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Buchi Emecheta's Kehinde (1994) and Maissa Bey's
Hizya (2015): Women's Resistance and Move to the
Center

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To:

- My beloved parents and grandparents.
- My dear sisters, brothers and my sister in law.
- My nephews and nieces.
- The memory of “Da Amar”, you will always be in our hearts, minds and prayers. May Allah grant you mercy, forgiveness and the highest place in Jannah.
- My best friend Kamar and my binomial Kamélia.

Fatma Ourdia

To:

- My loving parents and my grand mother
- My dear brothers and my sister in law
- My nephew and niece
- My binomial Ouarda

Kamélia

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Abstract

*The present dissertation explores the matters of patriarchy and women's resistance in the Nigerian and Algerian societies through the works of Buchi Emecheta's **Kehinde (1994)** and Maissa Bey's **Hizya (2015)**. Our study discusses the issues of gender discrimination and resistance through education and work in both novels. This study is divided into two chapters. In the first one, we have analyzed the issues of the conservative nature of the Nigerian and Algerian traditional cultures that discriminate women and oppress them. In the second chapter, we have depicted women's resistance through education and work since they are the ultimate way for women's liberation. To achieve our goal, we have relied on bell hooks feminist theory **From Margin to Center (1984)** and Betty Friedan's theory **The Feminine Mystique (1963)**. This work shows the difficulties and the hard living conditions of women who endure pain from their families, husband's and society. Moreover, we have depicted how women resist and protest the patriarchal attitudes for seeking freedom through the process of education and work. This study concludes that women's move from marginalization into rehabilitation of their position can be reached by education and work.*

Key words: *Gender Discrimination, African Cultures, Resistance, Education, Work, Liberation.*

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Introduction

Modern African literature has known the emergence of female writers who aim to change the position of women and resistance against the traditional constraints and male domination. They write to challenge the stereotypes that relegate women to a lower position. Buchi Emecheta and Maissa Bey are among the important figures who attempt to give voice and portray the life of the African women. Through their works, they expose women's bitter conditions within the patriarchal societies. Buchi Emecheta and Maissa Bey use protagonists who try to confront male superiority, discrimination and the socially endorsed norms that inhibit women's progress.

Writers like Emecheta and Bey use their pens to encourage women to militate against any form of persecution. They incite women to fight for their rights and change their negative image, as the society considers them as a tool for sexual pleasure. The two authors promote education and self-improvement for women as the only efficient way to achieve their objectives in life. They suggest that this fact will help to change the whole social structure as well as the development and the emergence of the notion of gender equality.

Over decades, women were and still are treated as inferior, passive and obedient to men. They endured all forms of oppression and discrimination imposed by traditions and culture. The present research explores the issues of sexism, marginality, love, education and career as depicted in contemporary African works of *Buchi Emecheta's Kehinde (1994)*¹ and *Maissa Bey's Hizya (2015)*². The novels reflect the position of women imposed by the sexist behaviours of the patriarchal societies. These women live under the shadow of men with no rights or respect. They are also viewed as subordinated being to men.

This dissertation examines the issues of patriarchy and women's resistance in Algeria and Nigeria during the post colonial era. In fact, even after the independence of many African countries, the system of patriarchy remains intact. Therefore, our work is interested in discussing the realities of African women's suffering from patriarchal oppression, resistance and their liberation mainly in the Algerian and Nigerian societies.

Review of the Literature

Both *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)* reflect the Nigerian and Algerian cultures, customs and traditions. To our knowledge, the two books received a large bulk of criticism from academics and writers.

To start with, *Kehinde (1994)* to our knowledge has received several critiques. We can identify the article *Gender Performativity in Buchi Emecheta Kehinde (2017)*³ by Velma Mohan. The latter is an Indian research scholar at the University of Kerala. The critic states that through *Kehinde*, Emecheta's protagonist, invites her readers to reject gender identity as an essence. The feminine roles as wives and mothers, according to Velma Mohan, are the effect of institutions, practices and discourses in the patriarchal culture. In fact, Velma incites women to redefine their identity as being strong, independent and successful individuals. She argues:

Buchi Emecheta is one of the most prolific second generation Nigerian women writers. Her literary works offer an authentic presentation of Nigerian women struggling to assert herself against sexual and racial oppressions. In the words of Marie Umeh, "[i]t is through Buchi Emecheta that the souls of voiceless Nigerian women ... are revealed" (qtd. in Ward 83). Emecheta's novel *Kehinde* traces the development of the female protagonist Kehinde Okolo from a traditional Igbo woman towards individuality within a heterosexual hegemony⁴.

From this quotation, Emecheta's work aims to put forward the voiceless women and their suffering from the patriarchal system of the Igbo society. Kehinde is a representation of a brave woman who has resist to free herself from patriarchy.

Shalini Nadaswaran writes in her article *The Legacy of Buchi Emecheta in Nigerian Women's Fiction* (2012) that Kehinde is depicted as a representative character of a Nigerian female who refuses to be a male victim. Shalini vindicates to go beyond silence and weakness. She declares that the novel is a demonstration of the growing strength of women to claim their identity and achieve deserved status. Shalini Nadaswaran asserts that a woman must be acknowledged as a person and as an individual, not just as a woman confined to roles dictated by her culture. She claims:

In using the first person 'I', Kehinde recognizes her dignity and her need to be acknowledged as a person and as an individual, not just as a woman confined to roles dictated by her culture. In standing up to her son, Kehinde recognizes her identity as a 'woman' and places value upon her womanhood. When Joshua is unhappy with his mother's stand, Kehinde resigns herself to the knowledge that "claiming my right does not make me less of a mother, not less of a woman. If anything it makes me more human"⁵

The quotation depicts Kehinde's recognition that women can be liberated from oppression only by themselves. They are the only persons who can change their status in the society and prove their identity as individuals.

Concerning Maissa Bey's *Hizya*, it is criticized by Badreddine Khelkhal and Dr Mahdia El Khalifa in their article entitled *Marginality in a Literary Work: Hizya of Maissa Bey*. They write that Maissa Bey reflects the marginalized women who are constantly haunted by the fear to transgress the social order. They add that Maissa Bey explores the Algerian women's conditions and context in general. She does not refer only to the protagonist Hizya in order to depict the harsh living of women, but she also uses other interrelated female characters. They assert:

Le roman *Hizya* traite non seulement de la situation personnelle du personnage central, mais en parallèle de bien d'autres situations des femmes algériennes au travers de personnages secondaires, par exemple les femmes travaillant avec elle au salon de coiffure. De surcroît, ce livre met l'accent sur la condition de la femme algérienne d'une façon contrastée. ⁶

As it can be noticed, the marginalized female characters attempt to change their lives and to remove marginality. She confirms that if someone has the possibility to reinvent his/her own life, he/she contributes to the improvement of the society. This fact cannot be achieved only with the break of social traditions which subordinate women. ⁷

Sexism and Sexualization of Women in Maissa Bey's Hizya (2019) is another work carried on the novel *Hizya (2015)*. It is written by Dr Mohammed Rachid Beneddra. In fact, he insists that the novel is a perfect representation of the voiceless Algerian women. Through his analysis, Dr Mohammed wants to explain and show the patriarchal aspect of the Algerian society among which control is only for women's destiny but never for men. He asserts in this context:

Un roman écrit à la première personne du singulier, le "je" de l'énonciatrice représente "des" voix féminines algériennes sous forme de revendication des droits de la femme. On peut, au préalable s'interroger sur les conditions de la femme en Algérie : si se sont les parents qui choisissent un mari pour leur fille, et pas forcément une épouse pour leur garçon, n'est-ce pas une sorte de sexisme, ou encore une atteinte à la sexualité féminine ? Comment se construit donc l'identité de la femme algérienne par rapport à l'altérité masculine ? ⁸

Maissa Bey, according to Beneddra, opposes the subjugation of women who are committed to a shared destiny. She is a symbol that calls into question women's double subordination, first under the parental roof and then throughout their marital lives.

Issue and Working Hypotheses

Our review puts emphasis on some major points of both selected works. From the cited above critics, we notice that both the novels *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)* received much critiques and literary attention but to our knowledge no attempt has been carried to combine the

novels into perspective. This is why we try to bring both works together through a comparative study. The study is based on the hypotheses that the two novels can be studied in a single work even if they have been written in different periods of time (1994/2015). Thus, the two authors share the same representation of the image of women in the African literature.

To develop our topic, we refer to some concepts from the theories of Bell Hooks' *From Margin to Center* (1984) ⁹ and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) ¹⁰ which are suitable for our analysis. The two theories give an insight on the image of women who live in spaces ruled by men. They show the lower position of women, their pain and submissiveness imposed by the social traditions.

In addition, the two theories provide solutions to the oppressed women in order to find their own voice and place in the society. The two theoreticians advocate for women's education and work since they are the only ways to free themselves from patriarchal societies. These concepts are remedies to get rid of the stereotypes and the restrictions of the domestic sphere.

Through this dissertation, we will try to find the similarities and differences in *Kehinde* (1994) and *Hizya* (2015) in terms of sexism, marginality and love. In addition, this study aims at showing how these experiences of patriarchal oppression contribute to the character's emancipation and liberation.

Methodological Outline

In this research paper, we have used on the IMRAD format. We have divided our dissertation into four parts: an introduction, methods and materials, results and discussion. In the first part, we initiate the historical background of our topic. We cite the literary review of some

previous works. Then, we present the problematic of our work. The second part contains methods and materials. In terms of Methods, we explain the theories of bell hooks' *From Margin to Center* (1984) and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Then, we introduce the materials which include the summaries of the novels *Kehinde* (1994) and *Hizya* (2015), as well, the biographies of their authors Buchi Emecheta and Maissa Bey. The results part provides final findings and answers to our problematic. The last part of our research contains the analysis and the discussion of our theme through the comparative study of our selected novels.

