A THIRD WORLD FEMINIST APPROACH TO FEMALENESS AS INFERIOR TO MALENESS IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AND TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S *NERVOUS CONDITIONS*

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ABSTRACT

A THIRD WORLD FEMINIST APPROACH TO FEMALENESS AS INFERIOR TO MALENESS IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AND TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S *NERVOUS CONDITIONS*

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This thesis analyses the inferiority of femaleness to maleness regardless of the skin colour in the works, *The Grass is Singing*, by Doris Lessing, and *Nervous Conditions*, by Tsitsi Dangarembga. While the patriarchal system allows men to oppress women both physically and spiritually, the colonial structure, constituting the basis for the Third World feminism, lets them make use of women according to their own profits. Additionally, the rights of women are abused in a specific way to support the colonial structure and to preserve the process of oppression. Functioning as a vicious circle, the process of colonization and the synthesis of the patriarchal system of the colonizer and the colonized serve for the undermining process of women in the fields of education, politics, law, and economics. Within the frames of the colonial patriarchal system, no matter what the colour of skin is, a woman is a woman and should lead her life according to the requirements and structures of the imposed system.

Keywords: Third World feminism, postcolonial feminism, gender discrimination, patriarchy.

ÖZ

DORIS LESSING'İN *THE GRASS IS SINGING* ADLI ESERİ İLE TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'NIN *NERVOUS CONDITIONS* ADLI ESERİNDE ÜÇÜNCÜ DÜNYA FEMİNİST YAKLAŞIMINA GÖRE CİNSİYET AYRIMCILIĞI

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Bu tez, Doris Lessing'in *The Grass is Singing* adlı eseri ile Tsitsi Dangarembga'nın *Nervous Conditions* adlı eserinde, kadınlığın ten renginden bağımsız olarak erkeklikten daha değersiz olduğunu karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz eder. Ataerkil sistem erkeklere kadınları fiziksel ve ruhsal olarak sömürme fırsatını tanırken, üçüncü dünya feminizminin temelini oluşturan sömürgeci sistem ise erkeklere kadınları kendi istekleri ve faydaları doğrultusunda kullanma fırsatını sağlamıştır. Ayrıca, kadınların hakları öyle başarılı bir şekilde gasp edilmiştir ki, bu şekilde hem sömürge sistemi desteklenmiş hem de baskı süreci devam ettirilmiştir. Kısır bir döngü olarak sömürgeleştirme sürecinin yanı sıra, sömüren ve sömürülen tarafların ataerkil yapısının sentezi, eğitim, politika, hukuk ve ekonomi alanlarında kadınları kösteklemektedir. Sömürgeci ataerkil sistemin bakış açısına göre, ten rengi ne olursa olsun kadın kadındır ve yaşamını empoze edilen sistemin ihtiyaçları ve yapıları doğrultusunda sürdürmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Üçüncü Dünya feminizmi, sömürge sonrası feminizm, ataerkil toplum, cinsiyet ayrımcılığı.

To my dearest wife, Selma KARA, as well as our son, Rüzgar KARA,

AND

In loving memory of my grandfather, Nihat YENİGÜN.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to evince the inferiority of women to men regardless of skin colour in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* in the aspect of Third World feminism. In colonized Rhodesia, while the patriarchal system allows men to oppress women both physically and spiritually, the colonial structure shapes men according to its own ideological and colonial profits. By doing so, the colonial powers empower men over women, thereby making men abuse women in such social issues as racism, class, culture, gender roles, objectification, assimilation, and alienation. Women, therefore, are oppressed through these components of Third World feminism and are marginalized from their bodies and identities as well as being assimilated and alienated in terms of both their bodies and their communities. Additionally, the rights of women are abused in a specific way to support the colonial structure and to preserve the process of oppression; the established patriarchal system, no matter which group of people it belongs to; either to the Black or to the White, adds another affliction and burden on the shoulders of the opposite sex; the women. Although performing a great effort to save their country from the colonizers during the war and rebellion times, women were put into the cage of the patriarchal system after the harsh conditions were overcome. The black women have no rights of education (though not officially), what is more, they are domesticated in order to provide for their husbands or fathers or whoever is on top of them according to the patriarchal hierarchy. The white women, on the other hand, have the rights of education; nevertheless, they are not different from their black comrades in terms of their destiny in the so-called Dark Continent. They are also domesticized so that they can look after their white husbands while they cultivate the lands, which they acquired from

the Blacks by force. The protagonist of *The Grass is Singing* is Mary, who is a white middle-aged woman, suffering from the patriarchal structure since her birth into a working-class family by ways of racism, gender roles, assimilation, alienation, objectification, culture, and class issues. Her exploitation is performed by the colonially coded male participants of the society. By the same token, the five black women; Tambu, Nyasha, Ma'Shingayi, Maiguru, and Lucia in Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions*, are also victimized in the same type of colonially modelled patriarchal community through their gender roles, the racist impositions of the colonizers, and economical disempowerments, marginalization, cultural enforcements, alienation, and assimilation, implanted by the same constitutions. Therefore, before beginning to analyse the novels, which are based on these thematic and theoretical grounds, the first chapter of this thesis is allocated to the colonial and liberation history of Rhodesia and to the biography of the authors, Doris Lessing and Tsitsi Dangarembga. The second chapter will include detailed information about definition of feminism, the emergence and improvement of feminism in addition to the theoretical information on Third World feminism. Besides the theoretical data on the Third World feminism, the reason why the mentioned type of feminism emerged and why the Western types of feminisms are inapplicable to the women of the Third World countries will be discussed with some examples and theoretical references. In the third chapter, each novel will be analysed in detail according to the components of Third World feminism such as racism, class, gender roles, culture, objectification, assimilation, and alienation together with the examples from the texts. The co-operating ideologies, the reasons and the consequences of women's mediocrity to the so-called superior sex will be presented. The conclusion, eventually, will assert that the colour of skin is not crucially important in the inferiority of women to men if they are residents in the Third World countries. Besides, all the colonial ideologies are in charge of oppressing women by ways of the components aforementioned.

Western desire to colonize African territories reached its peak in 1880s. The impetus among the British, American, Spanish and French colonizers was to become the super economic power in the globe. The British Empire imposed her imperialism on the other parts of the continent until 1880s.

> The 'scramble for Africa' in the 1880s and 1890s saw the continent partitioned into European colonies: Egypt, the 'Central African Federation' (Northern and

> Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland), Nigeria and British East Africa were all among the territories that became part of the British [E]mpire (Fhlathúin 28).

After this last colonization process, there came up great upheavals in the African regions which created great resistance against the ruling British hegemony. However, the defeat of the Africans was not a big surprise, for the British Empire used lots of heavy weapons against the natives, fighting against the colonizers under unequal circumstances (Fhlathúin 28). The outbreak of World War I increased the power of the Empire and she gained more and more territories in Africa, broadening her borders to Iraq and Palestine. Beginning with the Suez Crisis, which showed up in 1956, the British Empire started to lose her territories in Africa one by one; Rhodesia, among many other regions, triggered the flame of independence in 1965 with Unilateral Declaration of Independence of Ian Smith. The country gained independence in 1980 with international recognition, its new name being Zimbabwe with the newly-elected black president, Robert Mugabe (Fhlathúin 30).

To highlight the resistance more specifically, the detailed invasion and liberation of Rhodesia should and must be mentioned. Palmer and Birch admit it in their article, *Great Zimbabwe*, that Cecil Rhodes, who was the eponym of Rhodesia, invaded Mashonaland in 1890 after earning a fortune from the diamond caves in South Africa; unsatisfied with their available resources, the British settlers were in the intention of finding more sources for gold to become richer, for which they occupied Matabeleland three years later (6). In 1896, a gradually growing resistance came up as a result of the violence practise by the white settlers and the war was named as the First Chimurenga (War of Liberation). Hundreds of the white colonizers were dead, while thousands of the black resisters were literally massacred due to the fact that the leaders of resistance were hung, while the yielders who hid in the caves were exploded via dynamites. The British South Africa Company was a private enterprise of Cecil Rhodes and the same company governed Rhodesia between the years 1890 and 1923. After that, the settlers gained access for the new governing privilege and they governed the country until 1980 (Palmer and Birch 7). Gold became the second-class motive for the colonizers while tobacco, which was too expensive for the British Empire to afford to buy from the USA, formed the first motive of residence in Rhodesia. The number of the white settlers increased incredibly in the region, which brought about the exile of the natives to the native

reserves. Because of the increasing inequalities in addition to the violent attitudes of the settlers, the Second Chimurenga started in 1970, in which thousands of *men and women* (emphasis added) ran away from the region to be trained as guerrillas in order to fight against the white settlers. Palmer and Birch state in their article, *Roads to Freedom: The Second Chimurenga*, that Rhodesians, who were unable to find the armoury assistance from the West, shared solidarity with the East and they were equipped with guns, which, in the end, brought about the death of 27500 people officially (10 – 11). With the independence of the other colonies such as Portugal and Mozambique, Rhodesians received assistance from their comrades and made Ian Smith sign a power-sharing deal, which could not succeed in stopping the war at all. Eventually, the election was held with universal franchising and Robert Mugabe was victorious with his Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) party in April 18, 1980, which brought the emancipation of the new country, Zimbabwe (Palmer and Birch 11).

Although the Rhodesians struggled for their independence against the British settlement in their region under unequal conditions, Mlambo defines their resistance as "a story of how a small immigrant White minority arrogated to themselves the right to determine the pace and the direction of the nation's development at the expense of the majority and how the African majority struggled to assert their rights" (123). Disguising their original aim of prosperity, the British settlers introduced themselves to the natives as the illuminative friends of them, decisive in bringing improvements in all sorts of fields as well as civilization. Nevertheless, they never acted in accordance with their revealed intention; furthermore, they made laws and policies, which, in the end, provided profits on behalf of the colonizer, while decreasing the life standards of the natives. Palmer and Birch demonstrate the essential targets of the white settlers explicitly in their article, *White Rhodesia*, as follows:

> The Colony of settlers in Rhodesia aimed to ensure and perpetuate white privilege and control. They dominated access to all resources, such as land, education, health, training, the road and rail networks and loans for farming. Inequality was enforced by the settler-controlled parliament and reinforced by social segregation. Despite such support and an abundance of cheap black labour, it was a struggle for most whites to make a living, as the early novels and short stories of Doris Lessing testify (8).

As they also put it, the colonization of Rhodesia made the prevalent conditions more and more difficult for the natives, for they were deprived of their own civil rights in their very own countries while the white settlers made the best of them although they were actually foreigners there. By gaining power over the most important economic resources, the British settlers forced the natives become dependent on them in every aspect, thereby handcuffing them so that they cannot react against the inequalities because of disempowerment they were forcefully exposed to. Because of the imposed poverty, therefore, the natives became less interested with such issues as improvement through education and economic independence, for their only aim was to survive due to the colonizers' gain of power over economy. Survival, for sure, required absolute obedience to the powerful settler, regardless of the inequities they forced the natives to experience. By doing so, the natives were forced to leave their national territories and identities behind and to live as money-producing machines, though earning very little amount of money, enough to survive only.

Implanting such historical developments and applying their factual and unequal consequences into their novels, both Doris Lessing and Tsitsi Dangarembga incorporated the female victimization in their works. The novels, *The Grass is Singing* and *Nervous Conditions*, therefore, present the native and white women's racial and economic oppressions, promoted by the colonially coded patriarchal culture and society, which result in the female body's objectification, assimilation, and marginalization from its very own autonomy and community.

Hence, the white and the native women's inferiority to the colonial patriarchy, regardless of the colour of skin, will be presented in the suitable way to the components of the Third World feminism and the themes mentioned above.

1.1. Doris Lessing

Doris May Tayler was born as a British citizen to a bank manager, Alfred Cook Tayler, and a nurse, Emily Maude, on October 22nd, 1919 in Kermanshah in Persia (now Iran). When she was five, her family was informed (as many other British people were) that South Rhodesia was a golden opportunity of an immediate wealth, for it was a self-governing British colony. Therefore, the family moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1924 (Knapp 2), which, apparently, influenced Lessing in her profession to a great extent. She was never an easy child due to the fact that she had the passion to question everything all around her from the very early ages, which, she admitted, was a characteristic of her father. She was generally an aggressive child against her parents, especially against her mother. She refused many structural impositions, one of which was the formal education. It was in those years, "distaste for conventional feminine roles was instilled in young Doris Tayler – an aversion the later Doris Lessing will never lose" (Knapp 4). Between 1926 and 1932, Lessing attended Roman Catholic Convent in Salisbury, following another year of formal education in Girls' High School, which ended her journey of the conventional education. As Mona Knapp puts it in her splendid work, *Doris Lessing*, "she [saw] modern education – far from teaching individuals to think – as a tool to mass-produce compliant citizens who will run the herd and fit society's needs by bowing mindlessly to authority" (6). From then on, she educated herself by reading multiple kinds of books of various novelists. Additionally, she was a very good observer; after she left school, she worked as an au pair in Salisbury with two different families and observed the colonial Rhodesia in detail, which increased her awareness of all kinds of injustices at a very young age.

She made her first marriage with Frank Charles Wisdom, who was a civil servant, a year after she left her family permanently in 1938 and started working as a phone operator. However, her marriage was not a long-lasting one, for it ended with a divorce after bearing a son, James, and a daughter, Jean, in 1943. Between 1942 and 1948, she was active in a Marxist group where she met her second and last husband, Gottfried Lessing, a refugee of Führer regime, and married him in 1945 only to be divorced in 1949 after bearing her son Peter in 1947. From then on, she

concluded that marriage was not "one of [her] talents. She [was] much happier unmarried than married" (Newquist 46).

Before her divorce, she started working on her first novel, *The Grass is Singing*, in 1948 (although she had tried to write in prose and poetry genres when she was only sixteen and actually completed two novels and unfinished parts of many other books) and tried to publish it by giving the manuscript to at least twelve publishers, which, in turn, was denied by all of them (Knapp 8). After she got divorced from Charles, she sailed to London with her son, Peter Lessing, and it was only then that the manuscript was admitted in 1950 and brought her a great success. In 1956, when she had a visit to Southern Rhodesia, she found out that she was prohibited from the country. It was "her outspoken opposition to apartheid [that] brought her "banned person" status ... The respective bans were not lifted until Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and the end of South African apartheid in 1995" (Rege 1190).

As for her career, it is obvious that she was influenced by her life in Southern Rhodesia, indeed. In an interview with Roy Newquist, she expresses her notions over injustice, committed to the Black by the White, which, of course, were her observations beginning from her childhood in Rhodesia:

> I was brought up in Central Africa, which means that I was a member of the white minority pitted against a black majority that was abominably treated and still is. ... An adult black earned twelve shillings a month, rather less than two dollars, and his food was rationed to corn meal and beans and peanuts and a pound of meat per week. It was all grossly unfair, and it's only part of a larger picture on inequity. One-third of us – one third of humanity, that is – is adequately housed and fed. Consciously or unconsciously we keep two-thirds of mankind improperly housed and fed (57 – 8).

Approaching to the colonized community very critically, Lessing was always aware of the hypocrisy of the colonizer, handcuffing the Black in a mouse-trap in order to protract the colonial hegemony. Moreover, in many of her writings, one of which is a series of novel entitled *Children of Violence*, she reflected that the formal education system is constructed in the way to serve for the dominance of the White. Therefore, it is clear that injustice, not only to the Black but also in all kinds of mediums, constituted the basis for Lessing's literary career. She focused on the personal freedom in many of her works; thus, her main themes are constituted as a "frustration

with the endless repetition of human behaviour patterns, the struggle to liberate the self from these patterns, and the effort to understand and realize the individual's relationship and responsibility to the whole" (Rege 1191). Her attendance to some political groups, though not always as an activist, such as a Marxist group, the British Communist Party, and another socialist group of writers underscored her political notions that shaped her writing to some extent. However, she was always dissatisfied with the groups she took part in since she believed that the collective identifications of the individuals were only the masks of the powerless in order to seem stronger within the society. As Mona Knapp argues,

> [p]olitical groups are only one aspect of the *collective*, which can be defined as one of three major poles in Lessing's work. Collectivism includes nationalist affiliations, clubs of all sorts, mass support of authority and Führer-figures, and all caste or class systems. It further includes groupings determined by sex or social standing: in brief, all the structures with which individuals identify and conform in order to belong to something greater, more powerful than themselves (9 – 10).

Lessing was on the side of the strength of wholeness, which, she believed, is the only way to be able to live in freedom without the bars of inequality, no matter what aspect of life they are concerned with. Therefore, she produced her works within the frame of wholeness, disregarding individuality, collectivism and groupings. Essentially, her works, *The Golden Notebook* and *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*, deal with such matters (Knapp 10); they put the emphasis on the unity of all, no matter what the differences are, and subordinate the individualistic and collective ways of life. By doing so, she unconsciously produced works, belonging to the school of Sufism, which was described by Lessing in her own essay, *In the World, Not of It*, as follows:

> Sufism does not resemble in any way what it considers to be a degeneration of a real tradition and says that you cannot approach Sufism until you are able to think that a person quite ordinary in appearance and in life can experience higher states of mind. Sufism believes itself to be the substance of that current which can develop man to a higher stage in his evolution. It is not contemptuous of the world. "Be in the world, but not of it," is the aim (132 – 3).

The Golden Notebook, thus, was produced in the scope of Sufism without knowing that she was actually in the borders of the thought; she admitted it in a letter to Mona

Knapp in 1982 that what she longed for existed in the school of Sufism but she authored her novel before she found out the idea of mysticism (Knapp 13).

As mentioned before, Lessing was never confined in any kind of thought; she was a Sufi, a communist, a socialist, a radical, a liberal, and a feminist. Parallel to this, she demonstrated her notions of each school in all her works, implying that people should live in a harmony of wholeness instead of discriminating themselves with such titles as black or white, rich or poor, bourgeois or proletariat, woman or man, strong or weak, and so on. The destructions of any kind of collectives and –isms, as well as the individual definitions by way of these collectives, are the way to this organic unity of wholeness. Schlueter states his own argument about Lessing in his *Doris Lessing in Perspective* that

> Mrs. Lessing has something exceedingly significant to say about themes which have concerned many less talented writers of our day: the appeal of communism to the liberals of the late 1930s and early 1940s; the black – white situation in British colonial Africa; the role of the "free" woman in an essentially masculine world, and the manifestations, particularly sexual, of that woman's keen self-analysis; and the function of writing as a means of achieving therapeutic identity, even equilibrium, in a chaotic universe (5).

Hence, it is very obvious in her writings that rather than praising a group of people over the other, Lessing focused on the ideas to equalize whichever group she refers to. This, for sure, is one of the reasons why she sympathized herself with the realist writers of the nineteenth century like Balzac, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Chekhov, among others, for she reflected it in her essay, *The Small Personal Voice*, that the realist novel is the highest form of prose writing, incomparable to expressionism, impressionism, symbolism, naturalism, or any other kinds of –isms (4). As is known, the realist perspective in writing includes everything as they exist, therefore, this, for sure, is the closest step Lessing took in order to narrate everything belonging to every aspect of life as well as mirroring the people as they are. Her humanistic approach to the inequalities on agenda, therefore, made her a world citizen rather than a British citizen.

As for her compositions, there is a variety of genres in her production of works such as novels, short stories, plays, poems, essays, reportages, book reviews, and autobiographical texts. Throughout her life time, she was awarded numbers of times. Some of her awards were the Somerset Maugham Award, the Prix Médicis

étranger, the Mondello Prize, the Grinzane Cavour Prize, the James Tait Black Prize, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, Companion of Honour from Queen Elizabeth II, a Companion of Literature from the Royal Society of Literature, and the Nobel Prize in Literature (Rege 1188). Her works are translated into many languages throughout her literary career and there are lots of theses and dissertations written on her works.

To sum up, Doris Lessing benefited from her own experiences in her literary career. There are many glimpses of her own life within her creations. She was never handcuffed by any schools totally and she always tried to evaluate the issues on agenda from an objective perspective. Although she advocated the individual freedom in every aspect of life, she was never on the side of the individual imprisonment in the collectives, shaping the people according to the available system. She declared that her work, *Alfred and Emily*, was her last novel in 2008. As reported on *The Guardian* by Maev Kennedy, Lessing passed away at her home in London on the 17th of November, 2013, at the age of ninety-four (Web).

1.2. Tsitsi Dangarembga

Both a novelist and a film-maker, Tsitsi Dangarembga was born on February 14th, 1959 in the colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). When she was only two, she moved to England with her family, where she lived until she was six. In 1965, she returned to Rhodesia with her family and started her formal education at a mission school in Mutare, and completed her secondary school at an American convent school (Coundouriotis 118). That was the time when her writing process started; writing just for herself was a sort of cure, making her a way out of the alienation she was exposed to in her schools. Not surprisingly, she read the classics of English literature both at school and at home (probably as a result of formal education), however,

> [s]he read her first African novel (Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*) as a teenager, but it was not until she returned from Cambridge shortly before Zimbabwean independence in 1980 that she became avidly involved with African and African-American literature (Coundouriotis 118).

In 1977, she attended Cambridge University to study medicine only to return to Zimbabwe again in 1980 due to the same stressful effect of alienation. Although it

was her field of interest, she could not pursue her education in a foreign country where she was alienated because of her national and sexual identity. Thus, she left Cambridge University and pursued her dreams of education in Zimbabwe. After returning to Zimbabwe, she attended the University of Zimbabwe to study psychology (Coundouriotis 118). In 1988, she penned her first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, which brought her a worldwide popularity, although not initially. She went to Berlin in 1989 for German Film and TV Academy and met her husband Olaf Koschke, married him and bore her three children there. She graduated from the film school in 1997 and returned to Zimbabwe in 2000 (Lee & Dangarembga 132). Now, she runs her film production agency, which she founded in 1990s, with her husband in Harare, directing films and writing scripts.

Dangarembga's fiction has predominantly been correlated with both colonialism and feminism. For years, she has struggled hard to reflect the stories of her characters, sourcing back to her own experiences of multiple kinds of oppressions. While she was at the University of Zimbabwe, she was extremely aware of the political mechanisms in her country; she was keen on Afro-American women writers and their works, she was active in the Drama Club and she produced her initial theatrical works, *She No Longer Weeps*, *The Lost of the Soil*, *The Third One* (Coundouriotis 118), which are about these political issues shaping the attitudes of men, who, in turn, shape the life-styles and borders of the women of colour. Her themes generally consist of the oppressions on women by the colonizer and by the colonized men, which, she asserts in an interview with Christopher Joon-Hai Lee, are the ultimate results of being female:

> I suppose being female you really can't get away from it. It's what you wear … your whole image is so important, so one way or another it's going to be a theme I think. And also being black is another thing, you know? Your body becomes a big theme (*Desperately Seeking Tsitsi* 138).

