptability of Igbo culture. To represent this fluidity in his fiction, Achebe mixes literary English, Pidgin English, and colloquial English to recreate the rhythms of Igbo folklore.

Chapter Six: The Southern African 'Reportage'

The Southern African post-colonial discourse ranges from the Zimbabwean historical novel to the post-Apartheid reportage. The post-colonial Zimbabwean literature is a part and parcel of the dynamic mainstream of Anglophone African literature. It shares with the East and the West African literature a concern to illuminate the direction for social change

The birth of Zimbabwean literature in English has been influenced largely by the history of Zimbabwe and the various crises experienced between 1890 and 1980. The brutal intrusion of the White settlers into the land between the Zambezi and the Limpopo Rivers was part of a larger imperial vision which sought to subjugate the African continent in order to exploit its economic and human resources including female and child labor. The Post-independence Zimbabwean literature published between the mid 1980s and the early 1990s has also begun to develop an oppositional discourse, which deals with a critique of the nationalist political and social agenda.

Secondly, the end of Apartheid ushered in a new transitional stage for South African authors. Writers who were once content with polemic political themes in their prose are now challenged to explore original subject material and envision a new future for South African culture. Such authors are also confronted with the difficult task of coming to terms or self-readjustment with the new political scenario.

Under Chapter Six, an attempt would be made to investigate selected post-independence Zimbabwean and Post-Apartheid South African novels against the post-colonial paradigms. The representative selections are Chenjerai Hove's *Bones (*1988), J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2000) all of which draw upon the trials and tribulations of Zimbabweans and South Africans in that order.

6.1 Bones (1988) Zimbabwe

> Sons and daughters
> those who gave their bones
> to the making of a new conscience,
> a conscience of bones, blood
> and footsteps
> dreaming of coming home some day
> in vain
>
> -from its frontispiece

Hove's seminal contribution to post-colonial Zimbabwean literature, *Bones* (1988) is believed to be the first English novel on Zimbabwean gender relations. Hove draws upon the pledges of one of their legendary heroines-Nehanda- who is known to have galvanized and inspired African forces to fight against the White settlers during the 1896 and 1897 uprisings. Just before her execution by the settler forces for spearheading the uprising, she is said to have vowed, *'My Bones shall rise again.*

This prophecy has presumably reverberated across generations of Africans as a source of inspiration for freedom fighters. She, therefore, belongs to the period of primary resistance against British imperialism in Africa. Hove does not demystify the legend in order to show how Nehanda's progressive historical consciousness triggered the popular consciousness and has thus reshaped the outlook and activities of laborers such as Marita and the unknown woman in *Bones.*

6.1.1 Plot Summary

According to Zhuwarara (1994: 3-4), the novel appears to be about the liberation struggle which gathered momentum in the 1970s and ended with Zimbabwe's independence (1980). On a closer examination, however, it reveals the struggle more as a backdrop against which we grasp the full extent of Marita's suffering.

The latter marks a pivotal point, which provokes fundamental issues pertaining to the role and fate of African women who were caught up in a colonial situation, which has been dynamically changing. Even Hove's dedication of the novel to the martyrs on the inside cover conveys his sense of concern with the radical changes Zimbabweans have undergone during this period.

Structurally, the novel is quite slender but divided into fifteen chapters in which case each chapter is titled after one of the characters and is related from that particular character's viewpoint whose voice is intertwined with other voices. These characters recount various aspects of Marita's life on the farm following the deployment of her son to the war front and her desperate search for him in the course of which she meets her tragic end.

The last part of the story takes place after Marita's death. Marita's relationship with other characters is crucial since it is through their voices that we learn about her, and it is through her influence on them that the strength of her identity comes to

dominate the novel. Marita had the strongest bond with Janifa. The characters in Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* enact personal struggles for freedom against the prohibitive social and economic structures imposed upon them by Manyepo and the other colonizers.

Throughout the novel, the reader becomes aware of the intertwining lives, stories, and concerns of Marita, Janifa, Marume, the freedom fighters, and the colonial powers with which they had to contend on a daily basis. The picture of Marita that emerges is one of a woman who stoically endures much suffering, including brutal torture in the hands of the security forces who suspect her of collaborating with the guerrillas. Remarkably, she emerges without any bitterness. and remains morally steadfast in spite of her suffering.

6.1.2 Resistance and Representation

Aside from the dialogue that takes place between characters within the chapters in *Bones*, a more subtle form of dialogue between the oppressor and the oppressed is strongly felt. This exchange is characterized by the oppressor's attempts to dehumanize the 'other' primarily by diminishing or destroying their identity. the oppressed assert their identity in reaction to this dehumanization.

In the novel, identity is expressed through a person' indigenous name, their physical body, their spiritual being, and their family relationships. The oppressor is bent on totalizing the identity of others to destroy one of the crucial factors, which contributes to their humanity, thus, providing a justification for the suppression of the colonized. On the other hand, Hove shows the centrality of the black resistance against colonial imposition and the resultant reassertion of their identity.

One of the most important signifiers of identity is indigenous naming. The significance of naming as a repository of identity and life experience becomes clear when one learns that "Wives give birth and listen to the voices of the new children crying on their breasts before they name them Tapiwa, Marita or Tatenda. They will give a name that is laden with many stories, many paths that have been walked with bare feet" (Hove 1988:104-105). Hove's incorporation of indigenous nomenclature could be viewed as a strategy of reasserting individual identity of which the natives are denied.

The character's names are foregrounded through repetition, but the most recurrent one is Marita's name to the point of becoming a legendary heroine. Many of the passages, especially in Janifa's chapters, begin with a salutary gesture to Marita's name. As we learn more about Marita and her life, the significance of her name proves to be the register of her identity, thus making it the focal point of the story, which is an embodiment of resistance and a superhuman endurance.

When Marita was under police interrogation and torture on account of her son's "terrorist acts" they ask, "What is the bitch's name?" (Ibid: 57). Asking about her name would seem to indicate that they are interested in her identity. However, the employment of the word" bitch "undermines her humanity and identity as it reduces her into a subhuman category.

Therefore, it becomes impossible for her name to function as a signifier of identity. Marita's response to the soldiers appears to be an attempt to regain her unrecognized humanity. She answers, "Marita. I work here in the fields. I am not a bitch" (Ibid.). With her last sentence, she pulls herself out of the subhuman.

Her determination to take on bureaucrats, her resolve to ask the questions others refuse to ask and her insistence on public accountability mirror her heroic stature. Like all tragic heroes, she goes down fighting, and the text suggests that her spirit lives on in the minds of all who knew her, as a vindication of her moral stature.

Given her assertiveness, however, the title of Chapter Ten, "The Unknown Woman" appears to be rather abrupt and ironic. This title refers to Marita's post-mortem state since no one has claimed for her body. Labeling Marita "the unknown woman" is a desperate attempt to rob off Marita's individuality as it comes after her identity has been firmly established.

I presume that *Bones* is dedicated to the unsung heroes and heroines of the liberation struggle and the emergent depth of peasant virtue. For instance, Marita saves the tyrannical white farmer from the wrath of guerrillas by assuring the fighters, who want a pretext for killing him that Manyepo does not ill-retreat his farm workers is proof enough that she is more humane or magnanimous irrespective of her plight and poverty.

What is shining through her is the author's belief in the hidden richness of Marita's life. This richness lies in her heroic belief in the life of her son, in her abiding humanity, in her ability to hold on to decency, self-respect, compassion, and hope even in the midst of precariousness.

Janifa appears to be an heir-apparent of Marita's strength and resolve. She toils in the fields of Manyempo, laboring under the worst conditions in her own homeland, exists in the world of freedom fighters, and bears with the stigma attached to them by the colonizers, and is bound by strong emotional ties to Marita's departed son.

She is violated and wounded by Chisaga who is privileged enough to work in Manyepo's kitchen and receives special favors from the white boss. That is how Janifa's rape mirrors Marita's "interrogation" by the government following her son's disappearance. These women have been violated and abused by persons whose very nature and existence have been created by the process of colonialism in Zimbabwe.

These power structures of near-slavery, of resistance movements, and of harsh governances are directly related to the atrocities committed by the "white locusts" and the residual issues of regaining power after independence. Janifa haltingly describes the conversation and circumstances preceding her rape, and the events and reactions, which transpired afterwards, as follows:

> Then, I do not know what happened, Marita. The police came and took me to their camp, but my mother said, 'The man who did this is the child's friend. We like him, so do not put him in jail. The only problem is the child felt the first pains of pleasure. That is why she came to tell you the story. We like Chisaga very much. He eats here every day. He is not a bad man É' .So the police shook their heads and went to Manyepo. Manyepo threw his hands into the air with anger. 'My cook cannot do such things. Leave him alone or I will drive him to the District Commissioner. You catch Maringi and Chatora; the bastards have given enough trouble to my workers. You catch them and bring them here. I will castrate the bloody fools in front of everybody … That was the end, Marita. That was the end of the hornbill's journey. The wind had taken the hornbill to the wrong destination. So I sit here alone with the wounds which my mother thinks will give me pleasure one day. Blood flowing all the time, hurting my inside as I think of the day they brought you, Marita, worn out with abuse, worn out like an old piece of cloth, torn inside, torn like a worthless thing that nobody cares about. (Ibid: 93).

The rape of Janifa by the predatory, Chisaga, symbolizes the systematic abuse of power for decadent and selfish ends. Hove is mainly concerned with the experiences, cares, struggles, pain, and endurance of a woman stripped of any power, dignity, and security she might hold. Placed in the context of a "post-colonial" novel, one cannot help but draw the comparison between the woman and the country.

In other words, the strength of the female meant the strength of the troubled nation and that the reverse is true. Thus, as the country is figuratively raped and exploited by men such as Manyepo and so are the structures of society broken down drastically by the brutal forces of colonialism.

6.1.3 The Stride from Nihilism to Optimism

Bones is said to be the first Zimbabwean novel to break the Post-independence inertia. Hove delves into the newly independent world of Zimbabwe through the memories of all those who knew a woman, Marita, a farm-worker, whose only son was deployed to a war front and disappeared without a trace up until her death. Hove implicitly reveals that as far as the poor and the oppressed are concerned, 'the beautiful ones are not yet born' in the aftermath of independence. This disillusionment is indicative of the country's graver economic and political impasse which is pervades it to-date.

However, the final vision of hope and triumph comes through Janifa who "refuse[s] the colonizer. By being placed in an insane asylum with chains on her feet, she represents all oppressed Zimbabweans. She disentangles her feet from the chains and escapes from the asylum. She does not wait for her keepers to break the shackles for her. Her resolve to break the chains is voiced hereunder:

> Then, the keepers of this place will come and say... We will remove the chains soon when we know you are well... But I will take the broken chains with my own hands and say... Do not worry yourselves; I have already removed them by myself. I have been removing them from my heart for many years, [...] Then I will go without waiting for them to say go. (Ibid: 112).

Janifa's disentanglement from the shackles drives home the point that the black Zimbabweans do not have illusions about the oppressor's sense of morality. They are rather convinced that it is the oppressed themselves who are responsible for

liberating their body and soul from the yoke of colonialism. Marita, for instance, survives at the bottom of a harsh pyramidal social scale under the tyranny of male oppression. Marita's grief, her wisdom, her quiet resilience, all of which amount to a profound courage, is revealed not only in her actions but also in her determination to uphold her own principles of justice and morality.

The history of the land, smeared with blood, is presented in a counterpoint of different voices and characters shaped by personal experiences. But almost all of them glorify Marita and are influenced by her determination that she becomes a legendary heroine like Nehenda! The subject people's liberation must be carried out through a recovery of self and autonomous dignity. After having been rejected for so long by the colonizer, the day has come for the colonized to react against colonial oppression. By the end of the novel, a "self-recovery" has been achieved through an assertion of identity

6.1.4 Hove's Ideological Positioning

Despite a range of contrasts in the novel, Hove's underpins the complexity of the humanizing/dehumanizing process that counteracts a white versus black view. This counter-action is twice asserted in the novel. When Chisaga rapes Janifa, we see that the oppressor-oppressed relationship is not necessarily color-bound. Similarly, Janifa's stereotyping of the guerrillas reflects internal dehumanization at work.

The Zimbabwean nationals themselves are, thus, implicated in the perpetuation of the colonizer's ideological warfare. Chisaga, for instance, prefers to masquerade himself under what appears to be the dictum of 'Silence is golden' to the advantage of the colonizers.

Manyepo asks Chisaga many questions such as "Tell me, Chisaga, what your name means in the village where you come from? Is it because you are big that they give you this name? Chisaga, what was your father's nickname? Did you see him, I mean were you born before he died?"(Ibid: 33), which could have helped him reclaim his individual identity. However, Chisaga does not answer any of Manyepo's questions about himself, which would make him unique in front of Manyepo. Given this "opportunity" to identify himself, one may wonder why Chisaga refrains from doing so and reacts to it in such a manner:

> Shame' ... I keep my mouth closed. Nothing beats a closed mouth, nothing. A closed mouth is a cave in which to hide. So I hide myself there so that Manyepo does not see too much in my mouth. Many people have killed themselves because they are too loud mouthed. A loud mouth is a big trap. It can even kill lions. It burns forests. Did our people not say the tongue is a little flame, which burns forests? Yes, it is true. So I have kept quiet for many years (Ibid).

Chisaga does not want Manyepo to "see too much in his mouth." This seems to contradict the desire of black Zimbabweans to have their identities acknowledged. But if they asserted their identity, it would be as good as contradicting the philosophy of the oppressors who believe that all blacks are the same in order to justify their inferior position. Chisaga is more complacent with the status quo and has partly adopted the perspective of the oppressors.

Thus, he advocates the white proprietorship of the land that belongs to Manyepo and says, "We are like children up the tree. We cannot blame the tree for its crooked leaves. The tree is the way it is, so we have to climb if we want the fruits"(Ibid: 39). The native Zimbabweans are thus not free from the blood like Pilate but implicated in the perpetuation of tyranny and white supremacy in their own country.

6.1.5 Cultural Hybridity and Genre-border Crossing

Apart from such an ideological thrust, this novel is also laden with the questions of post-colonial identity and cultural hybridity. The unconventional and elliptical voices of the characters reflect both Hove's poetic gifts and his attempt to create an aura of the native culture and language. The novel lends itself as a microcosm of Zimbabwean hybridity.

In a society where the use of English has its place (within imposed colonial environments like schools), the reader encounters a fictional text that is written in English. One may wonder whether this affirms the value of English in re-establishing an independent Zimbabwean culture or attesting to the notion that the Anglophone African writer is actually a powerless subject.

As written language was introduced to the Zimbabwean people (within the novel) its value was minor. For those within the native culture, written language was effective so long as it allowed one to retain information and grant long-term access. From Marita's fascination with the letter, the reader learns that English is valuable in

Zimbabwe. But is the textual strategy restricted to its application within pre-determined colonialist structures? Or does Hove expand the appropriate application of English to subvert the authority of the colonialist via deviation from the RS English?

Above all, Hove affirms the value of oral communication, which is an aspect of native culture over the domesticated discourse. This facet in its own right justifies the oral history of African culture and provides a context within which the native writer can write against all culturally hegemonic discourse that not only negates the value of orality, but also establishes the significance of written language over the spoken one.

As Janifa reads the letter aloud, Marita hears words not meant to be regarded literally: "I love you; you are my margarine, my butter, my peanut butter for my heart." Such a text, the only existing writing of Marita's lost son, has a lesser significance when considered against such valued oral statements as:

> Marita, you are the one who told me that the earth breathed, so I should not put dirt all over the place. The trees, the rocks, the soil, you said they once talked like people; they ran races and gave each other prizes. How I imagined the baobab running clumsily across the plains, with grass and the little trees laughing at the big belly of the baobab heaving up and down. (Ibid: 13)

Apparently, critical discourse that negates a sustained oral history does so without considering that its significance is culture-bound rather than universal. This notion holds true in the context of universality rooted in British/Colonial-specific paradigm.

The adaptation of language, by itself, is a tool of resistance and a means of reaffirming the integrity of traditional African cultures. It is reminiscent of Achebe's novels set in the pre-colonial past and the way in which their very mode of expression is designed to capture the process of thinking, philosophizing and image-making prevalent in peasant societies inhabiting a specific rural locale.

Although he acknowledges that writers such as Chinua Achebe who write in English are contributing to the affirmation of their cultures, Hove, equally believes that such a contribution is tainted because of their choice of language. In fact, *Bones* was originally written in English, but not up to the standard of RS English.

For instance, the poetic flavor of the rhythm and phraseology of the Shona language is interwoven with English to the extent of sounding bilingual.

For instance, the Human attribute is linked with physical Nature and the elemental forces as in 'his moustache... dancing feverishly like a little forest shaken by the wind, "You are only a child with small breasts trying to come out like the small horns of a small bull" ((Ibid: 12-13). "Did our people not say the tongue is a little flame which burns forests?" (Ibid: 33). Thus, the human, natural and elemental forces compliment each other as an evocation of African animism.

Another dominant feature of *Bones* is genre border- crossing as reflected in the evocative power of its poetic and contemplative prose. The poetic language blends very well with the peasant wisdom, which the story seems to celebrate and glorify. In *Bones,* there is a refreshing and daring boldness in the way Hove captures the rhythms of thought in a poetic language distinctly rooted in Shona vernacular expression.

A case in point is the manner in which the anguish of Marita's protégée´ Janifa, is rendered in the wake of her insanity:

> Tears are not water. They must not be seen everyday. They are not water. The well of tears is not visited by anyone. No one knows the color and shape of the well of tears. If tears are seen everyday, things are bad inside Marita. Things are bad. Dark things that eat you from inside until you grow as thin as me (Ibid: 95).

Apart from the poetic evocativeness of the language, Hove also relies on traditional proverbs, maxims and epigrammatic expressions, which are translated from Shona. For instance, Chisaga and Murume seek to justify their subservient roles and the obsequious manner they relate to Manyepo by citing the traditional Shona proverb, "A king's son is a nobody in other lands." Chisaga also attempts to make a lame excuse for the outrageous behavior of his boss by citing a traditional saying, "Every village has its own fool" whose implication is 'the boss is always right.'

It should be noted that most of these idiomatic expressions may sound quite exotic to international readers who are unfamiliar with the poetic flavor of Shona. Hove is either translating or modifying the original Shona expressions so as to suit his contextual purposes like Chinua Achebe. This is a praiseworthy decolonization venture advocated by the proponents of Post-Colonial textual strategy.

6.1.6 Organic Metaphors and Spatial Locations

Bones could be regarded as a kind of elegy intended to mourn the death of unsung heroes and heroes of the liberation struggle. Because it begins to read like a sustained dirge and reveals an almost debilitating submission of the characters to fate. One of Hove's purposes in writing *Bones* might be acknowledging the martyrdom of the unsung heroes of liberation struggle and thereby to celebrate and unmask their anonymity.

To that effect, Hove employs the metaphorical matrix- "bones" which connotes the spiritual and individual self, not just the skeletal structure. There are a multitude of references to bones in the novel, such as "the bones of my people falling like feathers" (Ibid: 52) and "my bones will rise with such power," (Ibid: 53) turning bones into a symbol of the moral as well as the physical stamina of the people. They also represent the legacy of the past and the projected rebirth of a brave future.

For the white farmer, on the contrary, "bones" connotes physical or muscular strength. Chisaga tells us how the white farmer handpicks manual laborers. One of the manual laborers reflects on the recruitment: "Then, he inspected us like a police sergeant, feeling the strength of our muscles to see who was full of bones and who was full of watery muscles..." (Ibid: 39).

All the more, the disjunction between the city and the country has been featured prominently in the history of Zimbabwean fiction since the pre-independence era. This rural-urban dichotomy is a key feature of the settler-colonial spatial discourse, which sought to essentialise social identities by restricting them to fixed spatial locations and associating some of those identities/locations (white, urban) with civilization, and others (black/rural) with barbarism and backwardness.

The city in *Bones* is featured as a constrictive and all-devouring seat of the patriarchal state bureaucracy. This is contradistinction to the colonialist notion and the nationalist projection of cities as the key nodal points of the post-colonial superstructure. By analogy, in *The Stone Virgins* (2002) by Vera published over a decade later, the city is portrayed as both the embodiment of the colonial grid of sharp edges and social divides and a safe haven for a woman traumatized by (male-inflicted) violence pervading the countryside after independence.

6.2 Disgrace (1999) South Africa

> In my own terms, I am being **punished** for what happened between your daughter and myself. I am sunk into a state of **disgrace** from which it will not be easy to lift myself. It is not a **punishment** I have refused. I do not murmur against it. On the contrary, I am living it out from day to day, trying to accept **disgrace** as my state of being. (p.172)

The early years of democracy were characterized by a new form of writing called 'honeymoon literature' or 'the literature of celebration'. The most striking feature of honeymoon literature is its overriding tendency to glorify the miraculous materialization of the so-called multiracial 'rainbow nation'. However, the Post-Apartheid novel has relapsed into the sort of disillusionment experienced by post-colonial East and West African writers due to denial of expectations.

Thus, many post-Apartheid novelists are still influenced by racial themes that their preoccupation with political issues, resistance to oppression and their obsessive reference to race are unmistakably featured in the novels published over the last decade as reflected in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999). In the next subsections, an attempt would be made to explore the major post-Apartheid issues in this novel.

6.2.1 Plot Overview

Set in post-Apartheid South Africa, *Disgrace* relates the story of Professor David Lurie who is charged with seducing one of his students (Melanie).When he is hauled before an academic tribunal after the misbegotten affair with a student, he refuses to defend himself against charges of sexual harassment leveled against him.

In the wake of the scandal, jeered at by students, threatened by Melanie's boyfriend, ridiculed by his ex-wife, Lurie is forced to resign and flee Cape Town for his daughter's (Lucy) small holding in the countryside.

Subsequently, three black strangers appear at their house pretending to make a phone call and incite violence, which leaves both of them badly shaken and further estranged from each other. During the violence, Lucy is viciously gang-raped with the possible collaboration of her nearest neighbor, Petrus. Even worse, the gangsters ransack the house, sprinkle Lurie with alcohol and set him aflame, and shoot the dogs.