Methods and Materials

1-Methods

Throughout this dissertation, we deal with the theory of Feminism as developed by bell hooks and Betty Friedan. The theorist hooks introduced the theory of *From Margin to Center (1984)*¹¹ which aims to redefine Feminism so that it includes all those who are exploited, discriminated and oppressed. On the other hand, Betty Friedan's theory *The Feminine Mystique (1963)*¹² promotes women's liberation through education and career. In fact, the two theories are considered as a reaction to the stereotypes and traditional constraints against women. They have a common aim which encourages women to fight against patriarchal system in order to gain more freedom. According to this, we have selected some concepts (sexism, marginality and love) that are suitable for our subject.

a- bell hook's theory *From Margin to Center (1984)*

Gloria Jean Watkins, known as bell hooks is an American scholar and activist whose work examined the connections between sexism, marginality throughout her book *From Margin to Center (1984)*. This theory is a description of black women as existing in the margin in their lives hidden from mainstream American society as well as not being part of mainstream feminist theory. She has well explained in her book how women are marginalized in society. According to bell hooks, Feminism is a movement vindicating to end sexism, male domination and oppression¹³. For her, the feminist movement is an appeal to end the harsh reality of women as being men's possession. Feminism is a way of freeing women from discrimination and male domination.

Indeed, bell hooks introduces some important features as the inclusion of men in the feminist movement. She affirms that men suffer also, she even claims that they do not experience sexism, but there are ways in which it negatively affects them.¹⁴ bell hooks also believes on sisterhood and women solidarity. She argues that women must accept each other whatever the differences which may exist between them.¹⁵

In this dissertation, we have selected some concepts that suit with our topic, which are sexism, marginality and love. These concepts depict how women are relegated to a lower position in African societies.

Sexism appears to be the basis of all forms of prejudice and discrimination based on sex or gender especially against women and girls. Women are relegated to the domestic realm of nurturance and emotions. Sexism functions to maintain patriarchy or male domination, such oppression usually take the form of economic exploitation, social domination, and sexist behaviours. Bell Hooks in this essence claims:

Like most men, most women are taught from childhood that dominating and controlling others is the basic expression of power. Even though women do not kill in wars, do not shape government policy equally with men, they believe in the dominant ideology of the culture.¹⁶

From this quotation we may understand that the patriarchal society gives man the role as well as the right of domination, oppression and even exploitation. Masculinity is defined as sexual dominance; womanhood is viewed as sexual submissiveness. bell hooks in her feminist theory *Feminism is for Everybody (1985)*, states that men consider themselves superior and patronisers because of their genetics. More than this, power is always concerned by male character from childhood.

Marginality is another concept that has been also evoked by bell hooks. In the linguistic context marginality means the act of being relegated to a position indicating no importance. Talking about it in family and social context may stick to the act of being confined to a lower social standing. It occurs when people are pushed to the edge of a society; usually is an effect of discrimination making the person stands out and looks different from everybody else. Man is the nucleus and woman is a peripheral and an auxiliary entity. Bell Hooks defines marginality in her book *From Margin to Center (1984)* as following:

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. As black Americans living in a small Kentucky town. The railroad tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin.¹⁷

bell hooks reports the features of marginalization of black women in America. From this quotation, we find that people are mistreated because of their skin colour and their gender. They are even considered as non human since they have been excluded from certain places especially women who are put aside from white men and black men as well. The latter have subjected women to all forms of marginalization.

We also deal with the concept of Love which bell hooks tries to redefine in her book *All About Love: new visions (2000)*¹⁸. In her book, she offers a rethinking of the importance of love for individuals and even for societies. She argues that love ends struggles between people by bringing peace and compassion. The notion of love is an efficient weapon to abandon gender discrimination and gain respectful status within a patriarchal society. In this regard, bell hooks confirms: “The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others.”¹⁹

bell hooks defends the idea that love should be an act rather than a word. bell hooks evokes in her literary work *All About Love: New Visions (2000)* the concept of love because of her own experience with it. As she claims: “When I was a child, it was clear for me that life was not worth living if we did not know love. I wish I could testify that I came to this awareness because of the love I felt in my life. But it was love’s absence that let me know how much love mattered of my birth”.²⁰ In this regard, she adds that love is an action never simply a feeling and it is a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust.²¹

bell hooks depicts that women are not just properties, objects of men and means to fulfil their desires. She seeks to elongate struggle envisioning a life-affirming and targeting a peaceful tomorrow.

b- Betty Friedan’s Theory *the Feminine Mystique (1963)*

Betty Friedan is a Communist Jew of Russian origin known for her struggle to gain a place in America. She is a feminist writer and activist as well as a leading figure in the women’s movement in the United States of America. She is one of the founders of the *National Organization for Women in 1969*. Friedan also fights for abortion rights by establishing the *National Association for the repeal of Abortion laws and Contraception in 1969*. Moreover, as an activist, she aimed at helping women to have a greater role in politics and take part in the political process. She contributed to the creation of the National Women’s Political Caucus in 1971.²²

The term “Feminine Mystique” is coined for B. Friedan. It is to describe the societal assumption that women could not find fulfilment through housework, marriage, sexual passivity, and child rearing alone. Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique (1963)* brings new ground by exploring the idea that women can find personal achievements outside their conventional roles.

Betty Friedan affirms that unhappiness and inability to fulfil to the feminine mystique as the problem that has no name. She affirms:

The problem that has no name"-which is simply the fact that American women are kept from growing to their full human capacities –is taking a far greater toll on the physical and mental health of our country than any known disease.²³

Betty Freidan, in her book *The Feminine Mystique (1963)*, stresses on destroying all cultural beliefs and forms of oppression through creating a new career and life for themselves. In fact, women must overcome the constructed idea of the feminine mystique which attributes to them roles like wife, mother, and housewife, nothing else. The feminine mystique recognizes that keeping the house and raising children are essentials for motherhood. It disagrees with the woman who wants education and career.

Friedan's feminism emphasizes education and work for women and men instead of domestic life. She gave voice to millions of American women's frustrations with their limited gender roles. She said that she dedicated her life to paving the way for those who came after her²⁴. Betty Friedan encourages women to seek new opportunities for themselves by rejecting the feminine mystique and suggests that women have to find new life plan. She affirms that women could be well educated and have a successful career as well as a family. Women should endeavour to reach emanation.²⁵

For Betty Friedan transgressive education is a weapon for women. Thus, education may be used as an escape in women's shift from housekeepers to fulfilled women in society. In addition, Betty Friedan urges women to pursue an education and career. She believes that a woman can get

a job without neglecting her husband and family. Education is a way for women's liberation from the settings established by the feminine mystique. Betty argues:

The key to the trap is, of course, education. The feminine mystique has made higher education for women seem suspect, unnecessary, has saved dangerous. But I think that education, and only education; has saved and continue to save, American women from the greater dangers of the feminine mystique.²⁶

Education is the matrix of human evolution. Essentially for women, it is a key for them to social growth and identity. Moreover, education provides a new image of female characters; a woman who dares to transgress all the cultural beliefs and values of the patriarchal society. She exceeds all forms of discrimination and domination. In fact, men consider women's education as dangerous because it permits them to improve their way of thinking and acting. Education permits women to gain their freedom and have better status in society.²⁷

Betty Freidan incites women to have education in order to be active and have a professional life. Having a work is a way to be free and independent. It is the only thing in which women feel fulfilled as Betty Freidan argues in this essence: "The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own."²⁸ In other words, education is an efficient weapon and hard way to women's freedom; it is very urgent to educate them for the sake of freedom, creation and gender equality.

Betty Freidan invites women to free themselves from restrictions of the feminine mystique that devalues women. It prevents them from expressing themselves and using their abilities in other fields, not only in housekeeping and raising children. She incites women to make a life plan in terms of their own abilities in which their commitments as wife and mother will be integrated. She states:

The only kind of work which permits an able woman to realize her abilities fully, to achieve identity in society in a life plan that can encompass marriage and motherhood, is kind that was forbidden by the feminine mystique; the lifelong commitment to an art or science, to politics or profession.²⁹

In fact, women must go beyond male's control by cultural literacy awareness, transgressive education and struggle to make a career. They have to exploit all these advantages for regaining human and natural status. Indeed, women are created equal to man. So, it is up to them to refuse domination and get rid of male's fetters and unreasonable attitude.

Bell Hooks and Betty Freidan portray the oppression practiced against women. They depict how women are dominated by men and patriarchal societies and they describe also how women rebel and seek for independence.

Materials

2- Biography of the authors

a- Biography of Buchi Emecheta

Buchi Emecheta or Florence Onyebuchi Emecheta is a Nigerian writer. She was born in July, 1944 in Lagos, Nigeria. Buchi Emecheta emigrated with her husband from Nigeria to London. She began writing about her life including the problems she initially encountered in England. Her novels deal with the difficult and unequal roles of women in both foreign and African countries. Her character's lives are so deeply rooted in Igbo culture that even after immigrating to England, they are largely unable to depart from the traditional norms of Igbo society. In her novels, Buchi Emecheta evokes the issues of immigrant life in Great Britain as in *Kehinde (1994)*.