She underscores the idea that being a woman is completely what makes women be aware of the fact that they are on an inferior level once compared to men; besides, the women of colour in Africa experience this with more deteriorating results in their conditions, for they are abused twice. These are the reasons, she points out, which drew her to the utmost desire of writing. Correspondingly, women in general attend writing groups because of the oppressions they are forced to experience (Lee &

Dangarembga 139). If no one states the conditions of the people who suffer from some sort of oppressive attitudes, no one can know that there are people in some parts of the world going through the same experiences; this was another triggering point of Dangarembga's writing process.

Focusing on the colonial impositions of cognitive maps, which help colonizers put the patriarchy into a form, Dangarembga believes that the subordination of women keeps increasing. That the other parts of the world are aware of the oppressions is undeniable, nevertheless, one cannot figure out what it is like to be submissive, without being able to question anything at all, under the dominance of a privileged group in one's own country. People, she argues, must and should be aware of the other oppressions as well (Lee & Dangarembga 135). She believes that these cognitive maps are imposed on people at the very beginning of their lives through the formal education system by the colonizer in order to strengthen his dominance:

> People always saw education as something you did instrumentally. Education did include basic reading, but the novels you read were just for improving your language skills. And so we have not really developed a habit of reading. The other aspect of the reading habits in my country is that there wasn't really any literature which your ordinary Zimbabwean child or your ordinary young woman could relate to. … People were not encouraged to write. We had what was called the Literature Bureau and they published all the African writing. And they would only allow tales of traditional witchcraft, wives poisoning their husbands, you know, that kind of thing. And of course my parents wouldn't let us read them, because they were destructive. And yet, that was the only cognitive map that the forces in power then were allowing us to construct (George, Scott, and Tsitsi Dangarembga 311 – 2).

By making the people illiterate or ignorant, the colonizer supplied subservient patriarchal publishers, too, which hindered (and some still do so) the women authors from reflecting their own forcefully compliant experiences. The publishers, furthermore, included the detested women figures, according to Dangarembga, which, in turn, assisted the system in power fashion the patriarchy; a vicious circle, which kept both the men and the women of Africa running behind a slice of cheese uselessly like mice with the intention of eating it, however, they were forced to live with the dream of eating the cheese.

In addition to her concerns of colonial enforcements, she also draws a feminist route for women to follow in order to survive in a masculine-defined way of life. Dangarembga underscores it in her interview, *Africa's Women Speak Out*, by *BBC* that women must and should be aware of the power they have and the power they do not have, as well as the power they should have (Web). Furthermore, historically and politically unaware and ignorant, the women, she believes, are satisfied with the Western feminisms for a long period of time, for it has presumably taken part on the side of the women; however, in the course of the politically and historically changing time, the women should recognize the inconsistencies and the inefficiencies of this type of feminism, thereby founding their own theory and applying it into practice within their own conditions of societies (George, Scott, and Tsitsi Dangarembga 311 – 2).

As for her works, she has not produced a large amount of novels because of her fondness on film production. As for her selected works, she wrote her short story, *The Letter*, which was published in 1985 in Sweden. Following that, she has authored her first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, in 1988, which made her the first black woman author of Zimbabwe, whose work was published in Great Britain. She also penned a story for the film, *Neria*, in 1993. Furthermore, she produced her own films, *Everyone's Child* in 1996 and *Kare Kare Zvako* (*Mother's Day* in English) in 2004. Two years later, she wrote *The Book of Not: A Sequel to Nervous Conditions*. She was awarded with the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1989 for her first novel, *Nervous Conditions* (Coundouriotis 118 – 119).

CHAPTER II

BASIC DEFINITIONS: FEMINIST LITERARY CRITICISM

2.1. Definition of Feminism

As a very newly coined term, feminism came up in English through the end of the nineteenth century, approximately in 1890s, from French. However, it was not a crystal clear expression for those who were not familiar with the existent conditions of the period. Although it has been a long time since the term arouse, it is still not easy to define it correctly; or to name it more explicitly, for there are abundant types of it according to the necessities and schools of the societies and governments. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that even the scholars within the field of feminism feel awkward once they are asked to define what feminism is. The writer Rebecca West's very own words illustrate this confusion vividly upon being asked to define feminism in 1913: "I myself have never been able to find out what feminism is; I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute" (219). This instance is, of course, a concrete exemplification of the turmoil that the people in that period experienced, since the term was a fresh one for all the circles. At those times, it was nearly as simple as what West remarked. What meant by feminism was equal rights for women and men in social, economic, political, and judicial platforms. Nevertheless, if it was the justice that the women wanted, they had been labelled as feminists, no matter what the actual description of the expression was. Moreover, when feminism appeared as a word within the social and literal circles, "[i]nterestingly, the earliest examples of [it] in the Oxford English Dictionary carried negative meanings" (Walters 1). It was extraordinarily pejorative and once people heard the word feminist, their inferences were rather insulting, for they assumed the feminists as man-haters, witches, prostitutes, and so on. These misogynist approaches to those who aimed to defend their rights disposed the

women to the fright of asking for what they actually deserved. If they had done so, they would have been punished by those woman-haters. As Walters asserts, there are still some women trying to justify their intention of defending their rights but still beginning their speech as "I am not a feminist but…" (2). Therefore, there were even some scholars proposing the word 'womanism' for the replacement of the former.

Although defining feminism and ascribing it the actual and definite meaning is rather difficult, it is as clear as day that it has gone through lots of periods, full of protests, as well as suppressions, and redefinitions according to the aims of the supporters, thereby making it nearly impossible to name the term and school explicitly. It is still possible to underline that feminism covers equality between the sexes in economic, social, judicial, and political mediums. It is not a very surprising fact that before the first, second, and third waves of feminism, women earned less than men when the working hours and conditions were compared; additionally, they did not have the same standard of life before the society, for it was impossible for them to get education according to their own taste; they also lost their heritage from their ancestors when they got married to their husbands, and they could not have a word on their children once they were divorced; what is more, in political platforms, they had no right to vote or to become a deputy in the parliament. Considering these unjust approaches to women, it is still impossible to claim that all these abovementioned problems are overcome on behalf of the women; however, at least, some judicial, economic, social, and political matters are relatively not problematic anymore.

As Virginia Woolf put it in her essay-novel, *A Room of One's Own*, "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of woman and the true nature of fiction unsolved" (7 -8). At a time, when education for women was forbidden and the only allowed objective for them was to look after the family and to move along with the house works, Woolf does not only argue about women's social condition but also moves one more step and underlines the fact that women must also join in the creation-process of literature, for she inquires them with her very own words: "Have you any notion of how many books are written about women in the course of one year? Have you any notion how many are written by men? Are you

aware that you are, perhaps, the most discussed animal in the universe" (31)? Once looked back at those times, though seemingly a lunatic protest, there is a crucially important message beneath what she directs to humanity, especially to the men of literature – let your wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters have their own rooms so that they can lock themselves up there and feel the relief of individuality. It might be a way of escape from the patriarchy and allow them to create something of their own to highlight their own autonomy; thereby defending their own natural rights. However, to do this, they all need money, in accordance with this requirement; they all need an occupation, which also brings about another requisite; education, the social right of all humanity. Of course, within the boundaries of the patriarchal system, what she puts forward is something unattainable for women. Nevertheless, it is taken for granted that getting out of the borders is only and only possible through the gates, which the education and economic independence might supply. Thus, it is possible to assert that "Virginia Woolf's 'right to earn a living' was, and remains, central to feminism" (Walters 2).

The right to acquire education and economic independence, for sure, are not the only points with which feminism is concerned. Beside these fundamental wishes, women also acted for their judicial equities. As aforementioned, women were unable to preserve the properties, which they inherited from their ancestors, once they married their husbands. What is more, even if they were divorced, their heritage was left to their ex-husbands. By no means was it possible for them to get their inheritance back. This, certainly, caused the marriage institution become more and more hypocrite, for, "it was much harder to find a husband without a dowry" (Walters 30). Even in literature, there are examples of such women, who were in a great melancholy owing to their husbands' dishonesty. In Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished novel, *Maria or the Wrongs of Woman*, the heroine Mary is imprisoned in a madhouse by her husband in order to take control of what she has. To underline and highlight how women are exploited and thrown out as wastes of the patriarchy, Wollstonecraft likens the world to a vast prison and women to born slaves (*Maria or the Wrongs of Woman* 8). Additionally, women had no power over their own children; instead, children were bound to their fathers and independent of their mothers officially. Thus, it might also be stated that what feminism looks for is also the right for the women to acquire their official existence; to exist in the eye of the

judicial platforms, accordingly in the eye of their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons.

Apart from the economic, social, and judicial medium, women were also disregarded from the political platform through exclusion from the right to be existent within the parliament as a deputy, as well as the prevention from the right to vote for the candidate they would like to see in the parliament, or any other political election. Especially in World War II, women took an important part, though not, of course, as soldiers, but as the heads of the houses, owing to the fact that their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers were in the frontiers. All women were in solidarity and were in charge of their households; however, when the matter was politics, the governmental doors were closed to them, as if they were useless in the process of defence. This, of course, is just an example of how women were exploited by men according to their own tastes; but it is still crystal clear that they were ruled out of the politics by men and experienced another injustice in the course of time. As Walters argues, most of the men were enfranchised in 1890s, and women, as a very just protest, "pointed out that men who were poor and barely literate had been given the vote, while well-educated women, who paid rates and taxes, were still excluded from full citizenship" (74).

To sum up, although the inequalities are not only about economics, social standards, politics, and law, the most striking and eye-catching problematic issues are those abovementioned ones. Since the injustices experienced by women are abundant in amount and there are innumerable types of feminisms constituted according to the governmental structures and the sorts of inequalities within the social structure, it is nearly impossible to draw a crystal clear definition of feminism. Nonetheless, all of the feminism types meet at the same point, which is the fact that women ask for equality between the sexes, no matter what the medium is. Moreover, the misunderstanding that feminism is the school, which includes hatred towards men and championship of the women over the opposite sex, renders reaching their objective more and more difficult. Since the medieval times, there has been a strong struggle among women – and sometimes with the companionship of men, too – against the opposite sex to obtain some equal rights, although at those times it was not an –ism yet but an attempt for feminist criticism. Yet, as long as the conjuncture keeps changing, there will always be protests, struggles, activisms and fierce

discussions of women, for their necessities since the medieval times keep changing, too. Still, the core point of the problematized school will never change; the wish for equality between the sexes, which has been the overall definition of feminism for hundreds of years.

2.2. Emergence and Progress of Feminism

Although there was no school named as feminism until the trespassing of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it cannot be stated that there were not any attempts, either. From the Medieval Age to contemporary periods, many people, belonging to many different circles, struggled hard to underscore that women should have the equal rights to men (see Dinshaw). Surprising for those times, it was not only women but also men who were active in the process of the progression of women's condition. Everything that seemed problematic for women in that era paved the way to first, second, and third waves of feminism. In short, it might be inferred that although the conditions of women in that era were worse than those who triggered the waves in the late nineteenth century, the struggles, disputes, and inequities as well as hypocrisy of the societies were pretty alike.

Born in 1098 in Bermersheim, Hildegard of Bingen, a committed nun who spent her life in convent, was the first to admit the frailty of the women despite the fact that she wrote a multitude amount of letters in the Medieval Age, although writing for women was rather unattainable, for it was preserved for men. It is inferred from her very own letters that she kept taking shelter under the wings of God acknowledging that what she uttered would not be any more valuable than trash. Once she asked for help from the monk of Eberhard, who was the Bishop of Bamberg, via a letter, she wrote:

> Father, I, a poor little woman, am able to expound upon the question you asked me, because I have looked to the True Light, I and I am sending along to you the answer I saw and heard in a true vision not my words, I remind you, but those of the True Light, which has no imperfection (Baird and Ehrman 95).

If to read in between the lines, it is vividly observed that she was scared of the period's harsh and unmerciful punishments, for she underlined that what was written on the letter was not what she produced herself; on the contrary, it was the creation

of ‘the True Light’. Apart from that, the phrase, ‘a poor little woman’ is encountered nearly in all of her writings, which, for sure, depicts the women’s condition at those times clearly. As Barbara Newman asserts in her work, *Sister of Wisdom*, Hildegard of Bingen’s “visionary style and prophetic authority [functioned] as modes of empowerment for a woman who would otherwise have no licence to speak … alone, write or preach about the things of God” (xvii). By doing so, she took herself for granted and reflected her very own intuitions and observations as well as wishes. As Baird and Ehrman put it:

> "The Living Light has said to me"; "In the inspiration of a true vision, I saw and heard these words"; "The Fountain of Waters cries out to you"; "He Who gives life to the living says"; "The one who was, and is, and is about to come speaks"; "In a vision I saw," et cetera … [are] means of gaining authenticity for her word, the bid of "the poor feminine creature" for authority in a very masculine world (14).

That kind of prophetic speech did not only preserve her chance of writing but also “assured her an audience. … Were it not for the visions, she would never have preached or written at all” (Newman 34). Therefore, known as a visionary, Hildegard of Bingen benefited from her visions to a great extent, thus she could establish her own word kingdom and expressed her inner world to the public. Nevertheless, although her biography reflects that she witnessed visions since infancy, sharing them literally with the public and the other religious men started when she was forty-three. Accordingly, this is another proof of restrictions in women’s world, for she postponed all her life-work until she was forty-three, which is another dark side of the *Dark Age* (emphasis added).

Furthermore, Latin was the official language of the time and women were not allowed to use it, no matter what the circumstances were. As Carolyn Dinshaw argues,

> [h]igher education and official (Latin) culture were closed to women, but women, both lay and religious, did read and write in the vernacular languages (English and French in later medieval England), and a very few may have gained sufficient learning to make them *litteratus* – literate in Latin (12 – 13).

As the proto-feminist patterns in history, women could not get into the borders of the Latin language, as mentioned above. Correspondingly, men did not use the vernacular language, for it was believed that the vernacular language feminized the

male audience by equally combining them with the non-Latin women group (Wogan-Browne et al. 121 – 2). Even the languages were divided into two in order to grade one gender while degrading another. The border lines between the two groups were defined so strongly that nearly no women could trespass it for long centuries. Therefore, the women's search for a divine shelter, as Hildegard of Bingen did, was not an enormous incident, for they needed to reflect their own opinions and protests. However, although it has always been a male-dominant invention, the language has been a very important tool to convey one's freedom all throughout the history of mankind. The restriction, or more straightforwardly, the prohibition of using it, was banning the women from the society, which, eventually, rendered them a second-class gender, which is a social construction but not a biological entity.

Another pioneer of the proto-feminist movements was Julian of Norwich, who was another nun in the Medieval Ages. She protested against those, who argued that the Bible prohibited women from taking active roles in any social area. As an anarchist action for those times, she acted against the status quo, which swept women away from using Latin efficiently; however, although she used writing in order to defend herself and her fellows, she was only within the boundaries of the patriarchal system. She could advocate herself by just underlining the mediocrity of her own sex. She expostulated to the idea that she could not write down her experiences and she totally rejected to be quietened in her short version of *Revelations of Divine Love*: "Ought I to believe, simply because I am a woman, that I should not tell you of God's goodness? When I saw the vision I also saw that he wants it to be known" (33). By arguing her best-known idea above, she both asked her audience if women could not experience God's goodness and if she could not transfer what she experienced through written pieces of works. As a similar approach to that of Hildegard of Bingen's, she took herself for granted through her belief and God's autonomy, which brought her a group of audience and a secure medium to defend and to justify her observations about the patriarchal society and the system she was subject to.

Margery Kempe was also a miserable self in the Medieval Age, who was also a contemporary of Julian of Norwich. She made an account of her life, which was believed to be the first autobiography. She witnessed a very harsh attitude from her

husband; no matter how painful her childbearing was, Kempe could not get rid of her husband's never-ending wish for sexual intercourses. She had excessively intolerable pains while giving birth and finally she made a consensus with her husband which, as a conclusion, supplied her a more comfortable sexual independence after bearing fourteen children, which, of course, was not a profitless act of her husband; as a deal, he made Kempe pay for his debts and also made her forgo her tough Friday fasts so that he could eat and drink with her. He agreed with Kempe and uttered those famous sardonic and ironic words, which has echoed since then: "May your body be as freely available to God as it has been to me" (Walters 8). Forced to sleep with her husband just because Kempe was a woman, her husband's words emphasize how women were imprisoned within their female bodies; their bodies, as Kempe also showed it in her own autobiography, were the playgrounds of men, where they could play as much as and as freely as they wanted to. What he actually implied was that he had used his wife's body enough and then it was time for her to sacrifice her body to God, for it was his turn to use it in accordance with his own taste. Kempe's husband's words, for sure, were not invented and hollow; he talked in that ironic tone due to the fact that Kempe had a vision of Christ, who addressed her as follows:

> Daughter, you greatly desire to see me and when you are in bed you may boldly take me to you as your wedded husband, as your beloved darling as your sweet son, for I want to be loved as a son should be loved by his mother and want you to love me, daughter, as a good wife ought to love her husband. And therefore, you may boldly take me in the arms of your soul and kiss my mouth, my head and my feet as sweetly as you want (*The Book of Margery Kempe* 74).

What should be drawn as a message from the passage above is of course not what Kempe's husband adverted. It was a route for Kempe to get rid of her husband's relentless wish for sex. Other than that, what Kempe conveyed as a vision could be a self-exploration so that she could reach the utmost spirituality and take control of her own body and sexuality by getting free of her physical autonomy. Moreover, she might be looking for an ideal husband and wife, mother and son relationship, which, not surprisingly, she could not find within the male-dominant world of the Medieval Age. Therefore, it is observed that Margery Kempe, too, took shelter under the wings of the Divine, similar to Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich, although she had to forgo her sacred custom of fasting so that she could become self-autonomous

in terms of sexual intercourse and familial bonds, independent of traditional husband and wife, mother and son parallels in the patriarchal society.

Born in 1363 to an Italian family in Venice, Christine de Pizan was a strong intellectual in terms of women rights, too. Though she had difficult times due to the death of her father and husband before the age of twenty-five and being widowed with three children and an old mother to be looked after, the death of all the male participants of her family brought her good luck in order to move along with her career in writing. Her father, Thomas de Pizan, was the astrologer, physician, and alchemist of Charles V of France. Therefore, Christine de Pizan followed the path to the court with her father and thus had the chance to use the royal library, which helped her learn French and become efficient in the classic literature. As aforementioned, the male bounds of her life were dissolved and by this way "[s]he began working as a scribe, claiming Fortune changed her into a man to enable her to support her family through intellectual pursuits" (Dufresne 29 – 30). Despite the fact that her losses and her desperate situation within the system, where the women were not allowed to work in the literary circles to earn their living, seemed very unfortunate, she could use her intelligence to go on living and looking after her family. The phrase that fortune transferred her into a man is in fact crucially important, for it underlines the fact that she was a woman in terms of sex, but a man in terms of social ranking. Otherwise, it would be impossible for her to support herself and her family. Another impressive fact is that she was actually very thankful to her father and to Charles V due to the fact that her father insisted on her education in the classic literature and that Charles V allowed her to use the royal library. If it had not been for them, she could not have had the chance to be prominent within such a male-dominant community.

As one of her first reactions, she wrote against those male authors, who made women seem as vulnerable and worthless in literature. In her poem, *The Letter of the God of Love*, Christine de Pizan made a complaint to her audience in the shoes of Cupid, the god of love. As Dinshaw suggests it,

> women are being unfairly defamed and abused by male writers. … The patriarchal, anti-feminist structure of education is clearly indicted [in the letter], as is the personal animus of the clerks who write against women:

> misogynist scholars of the anti-feminist tradition base their works on books that lie, Cupid asserts, and indoctrinate young boys early in school (19).

Trying to demonstrate that literature was made of fiction and everything in it was adopted by the readers as it was shown to them, Christine de Pizan asserted the idea that what the society thought of women was nothing but only fiction. Moreover, the notion that women were mediocre to men, no matter what the circumstances were, was imposed on the boys at a very young age. Therefore, her solution and call for the women was that if women had written works of art, they would have been able to defend themselves against the patriarchal elements, which were shaped by the male authors.

Apart from the fact above, Christine de Pizan believed that it was not only the education system that made men misogynists; the novels, poems, or any other written works of literature caused women become the victims of the authors. When Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun cooperatively finished their courtly poem, *Roman de la Rose*, one of the contemporary women at those times was victimized by her husband. As Pizan asserted it in her very own words:

> Not long ago, I heard one of your familiar companions and colleagues, a man of authority, say that he knew a married man who believed in the *Roman de la Rose* as in the gospel. This was an extremely jealous man, who, whenever in the grip of passion, would go and find the book and read it to his wife; then he would become violent and strike her and say such horrible things as, 'These are the kinds of tricks you pull on me. This good, wise man Master Jean de Meun knew well what women are capable of'. And at every word he finds appropriate, he gives her a couple of kicks or slaps. Thus it seems clear to me that whatever other people think of this book, this poor woman pays too high a price for it (Baird and Kane 136).

As obvious through her own feminist critique above, Christine de Pizan could not tolerate the notion that women were presented as evils of nature or as the villains of the piece, for the fact that although they were not related to the things written within the books in any slightest amount, they were assumed as equal to those villainous characters in literature. This, for sure, affected their ordinary daily lives. She, however, acknowledged it clearly that the authorities or the sophisticated and well-equipped scholars of the period were capable of controlling the reactions of readers due to the fact that what Pizan knew about her own sex was totally opposite to those

what the scholars or the authorities assumed, which, for sure, were more credible for the men of the period.

Although similar in goal, Christine de Pizan was different from Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich in terms of their approaches to defence. While Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich hid behind the religious wings, Pizan advocated herself and her fellows through her intellectual and educational background, without any fear of the male-dominant society. Apparently, in the Medieval Ages, there were some attempts to establish the school of feminism, although it was not intended consciously. Defending themselves and their sex-fellows, the pioneers of the age wrote and acted against the established patriarchal conjuncture of the time. Thus, they laid the foundations of a good start for the descendants of nearly another six hundred years, thereby becoming the precipitating figures of the school of feminism.

