

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English



Field: Literatures and Foreign Languages

Option: General and Comparative Literature

Subject: English

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Master's Degree in English

Topic:

Mobility and Resistance in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* (1976) and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* (1981)

Presented by:

Ms. Saliha BOUZIDI

Ms. Lydia AMMAM

Supervised By:

Dr. Rabea AZIZ

Board of examiners:

Chair: Dr. Sadia SEDDIKI, MCB, Department of English, UMMTO

Supervisor: Dr. Rabea AZIZ, MCA, Department of English, UMMTO

Examiner: Ms. Ghalia BEDRANI, MAA, Department of English, UMMTO

Academic Year 2022/2023

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to our supervisor Dr. AZIZ Rabea for her advice, support, and help and without whose saintly patience, we could not have succeeded.

We would like also to thank the members of the jury Ms. BEDRANI and Dr. SEDDIKI for accepting to read, examine and assess our work.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to

My dear parents.

My sisters and my two brothers.

My friends

Lydia.

In my turn, I would like also to thank:

my dear parents

my brothers and sisters

allmyfriends.

Saliha.

Abstract

The present dissertation is a comparative study of two African literary works: *The Bride Price* (1976) written by the Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta and *So Long a Letter* (1981) written by the Senegalese author Mariama Ba. It focuses on the issues of Mobility and Resistance through the female characters of the two novels and it highlights how African women in both Nigeria and Senegal are subverted to the same conditions. To achieve our goal we have relied on the 'Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center' (1984), a book written by the African American author and feminist activist bell hooks. In the first chapter, we have shown the issue of marriage and polygamy in both the Nigerian and Senegalese societies, and how women face these challenges in the patriarchal system. In the second chapter, we have analysed the theme of education as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. This chapter has examined women's resistance through the female characters. In both works, women reject traditional gender roles and speak out against the patriarchal system that oppresses them. Finally, we have concluded that *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter* stresses the complexities and resilience of African women who are in constant resistance against men's oppression to achieve their deserved status in their societies.

Key words: *The Bride Price*, *So Long a Letter*, Mobility, Resistance, Polygamy, Marriage, Patriarchal system, Education.

Contents

Dedication

Acknowledgment

Abstract

Contents

I-Introduction	1
1.1- Review of the Literature	2
1.2- Issue and Working Hypothesis	4
1.3- Methodological Outline	5
Endnotes	7
II-Method and Materials	8
1. Method: Bell Hooks’ “Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center” (1984).....	8
2. Materials	10
a- Buchi Emecheta’s Biography.....	10
b- Synopsis of <i>The Bride Price</i> (1976).....	12
c- Mariama Ba’s <i>So Long a Letter</i> Biography(1981).....	13
d- Synopsis of <i>So Long a Letter</i>	14
Endnotes	16
III-Results	17
IV-Discussion	19
Chapter one: Marriage and Polygamy in <i>The Bride Price</i> and <i>So Long a Letter</i>	19
1-1: Marriage in <i>The Bride Price</i>	19
1-2: Aku-nna’s Marriage	20
1-3: Polygamy in <i>The Bride Price</i>	23
2-1: Marriage in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	25
2-2:Ramatoulaye and Aissatou’sMarriages	25
2-2-a:Ramatoulaye	25

2-2-b:Aissatou	28
2-2-c: Daba	29
2-3: Polygamy in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	29
Endnotes	32
Chapter two: Education as a means of Resistance in <i>The Bride Price</i> and <i>So Long a Letter</i>	33
2-1: Women’s Education in <i>The Bride Price</i>	33
2-2: Aku-nna the Educated Girl	35
2-3: Female Resistance in <i>The Bride Price</i>	37
2-4: Education as a means of Resistance in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	40
2-5: Ramatoulaye and Aissatou’s Education	41
2-6: Resistance in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	44
Endnotes	48
V-Conclusion	49
VI-Bibliography	51

I-General Introduction

This research paper deals with 'Mobility' and 'Resistance' in two African literary works, namely, Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* (1976) and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* (1981). Buchi Emecheta is a black woman novelist living in Britain after 1948. She wrote about female independence and freedom. Her work *The Bride Price* concerns the problems of women in post-colonial Nigeria. On her side, Mariama Ba is a feminist writer who gives an important role for African women writers. Her first work *So Long a Letter*, written in the form of a letter, deals with the discriminatory power expressed in the novel stemming from society's establishment of male dominance rooted in Mariama Ba's ideology of patriarchy¹.

Our aim through this dissertation is to compare the two writers' representation of the two concepts of 'mobility' and 'resistance' in their two works: *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter*. *The Bride Price* is a semi-autobiographical novel first published in the UK and in the US. It concerns the problems of women in that period. It is a dedication from Buchi Emecheta to her mother Alice Ogbanje Emecheta². *The Bride Price* is the first novel Emecheta wrote, but its original version was lost when her husband threw the manuscript on the fire. She later re-wrote the novel and was published in London in 1976. As far as, Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* is concerned as an epistolary English novel, which was originally written in French. It is published in 1981, and deals with multiple themes which include the life of women in Senegal during the 1970's. It is set during the passage of Senegal from late colonization to its liberation from French rule³.

This study is a comparison between the two novels *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter*. These two novels are written during the 1970s. The two authors grew up in African societies where they faced many obstacles such as oppression and male domination. Both works represent a generation of women caught between tradition and emancipation, and both

authors gave voice to the African women in the society to be independent from male domination.

Both Emecheta and Ba talk about the African society, its culture and tradition but mainly focus on the life of women and their contribution in building the family and society. These writers began to subvert the male writers' portrayal of women where traditional beliefs and customs constructed and directed women and the traditional system that caged them under its boundary as prisoners by renewing the female characters as fighters and challengers. The two authors' Feminist perspectives reflect on Bell Hook's *Feminist Theory: from margin to center* of which the central thesis is to create equality between sexes, and to end the sexist oppression.

Review of The Literature

Buchi Emecheta's and Mariama Ba's novels have received a great deal of criticism, because of their reflective images on African culture and traditions. First, Zenyaar Kareem Abdul in his work: "*Bride value: a Feminist Reading of Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price*", has claimed that *The Bride Price* is one of the most influential modern novels authored by Buchi Emecheta, and which features the voice of a female character. In his work, Abdul has analysed the patriarchal society in which women suffer and where they are the only victims. He has also criticized the African culture from which Emecheta comes. He confirms that Emecheta's female characters go through harrowing experiences being controlled by two oppressors: the power of males and the reality of the colonizers. He explains that the author's themes cover the areas of slavery, freedom, sacrifice, and femininity through which she gains recognition and honour. He also claims that Emecheta identifies women's voices and breaks down all the barriers placed on them in terms of oppression, slavery, racism, and race⁴.

Another piece of criticism is made by B.Muthulakshmi, in “*Customs Versus Economy: A Study on Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price*” in Palarch’s Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology. Muthulakshmi claims that women are inflicted with oppressed life which they eagerly pass on to their next girl children. He argues that *The Bride Price* focuses on women’s emancipation by providing proper education and abolishing sexism, inequality, customs from obscure cultures and traditions. He adds that Emecheta has vividly portrayed the problems of the Nigerian women in the Post- Colonial era. These women are bound by their own people who always dominate and consider them as the ruled custom and traditional masks. He confirms that the novel describes the evils of culture and tradition⁵.

In his research paper: "Pathetic Condition of a Character Aku-nna in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*", Mr. Shantaran Pralhadrao Nalgire argues that a woman has no value and no status in African culture. Emecheta's highlights the place of women and uses characters as well as theme as her tools. Shantaran claims that Emecheta portrays the pathetic condition of the character Aku-nna very carefully⁶.

Second, Mariama Ba’s *So Long a Letter* is also well regarded in literary circles, though there are a few criticism that scholars and thinkers have levelled against the work. First criticism comes from the Senegalese writer and critic Shirin Edwin who argues that Ba’s portrayal of polygamous marriages is simplistic and one-dimensional and that it fails to fully capture the complexity of the relationships and power dynamics at play in such arrangements. Additionally, Edwin argues that Ba’s has focused on the experiences of privileged, educated women in urban Senegal and neglected the experiences of rural women and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who may have very different experiences of polygamous marriages. Edwin’s criticism highlights the limitations of Ba’s portrayal of polygamy and the need to consider the diversity of experiences and perspectives within African societies.

Nonetheless, *So Long a Letter* remains an important and influential work that has made a significant contribution to African literature and feminist discourse⁷.

In addition, Rizwana Habib Latha in her *Feminism in African Context: Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter* issues of feminists within an African post colonial context. Mariama Ba's novel provides readers with a specific insight on Ramatoulaye's, as well as other women character experience for polygamy. She observes that Ramatoulaye's subjugation to the French colonial domination as well as the promise of liberation in post colonial period has created a complex impact on her identify. Although the novel stresses on the protagonist's construction and reconstruction of Ramatoulaye's identity as an individual, her experience also encompasses other collective identities both inside and outside the socio-cultural milieu⁸.

Many other female critics consider Aissatou as a true feminist. For Julie Agbasiere, for example, Aissatou is a woman of action who is ruled by her head, and who knows what she wants and goes out for it⁹.

The Bride Price and *So Long a Letter* remain powerful and important work of feminist literature, and continue to be widely read and celebrated. They have received a bulk of criticism from different critical perspectives.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

From our review of some of the literature written on Buchi Emecheta's and Mariama Ba's works, we have noticed that most of these studies give glimpses on the aspects of mobility and resistance without really exploring them. As far as we know, no previous study has given much attention to compare Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* in relation with mobility and resistance.