Even though Lurie's burns are redressed, Lucy slips into a profound depression and refrains from reporting the case to the police. In the aftermath of the outrages committed against him and his daughter, the overstretched police undermine Lurie's angry demands for justice, and his attempts to confront one of the assailants whom Petrus apparently protects, produce only stony silences and bald-faced lies. To add injury to insult, the culprits caught with the stolen vehicle were released on bail, leading Lurie to rub the police's incompetence in their noses.

All the more, their relations with Petrus. become increasingly troubled and ambiguous. Incidentally, David volunteers to work for Bev, Lucy's friend who runs the local veterinary clinic, and comes to realize that Bev's primary role, in this impoverished land, is not to heal animals but to kill them with as much love and mercy as she can summon. The novel ends with its protagonist, Professor David Lurie, carrying a crippled dog on its way to euthanasia.

6.2. 2 Strands of Disgrace

There are two strands of disgrace in the novel: firstly, Lurie is charged with sexual harassment against which he declines to defend himself but paradoxically pleads guilty. The trial begins with a summon earmarked for David Lurie:

> Next morning, with surprise dispatch, memorandum arrives from the Office of the Vice-Rector (Student Affairs) notifying him that a complaint has been lodged against him under article 3.1 of the University Code of Conduct. He is required to contact the Vice-Rector's Office at his earliest convenience. The notification-which arrives in an envelope and marked confidential –is accompanied by a copy of the code. Article 3 deals with victimization or harassment on grounds of race, ethnic group, religion, gender sexual preference or physical disability.Article3.1addresses victimization or harassment of students by teachers *(*Ibid: 57).

The chapters detailing the investigation of the sexual harassment charges provide a fertile ground for critical discourse. Taken as generic trial, the account of the investigation suggests that the underlying motive of a public trial is not to enact justice, but to instill guilt and shame in the culprit. The University's investigation into the sexual harassment charges filed against Lurie is modeled on the Criminal Justice System.

Though the Committee repeatedly denies that they are running a trial, both Coetzee and Lurie reject this claim. Lurie, indeed, refuses as a matter of principle to play along with their attempts to couch the hearing in a language other than that of trial and judgment. No matter how carefully or skillfully the Committee plays a linguistic gymnastics, Lurie manages to cut through the pretense and discern that they are truly seeking a confession. Lurie's approach culminates when he responds to the academic jury:

> What goes on in my mind is my business, not yours, Farodia. Frankly, what you want from me is not a response but a confession. Well, I make no confession. I put forward a plea, as my right. Guilty as charged. That is my plea. That is as far as I am willing to go (Ibid: 51).

David rather prefers a simplistic solution, waving away the notion of penance when he draws an analogy between the demands of the academic jury and the Maoist self-criticism: "It reminds me too much of Mao's China. Recantation, self-criticism, public apology. I'm old-fashioned, I would prefer simply to be put against a wall and shot. Have done with it" (Ibid: 66). After forcing himself sexually onto one of these "exotics" at a university where he teaches, Lurie explains his misconduct in taking advantage of an innocent student as follows in one of his exchanges with Melanie's father:

> It could have turned out differently, I believe, between the two of us, despite our ages. But there was something I failed to supply, something' – he hunts for the word – 'lyrical. I lack the lyrical. I manage love too well. Even when I burn I don't sing, if you understand me. For which I am sorry. I am sorry for what I took your daughter through. You have a wonderful family. I apologize for the grief I have caused you.... I ask for your pardon. (Ibid: 171)

David Lurie commits adultery with girls who are young enough to be his daughters - in a conversation with Melanie he nearly refers to himself as 'Daddy'. This implies that he is an unnatural father or a predator rather than a protector. On the contrary, David Lurie advises his daughter to take a break for six months or a year, after the rape, until things have improved in that country: "Go overseas. Go to Holland(Ibid: 57).

What Coetzee is at pains to paint in this novel is that there is no place for whites in the post-colony. The post-colony breeds nightmares for whites (i.e. violence, chaos and raping of white women). Hence, whites should rather pack up and go back to Europe from whence they came. (Ibid: 157).

The racist logic apparent in his attitude is perhaps unmistakable. Thus, when it is black men who are doing wrong, the whole country is charged but when a white man transgresses, the white population is not charged and the land does not breed nightmares for people of color. It is simply a failure to "supply the lyrical.

Furthermore, the white man has only to apologize to the family of the young woman, and all is forgotten. Or if there is punishment, the white man is punished on his own terms. Let me allow David Lurie to speak for himself:

> In my own terms, I am being punished for what happened between your daughter and myself. I am sunk into a state of disgrace from which it will not be easy to lift myself. It is not a punishment I have refused. I do not murmur against it. On the contrary, I am living it out from day to day, trying to accept disgrace as my state of being. (Ibid: 172).

The recurrence of the terms *disgrace* and *punishment* in a space of a single paragraph presumably reveals Lurie's guilty conscience or apologetic gesture. Coetzee portrays David Lurie in a positive light while the black gangsters who raped his daughters are portrayed as vindictive and insensitive rapists. This is due to his subscription to white supremacist notions of how black and white subjectivities are constructed.

Secondly, Lurie's trial alludes allegorically to events in post-Apartheid South African history in which case a TRC(1995-1998) was formed by the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act in* accordance with which the culprits were granted amnesty as long as they confessed the entire truth to enhance the process of building a 'rainbow nation'. In this regard Mandela himself (1999) observes that

> The experience of others has taught us that nations that do not deal with the past are haunted by it for generations. The quest for reconciliation was a fundamental objective of our struggle to set up a government based on the will of the people and to build a South Africa that belongs to all.(reproduced in*The Guardian,*Oct.25, 2002*)*.

Similarly, the trial of David Lurie takes on a greater cultural significance in the context of the post-Apartheid euphoria. Lurie's insight into the nature of his trial,

however, does not absolve him from disgrace. More importantly, Lurie's insight into the psychology of shame does not mean that he is innocent of the crime with which he was charged. He acted with reckless and cruel selfishness in his manipulation of Melanie in spite of his dismissal of the mishap.

Lurie's affair with Melanie in *Disgrace* is depicted as a betrayal of ethical responsibility, as he violates the conventional code of conduct. The physical consequences of sexual relationship such as pregnancies, abortions, and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS, demand consideration of the body that prioritizes moral issues and encompasses relations of self and other.

In Coetzee's novel, one may contrast Lurie's concern for Lucy's body after the rape when he advises her to undergo HIV and pregnancy tests to his lack of concern for Melanie Isaacs upon whom he forces himself in the wake of his affair with a prostitute.

6.2.3 The Black Peril Imagery

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* features the legacy of colonialism and Apartheid in the history of South Africa. He draws upon the age-old problems of Africa like race and political conflicts and the historical circumstances. Post-Apartheid South Africa is a violent country in which a melting-pot of diverse cultures are struggling to come to terms with one another as the balance of power shifts from one racial group to another.

Coetzee's novel focuses on the changing power relations between whites and blacks in the new South Africa through the eyes of two white characters (David and Lucy) who struggle to come to terms with the legacy of Apartheid:

> In the old days, one could have had it out with Petrus. In the old days, one could have had it out to the extent of losing one's temper and sending him packing and hiring someone in his place. But though Petrus is paid a wage, Petrus is no longer, strictly speaking, hired help. …It is a new world they live in, he and …Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it (Ibid: 117).

This nostalgia for the good old days or the colonial era is what makes this novel remarkable and relevant to the topic at hand. In fact, it is not only the nostalgia for white supremacy that makes the novel relevant to the topic but also the language

employed to describe the traditional mode of life. The tone of the novelist's language is identical with that of the white racist writers bent on stereotyping the African semi-urban community as observed cynically by Lurie:

> He [David Lurie] has been away less than three months, yet in that time the shanty settlements have crossed the highway and spread east of the airport. The stream of cars has to slow down while a child with a stick herds a stray cow off the road. Inexorably, he thinks, the country is coming to the city. Soon there will be cattle again on Rondebosch Common; soon history will have come full circle. (Ibid: 175).

Coetzee seems to assert that since the civilizing whites are no longer in power, what one should expect is violence and chaos! *Disgrace* portrays a white world within a black nation, a world which from David Lurie's perspective, has turned upside down. This appears to be a reflection of a deep-rooted prejudice against the black race well styled as post-Apartheid resistance. It shows that even though Apartheid has been legally banned, its legacy still haunts the country. Even worse, robbery, vandalism and rape are common occurrences.

Depending on from which standpoint it is viewed, the novel reaches its climax or descends into its darkest abyss when three black men rape a white woman. If there is one thing the colonizers always-feared losing, it is their sexual possession of white women's bodies. Corpora of literature that depict black males as castrated, without phallic power are abundant.

As result of this, black men in general, are portrayed as having a constant need to overtly assert a phallic misogynist masculinity, one that is rooted in contempt for the female. Needless to point out, the rationale that underpins this pathology is the obsession with an idealized vision of white femininity as opposed to the black peril imagery.

Perhaps, the most frightful aspect of this abuse that women and girls suffer is the sexual harassment or bestial gang rape. The father perceives the misogynist nature of the act, motivated not by sexual desire but by hatred, as they "put her in her place... showed her what a woman is for" (Ibid: 115).This is an extension of the inter- racial tensions and mutual distrust.

The racial dynamics become more strained when Petrus is implicated in indirectly facilitating a robbery on Lucy's land. He disappears deliberately when three black gangsters attack Lucy and return with building materials to renovate his new house. Lurie's regressive outlook is reflected in his efforts to persuade Lucy to leave the farm for fear of a potential danger and his suspicion of Petrus's, conspiracy. Committed to the land, however, Lucy reconciles herself to cope with the forces for social change simmering in the new South Africa.

Throughout the novel, power swings steadily from Lucy to Petrus who represents the transition between the old order and the new South Africa. Lucy realizes that she is dependent on Petrus for protection and that the way forward is to learn to live with him - uncertain though she is of his motives and intentions.

At one juncture, David recognizes the vindication of the oppressed black man as represented by the rape of a white woman that he blames history for Lucy's rape, reiterating that "it was a history speaking through them. A history of wrong. It came down from the ancestors" (Ibid: 156). It is these dualities like black vs. white, oppressed vs. oppressor, man vs. woman-, which are the most glaring representations of the power exchanges in the novel.

While black peril imagery was a common feature of racist political discourse throughout the twentieth century, the subversive status of white peril literature is confirmed by attitudes of Apartheid censors. Arguably, Coetzee self-consciously performs a subversion of 'black peril' narrative-by simultaneously scripting the hidden sexual exploitation of black women by white men that has prevailed for centuries.

In *Disgrace,* David Lurie translates Melanie's name, as the dark one while Lucy's name is associated with light. Playing on tropes of darkness and light, the names of the two women expose black peril stereotypes and the residual threat of the white peril that prevailed under colonialism.

Under the Apartheid, many white men exploited 'colored concubines' without guaranteeing them long-term socio-economic and psychological security. Rather than confirming 'black peril stereotypes, Lucy's name reveals that these have been based on upholding the purity of white women. The sexual violation of Lucy further

highlights a history tainted by racial injustice, by possession and dispossession where white women have been 'signs' of purity while the black ones are stigmatized.

David Lurie's reluctance to confess 'the long history of exploitation of which [his treatment of Melanie] is a part during the disciplinary hearing is yet another case in point. *Disgrace* points to a context where women are regarded as property, and are liable for protection only insofar as they belong to men.

Thus, the characters that represent the natives in the novel are inarticulate who cannot voice their emotions and explain their circumstances through history. Petrus, the black male character, is portrayed as being shiftless, cunning, and untrustworthy. Black women are portrayed as dull, obedient and sexually passive in spite of their prime age or adolescence. Women of Asian descent are shown as mere sex objects. When David Lurie telephoned a brothel, he was informed that that there were lots of exotics to choose from – Malaysian, Thai, Chinese and what not!

The reception of *Disgrace* at home was less rapturous although it was applauded abroad for its brutal honesty. In public hearings on racism over the media held by the Government's Human Rights Commission, ANC accused Coetzee of representing as brutally as he can the white people's perception of the post-Apartheid black man. By implication, the white race would 'loose their cards, their weapons, their property, their rights their dignity, while the white women are supposed to sleep with the barbaric black men.

6.2. 4 Generation Gap on Conflict Resolution

A generation gap is a popular term used to describe wider cultural and attitudinal differences between one generation and another, especially between parents and their children. Perhaps, the same applies to Lurie and Lucy with regard to tne problems of readjustment in a transitional society where the old wounds are still bleeding.

Father and daughter are brought together but further separated by a horrendous event when three men burgle Lucy's home, set fire to Lurie and lock him in a lavatory, and gang-rape Lucy. In particular, the boldness with which he presents David Lurie's racist fear and sense of powerlessness (the assailants are black) is ever memorable:

> He speaks Italian, he speaks French, but French and Italian will not save him here in darkest Africa. He is helpless, an Aunt Sally, a figure from a cartoon, a missionary in cassock and topi waiting with clasped hands and up cast eyes while the savages jaw away in their own lingo preparatory to plunging him into their boiling cauldron. Mission work: what is left behind, that huge enterprise of upliftment? Nothing that he can see (Ibid: 95).

Thus, begins the novel's second half, a gripping examination of the seemingly irreconcilable responses, which the two generations fashion to this dreadful eruption. The younger representative is more politically radical than the older; but the power of the novel stems from the way in which Lucy begins to influence her father's vision. The fact that he is conversant with French, Italian and English are not of much help for a white racist living in the 'dark continent.' Shaken by his solitude and by Lucy's counter- arguments, Lurie succumbs to the hard facts on the ground towards the end of the novel.

Though Lucy and her father are as separated as they have ever been, both have been changed by the effort of reconciliation. Lucy's reaction to the rape, which her father finds bewildering, is to seek refuge in a damaged silence, and then in fatalism. When she discovers that she has been impregnated by the gangsters, she seems to share the self-justifications of her attackers and refuses to administer an abortion.

On the contrary, she expects to have the child, to raise it, and even to love it in time. Her father finds this grotesque, and accuses her of trying to humble herself before history. This marks a growing divide between generations over the question of inter-racial tolerance. Lucy's rape at the hands of three black men represents the ultimate fracture between the generations, as David and Lucy could not reconcile their differences on this particular issue that he sneers at her "Not her father's little girl, not any longer" [Ibid: 105]).

During this evolution of generations, the South Africa that David has known throughout his life is undergoing a rapid change. It is his refusal to accept the changes that mark him, and his entire generation, as a liability. Before his resignation to the generation gap, David attempts to revive and reinvigorate his relationship with Lucy, thinking of her as his "second salvation, the bride of his youth reborn" (Ibid: 86).

Thus, Lurie has come to a point where he accepts the futility of his own position and offers himself for death, fully acknowledging and accepting the inevitable generation shift as an unavoidable law of Nature.

6.2.5 Echoes of *Cry, the Beloved Country*

Though Alan Paton and J.M.Coetzee come from different racial groups, they seem to partake similar concerns with regard to the inter-racial dynamics of South Africa both before and after the fall of Apartheid. To our dismay, Post-Apartheid South Africa is by no means am idyllic haven as xenophobic violence increases significantly in the country. Incidents of car jacking escalated, and many commercial farmers either emigrated or gave up farming because of violence committed against them.

From 1989 to 1994 the murder rate doubled, and a young South African woman could be expected to be raped twice in her lifetime on average. The changing landscape encouraged many of the wealthier South Africans, particularly in Johannesburg, to move into gated communities.

Lurie projects a pessimistic tone to the future of his family. Following his daughter's pregnancy, his line will be carried on through hatred, violence and accident. He says, "A father without the sense to have a son: is this how it is all going to end, is this how his line is going to run out, like water dribbling into the earth?" (Ibid: 199). Their desperate observations also reveal a bleak future and the need for readjustment:

> [I] t is humiliating. But perhaps that is a good point to start from again. Perhaps this is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level. With nothing. Not with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity. [Lurie replies] Like a dog. [And Lucy responds] Yes, like a dog (Ibid: 205).

For critics who read the novel through an allegorical lens, Lurie's negative outlook for the future does not speak well of his outlook on South Africa where the crimes of history haunt the present. Lurie and Lucy- are two South African whites who shoulder their disgrace, resigned to live for small private satisfactions in a nation whose wounds have not been redressed yet

It appears that both Lurie and Lucie are extremists in their standpoints that they need to forge some sort of middle passage towards tolerance and reconciliation David Lurie's story is a journey mirrored by the transition of Mandela's South Africa which moves from xenophobic tyranny to xenophobic anarchy. But the projected way out seems to be unpredictable.

6.2.6 An Exception to the Rule

Literary form has always been problematic for the South African novelist writing about the overwhelming internal pressures exerted by Apartheid and the wider legacy of colonialism. How could the volatile or explosive history of South Africa in the making be represented in fiction without lapsing into the impoverished aesthetic of merely political writing?

It is a matter of common knowledge that the bulk of South African literature is laden with journalistic accounts and manner of writing. But when it comes to the post-colonial textual strategy, the question of reportage or aesthetic proper seem to be rather irrelevant to the post-colonial language politics which favors editorial intrusions like appropriation at best, and abrogation of the colonial language.

With regard to the strategies of appropriation and abrogation, the rules do not wholly apply to Coetzee due to his racial background. Out of chauvinism, he openly declares that English is unbecoming of the African expression. It seems to be a die-hard resistance against the post-colonial paradigm as reflected in his chauvinistic remark:

> More and more he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa. Stretches of English code whole sentences long have thickened, lost their articulations, their articulateness, their articulateness. Like a dinosaur expiring and settling in the mud, the language has stiffened (Ibid: 117).

Disgrace's narrative style is heavily influenced by Lurie's literary background and exposure. Throughout the narrative, Coetzee incorporates phrases in Afrikaans, Latin, German, Italian, and French into the text. Such a style is a manifestation of a broad-spectrum editorial intrusion such as appending a glossary of terms as sorted out below (Coetzee 1999: passim)).

Handlanger: German for handyman

Inferno: one of the three canticas of Dante's *Divine Comedy*

Kaaps: Cape Malay accent of Afrikaans

kombi: passenger van

Lethe: river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology

***Losung*:** German for resolution, name Bev and Lurie use for the process of putting the dog's to sleep.

***Luxe et volupte*:** luxury and pleasure

Origen: Christian theologian and philosopher; an idealist who disregarded material things and castrated himself

Petrus: common name in ancient Roman times; from Latin word meaning Rock

Pollux: well-known boxer in Greek mythology, twin brother of Castor (a great horseman)

***Rape of the Sabine* Women**: 1635 painting by Nicholas Poussin, based on classical myth about the founding of Rome: Romans needed women for their city to flourish and raided a nearby town forcing the women to marry them

***Schadenfreude*:** German word meaning to delight in the misfortune of others

Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt**:** Latin for "These are the tears of things, and our mortality cuts to the heart;" lines grom Virgil's *Aeneid* as Aeneas recognizes the cost of war

***tessitura*:** the range of a melody or vocal piece

***The Mystery of Edwin Drood*:** Charles Dickens' last novel whose ending was not finished by the time he died.

***vedi l'anime di color cui vinse l'ira*:** Italian "now see the souls of those whom anger has defeated

In *Disgrace*, we also come across untranslated borrowings such as coup demain, (Ibid: 31), schadenfreude (Ibid: 42) Argus (Ibid: 44), Qu'devenuece front polices cheveux blonds, sourcils (Ibid: 65), Dumasit dein Leben andem *(*Ibi*d:* 209*)* and indigenous names like Melani, and caharijan (Ibid: 146) whose meaning could inferred from the context.

Moreover, David Lurie refers to romantic poets such as Byron and Wordsworth or Scarlatti's sonatas, Charles Dickens' novels, or Norman McLaren's films. David Lurie also pays close attention to language even in everyday conversation. Often in the novel, Lurie would linger over a word used by someone else or even himself delving into its context, connotation, or etymology.

Lurie's chauvinistic language politics, which does not entertain informal or substandard variety of usage, symphonizes his detachment from South African society. In the country, the people of the land (the majority) speak Xhosa, and Lurie's opera and philosophy does not matter. Yet his displacement began even before his exile to Salem, when Lurie, whose academic specialty- Romantic poetry- is reduced to a Communications Professor who is allowed to offer only a single elective course per semester on Literature.

What is more, elements of Magical Realism abound in Coetzee's *Disgrace*. Thus, an exploration of polar opposites such as

- old and young
- city and country
- life and death
- Africa and the West
- men and women
- savage and civilized
- human and animal
- teaching and learning
- insiders and outsider
- freedom and responsibility
- power and impotence
- past and present
- vengeance and mercy
- physical and spiritual
- grace and disgrace
- literature and life
- The old South Africa and the new South Africa.
- Black and White pervasive in the novel are used to defamiliarize and foreground the essential conflicts and anomalous scenarios with which the so called rainbow nation is troubled.

6.3. The Heart of Redness (2000) South Africa

> We returned to our places, these kingdoms,
> But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
> With an alien people clutching their gods.
> I should be glad of another death.
> .-from Eliot's "The Magi"

Considering the other side of the telescope within South Africa, we come across Zakes Mda's recent novel, *The Heart of Redness* (2000), which is said to be an anti-racist caricature published in the wake of ANC's advent to power. While the history of racial injustice still remains a strong theme, critics have identified a growing trend toward more personal and universal narratives by post-Apartheid writers.

A good number of these writers had to readjusts to life after returning from exile, to cope with the newly entrenched socio-political system placed within the new black elite, and witness to problems like political corruption and ineptitude of the freedom dancers. While both black and white authors like Nadine Gordimer, Alan Paton, and Zakes Mda, who are known to have exposed the evils of Apartheid to the world decades earlier, are equally responsible for drawing global attention to the wrongs of the post-Apartheid era.

6. 3.1 The Historical Background

The plot of this novel draws upon a traditional myth dating back to the mid-nineteenth Century when a teenage prophetess named Nongqawuse is known to have preached salvation for the Xhosa people. If the people would slaughter all of their cattle and burn all of their crops, the spirits of their ancestors would rise and drive their oppressors (the British colonizers) into the sea. The ancestors would also resurrect the cattle and restore the crops. A large percentage of the Xhosa ("Believers") adopted this new religion, destroyed their livelihood, and suffered many years of disease and starvation.

The conflict between Believers and Unbelievers has persisted through the "Middle Generations" and continues to the present. Believers claim that the prophecies of Nongqawuse would have come true, if only all of the Xhosa people had destroyed their farms and cattle. The ancestors failed to return because of the unbelief of a portion of the people.