Buchi Emecheta is among the pioneers of Womanism, which is an African type of Feminism. She uses her own personal experiences as the stepping stone to express all the obstacles and distinctions that women face in their societies. Emecheta seeks to defend women's rights and insists for female independence. She denounces the patriarchal systems of the African societies. The author encourages women to free themselves from the restrictions of the domestic space and improve themselves in terms of education and work.³⁰

b- Biography of Maissa Bey

Her real name is Benameur Samia, Maissa Bey is the pen name given by her mother. She was born in Ksar El Boukhari, a small village in the south of Algiers. She learned the French language thanks to her father who was a teacher and fighter of FLN (Front National Liberation). After her graduation of French literature at the University of Algiers, she teaches in Sidi Bel Abbas. Maissa Bey discusses the everyday life of the Algerian, Arab, and Muslim girl face in a philosophical way. Maissa Bey is very interested by the condition of Algerian woman and defends her in her novel *Hizya (2015)*. Maissa Bey is a current Algerian woman of letters, and one of the writers who engraved her name with golden letters in Maghrebian literature, and particularly universal literature.³¹ She is among the committed writers who have been able to talk over and take care of subjects required until nowadays to be prohibitions and taboos in society. Maissa Bey seeks through her writings to meet the other. Also she tried to claim the rights of women and enlighten female action to create in her a situation of rebellion in the face of the depression and desocialization of women.

3- Synopsis of the Novels

a- Synopsis of *Kehinde* (1994)

Kehinde is a novel which tells the story of a woman who is searching for independence. The couple Albert and Kehinde Okolo live first in London. Albert receive a letter from his sisters who pressure him to come back home. However, Kehinde refuses the idea because she is hesitant to leave London and find herself pregnant. Albert's insistence pushes her to get an abortion. After Albert departure, Kehinde remains to sell the house already ordered by him. She is lonely at first and feels like a half person without her husband and her children. Therefore, she gives up her job and departs for Nigeria. On her arrival, she is surprised when she find that Albert get married to another woman after two years of their separation. Then, she decides to return to England and establish a new life. Kehinde's troubled relationship to Albert and her children are paralleled in her collections of a difficult childhood. Kehinde's son Joshua returns to London and wants to dominate her by owning the house because for him women do not own houses. Kehinde is unwilling to allow her son to dominate her. She asserts: « This is my house. »

b- Synopsis of *Hizya* (2015)

Hizya (2015) is a novel written by Maissa Bey. The protagonist Hizya is a young girl of 23 years old. She is recently graduated as a translator but could not find a job in her field of study. Hizya is a stubborn, daughter of a cobbler, living under the Algerian social norms. She works as a hairdresser where she finds some freedom but remains under the inquisitive eye of her parents and brothers. She wants to choose her own husband by herself. So, she meets a boy called Riyad with whom she lives a love story. Hizya is fascinated by the legend of Ben Guittoun "Hizya". She wants to create a destiny like the legend. In fact, she desires to live freely and find

the ideal love she dreams of. Even though she knows that this kind of relationships in her society are rejected, but Hizya is determined to follow her dream. Hizya faces several issues regarding marriage, questioning herself all the time, questioning the women around her, the married and divorced ones such as her mother, Sonia and Leila. She lived in conflicts and dilemma, between freedom and submission, prohibitions and permission, saying and silence. At the end of the novel she surrenders to the bitter reality.

III. Results

While treating the two works Kehinde (1994) and Hizya (2015). We have reached significant findings. Through the female characters, the authors portray the image of the victimized and marginalized women living under the patriarchal constraints.

In the first chapter, we have analyzed the traditional norms of the Nigerian and Algerian cultures which oppress women and make them inferior to men. The female characters are conscious about their subordination by the masculine power. The protagonist of the novels, Kehinde and Hizya, share the same status.

In addition, the two works of Buchi Emecheta and Maissa Bey have discussed the same issues relying on their personal and cultural experience. Starting by Emecheta's work which is an autobiographical since it originates from her personal life in both Nigeria and England. Maissa Bey as well, advocates the rights of the voiceless women of her society. She demonstrates the sexist attitudes that relegate them to a lower position and which prevent them to progress in life.

Additionally, the last finding we have attained is that the two authors use educated protagonists in order to emphasise women's rebel and protest for seeking freedom from the patriarchal societies through education and work. These ways of resistance sustain women struggle to release men's subordination and reach liberation.

End notes

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²Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015.

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- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid
- ¹⁸ Bell. hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*. Harper Collins: United States, 2000.
- ¹⁹ Bell. hooks, *Outlaw Culture*. Ed Resisting Representations, 1994.
- ²⁰ Ibid, Preface.
- ²¹ **bell hooks quotes: Her profound words on love and feminism**
- ²² Michals. Debra, *Betty Friedan (1921-2006)*, 2017 <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/betty-friedan>
- ²³ Friedan. Betty, *the Feminine Mystique*. Virginia Peterson, 1963.
- ²⁴ Ibid
- ²⁵ Ibid
- ²⁶ Ibid
- ²⁷ Ibid
- ²⁸ Ibid, 365.
- ²⁹ Ibid
- ³⁰ Buchi. Emecheta, *Bibliographie sélective*. Direction des collections Département Littérature et art : France,2017.

³¹ <https://www.etudier.com/dissertations/Maissa-Bey/222544.html>

IV. Discussion

In this part of our dissertation, we will discuss the female issues in African society in novels: *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)*. To answer our problematic, we divided our work into two main chapters. The first chapter discusses the socio-cultural issues namely: sexism, marginality, and love that have an immense influence on the position of women in society. To achieve our aim of study, we have relied on Bell Hooks theory *From Margin to Center (1984)*. The second chapter deals with the ongoing questioning of accepted beliefs and hierarchies, transgressive education, career in both novels. In this part of work, we have referred to Betty Freidan's theory *The Feminine Mystique (1963)*.

Chapter One: Sexism, Marginality, Lovelessness and Love in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)*

a- Sexism in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)*

In *Kehinde (1994)*, Buchi Emecheta depicts Igbo society as a patriarchal one that accepts the marginalization of women as an essential principle to the continuation of their society. Umeh claims:

According to Emecheta, Igbo society embodies the principle of male dominance and female subordination. Emecheta's women for the most part are sacrificed at the altar of a male oriented society and men exploit the sex/gender system to maintain male-dominance.³²

Buchi Emecheta traces the life of the protagonist Kehinde who faces sexist behaviours established by the institution of marriage. A married woman is evaluated in terms of her ability to reproduce. Albert says:

We own a house, Albert said quickly. He was not unaware of the legal status of the wife here in Britain. In Nigeria, the home belonged to the man, even if the woman spent her entire life

keeping it in order. She could never ask her husband to leave the house, as was done here. But Albert did not want trouble, so for the sake of peace he said, Our house...³³

In addition, a woman is instructed to look beautiful, dress properly, sacrifices for her brothers and faithfully carry out her responsibilities as well as take care of her children. Kehinde describes Rike, her rival, as beautiful, sophisticated and mainly young. She is also a lecturer. Thus, Rike possesses all the characteristics of an ideal woman.

Albert also considers his wife Kehinde to be a beautiful woman since she maintains her physical look and dresses pleasantly for him. She takes really good care of herself. Women are educated from childhood to essentialize their gendered identities. A Nigerian woman is disciplined to be polite, patient, loyal, obedient, nurturing, and submissive. Girls are also expected to follow the same path of their mothers. Boys are sent to a boarding school while girls are expected to look after the family. Bimpe goes to a day school and returns home to do the housework. She complains in her letter to her mother, about the amount of housework that she must do after school because it is a fact that she only knows in Nigeria. Bimpe claims:

I knew then that I would have to be a day girl. Dad did not ask me to leave the dormitory but I knew it would be much cheaper for him. He thanked me very much for making the gesture. Rike drives me to school most mornings, because our school is not far from the university. Joshua is staying in the boarding house. He did not volunteer to be a day student and nobody is expecting him to do so. You know, mum how much is expected of boys here.³⁴

In addition to this gender discrimination, girls are punished for trivial mistakes contrary to all the faults committed by sons are accepted. Hence, Joshua rudeness is considered as the normal behaviour of a fourteen boy establishing his identity. However, Bimpe has no right to interfere in the family discussions; she is quickly silenced by her father.

One can deduce, as a result, that man is considered superior and privileged in the family and in the society. It is taught that man is the master and women are his slaves and all what they

possess: children, land, house, and even their bodies belong to men. This has been shown through Albert's instructions to his son in terms of controlling and conquering women. He states:

We men must stick together, and look after our women. The house in London is yours. Make sure it goes under your name. Your mother loves you very much and would be happy to see you make your claim.³⁵

Albert teaches his son to follow the same path as the Igbo authoritarian men. He insists on him to claim the possession of their house in London, despite the fact that the owner is her mother, Kehinde. This fact depicts how the Igbo society promotes gender discrimination and male domination.