The aim of this research is to make a comparative study on the two works, relying on the

Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center in which the feminist activist Bell Hooks criticizes feminist thought and its practice as it existed before and theorizes new ways to achieve a society without female oppression. She evokes social and cultural matters; such as self-definition and self-realization for women and which she considers as important factors that help them to move from their actual imposed status to a more higher one.

In the light of this theory, we intend to analyze the African black women's fight against the obstacles that exist in their societies in order to free themselves from discrimination. Emecheta's *The Bride Price* and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* represent a generation of African women that lived and caught between tradition and emancipation. They have given voice to them in their societies to free themselves. Our attention through this analysis is to extend the ground of criticism to study the feminist aspect of these novels in relation to mobility and resistance in postcolonial African history. The relevance of Hooks' *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* to our issue stands from the fact that this theory focuses on marginalized women. In fact, the African woman is part of this marginalized category.

Methodological Outline

At the methodological level, the dissertation will follow the IMRAD method. We have started with introduction in which we gave an overview about the topic and we set the purpose of our study. This has been followed with the review of some works written on Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*. In the methods section, we will introduce and explain the *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* (1984) by Bell Hooks. Then, we will provide biographies of the authors and brief summaries of the novels cited above in the Material section. In the result section, we will explain the findings reached through our study. The discussion section will be constituted of two chapters. The first

chapter will deal with marriage and polygamy in *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter*. The second chapter will focus on the importance of education for women's empowerment and independence, and we will show how the female characters can react to the patriarchal norms and traditions. Finally, we will conclude with a synthesis of the important points of our research.

Endnotes

¹Y. Derrab, H. Dahmani. “*Women’s Solidarity in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple(1981) and Mariama Ba’s So Long a Letter(1982)*”. Mouloud Mammeri University. 2017.

²Emecheta, Buchi. “*The Bride Price.*” Britain: Alison and Busby. 1976.

³ Sanelisiwe, Sithole. “*Translating Mariama Ba: Representation of African Women and Reception od Une Si Longue Lettre*”. 2018.

⁴Z.K.Abdul. “*Bride Value: a Feminist Reading of Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price*” .University of Charmo, Sulaimany, Iraq.2019.

⁵ B.Muthulakshmi. “*Customs Versus Economy: A study on Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price*” Mononmarian Sundaranar University Abishekapatti, Tirunrlveli-12.

⁶Mr. S.P. Nalgerine. “*Pathetic Condition of a Character: Aku-nna in Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price*” 2021.

⁷ Edwin, Shirin. “*Expressing Islamic Feminism in Mariama Ba’s “So Long a Letter.*” 2017.

⁸ HabibLatha, Rizwana “*Feminisms in an African Context: Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter*” 2001.

⁹ Sylvester, Mutunda. “*Women subjugating Women: Re-Reading Mariama Ba’s So Long a Letter and Scarlet Song*”. Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies.

II-Method and Materials

1-Method: Bell Hooks' *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984)

Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center is a book written by the African-American theorist and feminist thinker Gloria Jean Watkins known as Bell Hooks, in 1984. The author is known for her writings about different topics such as; gender, race and education. Hooks calls for the inclusion in the feminist movement of black women located on the 'Margin', invisible and ignored in American society. Throughout the book, the author explores various manifestations of central contentions and the feminist movement of the 1970s. Hooks proposes a new perception as a movement that not only fight for the equality of women and men (of the same class) but also for the end of sexist oppression and exploitation without neglecting other forms of oppression, such as racism.

In this theory, hooks explores the intersection between race, class and gender, and argues that feminist theory and practice must focus on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized communities. She begins by criticising mainstream feminist movements that have ignored the struggle of the poor and working-class women and women of colour, arguing that a feminist movement that benefits only privileged white women is not truly feminist. hooks claims that the experiences of marginalized women must be at the center of the Feminist theory and practice. She explores then the topics of race, class, and gender, by highlighting the ways in which these categories are interrelated and shape women's experiences in complex ways. She emphasizes the importance of understanding how the different systems of oppression operate to maintain hierarchies, and states that feminist movements must work to dismantle these systems in order to achieve true equality.

Throughout the book, hooks emphasizes the importance of coalition-building and solidarity among marginalized groups .She argues that it only by collective work that we can

challenge the dominant systems of power and create an equitable society. *The Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* is a call for feminist movements to center the experiences and perspectives of marginalized communities, recognize the intersectional systems of oppression and work towards collective liberation¹.

In the first chapter entitled “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory,” Hooks examines the role of black women in feminist theory and activism, arguing that their experiences and perspectives have often been overlooked and marginalized within the mainstream feminist movement. Hooks also emphasizes the importance of community organization as a means of creating social change. The theory has been highly influential in shaping feminist theory and practice, particularly in the fields of intersectionality and black feminism. It has also been praised for its accessibility and focus on the experiences of ordinary women.

In the second chapter entitled "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression," she emphasizes that feminism should not solely focus on addressing sexism but also take into account how other forms of oppression, such as racism and classism, intersect with and compound the oppression experienced by marginalized women. Hooks calls for a more inclusive and intersectional feminist approach that recognizes and addresses the various dimensions of oppression faced by women of different backgrounds. This chapter highlights the need to center the experiences and perspectives of marginalized women in feminist discourse and activism.

In the third chapter entitled “Educating Women: A Feminist Agenda”, Hooks discusses the importance of feminist education in promoting critical consciousness and social change. She argues that education must be liberatory and empowering, and must challenge dominant narratives that reinforce oppression. Hooks emphasizes the importance of creating

educational spaces that prioritize dialogue, and critical thinking that allows learners to connect their knowledge to their lived experiences².

Throughout the book, Hooks advocates a feminist movement that is grounded in solidarity and collective action. She argues that women must work together across lines of difference to challenge systems of oppression and create an equitable society. *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* is an influential and groundbreaking work that has helped to shape feminist theory and activism in the decades since its publication. By analyzing *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter*, in the light of the *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, we will gain a deeper understanding of the gender dynamics portrayed in the novels and the ways in which women negotiate power, challenge traditional norms, and assert agency within patriarchal system.

Incorporating bell hooks' *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* into the analysis of *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter* enables a nuanced examination of gender, culture and power dynamics. It encourages a deeper understanding of how these novels engage with feminist discourse and how they contribute to ongoing conversations about feminism in diverse contexts.

2- Materials

a- Buchi Emecheta's Biography

Buchi Emecheta was born on 21 July 1944 in Lagos, Nigeria. She was a Nigerian-born novelist, based in the UK from 1962. Her parents were from Umuezeokolo Odeanta village in Ibuza, Delta State. The young Emecheta was initially kept at home while her younger brother was sent to school; but after persuading her parents to consider the benefits of her education, she spent her early childhood at an all-girls' missionary school.

When she was nine years old her father died. A year later Emecheta received a full scholarship to Methodist Girls' in Yaba, Lagos where she remained until the age of 16. During this time, her mother died, leaving Emecheta an orphan. In 1960, she married Sylvester Onwordi, a schoolboy to whom she had been engaged since she was 11 years old. Later that year, she gave birth to a daughter, and in 1961 their younger son was born.

Following her success as an author, Emecheta travelled widely as a visiting professor and lecturer. She visited several American Universities, including Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Illinois at Urbana. From 1980 to 1981, she was senior resident fellow and visiting professor of English at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. . In 1982, she lectured at Yale University and the University of London. She became a fellow at the University of London in 1986. Over the years, Emecheta worked with many cultural and literary organizations, including the Africa Centre, London, and with the Caine Prize for African writing as a member of the Advisory Council. Most of her fictional works are focused on sexual discrimination and radical prejudice informed by her own experiences as both a single parent and a black woman living in the United Kingdom. Among the honours received during her literary career, Emecheta won the 1978 Jock Campbell Prize, from the *New Statesman* for her novel *The Slave Girl*, and she was on *Granta* magazine's 1983 list of 20 "Best of Young British Novelists". She was a member of the British Home Secretary's Advisory Council on Race in 1979. In September 2004, she appeared in the "A Great Day in London" photograph taken at the British Library, featuring 50 Black and Asian writers who have made major contributions to contemporary British Literature. In 2005, she was made an OBE for services to literature. She received an honorary doctorate of literature from Farleigh Dickinson University in 1992. Buchi Emecheta suffered a stroke in 2010, and she died in London on 25 January 2017, aged 72³.

b- Synopsis of *The Bride Price* (1976)

First published in 1976, this great literary classic follows a young Nigerian woman who rejects the patriarchal traditions of her culture to find love and happiness in the western world. *The Bride Price* by Buchi Emecheta begins in Nigeria specifically in Lagos. The events which move quickly at first center around Odia's family. Ezekiel and Ma Blackie, the father and mother, have two children: Nna-nndo, a son and Aku-nna, a daughter. Aku-nna is the protagonist of *The Bride Price*. Though the story begins in an urban center it follows Odia family as they relocate to their ancestral village. Ezekiel is dying, though he does not tell Ma Blackie or their children. He waits until Ma Blackie is away in Izu a country village, before he says farewell to his children. In Nigeria at the time, a family without a father had little to no means to support itself. In fact, the family would be considered nonexistent without Ezekiel. Even Nna-nndo's name serves as a reminder of this notion as it translates in English to "father is the shelter". Ezekiel's death leads Ma Blackie to take her children from the city and return to an agrarian lifestyle. Emecheta tells the reader about this transition as well as important background information, such as *The Bride Price*. Emecheta explains that Aku-nna translates the "father's wealth", which reflects a woman's role in Nigerian society. The interaction between Nigerian and British customs is also highlighted early as a crucial theme.