On the other hand, Unbelievers argue that the folly of the original Believers led to their prolonged suffering and the reinforcement of the colonial grip. This traditional conflict is reflected today in their attitudes toward economic development. Developers want to build a large casino and resort complex near the village. Unbelievers support the developmental trajectory proposed for their region while Believers are dead set against the proposal on account of its impact on the eco-system.

Meanwhile, Camagu, who holds a Doctoral degree in Economic Development returns from exile in 1994 to help build the new South Africa, has moldered for years in Johannesburg, unable to find a post commensurate with his qualification. Having spent four years after the first democratic elections of 1994 Camagu is prepared to abandon Johannesburg and the new South Africa to return to the USA.

The chance encounter with a beautiful woman which entices him to abort his intended return to the USA initiates his search for a young woman with "a hauntingly fresh voice" from the sleepy village of Qolorha-by-Sea. With its location in Nongqawuse country, the village becomes the heart of redness of the title. Much against his original intention, he becomes embroiled in the battle between Believers and Unbelievers, as well as a triangular love affair with to women representative of the feuding parties.

6.3.2 Titular Redolence

The appearance of Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness (*2000) almost a century after Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is not only redolent of its precursor in a titular sense, but also in its contingent and contiguous themes. Contrary to Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), Mda's The *Heart of Redness* (2000) presents a counter-discourse to racist caricature of black South Africans dating back to the appearance of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness (1902*).

The title, The *Heart of Darkness* functions as a substitute for Africa, the Dark continent as it was scripted in the European imagination. It represents, or acts as, a substitute for the African wilderness and a place, which awaits the civilizing mission of the West. *The Heart of Darkness* also assumes metonymic dimensions, as it is the equivalent of backwardness and the absence of enlightenment.

In contrast, the South African seaside community of Qolorha, or generations of feuding factions have made the issue of redness central to their identity. The references to "redness" throughout the novel foregrounds the concept of coming to terms with traditional culture, motherland and an aura of glorification of the traditionalism as opposed to the racist nomenclatures of Joseph Conrad in his *Heart of Darkness.*

6.3. 3 Counter-Discourse to Racist Caricature

Set in the post-Apartheid period, *The Heart of Redness* continues the task of destabilizing the Empire through a revisionist reading of history via Magical Realism. Both the title of Mda's *The Heart of Redness* (2000) and the name of the protagonist, Camagu, suggest a complex interaction in the novel of past, present and intertext. Thus, the former with its allusions to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and the latter with its association with traditional belief and the history of the amaXhosa together provide the point of departure for the counter-discourse.

As tales about Africa, Mda's *The Heart of Redness* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* are located at the intersections of ethical discourses that were inseparable from the European colonizing project of the late nineteenth century. What links these two stories is the common theme of Imperialism that provides the backdrop for the exploration of subjectivity within the context of "contact zones" (Pratt 1992: 4), which are social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other in asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.

The resonances between *Heart of Darkness* and *The Heart of Redness* are more than coincidental. J.U. Jacobs (2002: 228) discerns an allusion to Conrad's text, which requires the reading of *The Heart of Redness* in the light of Conrad's treatment of European colonization of Africa. The intertextuality of Conrad and Mda's work is enriched by the motifs of redness and darkness, which heighten their themes of contiguity and contingency.

When it comes to critical reception, *The Heart of Darkness* (1902) has been considered not only as a literary classic, but also as a powerful indictment of the evils of Imperialism. It reflects the savage repressions carried out in the Congo by the Belgians in one of the largest acts of genocide committed up to that time during

which about ten million Congolese were massacred (viz. ***BBC World*** Documentary Broadcast on 16 September 2oo7). Conrad's narrator encounters at the end of the story a man named Kurtz, dying, insane, and guilty of unspeakable atrocities.

More recently, however, African critics like Chinua Achebe (1988) have pointed out that the story can be read as a racist or colonialist parable in which Africans are depicted as innately irrational and violent, and in which Africa itself is reduced to a metaphor for that which white Europeans fear within themselves. The people of Africa and the land they live in remain inscrutably alienated. The title, they argue, implies that Africa is the "heart of darkness." Both Kurtz and Marlow journey into what Conrad projects as the almost unexplored centre of Africa, and described by Marlow as the "blank spaces on the earth" (Conrad 1902:33).

The counter- discourse to Marlow's gaze is encountered as soon as Camagu approaches Qolorha-by-Sea. Camagu's environment is not dark and impenetrable, but a place painted by a "generous artist... using splashes of lush color. It is a canvas where blue and green dominate." (Mda *2000:61*). This view is perpetuated throughout the narrative as, with the help of a local girl, he explores the area.

The rocks on the historic valley of Nongqawuse are home to indigenous fauna and flora like partridges and guinea fowls, cerise bellflowers, orchids, cyads and usundu palms (Ibid: 118-119).Camagu's landscape is one that comes alive and his enthusiasm for what he considers the "most beautiful place on Earth" (Ibid: 69) is sustained by a feeling of nostalgia for the vague memories of youth and long-forgotten images of an idyllic place.

Camagu's link to the historical/ mythological past is construed in the novel in terms of his confrontation with the legend of Nongqawuse, the parallel historical narrative and the significance attached to the connotation of his name. "Take that rope off his neck and say Camagu" (Peires 1981:69) is how J.B. Pieres describes the rescue/redemption of the amaXhosa prophet-to-be Nxele around 1812, in his study of the amaXhosa, *The House of Phalo*. He deals with the cattle killing of the 1850s, *The Dead Will Arise* (1989), he also defines the word "Camagu" as the cry made by the crowd at a sacrifice when they heard the great bellow of the slaughtered beast as its windpipe was severed (*Ibid:* 105).

Thus both the meaning of the word and the two contexts in which it appears are relevant to the study of Camagu as a subject. In both the cases , the word "Camagu" is defined in virtually the same terms: as a means of address to ancestors or diviners, meaning "Amen and be satisfied, O great Ones!" (Peires 1989: Ibi*d*).

In making his choices, Camagu strips off the white mask of a Westernized African and regains a perceived sense of amaXhosa identity (Cf. Fanon 1967). Camagu's journey is in sharp contrast to those of both Marlow and Kurtz. Because Camagu's journey ultimately becomes one of discovery and enlightenment that counters the darkness of Conrad's canonical work.

Camagu's personal development in *The Heart of Redness* transforms him from disillusionment with the corruption and nepotism of the city to a sense of fulfillment in the rural and historically renowned setting of Qolorha-by-Sea. In this essentially teleological or purposeful process, Camagu abandons a sense of self that is specified by an imperialist discourse, and by extension in contemporary South Africa to embrace traditions and ecology of the land of his ancestors grounded in history.

Thus, Camagu defines himself against Xoliswa Ximiya's modernist vision that rejects all tradition as detrimental. He sees the ritual trance dance of the unbelievers not as primitive, but as an expression of graceful pain and beauty (Ibid: 99), girls playing topless an integral part of a culture that is not ashamed of bare breasts (Ibid: 172) and traditional costume not as representative of backwardness, but as a "beautiful artistic cultural heritage" (Ibid: 184).

However, the crucial distinction comes in Camagu's reaction to the appearance of a snake in his hotel room (Ibid: 112). Camagu recognizes the snake as Majola, the totem of his clan, the Mpondomise, and refuses to allow the domestic staff to kill it. Instead he is overjoyed at its appearance, as this is a sign of good-omen. His action earns him the respect of the local population, but in the eyes of Xoliswa Ximiya, it reduces him to a man who is reinforcing barbarism (Ibid: 172) instead of Westernization.

Thus, Camagu's transformation is defined in relation to the perceived inter-textual discourses that permeate the novel that Camagu becomes a subject embedded in history (op.cit: 109).

6.3.4. The Promised Land and Its Anomaly

In the post-Apartheid South Africa, literature is no longer confined to the representation of the politicized racial environment. It has started to look at new aspects of power distribution and social relations. Post-liberation writing has shifted from the representation of racial division to that of class difference, reflecting the new social fabric.

In fact, writers have become interested in class relationships rather than race since the black empowerment policy involving affirmative action began to help black people join the ranks of the white bourgeoisie, while the poor comprise both races even though blacks still outnumber the white in this group.

Those who live in the shadows of colonialism respond in two ways: they can either embrace their past, or rebel against it. *The Heart of Redness*, like many other works of post-colonial literature, considers this rift of opinion in the context of South Africa. Whilst Mda's deconstruction of Western colonialism is unambiguous owing to the writer's positioning in a post- Apartheid South Africa, his novel sardonically problematizes another brand of colonialism or internal colonization characterized by widespread corruption and nepotism.

Camagu is a Diasporic intellectual who returns to 'The Promised Land' following the end of Apartheid, after three decades in exile, working at an international development agency based in New York. Back home, he intends to serve his country with a revolutionary zeal and euphoria of the independence dream.

He was, however, rejected for over his qualification or unfamiliarity with contemporary South African scenario or the so -called affirmative action which favored the empowerment of the inexperienced at the cost of merit and expertise. As the plot unfolds, Camagu does not assume the role of a cultural hybrid in the sense of being a bridge- builder between cultural practices since he is embroiled in the debate between the Believers and Unbelievers in Qolorha.

Thus, similar to the Unbelievers of Qolorha, Camagu initially sees himself compelled to turn to Western culture for economic security. By the end of the novel, however, Camagu has redefined his own position with regard to South African and American/Western culture.

The protagonist Camagu is, thus, the narrative focus through which this neo-colonial conflict is dramatized. This process effectively brings about the realignment of Camagu's cultural identity and involves a movement away from a transnational hybridity to dehybridization (i.e. the rejection of or estrangement from cultural values or knowledge previously gained in the process of cultural hybridization). Camagu moves from neutrality to partiality for his locality.

Thus, in *The Heart of Redness*, the local is embraced as the refuge from the forces of economic globalization: in order to protect the local, it is necessary to erect a barrier between the local and the global. Camagu rejects the automatic assumptions that the ideas of modernity and progress, as represented by the casino and hotel complex envisaged by the ruling party, would contribute towards the prosperity and civilization of Qolorha-by-Sea. Instead, he sees a neo-colonial, corrupt exploitation of the countryside, which is yet another brand of nepotism widespread in Johannesburg.

In his interaction with Qukezwa, he develops an appreciation of the value of tradition and Nature. However, it is in his dialogue and dissent with Dalton that Camagu creates his syncretic perspective of a cooperative-based ecological development for the community.

In *The Heart of Redness*, Camagu is the initiator of projects and the articulator of ideas, which bring the villagers to an awareness of their situation and a readiness to initiate change. On the strength of his persuasion and on the basis of his scrupulousness, Camagu supports Dalton and the believers in their fight against the casino and luxury hotel project, in favor of an ecological tourism based on cooperative enterprises, such as a backpackers' hostel, the provision of a local cuisine and the designation of the area as a 'National Heritage Site' in memory of Nongqawuse (Ibid: 274 - 275).

In fact, the value system of *The Heart of Redness* is rather different from the theoretical considerations of hybridity. Camagu, the hybrid intellectual (and thus precisely the kind of figure advocated by Bhabha) is against cultural hybridity on the realities of Qolorha or the encroachment of business centers on the natural environment.

6.3.5. Representation of the Heroines

Empowerment of the people of the village, in particular the women, is a cornerstone of Camagu's business philosophy and constitutes his contribution to his position as subject. It is also the aspect of his thinking that goads him into conflict with Dalton whose White skin/Black masks (Cf. Fanon 1967) disguises the paternalistic mentality.

The two female characters play a crucial role in the novel's unfolding exploration of cultural confrontations and interaction. In the two suitors plot, the protagonist's own developmental trajectory is influenced and structured by the choice made between two possible suitors, each of whom represent different and conflicting value schemes and moral attitudes.

The variant used in Mda's novel, which should, in this reversed gender context, perhaps be designated the "two brides convention", involves Camagu's choice between two women from the village of Qolorha who offer themselves to become his betrothed. The physical appearance, personality, and value schemes of the two women Xoliswa Ximiya and Qukezwa Zim are strikingly polarized. This polarity is strengthened by the fact that they are the respective daughters of the leaders of the Unbelievers (those in favor of economic progress) and Believers (those against it) respectively.

Xoliswa Ximiya, the school principal and unmarried daughter of Bhonco, a descendant of Twin-Twin the Unbeliever, supposedly represents the modern Xhosa woman who has renounced the tradition of redness. Criticizing the wearing of the traditional dress, the *isikhakha*, by cabinet ministers at the opening of parliament, she declares: "It does not matter if the president's wife herself wore isikhakha.... It is part of our history of redness. It is a backward movement. All this nonsense about bringing back African traditions! We are civilized people. We have no time for beads and long pipes!" (Mda op.cit: 184).

Xoliswa, who supports the idea of material progress, is in favor of constructing a casino at Qolorha-by-Sea. Hence, she is opposed to the former exile, Camagu, whom she once fancied as her lover but who has fallen for the charms of the strange Qukezwa, the alter ego of the prophetess Nongqawuse. Xoliswa Ximiya is more

fascinated by the fact that the stranger [Camagu] was on his way to the United States of America. She informs him that he will be happy in that wonderful country. She "[...] you have seen how backward this place is. We cannot stop civilization just because some sentimental old fools want to preserve birds and trees and an outmoded way of life." (Ibid: 67)

Her role is confirmed as Xoliswa Ximiya abandons her home village to join the elites of the new South Africa. As her name suggests, Xoliswa has become pacified, not in the sense of her personality, but as someone who has embraced Western/European concepts and values-or as her father, Bhonco, puts it as one who "is prepared to die for civilization" (Ibid: 259).

Qukezwa, by contrast, has a completely different non-Western form of attractiveness. When she smiles at him and impishly says, "I am not married", Camagu takes a close look at her, his eyes betraying his shock. Although she is not particularly beautiful, she is quite attractive (*Ibid*: 56). Whilst Camagu is not immediately impressed by Qukezwa's appearance, he has been seduced by her rebelliously free, colorful and creative spirit by the end of the novel. After all, "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder." She is in touch with her environment and introduces him to the natural world of Qolorha. In his fascination with Qukezwa, Camagu experiences her as a colorful, natural, and erotic force:

> Qukezwa sings in such beautiful colors. Soft colors like the ochre of yellow gullies. Reassuring colors of the earth. Red. Hot colors like blazing fire. Deep blue. Deep green. Colors of the valleys and the ocean. Cool colors like the rain of summer sliding down a pair of naked bodies. (Ibid: 233).

Overpowered by her irresistible charm and rustic simplicity, he shouts breathlessly." I love you, Qukezwa! I love you!" to which she responds "You know nothing about love, learned man!" she shouts back. "Go back to school and learn more about it!" (*Ibid*: 22). Camagu's passion for the two women thus plots his own cultural development in the novel

He establishes a cerebral connection with Xoliswa due to their shared knowledge of Western culture, but ultimately becomes a captive of his fascination for Qukezwa, so that at one point he wishes, in vain, that he could find "respite" "in Xoliswa Ximiya's icy beauty" (Ibid: 152). In the description of the two women's relative

attractions, not only Camagu but also the reader is destined to find Qukezwa to be the much more attractive option

The colorful and poetic prose used to describe her and her deep connection to the natural environment of Qolorha seduces the reader, just as her attractions work on Camagu himself. In such polarization of values, technology, education the values of Western civilization count for little, while Nature, local color and independence of spirit count for much. In fact, Qukezwa taunts Camagu for his formal education and suggests that he still has a different and more important kind of lesson to learn so that Camagu decides in favor of the natural and the local but against the lure of the economic attractions of Western 'advancement.'

In general, in Zakes Mda's post-Apartheid novel, increasingly important roles have been assigned to female characters. This is done against the background of a new trend in South African fiction where previously disadvantaged and silenced groups, especially women, have begun to articulate their problems and to assert themselves.

The new trend may perhaps be an outcome of the influence of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where victims of discrimination could reveal their innermost feelings. Mda increasingly empowers his female characters to assert themselves and voice their plight. Beyond empowering female characters, *The Heart of Redness* reveals features relevant to social and political transition in South Africa.

6.3 6 Elements of Magical Realism

Ashcroft, et al. (1998: 133) maintain that Magical Realism is used "to interrogate the assumptions of Western, rational, linear narrative and to enclose it within an indigenous metatext-a body of textual forms that recuperate the pre-colonial culture". Magical Realism plays an important role in the novel. Two important examples are the "scars" that appear in times of crisis on the bodies of the Unbelievers. At the end of the novel, disappointed that Camagu has opted for redness, Qoliswa decides to leave Qolorha, which metonymically represents the heart of redness for her.

No sooner has she decided to renounce all signs of backwardness and superstition than she wakes up one morning to find that the scars of her ancestors' flagellation have become her flagellation: "The Unbelievers were shocked to hear of the scars

on their daughter's civilized body. They thought that the scars had come to an end, as Bhonco did not have a male heir to inherit them" (Ibid: 302).

There are also near fantastic incidents like the "virgin birth" of Qukezwa's son though they are grounded in the temporal world. Moreover, polar opposites are employed as a means of identifying important conflicts, ironies, and themes and amplify them Mda juxtaposes urban and rural" civilization" vs. development and preservation, "Redness" vs. "Darkness" past and present modern and traditional black and white, Africa and the West old and young, men and women.

Apart from these, there are interesting parallels between David Lurie of *Disgrace (1999)* and both John Dalton and Camagu of *The Heart of Redness* (2000) regarding the roles of insiders and outsiders. Thus, Camagu and John Dalton represent "outsiders" in the novel (although both are, in some sense, "insiders"). Although Camagu is a black South African, his family left the ancestral village for good many years ago. His urban upbringing and exile in the U.S. have left him "a stranger in his own country" (Ibid: 29) and an outsider to the village of Qolorha.

John Dalton, whose ancestor of the same name participated in the infamous beheading of the patriarch of both lines of descent in the village, is set apart by his British ancestry. Dalton, however, has lived his entire life in Qolorha, speaks excellent Xhosa, and Participated in the rites of initiation and circumcision with those of his generation in the village. Other elements of Magical Realism like ambiguity, cyclical repetition of history in the context of South African politics, quasi –terrorism and folkloric details are apparently pervasive in this novel.

In general, the post-Apartheid novel reveals an incongruent dynamics that there seems to be no full-fledged national theme with which the emergent writers are obsessed but multifarious problems like AIDS pandemic, poverty, crime, gender roles, the ecological imperative, xenophobia, unemployment and elitist anarchism.

This polarity of views must have stemmed from the incongruence of their attitude towards racial, problems, globalization and the pros and cons of cultural hybridity and the corresponding dehybridization venture. More importantly, this thematic diversity could be attributed to the diverse nature of reality itself beyond regional or national implications as well as the ever growing impact of globalization.

Chapter Seven: Thematic and Stylistic Intertextuality

In the foregoing three chapters, an attempt has been made to investigate the thematic and stylistic peculiarities of East, West and Southern African post-colonial novels. Such an approach is intended to unravel the respective regional image as reflected in the contemporary novels published (ca.1970 and 2000), and thereby to determine their cross -fertilizations.

To that effect, I would venture to demonstrate the thematic and stylistic trajectories that traverse nations and regions across mainstream Anglophone Africa against the comparative model of post-colonial theory.

7.1 Paratextual Iconoclasm

The post-colonial African novelists appear to be radical iconoclasts rather than zealous upholders of their national/-regional image. If we start off with paratextual features like titles and frontispieces, almost all of them appear to be embodiments of the writers' philosophical pessimism or disenchantment with the post-independence socio-economic and political anomaly.

7.1.1 Significance of the Titles

Thus, the title novels like *Kill Me Quick, Sweet and Sour Milk, Abyssinian Chronicles, The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, and *Disgrace are* self-explanatory reflections of the socio-political anomaly which has been plaguing Sub-Saharan Africa ever since the nominal independence from the yoke of British colonialism.

To be more specific, K*ill Me Quick* evokes an atmosphere of black despair and the characters' preference of death over survival while *Sweet and Sour Milk* could be well styled as a structure of post-independence ambiguities. *Kill Me Quick* is a distracting and befuddling beverage for people who otherwise would have been fomenting trouble for the government. That is perhaps why the neo-colonial rulers are very tolerant of the production, sale and consumption of local illicit gins.

Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979) draws parallels between the colonial practices and authoritarian regimes in post-colonial Somalia. The juxtaposition of *Sweet* and *Sour* in the title of novel implies the paradoxical nature of Africa's hard won

liberation, which has backfired upon the ideals of freedom. Thus, the mother figure symbolizes Somalia whose children are starved of independence nourishment. When we consider Chapter Eight of Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979) expressions like ' language foreign to him,' 'milk-less breasts,' strange breasts' found to be the reflections of the denial of expectations to which the child is unnaturally doomed .The child's pleasure reverberates with ' milky breasts' and his mother's embrace and rock.

Denial of such a filial attachment would result in a desperate mood on the part of the child. This is equally applicable to Soyaan's upbringing as well as the entire Somalian community which has suffered a similar denial of fulfillment of expectations and nourishment after independence.

Similarly, *Abyss-inian Chronicles and The Beautyful Ones Are not yet Born* mourn the premature death of the post-independence euphoria much against the expectations of Ugandans and Ghanaians respectively. The title of Isegawa's novel suggests an ambitious attempt to capture the pathos of the entire country that "Uganda was a land of false bottoms where under every abyss there was another one waiting to ensnare people" (Isegawa 2000: 465).

Thus, the national image of Uganda is so riven with bitter personal, social, tribal and regional rivalry so cursed with beatings, betrayals, abandonment's, off hand criminality, craziness, and untrammeled nastiness. The word, thus, encapsulates the desperate situation in Uganda and hits upon "Abyss" and then expands to '*Abyssinia'*. Armah's *The Beautyful Ones*... is far bleaker than its Somali and Ugandan counterparts in terms of the whole range of the post-independence national aberration.

Disgrace from PASA. is said to be a reflection of maladjustment problems during the transition from White minority rule to Black minority rule in the last decade. As capstone, the title of the novel powerfully extracts the essence of the two disgraceful experiences to which Lurie and Lucy are subjected. David Lurie has been left with neither romance nor vocational recourse as he was sacked from his position while his daughter is bestially gang-raped.

By implication, the advent of ANC and the corresponding downfall of the Apartheid system are believed to be no less disgraceful from the point of view of the white minority.