Moreover, the Igbo women is constantly relegated and oppressed. Gender distinctions have attribute to women roles that cannot be protested. They do not have the right to refer to their husbands by their given names. This fact is known as a shame among the Nigerian society because man is considered as superior. Ifeyinwa states:

Little mother, Ifi, call Albert for me. Where is he? Kehinde besought her sister. Ifeyinwa opened her eyes in horror. "Sh...Sh...Sh, not so loud! Don't call your husband by his name here-o. We here you do it over there in the land of white people. We don't do it here-o. Please Kehinde, don't-o."³⁶

Besides this, the roles that have been established in society appear clearly in the discussion between the couple about the pregnancy and the abortion since Albert sees Kehinde's pregnancy as a hindrance. It will thus prohibit him from travelling. Therefore, he orders Kehinde to abort the baby regardless of her wills and feelings. She is told when to have children, when to make love and when to abort. Albert says:

Tentatively he said, I'm sorry we have to do this. When we get home to Nigeria, you can have as many babies as you like, I promise. Kehinde flared up instantly. What do you mean have as many babies as I like? Have you forgotten that they are tying my tubes as well? I meant what I said last night. If I abort this child, I want my tubes tied.³⁷

Albert wants to return to his traditional way of life since the Igbo traditions regard women as “other” whereas men are accepted superior by birth. Albert wants to behave according to the patriarchal codes of Igbo culture. His wife, therefore, will pay attention to him, and insures that he misses nothing. Despite the family life he had. Albert is never satisfied deep inside of himself as he is just a store keeper, a man without authority. Albert is disgusted from his position in London. He claims:

But I want to go back to the way of life my father had, a life of comparative ease for men, where men were men, women were women and one was respected as somebody. Here I am nobody just a store keeper. I am fed up of listening to my wife and indulging her [...] there I can have a drink on the verandah and people will pay attention to me, including my wife. ³⁸

Through Albert’s words, we understand that he has an inner desire to return to his native country to regain his powerful position as a man. Thus, he wants to enjoy his masculine privileges in his homeland. Kehinde refuses to leave London because she occupies an important workplace in it.

In *Hizya (2015)*, the notion of sexism appears in different stages throughout the story. We can find various excerpts from Maissa Bey’s novel which underline the implications of gender among Algerian men's opinions. The sexist behaviours have established the roles for men and women. In fact, women are taught from birth that they are weak, dependant, and the only responsibility they have to succeed is being housewives and caretakers of their parents, husbands, and children. Hizya’s mother claims:

Nous /femmes/sommes venues au monde/pour consacrer notre vie toute entière aux autres/obéir/ servir/ subir/ accepter d’être/et de faire/ce que les autres/ en premier lieu/les parents/ décident pour nous /et puis/ une fois mariées / donner la vie/ c’est notre fonction/ c’est notre seule raison d’être/ c’est notre mission sur terre. » Malheur à celles qui veulent briser le cercle, à celles qui veulent forcer le destin. ³⁹

Hizya’s mother is very mindful of the way women are considered in their society, and is conscious of the functions that are given to a woman. She believes that a woman occupies a

lowered position in the Algerian society. For Hizya's mother, a woman will never succeed in trying to change her status. She is a concrete example of the oppressed woman living under the sexist norms of the Algerian society. She is submissive and obedient woman to her husband without ever complaining. In this regard, Hizya describes her mother as silent and has offended reactions. Hizya narrates:

Ma mère et ses silences. Aussi vaste, aussi impénétrables qu'un secret de vierge enfoui au cœur de la terre ! Je ne sais rien d'elle ou si peu. D'avoir longtemps vécu à l'ombre de sa belle mère l'a écrasée. Respect pudeur soumission silence obéissance dévouement discrétion abnégation etc. des mots béquilles dont elle a fait un chapelet qu'elle égrène aujourd'hui sans relâche et presque mécaniquement à notre intention les mots qui ont éteint toute lumière en elle.⁴⁰

The Algerian society cannot perceive that a woman can be independent financially. For man, a woman should depend on her father's or husband's money in order to survive economically. She has no right to choose or ask for anything. The only mission that she has to accomplish is to stay and take care of her family members and house. She is damned if she never keep dealing with house and domestic sphere. Hizya's brother Boumediene asserts:

Si maintenant des femmes deviennent chefs d'entreprise, qu'est ce qu'il nous reste à faire, nous les hommes ? [...] je me demande pourquoi elle ne se contente pas de rester chez elle pour pétrir et cuir son pain. Qu'elle laisse au moins à ses fils de s'occuper du reste !⁴¹

The novel Hizya (2015) depicts the gendered norms established by the society towards women through all the female characters. Starting by the protagonist Hizya, she is a young girl well educated and graduated student. However, although her status, she remains less independent. She stays under the protection of her father and her two brothers. Even though she works, she cannot go out without the company of her brothers. She complains: Et me voilà flanquée d'un ou de deux garde du corps dont la présence suffit à déjouer toutes velléité de pendre des chemins qui bifurquent.⁴²

In this regard, a woman born first under the parental submissiveness disguised as protection. She must always submit to her father and brothers. She must have a titular figure. She is always under eye if she goes anywhere. She is always unsafe either physically or psychologically. This is the norm of her social sphere.

Maissa Bey demonstrates that women's freedom is limited although she has the opportunity to work as she is supervised by her father and brothers. She shows the way the female characters are subordinated in the novel. We can see how African women suffer from a sexist and patriarchal society. Each female character struggles in a different way against male domination searching for liberation and freedom.

b- Affinities in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)* in Terms of Sexism

The two novels deal with the concept of sexism. The African community knows sexism and gender discrimination towards women with excellence. The two authors target to denounce the discrimination and submission that all women face in their society or even in their houses by representing both the single woman and the married one. At the beginning, a woman faces sexism from her parental figure (father, brothers) then, from her husband after marriage and even her own sons.

In the patriarchal society, men have the supreme power to decide in different situations that concern their daughters and wives. Women's opinions are not sought even in matters that concern them crucially. Just like in *Hizya*. It is her father and brothers who have the right to decide for her. *Hizya* says:

Pour conclure, ma mère a demandé un délai avant de donner une réponse. « C'est son père qui doit décider bien sur... et ses frères ». Mettre en avant les éléments masculins, c'est ce que ma mère sait le mieux faire.⁴³

Kehinde (1994) demonstrates that even the son may exert power over his mother and sister. This fact is shown in Kehinde's son, Joshua, when he gives instructions to her about the house possession and the relationship between her and Mr. Gibson. Kehinde and Joshua discuss:

Mr Gibson is not in anybody's way, darling, she said sweetly to Joshua. But this is my house, and I want him out. It's not quite like that. This is my house, though it may be yours one day. She waited for him to object that he was his father's first son, and that women don't own houses [...] legally all this is supposed to be mine. Dad said so several times, you heard him yourself. Why didn't you challenge him then?⁴⁴

Women do not face sexism only from men but also from women in the domestic space. It occurs when a woman uses her authority to humiliate, mistreat, or compete unjustly with another one. Both novels depict the notion of sexism through the female characters Kehinde and Hizya's mother who endured subjugation from their mother and sisters in law. Kehinde claims :

They did not even bother to ask how we are'. This was the right time to talk about her hurt at being regarded as a nonperson by her sister in law. 'All they know is come home, send money, come home. What is in Nigeria anyway? Are we not happy here? They just want a chance to nose into the way we live. Come home!⁴⁵

In this respect, Hizya also tells about her mother that she faces sexism from her mother in law. When Hizya's father is absent, it is his mother who takes over the control in the house. Hizya narrates :

Ce faisant, elle ne manquait pas de houspiller sa belle-fille, ma mère, qui baissait la tête et souvent ravalait ses larmes. [...] c'est ainsi que de génération en génération, leur pouvoir pour maintenir la tradition, des mères exercent leur pouvoir- le seul qui leur soit permis- sur d'autres femmes, d'autres mères, dans l'espace domestique- le seul qui leur soit réservé.⁴⁶

Women cannot change these traditional costumes that inferiorize them. Their revolt, however cannot achieve equality. They are submitted reluctantly. They can never talk about the issues that hurt them. They can bear and live their destiny.

c- Marginality in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)*

Marginality is present in *Kehinde (1994)*. Through the protagonist Kehinde Okolo who struggles with marginality exercised by her husband. Kehinde feels valueless black within white culture, and a modernised black woman within the Igbo culture. As Kehinde and her family live in London, they certainly have lived racism since they are among white people. In the domestic sphere, Kehinde is marginalized by her husband. Albert has just instructed her to abort the baby. He does not care about her feelings and the fact that she wants to keep the baby. She feels depreciated and alienated. Kehinde asserts:

Was that what you had in mind? Abortion? Albert nodded. What does your wife say to that? Our women can be difficult when it comes to things like that. A white, easy, she'll see sense. Er... I haven't even told her yet. But she will do what I say.⁴⁷

Physical appearance contributes in the relegation of women in the Nigerian society. Albert confirms that when he was speaking about the physical body of his favourite woman. Emecheta states:

Kehinde, who had never been thin, was now, at thirty-five and after the births of two children and years of eating takeaway fish and chips, comfortably plump. Albert liked her that way. He found thin women unsatisfying. What was a man expected to fondle at night, when there was a gale outside? Give him a plump African woman with a heavy backside, like Kehinde. He looked in her direction. What are we going to do, eh?⁴⁸

From this quotation, we may say that women are criticized about their bodies as if it does not belong to them. They do not have the right to choose how they should be. They must fit the Igbo ideal woman that that the society has shaped.