Moving on with the Renaissance period, Elizabeth I's succession to the throne in 1558 prepared a more suitable medium for the women to underscore their existence. The defence of their rights was made possible through mentioning or implying the honourable dynasty in the works they produced. However, the new century's opportunities were not very different from those of the Middle Ages'; even the Queen admitted her mediocrity once she made a speech to her troops in Tilbury: "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king" (Elizabeth I 700). Her very own words, actually, may be interpreted in two possible ways: the first interpretation is that she was so courageous as to emphasize her own autonomy as a woman within the kingdom, underlining the fact that she became the queen regnant of England and Ireland with her sexual identity; on the other hand, it is also possible to draw the conclusion that she was literally weak and feeble owing to her sex, thereby acquiring her power of domination through her royal rights. No matter what the message of her speech was, both ways could still be considered as mediocre standings due to the fact that if she meant the first possible option, she *must have been* (emphasis added) very brave to call herself as the head of the country as a woman who was so weak and feeble by birth; on the other hand, if she meant the second one, it is crystal clear that she

named herself as a second-class being, thereby making her own gender-mates stand beneath the men in the social ranking, too.

Queen Elizabeth I was, of course, not the only example of the period; there were also many non-traditional and radical changes of women within the society. For instance, there were women writers using pseudonyms so that they could protect themselves from the harsh and expected outcomes of the misogynist society they lived in. Apart from that, there were also women wearing pants similar to those of men and behaving like the opposite sex in the early seventeenth-century, which, for sure, was in a total contradiction to the customs once the circumstances of the period were taken into consideration. Not many things changed after the Middle Ages; instead, the movements or attempts of women to underscore the equality of genders were in vain, for they still had no rights to elect and to be elected, the tradition of addressing women by making reference to their fathers or husbands was still in vigour, only a limited right of education was available, and they were in the position of maids to service their husbands, fathers, or brothers as well as coping with the daily household chores.

Within the religious frames and according to men, women, presumably, were the reason of the original sin committed by Eve, who was responsible for the fall of the mankind and the loss of God's grace, and that was apparently like a stain on their destiny. The eighteenth century poet John Donne emphasized this case in his poem, "An Anthology of the World: The First Anniversary", and put the blame on women, too; "One woman at one blow, then killed us all, / And singly, one by one, they kill us now" (106 – 107). As a prominent figure in English literature, Donne clearly expresses the reason why the mankind has to live on earth rather than in Heaven. The fall of Adam and Eve is due to Eve's persuasive attitude towards Adam about eating the forbidden fruit. According to Donne, that was how a woman killed all men. This has been the first reason why women constitute the group to be detested by men throughout history within the religious context. Furthermore, the changing traditions beginning with the Renaissance period such as the increasing number of women authors (although by using pseudonyms) as well as men-like women around, Donne thinks women carry on the original sin, committed by Eve. Men's consumption began thousands of years ago and is still in progress by the descendants of Eve in the

Renaissance period. Therefore, this is how, Donne thinks, every single woman kills men one by one, pointing out that if women continue their new fashion of clothes and physical attitudes, as well as their activism in writing, men will be punished in this or that way again.

As for the percentage of education in England in the seventeenth century, it is observed that nearly ten per cent of the female population had the chance to be educated. The rest of the population, which, for sure, was an incredible amount, was illiterate. However, the education opportunity was presented to some of the women not with the intention of making them mature enough to claim their own ideas, observations, voice, or opposition to the available system, but with the design of making them praise men and learn how to become virtuous and holy women, which is clearly pointed out by Josephine Kamm in her work, *Hope Deferred: Girls' Education in English History*, by giving references to Juan Luis Vives;

> Vives did not seek to deter an intelligent girl from studying, but he considered that her field of study should be severely restricted … 'Women should study wisdom, which doth instruct their manners and inform their living, and teacheth them the way of good and holy life. … When a girl had learned to read 'let those books be taken in hand, that may teach good manners. And when she shall learn to write, let not her example be void verses, nor wanton or trifling songs, but some sad [serious] sentences prudent and chaste, taken out of Holy Scripture, or the sayings of philosophers … Let a woman learn for herself alone and her young children, or her sisters in the Lord (30).

Nevertheless, some of the privileged women like Anne Bradstreet, who could learn reading and writing, managed to reflect their own observations and ideas. Though not many in number, they tried to demonstrate that women were abused by the patriarchal system and its contributors. Moreover, the common ground about the education of women, which was nearly very close to that of Vives', encouraged the female learners to develop a new perspective for their own gender. They, then, were more ambitious to create things of their own and they even questioned the term 'author', which, they thought, was nothing but a male-oriented entity. By doing so, it is possible to claim that they had an active role in the creation-process of the women writers. As Helen Wilcox also puts it, "by claiming the title 'author' in their prefatory poems… [women] were offering a protofeminist challenge to the traditional idea of the 'author' as male, modelled on a masculine God" (32).

Anne Bradstreet was one of those protesting women challengers, who contributed to her fellows with a very witty style. She was born in England in 1612 but then immigrated to a British North American Colony together with her husband and parents in 1630. Her father was a steward of the Earl of Lincoln, thus Anne had the chance to be well-educated in the fields of history, language and literature. In her work, "*The Prologue*", Bradstreet severely attacked the male-dominant literary world and presented the harsh obstacles about the female existence in literature:

> I am obnoxious to each carping tongue
>
> Who fays my hand a needle better fits,
>
> A Poets pen all fcorn I fhould thus wrong.
>
> For fuch defpite they caft on Female wits:
>
> If what I do prove well, it won't advance,
>
> They'l fay it's floln, or elfe it was by chance (25 – 30).

In this poem, Bradstreet explicitly reflects where the male-dominant society places the women. According to the men of the period, as aforementioned, the women's objectives were totally restricted to household chores and to the people they look after in that house. However, she clearly replies those men with a scornful and a detesting tone implying that women do not have to pass their time with those needle works, cleaning, cooking, washing, and so on. Besides, she also clarifies that she, who does not obey what the society points out, is scorned in this or that way, for "[i]t is debilitating to be *any* woman in a society where women are warned that if they do not behave like angels they must be monsters" (Gilbert and Gubar 2029). Explaining that women must also take part in literature, she mounts her disappointment and the unjust reality about the women writers; if what they write are successful, then they will be prevented from any improvement in their profession, otherwise, they will be labelled as thieves so that they will be humiliated not only personally but also generically within the community. The women's condition, though in the seventeenth-century and far from the Medieval Ages, is crystal clear once her lines are taken into consideration; what women present is a theft, a coincidence, or it requires a blockage so that the other individual women will not act like them. Similarly, as Walter suggests, "a number of women emerged as playwrights:

Catherine Trotter, Mary Manley, and Mary Pix all had plays produced – and were cruelly mocked in a play by a certain 'W. M.' which was staged in 1696 (23). As a very concrete experience for women, Bradstreet's verse echoes very truthfully.

What is more is that the opposing group did not only include men but also some women like Dorothy Osborne, who was Sir William Temple's fiancé. When Margaret Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies* circled around, she wrote her fiancé a letter to ask for a copy of the book with a scornful and humiliating tone:

> For God's sake, if you meet with it, send it me; they say 'tis ten times more extravagant than her dress. Sure, the poor woman is a little distracted, she could never be so ridiculous else as to venture at writing books, and in verse too. If I should not sleep this fortnight I should not come to that (Walters 23).

It was definitely not only about the women penning their own ideas, beliefs, observations, reactions, or protests; it is commonly known that it was not likely for women to act on stage, either. As for acting, it is noticed that at those times, the female roles were acted by the men, for women were banned, though not officially, to perform on stages. This was one of the reasons why Virginia Woolf created Judith Shakespeare as a fictional sister of William Shakespeare. The women performing on stage "were often treated as if they were, in essence, merely prostitutes" (Walters 23), which is apparently justified by The Earl of Rochester's famous lines in his *A Letter From Artemisa in the Town, to Cloe in the Country* "That whore is fcarce a more reproachful name, / Than poetefs" (27 – 28). Not surprisingly, when these lines are considered, the same idea about the women's assignments of the household chores comes up. They were marginalized by the blind and subtle patriarchal society in such a powerful and never-ending way that the women were forced to take up all the challenges and to try to create something of their own under such difficult circumstances. Considering the facts that the women writers began to interrogate the term 'author', struggled hard to absorb all the humiliations, and tried to bring forward new perspectives of their own, it is possible to claim that the first conscious feminist literary movement was triggered.

Apart from the counter-attacks to women writers by the male-dominant society and its women supporters, there was another chaotic problem, which was, for sure, another tragic consequence of the captivating community; the female representation in the literary works. The women characters, familiar to the readers,

were generally the prostitutes, doormats, killers, avengers, "the inconstant lover[s], the nagging [wives], the shrewish spinster[s], the disdainful mistress[es] or the seducing whore[s]" (Wilcox 34). Withstanding these unreal representations, the women writers created alternative characters; however, they were also inefficient in justifying the newly-created female characters, for they were also far from the reality themselves. According to Toril Moi, what was done there was an attempt in vain, for it is impossible to reflect the characters as real as the human beings are. He asserts that

> to study 'images of women' in fiction is equivalent to studying *false* images of women in fiction written by both sexes. The 'image' of women in literature is invariably defined in opposition to the 'real person' whom literature somehow never quite manages to convey to the reader (44 – 45).

Therefore, the confrontation of both sexes created untruthful characters within the literary world; nonetheless, the attempt of women to justify themselves is still a very clear portrait of how they reacted against the available system in literature and in the society. Additionally, their attempt can also be listed under the category of triggering the first feminist literary movement due to the fact that women were not only the authors of texts but they were also the readers despite the conventional oppositions within the society. This, definitely, increased the number of the women authors although there were two types of them; private and public writers. Moreover, the literary customs and culture such as libraries or universities were inaccessible for the women; however, they also started to question that huge problem within their literary works, which, of course, was very courageous considering the reactions of the opponents. Once all these upheavals among the women are regarded, it is obvious that although those women, who lived between the seventeenth-century and the Renaissance period, could not establish a feminist literary theory, they employed the appropriate and concise questions about feminism in order for it to be established by their heirs.

The eighteenth-century witnessed some radical changes about the problems of women once compared to the previous strict conventions in the earlier centuries. Nevertheless, it will not be truthful to assert that women gained everything they had been deprived of before. The general agenda about the women, for instance, was still a restrictive tradition in terms of education (see Walters). The education that *some*

(emphasis added) women were allowed to acquire was to read and write, but still the books written for them had instructive tones in order to keep them in the framework of the virtuous maids of their husbands, sons, fathers, or brothers. Nonetheless, it would be unjust not to declare that there were more women who could get education and there were even more women writers in the eighteenth century. Contrary to the expectations, there were still not many opportunities for them to improve their analytic skills; furthermore, they were unable to think, judge, or decide by themselves. A man was needed in order for them to put those analytical activities into practice. The problematic issue of marriage was still in discussion between the two groups; women who believed that a man was not necessary for the women to live as humans, and men, together with another group of women, who were outraged to the idea.

Born in 1666, Mary Astell was a radical writer and activist of the eighteenth-century. Losing her father at a very young age, when she was only twelve, she had serious psychological breakdowns. As Walters asserts, "she was deeply religious … profoundly conservative; a life-long Royalist and a High Church Anglican" (26). Although she was quite conservative, she was not a bigoted supporter of the religious customs, which equalized women to the servants of men. She was unconventional in her approach to the female problem in comparison to her ancestors in the previous centuries. She strongly defended the women's secular and individual autonomy and addressed them to exist for themselves rather than serving their so-called superior masters. She "combined the career of a Tory political pamphleteer with a deeply philosophical and theological interest that produced her most enduring works" (Springborg 216). One of her most celebrated works is *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, which invokes the women for activeness in the process of their intellectual progress. She argued that education was the best tool for women in order to think, judge, and improve their skills on their own, thereby equalizing themselves to men. She advised women in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* as follows:

> No longer drudge on in the dull beaten road of Vanity and Folly, which so many have gone before us; but dare to break the enchanted Circle that custom has plac'd us in, and scorn the Vulgar way of imitating all the Impertinencies of our Neighbours. Let us learn to pride ourselves in something more excellent than the invention of Fashion: And not entertain such a degrading thought of our own *worth*, as to imagine that our Souls were given us only for the service

> of our Bodies, and that the best improvement we can make of these, is to attract the eyes of men (55).

According to Astell, it was the custom of the society that put women into the cage of a primitive way of living in terms of intellect. They were presented the required rules to become good wives or daughters by the convention. Furthermore, the tradition forced them to be well-dressed according to the fashion of the time, to prepare a dowry, which was a prerequisite for marriage, so that they deserved to be selected by men as their wives; and to serve them as their maids in the house. However, she believed that women needed to be well-educated instead of being well-dressed, and that they were in need of a great change in their way of thinking. They, she addressed women, had to develop and train their minds, thereby attracting the men with their intelligence, which, for sure, she believed, was not that required. As she moves on her argument about the mediocrity of women, she urges the women one more time to be self-aware about their potentiality:

> We value *them* too much, and our *selves* too little, if we place any part of our worth in their Opinion; and do not think our selves capable of Nobler Things than the pitiful Conquest of some worthless Heart. … And after all, remember that Goodness is the truest Greatness, to be wise for your selves the greatest Wit, and *that* Beauty the most desirable which will endure to Eternity (55 – 56).

As obvious, she defined intellectual beauty as eternal while degrading the physical beauty, for it evades naturally as time passes by. By insisting on obeying what the tradition forced them to do, women undervalued their own selves while overestimating those of their sexual opponents'.

Astell also wrote her ideas about marriage. She, as formerly mentioned, did not believe that marriage was essential in order to preserve respect and equality within the society. It was only required for the continuity of the human species. In her work, *Reflections Upon Marriage*, Astell asked a rhetorical question: "But, alas! What poor Woman is ever taught that she should have a higher Design than to get her a Husband" (65)? Again and again, she put the blame on the patriarchal society's conventions that restricted the women's rights in terms of education and divert them to the path of marriage, for it was believed that marriage brought equality, which, for sure, was nothing but a big lie. This, she evaluated, was a big lie, for a woman's marriage to a man meant that "a Woman [had] no mighty Obligations to the Man

who [made] Love to her, she [had] no reason to be fond of being a Wife, or to reckon it a piece of Preferment when she [was] taken to be a Man's Upper Servant" (*RUM* 78). Though marriage brought women the chance to seem so-called equal in the eyes of the society, it only put them in the handcuffs in order to serve their masters as elevated servants.

Another great author of the period was Mary Wollstonecraft, who was born in 1759. She had a miserable life, for her family was not a prosperous one and that she was betrayed by her first husband, Gilbert Imlay, and had an illegitimate child, Fanny. Because of her desperate condition after acknowledging that Imlay betrayed her, she wanted to commit suicide and threw herself to River Thames, but fortunately survived. Her second marriage was with William Godwin, whom she was respectively happy with; however, she was dead only after a few months she got married to him and gave birth to another Mary, who would marry Percy Bysshe Shelley and write one of the best gothic novels, *Frankenstein*.

Wollstonecraft's ideas about the women's condition were not that different from those of Mary Astell's. She agreed with Astell on such matters as the custom's encompassing asset for women, the restrictive standing of the society about the women's education, and the culture's property of shaping women beginning from their childhood. Nevertheless, she enhanced the scope and added some other bricks on the wall; she has been a milestone in the feminist literary criticism since her works have been very truthful to life and thus have been referred to by many critics and academics for centuries, especially *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* which was published in 1792. Moreover, she was amongst the first to put the stance on the ground with a fierce angry tone, which, surely, made her points more explicit.

In her abovementioned work, she supported a "revolution in female manners" (53), which, she thought, could only be possible with an equal balance of opportunities between the sexes. She aggressively and inflammatorily asserted:

> [i]t is time to [a]ffect a revolution in female manners – time to restore to them their lost dignity – and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners (53).

Starting from the smallest particle, Wollstonecraft believed, it was possible to move through the biggest one. Firstly, women had to dare to change themselves and then they could direct all the society into the route of transformation for a more liberal one. Because the women of the period, though not all of them, were ignorant and exceedingly reckless about their rights and opportunities, a revolution in their manners was highly required. Apart from that, Wollstonecraft was aware of the fact that women, who were active enough in the process and struggle of change in their condition, were labelled as masculine creatures (Walters 34). However, she was also aware that it was crucially important to continue in the path to their just rights; therefore, she invited women to be more and more masculine, by which she was actually addressing to the patriarchal society in a sardonic tone, for rationality was adhered to the male sex only.

Wollstonecraft referred to beauty as a restrictive master of the ladies, for she believed that it was nothing but a tool of the convention for the women not to go beyond the borders, which were specified by the convention itself. At this very point again, Wollstonecraft and Astell agreed; they both underlined the fact that the convention that was specified by the patriarchal system functioned in an advantageous way for men and favoured them. Wollstonecraft drew a comparison between the views of women and men in her work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, as follows:

> Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adore its prison. Men have employments and pursuits which engage their attention, and give a character to the opening mind; but women, confined to one, and having their thoughts constantly directed to the most insignificant part of themselves, seldom extend their views beyond the triumph of the hour (52).

Considering the very own words of Wollstonecraft, it is possible to draw the conclusion that women resembled each other in character; they learnt how to be feminine from the society and they all applied the same principles into their lives, by which they were defined as "made women" (161) by Wollstonecraft. By doing so, women were made to believe that it would not be difficult for them to find husbands in the future. However, their recklessness brought about nothing but new cages within the society. They were controlled remotely by the system according to men's own taste.

To sum up the eighteenth-century, it is possible to draw the conclusions that once compared to the previous century, there were pretty radical changes such as the increase in the number of women writers, the amount of women learners, and the tones of women declaring their own rejections, observations, and resistances to the existent society. Nevertheless, it is observable that the women had just started to take control of their lives and to declare their just rights.

As for the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, it is possible to claim that especially the first two centuries were a stage for women to participate in all kinds of mediums in order to attain their educational, civilian, legitimate, and political rights[1]. Step by step, they acquired the right of education, and "[i]n 1918, women over the age of 30 were given the vote; and in March 1928, under a Conservative government, they finally won it on equal terms with men" (Walters 85). One of the biggest problems, the husbands' ownership of their wives' heritages by law, was solved through a Matrimonial Causes Act in 1923 (Walters 88). As for their civilian rights, women were not only committed to their right to vote but also to their need of equal wages for equal labour force, which still remains unsolved even in some Western societies. Especially beginning from the early twentieth century, an innumerable amount of feminisms came up gradually according to the needs and conjunctures of each country.

One of the most prominent feminist writers and activists of the twentieth century is Simone de Beauvoir, who advocated the idea that woman, as a word, has a negative connotation in any part of the world, for it is constructed socially. The entity, woman, is usually correlated to inefficiency and failure. In order to support her idea, Beauvoir argues that

> [t]he terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity (15).

It is rather observable that the construction of gender has been the issue of the feminist thought since the early twentieth century; the feminine, as a sex, is used as

[1] Because these three centuries have a vast flow of upheavals and events which are not in the scope of the main point of this thesis, only an account of the women's achievements is implemented.

the counterpart of the masculine, while the woman, as a gender, has been formed and re-formed according to the criteria of men so that they can move on their formalization of social identities of all human beings. From the beginning of the history of humankind, men have been overvalued once compared to women, which is not quite surprising, for the things women have been excluded from such as language, education, work-life, and so on, have been given to men, which, in turn, has provided them with good opportunities to undermine the woman identity. In short, the humanity is made to believe that woman is the second sex, as is the title of Beauvoir's masterpiece. She also puts forth that "[t]he female is a female by virtue of a certain *lack* of qualities,' said Aristotle; 'we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness'" (15). From this point of view, which is still not very different in the twenty-first century, it is pretty clear that women and men have been persuaded to admit that women are the defected type of humanity, which, as is the case with today's women, has hindered them from taking part in serious issues concerning their societies and has made it easier for men to be dominant in many concerns of humanity. This is also one of the reasons why the women, whose accounts are given in the beginning of this chapter, were forced to take shelter under the wings of the divine; they were all made to believe that they were inefficient, they were not given credits, and they were the members of the defected sex, which is one of the core points of Beauvoir's argument; they were born as females, nevertheless, they were taught to be women by the patriarchal cogs of the wheel. "Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being" (Beauvoir 15).

Héléne Cixous, another pioneering feminist thinker of the mid-twentieth and twenty-first centuries, has been rather influential in raising consciousness to women. She is a philosopher, a poet, a writer, and an academician, who authored *The Laugh of the Medusa*, pointing out the fact that women are predestined by birth and they are given roles by the communities they live in, which stem from the past patriarchal structures. As is the case, her notions over women's destiny are pretty alike to those of Beauvoir's:

> The future must no longer be determined by the past. I do not deny that the effects of the past are still with us. But I refuse to strengthen them by repeating them, to confer upon them an irremovability the equivalent of destiny, to

> confuse the biological and the cultural. Anticipation is imperative (Cixous 875).

Because of the fact that the past has always been a strong determinant over the woman problem, it is extremely difficult to erase and omit these obstacles at present; however, as Cixous admits it, too, the biological potentials and the cultural acquisitions are different components of the sex and gender trouble. West and Zimmerman put it in their work, *Doing Gender*, that "[s]ex … was what was ascribed by biology: anatomy, hormones, and physiology. Gender … was an achieved status: that which is constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means" (13). This is the point where Beauvoir and Cixous meet, for they both believe that gender is constructed through the attributions of the societies to the sexes whereas sex is a predestined biological entity, which determines someone's cultural position and attributions within the society. Furthermore, Cixous rejects the idea that all women can easily be grouped by the same criteria, specified by the whole patriarchal impositions, for

> you can't talk about a female sexuality, uniform, homogeneous, classifiable into codes – any more than you can talk about one unconscious resembling another. Women's imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible (875 – 6).

For sure, the fact that women's imaginary is unlimited is not specific to women only; this is definitely about being an individual or a human being. Nevertheless, what Cixous remonstrates with is that none of the men, who are in the process of shaping the patriarchal normative referents, are subject to this limited vision. Men, especially the active ones within the literary world, are individuals whereas all women are counted as one single type, specifications of which are similar to each other. This is exactly why Cixous calls women for taking active roles within the literary productions; it is women who know themselves more clearly than men, therefore, it must be women who can represent their own bodies, phantasms, sexualities, confinements, and restrictions more realistically. This, for sure, is directly related to the idea that because all women cannot be counted as one single body, most of their problems, obstacles, wishes, and needs are different; hence, it is not possible to claim that a single feminist thought is enough for all the women in the world, which brings about the necessity for different types of feminism. Women's experiences might

naturally be different from those of their comrades', for they live within different cultures and societies.

Similar in their reflection on women's representation, both Virginia Woolf and Héléne Cixous argue that women are reflected through the negative male gaze; therefore, they are represented as evil, lacking, or inefficient in many arenas. This is why Cixous puts forward that

> [w]oman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement (875).

By doing so, women can easily put their notions over the misconceptions about their own bodies more straightforwardly and they will be able to protest against the marginalizing patriarchy, which has hindered them from taking action about their very own autonomies throughout centuries.