The Heart of Redness, an allusion to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, represents a reversal of the colonial perspective by embracing traditional Africa. Red, which is the color of controversy in Zakes Mda's inventive novel, symbolizes the traditional African soil or the roots of identity in the context of displacement and cultural relocation as experienced by Camagu who has just returned home with the rising expectation of national reconstruction.

As an exception to the rule, however, the titles of novels like *Anthills, Bones and The Heart of Redness* are sparkled with a glitter of hope irrespective of the underlying sense of frustration. Thus, an anthill is an allusion to the resilience or endurance of ants that are always engaged in the antediluvian reconstruction of their habitation devastated by torrential wind while bones symbolize selfless sacrifice for freedom during the armed struggle against British colonialism. *The Heart of Redness* heralds the resurgence of a renewed nationalistic spirit and the drive for readjustment with one's traditional roots without prejudice to cultural hybridity.

7. 1. 2 Graphic Cover Designs

In addition to their metaphorical captions, the novelists underpin their iconoclastic overtones with symbolic cover designs. For instance, on the front cover of the first edition of Mawngi's *Kill Me Quick (1973)*, we observe the two protagonists, Meja and Maina, along with the other members of "the Razors" heading to a prison cell or a court of law bound hand-and feet under the 'custody' of the police. This is intended to foreshadow the prevalence of juvenile delinquency in post-colonial Kenya, which springs from a misguided political ideology and economic policy consequent upon unemployment, criminality and rural-urban poverty leading to an underworld life.

Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979) also features a blindfolded protagonist as a reflection of the pervasive military crackdown and harassment in contemporary Somalia. Ironically enough, it could be considered as the 'culmination of the Somali nation-building endeavor under the banner of an abstract freedom'.

Similarly, the skeletons and the naked child on the front cover of Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000) symbolize the trials and the tribulations of Muzegi and his generation during the civil war among the despotic rivals. This national aberration has been augmented with a scar or an open wound on the palm of the portrait.

On the other end of the region, we come across Ghanaian and Nigerian novels. *The Beautyful ones Are Not Yet Born* (1970) bears a solitary flower, which once again symbolizes the betrayal of Ghana by her own children, much against the rising expectations of the populace.

The graphological deviation which mixes up upper and lower cases in the title of the same novel, coupled with the deliberate misspelling of the word *Beautyful* provides a metaphorical matrix for a genuine body-politic which proved to be as intangible as a mirage. By implication, it is identical with the blighted flower on the front cover of Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977), which can hardly bear a fruit as luxuriantly as the healthier ones.

This imagery suggests the distortion of things from the normal and natural to the abnormal, and the subsequent introduction of chaos and destruction where beauty and order should have prevailed. Horticulturalists tell us that once a flowering plant is attacked by a pest, it is bound to enter the phase of evolutionary death. By analogy, Kenya and other post-colonial African nations are doomed to the same fate if the wicked joint venture of foreign investors and local parasites continues unabated.

The abnormal life cycle of a certain species of amphibians, which culminated in a premature death, alludes to the denial of expectations:

> The picture Aboliga the Frog showed us was of the man-child in its gray old age, completely old in everything save the smallness of its size, a thing that deepened the element of the grotesque. The man-child looked more irretrievably old, far more thoroughly decayed, than any ordinary old man could ever have looked. But of course, it, too, had a nature of its own, so that only those who have found some solid ground they can call the natural will feel free to call it unnatural. And where is my solid ground nowadays? Let us just say that the cycle from birth to decay has been short, short brief. But otherwise not at all unusual. (Armah op.cit:63).

The worst manifestation of such an unnatural degeneration is attributable to the pervasive corruption and kleptocracy at the expense of mass impoverishment under Nkrumah's Convention Peoples' Party. Moreover, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah (1987)* from post-colonial Nigeria features barren savannah grassland populated with bare trees and mounting anthills overshadowed by daybreak over the horizon suggestive of ultimate hope or vision on condition that the power-mongering dictatorships come to their senses, and all responsible citizens discharge their duties and responsibilities with a strong sense of commitment.

When we consider Southern African novels, they are found to be the mirrors of their respective national histories. In the case of Hove's *Bones (1988)* for instance, the skeletal bones symbolize the trauma of liberation struggle and civil war. Especially, bones, for which scavengers and vultures are craving, are on the one hand, reflections of patriotic sacrifice and the cost paid in blood for national independence. It also bears the portrait of the heroine, Marita, who meets with her tragic end in the course of searching her only son who had been deployed to the war front.

By the same token, the two South African novels reflect the transitional uncertainties of the post-Apartheid era. In *Disgrace (1999),* we witness an African hound or sniffer dog crouching to pounce upon his prey. Viewed in the context of the modern history of South Africa, dogs in this novel take on a deeper symbolic meaning as South Africa has a long history of breeding serious guard dogs, which were used throughout the Apartheid years to control, assassinate and dehumanize black and colored people in the townships of violence.

In post-Apartheid South Africa, guard dogs are still used for protection by the White race who feel threatened, in both the cities and the countryside. In another guise, dogs symbolize dehumanization with reference to the South African citizens deprived of their rights to legal protection like Lurie and his daughter under the new leadership. The other contemporaneous novel, *The Heart of Redness* bears, most probably, the portrait of the heroine –Qukezwa- who is the champion of traditionalism or the prophetess named Nongqawuse who is said to be the spiritual incarnation of ancestors. Traditionally, when red ochre is rubbed on the body , it is believed to signify a respect for traditional values among the Xhosa people.

Thus, most of the title -pages and their cover designs invariably mirror thwarted hopes but with a conditional sense of optimism. Bearing in view the significance of the titles and cover illustrations, the thematic parallels which crosscurrent the selected novels would be explored in the subsection below.

7.2 Post -Colonial Disillusionment

The post-independence generation of writers often constitutes a violent indictment of the political depravity that has become the norm across Anglophone Africa. This indictment, which sometimes takes the form of bitter satire, is all the more striking in view of the fact that the number of writers who choose to deal with the themes of corruption, nepotism and the ineptitude of African demagogues in power seems to increase by the day. In the next subsection, an attempt has been made to explore the magnitude of the post independence disillusion across East, West and Southern Africa with reference to the representative novels selected.

7. 2.1 The Race-Class Metamorphosis

One of the strands of disillusionment is the impact of a misguided economic policy evolved by the post-colonial regimes, which has resulted in the emergence of social class stratification, mass impoverishment and the attendant social alienation. Edward Said (1993:19) asserts that "domination and inequities of power and wealth are post-colonial facts of human society."

To begin with the East African chronicles, Mwangi gives a scathing indictment of the failure of the black elite to provide opportunities for the youth who are otherwise forced to join the ranks of gangsters, criminals and delinquents subjected to state-sponsored terror and police harassment. The issues of disillusionment and pain, which are found in Mwangi's previous novels, are once again revisited in their contemporary fullness in *Kill Me Quick (1973).*

Its thematic focus foregrounds the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class, betrayal of public confidence by the administrative bureaucracy, a highly decadent and socially stratified society that breeds and nurtures exploitation and oppression of the underprivileged. For instance, the chief characters experience an avalanche of failures and a wide range of exploitation, like chopping of wood for housewives in the suburbs, collection and sale of scrap metals, and serfdom on a white settler's farm.

This is the painful experience of man in neo-colonial African societies. Meja is haunted and hunted by nostalgia for his family, which expects his financial support as soon as he secures employment.

To that effect, he even offers to wok under the worst conditions for the least payment, fooled into believing that this would be an improvement over living on decayed left- overs and mercy of the vagaries of weather. Worse still, the farm manager frames both Meja and Maina up in a stage-managed theft case to aggravate the situation thus making them scapegoats.

The novel sums up Mwangi's concern for the prevalent social anomalies in neo-colonial Kenya, and it is a graphic demonstration of Mwangi's sympathy for the underprivileged members of his society. According to Onimode (1988:2), the characters in the novel constitute the class of people that groans under "food crisis, deplorable mass poverty, decimating diseases and pervasive illiteracy" by implication.

On the whole, the Post-colonial Kenyan novel is obsessed with the by-products of the independence dream like juvenile delinquency, poverty, uneven distribution of the national wealth, the underworld life of the downtrodden, state- sponsored terror against its own subjects, the marginalization of the women folk and the joint plunder of natural resources.

It features the far-reaching effects of mechanization such as the forcible dislocation of the peasantry from its means of production and the Spartan strength or endurance of the masses. It also evokes an oscillatory atmosphere swinging from Mwangi's pessimism *–kill me quick!* to Ngugi's optimism-*La Luta Continua*!

Similarly, Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk (1979)* is also no less critical of the post-colonial political status quo of the military junta. General Barre, who ousted the civilian government in 1969 through a military coup, held power for two decades and plunged the poor nation into an irrecoverable socio-economic chaos.

The Somali people were equally disillusioned with his tyranny and atrocity in spite of his nationalistic rhetoric of 'Greater Somalia' aimed at territorial expansion. Even worse, the social fabric of the country has been virtually wrecked by recurrent drought, cross-border conflicts and clannish civil wars.

Farah recapitulates his characteristic disillusionment with the dictatorial government of Somalia in as follows:

> Africa: a textbook reproduction of European values and western thinking. ...We see Africa 'taken back' to an era she had lived through before, the era of European dictatorship, concentration camps. Africa is again a torture chamber. Africa is humiliation. 'Africa,' Soyaan used to say, 'embarrasses me.' What has become of the elite who recreated these false hopes in the hearts of the African masses? (Farah 1979:124.)

Nuruddin Farah's novel unravels the stifling conditions of political oppression and tyranny that many post-colonial African countries like Somalia have gone through or are still experiencing. All the more, Farah's fundamental concern appears to be the position of Africa (and of Somalia in particular) in relation to colonial and neo-colonial powers. Somalia, indeed, provides a good case study for European interference in African development – first as an Italian colony, later a Soviet Russian satellite and an ally of Western democracy up until the downfall of Barre.

Turning over to Uganda, we find it to be no less than the replica of Somali socio-political malaise. As stated in the introductory section of this chapter, A*byssinian Chronicles (2000)* is a typical mirror of the post-colonial body politic. Isegawa's work suggests a passionate immersion in his country's history of military coups and dictatorships.

It is a snapshot of a tiny corner of Africa and its chequered history including the legacy of colonial powers who had scrambled for Africa among themselves at the Berlin Conference (1884-5) without even stepping foot on the continent. It is a matter of common knowledge that the implants of colonialism, religious sycophancy, power struggle, capitalism, militarism and international financial aid have distorted Uganda's authenticity and rendered it into the realm of baleful existence.

Apparently, Africa has always been stigmatized with civil war, dislocation, political instability, and bloody power struggle as reflected in *Chronicles*. The bloody conflict between Obote and Idi Amin has, thus, drained the scanty national resources besides thousands of human lives it has claimed for the selfish ends of armed political organizations under the cover of national salvation.

In effect, the social revolutions proved to be illusory as observed by the narrator of *Abyssinian Chronicles:*

> Three thousand and ten days of oppression, murder, mysterious disappearances, kidnappings and torture –chamber excesses had to erupt from the dungeons of memory into the sunlit streets. Euphoria, like every other drug, had worn off, and withdrawal symptoms like ravenous hunger and vengeance made people look around for scapegoats. (op.cit: 306).

The disaster of Uganda is attributed to a decade old political instability spearheaded by Idi Amin. Some of the thematic obsessions of Moses Isegawa include the suffering of children', satire against post- independence anomaly, the challenges of education, underdevelopment, exile, xenophobic expulsion of East Indians, power struggle state-sponsored crackdown, economic and material dependency on international monetary organizations, militarism, religious/catholic hypocrisy, and the predicament of renascent Africa baffled with how to come to terms with its freedom and nation-building. The national image of Uganda is well styled as an *Abyss* or' a bottomless perdition' to borrow a Miltonic phrase.

In West Africa, Ghanaian and Nigerian novelists appear to be even more embittered with the malpractices of the post-colonial demagogues. Ghana, as the first sub-Saharan African country to regain independence (1957), had kindled the imagination of the entire continent that democracy and social justice would prevail, and that Africa would be for the Africans. The era of the African personality, envisaged by Kwame Nkrumah and other nationalist leaders, had come to a standstill to the dismay of the populace.

Thus, consumerism and greed supplanted the promise of liberation that instant creation of billionaires on the backs of million of the poor, became incredibly enough, the order of the day. In effect, the dockers and the coolies like Joseph Koomson have become up-shoots of the materialistic and the degenerate era of post-colonialism.

Thus, Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* has been read as a stinging rebuke of post-independence African politics. The overall effect of the novel is to fix a sense of a whole nation laboring under a corrosive malaise which distilled its despair.

Another West African country plagued with a similar socio-political anomy is Nigeria. *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) portrays modern, independent, post-colonial (neo-colonial in this case), urban Africa. The novel dramatizes political struggles among Africans; reflects the continuing British and Western economic and cultural influences; and ends with the overthrow of the government (i.e. another coup).The novel arises out of the same cultural matrix as that of Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1970) and Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966).

Although the mythical country of Kangan had shed its colonial bonds, the influence of its former British oppressors still remained. A government dominated by totalitarian leaders who are as oppressive as the white colonists quickly filled the political gap created by the departure of the white man. The premature death of the independence euphoria is once again foreshadowed as follows:

> The sweeping, majestic vision of people rising victorious like a tidal wave against their oppressors and transforming their world with theories and slogans into a new heaven and a new earth of brotherhood, justice, and freedom are at best grand illusions. The rising, conquering tide, yes; but the millennium afterwards, no! New oppressors will have been readying themselves secretly in the undertow long before the tidal wave got really going. (Achebe 1987:99).

Achebe portrays rather a complex and layered political situation involving an authoritarian, military regime of the "Big Man," the culture and society which typically surround such a government, the political corruption, social and economic classes, gender distinctions and relationships. Besides, he features European cultural values among the elite, the gap between the political and intellectual elite on the one hand, and the masses on the other.

Crossing over to the Southern Africa, we come across Zimbabwean and Post-Apartheid South African novels such as *Bones, Disgrace* and *The Heart of Redness*. *Bones* is a narrative of resistance deeply embedded in the history of Zimbabwe. Historically, Zimbabwe was occupied in 1890 by British settlers and eventually came under white domination. Independence was finally won in 1980 after almost fifteen years of guerrilla fighting. No doubt Hove's crystallization of a political perception that the people of Zimbabwe are paradoxically the ultimate losers in Zimbabwe's unfolding contemporary history.

This disillusionment has some glaring historical antecedents like the experience of Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Somalia and Nigeria. Though some gullible groups think that the era of Apartheid is over; the theme of disillusionment is still evident in Mda's novel *The Heart of Redness*.

At the outset of the novel, Camagu is represented as an outsider in South African society. He has returned home to seek employment and in the hope to become part of the new South Africa, but was rejected for over his qualification (Mda 2000:29). At the beginning of the novel, it seemed that the "best option for him would be to go back into exile" (Ibid: 31) and seek the high-level job commensurate with his Western profile as he is estranged from South African political culture.

As stated in the novel, "He never learnt the freedom dance," because "while it became fashionable at political rallies, he was pursuing a Doctoral degree and working for the Communications Department of an international development agency in New York (Ibid). "Disillusioned with the corruption and nepotism in the city, Camagu had come to Qolorha in search of a dream'. (Ibid: 198).

Mda observes that '…the fruits of liberation are enjoyed only by those from exile or from Robben Island. Yet, we were the ones who bore the brunt of the bullets. We threw stones and danced the freedom dance." (Ibid: 34). This observation resonates with the popular adage that 'It is the soldier who fights but the fame goes to the general.'

A comparison of this novel with J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace* reveals that both of them are set in the rural area of the Eastern Cape, not far from Graham's Town, in post-Apartheid South Africa. Coetzee's novel focuses on the changing power relationships between whites and blacks in the new South Africa and we see events almost entirely through the eyes of two white characters (David and Lucy) as they struggle to come to terms with the legacy of Apartheid.

Disgrace could be considered as an expression of Post-Apartheid resistance .The disillusionment of Lurie appears to be associated with the futility of revolution or reformation in that the substitution of white racism with black anarchism has not solved the age-old problem of xenophobia.

7.2.2 Militarism and Abuse of Power

The other endemic national cancer of Black Africa is the senseless militarism and abuse of power, which perpetuates tyranny and political instability across the board. Civilian governments, which took up the reign of power, are toppled by the military junta much against the rising expectation of the populace. In effect, such military coups ensue civil war and bloodshed tearing apart the fragile economy in addition to the destruction of human life and the scanty material resources. Such ascension of armed forces to post-independence African politics by the barrel of a gun is one of the searing ironies of modern African history.

In the mid 1960s, many people in the post- independent African countries, were faced with the corruption and indiscipline of the first generation of civilian governments, were actually pleased to see the soldiers invade the political arena and chase the corrupt politicians out of the palace. Their expectation was that the soldiers, being non-partisan and patriotic and apolitical (in the tradition of their European mentors, would perform a short surgical operation, restore democratic institutions that were dismantled by the civilian politicians, and then move back into their barracks.

Ironically, however, the military governments proved to be more dictatorial and power-mongering demagogues, thus bleeding the old wounds rather than redressing them contrary to the so-called constitutional provisions. This reality is well recreated in post-colonial Ghanaian, Somalian, Ugandan, and Nigerian novels.

To begin with, East African chronicles, *Sweet and Sour Milk* and *Abyssinian Chronicles* attack such malpractices. Set in a tribal village during the years of Idi Amin's terror in Uganda, *Abyssinian Chronicles* immerses us into the mesmerizing extremes of beauty and brutality, wisdom and ignorance, wealth and poverty, hope and despair that characterize the continent. What lies in the heart of the novel is the impact of the vicious power struggle between Milton Obote and Idi Amin (1971-1979) consequent upon socio-economic and political crises of Uganda aggravated by the interference Britain, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Tanzania.

In the case of Somalia, everything being the same, underground terrorism and harassment is another mechanism of silencing the dissident groups with excessive force as reflected in *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979). The opposition group and their

regulars are purged from the struggle by imprisonment, exile, harassment or death. They are determined to suffer the consequence or die for the national cause – though none of them seem to have evolved a viable strategy of achieving their immediate objective. The General in *Sweet and Sour Milk* came to power through a military coup and was ousted from power in the same disgraceful manner.

Such sporadic military coups also characterize West African countries like, Ghana and Nigeria that their history seemed to be synonymous with militarism. *The Beautyful Ones* spans across three brief periods in the history of Post-colonial Ghana. These are the eve of Independence, followed by Nkrumah's civilian government and then by the military junta-all of which are characterized by widespread corruption, aggrandizement of material wealth and, betrayal of the masses.

In *Anthills of the Savannah,* the consequences of the abuse of power are handled radically. The novel represents a conflagration as savannah grassland in which case all the grass has been burned and trees scorched that only the anthills remain to bear witness to the antediluvian story. Achebe explores the question of power and its exercise of the different contestants for power-the soldier, the poet and the publicist-and proposes a populist coalition among them.

Political ambition and power-mongering are, perhaps, antithetical to morality that dictators like Sam destroy their friendship and loyalty in order to consolidate their power over their people. The deaths of Chris and Ikem, new leaders of the people, suggest the immaturity of the democratic tradition while the murder of Sam suggests that the people do not endorse the British style of totalitarian rule. The three murders reflect the political chaos of backward Kangan.

What is ironic about it is the fact that the demand for social reformation was paralyzed when each successive regime proved to be a bunch of architects that overthrew the previous regime. It is a system driven by sheer might and strength as opposed to justice, wisdom, or respect for the laws of the land.

The novel also portrays a strong and enduring sense of community among the people, despite the fact that they have no political rights. Achebe contends that this psychic unity is the only spiritual force that keeps the community ever integrated, its

heritage and culture intact even when it is ravaged by unjust political regimes. In its depiction of Sam, *Anthills of the Savannah* provides a perfect example of Francis Bacon's adage: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Another by-product of political instability and military-take-overs is civil war, which has become the hallmark of Africa and the matrix of post-colonial African novel. For instance, in Zimbabwe and Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and the civil disobedience in South Africa, war was telescoped into independence so that post-war and post-independence are coterminous. War in Nigeria came well after independence and marked off a new influence so that the term post-civil war can be used to mark a period in Nigerian literary history.

The Post-colonial African novels, whether they are set in civilian or military governances reveal that power is used as a means to an end. Thus, it is a means of consolidating power and protecting influential positions from other contestants for power.

Moreover, it is a means of amassing fortunes, shielding the hoard against the envious and prying eyes and hands of 'ill-disposed' opponents, of forging access to property in the midst of pervasive poverty, of establishing oases of wealth and opulence in a desert of squalor and destitution, of making accessible consumer durables and exotic foods in countries where the masses cannot afford three square meals. In sum, each of the novels raises the social class stratification, the ravages of civil war, inequity of wealth and power under the post independence governments.

It then follows that the "disillusionment' novels are rich and complex in their depiction of reality. Their imaginative reproduction of contemporary life outrages the reader, as they are literatures of vision and testimony. Almost all post-colonial novelists are invariably obsessed with the grave consequences of such post-colonial issues as internal colonization, tyranny, oppression, and an overwhelming disparity between the rich and the poor, the impact of dependency on foreign aid and capital, abuse of power and the concomitant maneuvers of the neocolonial masters.

It seems that the post-colonial novelists within Africa and in the Diaspora have shifted from critique to mass mobilization ever since the 1970s. In the light of their works, we observe that there is no difference at all among the civilian government

of Nkrumah, the new leadership of Post-Apartheid South Africa and Zimbabwe on the one hand, and the military juntas like Sam in *Anthills of the Savannah,* Idi Amin in *Abyssinian Chronicles and* the General in *Sweet and Sour Milk,* on the other.

In summary, political independence in East, West and Southern African countries enjoyed only a brief period of celebration. The targets of protest changed from the colonial invader to the inheritors of their power. Even in countries where independence was achieved with comparative ease and without bloodshed, a similar literature of protest against the abuse of political power by corrupt political systems is conspicuous.

7.3. Bridging the River Between

On the basis of the influence of Western education on the psychology of its African recipients, the African intellectuals could be divided into two categories: the psycho-passive intellectuals and the psychoactive intellectuals. The psycho-passive intellectual predominantly relies on himself, his thoughts, ideas, and decisions, sense of well-being, and humor, all of which are manifestations of self-centeredness. If he thinks that there is a need for development and progress, he will limit these to himself and moves only in the direction to which his personality leads him.