A woman's worth is not reliant solely on a bride price, though that is an important source of income for any Nigerian family, as Emecheta explains. Once she is married, the children she is meant to bear her husband are considered her contribution to the family's wealth and well being. Culturally, it is best if she has sons, but daughters represent the potential to receive a bride price someday, and so considered a source of wealth, too. When Aku-nna's father dies, her relatives arrive, and she argues with her aunts and uncles for decisions regarding her father's funeral rites. Though she is curious about his passing, she

does not ask about it because good children are expected not to be inquisitive. She knows that through storytelling she will eventually find out what happened to her father. Emecheta uses Ezekiel's funeral as an opportunity to explain how the Ibo people of Nigeria incorporate both their traditional beliefs and the christian's ideas of heaven and hell, for fear of offending any deities. When Ma Blackie returns to Lagos, she knows that she cannot stay in the city as a widow. She prepares to move with her children back to Ibuza. There, Okonkwo, Ezekiel's brother marries her, and she becomes one of his many wives. Whatever bride price Aku-nna attracts will now go to Okonkwo. His ambition led him to want more money, because with that wealth, he can claim the title of Obi⁴.

c- Mariama Ba's Biography

Marima ba (1929-1981) was a Senegalese writer, teacher, and feminist . She was born in Dakar, Senegal, and grew up in a polygamous family. Her father who was a civil servant, had four wives and several children. Ba was raised by her mother, who was a traditional woman with no formal education, but who instilled in her daughter the value of education. Ba received her primary education in Dakar, and then went on to attend school in Rufisque. In 1957, Ba married a Senegalese member of parliament, Obèye Diop, with whom she had nine children. Diop died in 1960, leaving Ba a widow at the age of 31.

Ba's literary career began in the 1970's, when she started writing essays and novels. Her first novel *So Long a Letter*, was published in 1979 and received critical acclaim both in Africa and at the international level. The novel, which is written in the form of a long letter, tells the story of two women who are close friends, and who experience different paths in their lives as wives and mothers in post-colonial Senegal. Ba's second novel *Scarlet Song*, was published in 1981, the same year that she died of cancer. This novel explores the themes of love, tradition and the clash between modernity and tradition in Senegalese society. Mariama

Ba's works are known for their portrayal of women's lives in Senegal and their critique of the gender inequalities and traditional customs that affect women's lives. She is considered a pioneer of African women's literature and her writing has inspired many African feminists and writers.

Mariama Ba's personal life clearly influenced her written works, she did not try to define feminism. Rather, she understood that it is different for every woman and is a reflection of background, culture, history, and religion. Ba believed that it was her mission as a writer to be a voice for the most vulnerable members of society. She was a leader in emerging global Feminism, and her works topics cross cultural barriers and demonstrate the unity of humanity⁵.

d- Synopsis of So Long a Letter (1981)

So Long a Letter is a semi-autobiographical epistolary novel by the Franchopone Senegalese Mariama Ba. It was first published in French as *Une Si Longue Lettre* 1970. *So Long a Letter* follows the story of the two Senegaleese women, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou. The story begins when Ramatoulaye decides to write a letter to her childhood friend Aissatou who lives in America.

At the beginning of the letter Ramatoulaye, a Senegalese school teacher, begins her Iddah (four month and ten days morning), the isolation period required in Muslim Senegal after the death of one's husband. Modou, Ramatoulaye's husband has recently died of a heart attack, and in her letter, she describes the funeral rituals to her best friend Aissatou who emigrates to America. Later, she reminisces about hers and Aissatou's early age, how they attended the coranic and colonial schools and how they grow as wives and mothers with responsibilities. Ramatoulaye confesses the importance of their encounter with the headmistress of the colonial school who has contributed in the formation of their strong

personality. She taught them how to be opened to modernity and civilization without losing their own culture and values. Ramatoulaye and Aissatou had gone through the same hardships when their husbands took a second wife. Being educated and liberal, Aissatou leaves her husband Mawdo who is commanded by his mother to take his cousin as a second wife. Aissatou has left Senegal after she requested for a divorce and served in the Senegal Embassy in the U.S. Contrary to Ramatoulaye, she has remained faithful to her marital life, but her husband has already begun his new life and abandoned her with twelve children and a wide range of responsibilities. Aissatou has succeeded to overcome her predicaments and become both economically and spiritually independent so, she shows tremendous supports to make her friend self-confident and autonomous too. She helps her to improve her life's conditions and defiantly to create a single life. Both Ramatoulaye and Aissatou have achieved heroic status by sustaining the survival of their newly created self, and they have constantly filled their husbands' vacuum. At the end of the letter, Ramatoulaye prepares for her friend Aissatou's arrival from America to present her sincere condolences and provide support⁶.

Endnotes

¹Hazel T. Biana. "Extending Bell Hooks' Feminist Theory. 2020. Journal of International woman's studies.

² Bell, Hooks. "*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*" South and Press, 1984.

³ Alphonse, Baraza. "Biography of Buchi Emecheta" South of African History Online.2017.

⁴Nasrullah, Mambrul. "Analysis of Buchi Emecheta's novels" April, 2019.

⁵ Lauren, Daugherty. "Biography of Mariama Ba." 2017.

⁶ Modupé Bodé, Thomas. Review N 36: Mariama Ba (1929-81), *So Long a Letter*. Senegal. 2019.

III-Results

Our work is a comparative study on the themes of mobility and resistance in *The Bride Price* (1976) and *So Long a Letter* (1981) by Buchi Emecheta and Mariama Ba. The analysis shows that, both novels deal with the challenges faced by African women in a patriarchal society which is marked by forced marriages, polygamy, and limited educational opportunities. Moreover, Emecheta and Ba have highlighted the struggles of black African women who are marginalized and oppressed by patriarchal norms and traditions.

Both of these works can be analyzed through the lens of Bell Hooks' *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* since they have focused on the experiences of those African women who are marginalized and oppressed within the patriarchal society. By centering the experiences of these women, Emecheta and Ba have challenged the dominant narratives and highlighted the importance of addressing the experiences of women who are most marginalized in Feminist theory.

The first Chapter is devoted to the analysis of the themes of marriage and polygamy in both novels. Indeed both writers have portrayed the difficulties of a polygamous marriage in which women become the victims of such custom. Both novels shed light on the complexities of marriage and polygamy in African society, particularly the ways in which gender roles and expectations are negotiated within these relationships. The authors have examined the cultural practices and norms that shape these relationships and also highlighted the challenges that arise when these practices clash with individual desires and aspirations. In addition, the two writers use the main female characters of their novels to denounce the suffering and oppression inflicted by the rigid patriarchal rules that have been applied on women, and to claim that women should not be considered as properties.

In the second Chapter, we have analyzed the theme of women's education and resistance. In both novels, education is shown as a powerful tool for resistance against oppressive systems. Eventually, these novels have demonstrated the transformative power of education and highlighted the importance of education for women to achieve social and political changes. Throughout this comparative study, we have noticed that both novels have demonstrated the strength of African women in the face of oppressive social expectations. The female characters resist conformity to traditional gender roles and fight for their rights to education and self-determination despite the obstacles they have faced in their lives.

IV-Discussion

This section of our work deals with the issues of marriage and polygamy, as well as women's education and resistance in both Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* and Mariama Ba's *So Long A Letter*. The first chapter discusses the subjects of marriage and polygamy in African society in the two novels, while the second chapter deals with the theme of education which is suggested by both authors as a cure to the issue of oppression of women by the African society, as it allows them to rebel against the patriarchal society.

1-Chapter One: Marriage and Polygamy in *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter*

This Chapter analyses the reflection of the African marital system in the *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter*. It demonstrates how marriage has been a crucial issue of traditional Nigerian and Senegalese societies. In fact, both novels reflect marriages characterized by polygamy and patriarchal oppression. To analyse these issues we will rely on Bell Hook's *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*.

1-1 Marriage in *The Bride Price*

Buchi Emecheta explores the issue of marriage in *The Bride Price* through the heroine of her novel. She portrays marriage as an ultimate objective in the lives of women within the Nigerian society. Moreover, she has sustained that women's role in society has been downplayed as a result of the patriarchal beliefs prevalent in the traditional Nigerian society. She presents the black women as victims bound by marriages within this patriarchal system.

The author sheds light on the women's realization of a disparity in the financial practices of different households, and her wish to understand the reasons behind it. However social expectations prevent her from openly expressing her curiosity. Emecheta says,

She (Aku-nna) had heard that a farmer husband did not give housekeeping money, as her father had given her mother. There were so many questions she would have liked to ask, but it was regarded as bad manners to be too inquisitive. So Aku-nna listened, worried and prayed to God to help them all¹

Emecheta demonstrates that women's voices can be expressed by showcasing multiple female characters, including not only Aku-nna the protagonist, but also her mother Ma Blackie and her aunt, Auntie Matilda. Through these characters, the author highlights the suffering experienced by women in Nigeria, placing emphasis on the fact that all of them suffer from the same problems and have the same destiny. Auntie Matilda says, "This is the fate of us women. There is nothing we can do about it. We just have to learn to accept."² She suggests that, there are social expectations and limitations placed upon women that they have to expect without questions.