It is possible to claim for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that women's activism on the streets brought about an academic recognition within universities, which accelerated and strengthened the feminist movements in the West, which was followed by the other parts of the world gradually, which is correlated to the philosophers, activists and writers of the period such as Beauvoir, Cixous, and so on. "San Diego State University and Cornell University establish[ed] Women's Studies Programs" (Howe 5) in 1970, which initiated the foundation of other women's studies programs in other academic circles, and the school of feminism has started to be institutionalized by this way. Women's studies programs have been crucially important in establishing consciousness raising groups, which have illuminated women about their confinements, restrictions, low-paid works and positions as well as their domestications. The women in these groups are not hierarchically specified in order not to reduce the women's expressions of their experiences. By this way, it is much easier for everyone in the groups to support each other, which is clarified through refined and sophisticated individuals, for "women's studies is the academic arm of the women's liberation movement" (Makosky and Paludi 15).

To sum up, although there were not concrete attempts of real conscious feminist movements in the Medieval Ages, women started questioning their positions within their societies since then. Despite the fact that they cannot be defined as feminists, their attempts of underlining their autonomy in the patriarchal societies are eye-catching; therefore, they may be evaluated as proto-feminists. Re-acquiring their stolen identities and their insistence on putting their own existence in the foreground of the patriarchal system have been their main concerns for centuries. The sexual, economical, judicial, political, educational, and civilian discriminations have debilitated them at first, but then, an illuminative power has conquered some of them in the beginning, although they have had counterparts from their own sex-fellows. Additionally, women have incrementally acquired some specific rights via writing, reading, and active participation in the protests against the existing social structure. Thus started the disseminative feminist movements, triggered unconsciously at first, but have continued rather purposefully through centuries.

2.3. Third World Feminism

Before drawing the portrait of how the Third World women are different from their ostensible comrades in the West, the term, Third World, should be clarified. In many writings, the term refers to a variety of correspondences; one of them is the geographical position that discriminates the people of the countries from the other privileged continents such as Europe; apart from that, another correspondence is the economical one, which underlines the fact that the countries referred to are not as rich and developed as those Western ones, which, of course, is a harsher fact that defines who to speak and to be heard in the international arenas; one other reference is that the countries are named by the colonizers or the conquerors of the times intentionally, however with no little aim of discrimination or any other marginalization. Arguing against the last categorization, Ama Ata Aidoo

> regards the terms ‘third world’ and ‘postcolonial’ as part of dominant societies’ deliberate ‘misnaming’ of reality. ‘Third’ to Aidoo indicates a step close to failure, and she believes that acquiescing in these terms does not make them ‘legitimate’. Aidoo finds ‘many grotesqueries and absurdities in the term Third World’ (Katrak xii).

As a matter of fact, as Aidoo also criticizes the naming of the term, most of the correspondences are not on the way to reality, but failure, inefficiency, inadequacy, and primitiveness. Taking this into consideration, it would, for sure, be unjust to draw a parallelism between the Western types of feminisms and the feminisms within the Third World countries[2]. Therefore, the privileged middle-class white women's being normative referents within a general concept of feminism cannot be regarded as applicable for all the women around the world, or more specifically, for the women living in or belonging to the Third World.

As a result of this hypocrisy, an excessive opposition against the Western types of feminism, which actually deal with the white middle-class women's problems, consisting of social, economic, and judicial inequalities, paying no attention to the problems or inequalities of women of colour in other parts of the world, aroused in the late twentieth century, and a new perspective in feminism emerged. As a newly-coined term, Third World feminism came up against the indifference of the white middle-class women as a protest, for they struggled to set up a universal sisterhood, however, failed to sympathize with their quasi-sisters in the Third World about their local problems. As Chris Weedon puts it, in the late 1960s and 1970s, the second wave feminism had two main aims: to analyse literature as a vehicle for reproducing and contesting patriarchal images of women in fictional texts, and to identify and analyse the specificity of women's writing (282). However, as an exclusionary and marginalising attempt, the second wave feminists were extremely self-absorbed in their very own obstacles within their own white societies, thereby having privileged themselves as well as leaving their sisters out of their path of so-called war for equality. This is absolutely a racist treatment to those who are not uncoloured, correspondingly uncivilized. Barbara Smith explicitly puts forth why racism should and must be removed from the approaches of the Western women by re-defining what feminism is in her essay, *Racism and Women's Studies*:

> The reason racism is a feminist issue is easily explained by the inherent definition of feminism. Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women, as well as white, economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but [is] merely female self-aggrandizement (48).

[2] From now on, the countries colonized by Britain, especially the countries in South Africa.

In order to embrace all women under all kinds of circumstances, an objective step must be taken. The commonalities and the differences must all be recognized and respected by all women worldwide. However, as for the concept of women, for instance, it is rather obvious that the name is given to those who are born as females biologically. Nevertheless, especially the second wave feminism supporters are far from the truth that this biological entity is almost the only commonality between themselves and the Third World women. Definitely, there are some other available commonalities once the two groups of women are considered; for instance, the fact that they both are oppressed is a crystal clear observation; nevertheless, the difference lies beneath the way they are overpowered. Given the fact that the present condition is turned upside down, it would, not surprisingly, be as Chandra Mohanty sketches in her essay, "*Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Postcolonial Discourses*":

> The supposition of women as an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location or contradictions, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy which can be applied universally and cross-culturally (336 – 7).

However, when the real frame of circumstances of the Third World women and of the privileged Western women is evaluated, it is pretty observable that while the former is uncultivated, domestic, indifferent, irrelevant, needy, strictly bound to her family, tradition and inherent culture, the latter has the chance to decide on such matters as related to her own life, is cultivated, critical, careerist, interrogative and so on. Tsitsi Dangarembga, for instance, conveys one of her experiences in Germany. When the reporter, Christopher Joon-Hai Lee, asks her if there were any difficulties she had about being an African writer, Dangarembga replies as follows:

> In Germany there are "writers" and there are "African writers." And I was never invited to a literary event, except maybe the Frankfurt Book Fair-but then only as an "African writer." … Well, I have a problem with segregation. I mean, if I am an African person at a meeting of writers, I don't have a problem. But if the writers meet and the African writers are supposed to go to their own special "African events," I have a problem. And that's how it was in Germany (148 – 9).

Furthermore, the Third World women are imprisoned in their own bodies in terms of sexuality; nonetheless, the white women, though not in all developed Western countries, are in control of their own sexual choices. So the question is how these

two groups of women, sharing only the commonality of sex, might be judged homogenously? It is, therefore, an undeniable fact that throughout the history of feminism, we have come across with many forms of feminisms which were formed and formulated according to the necessities, politics, traditions, cultures, cultural identities, and conjunctures of the specific regions; this is why the common frame of Third World feminism embraces a variety of feminist views in itself. As Çağatay, Grown, and Santiago proposed it in the Nairobi Women's Conference in 1985,

> [f]eminism constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. There is, and must be, a diversity of feminisms responsive to the different needs and concerns of different women, and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda (411).

Applying this principle into their own lives, the Third World women struggle hard to emphasize the fact that any type of feminism is not under the monopoly of the developed countries, or of the middle-class white women. From then on, they have reflected their own societies, cultures, traditions, cultural identities, and oppressions through their own autonomies and experiences. In other words, they have tried to protest against the Westernization process, which has prevented them from taking part in the international mediums; they have endeavoured to have an insider voice in their own mother country with their mother tongue by counter-attacking the war of colonization, which has ruled them out of their own national, social, traditional, and cultural identities.

Apart from the concept of women in the Third World feminisms, there are some other purports embodied by the consequences of the processes of colonization, decolonization and the postcolonial period such as language, education, culture, and assimilation. Besides these components, which imprison the women of the Third World, there are also a lot of sexual conceptions such as the hardening outcomes of the existing patriarchal system, objectification, alienation, gender roles, and women's attempts of resistance. None of the Western types of feminisms worked for the obstacles listed above. For instance, while the Marxist Feminist theory functions basically for the labour and wage equalities of the sexes and tries to set up a medium for a socialist way of life (see Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of Family, Private*

Property, and the State and Gayle Rubin's *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex*), the women of colour, or more generally, the women of the developing countries, have nothing to do with the theory that supplies a better way of life to the privileged women of the developed countries. It is crystal clear that Marxism is definitely protesting against capitalism and its burdening effects on people; therefore, the Marxist feminist theory predominantly dwells on the women's double-labour work such as working in the house, bearing and feeding children as well as working for a wage, and aims to prepare a gender-neutral equal way of life against the capitalist attempts. However, the fact that Marxist feminist theory malfunctions in the Third World countries is vividly observable once the following data is considered:

> [The] developments, especially since the Second World War, have fostered the growth of industrial centres which draw men away from rural communities, removing their labour from subsistence farming. The increasing migration of men to the cities, to mines, to export agriculture, or to work abroad has caused the number of female-headed households to rise dramatically (Dankelman and Davidson 16).

Apparently, while the Marxist feminist theory has been a saviour for the white-skinned middle-class women and has defended their rights, it has loaded more and more labour on the shoulders of the Third World women without giving them any option, for their husbands or fathers have left the family in order to earn much more money to get rid of their present poverty. Owing to this fact, women have worked both within and outside their houses so that they could maintain their lives, which, for sure, has been another serious responsibility they have had. Moreover, there has been an incredible amount of women slaves within these Third World countries, which, of course, is a matter that the Marxist feminist theory should dwell on; however, it is hard to believe that the slavery issue is dealt with by the theorists and the applicants of the theory in the Third World. Hence, it seems impossible to stand on the side of the Marxist feminist theory's beneficiary effects for the women in the Third World countries; it has not been practiced universally but in a Eurocentric way.

Radical feminism is another movement that was triggered in 1960s, within the second wave feminism acts. It declared that there is a universal patriarchal system that defines women and decides on behalf of them; more clearly, the patriarchal system has the control over women through abusing their sexual property

of reproduction. Women are classified and given meanings according to their conditions of being productive and re-productive. Besides, as Kate Millet admits it in her work, *Sexual Politics*, all the historical civilizations are patriarchal, for "the military, industry, technology, university, science, political office, and finance – in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands" (25). Nevertheless, what is clashing here is the fact that there is not a universal patriarchal system around the globe, for every nation has its own structure, culture and tradition, which shape its own patriarchal society that imprisons women within the bars in this or that way. More interestingly, there were also some scholars like Shulamith Firestone to suggest and believe that the class system must be replaced by the sex class in order to bring a real equality between the sexes, implying that the women's control over their bodies will eradicate all the class systems (12), which, for sure, is impossible in the Third World countries as there are still incidents of women circumcision and the non-existence of birth control. Therefore, Willis accused the radical feminist movement of being white and middle class in her article, *Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism*, for "most black and working-class women could not accept the abstraction of feminist issues from race and class issues, since the latter were so central to their lives" (95). The victimization of women by the patriarchal system, therefore, changes according to its location, culture, tradition, conjuncture and economy.

The examples about the fact that the Western feminisms are inadequate for the Third World countries could be multiplied; however, although the term, feminism, sounds rather Western and seems irrelevant and inconsistent for those who are outside the privileged Western societies, the assumptions of the Third World feminisms and the way they are depicted in the writings of the Third World women should and must be clarified. First of all, it is clear that on the basis of these feminisms lie the effects of post-colonialism such as language and education, racism, culture, and assimilation. Considering language, it is rather problematic that before writing or speaking, the colonized countries' people have to endure a fluctuation, for they cannot decide which language to use; English or the mother tongue? As Katrak argues,

> [c]olonization imposed a severe linguistic violence in disrupting integral links between language and culture. The denigration, at times, erasures of native

> languages, had severe cultural and psychological impacts on people's self-respect, identities, and values (27).

The psychological and cultural impacts on people's self-respect, identities, and values are pretty acceptable, for one's rank within the society is identified according to the quality of the English s/he possesses. Moreover, to be obliged to employ another country's language in the official arenas gives way to shakings of self-confidence and trust in one's nation. These, of course, are not the matters to be underestimated, for these people are forced to be oppressed in other ways that the other privileged people have not encountered before. A nation's language is its people's honour and identity. Moreover, it also constitutes the biggest part of their culture. Because most of the Third World languages are oral but not written, they have been disregarded by the British colonizers; therefore, the identities, cultures, traditions, basically the honour of these people are overleaped and they have been put into a new cage of a quasi-identity, which does not fit them well. As Katrak asserts, "the 'dark continent' [is] supposedly brought into history, and given a culture and civilization by [the] Europeans" (27 – 8). These people are not only erased culturally but also their autonomy is devastated, for "to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (Fanon 8). This, for sure, is the post-colonial result that embraces both sexes; in order to demonstrate the feminist discourse of this result, it is evident that the women of these regions are left ignorant and entitled as uncultivated, for most of them cannot use English to reflect their own oppressions. However, these women are swept away from the right of education, too, and they are even unable to defend their rights within their own mother countries. How, then, is it possible for them to be heard in the international arenas if their mother tongue is ignored almost worldwide? The urgent need of an objective voice is, thus, inevitable. Spivak admits it in her precious essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, that:

> In learning to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual systematically unlearns female privilege. This systematic unlearning involves learning to critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substituting the lost figure of the colonized (295).

The interconnection between language and alienation is, thus, made clear one more time; the women of the Third World are made foreigners in their own countries just because they cannot speak the colonizer's language; this is why, of course, they

cannot demonstrate their own notions over their oppressions and they are in need of those objective voices to defend them internationally. This, of course, as Spivak also argues, cannot be provided by speaking for the overleaped people but speaking to them, setting up empathy with them, in short, in a way, alienating themselves with their own cultures and identities and integrating with the Third World women's cultures and conditions. Both the Western and the alienated Third World women should and must meet on the same ground and act in a synchronized way, eliminating all the privileges and inferiorities created by the colonizer's so-called illuminative approaches.

Education in the Third World is another huge problem that hinders people from acting according to their own cultures. There are many obstacles about practicing education in these countries such as poverty, lack of schools, child labour, unaffordable school fees, the foreign language used in the classrooms as the medium of education, the curriculums' being inappropriate to the existent culture's norms, the political imposition of some sort of standards so that the people cannot act against the colonizers' policies, and so on. Poverty, for instance, is one of the biggest hindrances, preventing the children from acquiring education. Most of them cannot attend schools while the little part of the children having the chance to get education are forced to drop out of their schools, for they cannot pay for their school fees after some period of time. This is definitely a harsher obstacle for the female learners, for they are made responsible to take the positions of their mothers in the household chores while their mothers go to the agricultural fields in order to help support their families (Nestvogel 207). Therefore, instead of practicing education, the girls learn how to become adults at very early ages. Additionally, the boys, once compared to girls, are more privileged in that they have the opportunity to work in order to pay for their school fees; this privilege, however, cannot be considered right due to the fact that those boys are also children and they are abused at a very early age and they are made the victims of child labour. Nevertheless, though the matter cannot be defended, it is still evident that the boys, at least, go on their sessions of education for a longer period of time when compared to the girls' educational periods.

The language, used in the classrooms, as mentioned before, is another obstacle for the pupils since they have difficulty in understanding it. This obstruction

withholds the students from learning the target of the course because they have a language bar they have to transgress before understanding what is presented. Apart from that, Standard English is the officially used language across the Third World countries and therefore, the students, learning it, have the chance to acquire the prerogative of official existence. As Katrak argues, "[n]ot having the ability to read and write [S]tandard English is a serious disadvantage, and renders one marginal in various ways" (26). This occasion could be directly corresponded to the male students' more progressive chance of education. Once they learn the language, they marginalize the female learners, who are coerced to drop out of school earlier than the male students, and take control of them in every possible arena.

The inappropriate curriculum is another problem that the students have to face with. It is not adapted to the cultural norms of the existent society; on the contrary, it is generally based on the industrialized countries' norms, which, of course, is an alienating effect for the children. They are assumed as equal to those who live in Western societies. Correspondingly, this matter eases the industrial countries' residents in the Third World countries to find a job and to discard the natives. As Nestvogel puts forward it with her own research in the Third World countries, the applied curricula is "an instrument in the hands of the established elite who fear competition from [the] highly educated social groups" (211). As a matter of fact, the additional reason for the selected education programs' being insufficient is the fact that the opportunity of improving one's education in his/her mother country is nearly impossible. Furthermore, the employment opportunities are so rare that the colonizers decide on behalf of these people and believe that it is better for them not to be educated, for, in the end, they will not be able to work on their related professions. Most of them are predestined to work in agricultural fields, or worse, as slaves.

It is undeniable that the societies in the Third World countries are also patriarchal. However, theirs is a little bit more different from those of the Western societies. In the Third World countries, the patriarchal societies are shaped by the colonizers and correspondingly, once compared to men, the women of these countries are colonized and oppressed twice. The norms are identified by the colonizer, and the colonized men are expected to apply them on their women.

Chitsike argues it in her article, *NGOs, Gender, Culture and Multiculturalism: A Zimbabwean View*, that "[w]omen's subordination is rooted in customs and beliefs that are produced or shared by particular societies" (20). Therefore, the objectives of the women are specified by the system; the women are objectified as sex instruments, they are expected to deal with the household chores, to look after their men and their children, to do the labour on the fields, to give birth, and so on. These gender roles, consisting of womanhood, wifehood, motherhood, daughterhood, thus, alienate the women from their own bodies, families, people, and nations. In a world, where the superiority of men, regardless of the race, colour or culture, is imposed on women easily, it cannot be refuted that these norms are made by the masculine way of thought. Therefore, in a country, where the natives are left helpless due to the obstacles mentioned before, it is not hard to believe that all these gender roles are designed by the colonizers.

Recalling that these women are out of the educational rights and are imprisoned within their poverty of language and ignorance, they are made the harmless components of a harmful society. Their burdens are multiplied both by their men and the colonizer, who formulate how the native men's attitudes should be practiced. More dramatically, these women are assured that it is a cultural necessity for them to be obedient to their men and to be subordinate, mediocre within the society. On this, Chitsike interrogates how this cultural enforcement can make sense to someone:

> What is 'cultural' about a woman earning all the food through her sweat in the fields, and preparing that food for her husband and children to sustain them when the man is drinking the day away? Is it 'cultural' to be beaten to pulp and protect the man who has done it (20)?

So convinced with these instructions, these women are forced to experience inhumane activities under the title of religious practices such as female circumcision at a very early age until the day they get married so that their virginity is certified, which is definitely a very painful and a bloody activity. Furthermore, when these women's husbands die, some of them are forced to re-marry with one of the relatives of their dead husbands; or, if they do not marry them, they are made subordinate to their sons. As Chitsike puts it, there are many women thrown out of their homes by their sons (21).

The childbirth is another burden for the women, for there is no limit in childbearing. The men, within their community, are labelled as potent and productive as long as they keep making their wives bear more children. By this way, they are named as rich. Correspondingly, this childbearing issue is a cultural evidence of the women's productivity and young age. Additionally, – though not restricted to the Third World countries only – the men are allowed to have more than one wife, which might be related to the productivity and potency matters again, while the women, trying to have an extra-marital affair, are punished severely by their male guardians and the society.

All these matters of education, language, cultural identity, the patriarchal system, gender roles, traditions, and customs incorporate the way to alienation of the women to their own bodies and this alienation converts them into outsiders within their own culture. Objectified by the standards of the society and the available customs, women look for ways of survival and they resist against their predestination. Third World feminism, therefore, consists of the defence of the abused women of the Third World countries. The emergence of the schools is caused by the inapplicability of the Western types of feminism and their racist, cultural, traditional, and alienating approaches. By re-defining the concept of woman and asserting their own assumptions, the schools' supporters try to demonstrate that not all the women are oppressed under the same conditions and they also struggle hard to convince the circles that feminism requires a full equality both between the sexes and within the female sex.

CHAPTER III

FEMALENESS AS INFERIOR TO MALENESS:

THE GRASS IS SINGING vs. *NERVOUS CONDITIONS*

Third World Feminism stands on the side of the women of the Third World countries who suffer both from the effects of colonial powers, designing on the colonized people, and the sexual discrimination as a result of these colonially coded patriarchal communities. The effects of the colonial dominance over these people are predominantly racism, the imposition of the colonizer's culture to the tradition, available through formalization of language and educational arenas, as well as the expected consequence of the alienation of the colonized. Moreover, the colonially shaped patriarchal system of the colonized country undermines the women's autonomy twice as much as the patriarchal systems, available in the Western world. In both novels, Doris May Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, which was authored in an agreeable style and structure to the realist novel since the 18th century, and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, which was penned by a distinct division of the character Tambu and the narrator Tambu, who, in turn, addresses readers directly and moves away the distance between the author and the reader, these results, causing the women suffer much more than the privileged middle-class Western women, are clearly observable. Therefore, these components of the Third World Feministic approach, evident in these novels, will be discussed as is the main concern of this thesis.

Mary Turner, the protagonist of *The Grass is Singing*, is the prominent character of the novel both experiencing patriarchy and practising colonial benefits. She is an introvert white woman, living in the colonial Rhodesia with the detested natives, whose sexuality is not covered by any clothing, thereby seeming ugly to her. She is a tool of the culture, which, in accordance with this, shapes her in the way to

prevent her from being disobedient to the structured rules and norms even though she is white. This, as a result, drags her into a marriage, which, she believes, is only compulsory and a required mission in order to be worthwhile within the patriarchal society she lives in. Apparently, what she does to underscore her autonomy in the society triggers her tragic end; murdered by a black servant eventually, she not only sets up essential mediums throughout the novel to be able to exist as a woman, but also practises all forms of colonial opportunities over the black people for the sake of self-confidence and being an overpowering figure within her patriarchal society.

On the other hand, if we take a look at Tambu, both the narrator and the protagonist of *Nervous Conditions*, who is a black girl living in Rhodesia and suffering both from the colonial effects and the patriarchy, she is dominated by the colonial powers. Her journey throughout the story is a touching one, for she struggles extremely hard in order to get education. It is due to his brother Nhamo's death that she can acquire her just right to education. Throughout this journey, Tambu transforms into many other Tambus, for she acknowledges what life outside her little house is. She is exposed to the patriarchy harshly under the control of Babamukuru, her uncle, who, in turn, is under the spelling of the colonial powers. Furthermore, through her intimacy with her cousin Nyasha as well as her improvement in the schools where she gets her formal education, she finds out other patterns of the Western way of life. As she moves along with her journey, she understands what it is to be black and what it really means to be a woman within a colonized black community. It is not only Tambu who is predestined to suffer from the colonial powers and their representations but also the other characters like her cousin Nyasha, Maiguru, Babamukuru's wife, as well as Ma'Shingayi, her mother, and Lucia, her aunt. They are all entitled with humiliating tags and are forced to live with the little opportunities, offered by the colonial patriarchy.