After two years of loneliness, Kehinde returns to Nigeria to join her family, where she endures marginalization at various levels. Once in the homeland, Kehinde feels alienated from her husband because he does not treat her nicely. Albert becomes irrational as he plays the role of

the powerful Igbo man. He adheres to traditional Igbo culture, which ignores and degrades women. Kehinde complains:

Kehinde was both relieved that they had adjusted with apparently so little trauma, and confirmed in her opinion that there was no place for her in the family. The circle had closed in her absence, and she did not have the strength to fight her way back in.⁴⁹

Albert accepts polygamy as a typical way of living. He does not care about how this act will be received by Kehinde. Women are replaceable as pieces of clothes. It means they are within the reach of men. Albert justifies his second marriage to Kehinde that he follows the path of his parents. Thus, she does not have to complain. He argues:

I know you're angry. But look back, Kehinde. My father had two wives, yours had three, so what sin did I commit that is so abominable? Albert's voice grated. Did they marry in church? We had church wedding, or have you forgotten? All those promises, don't they mean anything to you?⁵⁰

Through this quotation, we may notice that the male character is tied to the traditions that give him the authority and to justify the discrimination practised against his wife. In spite of long stay in the atmosphere of gender equality in London he is unable to hold the beliefs that oblige him to share the same status with his wife.

The protagonist Kehinde faces marginality from birth. She is seen by her surrounding as a curse. People regard her as a sign of bad luck and blame her as if she is responsible for the death of her mother and twin sister. Kehinde asserts:

I later realized that she did not want me to know the story of my birth. She knew people would remember me and say, was this not the baby that brought bad luck to her mother and baby sister? Was this not the child that deprived her brothers and sisters of the joy of having a mother? What are you doing with such an ill-luck child?⁵¹

From the above quotation, we may say that in the Igbo culture, having a male child is pride and honour that will bring so much luck to family, whereas having a girl born is seen as bad luck. Just like Kehinde, who her birth is accused to be a child who brought bad luck.

As Buchi Emecheta, Maissa Bey also advocates the rights of the marginalized women in her novel *Hizya* (2015). Hizya the protagonist is marginalized as all the women of her society. She is living under the weight of heavy constraints within the Algerian family and society. In fact, Hizya faces marginality from birth especially about her physical appearance and skin colour. She is seen inferior to the other girls. Hizya is very tall, so her brothers criticize her negatively. They nickname her as “sloughi”, “giraffe” and “jument”. This is what explains that physical appearance can play an important role in the distinction and therefore the marginality of women. She claims:

La nature m’a dotée d’un teint qui, dès ma naissance, a surpris et désolé toutes les femmes de la famille qui se sont penchées sur mon berceau [...] j’ai dû entendre des dizaines de fois l’anecdote rapportée pas une de mes tantes à propos de la réaction de ma grand-mère paternelle juste après ma naissance. Celle-ci c’était exclamée en me voyant : une fille ! Et brune de surcroît ! Elle s’était aussitôt détournée en marmonnant qu’elle ne se voyait pas annoncer à son fils, le père, ces deux mauvaises nouvelles ! ⁵²

Maissa Bey does not only use Hizya as an example of marginalized women, but all her colleagues at work as well. For instance, the character of Leila, as a divorced woman, is the most marginalized woman in the African society. She is always seen with a bad eye and considered as a fallen woman. She lives in her parent’s house with her two children. In return to her family’s acceptance to live with them, Leila holds on all the responsibilities related to the family. Hizya confirms:

Quarante ans. Divorcée. Elle n’est pas à la charge de ses parents, puisqu’elle gagne sa vie. Elle n’a arrêté de travailler, sur la demande de son époux, que pendant les quatre ou cinq ans qu’a durés son mariage. Puis elle est revenue au salon. C’est elle qui s’occupe de tout dans la maison familiale. Les courses, le ménage, les factures, les soins médicaux de sa mère presque grabataire depuis son AVC. Et tout le monde trouve cela normal. C’est le prix à payer pour se faire accepter avec ses deux enfants. Le prix à payer pour l’échec de son mariage. Et son renvoi du domicile conjugal par l’époux.⁵³

From the passage, it is clear that Leila is portrayed as a victim who suffers as a divorced woman in Algerian patriarchal society. Leila is obligated to take responsibility and pay for

everything in the house for her family members. For them, it is the cost of her disobedience and marriage failure, because in her male-dominated society, women must be obedient to their husbands, bear all difficulties, and be quiet and submissive.

Furthermore, marriage is of great importance in order to prevent the daughters from prejudices and stereotypes. Women must marry at all costs in order to settle them down and spare them from the scourges of society, such as bad company and prostitution. Their marginality is understood as anti-conformism and a rejection of normativity. In fact, marriage is seen as protective institution for women. The following quotation illustrates :

Oui... Je sais ma mère n'arrête pas de me le répéter. A mon âge, il y en a qui ont déjà deux ou trois enfants! Limite inférieure, dix huit ans. Limite supérieure vingt cinq ans! Au delà tu deviens ce que les copines, jamais à court d'inventions verbales, appellent une céli-bayra ! Contraction de deux mots dans les deux langues. Synonyme plus ou moins approchant de laissé-pour-compte ⁵⁴

Women are never at ease in the patriarchal society. Men consider them as sex objects. This is what makes them feel ashamed of going outside. So, they have to be condemned at home in order to live safely. Hizya says:

Image de mon quartier. Pour beaucoup, les images de mon quartier, ce sont ces photos de femmes voilées qui descendent ou remontent les escaliers ou les ruelles en pente et qui ne fixent jamais l'objectif du photographe, ce voleur d'images. ⁵⁵

The quotation demonstrates the fear nourished by the social distinctions between men and women. bell hooks argues that women cannot walk freely, assume or do everything they desire because males do not allow them to be free. bell hooks confirms that a woman is a member of the whole society but she does not really contribute to it, even in her own body, she has no right to take decisions.

d- Affinities in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)* in Terms of Marginality

The concept of marginality is present in the two works. Both writers represent all marginalized women among their societies through their respective protagonists Hizya and Kehinde. The novels show the women's lower position in their society in spite of their capacities and their graduation. Even though Hizya is a graduated woman, she works as a hairdresser. She says :

Tu croyais pouvoir faire exception à la règle ? Tu le savais, quand même, que des jeunes filles chômeuses diplômées, il y en a autant que les jeunes hommes. [...] et contrairement aux hommes, à la maison, elles, elles ne chôment pas.⁵⁶

From this passage, one may understand how a woman can reach an intellectual instruction. But, this is all in vein within a social space forbidding any different female role. In fact, the established order of female status is immutable.

Kehinde works in a bank and earns more than her husband but she depends on him financially since he is the responsible on her expenses. It means that a woman is under the mercy of a man just for the fact of her biological formation. She can never gain another status even if she gains money, produces more than man or creates better than males.

In fact, Albert was only being realistic, since Kehinde earned more than he did. It was because of her position in the bank they had been able to get a mortgage. But the good wife was not supposed to remind her husband such things.⁵⁷

Both novels depict the daily life of divorced women. They are considered as fallen women because they did not preserve their marriage in order to remain good wives in order to be accepted in the society. As it is mentioned in *Kehinde*:

Mary Elikwu was surprised at Kehinde's reaction. She had meant to pay her a compliment, but she was learning very fast that a woman who left her marriage would always be marginalised, even by those she and her husband had regarded as close friends.⁵⁸

Just like in *Kehinde* (1994), *Hizya* (2015) too shows how Leila is a victim of being a divorced woman in the Algerian society. She wants to explain to Hizya that when a woman asks for divorce, she breaks the traditional values. Leila claims:

Ce que tu ne sais pas, c'est qu'il m'a fallu beaucoup de courage pour divorcer. J'avais contre moi toutes ma famille ou presque. Mais je n'ai pas eu le choix. C'était ca ou bien la folie. Ou...le suicide. Mon mari était un pervers. De la pire espèce.⁵⁹

In both novels, the female protagonists undergo physical abuse from other characters. *Kehinde* is criticised on her body because she is not in the extent to what mama Kaduna saw the perfect woman. *Hizya's* skin is also questioned in the novel. Even her grandmother and society believe that a perfect woman should have white skin, blue eyes, and light hair, as opposed to *Hizya*.

e- Lovelessness in Kehinde (1994) and Love Hizya (2015)

In *Kehinde* (1994) lovelessness is more prominent in the novel. This is illustrated through the couple *Kehinde* and *Albert* after his return to Nigeria. Lovelessness engenders tensions between the two. *Albert* once in Nigeria feels powerful and has more freedom. Consequently, this leads him to betray his wife and get married with another woman: A wife who fits with his thoughts and needs. *Kehinde* at that moment is in England and is unaware of what is happening in Nigeria. *Kehinde's* absence does not mean anything to *Albert*; this is why he is not enthusiastic on his wife returning to Nigeria. *Kehinde* and *Ifeyinwa* say:

But why didn't *Albert* give me even a hint that this was the way of life he wanted? What rubbish you talk. Men don't say such things. It's like asking why a man did not tell his wife before raking a mistress. But he must have left hints, you must have seen it in his behaviour. You were probably too sure of your position to notice, and too busy giving him orders. Why do you think he was not keen on your returning immediately?⁶⁰

Albert deceives *Kehinde* and argues that what he does was absolutely a traditional act. He does not take into consideration her feelings. Since their parents also had more than one wife.

⁶¹Kehinde is against polygamy and she wants to eradicate this custom of having more than one wife. It is a practise established by their ancestors since thousands of years. According to Kehinde, if Albert really loves her, he will not leave her for another woman. She believes that love is a commitment. We can conclude that Kehinde shares the same perspectives as bell hooks in terms of the definition of love.

Kehinde asserts that Albert has left his love in England and all the feelings and the attentions that he gives her. In Nigeria, Albert becomes another person with arrogance. He does not feel any sympathy or affection towards his wife Kehinde. He acts with selfishness which appears first when he takes the decision of the abortion. Even though Kehinde wants the baby, Albert forces her to abort. Kehinde feels betrayed twice, first because Albert gets married and because he has children with her rival Rike. After her arrival to Nigeria, he does not give her any importance. Kehinde complains:

Kehinde did not believe what she was hearing. This was not what we planned. We couldn't keep the baby because we had no money. Only a few months later, a prophet convinces you you are going to have a messiah. Oh Albert, what happened to you?⁶²

At the end, Kehinde does not accept such behaviours and contempt from Albert. In fact, she decides to return to England and sacrifices her marriage for her own freedom. In England at least she feels independent to do whatever she wants.