1-2 Aku-nna's Marriage

Aku-nna's desire is to marry someone living in Lagos, a more urban and cosmopolitan area, suggests that she desires a partner who is more progressive and liberal in his views and lifestyle. Although she doesn't oppose the notion of an arranged marriage, she fears the kind of man who might be selected for her. Emecheta asserts,

Aku-nna remembered only scraps of stories about what life in Iboza would be like, she knew she would have to marry, and that the bride price she would fetch would help to pay the school fees for her brother Nna-nndo. She did not mind that; at least it would mean that she would be well fed. What she feared was the type of man who would be chosen for her. She would have liked to marry someone living in Lagos³

Aku-nna believes that being a woman means coming with a predetermined fate that cannot be change. She is left wondering about her own fate and what it will entail, and this adds to her apprehension and anxiety. Emecheta states, "Aku-nna was sure they were saying all this by way of consolation and also to prepare her for what was going. They had tired to do so, but they had not succeeded. If anything, they intensified her fear of the unknown. What

was her fate going to be, she wondered⁴”The quote reflects the social constraints placed upon women and the feeling of helplessness that can arise when faced with predetermined expectations and unknown outcomes. It highlights the struggle of women who feel trapped by their circumstances and the longing for agency and control over their own lives.

Emecheta’s view about women falls within revolutionary feminism. This later surpasses the mere reformation of women’s rights by aiming to include and uplift women of all backgrounds, including women of colour, women from different social classes. It emphasizes the importance of having a visionary perspective that embraces inclusivity rather than exclusivity. By fostering this inclusive vision, revolutionary feminism seeks to transform global politics in order to eradicate all systems of domination. One of the main criticisms that Bell hooks raises against reformist notions of feminism is their tendency to exclude women of colour from the feminist discourse, which undermines the movement’s goal of true equality and empowerment for all women. Hooks states, “If we dared to criticize the movement or to assume responsibility for reshaping feminist ideas and introducing ideas, our voices were turned out, dismissed and silenced. We could be heard only if our statements echoed the statements of the common discourse⁵”. This quote reflects a situation in which women want to express criticism, or offer new perspectives within a particular movement, feel that their voices are disregarded. They believe that their opinions are only acknowledged and taken seriously if they aligned with the prevailing or popular beliefs and opinions within the feminist movement.

Aku-nna’s step father Okonkwo, the crafty and greedy character, tries to arrange the marriages of both his step daughter Aku-nna and his daughter Oguvia. He says, “Aku-nna and Oguvia will get married at about the same time. Their bride prices will come to me. You see the trend today, that the educated girls fetch more money”⁶ His aim is to claim the bride prices for his personal gain in order to attain the esteemed status of an Obi, and acquire the

prestigious title of Eze (a king). In his pursuit to become an Obi (a chief), which entails hosting an opulent and costly celebration, Okonkwo perceives his daughters as valuable assets to be traded for financial rewards. Okonkwo claims, “You cannot see beyond your noses,” ... “You are too young. Don’t you know I hope to become an Obi and take the title one day?”⁷ In order to become an Obi and receive the respected Eze title, a man must make a big and expensive sacrifice to the gods.

For Hooks, the traditional institution of marriage has often been oppressive for women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. She criticizes the patriarchal power structures that underpin marriage and advocates for a feminist approach that challenges and transforms these structures. She highlights the importance of acknowledging the diverse experiences of women and addressing the ways in which sexism intersects with other forms of oppression. Hooks argues,

Not all women, in fact, very few, have had the good fortune to live and work among women and men actively involved in the feminist movement. Many of us live in circumstances and environment where we must engage in feminist struggle, with only occasional support and affirmation⁸

This quote highlights the challenges faced by women who are not surrounded by a community of individuals actively engaged in the feminist movement. It emphasizes that many women can find themselves in circumstances and surroundings where they have to navigate their feminist struggles alone.

Chicke, Aku-nna’s teacher, is one of the descendents of slaves, with whom Aku-nna falls in love. Chike reveals that he has strong feelings towards Aku-nna. She occupies his dreams and seems to be present in every aspect of his life. Emecheta states,

Chike had been embarrassed by this frankness of his father’s, so choked with emotion. He apologised for being such an impossible son, but what was he to do? “ I dream about the girl—I see her in everything, in the stream, I see her smile when I am riding

alone, I hear her small voice when birds sing. I cannot tell you how happy we are when we have dumped her plaintain into the Niger and can just sit and talk..."⁹

The quote portrays the complexity of emotions experienced by Chike. He feels embarrassed by his father's honesty, but he also deeply longs for Aku-nna who seems to occupy his thoughts and dreams. The happiness he experiences when he spends time with her, indicates a significant emotional bond between them.

In the end, as Aku-nna reaches eighteen, she and Chike are determined to take their committed and enduring relationship to the next level by getting married. Though Chike is an educated man who can afford a wealthy bride price. Emecheta states,

So it was that Chike and Aku-nna substantiated the traditional superstition they had unknowingly set out to eradicate. Every girl born in Ibuza after Aku-nna's death was told her story, to reinforce the old taboos of the land. If a girl wishes to live long and see her children's children, she must accept the husband chosen for her by her people, and the bride price must be paid¹⁰

It comes from this, that Aku-nna and Chike are determined by traditional superstitions in their community, Ibuza. Emecheta suggests that a girl must accept the husband chosen for her by her community, in order to have a long prosperous life, and to ensure the well being of future generations. After Aku-nna's death, her story is told to every girl born in Ibuza. Aku-nna's unfortunate fate is marrying a man she doesn't love.

1-3 Polygamy in *The Bride Price*

In the Nigerian society marriage is characterized by polygamy, where a man can have multiple wives. In Buchi Emecheta's novel *Okonkwo* serves as an embodiment of this practice, which reinforces male chauvinism and dominance. He results in jealousy among the wives and allows men to exert power and control and often leads to a hierarichal structure

within the family. The dominance of men can stifle the voices and agency of women and limits their personal growth and opportunities for self-expression.

After the death of Aku-nna's father, her mother Ma Blackie has been unable to assume the responsibility of being the head of the family. Therefore, she submits herself to traditional practice and resignedly accepts her destiny as the inheritance of her husband's eldest brother, Okonkwo. This leads to Aku-nna's and her mother's return to Ibuza. When Aku-nna reaches the land, her step sister Ugugua informs her, "You still don't know the customs of our Ibuza people! Your mother will become my father's wife! My father has inherited everything your father owned: and he has inherited your mother too"¹¹ Ogugua informs Aku-nna that her father Okonkwo has inherited all the possessions. Okonkwo as the head of the family, is expected to hold patriarchal authority, and there is a prevailing belief that women should comply with his directives.

Many African cultures see women as possessions of their husbands. Thus, Emecheta aims to amplify the voices of women who endure the oppressive effects of patriarchal hierarchies resulting from polygamy. The author highlights the jealousy caused by polygamy, when Okonkwo marries Ma Blackie as his fourth wife. Ngbeke, the first wife of Okonkwo shows her hatred and jealousy against Ma Blackie and Aku-nna and compares them to an *Ogbanje*, a Nigerian word meaning 'living dead'. Ngbeke affirms,

"Yes I am sure she is one," ...She is different. Have you ever come across someone who seldom talks? I must speak to her mother about it tomorrow. I fear these girls who are *ogbanje*. They all seem to behave too well, but they are only in this world on contract, and when their time is up they have to go. They all die young, usually at the birth of their first baby. They must die young, because their friends in the other world call them back. I am happy none of my three girls was an *ogbanje*¹²

Through this claims, Ngbeke expresses fear toward Aku-nna who is believed to be a living dead, she suggests that Aku-nna is different from the others.

In *The Bride Price*, Emecheta portrays polygamy as a complex and often an oppressive system that perpetuates gender inequality. The practice of polygamy is deeply rooted in traditional Nigerian society, where men are allowed to have multiple wives. However, the author highlights the negative consequences of this practice, particularly for women who often find themselves trapped in unhappy and unfulfilling marriages.

2-1-Marriage in *So Long a Letter*

In *So Long a Letter*, Ba's exploration of marriage is consistent with the feminist theory: *from Margin to Center*, as she highlights the ways in which gender inequality is perpetuated through cultural norms and social expectations. *So Long a Letter* is a novel that uses the theme of marriage to explore the complex ways in which patriarchy shape women's lives, and how feminist theory can help us understand and criticize these structures of oppression.

2-2Ramatoulaye and Aissatou's Marriage

The novel portrays the institution of marriage in the Senegalese society, where it is considered a crucial aspect of a women's life and an important way to secure their financial stability and social status. The book tells the story of two women, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou who are best friends. It explores their experiences in marriage and the social expectations that come with it. Both of Ramatoulaye and Aissatou struggle with these expectations as they explore their marriages.

2-2-a: Ramatoulaye

The protagonist, Ramatoulaye, is a woman who is navigating the complexities of marriage in a society where women are expected to be submissive to their husbands and

prioritize their roles as wives and mothers above all. Through Ramatoulaye's experiences, the novel shows the tension between women's desire for individual agency and the pressure to conform to social expectations. Furthermore, bell hooks' *Feminist theory: from Margin to Center*, provides a framework for analyzing the experiences and struggles of marginalized women within feminist movements. Ramatoulaye represents a marginalized voice, grappling with patriarchal structures and constraints imposed by marriage within her society. Her story aligns with the experience of many women who face marginalization within their marriage due to cultural norms.