3.1. *The Grass is Singing*

3.1.1. Racism and Class

Racism and class are simultaneously the core points of *The Grass is Singing* (hereafter *TGS*), for "[g]ender and race - sexism and racism - are components of … hierarchy by which the white settlers and interlopers attempt to establish their own rules and security in the alien land" (Aghazadeh 111). Because of the white dominance over the black, the colonizers have always been the strong group, discriminating people according to their colour, and establishing the norms according to their own tastes, thereby identifying the powerful and the weak, the rich and the poor, the privileged and the overwhelmed. In 1966, in *A Conversation with Doris Lessing* with Florence Howe, Lessing portrays what it is to be black, she thinks "it's black – it's hatred, fear, it's everything – and what's more [the Black are] foreigners, everything" (7), which, apparently, underscores Mary Turner's position within her society against the black community. The novel opens with a newspaper report, informing people about a white woman's murder by her black servant, Moses. The news was "almost satisfaction, as if some belief had been confirmed, as if something had happened which could only have been expected. When natives steal, murder, or rape, that is the feeling white people have" (*TGS* 9). The murder, therefore, draws a drastic border between the white and the black people; correspondingly, the rich and the poor classes. That the murder does not cause a big surprise among the people is the result of the bias that the black people are killers, thieves, and sexual abusers. The black, thus, are detested, feared, made foreigners in their own country, in short, are entitled to all the negative connotations to be defined.

The racist approaches within the novel are assumed as one of the reasons why Mary Turner is killed, for her "death, like her life, is shaped by the profound hatred, contempt, fear, and grudgingly acknowledged economic need of the black upon which white African society is predicated" (Zak 482). Mary's racist upbringing and her attitudes do not cause any female to be offended, for she does not interact directly with any black woman in the novel. Nevertheless, her detestation, fear, and repugnance lead Mary to the status of a victim of racism:

> As a woman in a patriarchal society, she cannot openly turn against her husband. Instead, she strikes out at her fellow-oppressed, the natives – the only beings she feels to be lowlier than herself. Her relationship to Moses is a battle for the illusion of power between the powerless and the oppressed, with which Lessing also establishes the analogous status of females and blacks as backed up by historical examples. Both are outcasts in a segregated, group-oriented society and, since neither has hope of challenging the dominant collective, they instead turn against each other (Knapp 25 – 6).

Mary Turner "knew … that the natives were getting cheeky. But she had nothing to do with them. They were outside her orbit" (*TGS* 36) until she married Dick Turner, a white farmer in Southern Rhodesia. After that, she became a real representative of the white collectives, available in Southern Rhodesia, detesting the blacks and applying all opportunities which make her feel stronger than them. She was raised in the way to hate the black people; however, she never confronted with any of the natives before coming to Dick's farm. It is evident in the novel that there are inherited reasons why she hates the natives:

> Her mother's servants she had been forbidden to talk to; in the club she had been kind to the waiters; but the 'native problem' meant for the other women's complaints of their servants at tea parties. She was afraid of them, of course. Every woman in South Africa is brought up to be. In her childhood she had been forbidden to walk out alone, and when she had asked why, she had been told in the furtive, lowered, but matter-of-fact voice she associated with her mother, that they were nasty and might do horrible things to her (*TGS* 58 – 9).

Having all the racist characteristics of a white colonizer, Mary Turner struggles much to underscore her own autonomy within the patriarchal society by looking down on the black people, ordering them, and addressing them with a hateful tone of voice and malevolent titles, one of which is "monkeys" (*TGS* 95), which she uses for the black babies sucking their mothers. Conflicting with the Third World feminist perspective, Mary never sets up a medium on which both she and the native women can meet and sympathize with each other. Instead, her disgust against the native women is observed once she encounters them opposite the store they have recently opened, for, as Aghazadeh puts it in her article, *Sexual-Political Colonialism and Failure of Individuation in Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing*, "it is the political exposure of the futility and fragility of the patriarchal and colonial society upon which the masculinity of imperialism has sustained itself" (108):

> If she disliked native men, she loathed the women. She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies and soft bashful faces that were also insolent and inquisitive, and their chattering voices that held a brazen fleshy undertone. She could not bear to see them sitting there on the grass, their legs tucked under them in that traditional timeless pose, as peaceful and uncaring as if it did not matter whether the store was opened, or whether it remained shut all day and they would have to return tomorrow. Above all, she hated the way they suckled their babies, with their breasts hanging down for everyone to see; there was something in their calm satisfied maternity that made her blood boil. 'Their babies hanging on to them like leeches', she said to herself shuddering, for she thought with horror of suckling a child. … She did not think of herself, but rather of these black women, as strange; they were alien and primitive creatures with ugly desires she could not bear to think about (*TGS* 94 – 5).

Because she is overpowered by her own white-skinned men, she feels inferior within the society; thus, she finds the way to feel powerful in humiliating the black people around, and feeling distaste with whatever they are in charge of doing. They are insolent, inquisitive, alien, and primitive. "The sensation of being boss over perhaps eighty black workers gave her new confidence; it was a good feeling, keeping them under her will, making them do as she wanted" (*TGS* 112). Nevertheless, she is completely unaware of the fact that she, too, is an alien within her own society.

> The whole novel can be seen as Mary's struggle towards individuation to preserve her authenticity and sense of self but it fails because of the psychological and political forces which furnish her little insight into her condition and threaten to crush her (Aghazadeh 108).

Because looking down on the black people with disgust makes her feel different from and better than them under every circumstance, she prefers not to be one of them, in other words, not to be one of the women.

Additionally, a proof of Mary Turner's misbehaviour towards Moses is unveiled when the Sergeant and the policemen gather to find out the cause of the murder. Once the Sergeant arrives and interrogates the crime, a new-comer, Tony Marston, who is one of the households, informs him that Mrs. Turner treated Moses badly, on which the dialogue between the Sergeant and Charlie Slatter, a neighbour of Turners, is as follows:

> 'Nagged at him, eh? Oh well, women are pretty bad that way, in this country, very often. … My old woman drives me mad – it's something about this country. They have no idea how to deal with niggers.'

> ‘Needs a man to deal with the niggers,’ said Charlie … ‘Niggers don’t understand women giving them orders. They keep their own women in their right place’ (*TGS* 23).

As a white woman within the colonial Rhodesia, Mary Turner is presumably censured through victimization of the colonially coded racist patriarchy. Although the reason why Moses kills Mary is not only because of her accustomed way of overpowering approach to him but also because she swallows his pride by keeping silent on his dismissal from the farmhouse when they were seen by Marston, though Moses’ only aim was to console his mistress. It is very evident from the dialogue above that Mary’s attitudes towards Moses, but not to the other blacks, are more different than the white collectives, which, in the end, brought her disastrous decline. As Knapp argues it, “… Mary’s breach of the colour bar on a human, emotional level is an unspeakable delict; and the white collective, feeling it owes her no more allegiance, sees the death penalty imposed on her as just” (27). Mary’s racist behaviour puts her in the shoes of the women of colour in Southern Rhodesia, for she is victimized by the white patriarchy in a roundabout way. Her detestation of the black people, in turn, creates another feeling of hatred by the black, and eventually she is killed by the colonially modelled patriarchy, in which there is an embedded racist reaction. This fight for power is exactly what pulls Mary over Moses. She establishes some sort of solidarity against the fact that they both are overpowered; however, the fact that she cannot control her hatred for the black people prepares her end as a victim of the racist system.

> [She] is fragmented between two contradictory status: on the one hand she longs to be a subject of her life, to live in a way she desires, and on the other hand she unconsciously performs a role as an object of the white oppressive structure of a colonial society which extracts meaning of her personal self and imposes its values, forcing the individual to yield to the good of the collective (Aghazadeh 108).

One other racist approach of Mary, which causes a quarrel resulting in her underestimation and oppression by her husband, is the struggle of power within the house. As a white woman, married to a landowner, she should not transcend the borders drawn by the patriarchy; she should not try to demonstrate her power of labour in any way once the works in the fields are considered. It is her husband Dick’s objective to deal with anything outside the household chores. What she is

responsible for is only looking after her husband and everything related to the housework. Nevertheless, because of her search for individual liberty, which she longs for, she cannot control her self-quest of freedom and intrudes in Dick's field of work. Periodically, she dismisses the native workers, responsible for the service in the house, on which Dick loses his temper finally. He cannot take control of his wife's authoritative attitudes while it is him who should decide on such matters as hiring and dismissing the natives, as it is his right, given by the unwritten patriarchal norms. He rages at Mary with his controlling tone of voice and commands her to stand one step back from his ascribed responsibilities:

> He's my boy, not yours. Don't interfere. … I work hard enough, don't I? All day I am down on the lands with these lazy black savages, fighting them to get some work out of them. You know that. I won't come back home to this damned fight, fight, fight in the house. Do you understand? I will not have it. And you should learn sense (*TGS* 78).

This, nonetheless, does not help Mary understand what Dick's point is. Instead, she pays for the servant and dismisses him again, ignoring her husband. What the Sergeant and Charlie Slatter talks about on finding Mary's corpse is exactly this idea of the white women's unlimited wish for authority. They agree on the patriarchal rule that the white women should not try to manage the black people in any way, for it breaks the first rule of the colonial society, which is "e*spirit de corpse*[3]" (*TGS* 11). Once the women or the white people break this rule, they are hated by the rest of the group as in the case of Mary and Dick Turner. "That is why after discovering Mary's transgression; Charlie Slatter prescribes the six-months banishment for Turners so that he can prevent the contagious disease from being spread in the whole society" (Yahya and Lalbakhsh 33). Trying to prevent this, Dick struggles throughout the novel to be in charge of every masculine work, closed to the intervention of the women, thereby objectifying Mary in accordance with the white patriarchal norms. As Aghazadeh puts forward, "the white women are convinced that they cannot share power with the white men especially in the farm life which is the current context of masculinity – tough work, action, challenge beyond domesticity" (112). Hence, Mary is left in her own domestic world, affected and victimized by the racist colonial patriarchal system as a Third World woman, contrary to her skin colour. Her

[3] The morale of a group of people; here, the unwritten laws of the colonially coded patriarchy.

objectives and position within her society are predestined, and she has nothing to do to change this in any way. Racism she practises as well as racism directed to her by her own society lead her to a dead-end eventually, causing her to put an end to her search for self-independence by force.

Besides racism, social class and patriarchal capitalism are other prominent obstacles for Mary throughout her quest. She witnesses the restrictions of being a daughter of a working-class family as well as becoming a working-class wife. Although she is a white woman, she experiences all the ill-treatments of the patriarchal society, unconcerned of the colour of women, rather, interested in gender. "Her life and her death as depicted are the product of the social realities of a patriarchal, colonial system" (Seligman xiii). Her sexual identity is defined by the norms and necessities of the patriarchy; hence she is limited and oppressed because of her inability in assertion of her autonomy and needs. Yahya and Lalbakhsh demonstrate the reasons why Mary suffers from the borders of class and enforcements of patriarchal capitalism in their article, *A Socialist Feminist Reading of Doris Lessing's the Grass is Singing*, as

> the unbearable heat that deteriorates her both physically and mentally; economic dependence on her husband that leaves her no way to regain her autonomy; the disappointing indifference and failures of her daydreaming husband; the discord and lack of agreement in terms of their personal viewpoints and personal well-being; and her problematic relationship with the native houseboys who are in direct contact with her (3).

All these contribute to Mary's deterioration both physically and psychologically. From the very beginning of her journey, she is put into a cage of social norms and left dependent on her husband economically. These, for sure, lead her step by step to the route to a self-destruction. All her endeavours constitute a cause-and-effect relationship, which drags Mary to death.

Poverty for Mary has been a ghost, chasing her from her childhood; her father worked for the railway company as a pump-man, "brought home the money, and not enough of that. Apart from that he was a cipher in the house, and knew it" (*TGS* 33). Many quarrels within their house came up as results of the difficulty in paying for the bills, shortage of money for food, her father's addiction to alcohol, and so on. Still, Mary managed to get educated at a boarding school. After she left the school at the

age of sixteen, she worked in an office as a typist and then improved herself in her profession, which made her have a good job in the town. "She was very happy. She seemed born for typing and shorthand and book-keeping and the comfortable routine of an office. … She had … her own friends, a niche in the town" (*TGS* 35). Her life of freedom begins with her integration of her identity within the society she lives in; however, the most important tool for her self-assertion is that she was not dependent on anyone for financial support. She lived as she liked. Her life before getting married to Dick was so pleasant that although she was not an upper class member with the salary she earned, she lived "in much the same way as the daughters of the wealthiest in South Africa" (*TGS* 35). In a patriarchal society, in which the women are responsible for the household chores and looking after the master of the house as well as the children, Mary moved over on a different route, which made her shine amongst the others and made her feel self-confident.

> She … was earning good money. If she had wanted, she could have taken a flat and lived the smart sort of life. … There was nothing to prevent her living by herself, even running her own car, entertaining on a small scale. … She liked the crowds of girls [in the girls' club], … she was a person of some importance. … She played tennis, or hockey, or swam. Mary was such a good pal! She was friend to half the town. And in the evening she always went to sundowner parties that prolonged themselves till midnight, or danced, or went to the pictures (*TGS* 36 – 7 – 8).

As obvious, Mary asserts her identity within her circles; this, for sure, is the reason why there is a strong emphasis in the novel that she was happy all through her life before her marriage. Correspondingly, it is never admitted by the author that Mary is satisfied with her life and her conditions once she started living with Dick in the country. The reasons why she is dissatisfied are that she is forced to abandon her accustomed individuality and she is pushed to live her life in accordance with what the patriarchal capitalism suggested. She is enslaved to live with a husband, who is a complete failure in economic issues and in responding to the wants and needs of his wife, as well as being obsessed with his farm but nothing else.

> [Mary] sees the inadequacy and narrowness of her family's life follow her in her marriage. The narrative links poverty and gender in analysing Mary's new situation, which do not allow her to move beyond the codes of behaviour. Poverty from which Mary has always tried to escape tracks her in her ill-matched marriage (Aghazadeh 110).

As suggested before, her experience of poverty with her family has chased her like a ghost, always reminding her of the bars she cannot go beyond in any way. On the first day she arrived at Dick's farmhouse, she was colonized by the assumption that "her father, from his grave, had sent out his will and forced her back into the kind of life he had made her mother lead" (*TGS* 54 – 5). The parallel destiny of Mary and of her mother is emphasized regularly within the novel, pointing out the brutal end they both shared and their vain endeavour to break the laws of authority within the societies they lived in. This might also be a signification of the women's eternal suffering of the patriarchy without any option or chance of getting rid of it in any way in that part of the world. Not sharing any glimpse of resemblance with the girls' club in the town, the farmhouse is a similar replacement of her home concept, by which she trembles remembering her past experience of "a wooden box shaking by passing trains" (*TGS* 39). Even worse, the farmhouse had a thin roof on top of it instead of a ceiling, which directed her to intolerable practices of heat within the house. This problem decreased Mary's tolerability to anything around her and led her to neurosis; on asking Dick for a ceiling, for the first time she used a tone of voice "taken direct from her mother, not the voice of Mary the individual but the suffering female" (*TGS* 79), she was silenced by her husband. Although Dick sometimes had the opportunity to put a real ceiling on top of the roof, he postponed and then quit the idea, as he warned his wife with a furious tone of voice by saying "as for ceilings, you can whistle for them. I have lived in this house for six years and it hasn't hurt me. You can make the best of it" (*TGS* 79). Actually, Dick's indifference, though there are many other examples of it, is a reflection of the patriarchal society, constantly reminding Mary of her status as a second-class being, ranked after the men on the hierarchical list, and giving her no chance of asserting her own identity, which is in a complete accordance with the patriarchal capitalism. As Beauvoir argues it in her legendary work, *The Second Sex*,

> [t]he curse that is upon woman as vassal consists … in the fact that she is not permitted to do anything; so she persists in the vain pursuit of her true being through narcissism, love, or religion. When she is productive, active, she regains her transcendence; in her projects she concretely affirms her status as subject; in connection with the aims she pursues, with the money and the rights she takes possession of, she makes trial of and senses her responsibility (641).

If she had the economic independence, she would not feel herself in the shoes of her mother, victimized by the same norms of the indigenous system. Another instance of Dick's selfish attitude to his wife occurs when Marry, fed up with the heat and trying to cool herself, uses the water, which is fetched under difficult circumstances twice a week. Dick protests against his wife's quasi-squanderer attitude by bursting out to her as follows:

> Every time I order the watercart to fetch water for the house, it means a driver, and two waggon boys, and two oxen off other work for a whole morning. It costs money to fetch water. And then you go and throw it away! Why don't you fill the bath with water and get into it, instead of wasting it and throwing it away each time (*TGS* 71)?

Apparently, Mary does not even have the right to refresh herself, although she tries hard enough to get accustomed to the new environment under the pressure of poverty, without complaining anything about it. Instead of her refreshment, the need to preserve the available amount of money for Dick is more essential, which, for sure, is not a big surprise, for what Dick cares most is his farm and animals, by which, he assumes, he will be rich one day. As a result of such disagreements between the couple, Mary draws the conclusion that the

> women who marry men like Dick learn sooner or later that there are two things they can do: they can drive themselves mad, tear themselves to pieces in storms of futile anger and rebellion; or they can hold themselves tight and go bitter (*TGS* 90).

In a total conflict with what the system requires, Mary has an attempt of getting rid of the entrapments, caused by her economic inefficiency; she runs away from the farmhouse to her previous town in order to get her freedom of voice back by acquiring her old job and living in the girls' club, by which she only acknowledges that she is not to be accepted to her professional position in the office because of her ugly and old outlook, or to the girls' club due to her marital status. As a poor, penniless woman in such a society, the only solution is unfortunately going back to the farmhouse with her husband, which also signifies the inescapable consequence of the authoritative figure of the dominant capitalist system. In Aghazadeh's words, "[i]n order to leave Dick and take up a new personality, Mary needs both money and the courage to overcome the obstacles. She needs both the economic and psychological support in her present situation" (110). Nevertheless,

she has to endure all these authoritative enforcements and forget about her beautiful life in the town just because she is a married woman now and cannot do anything other than acquiescing and being submissive to what the society assumes fits her.

Charlie Slatter, the neighbour of the Turners, is a very good representation of the indigenous patriarchal capitalist society. The other male characters of the novel are not very different from Charlie since all the farmhouse owners, or the other white workers in the farmhouses, all share the intention of earning money through abusive approaches to the native workers and to the women of their own or to those of the natives. As depicted in the novel, Charlie Slatter came to Africa

> with one idea: to make money. He made it. He made plenty. He was a crude, brutal, ruthless, yet kindhearted man, in his own way, and according to his own impulses, who could not help making money. He farmed as if he were turning the handle of a machine which would produce pound notes at the other hand. He was hard with his wife, making her bear unnecessary hardships at the beginning; he was hard with his children, until he made money, when they got everything they wanted; and above all he was hard with his farm labourers. … Slatter believed in farming with the sjambok [a leather whip especially used in South Africa]. It hung on his front door, like a motto on a wail: 'You shall not mind killing if it is necessary' (*TGS* 14).

As a real representative of the bourgeois landowners in South Africa, Charlie Slatter is a profit-oriented man, disregarding the autonomies, rights, needs, and wants of other people, even the ones in his own family, which is a qualification of the available system in South Africa.

> His attitudes indicate the bourgeoisie trend including inclination and intention to exploit and dominate others. He is a man who always looks for people who could do more things for lower wages. He is the man that makes the ideology of his society and imbues that ideology in the people's mind. Such society includes a closed circle in which one exploits and oppresses the other (Yahya and Lalbakhsh 6).

Therefore, Mary and the women like her do not have many opportunities rather than preserving their mediocre standing within the community to get rid of the oppressions applied to them by the crucial men like Charlie Slatter or a lighter example of him, Dick Turner. As a woman, who finally surrenders to the patriarchy, Mary is the victim of the colonially coded patterns, for she is not treated in different manners than the black women in the country. "Had she defied society's oppressive

institutions out of conviction, rather than of fear and neurosis, she might not have lost her hold on life" (Knapp 28).

3.1.2. Culture, Gender Roles and Objectification

As for gender roles and correspondingly the process of objectification, it is probable to claim that culture, which is coded and suited by the patriarchal system, is extremely influential in the making of these roles. There are some specific roles that the system enforces women to wear on such as wifehood, motherhood (the mother of a son is of course more privileged than the mother of a daughter), widowhood, sisterhood, a sexual partner, a single woman, and a married woman. Taking these roles, scripted by the indigenous culture, as the basis of the analysis of the novel, it is pretty observable that Mary is victimized by them because of her disobedient attitudes against these norms, as she thinks she is not a part of the culture and its other consequential issues. Trying to possess her own choices over her body besides the matters that stress her individuality and subjectivity, Mary goes through a hard and a tough process of societal and cultural assertions, which contributes to her growing loneliness and alienation within the other people. Though her success in her aim is open to debate, it is clear that she suffers a lot because of her insistence on not quitting her personal freedom. This, for sure, underlines the fact that it is not possible for the women to call for the necessity of action for freedom, rather, they are allowed to negotiate for this on a scale that the patriarchy points. As Katrak puts it, "[w]hatever a girl or woman's negotiation [is] – speaking against, being complicit within, or resisting tradition – female protagonists experience self-exile, a sense of not belonging to themselves, and particularly not to their female bodies" (158). What draws Mary into the entrapment of her physical and spiritual loneliness as well as her neurosis is, therefore, her disintegration from the available customs and culture within the area she inhabits after her marriage. In addition, her misjudgements and maladaptation struggles before she was married are also rather efficient in her process of objectification by the traditional representatives.

As a single woman who is leading "the comfortable carefree existence" (*TGS* 35), Mary is self-sufficient and independent, for she is working as a secretary in an

office and living in the girls' club, where there are lots of young girls, living according to their own tastes of life. The social pressure is what these girls never feel until they get old enough to be forced to marry a companion so that they can go on living under the wings of their partners peacefully without any possible danger to be experienced from the people around. Unfortunate of her, although Mary "seemed not to care for the men" (*TGS* 38), she was also forced to get married due to the fact that the girls were gossiping about her artificial young presence and claimed that men were unwilling to marry her. However,

> [i]f she had been left alone she would have gone on, in her own way, enjoying herself thoroughly, until people found one day that she had turned imperceptibly into one of those women who have become old without ever having been middle-aged: a little withered, a little acid, hard as nails, sentimentally kindhearted, and addicted to religion or small dogs (*TGS* 38 – 9).