On the contrary, the psychoactive ones are 'marginally ethnic elites who are concerned about the city, the people and progress as they affect the whole heterogeneous population. Between the two extremes, the rise of parochial intellectuals with a provincial range of vision bent indoctrinating ethnocentrism rather than broad-based nationalism has become fashionable.

It is a politically motivated legacy of colonialism as reflected in some African novels featuring internal strife between regions, lowlanders and highlanders culminating in ethnic strife or balkanization of a single country as a result of political gambling.

In the next subsection, an attempt would be made to examine the position of African intellectuals on the nation building agenda as reflected in the selected novels.

7.3.1 Ordeals of the Intellectual

To begin with Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick*, there is as such no intellectual figure in the strict sense of the term but school leavers like Maina and Meja alongside members of the Razor gang who are presumably school dropouts. They are portrayed as passive victims of the misguided economic policy of the post-colonial governance unlike Karega and the lawyer in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* who are involved in the strike against the irresponsibility of the leadership when drought struck Illmorog.

Similarly, one of the major characteristics of Farah's novels is the fact that his 'Characters' are not engaged in an actual combat with the regime against which they are plotting. They are rather emotionally charged to provide solution with minimal practicality. But in the place of the General's rigid ideological certainties, Farah offers open-ended and ambiguous truths.

There are no political panaceas on platform. His characters are simply forced to make imperfect moral choices: Loyaan, in *Sweet and Sour Milk*, who battles for the soul of his poisoned twin, Soyaan, who has been elevated posthumously to be a " Hero of the Revolution" to wipe the traces of his dissent for political reasons.

Soyaan is represented as a political activist (perhaps the ring leader of the underground movement who sacrifices his life for the good of his country). Farah seems to contend that there would be no national salvation without sacrifice, an argument which sounds quite reasonable in the context of contemporary African politics whereas the proverb has it "Might is Right."

Although Loyaan is so befuddled with events surrounding the mysterious death of his twin brother, he is unable to map out any course of action other than defending his brother's name against the encroachments of state propaganda which claims Soyaan's martyrdom to it own advantage. Even Dr. Ahmed Wellie, who is in charge of the prisoner's medical care, whispers the inhuman treatment of the suspects, the activists, and other people who are languishing under the so-called custody. Dr. Ahmed's position seems to have been torn apart between loyalty and potential treason.

Farah seems to be pleading for a native settlement of native problems and a native development within a native-inspired framework. While he is critical of governmental dependence upon the economic aid and ideological format of foreign powers, his criticism of the opposition's strategic weakness is also evident as the execution of the activists is enacted before the fruition of their struggle.

The intellectual-figure of *Abyssinian Chronicles* is a thoughtful protagonist by the name Mugezi. In a leisurely and roundabout fashion, Mugezi tells the story of his life, from a miserable rural childhood through adolescence in Kampala, a stint at a ghastly Catholic Seminary, military service, university and a string of odd jobs and affairs, before winding up with his emigration to Holland in the late 1980s. The protagonist of Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* undergoes many trials and tribulations to the point of joining armed struggle shoulder-to-shoulder with his former acquaintances.

His accidental involvement in armed struggle in collaboration with a former acquaintance seems to have been triggered by the necessity of survival rather than by a sense of commitment. In fact, we watch him grow and change, along with the growth and change of the country, and the parallel between the two works quite well, providing a human context for the political upheavals, along with the usual themes of life, growth, and Mugezi's search for identity and meaning in his life.

In *Abyssinian Chronicles*, *the* Teacher who is underpaid also offers to brew and sell *kill me quick* in order to supplement his meager income. Otherwise, the role of the intellectual in *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000) is rather marginal or secondary. Similarly, in Armah's, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born,* the protagonist with an eleventh grade certificate bears the burden of this paradoxical representation.

His identification with a *chichidodo* (species of a bird with an ambivalent behavior) is the first case in point. The more he tries to dissociate himself from the corrupt life of Koomson and the materialistic ambition of his wife, the more he gets mired in the stains of corruption.

To cite but a few examples, at a certain point, when Koomson takes shelter in his house, the Man tries not to breathe the foul smell from Koomson's mouth and the

nauseous flatulence from his anus, but he gulps them down through his mouth like passive smokers. The ending of the novel which shows the Man physically tainted by shit and morally tainted by fall from his previously avowed high moral posture had been foreshadowed all along through several hints by the author.

Moralists tell us that evil prospers because virtuous men like the Man play the role of the Devil's advocate to the effect that evil prospers because supposedly 'good' men take an active part in the perpetuation of corruption. Conversely, if the Man had handed over the run-away politician to the Security forces, he could have been perhaps accused of betrayal!

Though the Man appears to be a bundle of pejoristic contradictions, he is not against the material bounty *per se* but the means by it is acquired. He asks the Teacher by way of confirmation:" How can I look on Oyo and say I hate long shiny cars? How can I come back to the children and despise international schools?" (*Ibid*: 92). Therefore, ambiguity is the hallmark of the Man's character.

In the early 1970s, we witness the radical stride of the intellectual- figures from passive alienation to selfless determination as reflected in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and other contemporary novels. The collapse of civic order and constitutionality coupled with military adventurism triggered radical African writers and imperiled their lives.

The imprisonment of Soyinka, the exile of Ngugi and the death of Christopher Okgibo and Saro-Wiwa are but a few examples. In each case, they attempt and reorient the masses against internal colonization in spite of the risk and are thus branded as the impetuous sons of Africa.

In *Anthills of the Savannah,* the populist-minded, poet and editor of the *National Gazette,* Ikem Osodi, the highly accomplished and double-visioned Beatrice Okol and the gentle Commissioner of Information, Chris Oriko, are in the process of charting a populist course when the dictator moves against them. In *Anthills of the Savannah,* heroes mobilize the workers and peasants against the anti-democratic forces in a campaign to rebuild their lives and their country out of the rubble of post- independence chaos.

In his capacity as the Minister of Information, Christopher Oriko is in an unenviable position. Charged with the responsibility of defending the policies of a military dictator, who happens to be one of his old friends, he treads a fine line between loyalty and subversion. He is intelligent enough to understand how rotten the government is, but is too much of the detached intellectual to commit himself to struggle.

When confronted by his old friend Ikem Osodi, a firebrand oppositionist who has succeeded him as Editor of the state-owned newspaper, Oriko justifies his inaction through a kind of Hegelian aloofness:

> Nations were fostered as much by structures as by laws and revolutions. These structures where they exist now are the pride of their nations. But everyone forgets that they were not erected by democratically elected Prime Ministers but very frequently by rather unattractive, bloodthirsty medieval tyrants. The cathedrals of Europe, the Taj Mahal of India, the pyramids of Egypt and the stone towers of Zimbabwe were all raised on the backs of serfs, starving peasants and slaves. Our present rulers in Africa are in every sense late-flowering medieval monarchs, even the Marxists among them. Do you remember Mazrui calling Nkrumah a Stalinist Czar? Perhaps our leaders have to be that way. Perhaps they may even need to be that way (Achebe op.cit: 74).

It also reflects the exploitation of labor which according to Diop's Poem "Africa" fertilizes the womb of the earth. If the architectural pearls cited above were raised on the backs of serfs, it does not hold to reason that dictatorial governance and murderous packs should be tolerated. But the choice between revolution and reform is still a subject of controversy.

7. 3.2 Essentialism vs. Cultural Hybridity

As theorists like Robert Young (1995: 1 - 2) have emphasized, migration, Diaspora, and the mixing of peoples is a fact of life, so that the teeming mix of ethnicities that make up (for example) London today, from Saxons and Vikings to migrants from India, the Caribbean and Africa, prove that "the totality of the West will always be raven by difference."

In addition to political challenges directed against internal colonization and the shadow of neocolonialism, Diasporic African intellectuals are also gravely concerned about problems of essentialism and totalization.

Likewise, the themes of location/dislocation, belongingness/marginalization, alienation and identity, -central to the problematic glorification of home-were the major topics of critical inquiry and creative expression in contemporary literature. Contrapuntally entwined with these themes are the strategies of resistance and survival through which the dislocated invent a space of their own and alternative modes of identity such as hybridity or cultural assimilation.

The question of hybridity, alterity and the attendant identity crises are perhaps the by- products of exile associated with the Diaspora of enslavement and that of colonialism. By definition, the concept of exile proves to be elastic, capable of covering political expulsion from the nation, region or language of one's birth, to economically motivated migration, to an inner kind of exile from one's self and surroundings more or less synonymous with psychological alienation, social maladjustment and spatial dislocation.

More specifically, returning home from exile entails readjustment problems due to the fact that one's place of origin fixed or fixated in the exile's memory as home, does change drastically for the worse to the dismay of the returnee.

In spite of such drastic changes, however, the engagement with Imperialism by post-colonial intellectuals centers on a reaffirmation of the traditional cultures, modes of life that were disrupted by the former. Opposition to Imperialism can, therefore, be diverted into a form of search for an unadulterated pre-colonial tradition, through which the post-colonial intellectuals attempt to re-embrace their own people and "their" true identity.

On the whole, the issues raised in most of the novels revolve around the question of identity, alterity and hybridity. Hybridity is, thus, a concept that has been used to counter the monolithic and hierarchical constructions of culture that characterize (neo) colonialism and racism. Bhabha's concept of the "third Space" is one manifestation of a sense of optimism about the role of cultural hybrids in which the transnational with a foot in more than one culture can play a key role and "elude the politics of polarity" (Bhabha 1994:39).

When applied to post-colonial novels like *Abyssinian Chronicles (2000)* the protagonist migrates to the Netherlands even though he is nostalgic of his homeland. His consequent estrangement and alienation is evident. Whereas the question of migration and immigration is quite marginal or non-existent in *Kill Me Quick* as Mwangi seems to be more obsessed with the frustration and unemployment of school leavers at home like Armah who dwells upon the alienation of confined characters such as the Man and the Teacher.

On the contrary, *Anthills of the Savannah, Sweet and Sour Milk and The Heart of Redness,* feature Diasporic intellectuals who are the bearers of cultural hybridity and cultural otherness but with a strong sense of commitment to and nostalgia for their homelands. The question of identity appears to be more profoundly treated in Mda's *The Heart of Redness*. Thus, even a cultural hybrid like Camagu cannot stay on the fence, but finds that he must decide in favor of one culture rather than another.

The novel's spirit, however, is not one of cultural isolationism but a conditional interaction between traditionalism and modernism. It involves opening up Qolorha to ecologically minded tourists so as to enable the villagers meet the outside world on its own terms, not on those of neo-colonial economic forces from outside.

The Heart of Redness, therefore, depicts the preservation of identity and alterity as a necessity if local cultures are to protect themselves from larger globalizing cultural forces. It is also suggested that a clear sense of local cultural allegiances should override an amorphous hybridity as reflected in the novel:

> The sufferings of the Middle generations are only whispered. It is because of the insistence: Forget the past. Don't only forgive it. Forget it as well. The past did not happen, you only dreamt it. It is a figment of your rich collective imagination. It did not happen. Banish your memory. It is a sin to have a memory. There is virtue in amnesia. The past. It did not happen. It did not happen. It did not happen. John Dalton's friends think that memory is being used to torment them for the sins of their fathers. Sins committed in good faith. (Mda, op.cit:137).

The whole concept of national identity has to be revised as the world has become far more integrated and demographically mixed than ever before. It then follows that all the novelists in the foregoing discussion advocate neither complete totalization nor essentialism but cultural hybridity- an option that appears to be unavoidable due to the impact of historical and global trends.

The third generation of African writers thus challenge essentialist notions of identity and emphasize 'difference' and hybridity over homogeneity promoted by the nation-state (Gikandi 2003:525). This position might perhaps take the second-generation writers who were nostalgic by surprise.

7.4 Gender Issues Revisited

Post-colonial feminists can be described as feminists who have reacted against both universalizing tendencies in Western feminist thought and a lack of attention to gender issues in mainstream post-colonial thought (S. Mills, 1998). One would frequently hear the term "patriarchy" used among feminist critics, referring to traditional male-dominated society. An off-shoot of this perception is found to be "marginalization" which refers to the state of being forced to the outskirts of what is considered socially and politically significant.

In fact, the female voice was traditionally marginalized, or discounted altogether in certain patriarchal societies. Thus, feminists draw an interesting parallel between women and 'the colonized'. Both are positioned as 'the other' - women to the male order and 'the colonized' to the imperial order. Feminism, however, has a problematic relationship with post-colonialism. For instance, post-colonial nationalists protesting against the atrocities of imperialism perceive feminist efforts of liberating the females from their respective patriarchal domination as a misdirected agenda as it is secondary to cultural liberation

While pointing out similarities may lend a sense of solidarity, it is also important to note that the battle for women's liberation changes its form in different contexts: "whereas Western feminists discuss the relative importance of feminist versus class emancipation, the African discussion is between feminist emancipation versus the fight against neo-colonialism, particularly in its cultural aspect" (Petersen 1995: 251-2). In the African context, the latter appears to be much more relevant lest we should align 'the cart before the horse.

7.4.1 Post-Colonial Motherism

In retrospect, many of the early African novels had little to do with male-female relationships concerned as they were with broader issues of colonialism and liberation struggle. In the African contemporary novel, feminine characters are inscribed in a complex sphere of meanings derived from the ancient myth of the

"Big African Mother-Earth." This Afrocentric feminist theory is anchored on the matrix of *motherhood* which is central to African metaphysics and has been the basis of the survival and unity of the black race through the ages. Acholonu (2002:3) contends that "the weapon of Motherism is love, tolerance, service, and mutual cooperation of the sexes .The motherist male writer or artist does not create his work from a patriarchal, masculinist, dominating perspective nor present himself arrogant, all knowing self-righteous before his muse.

Farah, Achebe, Hove and the other African novelists have entertained gender issues with varying degrees of emphasis. To begin with Farah, what has been so extraordinary about Farah's novels from the very beginning is the central place he has accorded to gender issues. Although Farah's novels are essentially African, they are thematically relevant not only to the realities of African societies, but also to universal human conditions, in a manner which transcends the contemporary settings of his works.

Of course, it is the legitimate role of patriarchal ideology which should be a centre of interest for feminists, since lack of adequate legitimization automatically means that the whole edifice of government stands upon a suspect foundation. Farah's critique of a patriarchal system is laudable for his stark portrayal of the effects of patriarchal subjugation of women.

The emergence of defiant characters like Medina in his trilogy is a major breakthrough in the representation of women in a patriarchal system. Medina, who is a leader of the ten and the editor of Somalia's single newspaper, is sacked due to her untactful extremism. She criticizes the General for his tolerance on the grounds that she is a woman and no longer a threat to the State while other women are and tortured.

Over and above, women, who occupy central roles in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Chenjerai Hove's *Bones,* embody the most important gender issues and conflicts within both texts. Women, as a group and as individuals, are central to themes of communal strength, solidarity, and the transmission of cultural and spiritual values.

In these novels, generative women become metaphorical representations of their role as carriers and transmitters of cultural tradition, as well as catalysts for the evolution of tradition. Becoming transmitters of beliefs and spirituality, women venture to break the silence that had been associated with them since Creation.

Achebe traces the beginning of female denigration to the Genesis of Adam and Eve. He writes that "the original oppression of women was based on a crude denigration. She caused man to fall. So she became a scapegoat which might be blameless but a culprit richly deserving of whatever suffering. Man chose thereafter to leap on her. That is woman in the *Book of Genesis* (Achebe op.cit: 97).

Achebe strives to reassert the moral strength and intellectual integrity of African women, especially since the social conditions, which had marginalized in the past have undergone a drastic change. One of these trends is the cultivation of the spirit of post-colonial motherism, which represents women as the incarnations of the last hope for the restoration of the natural order in life and in every sphere of life

Achebe (1987) seems to suggest that the colonized African soil that has been totally dominated by men, is colored by wars, civil strife, hunger, famine, tyranny and genocide could redressed with a return to the mother essence. Speaking through his alter ego Ikem, who is a crusading journalist and writer, Achebe acknowledges that the malaise the African party is experiencing results from excluding women from the scheme of things. Beatrice who has an honors degree from Queen Mary College, University of London, projects Achebe's new vision of women's roles and criticizes Ikem's hazy thoughts on gender issues.

Thus, Achebe, who emphasizes the importance of community, presents women both as means of healing and as sources of inspiration for resistance. In *Anthills of the savannah,* the strength of women in the midst of suffering through interaction, caring and sharing is so well recreated that the common front of womanhood is established. For instance, Beatrice finds solace after Chris' death by attending the needs of Elewa:

> For weeks Beatrice sprawled in total devastation. Then one morning she rose up, as it were, and distanced herself from her thoughts. It was the morning of Elewa's threatened miscarriage. From that day she had addressed herself to the well being of the young woman through the remaining weeks to her confinement [Achebe op.cit: 202]

By the same token, the relationship between Janifa and Marita in *Bones* is central to the narrative. The relationship between these two women provides the strength for spiritual resistance central to Hove's message. Personal relationships between women heighten a sense of solidarity that in itself is effective against oppression. In *Bones,* female solidarity is manifest in the unknown woman's alliance with Marita after her death.

> The woman threatens to scream and shout rape before she strips naked in front of them all. But the chief of the people in uniform insists that he does not take that type of behavior...She bares her chest and asks him to be quick about it so she can be buried in the same grave as Marita. The man is ashamed to shoot her just like that, so he slaps her in the face. That does not stop her from spitting in the face of the man...He orders them to jump in so that we can bury this prostitute alive with the corpse. (Hoves 1988:80).

Thus, the woman's courage illustrates the extent to which Marita's actions could affect others as well as the ability to find strength in the face of political and gender oppression. The Unknown Woman, who by virtue of her anonymity is almost an archetype and mysterious, dies in the course of giving a token burial to Marita out of a sense of friendship or moral obligation.

In *Bones,* the heroine becomes a symbolic representation of resistance to both gender and racial oppression. Her physical infertility is outweighed by the legacy of resistance that she passes on to the next generation through Janifa. Similarly, the birth of Elewa's child in *Anthills of the Savannah* symbolizes a bright future and her naming ceremony marks the revival of the social folk custom.

With reference to Mda's *The Heart of Redness, strong* and self-willed female characters are emerging. This is reflected in the representation of Qukzwa as a vigorous bearer of the traditional attitude towards identity, protection of the echo-system and against the so-called developmental trajectory. The strength of her will power and assertiveness is well demonstrated in her influence upon Camagu who is impressed by her convictions, to the extent of changing his mind.

7.4.2 Marginalization of Gender Issue

In the other East African novels, the concern with gender issues is rather marginal. This is, perhaps, the novelists are concerned more with cultural empowerment rather than feminism proper. This perception reinforces the view that unless the

political machinery is transformed for the better, it is futile to deal with gender issues. By implication, the writers seem to drive home the point that cultural empowerment comes first and then the rest shall follow. After all, both male and female characters are subjected to bondage, tyranny, harassment, economic depravity and state –sponsored terror in contemporary African societies.

This phenomenon is observable both in *Kill Me Quick* and *Abyssinian Chronicles.* In *Kill Me Quic*k Sarah is duty-bound to entertain the leader of the gangsters as a mistress in addition to shouldering her socio-economic burdens. In *Kill Me Quick,* Mwangi advances the widely held view that women are perhaps the worst victims of the neocolonial woes. They suffer from sexual harassment and exploitation.

The novel is populated with women of easy virtue, whose main source of livelihood is prostitution which is depicted as a way of life for young girls desirous of making money and have been lured to the city by their desire to enjoy life, dine in fashionable hotels, ride in luxurious cars and attract prosperous men who can take care of them as lovers.

Even though Mwangi appears to be impartial in his representation of characters, the younger generation- both male and female- appear to be the most adversely affected groups of the society by the socio-political ills that plague Kenya. A case in point is the bondage of Sarah (Mwangi 1973:117), who is bound to endure the hardships of life like the boys.

Family disintegration, poverty, periodic drought, unwanted pregnancy and forced prostitution are all but the most formidable social problems of post-colonial Kenya. Another instance is the bestial rape of hundreds of girls in the *Abyssinian Chronicles* by sex- starved soldiers during the civil war with all its implications.

The representation of female characters in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* has been interspersed between the destruction of Maanan and the vanity of Estella Koomson. Sister Maanan is a symbol of a patient suffering symbolizing the millions of Ghanaian women jilted by husbands and politicians who have abandoned and destroyed them.

As stated in the novel," Sister Maanan found refuge in lengthening bottles, and the bypassing foreigners gave her money and sometimes even love. The wharves turned

political machinery is transformed for the better, it is futile to deal with gender issues. By implication, the writers seem to drive home the point that cultural empowerment comes first and then the rest shall follow. After all, both male and female characters are subjected to bondage, tyranny, harassment, economic depravity and state –sponsored terror in contemporary African societies.

This phenomenon is observable both in *Kill Me Quick* and *Abyssinian Chronicles.* In *Kill Me Quic*k Sarah is duty-bound to entertain the leader of the gangsters as a mistress in addition to shouldering her socio-economic burdens. In *Kill Me Quick,* Mwangi advances the widely held view that women are perhaps the worst victims of the neocolonial woes. They suffer from sexual harassment and exploitation.

The novel is populated with women of easy virtue, whose main source of livelihood is prostitution which is depicted as a way of life for young girls desirous of making money and have been lured to the city by their desire to enjoy life, dine in fashionable hotels, ride in luxurious cars and attract prosperous men who can take care of them as lovers.

Even though Mwangi appears to be impartial in his representation of characters, the younger generation- both male and female- appear to be the most adversely affected groups of the society by the socio-political ills that plague Kenya. A case in point is the bondage of Sarah (Mwangi 1973:117), who is bound to endure the hardships of life like the boys.

Family disintegration, poverty, periodic drought, unwanted pregnancy and forced prostitution are all but the most formidable social problems of post-colonial Kenya. Another instance is the bestial rape of hundreds of girls in the *Abyssinian Chronicles* by sex- starved soldiers during the civil war with all its implications.

The representation of female characters in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* has been interspersed between the destruction of Maanan and the vanity of Estella Koomson. Sister Maanan is a symbol of a patient suffering symbolizing the millions of Ghanaian women jilted by husbands and politicians who have abandoned and destroyed them.