Throughout *So Long a Letter*, we have noticed the oppressive conditions of women and their need to be emancipated. Ramatoulaye, the narrator, informs us of the status of African women and parents who want to choose husbands for their daughters. Men believe in their superiority over women. She states that:

This is the moment dreaded by every Senegalese woman, the moment when she sacrifices her possessions as gifts to her family-in-law; and, worse still, beyond her possessions she gives up her personality, her dignity, becoming a thing in the service of the man who has married her¹³

This quote portrays marriage in Senegal in a mostly negative way. The woman within this institution is forced to give up everything, including her identity, and she becomes an object in the service of man who is her husband. In the Senegalese community, where Ramatoulaye lives, women have almost no rights in comparison with men. Women's worth is determined by their husbands. In a way, when a woman marries, she becomes almost like man's shadow. She is always present but never noticed until her presence is needed.

Ramatoulaye's marriage is arranged in Senegal. Modou is her cousin and they are brought together by their families. She is initially hesitant to marry Modou, as she is in love with another man, but eventually agrees to the marriage out of duty to her family. Throughout their marriage, she faces many challenges. Modou is a polygamist who takes a second wife

without Ramatoulaye's consent. This causes great pain and humiliation for her, because as she has always believed that Modou loves her above all else his life. The main protagonist is left to care for their twelve children alone while Modou is away, often for long periods of time. Despite the difficulties, she remains committed to her marriage and her role as a wife and mother. She relies on her friendship with other women, including her childhood friend Aissatou, who has also experienced the pain of being in a polygamous marriage.

The novel reflects on the main protagonist's life experiences and relationships, including her past with her childhood friend and former lover. Ramatoulaye and Tamsir have been close friends since childhood, and their friendship eventually turns romantic. When Ramatoulaye's family arranges for her to marry Modou, Tamsir is devastated and leaves the country. Although she is still mourning the loss of her husband, Ramatoulaye is drawn to Tamsir's charm. The two begin a secret affair, and she finds herself torn between her loyalty to her husband and her growing feeling for Tamsir. However, their relationship is ultimately finished. Tamsir is married, and Ramatoulaye realizes that he will never leave his wife for her. She decides to end the affair, but Tamsir is persistent and continues to pursue her. On her part, she refuses to be objectified by men. She goes on to tell Tamsir,

You forgot that I have a heart, a mind that I am not an object to be passed from hand to hand. You don't know what marriage means to me: it is an act of faith and of love, the total surrender of oneself to the person one has chosen and who has chosen you. What of your wife, Tamsir? Your income can meet neither their needs nor those of your numerous children¹⁴

Ramatoulaye is addressing Tamsir who has treated her as an object to be traded or handed off to others. By reminding this person that she has a heart and a mind, she is asserting her humanity and her right to make her own choices about her life and her relationships. She also emphasizes the meaning of marriage to her. Throughout her relationship with Tamsir, Ramatoulaye grapples with her own desires. She knows that her relationship with him is

frowned upon by her community and her children, but she also realizes that she has the right to pursue her own happiness. In the end, she chooses to prioritize her own well-being and the needs of her family over her relationship with him. The protagonist represents many women, as she communicates her definition of marriage as an act of faith and love, through one surrenders oneself to another.

2-2-b: Aissatou

Besides Ramatoulaye, Aissatou's marriage is a significant aspect in the story. She is the best friend of the protagonist, Ramatoulaye. Aissatou's marriage is arranged by her parents to a man named Mawdo. The couple is happy together and have had many children. However, Mawdo's family have forced him to take a second wife. Aissatou is shattered by the fact to divorce Mawdo. Her radical refusal to stay in a traditional polygamous marriage is clearly expressed in her letter to her husband that reads,

Mawdo, princes master their feelings to fulfil their duties. 'Others' bend their heads and, in silence, accept a destiny that oppresses them. That, briefly put, is the internal ordering of our society, with its absurd divisions. I will not yield to it. I cannot accept what you are offering me today in place of the happiness we once had. I am stripping myself of your love, your name. Clothed in my dignity, the only worthy garment, I goes my way¹⁵

Aissatou is clearly sighted, unsentimental and courageously bold. She breaks with the archaic customs that thrive on women's subjugation and oppression and chooses to get out of her marriage and the society which legitimizes infidelity and polygamy. Her decision to leave her husband is seen as a scandal in her community, and she faces criticism from her family and friends. However, she remains resolute in her decision and refuses to comprise her dignity and self-respect. Aissatou's marriage and subsequent divorce highlight the challenges faced by women in traditional societies, where men have more power and agency. Her marriage reflects key ideas from Bell hooks *The Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*. Her story

highlights the need to center the experiences of marginalized women, the importance of intersectionality in feminist analysis, and the agency of women in challenging oppressive structures. Through Aissatou's journey, we see the power of women who refuse to be confined in the margins of society.

2-2-c Daba:

Marriage in *So Long a Letter* is also represented through the character of Daba who has married. She is the second daughter of Ramatoulaye and Modou, and her marriage is an important event in the story. Daba's wedding is described as a lavish affair with many guests and elaborate preparations. Ramatoulaye is excited by her daughter's wedding, but she also reflects on her own marriage to Modou and the challenges she faces as a wife. Daba's marriage is a reminder of these challenges and the expectations placed on women in the Senegalese society. Her marriage is an important event in *So Long a Letter* as it highlights the struggles and complexities of women's lives in Senegal. It symbolizes social expectations and the conflict between tradition and personal freedom. Additionally, the marriage prompts the protagonist, Ramatoulaye, to reflect on her own marriage and the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society. In the context of Daba's marriage, the *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, involves recognizing the ways in which her experiences reflect the struggles of marginalized women in a male dominated society. Daba's story provides insight into the complexities of navigating oppressive structures while maintaining a sense of agency and dignity.

2-3 Polygamy in *So Long a Letter*

In the novel, polygamy is described as humiliating and hurtful for the women who are involved. *So Long a Letter* explores the theme of polygamy within the context of feminist theory, specifically drawing on the idea presented in the *Feminist Theory: from margin to*

center. The novel sheds light on the negative effects of polygamy on women's lives and supports the feminist goal of challenging and transforming patriarchal structure.

Mariama Ba uses Ramatoulaye's personal story to illustrate the adverse consequences of polygamy on women in Senegalese society. Within the novel, the main character discusses the suffering and challenges she endures due to her husband's choice to marry again. She also contemplates how polygamy affects her children and the broader community, emphasizing its role in perpetuating gender inequality and upholding patriarchal traditions. An example of this is seen when Ramatoulaye is left to raise her twelve children by herself after her husband's death. She states,

I was irritated. He was asking me to understand. But to understand what? The supremacy of instinct? The right to betray? The justification of the desire for variety? I could not be an ally to polygamic instincts. What, then, was I to understand? How I envied your calmness during your last visit. There you were, rid of the masks of suffering. Your sons were growing up well, contrary to all predictions¹⁶

The female protagonist makes it clear that she cannot be an ally to such instincts, indicating that she does not support polygamy. She is confused about what she is supposed to understand, as she cannot comprehend why someone would want multiple partners and how it can be justified. This highlights the protagonist's struggle to understand her husband's desire for polygamy.

Aissatou, Ramatoulaye's childhood friend, is another character in *So Long a Letter* who represents a different experience of polygamy. Unlike Ramatoulaye, who became a second wife after her husband Modou takes a younger woman, Aissatou's decision to leave her husband Mawdo and to pursue her education is significant because it shows that women can break free from the traditional roles of wives and mothers, and forge their own path in life. Aissatou's story also highlights the limitations of polygamous marriages in terms of emotional fulfillment and agency. She is deeply hurt by her husband's decision to take a

second wife, and recognizes that she will not be able to find happiness in such a marriage. She has the courage to break free from the expectations placed on her as a wife and mother, and to achieve her own goals. Aissatou's story in *So Long a Letter* provides a contrast to Ramatoulaye's experience and highlights the complexity of polygamy in the Senegalese society. Mariama Ba displays Aissatou's courageous desire, which is truly exceptional in a society, where women are anticipated to welcome a co-wife openly.

In our analysis using the *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, we have delved into Aissatou's lived experiences and explored the ramifications of polygamy on her social standing. This approach enables us to grasp the intricate intersectionality of her identity, encompassing factors such as her gender, race, and cultural backgrounds. Through this framework, Aissatou's experiences emerge as those of a marginalized woman within a patriarchal society, prompting a reevaluation of the prevailing narrative that frequently portrays polygamy as an unquestioned cultural tradition, often neglecting its detrimental impact on women's lives.

Endnotes

¹ Emecheta, Buchi. *“The Bride Price”*: (Britain: Alison and Busby, 1976), 53.

² Ibid., 37

³ Ibid., 52-53.

⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁵ Bell, hooks. *Feminist Theory: from margin to center*, (1984), 22-23.

⁶ Emecheta, Buchi. *“The Bride Price”*: (Britain: Alison and Busby, 1976), 75.

⁷ Ibid., 75.

⁸ Bell, Hooks. *“Feminist Theory: From margin to center”*, (1984), 7.

⁹ Emecheta, Buchi. *“The Bride Price”*: (Britain: Alison and Busby, 1976), 106.

¹⁰ Ibid., 168.

¹¹ Ibid., 64.

¹² Mariama, Ba. *“So Long a Letter”*, (1981), 4.

¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵ Ibid., 35

2-Chapter Two: Education as a means of female resistance in *The Bride Price* and *So Long a letter*

In this chapter, we will deal with education as a means of resistance adopted by the female characters of *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter* to challenge the patriarchal system of their societies. In our analysis of these issues we will rely on Bell Hooks' *Feminist Theory: from margin to center*, and we will explain its relation with the themes treated in this chapter.