The traditional society does not let her continue her life as planned by her or in a carefree way, for she cannot remain single due to unwritten rules. Even the girls at the club are aware of the fact that "she just isn't like that, isn't like that at all" (*TGS* 40); her own autonomy is triggered to shatter by the societal norms, for she has to fulfil her responsibilities as a wife and as a mother. Despite her unwillingness in marriage, her free will is undermined because of the traditions. Her first strained reflection comes up when she considers the words of her friends, "she took the ribbon out of her hair, though with regret, … and bought herself tailor-made clothes, in which she felt ill at ease, because she felt truly herself in pinafore frocks and childish skirts" (*TGS* 41). As inferred from her reluctance, she undresses her own personality once she gets rid of her frocks and childish skirts, in which she has underscored her self-existence with her own style and way of life. By leaving them behind, Mary takes the first step into her life, full of societal impositions and enforcements, which lead her to the undesired end, which she has to experience at the end of the novel. Some traditionally legitimate female roles such as the proper attitudes of single women, as in the case of Mary Turner, cause them suffer mentally to a great extent, which, inarguably, is caused by their physical alienation to their bodies (Katrak 159). Hence, Mary seeks a husband for herself; nevertheless, "it might have been anybody. Or rather, it would have been the first man she met" (*TGS* 44).

This transformation is, for sure, the result of the societal norms, which suddenly make Mary a powerless, needy, and an insufficient woman.

> The woman who was once admired and loved by the society is disqualified because of her sloppy appearance and unpolished manners. She comes back and ultimately resigns herself to the traditional role of a woman, that is, of looking after her home and husband (Ahmed 15).

As the mirror of the patriarchal society, Dick Turner has already planned the role Mary should play within the farmhouse since she "was a practical, adaptable, serene person, who would need only a few weeks on the farm to become what he wanted her to be" (*TGS* 49 – 50). The word *adaptable* (emphasis added) is extremely important, for it is inclusive of the patriarchy's property of shaping women in the way to serve and feed their system so that it will keep women subservient and dependent on men. Furthermore, the farther the women are exiled from their own bodies, individualities, subjectivities and freedom, the better it is for the community's self-durability, for "tradition is problematically ahistoricized, so that cultural traditions are presented in dominant ideologies as timeless and totalizing" (Katrak 159). Therefore, as long as the processes of otherization and objectification are in practice within the society, the patriarchy can remain renewable and keep itself in charge of defining what women and their roles within the society are. In an inexperienced manner, though, Mary thinks that "she would be her own mistress: that was marriage, what her friends married for – to have homes of their own and no one to tell them what to do. She felt vaguely that she had been right to marry – everyone had been right" (*TGS* 51). Still under the influence of the collectives, which suppose marriage is virtuous for a woman to remain chaste, Mary sees her friends as the normative references within the society, unaware of the fact that they, too, are the victims of the traditional norms, burdening them more and more. As a result of this sustainability, the reason why Mary felt on the first day of her arrival to the farmhouse that it was as if she were in her father's house rather than her husband's is because of the parallel nature of men, who are ascribed the similar roles by the patriarchal society, subordinating and undervaluing women as well as making them more inferior to the privileged gender. By marrying, therefore, the male acquires more respect and strength within the society while the female loses control of her

body and is dragged into a self-exile, becoming more and more dependent on her husband.

As a matter of fact, Mary is not only in charge of the household chores, which she is put into regardless of what she has ever thought of them, but also of the store, which Dick decides to open with the intention of earning much more money. By doing so, Dick assigns Mary to another obligation, for he is the master in the house. The authority is now felt by Mary, too, as another tool of Dick. Although she cannot tolerate the idea of a store because of her agonising memories about her drunkard father, buying alcohol regardless of their poverty, Mary agrees to work in the store thinking that "it would have been like arguing with destiny itself … [and] there was nothing else she could do" (*TGS* 94). Destiny here might be evaluated in two different ways, one of which is the prevailing fate, chasing her no matter how hard she tries to get rid of, and the patriarchal enforcements, for she cannot break the restrictive bars of it although she endeavours to do so a lot. This, unfortunately, is not Dick's one and only plan for Mary to carry on; he also imagines her as the mother of his children notwithstanding her hatred of giving birth and suckling a baby. In short, motherhood comes up as another obligation for Mary since, in Yahya and Lalbakhsh's words in their article, *A Socialist Feminist Reading of Doris Lessing's the Grass is Singing*, "[f]or Dick a wife is a machine he can buy to produce offspring and provide companionship" (8). Instead of her prescribed role as a mother, when Mary "thought of children she saw her mother's face at her children's funeral. … She liked other people's children but shuddered at the thought of having any of her own" (*TGS* 39). This, however, does not mean that Dick should feel any sort of sympathy for Mary since he is the patronizing voice in the house and so the people around him are bound to fulfil all his needs and wishes. According to the impositions, Mary should not only bear children but also fulfil the sexual desires of her husband, no matter how disgusting they are to her. On encountering the native women, feeding their babies opposite the store she is responsible for, Mary is stunned; "the idea of a child's lips on her breasts made her feel quite sick; at the thought of it she would involuntarily clasp her hands over her breasts, as if protecting them from a violation" (*TGS* 95). The violation, nonetheless, is not of her breasts but of her sexuality and her freedom of choice on her body. Sexual intercourse is what Mary hates because of

their house, which lacked any privacy while her mother and father had intercourses she had to be a witness of, by which her mother suffered a lot due to her father's masochistic lusty attitudes. However, her loneliness and the roles designed for her have such deteriorating effects on Mary's mental health that it surprisingly turns out to be she who longs for a baby to erase her loneliness and to give her something to consume her energy and time on although she "hated the idea of a baby, when she thought of its helplessness, its dependence, the mess, the worry" (*TGS* 135). The assimilative property of the indigenous culture, therefore, runs like clockwork, making her a victim again. Nevertheless, although Mary longs for a baby despite her distaste of it, Dick is again the decision-maker on the matter; he refuses to have the baby since he thinks they cannot afford a baby, thereby becoming the authoritative voice over Mary's body one more time. It is Dick who is allowed to use Mary's body as his own playground regardless of the permission of the body's owner, thereby treating her "like a superior to a subordinate" (*TGS* 147). With the official law, he does not begin a reciprocal affair with his wife, on the contrary, with the capitalist property of patriarchy, he officially purchases a body for himself to objectify according to his own taste.

> The society that Lessing depicts for us has the same characteristics and implements the same patriarchal ideology. Mary's father, Dick, Charlie Slatter, and even the native men are decision makers and dominators of individuals who take their superiority as natural and biological. … In Turner's family Dick is the patriarch who makes decisions and designs the plans. It is Dick that decides what should be cultivated and raised. Although his plans are all on an impulse and never come to a happy end, he never lets Mary make any decisions. That is why Mary has to follow all Dick's miscalculations and suffer from knowing the bitter reality behind them and witnessing the upcoming failures. It is Dick who decides when they can have sex, when they may have children and when they cannot afford it. It is Dick who decides to borrow money or not. And it is him that defines Mary's life and death by his indifference to her needs and his ignorance to the heat she has to tolerate. He applies his power to all things related to his wife and determines everything without any attention to her will or her urgent needs (Yahya and Lalbakhsh 8 – 9).

Though it is not a humanistic approach to discriminate the people according to the colour of their skin, it should be declared according to the scope of the novel that it is evident Mary is also hierarchically beneath the native men because of her disadvantageous gender. Although she feels her inherited hatred towards the native

people from the beginning of the novel, Mary is overpowered by her servant, Moses, multiple times, as their relationship progresses. The roles change; while at first it was Mary who had the control over Moses because of his undervalued race, it turns out to be Moses who runs the show because of his prerogative gender after Mary's neurotic condition. "Blackness and femininity are therefore conflated in the novel. In their relations to patriarchy and whiteness, they are shifting signifiers of power and impotence" (Grogan 39). Taking this idea into consideration, it is evident that Mary fluctuates between the two worlds; the external imposing culture and her interior world, longing for individuality. Just like the country, colonized by the white people, her sexual identity is colonized, too, by the patriarchal normative rules. Her relationship with Moses, the native servant, is also rather eye-catching because of the fact that Mary feels extremely frightened at first and nearly throughout the whole novel due to Moses' presence. Moses' existence, therefore, resembles a kind of fear against the patriarchal strength and vitality. When Mary brings the whip down on Moses' face, she acknowledges what her fear, caused by the native presence, is.

> He was a great hulk of a man, taller than any of the others, magnificently built, with nothing on but an old sack tied round his waist. As he stood there, frightened, he seemed to tower over her. On his big chest another red drop fell and trickled down to his waist (*TGS* 119).

The physical appearance described by the narrator is a reflection of Moses' strong vitality, which gives Mary a fear of revenge that she assumes Moses will take one day. Although this is the expected result of what Mary has done to Moses, it is also a reflection of the influence that Moses has founded on Mary. Once Moses comes to assist his mistress due to a nightmare by bringing her a glass of water, Mary experiences the fear again; "it was like a nightmare where one is powerless against horror: the touch of this black man's hand on her shoulder filled her with nausea; she had never, not once in her whole life, touched the flesh of a native" (*TGS* 151). She feels inevitably powerless; therefore although she is reluctant to drink the water, she cannot help admitting the offer, for "'drink', [Moses] said simply, as if he were speaking to one of his own women" (*TGS* 151). She cannot overpower the black man both because of her fear against the dark body and of the masculine presence standing like a phallic image in front of her.

> The touch of the African man threatens Mary's social integrity. Not only Mary's identity but the identity of the entire colonial society in which she lives is itself subtly transformed with each instance of such contact between races (Frampton 20).

Mary is not only scared of the dark body but also of his dominating presence. When Moses says "Madame lie down, … his voice [being] gentle, almost fatherly" (*TGS* 151), he becomes the father figure, which reminds Mary of the dominating patriarchal figure in the indigenous culture. Both her growing obsession and her dependence on Moses are clearly demonstrated when Moses, with his own free fill, decides to leave the farm and Mary begs him to stay in tears. It is contradictory to the prevalent custom that a white woman is begging a black man to stay. However, as aforementioned, the roles have interchanged. Now, Moses is the symbol of the patriarchy itself, while Mary is the symbol of the women, who suffer from the indigenous patriarchal oppressions within the area. Under the same oppression,

> [f]earfully, she did her work in the house, trying to keep out of his way; if he was in one room she went to another. … She dreaded hearing him speak, because now there was a new tone in his voice: familiar, half-insolent, domineering (*TGS* 167).

She acts as if she were not scared of Moses but of his domineering and vital presence reminding her of her mediocre position when compared to men, no matter black or white. From then on, "only [Moses] was powerful and sure of himself, and [Mary] was undermined with fear, by her terrible dream-filled nights, her obsession" (*TGS* 167). That Moses is the patriarchal opponent of Mary's racial presence is observable once Mary surrenders to him after the crisis of nightmare:

> There was a new relation between them. For she felt helplessly in his power. … Her feeling was one of a strong and irrational fear, a deep uneasiness, and even – though this she did not know, would have died rather than acknowledge – of some dark attraction. It was as though the act of weeping before him had been an act of resignation - resignation of her authority; and he had refused to hand it back (*TGS* 154).

Becoming aware of the fact that Moses' authority suppresses her racial privilege, Mary stops acting as if she were superior to Moses and that she could overpower him just because she is white. "[Her] white identity, predicated upon her hierarchical superiority to the black man, cannot sustain itself once the notion of a shared humanity across the races is recognized" (Grogan 39). The narrator describes how

their relationship, both different from the whole colonizer group and forbidden by the same group with unwritten laws, begins and how it breaks the borders and restrictions that the colonizer has drawn. By doing so, both Mary and Moses find out that it is humanity that comes to the forefront when they are able to free themselves from the racist biases.

Another problematic issue, inferred from the incidence abovementioned, is that Mary is unaware of the fact that she is attracted by the presence of Moses, which is totally against the cultural and societal norms. As Charlie Slatter underscores it, "[t]hou shalt not let your fellow whites sink lower than a certain point; because if you do, the nigger will see he is as good as you are" (*TGS* 178). On the contrary, Mary commits the worse of this dictation; her suppressed sexuality comes up with her intimate relationship with Moses. "She used to sit quite still, watching him work. The powerful, broad-built body fascinated her. … [H]is muscles bulged and filled out the thin material of the sleeves until it seemed they would split" (*TGS* 142). The inherited and culturally needed hatred for the natives, which Mary has had from the beginning of the novel, fades away as time progresses. Instead of hating the black man, she begins to feel a compassionate intimacy towards him. Therefore, "[w]hat had happened was that the formal pattern of black-and-white, mistress-and-servant, had been broken by the personal relation" (*TGS* 144). This, of course, brings about other severe impositions within the circles of both patriarchy and the society; as the novel opens with the murder of Mary, it is observable that her punishment is fulfilled through the avenger, Moses, for his patriarchal enforcement on Mary is broken by his dismissal from the farmhouse since, as Yahya and Lalbakhsh discuss it in their article, *Engendering the Feminine Power: Identity, Prescience and Anticipation in Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing and The Good Terrorist,* "Moses is the one that imposes his own version of patriarchy and its related laws and rules on Mary" (33); furthermore, the punishment is also practised by the society via Moses since Mary commits the biggest crime, transgressing the racial borders without regarding the prestige of the patriarchal society and its traditional laws. Furthermore, once her murder by Moses is evaluated in the patriarchal stance, it is possible to admit that Moses takes revenge not only for the racist attitudes he is exposed to but also for the patriarchal rights he has, notwithstanding his skin colour.

3.1.3. Assimilation and Alienation

Assimilation and alienation co-operate with other components of the Third World feminism in order to serve the indigenous patriarchal system. Therefore, racism and class, gender roles and objectification as well as culture and resistance are, too, the subcomponents of assimilation and alienation of Mary since they all lead her to the feeling of loneliness and to the outsider effect. As she keeps moving on her journey of identity assertion as an individual, she gets closer to these feelings because of the enforcements of the society she lives in. It is an undeniable truth that Mary is against the process of her assimilation through the cultural and patriarchal impositions. This is why she is an outcast in the community she lives in. She is not assimilated completely, although endeavoured to do so by the patriarchy through the normative objectives of a woman, which prepares her death.

As aforementioned, "Mary felt ashamed of the poverty of her house, and yet superior because of her experience in the social life of the town" (Brewster 35). Her circle of friends, economic self-sufficiency, and social life are incredibly unfamiliar to the people around her in the farm. Thus, she is distanced from the society; she cannot find anything or anyone close to her own way of life, which makes her more and more alienated to her husband primarily and to the environment respectively. On the first days of her arrival to the farm as Dick's wife, she has problematic times to fill in her leisure times due to the fact that there is nothing she can do according to her own wishes. Thus, she is inclined to those works of decoration and embroidery as well as the household chores, which she is not so keen on actually. However, even these harmless activities are enough for her husband to be alarmed in case his autonomy and authority within the house might be hurt. "What was she [Mary] going to do with all this energy and efficiency? It undermined his [Dick's] own self-assurance even further, seeing her like this, for he knew, deep down, that this quality was one he lacked" (*TGS* 62). Because of this reason, Dick, afraid of equalizing his gender with that of his wife's, finds a solution by opening a store, which will both be beneficiary for his prosperity and for his wife, who will find something to expand her energy on. However, this does not assist Mary in finding a meaning for herself, applicable to her new way of life, so that she can be integrated into the new society.

On the contrary, she becomes more and more internalized, furthering away from herself and from the community, getting entrapped into a sort of neurosis, which is an inevitable end for a woman, externalized by the norms of the society. “While the men are active, creative, immersed in and energized by their value-giving work, women are reduced to seeking definition through their husbands' work, slowly deteriorating into silent “adjustment” or madness” (Markow 89 – 90). Mary, thus, is enforced to live in her own world, bored with the farming issues, having nothing in common with her husband except for the idea that they both are in need of someone for different reasons. Even her creativity and productivity are out of use, unprofitable for her husband, and endangering his autonomy. This pushes her to the gates of madness unsurprisingly, which, as observed in the works of Doris Lessing frequently, is the result of the failures of women due to their inability in living as free beings (Markow 88).

Mary’s physical loneliness as well as her spiritual one is again the result of her property of being different from the women, acting within the frames of the role that the society scripts for them. On a companionship of the Slatter family in their farmhouse, Mary is not attracted in anyway; furthermore, she is surprised by Dick’s notions over the companionship. On Dick’s words, which try to persuade Mary for more visitations of their neighbours in order for Mary not to suffer from loneliness, Mary thinks she is not lonely actually, however “she did not know that loneliness can be an unnoticed cramping of the spirit for the lack of companionship” (*TGS* 77). In fact, what Mary longs for is the physical loneliness itself, which will protect her from the spiritual one, undermining her autonomy by the intruders around her. “Throughout her life Mary had been isolated, both in fact and in feeling, and this isolation had created in her a feeling of non-involvement in the lives and feelings of others that she calls “freedom”” (Schlueter 14). However much Mary insists on her physical loneliness to avoid the spiritual one, she is unaware of the fact that she herself paves her way to the alienation process. Her isolation helps the society contribute to her lonely position more and more. “If only she had something to fill her time – that was the trouble” (*TGS* 82). Unfortunately, there are only the things related to the farmhouse or feeding the animals within her own frame to fill in her time. As time passes, there comes up only one person, who really sympathizes with

her, understanding her real condition that she is an outcast, an undesired guest within the house. Tony Marston portrays her condition very realistically speaking on his own:

> She doesn't behave as if she were. She behaves simply as if she lives in a world of her own, where other people's standards don't count. She has forgotten what her own people are like. But then, what is madness, but a refuge, a retreating from the world (*TGS* 187)?

Her neurotic disease is caused by her resistance not to fit in the frames of the patriarchy's definitions of women as well as her loneliness, supporting her identification of a woman, who is totally different from her unaware comrades within the colonially modelled patriarchy. The assimilation process, therefore, does not work on Mary, for the only assimilative roles she wears are the leisure time activities she commits within the house such as painting the walls and embroidery. Additionally, she is forced to work in the store her husband has recently opened, which, at first, she rebels against and refuses to work in. Thus, it is not suitable to declare that Mary is assimilated within the indigenous culture; "her community does not acknowledge her characteristics as part of its definition of itself: most damningly, she does not perform her colonial femininity 'correctly' because she does not adequately adhere to the rules of racial engagement" (Grogan 32). She always tries to preserve her life before marriage; most of the times "she [takes] refuge in her own thoughts; or, rather, she lapse[s] into her familiar state, which [is] a dim mindlessness" (*TGS* 85). With the continuation of time, she is more and more self-dependent and introvert, exiling herself from the surrounding, diving into a deadly silence, which, for sure, is a punishment of the inherent culture; her condition, due to the enforcements and impositions, turns out to be a compulsory one. Her neurotic deterioration stems from her alienated body and spirit.

> As there is no limit to the amount of sleep to which the human body can be made to accustom itself, she slept hours every day, so as to hasten time, so as to swallow great gulps of it, walking always with the satisfactory knowledge that she was another few hours nearer deliverance. Indeed, she was hardly awake at all, moving about what she did in a dream of hope, a hope that grew so strong as the weeks passed that she would wake in the morning with a sensation of release and excitement, as if something wonderful was going to happen that very day (*TGS* 128).

Dreaming, as Marston also proposes it for madness, is a way out of the hell for Mary. Lessing, too, puts it in *Doris Lessing at Stony Brook: An Interview by Jonah Raskin* that

> [m]ental illness is part of mainstream. … People who are called mentally ill are often those who say to the society, "I'm not going to live according to your rules. I'm not going to conform." Madness can be a form of rebellion (69).

Her neurosis, therefore, is a shield for her to underline her own resistance against patriarchy, oppression, assimilation, and so on. She is so absorbed by the surrounding that dreaming is her only hope for a dim change in her life. The words *deliverance* and *release* (emphasis added), therefore, have great importance in inferring what Mary feels about living in the farm with the people who are not similar to her previous fellows at all. Thus, Mary experiences retrospection and neurosis to a great extent in the course of time, for keeping herself reminiscent of the old beautiful days in the girls' club and in the office helps her hang on her boring, monotonous, alienating, and dominated life. She feels as if she were imprisoned in a cage, waiting for her emancipation or, rather, for her execution, which, in the end, is realised by Moses.

Although Mary tries to resist the prevalent conditions and the impositions of the system, she is not able to endure them for a long time. Once, she quarrels with her husband over her standards in the house and yells him as follows: "I won't let go my standards. I won't! Why should I? It's bad enough…" (*TGS* 68). However, it is only one of the innumerable rebellions she demonstrates, for after such a resisting tone, she stops herself and relinquishes saying it is bad enough living in a pigsty like their farmhouse (*TGS* 68). She is forced to let go her standards. Nevertheless, as her death proves it, she is not one of the oppressed for a long period of time; on the contrary, she is aware of the fact that she will be killed by Moses and she admits this very idea instead of continuing her oppressive and mediocre life. As a self-aware woman, she knows in the end that she "will come across [*Moses*], and it will all be over. … He [will] save her! Somewhere in the trees *he* [is] waiting; somewhere in the vlei [is] the young man who [will] come before the night to rescue her" (*TGS* 197 – 8). In Lalbakhsh and Yahya's words, "Lessing's engendered female character in *The Grass is Singing* proves herself a dynamic character who moves from some kind

of naivety to the missionary status of a revolutionary New Woman who, resists, fights and subverts" (33).

Consequently, the patriarchy and its other subservient components fail in making Mary one of the other women, who are submissive to every single thing, presented to them. Although Mary's is not a conscious rebellion, for she is left in her unvoiced world and shown no attention to her step by step downfall by the dominant characteristics of the system, her final self-awareness before her death is eye-catching. Nonetheless, her ultimate patriarchal punishment is acknowledged by the rest of the community only after her execution by Moses since, as the narrator puts it, "the crises of individuals, like the crises of nations, are not realized until they are over" (*TGS* 131).

3.2. *Nervous Conditions*

3.2.1. Racism and Class

Sartre argues in his preface to Frantz Fanon's work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, that "[t]he status of "native" is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonized people *with their consent*" (18). Dangarembga borrows the famous reference from Fanon's work and implants it in her novel with her own words as "*[t]he condition of the native is a nervous condition*" (*Nervous Conditions*, unpaginated fore-leaf). Apparently, both Sartre and Dangarembga are right in their evaluation, for poverty of black people and the class, which they are members of, cause exceeding obstacles before their improvements and ontological stances in a colonially modelled society. On the one hand, the colonial powers privilege the male cogs of the wheel; on the other hand, they disempower the female particles. The poor black people in the novel, *Nervous Conditions* (hereafter *NC*), suffer from poverty more and more while the colonizers improve their system, benefiting from these people's agonizing standings within the society. Ma'Shingayi, Tambu's mother, evaluates that "being black [is] a burden because it make[s] you poor" (*NC* 16) if you are not on the side of the colonial powers or not submissive to their controlling quality. The black people can lead a prosperous life, at least with a life standard on average once compared to those people living under miserable circumstances, on the condition that they let the colonizers use them as tools that help the prevalent system proceed as long as possible. Under the influence of this system, of course, women suffer much more than men owing to the fact that women stand as the second beneficiary entities of the prevalent system, while men become the first to take advantage from the class-oriented patriarchal society.