As stated in the novel," Sister Maanan found refuge in lengthening bottles, and the bypassing foreigners gave her money and sometimes even love. The wharves turned

men into gulls and vultures, sharp waiters for weird foreign appetites to satisfy, pilots of the hungry alien seeking human flesh." (Ibid: 66)

In contrast, the frailty of Estella Koomson who is bedecked with Western finery symbolizes identity crisis suffered by the entire African female world, which is crazed with the imitation of the Western style of life. Her apathy for domestic commodities is also revealed with reference to the various brands of bottled beer during the party held at the Man's place.

Between the two extremes, there are provocative female characters that goad the Man into the undesirable national game or corruption. The Man recounts how his wife persuaded him to join the ranks of the fast drivers as:

> Teacher, my wife explained to me, step by step, that life was like a lot of roads: long roads, short roads, wide and narrow, steep and level, all sorts of roads. Next, she let me know that human beings were like so many people driving their cars on all these roads. This was the point at which she told me that those who wanted to get far had to learn to drive fast. And then she asked me what name I would give to people who were afraid to drive fast, or to drive at all. I had no name to give her, but she had not finished. Accidents would happen, she told me, but the fear of accidents would never keep men from driving, and Joe Koomson had learned to drive (Ibid: 58-59).

Oyo is as ambitious as she is acquisitive striving hard to impose her will power on her alienated husband. The representation of women, young and old, rich and poor is relatively unsympathetic and stereotypical for Armah's novel was politically motivated rather than by gender issue proper.

The question of female characters in the post-Apartheid South African novel is rather ambiguous. In *Disgrace*, we find the same category of young and old, black and white women all of who appear to be subjected to bondage, rape, adultery and prostitution. One witnesses the maltreatment of both black and white female characters by each other.

A case in point is the rape of Lucy by black gangsters and the molestation of Melanie by Lurie. What appears to be self-contradictory is Lurie's position that he is critical of the lawlessness of the transitional period without paying damn attention to Melanie with whom he has committed adultery to the point of making fun of the Disciplinary Committee.

The fact of the matter is that there are two patriarchs in *Disgrace:* that Petrus represents a force for oppression without any pity as potentially, as David Lurie's. Lurie has made use of Soraya and Melanie, but there is a lethal symmetry in the fact that his own daughter is used in turn and becomes a chattel of the Petrus clan - a bayonet, without a voice. When the novel ends, her rapists have for some time spread news of her rape around the district. Thus, neither racial group is protected against sexual violence.

In *The Heart of Redness*, two black African female characters are juxtaposed. They hold contrary views on the question of modernization and preservation of tradition. The uneducated woman is skeptical of the encroachment of Western style of development while the educated ones like Xoliswa Ximiya denigrate traditional values. Attitudinally, the educated ones like the teacher Xoliswa Ximiya undermine the idea of redness or the traditional value system, which is zealously embraced by Camagu.

Her reaction to the notion of cherishing or reviving tradition bursts out in one of her dialogue's with Camagu: "It is a backward movement. All this non-sense about bringing back African traditions. We are civilized people. We have no time for beads and long pipes.'(Ibid: 185). In contrast, the village maid Qukezwa is a strong defender of traditionalism.

When we consider the problematization and resolution of the women question, the gender issues that exist within Africa, like the issues of colonialism, cannot be solved with the same old formula that a dynamic vision should be envisaged beginning from an attitudinal change towards the women question.

At any rate the post-colonial African novelists have created memorable female characters with a revolutionary zeal. When it comes to the question of priority, all the novelists seem to suggest that cultural empowerment should precede the gender question in the African context where the former is the burning issue.

7.5. An Endemic Xenophobia

One of the most endemic problems of the modern world is the persistence of ethnicity and racism. This is applicable to both the so- called developed and underdeveloped worlds that it has become customary to hear the bad news of racial

conflict, eviction and at times even genocidal crimes against humanity on both sides of the Atlantic.

To be more specific, the ugly picture of the Apartheid policy has been well chronicled in the annals of Africa as well as in imaginative literature. Xenophobic violence persists to-date between white and black as well as the native black and the immigrants in spite of the shared racial identity.

7.5.1 The Ghost of Apartheid

Now that Apartheid is over, writers are questioning the conception of reconciliation and rebuilding. Literature that embraces these issues has helped to reshape the definitions of ethnic identity and national unity. Paradoxically, xenophobia, which had ravaged South Africa in epidemic proportions, appears to be still persistent

Following the triumph of ANC and its advent to power, an *ad hoc* commission known as TRC was set up to liberalize the age-old apathy against each other. Though many black Africans were skeptical of its mission, it seems to have worked out pretty well towards mollifying vengeance as there has been no State –sponsored campaign against the beneficiaries of the Apartheid policy.

However, there is a tendency, on the part of the gullible majority to downplay the seriousness of today's racial oppression in South Africa. This is achieved through silence around issues of race as if it had been wiped out once and for all. All the same, the Apartheid policy or governance might have been defeated, but the project to dehumanize and decolonize the black majority is visibly carried out through other media like literature.

A critical review of Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), thus, reveals that there has been very little change in the representation of black people in fictional work that sells, and to which the public at large has an access. The description of race in South African society is still bound up with stereotypical representation of the black race.Thus the ascension to power of the ANC is tantamount to humiliation and disgrace from the point of view of the White South Africans as reflected in Coetzee's novel.

At its face value, *Disgrace* seems to offer a renegotiation of this stalemate, as a result of which Lucy and Petrus will manage to coexist; yet the novel's depiction of a world of disrupted relationships is subtler, and far bleaker.

Disgrace had sparked a parliamentary debate that many members of the ANC were unhappy with Coetzee's portrayal of the new South Africa. The ANC's argument is built on the idea that Coetzee's novel reflects society, that the views of the white characters in *Disgrace* may be equated with those of white South Africans in general. Yet, the corollary of this reading would mean that the black rapists in *Disgrace* are representative of most black people in South Africa, which is exactly what the ANC would like to refute.

It is, perhaps, impossible to divorce *Disgrace* from a global social climate, which is shaped by the notion that post-colonial states fail as soon as whites relinquish power to the natives. Even though the germ of racism is believed to have been sown and nurtured by the colonizers themselves, it appears that the plot has backfired at the remnant white minority.

The problem of xenophobia as a periodic time bomb is also sharply felt in Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles*. In multi-racial or heterogeneous African countries, each time a government rises and falls, the expectation of the indigenous population is the expulsion of foreigners involved in business transaction for dominating the economic sector. That is exactly what happened to the country's East Indians during the reign of Amin in which case hundreds of them were dehumanized and their rightful properties confiscated much against the dictates of morality and the provisions of international law.

Similarly, the land question in Zimbabwe is known to have aggravated the hostility of not only the former colonial masters and the Empires but also Zimbabwean nationals against British settlers and farmers. The owner of the farm in *Bones* is a white settler while the toiling laborers like Marita are Zimbabwean nationals forced by circumstances to work for the least payment under the worst conditions redolent of the Triangular Slave-Trade. It could be more than surprising to hear that Zimbabwe introduced a land tenure policy twenty years after its independence from British colonialism!

7.5.2 Partiality for the Black

Overtones of mild xenophobia are also discernible in the other novels. For instance, a certain degree of resentment against white settlers and farm-owners is also observable in Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* where the white employers versus black laborers are juxtaposed. When we consider the characters in *Anthills* of *the Savannah* except for people like the American journalist and Mad Medico, the rest are Black Africans. Nevertheless, race plays a part as reflected in Beatrice's attitude towards the white race.

Farah, on the other hand, seems to uphold the idea of hybridity as demonstrated through Soyaan's marriage to Margarita and the subsequent birth of Marco. In fact, the older generation as represented by Soyaan's mother who is against Margarita is, xenophobic.

In *The Heart of Redness* the number of white characters is minimal. Mda represents the British in historical and contemporary frameworks through John Dalton, the storeowner and great great grandson of the nineteenth-century Dalton. The contemporary Dalton was raised in the village and knows the language of isiXhosa, having attended "initiation school." He is characterized as mocking the "sneering snobbishness of his fellow English-speaking South Africans" (Mda 2000: 9)

Other white characters are principally governors or military figures, such as the "Great White Chief," possibly a reference to the actual Sir Harry Smith; Sir George Cathcart, who replaced Smith; and "The Man Who Named Ten Rivers," referring to Sir George Grey, Cathcart's successor.

With an invariable degree of accentuation, Post-colonial African novelists have, thus, reflected upon the impact of foreign interference in the internal affairs of their country economically, politically, culturally and psychologically. Our age seems to be a race-sensitive world in spite of the growth international relations, demographic shifts and rhetoric of civilization.

7.6. Ideological Thrust

The socio-political problems with which Africa is plagued can hardly be isolated from the causative agents as they are implicated in the perpetuation of such an anomalous situation. In retrospect, the protest was against the triple burdens of colonialism. The trend, however, seems to have changed from attacking Western colonialism to the indictment of internal colonization.

7.6.1 Mass Resignation

The post-colonial issues pervasive in the Anglophone novels published since the 1970s are found to be the implants of colonialism *per se* like oppression, tyranny, and the dominance of patriarchal ideology, corruption, dependence on foreign aid, military dictatorship. Such a socio-political impasse and its attribution are observable in the post-colonial East, West and Southern African novels under consideration.

Nuruddin Farah, in *Sweet and Sour Milk*, for instance, asserts that the resigned observers themselves are responsible for the perpetuation of undemocratic traditions in Somalia. He capitalizes on the inexistence of mass uprisings, labor strikes, student demonstrations and civil disobedience in his motherland as is the case in the other African, Asian and Western countries. This situation deteriorates when individual interest is served at the expense of national interest.

The consequences of mass withdrawal from political activism are also implied in *Kill Me Quick*, *Abyssinian Chronicles*, and *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Anthills of the Savannah.* For instance, Achebe's *Anthill of the Savannah (*1987) warns the resigned observers of the socio-political phenomena unfolding in their countries against their withdrawal with accent on the myth of power struggle in post-colonial Nigeria, which seems to be deteriorating by the day.

Another internal factor, which contributes to political instability, is more of civil war than cross-border conflict. What has, for instance, brought Somalia to the brink of disintegration is an undemocratic military take-over aggravated by clannish and ethnic conflicts. Such an absence of a democratic tradition or rigged-election has made the fate of some African countries unpredictable.

The recurrence of military coups like that of Uganda (1971-1979), which had plunged the country into chaos, is a case in point. The truancy of the military, smuggling, rape, and spread of HIV/AIDS, embezzlement and terror, harassment and anarchism still impact on its national economy public life.

West African countries like Ghana and Nigeria are not immune from this neocolonialist bondage either. As a result, Armah and Achebe seem to be gravely concerned with the national anomaly prevalent in their respective countries. One could safely conclude that West Africa is the replica of East Africa.

The very problems, which plague East Africa, are pervasive on the other side of the continent. Because these regions are plagued with rampant corruption, ethnic strife, and monopoly of power and economic resources by demagogues, periodic/sporadic military take-overs, exploitation, and abuse of power, nepotism and servility to foreign powers rather than to one's own constituency. Thus, all the leading demagogues in the post-colonial African novels could be described as identical twins for their motivation, temperament and immorality is hardly distinguishable from one another.

This grim picture has been further reinforced by an allusion to the myth of Plato's cave whereby people prefer darkness to light without any external imposition. All the more, the middle class as reflected in the language of the interpreters seem to understand fully the carrier of the new vision but willfully choose darkness rather than the light of the new vision of freedom and beauty. That is what the Teacher's cynical observations and withdrawal reflects by way of drawing an analogy between the resigned observers of the national game and the dwellers of the cave in Plato's myth

7.6.2 Opportunism of the Elite

On top this, the demagogues who are crazed with the pursuit of material wealth and unbridled power are charged with improper influence. To cite an example, the metamorphosis of Koomson is a case in point. From political involvement with the Dockers in the 1950s, he has proceeded through the Ideological Institute at Winneba, the instant breeding ground for party hacks, to the ultimate accolade of a plum government appointment. In the bloated language of bureaucratic deference he is described as "His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plenipotentiary, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labor' (Ibid: 56) with all the privileges pertaining thereto.

The portrait of Koomson appears to be simply a means of slandering the leadership. Because, all the humbler characters like . the bus conductor who is crazed with the Cedi , the allocations clerk who eventually succumbs to the contractor's offer and the policeman at checkpoint are implicated in the perpetuation of the age of darkness as they encourage bribery or corruption as a conventional national game which the passive observers should have followed suit. This is further illustrated by

the graffiti the Man finds scrawled on the walls of the office latrine:

> **MONEY SWEET PASS ALL**
>
> To the left there are others, a bit harder to make out at first
>
> **WHO BORN Fool SOCIALISM CHOP MAKE I CHOP**
>
> **CONTREY BROKE** ((Ibid: 106)

It is no longer the white man who is responsible for the grinding poverty of the masses but the revolutionary fighters whose corruption and lust for power undermines their cause. Over and above, Armah is critical of the opportunism of party members, parliamentarians and the civil servant as reflected in the dialogic scene between the Man and the Teacher:

> Oh, you know the ideological thing, *Winneba*. That is where the shit of the country is going nowadays, believing nothing, but saying they believe everything that that needs to be believed, so long as the big jobs and the big money follow….The civil Servant who hates socialism is there singing hosanna. The Poet is there, serving power to and waiting to fill his coming paunch with crumbs….the only thing demanded of them is to be good at fawning. (Ibid: 89).

The other problem is the unholy alliance of the ruling elite with the clergy. In principle, religion and political ideology are incompatible in their ontological view or philosophy of life. Political ideology is inherently immoral in its intent and content as it is concerned with down- to-earth issues aimed at perpetuating power and glory through invasions, annexations, dictatorships and discriminations. Religion on the other hand, is otherworldly as it is concerned with the spiritual life of mankind and life after death and entails moral sanctions.

These two incompatible value systems, however, operate hand-in-glove in the context of post-colonial African politics. Thus, the clergy blesses both the deeds and the misdeeds of the demagogue much against Christian morality and the sacred tenets of Islam. The clergy is found to be the major catalyst for the protraction of the reign of African dictatorship.

In Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk,* the clergy sing to the tune of Socialism/Marxism in the midst of cold-hearted murder, crackdown and kidnapping. and torture. Ambiguously enough, *Sweet and Sour Milk* reveals an attempt to harmonize Soviet backed Marxist/Socialist ideology with the tenets of Islam, which are absolutely incompatible. Even worse, the institution serves as a propaganda ploy intended to

silence the imminence of popular uproar in favor of the contemporary body politic. To our dismay, nowhere do we witness the critical voice of the clergy against the underground terror and onslaught carried out by the Secret Service in broad daylight.

The same applies to the case of Uganda where Christians and Muslims cohabit. Leaders of the Anglican Church, Protestants and Muslims are the proponents of the tyranny of Idi Amin against the will of God or Allah. They praise and glorify the buffoonery of Idi Amin and his regulars instead of condemning it in the name of the Almighty. The role of the clergy should have been one of mediation and reconciliation and condemnation of such hypocrisy.

East African post-colonial novelists in question attack the sycophancy of the clergy for its unholy alliance with tyrants, opportunists, traitors and Judas. Africa seems to have been cursed with its leaders- both secular and spiritual-beyond redemption.

7.6.3 The Neo-Colonialist Patronage and Its Impact

The patronage of foreigners and their maneuvers are believed to have seriously undermined national economies, borders, politics and culture. In other words, that local African political and cultural space upon which global forces play themselves out in terms of domination and its resistance is the bedrock on which the new bases of power proclaiming new truths of the nation are raised.

If we consider Kenya, it is the irresponsible body politic and their foreign allies that are busy sucking dry the natural resources of the nation as reflected in *Kill Me Quick*. Thus, the so-called governments of independent Africa are hardly concerned with the benefits of economic protection policy, which prioritizes 'National Interest First' without prejudice to bilateral relations.

They seem to be worried more about the security of their former colonial powers and the contemporary patron saints who protect them from internal rivals in exchange for the relegation of national interest to a secondary or tertiary position. Thus, the encroachment of mechanization and globalization is greeted with enthusiasm at the expense of the interest of the indigenous population.

One of the preconditions set for the provision of foreign aid is, for instance, compliance with of the IMF-World Bank agenda such as the introduction of

structural reform, privatization, and devaluation of the national currency in favor of the American Dollar, Euro and Pound Sterling and globalization policy. Such issues are seriously treated in post-colonial novels like *Sweet and Sour Milk* and *Abyssinian Chronicles.*

In the case of Nigeria, the political history of Kangan in *Anthills of the Savannah* is essentially the history of three male friends. Been-to's have, in their own minds, risen to a level above most of the bedraggled and suffering population, yet they are doomed to fail due to their insistence on attempting to run the country according to pre-existing Western patterns.

Achebe seems to argue that modes of failure are doomed to repeat themselves in African societies, "been-to" or not been-to. As long as proposed solutions adhere solely to Western ideas of advancement or success, nothing can be achieved-. Raised by Europe and placed in control of the supposedly independent nation, men such as Chris, Sam and Ikem unwittingly repeat themes of colonialism. For instance, Ikem muses after some harsh thoughts, "the very words the white master had said in his time about the black race as a whole. Now we say them about the poor" (Ibid: 37).

This stance is critical of the gross imitation and application of Western models to the resolution of African problems. By implication, the post-colonial novelists seem to underpin Ikem Osodi's contention in the twelfth chapter of *Anthills of the Savannah* .At the end of his speech intended for the University of Bassa, the chairman states that 'writers in the world context must not stop at the stage of documenting social problems but move to the higher responsibility of proffering prescriptions. But Ikem responds emotionally that 'writers do not give prescriptions but give headaches'. (Ibid: 48).

Achebe is critical of the inefficacy of the strategy adopted to resolve the political crisis of Africa and explores alternative Afrocentric approaches. This view is also shared by Farah as reflected in *Sweet and Sour Milk* by of charging Western allies, and Eastern 'Patron Saints' like USSR before its balkanization into mini-states.

The revolutionary elite is supposed to evolve a pragmatic strategy of social reform not based on European models but on an Afrocentric framework. Thus, unless the

leadership comes to its senses, the populace reacts heroically against tyranny, and the Western 'Patron Saints' keep their hands off African countries, the reign of terror is likely to become protracted, perhaps, indefinitely.

Given the historical context as well as their apparent themes, these novels could be categorized under 'Resistance Literature', which draws upon the struggle for national liberation and independence, particularly in the twentieth century, on the part of Afro-Asian countries over which Western Europe and North America have sought uninterrupted socio-economic control and cultural hegemony.

7.7. Textual Strategy

Textual strategy relates to one of the ordeals of the writers from former British colonies in Africa as well as in South-east Asia. These post-colonial writers are baffled with the choice of a medium of expression with which to discharge their creative endeavor.

The debate about the interrelationship of post-colonial literatures constitutes a radical critique of Eurocentric notions of literature and language. In the context of a heterogeneous society, where the colonized often coexist with their former colonizers, Post-Colonial writers attempt to reassign new ethnic and cultural meanings to marginalized groups. What is ironic about it, however, is the fact that the bulk of Post-Colonial literature is written in the language of the metropolitan powers due to linguistic and political dependency.

In spite of this dependency, however, post-colonial literature attempts to construct new identities against these outwardly imposed borders. One of the strategies adopted to that effect is appropriation of English with a considerable degree of flexibility or deviation from RS in such a manner that does not affect intelligibility.

7.7.1 Modes of Appropriation

According to Rao (1938: VII), appropriation is an attempt to "convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own" (See, also Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1989: 39). Consequently, the post-colonial African writer expresses his thoughts through an Africanized version of the "almighty" English language. The postcolonial writer is always "fashioning out English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience" (Achebe 1975:61).

The counter argument, however, is that working within the confines of a 'world language' could only be a capitulation to European cultural standards crudely disguised as 'universalism. By implication, decolonization would be meaningful if European languages are overthrown in the post-colonial writers' attempt to shift the Centre away from the West to the East.

However, irrespective of the heated debate, almost all Anglophone African novelists have appropriated English as the medium of their expression. Thus, Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* and Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* are written with a certain degree of liberty or flexibility. In Mwangi's novel we come across many editorial intrusions like untranslated and translated Swahili diction in spite of his abstinence from the question of language politics unlike his compatriot, Ngugi, who is bent on decolonizing the African mind by eschewing English.

Farah's Sweet *and Sour Milk* is a truly post-colonial novel for the story takes place in Somalia land that was colonized by the Italians in the late 1800s as a result of the scramble for Africa, and was controlled by the British after World War II. Farah depicts the integration of Italian language, culture and education into the Somali mode of life, creating a story that is both unique and authentic.

Similarly, Moses Isegawa's position is best reflected in his interview with *The Daily Monitor*:

> ***The Daily Monitor***: Ngugi Wa' Thiong'o talks of African writers discarding English and writing in native languages. Instead your books are translated in French and Dutch. *Abyssinian Chronicles* was first published in Dutch. Why?
>
> **Moses**: If you are a musician, you sing in a language you like. Nobody forces you to sing in Russian if you want to sing in Langi or Lusoga or Luganda. I just write in English and if one chose to write in Langi I am happy for them if it works for them. Everybody does what he or she wants to do in the most comfortable way they want to do it. I am not going to write in Luganda or Langi. I will continue writing in English. *Abyssinian Chronicles* was published in Dutch because a Dutch publisher accepted it and translated the manuscript from English.

In fact, Isegawa has incorporated a range of editorial intrusions like idiomatic expressions, untranslated vernacular diction (glossing) and a lengthy glossary of terms. Thus, he is in favor of appropriating English without being absorbed into its

metropolitan culture (See, Chapter Four for details)

Similarly, Armah has incorporated untranslated vernacular diction, and Pidgin English *in The Beautyful Ones Are not Yet Born.* What is more, the novel is laden with organic/spatial metaphors like the chichidodo, Aboliga the Frog, the fast drivers, the bus, the banister, the Railway Administration Block etc., and a graphic imagery of decadence. Above all, Armah is famous for his linguistic realism involving obscene expressions, sensory details and physical descriptions

When it comes to Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, we find it to be strongly charged with local flavor of story-telling tradition. Typical of African cultures, Nigeria's storytelling comes from a long oral tradition. This tradition allowed generations to benefit from African literature despite widespread illiteracy. Folktales, legends, verses, myths, and proverbs were preserved in the memories of the people and communicated by performance or simple recitation.