2-1 Women's Education in *The Bride Price*:

The central theme in *The Bride Price* is the role of women's education in breaking the chains of old traditions and customs. For Emecheta, women's education illuminates the minds and contributes to the development of a country. While talking about traditions and culture in the Africans society, she demonstrates women's contributions in life, and their capacity of building a family and society. Therefore, she indicates the equality of education for both sexes.

In *The Bride Price*, the female protagonist Aku-nna is against the traditional roles, socialization and cultural expectations. Thus, she provides changes in her position in an oppressive African world, Emecheta says,

Aku-nna and Nna-nndo soon grew accustomed to things at Ibuza, learning in school the European ways of living and coming home to be faced with the countless and unchanging traditions of their own people. Yet they were like helpless fishes caught in a net¹⁷

Emecheta describes a situation in which Aku-nna and Nna-nndo have encountered a significant contrast between their experiences at school, where they are exposed to European ways of living and their home, they are confronted with the unchanging traditions of their

own people. The metaphoric expression “helpless fishes caught in a net” portrays their feelings of entrapment and powerlessness in navigating this dichotomy.

Indeed, Bell hooks in her *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* mentions that education is the best way for women to be free. It is a movement of freedom. She says,

Encouraging women to strive for education, to develop their intellects, should be primary goal of feminist movement. Education as the practice of freedom will be a reality for women only when we develop an educational methodology that addresses the needs of all women. This is an important feminist agenda¹⁸

In this quote, bell hooks emphasizes the importance of encouraging women to strive for education and intellectual development as a primary goal of the feminist movement. She asserts that true freedom and empowerment for women can be achieved only when educational methodologies are designed to meet the diverse need of all women.

Emecheta sees that women’s powerlessness can be largely bounds through education. They are often expected to conform to traditional roles of wife and mother, and their value is often determined by the bride price they fetch in marriage. However, Aku-nna rebels against these expectations by expressing a desire for education and independence. She challenges the norm of early marriage and expresses a longing for knowledge and self-sufficiency, which goes against the social norms of her community.

The modern woman does not find any sense in such self-expression, individuality, and self-identity. She tries to make herself free of dependence syndrome. The Indian writer of English literature Chaman Nahal in his article “*Feminism in English Fiction Form and Variants*” claims,

I define feminism as a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome, where it is the husband or the father or the community or whether it is a religions group, ethic group when women free themselves of the dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of feminism materializes¹⁹

This statement explores the idea that certain feminist activists unintentionally perpetuate class-based inequalities within the feminist movement by prioritizing the advancement of already privileged women who require basic skills education, while overlooking the educational needs.

2-2-Aku-nna The Educated Girl

Buchi Emecheta's describes central character Aku-nna is the Ibo heroine, who is very fond of learning. She is intelligent, nice and quiet. She is a good girl and obedient to her parents, but she is closer to her father more than her mother, he gives her name of Aku-nna which means father's wealth. After her father's death, Aku-nna endures the humiliation and oppression of the other characters. While expressing her grief, we realize the bonding or closeness between daughter and father. She expresses her feelings by saying, "My father was a good provider. My father was a good Christian. He was a good husband to my mother, Ma Blackie. He bought me many dresses. He was kind to me. He sent me to school. This was followed by a long, wordless cry of pained sorrow, wordless but moving²⁰" This citation conveys a complex of gratitude, nostalgia, and profound sadness. It paints a picture of a significant relationship between Aku-nna and her father. It highlights the importance of the father figure in Aku-nna's life. Her father represents a deep emotional connexion that elicits a strong emotional response.

However, Okonkwo Aku-nna's step father is against her education. He allows her to join school for impersonal goal which is a rich bride price. In this context, Bell hooks states,

We identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation, oppression and capitalism, are extensions of male supremacy, men dominate women a few men dominate the rest. All power situations throughout history have been male dominated and male-oriented. Men have controlled all political, economic, and cultural institutions and backed up this control with physical force. They have used their power to keep women in an inferior position. All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women²¹

Bell hooks' words reveal men's pretended superiority over women. They are dominant, they impose rules in women's lives, and men oppress them. hooks asserts that men are the primary agents of oppression, and thinks that male supremacy is the fundamental form of domination. Therefore, all other systems of exploitation and oppression, such as racism, capitalism, and imperialism, are considered as extensions or derivatives of male supremacy

Okonkwo, permits Aku-nna to continue her education just to increase her bride price; which will go to him, but he does not care about her personal wishes. His goal is to be the chief of the village, an Obi, he claims, "Ummm, that may be so, but it is a great deal of money to pay for an ordinary woman" ... "I won't mind if Aku-nna fetches us a large sum. I could do with some money"²². An educated Aku-nna is regarded as a proud lady in her family. Education helps Aku-nna in a crucial moment to be courageous and confident.

Aku-nna, the central character of the novel attempts to learn and to become educated. For her, finishing her education is more important than everything else. Hence, she goes to school where she meets Chike one of her teachers and falls in love with him. Aku-nna wants to follow her dreams without caring about what society aims from her. In this regard, Bell Hooks asserts,

It is the freedom to decide her own destiny; freedom from sex-determined role; freedom from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to convert them freely into action. Feminism demands the acceptance of woman's right to individual conscience and judgment. It postulates that woman's essential worth stems from her common humanity and does not depend on the other relationship of her life²³

This citation explains that women must be independent. In order to be able to make decisions about their own lives, and undergo in the society as free individuals in society, women should express their thoughts and act freely without being under men's domination.

2-3 Female Resistance in *The Bride Price*

Women are controlled and bound in the name of tradition and not by any particular region or place. They are against these traditions and feel that they are the ultimate victims of acts of resistance. Buchi Emecheta shows that only formal education can help young girls to better understand the way through which they are marginalized, exploited and conditioned to accept the secondary role in society. Highly educated women have more value in the society, mainly students and teachers, as hooks asserts, “given the bourgeois class bias of many feminist activists, attention has been given to women in higher education, both as students and teachers, with little or no attention given to the need to educate women who lack basic skills²⁴”

When we connect this quote to Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*, we can see the relevance in the context of the story. The novel explores the challenges faced by young women in a traditional African society, where issues such as education and basic skills are often overlooked in favor of traditional gender roles and marriage customs. Emechet's novel sheds light on the struggles of women who are marginalized and not given the opportunity to pursue education or develop essential skills, which aligns with the concerns raised by bell hooks regarding the neglect of such women in feminist activism.

In *The Bride Price*, resistance is a central theme, as Aku-nna and other female characters navigate the patriarchal society and cultural norms that limit their agency and freedom. They resist the traditional patriarchal customs and expectations of their society, by challenging gender roles, pursuing their own ambitions and desires, and making choices that prioritize their own agency and autonomy over the wishes of their fathers or husbands.

Aku-nna the main character of the novel resists the expectation of marrying the man chosen for her by her father. Despite her father's wishes for her to marry a wealthy man who

can provide a high bride price, she resists the idea of being sold as property and fights for her right to choose her own path in life, including her choice of a romantic partner.

Education is also portrayed as a means of resistance in the novel. Aku-nna's desire for education is seen as a way to break the chains and to be free from the constraints of her traditional society. Despite she faces numerous obstacles, including gender discrimination and financial limitations, Aku-nna determines to pursue her education, she sees this later as a means to empower herself and gain the tools necessary to challenge the oppressive norms and traditions that limit her agency as a woman. Aku-nna wants to continue her education and marry for love rather than financial gain. She falls in love with the schoolteacher Chike, who also comes from a poor family but shares her aspirations for a better future.

Throughout the novel, Aku-nna and Chike face many challenges as they explore their relationship and try to resist the traditional customs that dictate their lives. They have faced opposition from both Aku-nna's family and their community who view their actions as a betrayal of their culture. Emecheta states,

He came closer to her, not caring whether they were seen or not. He wanted to marry this girl, even if it meant breaking all the laws of Ibuza. As he held her to this clammy chest, her body shook, from fear and from something else inside her which she could not name. He stroked the perspiration from her forehead, dipped his nose into her short curls²⁵

This quote emphasizes Chike's desire to marry Aku-nna, to the extent that he is ready to defy the laws and norms of their society, specifically those of Ibuza. It also portrays a passionate and rebellious love between Chike and Aku-nna regardless of the consequences of this relationship.

Besides Aku-nna's resistance, her mother Ma Blackie, is also portrayed as a strong-willed and independent woman who faces many challenges in her life. She resists the

traditional practices and beliefs of her Igbo community, especially regarding the treatment of woman. She believes that girls should have the same opportunities as boys, and that women should not be forced into marriages they do not want. Ma Blackie's resistance to the bride price is rooted in her belief that women should not be treated as commodities to be bought and sold. Emecheta asserts,

Ma Blackie had warned Aku-nna about this, instilling in her that no woman should carry her father's glories to her husband's house. As soon as a good woman was married, she must learn to exult in her husband's accomplishments, however small they might seem in comparison with her father's²⁶

This quote highlights the expectations placed on women in African societies, where they are not expected to subdue their own personal achievements and instead they should uplift their husbands' accomplishments. It stresses on the gender dynamics and cultural norms prevalent in the community.

Ma Blackie also resents the fact that the payment of the bride price means that Aku-nna should be taken away from her and her siblings, and that she would be expected to serve her husband and his family rather than pursuing her own dreams and aspirations. Despite the criticism and ostracism she faces from her community for her resistance to the bride price, Ma Blackie remains steadfast in her beliefs and refuses to give up in a social pressure. Her actions have a powerful impact on her daughter Aku-nna, who is inspired by her mother's courage and independence.