Starting her journey as the protagonist of the novel, Tambu, who is one of the abovementioned female characters, grieves due to her class-oriented patriarchal family. She starts narrating her story with very stunning sentences, which are as follows: "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor I am apologising for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all" (*NC* 1). These sentences, for sure, may sound inhumane due to the fact that there is a girl

speaking directly to the reader with a remorseless tone of voice, which underlines the sensation that the loss of her brother does not cause any affliction in her. Nevertheless, the reason why she approaches her brother's death as an insensitive woman is justified once her account of her story keeps improving, for "[i]t is a story in which [the oppressed girls and women] have a say in how that life is to be lived and shaped; a story that catapults them beyond the kitchen and into a world of their own" (Moyana 27). Correspondingly, if her brother did not die, she would have no story to tell at all, which is emphasized by Tambu one more time that her brother's death and the existence of her story are inseparable (*NC* 1).

As a native girl, who is so keen on education that she cannot abandon, Tambu realizes there is not enough money for Nhamo, her brother, too, to continue his education. Considering this, their mother, Ma'Shingayi, begins to boil and sell eggs as well as enlarging her vegetable garden with rape vegetables so that there are more of them to sell. By this way, they could collect the money, necessary for Nhamo's education, which is extremely unfair, for Tambu is not allowed to go to school due to economic insufficiency; therefore, only one person in the family can have the opportunity of education and it is, unsurprisingly, Nhamo because of his sexual status within the family. Tambu is excluded from education. Her miserable renunciation from her education is asserted as follows:

> I understood that selling vegetables was not a lucrative business. I understood that there was not enough money for my fees. Yes, I did understand why I could not go back to school, … my circumstances affected me badly (*NC* 15).

Because of their poverty and class standing, Tambu, or her family, cannot afford another child's school fees. However, the patriarchal family decides on the male child's education right because of the fact that women are not required in the fields of self-cultivation; on the contrary, what they are required to do is to follow the instructions and enforcements by the class-oriented family and to be submissive to it even if the decision is about their very own autonomy. As Dangarembga admits it in an interview by BBC, titled as *Africa's Women Speak Out*, "traditionally women have been excluded from economically viable positions in society, and women are having to challenge this exclusion constantly" (Web). The privileged gender, therefore, is supported by the class system while the female gender is doomed to be

entrapped in her poverty and to be dependent on her prospective husband, bearing his children and looking after them as well as coping with the household matters. This, for sure, is the policy of the colonizers; they imprison the natives within the borders of poverty and then the families cannot afford their children's education fees or anything else, which, in the end, serves for the system again due to the fact that the people (most generally the women) become more and more ignorant as well as becoming more and more dependent on the indigenous policy. In short, the system runs like clockwork as a vicious circle, making the natives run like the mice trying to capture the cheese but never being able to do so. Frantz Fanon demonstrates the difference and inequality between the colonized and the colonizer explicitly in his *The Wretched of the Earth*. His portrayal of the prevailing condition proves the clockwork straightforwardly. He argues that

> [t]he settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about. … [T]he streets of his town are clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. … The town belonging to the colonized people … is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. … It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. … The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well (39).

The colonizers, as Tambu's grandmother also defines them with the word *wizards* (emphasis added), "were avaricious and grasping; there was less and less land for the [natives to cultivate]. At last the people came upon the grey, sandy soil of the homestead, so stony and barren that the wizards would not use it" (*NC* 18). Furthermore, the settlers' ideology is rather explicit from the very beginning of the colonization process as the readers find it out from the same story of the grandmother again that the white settlers were not in need of the women and the children; apparently, the castrated group of people are those, who will be shaped according to the needs of the colonizers in the end.

Very self-motivated, Tambu does not give up becoming hopeful for getting education and asks for permission from her family to grow some maize and to sell them so that she can continue her education sessions. However, if it were not her mother, she would not be able to make her plan work out, for Ma'Shingayi has persuaded Jeremiah, Tambu's father, to admit her plan and give her some seeds. Before Ma'Shingayi's intervention, Jeremiah's reply has been completely suitable to the system as he puts it with his own words, "there is no money. … There is no money. That's all" (*NC* 17). The indigenous structure is so integrated to the people around that they cannot think of anything but failure all throughout their lives. They are made to believe that they are natives, they are poor, they are ignorant; furthermore, once the conditions of the women are considered, it is obvious that they are not given any chance to stress their own autonomies within the class system by improving themselves through education and acquiring their economic independence, for it is a total objection to the inherent policies of the colonizer. Taking this idea into consideration, it is not surprising that Ma'Shingayi tries to console Tambu about her possible future disappointment: "[a]nd do you think you are so different, so much better than the rest of us? Accept your lot and enjoy what you can of it. There is nothing else to be done" (*NC* 20), which proves the notion, as Babamukuru puts it, that these people "cannot afford to dream" (*NC* 45). Drawing the attention to the women's shared and inevitable destiny, Ma'Shingayi highlights the idea one more time that just because Tambu wants does not mean she can acquire education; on the contrary, as a matter of fact, she is a girl, whom all the humanistic rights are taken from. She is apparently unaware of her gender's mediocrity and submissiveness to the male owing to the fact that

> [one] is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine (Beauvoir 273).

Therefore, because the poor and class-oriented patriarchal society draws Tambu such a submissive role, she is expected to fulfil all the necessities ascribed to her. The problem is that woman, as a societal title, and female, as a biological entity, are assumed as equal; because Tambu was born as a female, she should and must become a woman with the defined rules of the patriarchy now.

Nhamo's reaction to the news that he will be taken with Babamukuru so that he can have a decent education demonstrates a drastic portrait of what the poor natives are excluded from:

> I shall no longer be Jeremiah's son. … I shall wear shoes and socks, and shorts with no holes in them, all brand new, bought for me by Babamukuru. He has the money. I will even have underwear – a vest and pants. I shall have a jersey in winter, and probably a blazer too. I shall stop using my hands to eat. I will use a knife and fork (*NC* 48).

Inferred from the portrait drawn by Nhamo above, it is observed that Nhamo, a representative of the economically suffering natives, is so fed up with his prevailing condition that he does not hesitate to renounce his father. Furthermore, they are abandoned to their fate of primitive life, in which there are no clothes without holes in them, or underclothes for a more hygienic and healthy condition, not even a pullover to prevent them from the cold weather; by the same token, their primitive way of life does not let them buy any forks or knives so that they can eat comfortably, thereby colonizing women twice as much once compared to men. Therefore, the idea is that, the natives are made as poor as possible by the colonizers; correspondingly, they are made powerless, for the powerless cannot hurt any cogs of the system. Additionally, poverty is such a handcuffing and supreme entity that the people surrender to it indispensably. As a psychologically harmful event, which is made by Babamukuru for Jeremiah and Ma'Shingayi to get married under the Christian belief, Tambu is extremely ashamed and affected badly and she does not want to attend her parents' wedding, nonetheless, she cannot oppose to Babamukuru due to her poverty. As she presents it with her own reasons,

> [she] could not be angry with [Babamukuru]. Babamukuru who was [her] benefactor, [her] father for all practical purposes and who was also good, deserving of all love, respect and obedience. So [she] banished the anger (*NC* 151).

It is definitely not unpredictable that Tambu cannot get angry or treat Babamukuru disobediently; it is Babamukuru who supports Tambu financially in order for her to complete her education and become economically a self-dependent woman within such a limitative patriarchal society, exiling the women from all sorts of public mediums. Tambu prefers the humiliation of her parents rather than losing her chance of so-called independence (that she cannot be as independent as she thinks is

observed once Maiguru's, Babamukuru's wife's, condition is evaluated). What she can all do, at all costs, is resisting very painfully to Babamukuru about not attending the ceremony. Acquiring the colonial economic power, Babamukuru, of course, threatens her by the opportunities he provides for her, thinking that his authority, in a way, is under the threat of a female's stubbornness:

> If you do not go to the wedding, you are saying you no longer want to live here. I am the head of this house. Anyone who defies my authority is an evil thing in this house, bent on destroying what I have made (*NC* 159).

All these, of course, are directed to Tambu because of her economic mediocrity and weakness before Babamukuru; all these, in turn, will be encountered by Tambu as the loss of her expenses such as the school fees, clothes, and so on. The threats, unexceptionally, are fulfilled by Babamukuru and Tambu is assigned to the household chores for two weeks, as she is the disobedient and indecent girl, an enemy of the patriarchy in Babamukuru's residence. Babamukuru, in consequence, is transformed into the embodiment of the white colonizer in his own house, inhabited by the natives as himself.

Additionally, Lucia's words underline the poverty and its effects on women one more time. With her own account of a factual memory, she describes the miserable destiny of her family because of their poverty as follows:

> [T]here were no cattle at all in [her] father's kraal. Because of this, some people believed it was a blessing that the first two of [her] maternal grandparents' children were girls. 'Otherwise … if he had had sons, how would those sons have taken wives? … [T]he daughters will bring cattle, the cattle will enable the old man to work his fields, the family will prosper, and when the sons are of an age to marry, by then they will have accumulated their *roora*[4]' (*NC* 127).

Obviously, the women are not even as valuable as those farm animals at the very beginning of their lives, for they are in need of nutrition, correspondingly, of money. Just like the animals, they are fed by the families in order to count for some worth of money for the young men of the households to *purchase* (emphasis added) their wives with the intention of making them fulfil their sexual needs and desires, and work in the house and on the fields as well as bearing their children and looking after

[4] Bride price paid by the men in order to take the women they want as their wives.

the male population within the house. Unfortunately, the women in the novel, except for Nyasha and Tambu, have no chance to change this at all owing to the fact that the "British colonizers have robbed Tambu's family and the other natives of all their capital and forced them to live in poverty and suffer racism" (Baharvand and Zarrinjooee 31), which prepares the suitable medium for the double oppression process of the women.

Racism is also another burden on the black women's shoulders, standing as a glass ceiling, preventing them from acquiring any type of opportunity, which will improve them cognitively, which, correspondingly, will give them the chance of mobility between the classes. "The terror of racial and gendered imaginings combine to form a lethal combination that traps the native, making him/her feel silenced, disempowered and ineffectual" (Bhana 135). Therefore, the women are marginalized and they suffer because of both racist and sexual inequities. Even Tambu's attempt of narrating her own account of journey is evaluated as a quasi-treason to her own people, own men, and own sex. Minh-ha argues in her work, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, that

> whenever a woman of colour takes up the feminist fight, she immediately qualifies for three possible "betrayals": she can be accused of betraying either man (the "manhater"), or her community ("people of colour should stay together to fight racism"), or woman herself ("you should fight first on the women's side") (104).

Although there is not an evidence for the fact that Tambu is accused of betraying her own sex, men, or community, it is rather observable that she would not be able to have the chance to transfer her own story to the readers on condition that her brother Nhamo were alive. The racist and class-oriented patriarchal society, therefore, does not allow the female autonomy assertion within any kinds of medium, which, as a result, may be evaluated as a betrayal by the cogs of the system, for Tambu circumvents the indigenous culture and gives a portrayal of her oppressed life, including the other oppressed women's, too, of course. "The narrator, Tambu, achieves voice through narration, an act that gives her liberation from her patriarchal-imposed silence and offers hope in the resilience and success of female challenge" (Uwakweh 77). Thus, it is the indigenous racist system's very idea of fear for liberation of the women that calls the other patriarchal components of the society for

action to prevent this freedom of voice; apparently, this is why Tambu might be marginalized as the broken cog of the racist system; she transgresses her borders.

Tambu's journey, beginning with great illusions of the white colonial powers and continuing in an enormous affright of failure in integration with them, demonstrates a growth in her trust to the colonizer as long as she keeps herself attached and devoted to education. This creates the inability to be enlightened for her visions, for unravelling the curtains between the facts and illusions. However, as she enters into the so-called kingdom of Babamukuru, she is aware of the fact that she does not belong to the educational mediums once she is chased by the "loose, ferocious guardians of the gates to the kingdom" (*NC* 66). The analogous existence of the assaultive dogs stands for the white colonizer, trying to prevent a native female from acquiring education, for it will break her memorized rules about the patriarchy, as it is the case with Nyasha, too. Tambu's fear, thus, is a signification of the native women, frightened of transgressing the gates of the forbidden land, thereby remaining passive and subservient. At first hand, Tambu believes that "Babamukuru was God, therefore she had arrived in Heaven" (*NC* 70), feeling herself as superior to those girls, who are deprived of any chance of being educated, which is completely suitable to the melting pot ideology of the colonizers, for Babamukuru also feels the same way with Tambu once he is taken into the missionaries and educated according to the norms of the colonial powers. As Njozi also puts it in his article, *Utilitarianism versus Universalism in Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, "it is worth noting that with the exception of Nyasha, there are striking parallels between the behaviour of Babamukuru towards the authorities and the behaviour of other characters towards Babamukuru" (4). As a matter of fact, the "authorities thought Babamukuru was a good African. And it was generally believed that good Africans bred good African children who also thought about nothing except serving their communities" (*NC* 109).

> Tambudzai merely deceives herself about maintaining her own dignity. She reprimands her brother, Nhamo for neglecting his native identity, and also for his flattery to Babamukuru; but her own behaviour is not noticeably contrary to Nhamo's after she leaves the homesteads and learns Englishness in the westernized school headed by Babamukuru (Baharvand and Zarrinjooee 35).

Therefore, this indebtedness should never ever be omitted by the natives, which is definitely a burden on Tambu's shoulders (on other native's, too, of course) owing to the fact that she cannot rebel against Babamukuru throughout the novel, with the exception of her reluctance for and resistance against attending her parents' wedding ceremony.

Although "[t]he interconnectedness of gender, sexuality, nationality and race for Tambu changes throughout the novel and the negotiation of these subjectivities … continues, as it should" (Selvick 289), through the very end of the novel, Tambu is still a mesmerized young girl, filled with the illusions of the colonial powers' well-intentioned activities, since her fascination cannot be torn apart although she comes to know a nun in Sacred Heart, responsible for introducing the missionary to the families. The moment, which is actually heart-breaking but obviously not a touchy one for Tambu, is as follows:

> 'All the first-formers live on this corridor,' [the nun] explained as she led the way. 'And the Africans live here,' she announced, triumphantly flinging the door to [Tambu's] new life wide open. The room was empty. … It was not a small room but then neither was it large. It certainly was not large enough for the six beds that stood in it, … all of necessity so closely arranged that there was barely space to walk between them (*NC* 198).

Imagining that the colonizer is on the side of Tambu, – thanks to Babamukuru's efforts, of course – Tambu is not really disappointed although she witnesses a racial discrimination at her first step to the missionary only to find out that the White live in the rooms with four beds and one cupboard for each, while she has to share one cupboard with another student in her room just because she is African. The reason why she does not feel humiliated and lets the colonizers make her inferior to the racist patriarchy, however, is because "she is a rural girl who violates her self-esteem in order to get rid of her squalid rural life and to place herself in the urban society" (Baharvand and Zarrinjooee 35). Apparently, her national status is not counted as equal to that of the enlightening white colonizers'. The settlers arrange everything according to the comforts of their own people, thereby marginalizing the native girls. Nevertheless, the assimilative activities are so influential that Tambu, although segregated racially, defines herself as "a much more sensible person than Nyasha, because [she] knew what could or couldn't be done" (*NC* 208), thereby becoming

another Babamukuru, serving for the colonizing community, though having more restricted rights in comparison to her male prototype. Just like her race, she is colonized and exploited according to the prevalent system, although, surprisingly, Babamukuru thinks that "it may change her character for the worse … these Whites, you know … you never know" (*NC* 185). As Bhana also puts it "both the indigenous and white settler communities centre [Tambu] (albeit for different reasons) and simultaneously marginalise and ostracise [her]" (127).

Turning back to the racism-oriented mediocrity of the rest of the women characters within the novel, it is possible to claim that the abortion of the women from the educational rights, which is correlated to their poverty, is also an evidence of the racist approaches of the colonizers' policy. Because, as Nhamo asserts it, it is not Tambu but Nhamo who has to attend the school (*NC* 20), for

> [n]ot surprisingly, … Whites were indulgent towards promising young black boys in those days, provided that the promise was a peaceful promise, a grateful promise to accept whatever was handed out to them and not expect more (*NC* 108).

This, correspondingly, brings about the submissive gender roles of the women. It is not the women but the men who are beneficial for the inherent policies of the settlers, for they are the ones to shape the women according to the necessities of the colonizer. The colonial powers, thus, elevate the male gender in comparison to the female. Therefore, apart from the restrictive property of poverty, racism has a lot of impositions on women. It tears them apart from their civil rights and causes them become more and more submissive without any chance to resist the indigenous racist system. As it is found out in the novel, Maiguru, for instance, has a master's degree; however, she cannot even use her salary for herself according to her own taste. Once Tambu asks the outcome of Maiguru's salary, she replies in a very disappointed tone that the government, in a way, takes the money (*NC* 103). As Maiguru keeps her supressed and obedient condition, the mystery of the colonizer is unveiled.

> What it is … to have to choose between self and security. When I was in England I glimpsed for a little while the things I could have been, the things I could have done if – if – if things were – different – But there was Babawa Chido and the children and the family. And does anyone realise, does anyone appreciate, what sacrifices were made? As for me, no one even thinks about the

> things I gave up. … But that's how it goes, Sisi Tambu! And when you have a good man and lovely children, it makes it all worth while (*NC* 103).

Maiguru, hence, points out the idea that she is not presented any opportunity by the patriarchal society although she has a sophisticated education in England; on the contrary, she is forced to choose between the self and the security, which, unsurprisingly, underscores the barbarous quality of the racist patriarchal society. Ogundipe-Leslie argues that

> [t]he British simply swept aside previous female political structure in society, replacing them with completely male structures and positions. Modern societies have now inherited these male-dominated structures and, with them, the hardened attitudes of male superiority and female exclusion from public affairs which had been introduced by the colonial systems. The colonial systems negatively encouraged or brought to the fore the traditional ideologies of patriarchy or male superiority which originally existed in African societies (29 – 30).

Because she is a female, it is Maiguru who *has to* (emphasis added) relinquish the career she dreams of. Besides, by doing so, Maiguru is deprived of her deserved civil rights; however, it is the patriarchy which imposes the black men that there are no rooms for women within the societal positions, thereby imprisoning them in their domestic worlds. This might be the reason why Maiguru, on an attempt to resist Babamukuru's double oppression, leaves the house only to hide under the wings of another man, her brother, instead of benefiting from her academic degree and trying to find a place for herself, suitable to her academic equipment. She, too, is aware of the fact that the colonial Rhodesia is not a place she can assert her own individuality. She has to be obedient to the racist patriarchy, for the colonizers' mission is to civilize them and the natives, therefore, are grateful to them. In relation to her learned helplessness, "[s]he … keeps silent about her academic achievements, enabling the community to continually de-emphasise and overlook them while aggrandising her husband's achievements" (Bhana 128). As Tambu's illusions about the colonizers unravel it:

> They were holy. They had come not to take but to give. … They had given up the comforts and security of their own homes to come and lighten [their] darkness. It was a big sacrifice that the missionaries made. It was a sacrifice that made [them] grateful to [the missionaries], a sacrifice that made them superior … to [the colonized]. … The missionaries' self-denial and brotherly

> love did not go unrewarded. [The colonized] treated them like minor deities (*NC* 105).

Therefore, it is pretty observable that the colonizers introduced themselves as the light of improvement and civilization-carriers for those who are entrapped in their primitiveness. That is why the colonized vacillate between their self-assertion and obedience. On the one hand, if they obey, they have to leave their national and sexual identity behind, on the other hand, if they resist and become disobedient, they automatically serve the wicked consummation of the colonizer. As aforementioned, this, for sure, is a vicious circle and as Babamukuru's ideology summarizes it, a native must "endure and obey, for there is no other way" (*NC* 19). This is also similar to Tambu's illusions, mirroring the ideology of the colonizer.

The women, who are out of the borders that the racist patriarchal society has specified, are named as loose, accused of prostitution or indecency. As Maiguru responds to Babamukuru about Tambu's attendance to the Sacred Heart, not surprisingly with his approval and permission to speak, she provides a long argument about this as well as contributing to the very core point of the Third World feminist approach, which is the fact that race is not that important for the women living in Rhodesia; black or white, they *have to* (emphasis added) obey and live in a subordinate way, without challenging the founders of the structure, in order to be consistent with the inherent culture.

> Don't you remember, when we went to South Africa everybody was saying that we, the women, were loose. … It wasn't a question of associating with this race or that race at that time. People were prejudiced against educated women. Prejudiced. That's why they said we weren't decent. … After all this time and when we have seen nothing to say it is true. I don't know what people mean by a loose woman – sometimes she is someone who walks the streets, sometimes she is an educated woman, sometimes she is a successful man's daughter or she is simply beautiful (*NC* 184).

Maiguru is completely right in her evaluation of the inherent patriarchy. All the women she gives accounts of are considered as the unwholesome parts of the community, who can spread the epidemic to the whole country and undermine the settlers' policies. The race is not a topic of discussion, for no matter what the colour of the skin is, all the educated women are entitled as harmful, inclusive of contagious and poisonous ideas that may infect the others. However, this does not change the

reality that the native women are doubly oppressed due to their ignorance and illiteracy. Baharvand and Zarrinjooee argue it in their article, *The Formation of a Hybrid Identity in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, that

> women are encouraged by males to be submissive labourers at home. The resultant illiteracy deprives women of participating in social activities. Thus, they will be ignorant of their rights and fail to organize their efforts to enjoy social rights. Females have no place in liberation movements in such a society and can't move toward enlightenment (30 – 1).