In the novel *Hizya (2015)*, the protagonist is a young woman who is fascinated by poetry and love. She wants to take the real Hizya of the poem written by Mohammed Ben Guittoun as a model for a great love story. Hizya has constituted a dream, to reproduce exactly the life of her namesake. She asserts :

Hizya. Fille d'Ahmed Ben el Bey. C'est par elle et par ce chant, qui n'est rien d'autre qu'un tombeau somptueux érigé par l'amant à l'amour, à cette femme éternellement vivante à travers un poème, que la poésie est entrée dans ma vie.⁶³

Hizya grows in a conservative family, where there are no means to relationships and even love stories. This is what pushes her to transgress the society's laws, by meeting a man and starting a relationship with him. In a phone store, Hizya knows a man called Riyad with whom she lives an adventure of love in the unbeknownst of her parents. Hizya wants to rebel against the millennial traditions, go beyond her father's authority and the hypocritical taboos.

Hizya refuses to live the same fate of her mother and the other women in her society. She wants to establish a new vision of love relationships. She wants to live a real love story with the man she chooses. She imagines an extraordinary life with Riyad, a life full of deep feelings and joys. Hizya seeks to free herself from the mores of the human community and refuses to submit to the dictations of society governed by traditions and convictions. She declares:

Pourquoi pas? Vouloir rencontrer un homme-où? Quand? Qui ? Comment ?, vouloir vivre une histoire d'amour, un amour qui serait exceptionnel, n'est ce pas déjà de la déraison, ou du moins le commencement de quelque chose qui ressemblerait à de la folie ? Le vouloir seulement. Pourquoi pas ? Je voudrais simplement savoir. Savoir ce qu'est précisément cette forme de folie.⁶⁴

However, Hizya cannot realize her dream and fall into the bitter reality which is very far from dreams. The Algerian conservative traditions prohibit this kind of relations between men and women except by marriage.

In order to keep the moral and social orders, many methods are applied in this regard. For instance, separating the two sexes, prohibiting the physical contact or observe them when they are together. In fact, a woman should obey the norms and be far from prohibitions and never cross the limits. As it is confirmed through the mother's behaviour toward her daughters as explained in:

Ma mère passe au peigne fin tous les coins et recoins de notre chambre. Elle fouille partout. [...] qu'elle secoue pour voir si un papier compromettant, une photo, une adresse, un numéro de téléphone ne s'y cachent pas. [...] plus méthodique, plus minutieux des inspecteurs chargés d'une enquête criminelle.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, Hizya dares to break the boundaries of her family and society, but she does not succeed to realize her wills. She is sidetracked by the reality, as her love story is not crowned by marriage. As a consequence, Hizya ceases her attachment to the poem of Ben Guittoun which inspired her considerably. She finishes by accepting the real life and argues that the legend she wants to follow is just an excuse since there is no escape from reality. She is an ordinary woman with an ordinary life no more than this as all other families.

In the patriarchal societies, love is considered to be a weakness particularly for men. Love is one of the society's taboos that must not be evoked by anyone especially women. This fact contributes in the marginalization of women by neglecting their emotions and feelings. The absence of love sustains men's superiority and women's inferiority.

f- Affinities in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)* in terms of Lovelessness and Love.

In *Kehinde (1994)*, the protagonist lives a peasant life with her husband and children in London. Albert there accepts the equality between him and his wife but this does not last. In Nigeria, Albert becomes the real Igbo man. For him, expressing feelings is not important at all because for the Igbo society, this fact devalue men. In fact, Albert wants to follow the same way of thinking as his ancestors. That is what explains his behaviours and his polygamy. He asserts: I know you're angry. But look back, *Kehinde*. My father had two wives, yours had three, so what sin did I commit that is so abominable? Albert's voice grated.⁶⁶

However, Kehinde does not accept this way of living and the traditional customs of the Nigerian society. So, she decides to abandon her marriage and those social norms that burry her dreams. London has enough changed her way of resonating, to refuse and reject such social constraints that still marginalize women. Kehinde confirms:

She took hold of herself. Surely it was foolish to pine for a country where she would always be made to feel unwelcome. But then her homecoming had been nothing like the way she had dreamed of it. She now knew how naive she had been, trusting Albert implicitly.⁶⁷

From this quotation, we may understand that Kehinde feels lonely. Things do not go like she expects. Her love story with her husband is affected by Albert's thoughts and beliefs. They do not have the same perspectives of the way of living. She realizes that she deserves a better life far from him.

In *Hizya* (2015), the protagonist wants to challenge the social orders of the Algerian society. She wants to trace a way to a new life, where her decisions and opinions are primordial. She lives a love story with the man she chooses. She transgresses the social barriers which reject any kind of relationships between men and women. Love stories are considered as sins in such patriarchal societies. *Hizya* finishes by accepting the reality and realizes that the society cannot be challenged. She says:

J'imagine ma vie. J'imagine ce qui m'attend. Le chemin est tout tracé. Il ne diffèrera en rien de celui qu'ont emprunté tant de cousines, de voisines et d'amies. Qu'elles aient fait des études ou non. Qu'elles aient un travail à l'extérieur ou non.⁶⁸

From this, we may conclude that *Hizya* and Kehinde's love stories do not grow as they liked. They surrender to the harsh reality and accept their destiny. *Hizya* ends her engagement with Riyadh at the end of the story because her parents are against it. Traditions compel her to do so. Kehinde, on the other hand, abandons her marriage against her will because she refuses to accept the traditions and customs.

To conclude, this chapter is expected to demonstrate the image of the African women in both the Algerian and Nigerian societies. We have established a comparative study and analysis through the works of Maissa Bey and Buchi Emecheta. This is to provide the readers with an insight on how women are marginalized and inferiorized by men in the two different societies. Women are victims of gender inequalities, marginalization and lovelessness. The authors show how sexist behaviours negatively influence love relationships. In one word, both novels reflect the female oppression and patriarchal authority over women in both Algerian and Nigerian contexts.

³²Umeh Marie. 1996. *Igbo Women and Culture in Emerging perspectives on Buchi Emecheta*. Ed New Jersey: Africa World Press.

³³ Buchi. Emecheta, *Kehinde*. Pearson Education Limited, 1994, 4

³⁴ *Ibid*, 120.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 140.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 70.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 22

³⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

³⁹Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 50.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 29.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 82

⁴² *Ibid*, 43.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 110.

⁴⁴Buchi. Emecheta, *Kehinde*. Pearson Education Limited, 1994, 137:138.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

⁴⁶Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 62.

⁴⁷Buchi. Emecheta, *Kehinde*. Pearson Education Limited, 1994, 15.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 91.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 86.

⁵¹ Ibid, 19

⁵² Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 68.

⁵³ Ibid, 138.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 48.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 35.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 26.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 39.

⁵⁹ Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 142.

⁶⁰ Buchi. Emecheta, *Kehinde*. Pearson Education Limited, 1994, 74

⁶¹ Ibid, 86.

⁶² Ibid, 87.

⁶³ Ibid, 86.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 50.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 44:45.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 86

⁶⁷ Ibid, 96:97.

⁶⁸ Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 48

Chapter Two: Resistance through Education, Work and Cultural Divergences in *Kehinde* (1994) and *Hizya* (2015)

Women in both Nigerian and Algerian societies often have the image of being submissive by the social traditions in the patriarchal societies. This is the reason why women decide to break silence. They show resistance to describe their pain, thus expressing their desires to pursue their freedom and to achieve their dreams. They seek to be emanates and gain their natural status of being equal to men.

a. Education as Transgression in *Kehinde* (1994) and *Hizya* (2015)

Buchi Emecheta supports the idea of education for women through her use of an educated protagonist named Kehinde. She promotes the fact that a woman must have a degree in different fields. An educated woman can protest against discrimination and fight for her freedom and her rights. In her novel, Kehinde does not accomplish her university studies. Consequently, she is determined to reach her objective to have a higher degree in sociology. Bimpe says:

Oh, I almost forgot- congratulations! I can't believe that in such a short time, a little over three years, you could get a degree! I know you said you were determined to be a university graduate, but honestly mum, I didn't think you could achieve it. Many congratulations mum.⁶⁹

Through this quotation, we confirm that a woman must have the will and never renounce to hindrances that make her dream unattainable. In fact, Kehinde has faced a problem once in Nigeria because she has no certificate in order to work. Thus, she takes this as a boost to continue her studies. Education contributes to the way women think and act. It stimulates women's intelligence. As a result, they prioritize the use of their minds, as evidenced by Kehinde's reaction to her husband's abortion decision. Kehinde challenges her husband; she makes tube-tying as a

condition for him. However, if she is not intelligent, she would accept her husband's instructions without hesitation. She claims:

Kehinde flared up instantly. What do you mean, have as many babies as I like? Have you forgotten that they are tying my tubes as well? I meant what I said last night. If I abort this child, I want my tubes tied. I can no longer rely on you to take the proper precautions. And I want to go through this again, ever.⁷⁰

Buchi Emecheta, in this novel, uses other female characters namely Moriammo, Rike and aunt Selina who have access to education and fight for equality and self-definition. Emecheta reinforces the appeal for women's education throughout the world. She believes that education is a key for their freedom and liberation from social and male's oppression.