The purpose of oral literature is not only to delight but also to instruct and assert one's identity. Achebe, thus, exploits folkloric details such as creation myths and elements of social folk-custom in his modern narrative. Achebe's position on the question of language politics is rather ambiguous that he is in favor of appropriation and against abrogation (See Chapter 5.2).

In the Southern region, the hybridity of Zimbabwean literature is reflected in the example of Chenjerai Hove who negotiates native culture by employing a colonialist technique and language. It is from this mode of adaptation that Zimbabwean writers have forged a post-colonial discourse that affirms the native as more than *other* and contributes to the reestablishment of native culture or decentering the hegemonic Western discourse.

Hove employs mythological and proverbial and folkloric details in general. As might be expected, it is this mythic quality which gives hint of an overriding theme in the novel. In a section entitled "*1897 My Bones Fall Apart*," which not only is narrated by an anonymous , omnipotent narrator, but also carries the connotation of an earlier revolt, the reader comes across two different and very powerful forces, made up of individuals acting in concert

The locusts are obvious allegories to the white man as reiteratively depicted in the following extract:

> The locusts of disease will eat into the fields of our harvests until we remain like orphans in the land we inherited for our children whom we have inside us. The locust that our ancestor says we can eat comes alone and runs away when we run after it. (Hove: 44)…. These locusts, while terrifying, are not the most powerful of all, however, for my bones will rise with such power the graves will be too small to contain them. The ribs of the graves will break when my bones rise, and you stare in disbelief, not knowing if your hunger for war can stand up to it. Then the locusts will not be seen again and strangers will not think that he who accepts them is full of foolishness. . . (Hove Ibid: 50).

The power of the bones springs from not only their numbers, but also from their unity. After all is said and done, the death and misery which infect the book serve to remind us of what it is to be powerless, or, indeed, to be powerful in an age when the worst can happen both to the weak and the strong in societies made fragile by so many political and cultural upheavals. Hove's novel is thus charged with local flavor as is the case with Achebe's novels.

In the context of Post-Apartheid South Africa, Coetzee uses many organic metaphors like *dogs* and *fire*, which have a symbolic significance. There are many references to fire throughout the novel associated with vengeance. In *Disgrace*, expressions like "David is set on fire in the attack, passion is a fire, a flame, the dogs' bodies are consigned to fire at the end of the novel, and David conjures up a vision of Dante's I*nferno*, with souls boiling (Ibid: 209), are recurrent.

This is reminiscent of Robert Frost's poem 'Fire and Ice" in which case the former symbolizes violent and the latter non-violent agents of destruction. Especially, the word *dog* which recurs in Coetzee's *Disgrace* has both positive and negative connotations in the South African context as stated in Section **7.1.2.**of Chapter Seven which deals with the significance of graphic cover designs. On the one hand, it is an echo of Apartheid era. On the other, it symbolizes the dehumanization of the white race in the new South Africa from Coetzee's point of view.

In general, the post-colonial African novelists have appropriated English as a means to an end in spite of their temptation to decolonize their mind. In fact, they are not required or obliged to absolutely comply with the standard usage of Anglo-American English (RS).

There is also a room for flexibility in the sense of using English with some admixtures from vernacular languages of each country by way of subverting the standard usage and popularizing editorial intrusions like the translation of vernacular diction, phraseology or idiom, glossing, modification of the morpheme-grapheme correspondence modeled on vernacular syntax with English vocabulary.

Moreover, almost all the novels here are characterized by genre-border crossing owing to their lyrical prose that we sometimes feel as if we were reading a poetic piece rather than prose narrative. The choice of English as medium of their expression is the most dominant intertextual element across the contemporary East, West and Southern African novels. In fact, the degree of seriousness with which the novelists tackle the question of language politics is bound to vary from writer to writer, from country to country and from region to region for various objective and subjective reasons.

7.7.2 Magical Realism

Almost all of the novels under selection constitute elements of Magical Realism. To cite a few examples, Abyssinian *Chronicles, Sweet and Sour Milk, The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Disgrace* and *The Heart of Redness* are invariably laden with striking example of Magical Realism. *Abyssinian Chronicles* opens with an awful Magical Realist description, which takes the reader by surprise. It appears to be intended to lash at the cannibalistic socio-political facts of Uganda during the guerilla war between the loyal forces of Obote, on the one hand, and those of Idi Amin, on the other. If the masses are the victims, the crocodile, which swallows Muzegi's father, symbolizes forces of tyranny.

What is more, the cyclical repetition of history in the same novel is the characteristic feature of Magical Realism. The same applies to Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* where an underground harassment of the non-conformist family members, community leaders and dissident forces through an intelligence network, are metaphorically described as the *Dinosaurs;* seem to be the order of the day.

Similarly, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not yet Born* abounds in a range of such details as proverbs and mythological stories. Instances of Magical Realism in this novel include polar opposites like the materially opulent and the miserable, fast drivers

and slow drivers the military regime and the civilian government, the genuine and the opportunist, the corruptible and the incorruptible, the present and the past, the cyclical repetition of history, the reductive imagery or iconoclasm, the ambiguity of the ultimate solution to the political impasse.

Like his contemporary Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Armah incorporates metaphorical proverbs, and the myth of Plato's cave. The latter is an attribution to the perpetuation of the reign of tyranny for which the people themselves are partly responsible. Similarly, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is also laden with elements of Magical Realism such as terror, iconoclasm, creation myth, military crackdown, and the cyclical military *coup d'etat* and ambiguity .

This technique has been demonstrated rather intensively in the post-Apartheid novels of South Africa like *Disgrace* and The *Heart of Redness.* To begin with, Coetzee's *Disgrace* juxtaposes young and old, black and white, retribution and forgiveness, freedom and responsibility, insiders and outsiders, the 'savage and the civilized. Similarly, Zakes Mda in *The Heart of Redness* draws parallels between the urban and the rural, black and white, darkness and redness, African and Western, globalization and preservation, the modern and the traditional, Believers and Unbelievers, history and myth.

In sum, almost all the novels in question are characterized by the preponderance of sensory details or graphic imagery of the physical setting, characters, and the bleak political scenario. As a whole, Magical Realism as a literary technique has been exploited effectively by most of the novelists in question to make the fictional stories stranger than truth thus subverting Western Realism for its inadequacy or imperializing mission.

7.8. Cosmic Vision

According to M.H. Abrams (1999:14) "Atmosphere is the emotional tone pervading a section or the whole of a literary work which fosters in the readers expectations as to the course of events whether happy or (commonly) terrifying or disastrous." Such a mood pervading a given work of art could be classified into two broad categories known as optimism and pessimism all of which are reflections of the writer's cosmic vision.

7. 8.1. Pessimism

The African novel is essentially committed to the exposure of social and behavioral wrongs pervasive in post- colonial Anglophone Africa. Such an obsession with social and behavioral wrongs, which borders on Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Orwell's *Animal Farm*, springs from the visible continuity of colonial practices in disguise and is aimed at social reformation and re-correction of behavioral flaws

It is, perhaps, the futility of reform or the perpetuation of political atrophy that seems to have thrived in certain African novelists like Armah, Farah, Achebe, Mwangi, Moses and their contemporaries with marked pessimism as reflected in their novels.

As a point of departure, Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* is a bitter indictment of the post-colonial restoration of social class stratification where socio-economic justice should have prevailed in accordance with the original promises of the Mau Mau oath. The novel captures the pinches of the oppressed in the class-enclave of Kenya. The representation of the broad masses and their deprivation is so vivid that the boys are symbolically emaciated and incapacitated with frustration.

The frontispiece of the title of the novel, *Kill Me Quick*, is an embodiment of the central theme and the bleak atmosphere that the story evokes

> Days run out for me,
> Life goes from bad to worse
> Very soon, very much soon,
> Time will lead me to the end,
> Very well. So be it.
> But one thing I beg of you,
> If the sun must set for me,
> If all must come to an end,
> If you, must be rid of me
> The way you have done with all my friends,
> If you must kill me,
> Do so fast.
> KILL ME QUICK

Meja and Mania prefer to die quickly rather than live their death. They implore the Almighty to kill or bless them with bounty. There emerges from Mwangi's handling of disillusionment and pain a virulent critique of the African past and present, and a pessimistic view of future evolution. His vision is certainly a "grim view of a doomed society" (Gakwandi 1986: 159).The sense of dismay with which he

confronts the corruption and divisions in the post-independence Kenya is unmistakably captured in this novel.

Thus, Kenya has been enmeshed since 1963 in the crucible of deaths and births, agony, poverty, dehumanization and starvation culminating in the violation of human dignity. Hence, *Kill Me Quick*, like many other postcolonial African novels, reveals an atmosphere of fear, hate, humiliation and an aura of repression, in the form of arrest, exile and execution. It highlights the dictatorial and oppressive tendencies of the imperialists and neo-colonial rulers in African nations.

After all, the reader witnesses a bleak time of destitution and deprivation of the common man in neo-colonial Kenya. His description of ordinary life is marked by a strong sense of deprivation. Injustice, inequality, dehumanization by the industrial and capitalist system, poverty and corruption constitute the writer's disillusionment with the independence dream or *Uhuru.*

Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* is yet another reflection of the bleak post-colonial picture prevalent in Somalia-an unnatural motherland with children deprived of their birth right to her breast milk, which is a source of sustenance and nourishment By analogy, the country is comparable to Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* or Blake's *Sick Rose* or better still with Eliot's "The Wasteland" ruled by hollow men. It is stigmatized with deprivation, destitution, leading sooner or later, to starvation and national suicide. All the national ills appear to be attributed to the malpractices of its degenerate children rather than to former colonial masters.

All the more, the image of the state apparatus or the body politic is attacked for its vanity fair in the face of crumbling masses as reflected in the red-carpet festivities on the various occasions of state visits. In *Sweet and Sour Milk,* Farah maintains an atmosphere of uneasiness and tension through Loyaan's defiance, on the one hand, and the personification of oppression and tyranny through the character of the General, on the other. Farah's iconoclastic indictment of post-independence politics has been aptly summed up in the following reflective observation:

> Africa, for nearly a century, was governed with the iron hand of European colonial economic interest: these ran Africa as though it were a torture-chamber. Africa has known the iron rod, the whiplash, thumb-screwing and removing of testicles: Africa has been humiliated one way or another. I am not saying anything new if add that whether British, French, Belgium, Spanish, Portuguese

> or Italian, the colonial mafiadoms which, on behalf of the civilized world, administered the colonies barbarously, savagely, never considered it expedient to allow the sub-human subjects under their administration the same democratic rights as they themselves had, both in their own countries and in their privileged positions as rulers, viceroys or governors. From the colonies, they created small elite that, in a world of make-believe, behaved as though they were on a par with their European classmates, their university colleagues(Ibid:124).

This critical observation corroborates the view that Africa is still under the shadow of neo- colonialism nurtured by puppet governments who are subservient to their former colonial masters. All the more, the milkless breast, which has turned sour from the point of view of its beneficiaries, is symbolically significant.

Another grim picture that emerges from East Africa is associated with Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicle*s. An 'Abyss' is a bottomless gulf or pit; any unfathomable or apparently unfathomable cavity or chasm or void extending below. Having come of age within the tightly measured boundaries of a newly independent state, Isegawa's narrator conveys a self-reflective tale of passion and regret that crosses continents and generations. The metaphorical matrix of the novel suggests an ambitious attempt to capture the pathos of an entire country:

> Uganda was a land of false bottoms where under every abyss there was another one waiting to ensnare people," Mugezi's father postulates, "and the historians had made a mistake: Abyssinia was not the ancient land of Ethiopia, but modern Uganda (Isegawa 2000:469).

This abyss was bound to recede deeper and deeper with the cyclical Obote-Idi Amin take-over via a protracted guerilla warfare sponsored by ill-motivated neighbors and the patronizing neo-colonizers. The plot ranges from the conflict-ridden Uganda of Idi Amin and his successors, to the expatriate ghettos of 1980s Amsterdam. The central theme is Uganda's tragedy at the hands of Milton Obote and Idi Amin's brutal dictatorships. Mugezi's father believes that *Abyssinia* is a name more fitting for modern Uganda than ancient Ethiopia for Uganda is truly 'a land of false bottoms'.

Crossing over to West Africa, we come across t the same dismal picture. To begin with, the critical reception of this novel in terms of Armah's cosmic vision ranges from a profound philosophical pessimism to an articulation of guarded optimism for

the future. Writing from the optimistic school of thought, Neil Lazarus (1990:137) for instance notes that "'Critics of the novel have not found it easy to describe [the] relationship between affirmative vision and degraded reality" expressed throughout the novel.

The central despair of the novel reveals itself in the following monologue by the Man upon hearing the breaking news of the coup on a radio:

> New men would take into their hands the power to steal the nation's riches and to use it for their own satisfaction. That, of course, was to be expected. Now men would use the country's power to get rid of men and women who talked a language that did not flatter them. There would be nothing different in that. That would be a continuation of the Ghanaian way of life... But for the nation itself, there would only be a change of embezzlers and a change of the hunters and the hunted. A pitiful shrinking, of the world from those days Teacher still looked back to, when the single mind was filled with the hopes of a whole people. A pitiful shrinking, to days when all the powerful could think of was to use power of a people to fill their own paunches. Endless days, same days, stretching into the future with no end anywhere in sight. (Ibid: 162).

Thus, much of the criticism that views the novel as a work of uncompromising pessimism extends the gloomy picture beyond the Ghanaian socio-political setting thus emphasizing its implications for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is imbued with a very deep mood of futility that could be broken by the personal examples of self-less characters. The decades of independence have brought only minimal reasons for hope. Ruling governments have oscillated between corrupt demagogues and violent army generals. For the first time, Achebe chooses to disguise the setting by inventing a fictional state, Kangan, though the rulers and their practices are closely modeled on the actual atrocities of Amin's Uganda.

This may be intended to universalize the African situation, or to draw an analogy or even to indicate that Achebe can no longer bear to contemplate directly the misery into which his own country has been plunged. Perhaps Achebe has begun to lose confidence in his generation which he has served. Nevertheless, his early quartet stands as a masterly achievement that will inform generations of readers of the disasters colonialism brought to Africa- sometimes with benign intentions. At any

rate, Achebe's latest novel is less pessimistic than Armah's first novel in its projection of a better future in spite of the stumbling blocks post-colonialism (See, section 7.8.2).

Disgrace from South Africa also sends out a dismal, discouraging message that political change in South Africa has had virtually no effect on the alleviation of human suffering. The novel examines the power shift in the new South Africa between blacks and whites, and about how precarious this new relationship is due to South Africa's troubled history.

Drawing upon all these anomalies, (Hama Tuma 2002:3) paints a grim picture of post-colonial Africa as nihilistically as follows:

> Today, Africa is in a deeper mess. Deprived of its sovereignty, ruled by kleptocrats who have mortgaged its future to the World Bank and the IMF, ravaged by maladies ranging from malaria to AIDS, humiliated and plundered, Africa is in a dire state. Inter-ethnic strife is fanned, genocides are aplenty, puppets are on the thrones, and misery and famine stalk the people. There are myriad threads of misery the writer can weave into captivating tales and stories.

Thus, most of the post-colonial African novels are characterized by philosophical pessimism with few exceptions which discussed below.

7 .8. 2 Optimism

Even though the philosophical pessimism of African writers is a foregone conclusion, recent trends herald the rebirth of moral regeneration capable of combating the socio-political anomaly, which has befallen their countries. Thus, we detect overtones of optimism and ultimate hope and victory in the midst of darkness. One of these optimistic novelists is Chinua Achebe who has embarked on the creation of "impetuous sons" rather than resigned psycho-passive anti-heroes.

Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* exposes the ills of the African postcolonial nation-state in an effort to propose credible alternatives to them. These alternatives are best described as horizons because they do not take the form of systematic solutions or detailed political and social programs. In *Anthills of the Savannah,* we find a groping for possibilities that are largely fragmentary, undecided and often amorphous.

In *Anthills* of *the Savannah,* Achebe attempts to clear a space that will enable fresh possibilities and open new horizons. Some of the new possibilities he suggests capture the political alternatives that Africans have put forward to redress the failure of many African nation-states to fulfill their peoples' aspirations.

There are some flickers of hope. Interestingly enough, it is the female characters who display strength and assurance in the midst of corruption and violence. In the final chapter, the focus is on the birth of Ikem's daughter, for whom Beatrice holds a traditional naming ceremony.

This gesture underscores the strong yearnings for some kind of reconnection with Africa's lost traditions that were trampled underfoot by colonialism. The infant is named A*maechina*, or 'May-the –path-never- close,' in memory of Ikem posthumously venerated for his martyrdom. The political allegory of the sun shining on the anthills of the savannah heralds an ambitious exposé and a compassionate vision of the future.

Comparatively, there is also a sense of conditional optimism in The *Beautyful Ones Are Not yet Born* and *Abyssinian Chronicles.* Although Armah suggests no easy answers to the contradictions that are portrayed in this novel, it is interesting, to consider the Man's thoughts in his wandering. Towards the end of the story, Armah impresses on the reader that the Man would just have to make up his mind that there was never going to be anything but despair (Armah, op.cit:180-81).

Even when he considers the likelihood of a new life, his doubts are shown to overpower any hint of optimism as observed from his monologue reproduced below:

> Someday in the long future a new life would maybe flower in the country, but when it came, it would not choose as its instruments the people who had made a habit of killing new flowers. The future goodness may come eventually, but before then where were the things in the present, which would prepare the way for it? (*Ibid*: 159-160).

All the more, Isegawa is plagued with nostalgia, which kindles faint hope or sense of optimism.

> I had found myself a stone to lay my head on, an enchanted hilltop made of boulders from all the corners of the globe. I was back in my element: watching, planning, and waiting for the right time to

> strike. Abyssinia was on my mind; so was my new foothold on this precipitous hilltop. It has always been a Herculean task for Abyssinians to get their foot in the door, but once in, they never budge. I was in (Isegawa, op. cit: 493).

Mugezi, who is at the center of this unforgettable novel, manages to make it through the hellish reign of Idi Amin and experiences the most crushing aspects of Ugandan society that he withstands his distant father's oppression and his mother's cruelty in the name of Catholic zeal, endures the ravages of war, rape, poverty, and AIDS, and yet is able to keep an optimistic outlook on life.

The two Southern African novels, namely *Bones* and *The Heart of Redness,* are characterized by a sense of optimism emanating from determination and reassertion of one's identity. *Bones* -a metonymic of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle against British rule-serves as a legendary source of inspiration for a national cause. *The Heart of Redness* as an aspect of coming to terms with one's roots which were dislocated due to exile, displacement or Diaspora heralds the third dimension of identity or cultural hybridity as the last resort.

7.8.3 Poles of Oscillation

Between the two extremes, there are oscillatory overtones which swing from pessimism to optimism and back again to pessimism. Such mixed feelings spring from broken but optimistic hearts. Even for pessimistic writers like Armah, it seems that there is a flicker of hope that things would change for the better with the growing commitment of the intellectuals, the reorientation of the misguided masses/youngsters, and the overthrow of the kleptocrats and shielding against the interference of the so- called neocolonial patrons in the internal affairs of their former Empires.

Within the statement of the title, a vaguely defined hope is implied hat the beautyful ones might be born. One of the narrative voices says that 'yet out of the decay and the dung, there is always a new flowering' (Ibid: 85).This marks the transition of post-colonial African novel from despair to optimism in spite of its gloom. Thus, "The comparative approach illuminates not only parallels and affinities but also divergences between literary developments of one nation and that of another" (Wellek and Warren, 1956:46).

Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Implications

An examination of the contemporary novels from mainstream Anglophone Africa (ca.1970-2000) against the comparative model of post-colonial theory reveals that African writers of the third generation partake ideological, stylistic and critical engagements. The range of these trajectories and their implications for the prospective growth of African literature are recapitulated hereunder:

8.1 Conclusion

The post-colonial African novelists' disillusionment with the euphoria of independence and the degeneration of such an enormous celebration into a nightmarish betrayal has been captured vividly in the East African, West African and Southern African novels. These works embody a pungent satire directed against the ineptitude of the new ruling elite and the resultant economic, social and political scenario of their countries.

In such a society where citizens are jailed without trial on groundless charges, it is the poor suspects who plead not guilty that suffer severe punishments for a crime which they have allegedly committed as reflected in post-colonial novels like *Kill Me Quick* (1973), *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1977), *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2000), *Bones* (1988), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and *Disgrace* (1999). The question of justice, thus, appears to be at stake in countries like Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe and the post-Apartheid South Africa due to the dysfunctional or superficial nature of the so called organs of justice.

All the more, the masses are implicated in the perpetuation the season of anomy owing to their withdrawal from political activism for one reason or another. By implication, the demobilized war veterans, the resigned observers, the opportunistic civil servants and the parasitic national bourgeoisie are in an implicit compliance with the corrupt 'fast drivers' and government functionaries.

These problems seem to have been compounded, to the advantage of the ruling elite, by the intellectual resignation, misdirection of the populace and recurrence of military crackdown against unarmed and defenseless civilians. Coupled with these are Police phobia and brutality which appear to be quite pervasive in the post-colonial novels across the board.

What is more, the double-dealing of the clergy -both Christian and Islamic- is bitterly attacked in novels like *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Sweet* and *Sour Milk*. Thus, the unholy alliance of the clergy and the ruling elite much against Christian morality and the tenets of Islam is one of their butts of satire.

The gravity of this disillusionment presupposes the writers' radical departure from disillusionment to a strong sense of optimism. This stride marks that national/regional salvation lies in the re-orientation of the misguided public and the enforcement of violence in order to bring about the envisaged social reform and write a paged history.

The post-colonial novels subsumed under this category are *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979), *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) *Abyssinian Chronicles (2000)* and *The Heart of Redness* (2000). In these novels, the representation of the intellectual-figures and/or the Diaspora has been transformed from resignation to psycho-activism, from pessimism to optimism, and from indifference to an altruist dedication.

To that effect, the black nationalists are called upon to tighten their grips on the blood-thirsty tyrants who are busy swindling the national resources of the country and sucking dry the sweat of the laboring masses in collaboration with their neocolonial 'Patron Saints.' Thus, the ordeal of the African nationalists (viz. intellectuals, artists, journalists, diplomats, community leaders and youngsters and the radical wing of armed forces) against this national aberration appears to be more demanding than ever irrespective of summary executions, disappearances, homicides and harassments.