Ma Blackie represents the modern, educated African woman. She serves as a mentor and role model for Aku-nna, and plays a pivotal role in shaping Aku-nna's understanding of gender roles and the importance of education. She is known for her confidence, independence, and progressive mindset. She has embraced education and has achieved financial stability through her entrepreneurial ventures. Throughout the novel, Ma Blackie challenges traditional

gender norms and encourages Aku-nna to aspire for more than what society expects of her. She believes in the power of education and supports Aku-nna's dreams of being a teacher. Ma Blackie advocates for women's empowerment and fights against oppressive customs, such as the bride price, which often commodify women and restrict their choices. Emecheta says,

Ma Blackie automatically belonged to the elite, for her children attended school, and this was a bone of contention between Okonkwo and his other wives and children. They could stomach Nna-nndo going to school for he was a boy, and also his father had left over one hundred pounds in savings and had joined a progressive Ibuza group called the Pioneer Association, whose aim was to ensure that on the death of any member the first son of that family would be educated to grammar-school level²⁷

The above quotation reveals that access to education and the ability to provide it for one's children among factors that determine social standing and prestige within the community. It underscores the divide between the educated elite and those who are denied educational opportunities, leading to conflict and resentment among family members.

Through the journey of Aku-nna, *The Bride Price* portrays the resistance against traditional gender roles and empowerment that education can bring. It exposes on the challenges faced by women in traditional African societies and the importance of education as a means of resistance and empowerment. Female characters resist the male oppression within the patriarchal society, Aku-nna in particular faces all obstacles that may present from realizing her dreams and all her wishes, such as being an educated girl. They are oppressed by men in all spheres, and they must respect all the rules imposed by them.

2.4 Education as a Means of Resistance in *So Long A Letter*

In *So Long a Letter* by Mariama Ba, the importance of women's education is a central theme that the author explores. The novel examines the lives of women in a patriarchal society and emphasizes the transformative power of education for women. Education is portrayed as a means for women to gain knowledge, skills and self confidence, enabling them

to assert their independence. It is represented as a way for women to challenge social norms and break the cycle of gender-based oppression. It equips them with the tools to advocate for their rights and challenge the patriarchal structures that limit their potential.

2-5 Ramatoulaye and Aissatou's Education

Ramatoulaye and Aissatou are both well-educated, having attended French colonial schools during their youth. Their education equips them with the tools to navigate the changing social and political landscape of post-independence Senegal and to confront the traditional expectations placed upon women in their society. Ramatoulaye says,

To lift us the bog of tradition, superstition and custom, to make us appreciate a multitude of civilizations without renouncing our own, to raise our vision of the world, cultivate our personalities, strengthen our qualities, to make up for our inadequacies, to develop universal moral values in us: these were the aims of our admirable headmistress. The word "love" had a particular resonance in her. She loved us without patronizing us, with our loose blouses, our wrappers. She knew how to discover and appreciate our qualities²⁸

In this quote, Ramatoulaye expresses a desire for change and progress in society. She discusses the need to move away from the limitations of traditions, superstitions and customs that might hinder the development of women. The female protagonist believes that by breaking free from these constraints, women can gain a broader understanding and appreciation of the diverse civilizations existing in the world. Furthermore, she emphasizes the importance of personal growth and self-cultivation. She believes that by nurturing their personalities and strengthening their positive qualities, individuals can compensate for their weaknesses or inadequacies. This focus on personal development is seen as a means to contribute to the progress of society. Additionally, this quote reflects Ramatoulaye's progressive mindset and her aspirations for social improvement, personal growth, and the cultivation of universal moral values.

In *So Long a Letter*, Aissatou is one of the main characters and the childhood friend of the protagonist, Ramatoulaye. Though her education is not extensively detailed in the novel, it is made clear that she receives a good education. Both Aissatou and Ramatoulaye come from traditional families in Senegal, where girls' education is not always prioritized. However, Aissatou's father believes in the importance of education and supports her along with her brothers. As a result, she is allowed to attend school and receive a female's education. Ramatoulaye challenges the idea that women in her society are passive and uneducated. She says,

But we are not incendiaries; rather, we are stimulants! And I pressed on: in many fields, and without skirmishes, we have taken advantage of the notable achievements that have reached us from elsewhere, the gains wrested from the lessons of history. We have a right, just as you have, to education, which we ought to be able to pursue to the furthest limits of our intellectual capacities²⁹

From this quote, we notice that women like Ramatoulaye see themselves as agents of change and progress. The term “incendiaries” means that they are catalysts for transformation and a desire for change. Similarly, they are “stimulants”, which indicate that they provoke action and inspire others. Ramatoulaye acknowledges that progress in various fields has been achieved by learning from both the accomplishments of others and the lessons of history. She thinks that women, just like men, have a right to education and should be able to pursue it to the fullest extent of their intellectual abilities.

Later in the story, Aissatou faces a difficult situation when she discovers her husband' (Mawdo) infidelity and decides to divorce him and defy the social norms. This decision showcases her independence and strength of character, which might be attributed to her education and exposure to different ideas. While the novel does not provide extensive details about Aissatou's education or its impact on her life, it reveals that her education contributes to her personal growth, resilience and ability to make choices.

In Bell hooks theory, women are encouraged to accept the challenges of education.

She comments,

When teaching feminist theory, one must counter such attitudes and find ways to encourage women to think systematically about the world, our society trains only a few people to think in this manner mostly those from the classes it expects to control the social order. Certainly most women are not expected to take control and in consequence are not encouraged to think analytically. In fact, critical thinking is the antithesis of woman's traditional role³⁰

This citation highlights the need to counter prevailing attitudes and encourage women to engage in systematic thinking about the world. Bunch suggests that society primarily select a few individuals, typically those from privileged classes who are expected to maintain control over the social order, to think in this analytical manner. On the other hand, women as a marginalized group are not typically expected to take control or be actively involved in shaping social structures. Bunch's statement emphasizes that women's traditional roles in society have often been associated with characteristic and expectations that are contrary to critical thinking. These traditional roles have often confined women to domestic and caregiving responsibilities, reinforcing social norms that discourage them from questioning or critically examining the existing power structures and gender inequalities. When we link to So Long a Letter, we find that Aissatou knew that women like her confined to traditional roles, were rarely encouraged to think analytically. Critical thinking had always been the antithesis of a woman's expected path. Yet, in this letter, she vowed to defy those expectations and explore the world through a feminist lens, just as hooks had encouraged her to do.

Aissatou underscores the importance of feminist theory and its role in challenging these gendered expectations and encouraging women to engage in critical analysis. *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center* is framework through which women can question and challenge social norms, examine power dynamics, and work towards dismantling oppressive structures.

Equally, in *So Long a Letter*, Daba, Ramatoulye's daughter, is depicted as a young intelligent, and ambitious girl. She is passionate about her education and desires to pursue higher studies. In the novel, Ramatoulaye mentions that Daba has been admitted to the University of Dakar, which means that she has completed her secondary education and aspires to her studies at the university level.

Daba's pursuit for education is significant in the context of the novel, since it reflects the changing role of women in Senegalese society. Mariama Ba addresses the theme of women's education and empowerment in her work by highlighting the struggles and challenges faced by women like Ramatoulaye and her daughter Daba. Through Daba's character, Ba emphasizes the importance of education for women and the need for them to assert their independence and intellectual growth. Daba's educational journey represents a departure from traditional gender roles and social expectations as she wishes. She wants to carve her own path and contribute to society through her knowledge and skills. While the novel primarily focuses on Ramatoulaye's experiences and reflections, Daba's education serves as a symbol of hope and progress for women in a patriarchal society, showcasing the potential for change and empowerment through learning.

So Long a Letter represents education as a transformative force capable of empowering women, challenging gender roles, and fostering social change. It demonstrates the potential of education to liberate individuals from oppressive social expectations and calls for equal access to education for both genders. However, it also recognizes the limitation of education in addressing deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and underscores the need for ethical and moral grounding alongside education to foster a more equitable society.

2-6 Resistance in *So Long a Letter*

The theme of resistance is prevalent throughout Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* and it

is addressed primarily in the sixteenth chapter. In this chapter, the main character, Ramatoulaye, reflects on her personal experiences of resistance and rebellion against the patriarchal society in which she lives. Ramatoulaye recounts how she has been a victim of gender-based oppression, especially in her marital life. She recalls her husband's infidelity, and how she resists the social norms that force women to tolerate such behaviours from men. She decides to leave her husband Modou and to raise her children as a single mother, which is a significant act of resistance in a culture that views marriage as a woman's ultimate goal. One of the strongest ways in which the protagonist resists by refusing to accept the traditional roles that society expects for her. Despite being a widow and a mother of twelve children, she decides to go back to school and pursue a career as a teacher. This decision challenges the norms of her society, where women are expected to be submissive and to prioritize their families over their own ambitions. Ramatoulaye's resistance is also evident in her rejection of traditional marriage practices. She refuses to remarry after her husband's death and instead chooses to live independently despite the exerted pressure from her friends and family worry to convince her to find another husband. She says,

I survived. I overcame my shyness at going alone to cinemas; I would take a seat with less embarrassment as the months went by. People started at the middle-aged lady without a partner. I would feign indifference, while anger hammered against my nerves and the tears I held back welled up behind my eyes. From the surprised looks, I gauged the slender liberty granted to women³¹

Through this quote, Ba highlights the challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies where their independence and agency are often constrained by gender norms and expectations. Ramatoulaye's experience shows the resilience and determination of women to overcome these challenges and assert their own identity and autonomy.