Kehinde's best friend, Moriammo, does not have a higher education. She does not speak English fluently. It is best exemplified by Kehinde's deciphering of Moriammo's words:

Na true-o. You know K, I no like chicken wey no get pepper. Not enough pepper for this your chicken. Chicken without pepper give you heartburn. [...] Where you read that? Where I read am? Na from Encyclopaedia Worldcanica. Oh my god Moriammo. You are murdering the English language.⁷¹

Therefore, she wants to improve herself and get a degree in education. She claims that she is going to pick up her life and study for a degree, the way Kehinde does. Moriammo gives a great interest to education because it is a weapon that enables women to overcome the social and traditional restrictions that prevent them from their rights.

In the Igbo culture, educated women such as aunt Selina and Rike exist. In terms of education, these women broke the ancient mores of their society. For example, aunt Selina is a typical successful Nigerian business woman. In another side, Albert's second wife is also a lecturer. She is well educated and occupies an important workplace. Ifeyinwa says that Rike is a big teacher at the university. Kehinde says:

Yes Moriammo, he has another wife. She is a lecturer. She has a PhD. She has a maid. She has a Peugeot. She has a son twelve months old. And I am sure the one she is carrying will be another son. You know my husband-our husband-cannot sit down and read a book to save his life, but now he is married to a young woman with a doctorate degree in literature.⁷²

Emecheta depicts an educated woman in an Igbo society in this quotation. She demonstrates how Rike's social standing is elevated as a result of her education. Compared to other uneducated women in her society, she has decent financial means. She opposes the patriarchal society's social constraints. She is independent and fulfilled.

Maissa Bey, in her novel, portrays an educated protagonist in order to show the importance of education in women's thoughts. Hizya is a graduated young girl. She has a Master degree in translation. Hizya makes part of the new generation where women finally have the right or access to education. It enables women to develop a way of thinking in order to free themselves from discrimination and oppression. Hizya says:

Je me souviens m'être dit que j'allais enfin pouvoir m'éloigner, me détacher de tout cela le jour où j'ai franchi les grilles de l'université pour la première fois. Mon père et ma mère étaient tellement fiers de ma réussite au bac fêtée par toute la famille et les voisins, que je n'ai pas eu trop gros mal à obtenir d'eux le droit de poursuivre mes études. Je n'avais pas choisi la filière de traduction. J'y ai été orientée au vu de mes bons résultats dans les matières littéraires.⁷³

Thanks to education, Hizya is depicted as a modern woman who is trying to confront the patriarchal society. Acquiring new vision toward the future, Hizya wants to challenge the social norms by assuming herself in the society. She wants to pursue her desire and live as she wants. She claims:

J'allais à l'université chaque matin. Même les jours où je n'avait pas cours. Je repense sans cesse à cette période privilégiée de ma vie. Sans doute la plus lumineuse, la plus exaltante. Nous étions de nombreuses filles- statistiquement plus nombreuses que les garçons-à passer des journées entières dans cette enceinte. Entre les cours, nous étions souvent à la bibliothèque mais aussi à trainer dans les allées, dans les espaces verts, à lézarder au soleil. Plaisir qui nous est interdit ailleurs⁷⁴

From this passage, Hizya describes university as the only space where women can enjoy moments of freedom. She claims that university considered as bridge which permits women to improve their future and get rid of the patriarchal norms, oppression and discrimination they undergo in their societies.

Maissa Bey as Buchi Emecheta adopt the use of several educated female characters in order to promote the importance of education in women's lives. Indeed, Bey uses Kahina, Sonia as educated young girls who are aware about the oppression and the gender differences that devalue women in the Algerian society. They refuse to live as their mothers and challenge patriarchy each one in her way.

Another female character in the novel is Sonia; Hizya's colleague in the hairdressing salon. She is a young girl. She has a Master degree in software engineering. Sonia is a determined woman who has never accepted the restrictions of the patriarchal society. She dreams to leave the county and reach a freedom which is not accessible in the Algerian society. Sonia is exhausted by the aggressions which she faces everyday and the members of her family who make her feel that she is just a marionette which they can manipulate as they want. She says:

Je ne sais pas si tu peux le comprendre mais moi, ici, je ne respire pas, je ne vis pas: je survie. Mes parents, mes frères, mes cousins, les hommes dans la rue, tous, tous me donnent le sentiment que je ne m'appartiens pas. Que mon corps ne m'appartient pas ! C'est comme si chaque regard me volait une partie de moi-même. J'en ai assez d'être entourée de barbelés, ou que j'aïlle ! Je n'en peux plus de ces regards, de ces remarques, de ces rappels à l'ordre, de ces agressions quotidiennes.⁷⁵

From this passage, we may understand Sonia's motivation to break the sexist norms of the Algerian society. She is conscious that the problem comes from her society that obliges men to maintain their domination on women. She believes that her freedom cannot be reached in the Algerian conservative society. Thanks to her education, Sonia has a different way of thinking.

Despite all the difficulties she faces in her everyday life, she does not surrender and continue to pursue her dream. Hizya notes:

Sonia, elle, a appris à se battre. Depuis toujours. Contre des conditions de vie très précaires. Contre une famille qui n'a jamais compris son acharnement à vouloir s'en sortir. Contre ses frères qui n'ont pas cessé de semer des embûches pour son chemin. Chaque étape franchis représente pour elle une victoire. Le lycée. La fac, surtout la fac. Son travail au salon. Des victoires difficiles et douloureuses, dont elle paie chaque jour le prix. Rien de tout cela n'a pourtant entamé sa volonté.⁷⁶

Kahina, Hizya's sister is a high school student. She has fixed an objective to follow her studies after getting her baccalaureate exam. She wants to be graduated in medicine. She wants to follow the same path as her sister in order to be an independent woman. Hizya affirms:

Elle a décidé depuis longtemps qu'elle se donnerait, grâce à ces résultats, les moyens de s'inscrire en médecine. Elle ne supporterait pas, affirme-t-elle d'un ton résolut, que les portes de l'université restent fermées devant elle.⁷⁷

From this, education is one of the resistance forms by which women can get a self definition and challenge gender inequalities. Education traces for women ways to liberation and to improve their position in the society.

b. Independence through work in *Kehinde (1994)* and *Hizya (2015)*

Betty Friedan incites women to have education in order to be active and have a professional life. Having a work is a way to be free and independent. She promotes education and work as the ultimate method by which women can avoid becoming trapped in the feminine mystique. Betty argues:

Economic equity is an enormous empowerment of women. Having jobs that provide income means that women can be a more effective force, a more equal force, in the political process. Women with income take themselves more seriously and they are taken more seriously.⁷⁸

In fact, Buchi Emecheta deals with the concept of work in her novel *Kehinde (1994)*, she demonstrates a strong and independent protagonist. Kehinde lives in England. She is financially

independent since she gains more than her husband Albert. It is because of her position in the bank that they get a mortgage. From this, we understand that work or professional career contributes in women's progress in life. It is a way through which a woman can get whatever she wants. Work permits them to improve their position in society and move from marginality to the center especially when they contribute on the economy of their countries.

It is important for women to work in order to gain their lives. They should not only be satisfied with their education, but they should fight to have a job. Although, the hindrances they may confront, they should not surrender. In contrast, they must take these hindrances as a boost to go further just like Kehinde. She is determined to study for a higher degree in order to get a good job by which she can have a better career and move forward for a better life. Bimpe asserts:

Oh, I almost-congratulations! I can't believe that in such a short time, a little over three years, you could get a degree! I know you said you were determined to be university graduate, but honestly Mum, I didn't think you could achieve it. Many congratulations, Mum.⁷⁹

Because of her trip to Nigeria, Kehinde lost her job at the bank. Despite all the difficulties she may have experienced, she does not renounce to that situation. Consequently, she works in a hotel as a room cleaner while she is studying for a higher degree. Kehinde stands up for herself by running away from the oppressing tradition that is imposed on women. She leaves Nigeria and the social restrictions of that society in order to liberate herself. She says: "I have a degree, and a job at the Department of social services. I'm enjoying meeting people and leading my own life."⁸⁰ Through this, Emecheta wants to emphasize women's self-fulfilment and the rebellion to release from patriarchal societies. This can be reached only by education and work.

Buchi Emecheta uses other working female characters like Moriammo and Rike. Rike is Albert's second wife. She has a PhD degree. She works as a teacher and gain her life. Thanks to

her position work, she is an independent woman. She even has a maid and a car. Unlike the other oppressed women. Kehinde claims:

She has a foresight, going to college and having herself educated, after so many children. Raising children is not enough. The saving grace for us women is the big 'E' of education. This girl, Rike, doesn't even have to live with us because her education has made her independent, yet she is content to be an African wife in an Igbo culture.⁸¹

From this quotation, Kehinde affirms that where ever a woman can be, if she is educated and has a job, no one can oppress her or discriminate her. These are the keys by which women can reach their liberation.

Moriammo is another female character in Kehinde's novel. She is Kehinde's colleague and best friend. She works at the bank. Moriammo as well, is determined to go beyond the limits and restrictions of the patriarchal society. She wants to study more and reach a higher degree which permits her to assume herself in the society and improve her position.