The other major breakthrough in the development of the contemporary African novel is the revival of gender issues which were otherwise neglected. In the East, we come across an emergent feminist writer-Nuruddin Farah of Somalia- who is critical of the dominance of patriarchal ideology not only within family circles but also at the level of the superstructure. Farah is laudable for his stark portrayal of the effects of patriarchal subjugation of women.

Similarly, we witness a gross violation of human rights regardless of age- group, religious belief, social status and gender in Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles*.

Following his flight to the Netherlands, Muzegi also re-echoes the plight of women who are jilted by their husbands and/ or lovers like the black American lady he encounters in the host country. The stigmatic practices of circumcision and polygamy have also been attacked in the casual dialogue between the lady and Muzegi.

In West Africa, although Armah 's portrayal of the plight of female characters like Sister Maanan, Oyo and the girls who fall prey to predators is undeniable, the gender issue has been relegated to a secondary position. In contrast, Achebe seems to be more concerned with the representation of female characters that he has introduced a memorable character like Beatrice, who is considered to be the bulwark of the reformist strategy envisaged by her Diasporic colleagues.

The Zimbabwean novelist in his historical novel, *Bones*, further crystallizes the question of gender issue. The novel heralds the emergence of courageous female characters during the hard times of liberation struggle and in the wake of independence. The suffering of Marita and her Spartan strength together with the fearlessness of the unnamed woman, who claims the dead body of the former from the police, is a case in point.

With regard to Post-Apartheid South Africa, Coetzee's *Disgrace*, which seems to be a plea for tolerance, if viewed from the point of view of Lucy, is a special case. Even though the Apartheid system is legally banned, xenophobia still persists as both parties nurse it that one racial group dehumanizes the other.

The fact that both black and white female characters juxtaposed in the novel are equally doomed to sexual harassment implies that the fall of Apartheid has not resolved the endemic racial problem. In other words, the representation of female characters is no more than the substitution of white racism by anti-racist racism from the point of view of the writer.

In Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, the representation of female characters is polarized. This is observable from their attitude towards developmental trajectories vs. the preservation of the echo-system in which case Quezwa is against globalization trends while Xoliswa Ximiya is in favor of it. As a whole, the writers from the mainstream Anglophone Africa have probed into the matrix of Africa's

socio-political ills and their ideological thrust, and have, thus, envisioned a national/regional dream for re-interpretation.

Apart from the thematic preoccupation of the novelists, the textual strategies, which characterize the works in question, are also worth considering. The burning issue of decolonizing 'African literature' has been one of 'foregrounding the textual strategy of appropriation in the midst of a plea for abrogating the imperial tongue.

To that effect, the post-colonial novelists have vigorously enforced an alternative textual strategy of appropriation involving the employment of a variant form of english well -styled as English with small' e' in disfavor of RS-English. Thus, one of the fundamental tenets of recent post-colonial theory is the reclamation of the previously disparaged and denigrated cultures.

Finally, owing to the hard fact that the post-colonial African novel is hybrid of African and Western literary conventions, the question of proper literary appreciation happens to be one of the most daunting tasks facing Western readers who are tempted to read African literature either according to strictly Western criteria or as an exotic specimen of cultural otherness. Consequently, the empowerment of an eclectic approach to the critical appreciation of 'African literature' appears to have been aggressively enforced.

8.2 Bilateral Implications

The post-colonial African novel raises a number of historically conditioned formal and ideological issues that do not conform to Western literary canons. To strike a balance between the Afrocentric and Eurocentric extremes, the following suggestions are earmarked for Anglophone African writers, Afrocentric critics, curriculum designers and Eurocentric critics in that order:

1. Given the hard fact that English has irreversibly become a window-on-the world by the accidents of history, Anglophone African writers should invariably maintain English as the medium of literary expression. It should be borne in mind that because English is associated with colonial powers and with colonial oppression, it cannot be discarded overnight that such an adventure is bound to be counter-productive.

2. By the same token, Afrocentric critics, whether they are ethnic- Africans or non-Africans, should not overstretch the question of decentering Western universalism as well as the agenda of Afrocentric typological revision. Thus, both Eurocentric and Afrocentric writers/critics could operate within the framework of Aristotle's 'golden mean' with due acknowledgement of the matrices of Occidental and Oriental literatures.

3. Besides, curriculum designers and policy-makers should pay due attention to the empowerment of vernacular languages and indigenous literatures alongside the foreign language component in the school and college curricula. After all, appropriation of (English does not preclude the development of vernacular literature. All the more, it is advisable to adopt a diglossic or polyglossic language policy as the case may be to salvage one or the other from extinction.

4..Conversely, African literature should be pursued vigorously under comparative and post-colonial studies, which are emerging against all odds. After all, "A major element in post-colonial agenda is to disestablish Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values, and to expand the literary canon to include colonial and post-colonial writers from Africa, the Caribbean Islands and the Indian subcontinent." (Abrams 1999:237).

5. Insistence on the hegemony of Western canons and disregarding the contribution of post-colonial writers would be equally a disservice to the development of literary theory. Consequently, without prejudice to Eurocentric theories some of which are seminal, it is high time that polyphonic theories of literature like post-colonialism, which account for the bulk of Oriental countries and their cultural productions, are accommodated. This calls for a paradigm shift, which fosters multiculturalism or cultural hybridity instead of an outmoded essentialization or totalization policy. In sum,

> As the hey-day of European imperialism recedes further into the past, the theoretical issues raised by post-colonial theory: questions of resistance, power, ethnicity, nationality, language and culture and the transformation of dominant discourses by ordinary people, provide important models for understanding the place of the local in an increasingly globalized world (Ashcroft .2002:222).

Select Bibliography

A. Non-Literary Sources

Animode, B (1988) *A Political Economy of the African Crisis.* London: Zed Books.

Crowder, Michael (1962) *Senegal: A Study in French Assimilation Policy.* New York: Oxford University Press.

_____ 'Indirect rule: French and British style,' *Africa* 34(3) (1964) 205.

D. Martin. and P. Johnson (1981) *The Struggle for Zimbabwe.* Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.

Davidson, Basil (1994.) *The Search for Africa: A History in the Making.* New York: Random House Ltd.

Fanon.F. (1968) *The Wretched of the Earth.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Gamst, F.H.Charles (1984) *The Quemant: A Pagan-Hebraic Peasantry of Ethiopia.* Illinois: Waveland Press Inc.

Kenyatta, Jomo ((1968) *Suffering without Bitterness.* Nairobi: EAPH.

Lenin, V. E (1916) *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism.* Moscow: Parus Publishers.

Lugard, Frederick (1965) *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa.* Edinburgh: Blackwood.

Mandela, Nelson, "We should Forgive but not Forget", *The Guardian* (July 3, 1999).

Mashanga, M. (1970) 'Education and Frustration,' *East African Journal* VIII: 39-46.

Pieres, J.B. (1981) *The House of Phalo.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

_____ (1989) *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle-killing Movement of 1856-7.* Johannesburg: Indiana University Press.

Rodney, Walter *(1972) How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* Washington: Howard University Press.

Tamarkin, M. (1978) 'The roots of political stability in Kenya,' *African Affairs.*77:297-320.

The Guardian,oct.25,2002. Sec. Africa News.

Walsh, Jill Paton (1977) 'History is Fiction,' in *Crosscurrents of Criticism*, (ed.). Paul Heins, Boston: The Horn Book Incorporated.

B. Primary Texts

Abbe, Gubenna (1975) The *Defiance.* Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press.

Abrams, Peter (1946) *Mine Boy.* London: Faber.

_____ (1954) *Tell Freedom.* London: Faber.

Achebe, Chinua *(1966) A Man of the People.* London: Heinemann.

_____ (1987) *Anthills of the Savannah.* London: Heinemann.

Ajwang, Jan 'Interview with Moses Isegawa,' *The Daily Monitor* (Tuesday, October 18), 2005.

Aluko, T.M. (1959*) One Man, One Wife. London: Heinemann.*

_____. (1965*) Chief, Hounorable Minister.* London: Heinemann.

Armah, Ayi Kwie (1970) *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born.* 1968;. London: Heinemann.

Ashenafi, Kebede (1965) *Confession.* Addis Ababa: *Behanena Selam* Printing Press.

Awoonor, Kofi (1971) *This Earth, My Brother*. London: Heinemann.

Coetzee, J. M. (1999) *Disgrace*. London: Random House Ltd.

Conrad, Joseph (1902) *Heart of Darkness*. London: Hesperus Press.

Dagnachew, Worku *(*1968) *The Thirteenth Sun.* London: Heinemann.

Dangarembga, Tsitsi (*1989) Nervous Conditions.* Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.

Duodo, Cameron (1967) *The Gab Boys*. London: Heinemann

Ekwensi, Cyprian (1961) *Jagua Nana*. London: Heinemann.

Farah, Nuruddin (1970) *From Crooked Ribs.* London: Heinemann.

_____ (1979) *Sweet and Sour Milk*. London: Heinemann.

_____ (1993) *Gifts*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

_____ (1998) *Secrets*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Foden, Gile (1998) *The Last King of Scotland*. London: Faber and Faber

Hama Tuma (1993) *The Socialist Witch Doctor and Other Stories*. London: Heinemann.

_____ (2002) 'The Role and Ordeals of the African Writer,' in *African Absurdities: politically Incorrect Articles.* Trafford Publishing.

_____ (2004) *Give Me a Dog's Life Any Day*: *African Absurdities II.* Trafford Publishing.

_____ (2007) *Democratic Cannibalism*: *African Absurdities III.* Infinity Publishing.

Hove, C. (1988) *Bones.* Harare: Baobab Books.

Hayford,J. E. Casely (1911) *Ethiopia Unbound*. London:C.M.Phillips.

Isegawa, Moses(2000) *Abyssinian Chronicles*. New York: Barnes & Nobel.

Jacobs, J.U. (2002) 'Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*: t*he novel as Umngqokolo,' Kunapipi* XXIV (1&2): 224-236.

Kaunda, K. (1963) *Zambia Shall be Free*. London: Heinemann.

La Guma, Alex (1967) *The Stone Country*. London: Heinemann.

Laye, Camara (1959) *The African Child*. Collins.

Mda, Zakes (2000) *The Heart of Redness*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Mengistu Lemma (1970) *The Marriage of Unequals*. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd.

_____ "Snatch and Run"/ Marriage by Abduction," *Ethiopia Observer.* Vii (1972). 322-360.

Mpe, Phaswane (2001) Welcome *to Our Hilbrow*. Pietermaretzburg: University of Natal Press.

Mphahlele, Ezekiel (1959) *Down Second Avenue*. London: Faber.

_____ (1962) *African Image*. London: Faber and Faber.

_____ (1970) *The Wanderers*. New York: Macmillan.

Mwangi, Meja (1973) *Kill Me Quick*. London: Heinemann.

Nega, Mezlekia (2000) *Notes from the Hyena's Belly*. New York: Penguin

Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o (1977) *Petals of Blood*. New York: E.P. Dutton.

_____ (1982) *Devil on the Cross*. (Trans.). Oxford: Heinemann.

Orwell, George (1945) *Animal Farm*. London: Heinemann.

Ousmane, Sembene (1960) *God's Bits of Wood* .New York: Doubleday.

Oyono, Ferdinand (1956) (trans. John Reed, 1966). *Houseboy*. London: Heinemann.

_____ (1956) (trans. John Reed.1966).*The Old Man and the Medal*. London: Heinemann.

Paton, Alan (1946) *Cry, the Beloved Country*. London: Cape.

Rive, Richard (1964) *Emergency*. London: Heinemann.

Sahle-Selassie Berhane-Mariam (1968) *Afrsata* London: HEB.

_____ (1974) *Warrior King* .London: Heinemann.

_____ (1979) *Fire Brands*. Drumbeat: Longman.

Salih, Tayeb (1969) *Season of Migration to the North* .rpt. Oxford: Heinemann.1991.

Soyinka, Wole (1965) The *Interpreters*. London: Heinemann.

_____ (1973) *Season of Anomy*. London: Rex Callings.

Swift, J. (1721) *Gulliver's Travels*. London: Chatman P.L.C.

Tsegaye Gabremedhin (1965) *Oda Oak Oracle*. London: Oxford University Press.

_____"Azmari" *Ethiopia Observer*. lx, *no 1. (1965)229-239.*

Tutoula, Amos (1953) *The Palm-wine Drinkard*. New York: Grove Press.

Vera, Y. (1993) *Nehenda*. Harare: Baobab Books Ltd.

_____ (2002) *The Stone Virgins*. Cape Town: Weaver Press.

Wolde, Haile (1969) *Defend the Name*. Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press.

C. Secondary Sources

Abiy, Daniel (1986) "Socialist Realism and Its Implications for the African Writer" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis) AAU.

_____ (1998) "African Literature and Language-Based Approaches in ELT: A Study of Motivation (Unpublished PhD Thesis) AAU.

Abrams, M.H. (1981) *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holtrinehart and Winston.

_____ (1999) *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Thompson Learning Inc.

Achebe, Chinua (1988) 'The African writer and the English language' *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York.1990.

_____ 'The African writer and the Biafran cause,' *The Conch*, I No. 1 (March 1969) 8.

_____ "An Image of Africa,' *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 18, no. 4 (Winter 1977), pp. 782-794.

Acholonu, Obianuju Catherine. 'Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative,' *Conch* 3 (March-April 2002).

Agho, Jude (1993) "Disillusionment in the Novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, A.K.Armah, Alex La Guma and Sembene Ousmane" (Unpublished PhD Thesis) University of Ibadan.

Ahmed, Aijaz (1992) *In Theory: Classes, Nations and Literatures*. London: Verso.

Akalu Getaneh (June 1981) "Comedy and Social Purpose: Two Plays of Mengistu Lemma "(Unpublished MA Thesis) AAU.

Asfaw Damte. 1982a 'A national literature,' *Yekatit Quarterly*. 4 (June): 17-20.

_____.1982b'Talking of language and literature,'*Yekatit Quarterly* 6(2) (December): 12-17.

_____ (1985) *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. Vol. 4. Guha, Ranajit, ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) *The Empire Writs Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.

_____ (2004) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.

Auerbach, Eric (1940) *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Garden City, New York: Doublday.1957.

Beckson Karl and Arthur Ganz (1993) *Literary Terms: A Dictionary*. London: Andre Deutsch

Bhabha, Homi K. (1996) *Cultures in Between: Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage Publications.

_____ (1994) *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Brown, Lalage (1973) *Two Centuries of African English*. London: Heinemann.

Calder, A (1984) *Meja Mwangi's Novels: The Writing of East and Central Africa*. G.D.Killam (ed).London: Heinemann.

Chapman, Michael (1945) 'African Literature, African Literatures: Cultural Practice or Art?' *Research in African Literatures*, Volume 34, Number 1, (Spring 2003,) 1-10.

Chinweizu, Jemie, Onwuchekwa and Madubuike, Ihechukwu (1983) *Toward the Decolonization of African Literatures*. Vol.1 Washington, D.C: Howard University Press.

Dathorne, O.R. (1975) *African Literature in the Twentieth Century*. London: Heinemann; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

David, Ker. (1997) *The African Novel and the Modernist Tradition* .New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Debebe, Seifu (1980) "Ethiopian Literature in English" (Unpublished MA Thesis) AAU.

Fanon, Frantz (1968) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

_____ (1967) *Black Skin, White Masks* (trans.) New York: Grove Press.

Finnegan, Ruth (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Frey, Northrop (1957) *Anatomy of Criticism*. Amsterdam: Princeton University Press.

Gérard, Albert S. (1986). *European-language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

_____ (1990) *Contexts of African Literature*. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi.

Gikandi, Simon (2003) 'Structuralism and Post-structuralism', in Simon Gikandi (ed.), *Encyclopedia of African Literature* (London and New York: Routledge) pp.523-6.

Gillard, Garry (1977) "Handling of Action: Formal Aspects of Fictive Narrative in Africa" (Unpublished MPhil Dissertation) Murdoch University.

Gordimer, Nadine (1973) *The Black Interpreters: Notes on African Writing*. Johannesburg: Spruces/ Ravan.

Gray, Paul. 'Child chaos: a Ugandan reimagines his homeland's history,' *Time Pacific* 44(November 2000).

Griffith, Gareth (1978) *A Double Exile: African and West Indian Writing Between Two Cultures*. London: Marion Boyars.

_____ (2000) *African Literature in English: East and West*. Harlow Essex: Pearson Education.

_____ 'The Language of Disillusion in the African Novel,' *Commonwealth Literature*, 1971.

Heywood, Christopher (ed.). *Perspectives on African Literature: Selections from the Proceedings of the Conference on African Literature* Held at the University of Ife 1968, Heinemann, London; Africana Publishing Co.; New York, in Association with the University of Ife Press, 1971.

Hutcheon, Linda (1988) *A Poetics of Post-Modernism: History, Theory, and Fiction*. London and New York: Routeledge.

Irele, F. Abiola (1981) *African Experience in Literature and Ideology*. London: Heinemann.

_____and Simon, Gikandi (eds.). (2004) *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*.Cambrigde University Press.

Izevbaye, Dan 'The African experience of comparative literature', in *Comparative Approaches to Modern Africa Literature*, S.O. Sein (ed.), pp.1-15.Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.1982.

Jacobs, Fuch 'Post-Colonial Mock-Epic' in *Studies in Literary Imagination* (fall 2000).

Jaheinz, Jahn (1969) *A History of Neo-African Literature: Writing in Two Continents*. London: Faber.

Jameson, Fredric 'Third-World Literature in the era of multinational capitalism' *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65–88.

Kihende, Ayo 'Intertextuality and the contemporary African novel,' *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 12(3):372-386(2003).

_____ 'Post-independence disillusionment in contemporary African fiction: the Example of Meja Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick*.' *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 13(2) (2004)228-241.

Killam, G. D. ed. (1973) *African Writers on African Writing*. London: Heinemann.

Kurtz, Roger (1998) *Urban Obsessions, Urban Fears: The Post-Colonial Kenyan Novel.* Oxford: James Currey.

Lazarus, Neil (1990) *Postcolonial Resistance in African Fiction.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lukacs, George (1971) *Writer and Critic and Other Essays.* Edited and translated by A. Kahn. London: Merlin Press.

Martin, Wallace (1986) *Recent Theories of Narrative.* Cornell University Press. London: Macmillan Publishers.

Mengistu, Lemma 'The language of people as the language of literature,' *Yekatit Quarterly* VI (4) (June 1983)13+

Moore, Gerald ed. (1965) *African Literature and the Universities.* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press for the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

Moore, Gerald, and Ulli Beier eds. (1968) *Introduction to Modern Poetry from Africa.*1963; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Moore, Gerard (1969) *The Chosen Tongue: English Writing in Tropical World.* London: Longman.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1972) *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics.* London: Heinemann Educational Books.

_____ (1986) *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

_____ "Europhonism, Universities, and the Magic Fountain: The Future of African Literature and Scholarship", *Research in African Literatures* 3 (1) 2002: (1-11).

Nkosi, Lewis *(1965) Home and Exile* London: Longman.

Odinga, Oginga (1968) *Not yet Uhuru.* London: Heinemann.

Okara, Gabriel 'African speech...English words' (1963) in *African Writers on African Writing.* ed. G.D. Killam (1973) London: Heinemann.

Oriaku, R.O. (1982) "Protest and Revolution in the Kenyan Novel: The Example of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Meja Mwangi" (Unpublished M.A.Thesis) Ibadan University.

Owomoyela, Oyekan. (1979) *African Literatures: An Introduction.* Waltham, Mass: African Studies Association.

Palmer, Eustace (1979) *The Growth of the African Novel.* London. Heinemann.

_____ 'The Criticism of African fiction: its nature and function" *International Fiction Review* 1(July 1974)112-119.

Petersen, K.H.'First things first: problems of a feminist approach to African Literature,' *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* 251-2.ed.Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge.

Pratt, Mary Louise (1992) *Imperial Eyes: travel Writing and transculturation.* London and New York: Routledge.

Ramak, H.H. (1963) *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* eds.N.P. Stallknecht and H.Frez. Southern Illinois University Press.

Rao, Raja (1938) *Kanthapura.* New York: New Directions.

S. Mill. (1998) 'Postcolonial feminist theory,'" in S. Jackson and J. Jones eds., *Contemporary Feminist Theories* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) pp.98-112.

Sahle-Selassie 'Talking of language and literature,' *Yekatit Quarterly VI* (1) September1982)19-21.

Said, Edward (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

_____ (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Santangelo, B.Camenoro (2004) *African Fiction & Joseph Conrad: Reading Post-Colonial Intertextuality*. State University of New York Press.

Soyinka, Wole (1965) *The Interpreters*. London: Heinemann and New York Macmillan 1970.

_____ (1973) *Season of Anomy*. London: Rex Collings.

Swarns, Rachel 'South Africa's black writers: a free society's tension,' *The New York Times* (June 24) 2002.

Taye Assefa (1980) "Theodros in Historical Fiction" (Unpublished MA Thesis) AAU.

_____ *(1994)* 'Imagery of Decadence in *The Thirteenth Sun,' Proceedings of Eleventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, AAU.*

Tiffin, Helen (1995) 'Post-colonial literatures and counter-discourse', in *The Post--Colonial Studies Reader*. pp. 95-98.

Tucker, Martin (1967) *Africa in Modern Literature: A Survey of Contemporary Writing in English*. New York: Frederick Ungar.

Ulli, Beier (1979) *Introduction to African Literature*. Harlow, Essex: Longman Group Ltd.

Wabsterg, Per ed. (1967) The *Writer in Modern Africa: African-Scandinavian Writers' Conference*. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation.

Wali, Obi." The Dead End of African Literature" *Transition*. 10 (1963)13-15.

Wauthier, Claude (1978) *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa*. London: Heinemann.

Web, Hugh (1991) *Passionate Spaces: African Literature and the Post-Colonial Context*. Australia: Post-Colonial Press.

Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren (1956) *Concepts of Literature*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Wright, Derek (1997) *Contemporary African Fiction*. Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies.

Yimer Kifle (1990) "Stylistics, Pedagogy and Ethiopian Writing in English" (Unpublished PhD Thesis) Nottingham University.

Young, Robert J.C. (1995) *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in The Culture and Race*. London and New York: Routledge.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Faris. eds. (1995) *Magic Realism: Theory, History and Community*. London: Duke University Press.