In addition to these personal forms of resistance, the novel also explores other types of struggle. Ramatoulaye's daughter (Daba) for instance, becomes involved in student protest

movement that advocates gender political and economic freedom in Senegal. This movement is seen as a form of resistance against the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing oppression of African people by western powers. The author addresses the concept of resistance in a broader sense, highlighting the struggle of women who resist traditional gender roles and expectations in Senegal. Ramatoulaye recalls her conversations with her friend, Aissatou, who also resists her arranged marriage and opts for education and a career over domesticity. Aissatou's story is a testament on the importance of education in empowering women to resist social norms.

Aissatou's resistance is also evident in her refusal to conform to traditional expectations regarding marriage and motherhood. Despite the pressure she faces from her family to accept a polygamous marriage, she chooses to remain single and focus on her career of teaching. She also refuses to be defined solely as a mother, asserting her right to pursue her own ambitious and passions. Throughout the novel, Aissatou's resistance is demonstrated through her strong and assertive personality. She speaks her mind and stands up for herself and others when necessary. She refuses to be silenced or prevented from resisting oppression and discrimination. Even in front of significant challenges, she serves as an inspiration to other women in her community. In summary, Aissatou's resistance in *So Long a Letter* is a powerful testament to the resilience and strength of women in confrontations patriarchal oppression. Her determination to follow her own goals and desires, rather than to conform to traditional expectations, serves as a reminder that women have the power to resist and overcome oppression in all its forms.

Both *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter* have highlighted the struggles of women in respectively Nigerian and Senegalese societies to resist oppressive patriarchal norms and expectations. These novels have emphasized the strength, determination, and resilience of women who dare to challenge their roles and contribute to the broader struggle for gender

equality and social change. The two authors have encouraged women to stand up against gender-based oppression and opted for education as a tool for women's empowerment.

Endnotes

¹⁷Buchi Emecheta. *The Bride Price*, 82.

¹⁸Bell Hooks, “*Feminist Theory: from margin to center*,” 114-115.

¹⁹Chaman, Nahal, “*Dependence syndrome*,” 30.

²⁰Buchi, Emecheta, *The Bride Price*, 30.

²¹Bell, Hooks. “*Feminist Theory: from margin to center*”, 68.

²²Buchi, Emecheta. *The Bride Price*, 76.

²³Bell, Hooks. “*Feminist Theory: from margin to center*,” 24.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 108-109.

²⁵Buchi, Emecheta. *The Bride Price*, 92.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 125.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 74.

²⁸Mariama, Ba. *So Long a Letter*, 16.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰Bell, Hooks. “*Feminist Theory: from margin to center*,” 114.

³¹Mariama, Ba. *So Long a Letter*, 54.

V-Conclusion

This piece of research has dealt with the issues of 'Mobility' and 'Resistance' in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* (1976) and Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* (1981). Our analysis has focused on the themes of 'marriage' and 'polygamy' in African society, and both novels show how women's education can be used as a tool of empowerment and resistance against patriarchal society. Indeed, our study shows that both authors tend to liberate women from the oppression and the discrimination of the patriarchal system.

In the first chapter, we have focused on the two authors dealing with the theme of marriage and polygamy. This is explored through the lens of Bell hooks' *Feminist Theory: from margin to center*, as the novels present a critical examination of the ways in which traditional gender roles and patriarchal social structures limit women's agency and opportunities. These novels offer insights into the struggles and challenges faced by marginalized women in African societies and the need for feminist activism to challenge patriarchal norms and promote women's empowerment.

Through this chapter, we intended to show that both Buchi Emecheta and Mariama Ba have portrayed marriage as a social and economic institution that places significant pressure on women to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations. Women are often expected to be submissive and obedient. They are also supposed to prioritize their husband's needs and desires over theirs. The idea of love and fulfilment is often absent from these marriages, and women are seen as valuable only for their ability to bear children and maintain householding. In addition, polygamy is explored in both novels by highlighting the ways in which it reinforces patriarchal structures and gender inequality.

The second chapter, however, has been devoted to the themes of 'education' and 'resistance'. It has been shown that in spite of the fact that men put obstacles and do

everything to keep women under their control, females do not give up and always develop strategies for resist. In both works the importance of education is emphasized as a means of empowering individuals and challenging oppressive social norms. The authors have stated that through education, individuals can develop critical thinking skills and the confidence to resist and challenge the status quo. They also have highlighted the challenges and risks involved in such resistance, particularly for women who are marginalized and oppressed in patriarchal societies. The conclusion of both novels is that 'resistance' and 'education' are crucial for achieving social change and individual empowerment, but that these efforts require perseverance and courage in the face of significant obstacles.

By examining *The Bride Price* and *So Long a Letter* through Bell Hooks' *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*, we have shown how the two novels portray the ways through which women resist and challenge the oppressive structures. This analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how these literary works contribute to feminist discourse and offer insights into the lived experiences of women within patriarchal societies.

Our research does not cover all the issues that can be tackled in both Buchi Emecheta's and Mariama Ba's novels. We hope that we helped our readership to understand some issues explored in this memoir. Furthermore, we believe that this topic is still an interesting subject that needs further investigation.

VI-Bibliography:

Primary sources:

-Ba, Mariama. *“So Long a Letter.”* Harlow: Heineman. 1981.

-Emecheta, Buchi. *“The Bride Price.”* Britain: Alison and Busby. 1976.

Secondary Sources

Books

-Hooks, Bell. *“Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center”* South and Press, 1984.

-Nahal, Chaman. *“Feminism in English Fiction: Forms and Variations”*, Feminism and Recent Fiction in English. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991.

Articles and Journals from the Web

-Alphonse, Baraza. “Biography of Buchi Emecheta” South of African History Online.2017.
(Accessed in: 17-10-2022)

-Ashmi. Power of Education in Mariama Ba’s So Long a Letter. Sparkling International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Studies, 2020. 3(1),12-15.(Accessed in: 18-10-2022)

-B.Muthulakshmi. “Customs Versus Economy: A Study on Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price” Mononmarian Sundaranar University Abishekapatti, Tirunrlveli-12. Palarch’s Journal of Archeology of Egypt/ Egyptology. (Accessed in 09-11-2022)

-E. Rathika. *“Autocratic Study of Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price.”* International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translations Studies 04, no.04.2017. (Accessed in: 11-11-2022)

- Edwin, Shirin. “*Expressing Islamic feminism in Mariama Ba’s So Long a Letter*”. Available from: <http://doi.org/10.1080/09663690903279161> (Accessed in: 11-11-2022).
- G. Sankar, T.Rajeshkannan. “*Representing the African Culture in Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price*.” Department of English, Vel Tech High Tech Engineering College Chennai-600062, India. 2004. <http://www.academicjournals.org/IJEL> (Accessed in: 13-11-2022)
- HabibLatha, Rizwana. "Feminisms in an African Context: Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter. 2001. <http://www.jstor.org> (Accessed in: 13-11-2022)
- Hazel T. Biana. “Extending Bell Hooks’ Feminist Theory. 2020. Journal of International Woman’s studies. <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws> (Accessed in: 23-03-2023)
- Journal of International women’s studies. Extending Bell hooks’Feminist Theory. February 2020. <http://vc.bridgew.edu> (Accessed in: 23-03-2023)
- Lauren, Daugherty. “Biography of Mariama Ba.” 2017. <http://www.Sahistory.org.za>
- Maina, Ouaronodima. “*Polygamy in So Long a Letter: A Misunderstood Concept*”. 2018 (Accessed in: 17-10-2022)
- Modupé Bodé, Thomas. Review no 36: Mariama Ba (1929-81), So Long a Letter. Senegal. 2019. (Accessed in: 15-02-2023)
- Mr. Shantaram Pralhadrao Nalgire. "Pathetic Condition of a Character: Aku-nna in Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price". 2021. www.questjournals.org (Accessed in: 13-11-2022)
- Nasrullah, Mambrul. “*Analysis of Buchi Emecheta’s Novels*” April, 2019. (Accessed in: 15-02-2023)
- S.Selvakumar, Dr.S.Joseph Arul Jayray. “A Rereading of the Power Dynamics of Black

Women: Perspectives of Buchi Emecheta, an African Feminist with a Small ‘f.’” *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*. 2021. <http://www.jils.org> (Accessed in: 12-11-2022)

-Sylvester, Mutunda. *Women Subjugating Women: Re-Reading Mariama Ba’s So Long a Letter and Scarlet Song*. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*. <http://escholarship.Org> (Accessed in: 10-11-2022)

-Z.K.Abdul. “*Bride Value: a Feminist Reading of Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price*”, Department of English, College of Education and Language, University of Charmo, èSulaimany, Iraq, 2019. *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Language Teaching*. <http://jurnal.uisu.ac.id/index.php/language-literacy> (Accessed in 13-11-2022)

Theses

-J.Richa. “*Marriage and Myth in Buchi Emecheta’s The Bride Price*.” *Research Scholar*, Department of English, Ranchi University, Ranchi, 2017. <http://www.rjelal.com> (Accessed in: 20-01-2023)

-Sanelisiwe, Sithole. “*Translating Mariama Ba: Representation of African Women and Reception of Une Si Longue Lettre*”. 2018.

-Y. Derrab, H. Dahmani. “*Women’s Solidarity in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple (1981) and Mariama Ba’s So Long a Letter (1982)*”. Mouloud Mammeri University. 2017.