Aunt Selina is one of the female characters who dares to change her position in the society thanks to her work since she is a respectful business woman. In addition, she has a strong personality contrary to other women from her society. Aunt Selina is the example of a brave and rebellious woman since she breaks the barriers in order to live freely. The following quotation illustrates:

A big woman burst in, a typical successful Nigerian businesswoman, known locally as tick madam. Not waiting to be invited, she entered with a breezy confidence that indicated unmistakably that the house was hers. She was aunt Selina, the eldest of the Okolo family [...] one could never say to such a woman, why don't you wait until I say come in?⁸²

These are representations of the determined women who reject the traditional rules which limit their ambitions and prevent them to reach their goals in life. Wherever a woman goes, particularly in the patriarchal societies, she must study and work in order to free herself from the social constraints. She has to improve her position with her own hands and knowledge.

In the novel *Hizya* (2015), Maissa Bey as well deals with the notion of work. She reveals that is crucial for women to work in order to get their freedom and reach the self-fulfilment. Despite prejudices and social constraints, career and work are more important.

The African society has experienced an alternation in terms of education and work; this was mainly the case with women. As Hizya does not have any difficulties to go to school, she has no difficulties to find a job as well. Hizya's father promotes his daughters' education and defends them from the stereotypes. He argues :

Quant à tes sœurs, tu peux dire, si tes nouveaux amis te posent la question, que c'est moi, leur père, qui les autorise à sortir et à travailler. C'est qui les autorise à sortir tête nue ! Tu entends ? L'essentiel est ce qu'elles ont dans la tête, et non sur la tête !⁸³

Hizya considers this fact as a boost for going further, even if she does not succeed to work with her translation degree. She enrolled herself in a training center to get a hairdressing degree. In fact, she managed to obtain a job in a hairdressing salon.

As Hizya, her colleagues also have degrees in different fields, but they work in the salon. Through this, Maissa Bey gives an image of determined young girls, who are seeking for freedom and fulfilment as being young women who refuse the bitter limits of their society. They want to prove that they are able to work inside and outside the house. Even though, it is not a job that corresponds to their intellectual level but the essential for them is to be independent financially. Hizya confirms that work left her discover the joys of the salaried work. She says: « Je gagne ma vie. Je n'ai plus à tendre la main pour obtenir de quoi acheter un ticket de bus ou un paquet de serviettes hygiéniques. »⁸⁴ From this quotation, Hizya claims that when a woman earns her own money, she will be self-sufficient and no longer need to rely on her male family members to support herself.

In addition, Leila has not been at the university unlike her colleagues. So, she started working at the age of fifteen years old as an apprentice. Thanks to this work, Leila is able to raise her children and provide for her children's needs. When she divorced, her work provides her strength and patience since she takes the responsibility of her family. For them, it is the price of her disobedience and failure of marriage. Leila says :

« Quarante ans de misère », ose-t-elle dire à voix basse après avoir soufflé les quelques bougies que nous avons disposées sur le gâteau. Nous nous exclamons toutes d'une seule voix : « ne dis surtout pas ça ! Tu as tes enfants, un travail et plein de gens qui t'aiment, qui t'apprécient ! » Sonia renchérit : « et bientôt un appartement. La liberté, quoi ? Tu pourras enfin respirer, organiser ta vie, comme tu l'entends.⁸⁵

From this, one may notice that Leila is a courageous woman who defies the traditional values. She prefers to adopt resistance rather than to submit. Even if Leila confronts many troubles, she defies everything and keeps working in the hairdressing salon. Thanks to her work, she applies for housing to go far away from her family. Leila is optimistic to start a new life with her children.

Sonia is Hizya's colleague in the hairdressing salon. She is an example of an awakened generation. She knows that her society buries women and their dreams. Work has changed Sonia's way of thinking. It makes her a determined woman. She dreams of escaping from her country. She wants to cross the barriers and have a new life where she feels respected and valorised. Hizya asserts:

Sonia, elle, a appris à se battre. Depuis toujours. Contre des conditions de vie très précaires. Contre une famille qui n'a jamais compris son acharnement à vouloir s'en sortir. Contre ses frères qui n'ont pas cessé de semer des embûches sur son chemin. Chaque étape franchie représente pour elle une victoire. Le lycée. La fac, surtout la fac. Son travail au salon. Des victoires difficiles et douloureuses, dont elle paie chaque jour le prix. Rien de tout cela n'a pourtant entamé sa volonté.⁸⁶

In fact, education and work represent paved paths of escape for all these women described in the novel. High school, university and work are forms of liberation for women even though

their freedom is limited. In a way or another, they are symbolic to make an appeal to women to seek their natural freedom and womanhood.

c. Cultural Divergences: Kehinde and Hizya and Patriarchy in *Kehinde (1994) and Hizya (2015)*

African communities have long been considered to be patriarchal. These societies are based on sexist differences between men and women. These beliefs victimize women and advantage men. Gendered norms colonize and marginalize women both within their houses and societies, as the essential principle of the continuation of their communities. Additionally, those people who grow up in those patriarchal countries can never untie from the sexist attitudes once in foreign countries. Indeed, this fact creates conflicts of people's adaptation in their non-native countries because their ways of thinking cannot correspond to that country and the liberties that are provided in those countries are quite unacceptable for them.

In *Kehinde (1994)*, Buchi Emecheta depicts the efforts of the protagonist Kehinde to escape victimization in her marriage within British and Igbo societies. Kehinde rejects the Igbo restrictions and her husband's oppression as well. This justifies her determination to leave Nigeria and her children. She declares:

Here, she was full of herself, playing the role of a white, middle-class woman, forgetting she was not only black, but an Igbo woman, just because she worked in a bank and earned more than he did. Many women worked in banks".⁸⁷

Through this quotation, Kehinde decides to return to London in order to regain freedom. Kehinde wants to change the prejudices and the unjust behaviours of the Igbo culture. She feels westernized, as result, she refuses the traditional patriarchal structures. At the end of the novel,

Kehinde becomes free, powerful and independent. Women are truly valorised in England since it is a country where a woman is Queen.

In *Hizya (2015)*, we deduce that the social restrictions interrupt the dreams of the protagonist despite her determination to look forward in her life and her desire for a love story. Hizya wants to challenge the social taboos and prejudices. However, she did not succeed her mission; the family has the supreme power to decide on their children's future. At the end of the novel, Hizya surrenders to her destiny and her family's will. She declares that she will have a family similar in all respects to other millions of families. She says: *Nous aurons une vie ordinaire. Nous formerons une famille identique en tous points à des milliers d'autres familles. Nous, je. Je finirais bien par oublier le poème.*⁸⁸ From this, Maissa Bey depicts how the gendered norms influence the people's lives among the Algerian societies. She sheds light on the women's marginalization and oppression.

This chapter addresses an important life issue. It includes education and school instruction which are of high importance. Besides it, we discuss some other important issues concerning work and the recognition of cultural divergences in women's lives. Similarly, how these three concepts provide strength and help to liberate women from community constraints. Women gain their places in society and establish their identities within patriarchal societies as a result of education. Women can achieve economic freedom and independence as workers.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 122.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 22.

⁷¹ Ibid, 53

⁷² Ibid, 94.

⁷³Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 132.

⁷⁴Ibid ,133.

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- ⁷⁵ Ibid, 95
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, 98
- ⁷⁷ Ibid, 184.
- ⁷⁸ <https://quotes.thefamouspeople.com/betty-friedan-842.php>
- ⁷⁹ Buchi. Emecheta, *Kehinde*. Pearson Education Limited, 1994, 122
- ⁸⁰ Ibid, 139
- ⁸¹ Ibid, 95
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- ⁸³ Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 149.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid, 23.
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- ⁸⁶ Ibid, 98.
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- ⁸⁸ Bey. Maissa, *Hizya*. Barzakh: Alger, 2015, 296.

General Conclusion

Throughout our dissertation, we attempted to discuss the issues of sexism, marginality and love and how women move to the center through education and work in Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde* (1994) and Maissa Bey's novel *Hizya* (2015). We demonstrated how both Emecheta and Bey use their pens to show the African women's marginalization and oppression. They have depicted the lives and experiences of Algerian and Nigerian women. We shed light on the way women are described in the two novels, relying on both Bell Hook's theory *From Margin to Center* (1984) and Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). The first theory shows the rigid living situation of women in patriarchal societies. bell hooks makes an appeal to women's solidarity and resistance. The second theory explains how women can liberate themselves through education and career as the only ways to subvert and resist the patriarchal system.

In the first chapter, we have made an overview on women's conditions among the patriarchal societies through Buchi Emecheta's and Maissa Bey's novels. We highlighted the stereotypes that inhibit women's growth. African cultures and traditions have significantly contributed to the rise of gender inequalities and providing injustices and the unfair codes that relegate women to a lower position. Indeed, male dominance leaves women silent and voiceless. It has defined roles to women as being submissive, weak and passive. To conclude, both Algerian and Nigerian societies share the same ways of discriminating women. Both societies privilege men's dominance and superiority.

In the second chapter, we have emphasized the importance of education and work in the lives of women. We highlighted the roles of educated women among the patriarchal societies. Through Buchi Emecheta's and Maissa Bey's novels, we realized how women can liberate themselves from the social restrictions which prevent their improvement. To

conclude, education is the only way by which women gain their freedom, and go further in their objectives.

Education and career encourage women to break the cultural contradictions and the traditional chains which have always lessen the value of women. We have come to conclude that an educated and working woman can be free and independent. She can go beyond the boundaries and fulfil her objectives and ambitions.

We tackled an interesting issue in two African contexts and different periods. However, our research does not cover all the issues that are related to the work of Buchi Emecheta *Kehinde (1994)* and Maissa Bey *Hizya (2015)*, so we invite other students to explore other issues from other perspectives.

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