Therefore, these women's chances in life are barbarously stolen from them, as Babamukuru does, too, when he prohibits her daughter, Nyasha, to read such books as *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (*NC* 82), thinking that the book and its alternatives might prevent his daughter from becoming a decent woman. However, as Nyasha recommends it to her cousin, Tambu, a native woman has to keep moving on, becoming involved in all sorts of things to improve herself, finding out one thing or another as well as having cognitively a mobile and unstoppable way of life; or else, she is doomed to be entrapped (*NC* 98). As portrayed in the novel, Nyasha "had an egalitarian nature and had taken seriously the lessons about oppression and discrimination that she had learnt first-hand in England" (*NC* 64); hence, the question arouses simultaneously: if Nyasha was not educated in England formerly, would she still suffer from her anorexic nervousness? She is an outsider in her own community, what is worse is that she is an outcast in her own father's house because of her so-called indecency and rebellious nature. Aware of the on-going designs of the racist-patriarchal society, she is labelled as disobedient and she is dragged into anorexia nervosa [5] as a result of her alienation. She is not deprived of such opportunities as education; nevertheless, she is forced by Babamukuru, the representative of the colonial racist patriarchy, to live her life according to the norms that her father has specified formerly. Clashing with her father's norms, Nyasha dresses according to her own taste, irrespective of the people around, and talks to a young boy before coming to Babamukuru's *prison* (emphasis added), which, for sure, is observed by her father explicitly. She is entitled as a whore for such an indecent behaviour. In Babamukuru's words, she cannot "behave like a young woman from a decent home"

[5] According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, an emotional disorder, especially affecting young women, … causing the person to stop eating, leading to dangerous weight loss (54).

(*NC* 116), on which Nyasha replies in a very sardonic and true-to-life tone of voice by asking, "should I worry about what people say when my own father calls me a whore" (*NC* 116)? The perspective is crystal clear that she breaks her father's ideology of obey or die, that is why she is forced by the authoritative figure to be banished to her nervous condition of anorexia. She is oppressed by her father's own racist attitudes, indeed. On this severe punishment of domestic violence, Tambu acknowledges that victimization has nothing to do with education, poverty, or tradition. It is actually universal and only and only related to femaleness. As it is also a part of the title of this thesis, Tambu emphasizes that the biggest problem is in fact "femaleness as opposed and inferior to maleness" (*NC* 118). Babamukuru's racist attitudes need more in-depth analysis, for he is another native in the colonized country. However, he is applied and taught all the necessary qualities of an oppressor by the colonial powers. His status in comparison to the other natives in the region is much better. Thus, he does not intend to lose the grace of the White. As it is presented in the novel, Babamukuru is offered a scholarship by the colonizers and "to decline would have been a form of suicide. The missionaries would have been annoyed by his ingratitude. He would have fallen from grace with them and they would have taken under their wings another promising young African in his place" (*NC* 14). Therefore, equipped with the racist impositions, Babamukuru is a profitable tool for the White to apply their own racist activities on the female body. Turning back to the moment of violence, after experiencing a brute force from her father, which is inclusive of punches, slaps in the face, smashes on the head by force of banging it on the floor, Nyasha subsides into passive resistance; she walks out of the room without saying a single word or without showing any reaction to what has just happened, on which Babamukuru reacts with a hateful tone as "[s]he walks! She just walks away. She is proud. That is her problem. She is proud" (*NC* 117). With a disbelief in Nyasha's resistance, Babamukuru becomes the symbol of authority one more time, standing as a wall, impossible to be broken; moreover, as obvious from his own words on her passivity, Nyasha should have abandoned her self-esteem to be a decent daughter, who is like some sort of liquid in a cup, formed by her father. Njozi also argues that "success, in material terms, hinged on one's capacity to swallow one's pride and obey the powers that be" (3), therefore providing the

credible evidence once more for Babamukuru's, correspondingly the colonizers', policy of obey and endure, thereby victimizing the women both sexually and racially.

On her father's racist patriarchal existence, Nyasha develops anorexia nervosa to resist the indigenous racially modelled patriarchy although it is not counted as an African way of illness by the psychiatrist in the novel (*NC* 206). However with Hill's words,

> [i]f physical and psychological illness can be read as symptomatic of colonialism, it can be cured only by independence ... And since Nyasha's rebellion against the silencing of her voice and body is a gendered rebellion against patriarchal authority, her personal experience of rebellion figures the guerrilla war taking place in Southern Rhodesia during the 1960s and 70s when the novel is set (79).

Though it is compulsory in Babamukuru's house to finish the food served, Nyasha, due to her illness, cannot eat anything and whenever she is forced by her father to eat her food, she resists the brutal enforcement by vomiting whatever she eats. Aegerter argues in her article, *A Dialectic of Autonomy and Community: Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, that Nyasha's "bulimia signifies her refusal to swallow a sexist ideology she cannot and will not stomach. She rejects the Western ideals that revile the very man she is forced to revere, that make a slave of her father, her master" (237 – 8). She does this despite the fact that her refusal to eat anything might possibly bring about her death soon; however, she is rather self-aware that she does not want to surrender to such an exploitative community, under the influence of the Western ideals. Therefore, the racist and sexist system pushes her away and she becomes exiled in her community, being oppressed doubly.

The racist patriarchal society, thus, entraps the women within their domestic roles, segregating them from all resources which are liable to pave the road to their liberation. Furthermore, the characters, except Nyasha, are made scared of being the victims of the inherent policies and are silenced so that the policies can keep functioning. Dangarembga also asserts in her interview, *Africa's Women Speak Out* by BBC, that "women are still very afraid to raise their voices for fear of victimization, or when they speak, they do not speak from their personal woman's truth but say what they think possessors of needed resources would want them to say" (Web). Considering Dangarembga's perspective, it is observable that Nyasha is

a total contradistinction for the indigenous system and is punished due to her disobedience whereas Maiguru and Tambu are representatives of the women who cannot speak through their own voices, but via the imposed culture, thereby resigning their sexual identity as well as their national and personal individualities to the racially modelled patriarchal society. In short, "they are [the] victims of racial inequality which is [sic.] practiced by the white colonizers who consider them as inferior black creatures" (Baharvand and Zarrinjooee 36).

3.2.2. Culture, Gender Roles and Objectification

As accounted under the same topic for *The Grass is Singing*, culture in *Nervous Conditions*, too, is dominantly effective in shaping women by ascribing them to the roles they have to carry on. The roles in this novel are motherhood, wifehood, daughterhood, and spinsterhood. These roles, without any surprise, are other burdens on the shoulders of women since they contribute to the imprisonment of them in their domestic, uncultivated and ignorant worlds. Tambu's mother, Ma'Shingayi, portrays what it is and what it costs to be a woman very clearly once she says

> [t]he business of womanhood is a heavy burden. … How could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children? … When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy; you have to start learning them early, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on. Easy! As if it is ever easy. And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength (*NC* 16).

As she underlines it, being a woman is a huge burden, loaded by the colonially modelled patriarchy; what is more, women are made to believe that there is no way out of this burden and that they have to learn how to live with it from the very early ages. It is their destiny, they believe, which should and must be fulfilled. Therefore, Tambu, Nyasha, Ma'Shingayi, Maiguru, and Lucia are disempowered as well as being victimized by the societal norms, which define their sexual identities and roles within the community they live in.

Tambu, as mentioned before, is prevented from her educational rights due to her present role as a daughter and her prospective role as a wife. As a daughter, she has to fulfil her responsibilities within and out of the homestead. She has to help her mother cook, clean, and assist her in looking after the people residing in the house. Moreover, her responsibilities are doubled when her mother is on the fields as a bread-winner. The male residents of the house, on the other hand, are not in charge of any single thing, for they are the ones to be looked after. Therefore, it is evident that the males do not intend to lose their comfort in any way. If Tambu is allowed to go to school, the objectives within the house will be disrupted. Her predestined future is so highly acknowledged by her mother that she is satisfied with her observation that Tambu is struggling against an insurmountable power. She gets furious on Jeremiah's insistence on not letting Tambu try to earn some money in order to continue her school and says

> [t]he girl must have a chance to do something for herself, to fail herself. Do you think I have not told her her efforts will come to nothing? … She must see things for herself. If you forbid her to go, she will always think you prevented her from helping herself (*NC* 25).

Ma'Shingayi does not utter any positive words in order to support her daughter's future. Actually, she emphasizes one more time that there is no escape from her formerly defined destiny as a woman by the colonizers' patterns of patriarchy. Making it more explicit, she also underscores the fact that the permission for going to school, which she is expecting to be admitted by her father, has nothing to do with her father in fact, for not only Jeremiah but also the colonizers' property of definition of the women is an obstacle before her to free herself from the societal impositions. As her mother puts it at the very beginning of the novel, she should believe in this or that way that "some things cannot be done" (*NC* 17).

Tambu is also deprived of her educational rights due to her prospective wifehood. It is believed that her education will not be profitable for her own family owing to the fact that she will not be recognized as an individual within the circles of her profession after her graduation, thereby failing in the mission of breadwinning. Dangarembga asserts in her interview, *Africa's Women Speak Out* by BBC, that women are not given any chance in their professions and they cannot hold on to their

fields due to frequent male domination in the fields (Web). Thus, instead of starving for education, what Tambu must do is to learn cooking, cleaning, taking care of the households as well as growing vegetables, for, as Jeremiah believes, she cannot cook books and feed her husband with them (*NC* 15). Correspondingly, he relates his idea to the fact that one day she will find a man as a husband and he will have lost everything since nobody has heard of an instance that there are girls, living in their fathers' houses forever and ever (*NC* 30). Tambu, therefore, cannot find herself a place to assert her identity, for "everywhere around her she perceives the injustice intrinsic to the position of woman" (Veit-Wild 332). She is victimized by the roles she is assigned to and she is objectified according to the necessities of the supreme gender, the male. Such a materialistic and pragmatic scope of the patriarchal society is, for sure, the resultant of the inherent culture and traditions. What Tambu desires for has no benefit for the family at all; after being fed for years despite the lack of economic resources, the girl will get married and become beneficiary for her husband. If Nhamo did not die, Tambu would not have the opportunity to "do what she can for the family before she goes into her husband's home" (*NC* 56). Therefore, it is also observable that Tambu is ascribed to the role of a bread-winner within the house, irrespective of the main reason behind her great desire of education. She is allowed to get education not because she really wants to be educated but because she will become profitable after she finishes her school. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that Babamukuru does not do a favour for Tambu; on the contrary, on the death of Nhamo, Babamukuru will feel he has neglected the family and has not completed his duty (*NC* 56). Tambu, thus, becomes a component of a duty, not an individual who has acquired what she has longed for with her just and decisive struggles for it, thereby becoming marginalized again. Therefore, it is obvious that Tambu has a new burden on her shoulders; to be successful in her education life and to support her family financially.

She also admits it herself in the novel that she is directed into a route, which is specified by the others; however, she is unfortunately not aware of the fact that she is marginalized by the cultural norms.

> Consciously I thought my direction was clear; I was being educated. When I had been educated, I would find a job and settle down to it, carrying on, in the

> time that was available before I was married into a new home. … Issues were well-defined for me at that time: these were the goals and this was how we would reach them. Babamukuru was my touchstone who showed me that this was true. So I should have been content with preparing myself for the life I have described (*NC* 153).

As she confesses it herself, all the future plans for Tambu are assigned by Babamukuru in detail. By the same token, she is obviously taught that she can work only and only until she is married, which also implies that once it is the right time, she has no other option but to get married to someone, an adversative attitude cannot be tolerated apparently. Becoming the fatherly patriarchal figure, Babamukuru points out Tambu the road she *has to* (emphasis added) walk on; therefore, Tambu does not have the luxurious right of being discontent with the plans and her possible future. This makes Tambu nothing but a woman, having no ability to think and decide for herself, always in need of a man to be defined as a human being within the society. Apparently, she is already defined as the *other* (emphasis added). She does not interrogate anything concerning the social norms or the settlers' missions; she always shows respect to the authoritative figures around her and never talks unless she is spoken to. Nothing, except for the things concerning her education, is important for her to resist or rebel against. The system, therefore, is proved to be working as it is intended to. "As a result of [the] things that [she] did not think or do, Babamukuru thought [she] was the sort of young woman a daughter ought to be" (*NC* 157).

Though Tambu's parents' wedding ceremony seemingly places her identity and autonomy, her resistance against attending it is another sign of the patriarchal mechanism. She is punished by Babamukuru, for she objects to his will. She is forced to take the responsibility of the household chores for two weeks, which is a traditional punishment, reminding Tambu of her real place in the community, the domestic surrounding. Her so-called individuality is not actually placed, for she does not resist the punishment, either. Her objection to the attendance in the wedding is just a simple test of her identity assertion. If she were sincere and locked on her intention in assertion of autonomy, she would continue her resistance not to carry on the punishment. That is why Nyasha mocks Tambu by saying her: "And what would happen … if nobody punished you? I suppose you would punish yourself. Really, Tambu, I believe you would" (*NC* 171). As an equipped young girl with the feminist

doctrines, Nyasha is one of the most flat and realistic characters throughout the novel, hence, her observations about Tambu's choice are rather creditable. Extremely obsessed with the authoritative existence of Babamukuru, Tambu is aware of her weakness when the subject matter is the male sex. She is in the act of struggle for fulfilling the requirements of the role of a decent daughter; therefore, it is impossible for her to emphasize her own autonomy.

Nyasha is another young woman, suffering from the burdens of the patriarchal society as well as the burdens of her disadvantageous gender. She is another daughter who is forced to perform daughterhood. Nevertheless, her attitude is more different from that of Tambu's, for Nyasha is the young woman, speaking from her own voice, as Dangarembga defines it, and not surrendering to the roles, imposed on her. It is difficult to admit that she is not victimized; nonetheless, it is also undeniable that she asserts her own identity regardless of the indigenous patriarchal roles. Because of being disobedient to her father, correspondingly to the colonially coded patriarchy, Nyasha is accused of being a whore as well as being a loose girl. Her gender role, for instance, hinders her from staying out with a boy alone at night; because, this is not something that a decent girl can do, as asserted by the societal norms. Unconventionally, Nyasha resists her father, trying to assert her individuality, and punches him in the eye, which is actually an extreme point that a daughter can reach. Her self-confidence in resisting against the accusations can never ever be omitted, for, as Babamukuru admits it, they cannot have two men in their house (*NC* 117). Explicitly, the act of defending one's own pride is a prerogative, which is attributed to the male gender only. Nyasha, as her gender presupposes it, should be submissive to her father as his daughter, and she should never ever challenge her father's authority since it is a forbidden act for her gender. What she is required to do is to be ignorant, unconcerned, submissive, and low in character since the women lacking these properties are entitled as masculine, and they are overthrown from the community they belong to. As a young woman, colonized by patriarchy, Nyasha underscores the threat for the women, who try to please the authorities by behaving obedient to the rules, imposed by the patriarchy:

> You've got to have some conviction, and I'm convinced I don't want to be anyone's underdog. It's not right for anyone to be that. But once you get used

> to it, well, it just seems natural and you just carry on. And that's the end of you. You're trapped. They control everything you do (*NC* 119).

As a very concise analysis, Nyasha vividly portrays the possible results of fulfilling the gender roles, imposed upon women. She lives contradictory to the authorities by disregarding her role of daughterhood since, throughout the novel, she is aware of the fact that "it's all the things about boys and men and being decent and indecent and good and bad" (*NC* 193).

> Nyasha recognizes that male privilege is a social construction rather than some indelible natural law. Its artificiality is arbitrary, and her indignation and rage are at the refusal of those who benefit from the gender-based hierarchy to see how their participation in the sexist system means their complicity in, and the perpetuation of, the paternalistic racial patriarchy of colonial Rhodesia (Aegerter 236 – 7).

Hence, the indigenous patriarchal system steals women from their existence and it disempowers them through imposing the inevitable gender roles. Because Nyasha proves that she does not belong to the colonizers, neither is she a member of the natives (*NC* 205), it is more concrete that the women, irreverent to the accustomed gender roles, are torn apart from their communities and are not accepted to the colonizers' stands, correspondingly being forced to remain in limbo.

Maiguru is also a suffering woman within the colonially modelled patriarchy's burdening gender roles. As a married woman, she has to be both a wife and a mother within the boundaries that are specified by the patriarchal normative references. As aforementioned, she is excluded from her professional field although she has a master's degree; therefore, she is imprisoned in her domestic world, looking after Babamukuru as a wife as well as caring for her children as a mother. However, "Maiguru's bitterness indicates her difficulty [in] accepting her gendered role – she, like Tambu's mother and Lucia, senses many of its contradictions and injustices" (Bhana 128). She is "prevented by marriage from doing the things she want[s] to do" (*NC* 103); nevertheless, the shared belief, as Tambu defines it, is that she does not have to be existent within her own field of study, for it is Babamukuru who defines her very autonomy (*NC* 104). Correspondingly, Maiguru is marginalized as a woman since she is in need of the men's gaze in order to assert her own individuality as well as her gender. Without Babamukuru, as the patriarchy

necessitates it, Maiguru is no more than a black creature, lacking an identity of her own, and an outcast in her own community like Lucia. Additionally, when Maiguru, as a wife and a relative of her husband's family, tries to assert her ideas over Tambu's punishment because of her disobedience to Babamukuru, she is silenced, for she cannot intervene, Babamukuru says, between Babamukuru and his family; nonetheless, Maiguru cannot put up with the situation anymore and tries to escape from her gender role as a wife by protesting against her husband as follows:

> Yes, she is your brother's child. … But when it comes to taking my money so that you can feed her and her father and your whole family and waste it on ridiculous weddings, that's when they are my relatives, too. … I am tired of being nothing in a home I am working myself sick to support. I have had enough (*NC* 174).

The very protest of Maiguru, which is the only one throughout the novel, implies the fact that wives have no right to admit their own ideas on such matters as the concerns of masculine existence. Once she is needed, she is given the identity of a relative to her husband's family; on the other hand, if she is not necessary for the patriarchal referent, her identity is stolen from her and she is put through a customized speechlessness.

> The cultural outcome of political transformations in Africa is manifold. Women are "naturally" excluded from public affairs; they are viewed as unable to hold positions of responsibility, rule men or even be visible when serious matters … are being discussed (Ogundipe-Leslie 30).

Because colonial powers assign the colonized native men to the roles in accordance with their profits, the male dominance is in the intention of shaping women's gender roles according to their demands. Maiguru's wifehood, thus, requires her to be obedient to her husband and to speak on the matters that her husband permits her to do. Through Nyasha's words, too, it is crystal clear that "it's difficult when everything's laid out for you. It's difficult when everything's taken care of. Even the way you think" (*NC* 175). Women, correspondingly, *have to* (emphasis added) be submissive to the patriarchy and let the male dominance decide upon their own bodies and identities, thereby "end[ing] up slaving for everybody" (*NC* 124).

Maiguru's predestined roles are not different from that of Ma'Shingayi's, which points out the fact that cultural impositions on women are not a question of

cultivation, for although Maiguru is educated and cultivated in Europe, she is as silent and passive as Ma'Shingayi is. Their roles of wifehood and motherhood enforce them to go farther away from their own free will and identity, thereby, becoming submissive to the authoritative figures within their families. Contrary to Tambu's portrayal of Maiguru as a well looked after woman, driven about in a car, looking well-kempt and fresh, clean all the time (*NC* 16), her attributed roles prevent her from becoming even slightly more different from Ma'Shingayi. Even the sentences Tambu uses for describing Maiguru are in the passive form; she is looked after and driven about. Becoming obedient, she cannot *take care of herself* or *drive* (emphasis added). Parallel in their definition of womanhood, neither Maiguru nor Ma'Shingayi has the right to state their opinions on their children. When Nhamo dies, Ma'Shingayi can hardly tolerate the grief; nevertheless, as Tambu's aunt tries to soothe her, she "must endure the pain of his passing as [she] endured the pain of his coming" (*NC* 56). Therefore, as inferred from her passivity in saying a word to prevent her son from going to the mission, Ma'Shingayi's objective is to bear him, to feed him and to cry after his death. Her role as a mother, thus, is reinforced by the authorities, necessitating her to allow her husband use her body as his own playground as well as bearing his children without being asked whether she has ever thought of having a baby or not, then giving her children under the authority of the father figure in the family as if she were not the agent of the childbearing period. Demonstrating a slightly different attitude from Tambu's opportunity for going to the mission, Ma'Shingayi cannot be efficient in prevention, either; she is not a mother to her children, on the contrary, she is a victim of her husband, Jeremiah.

Even when Jeremiah and Ma'Shingayi's official marriage is offered by Babamukuru, neither of them resists against Babamukuru's authority. Ma'Shingayi is forced to be humiliated among the other people due to her unofficial marriage to Jeremiah, which brings about an illegitimating property to her children and her womanhood. She is not asked if she really thinks that she was under the evil power due to her unofficial marriage or whether she intends to have a Christian way of marriage with her husband. Therefore, there are "two systems of belief set in opposition to one another, with one having the structural authority to suppress and erase the other" (Bhana 123). By omitting Ma'Shingayi, thus, Babamukuru

disempowers her and undermines her sexual identity and autonomy, thereby marginalizing her. Upon Lucia's question whether she wants to leave the house with her, Ma'Shingayi, once more, emphasizes that her identity, individuality, existence or non-existence are not the things to be taken seriously by the patriarchal representatives in the family:

> Lucia … why do you keep bothering me with this question? Does it matter what I want? Since when has it mattered what I want? So why should it start mattering now? Do you think I wanted to be impregnated by that old dog? Do you think I wanted to travel all this way across this country of our forefathers only to live in dirt and poverty? Do you really think I wanted the child for whom I made the journey to die only five years after it left the womb? Or my son to be taken from me? So what difference does it make whether I have a wedding or whether I go? It is all the same. What I have endured for nineteen years I can endure for another nineteen, and nineteen more if need be. Now leave me! Leave me to rest (*NC* 155).

Dragged into another moment of passivity and speechlessness, Ma'Shingayi draws a portrait of the women, entrapped in their gender roles, which are defined by the colonially modelled patriarchy. As a representative of the native women, she has suffered all through her life and will be doing so since there is no hope for their salvation from their manacles. They are predestined to be engulfed in their roles, for it is what the settlers' policies require. Due to her submissiveness to her father first and to her husband later on, it is extremely difficult for Ma'Shingayi to make up her mind and to come to a conclusion to gain her freedom from the patriarchal enforcements. She has never been in charge of her autonomy; hence, she cannot learn how to do it under the influence of such a disempowering community.

Lucia is another example of a woman, who is accused of whoredom and witchcraft due to her spinsterhood and her resistance against the cultural necessity for a woman to get married. Still, although she is victimized and marginalized by the authoritative emblems, she does not prefer to speak with others' voices or to remain silent for those norms, enfeebling her autonomy. Her victimization starts with her miscarriage; once she goes through a tough pregnancy and loses her baby, she falls from her parents' grace and she is directly thrown away from the house with the excuse of looking after her sister, Ma'Shingayi. Therefore, she is not a woman of the inherent culture and she is depicted as a woman who sleeps with anybody and

everybody without giving birth to a single child, bewitched, more thoroughly a witch herself (*NC* 128). Apparently, her responsibilities to her specified gender roles as a married woman and as a mother are not fulfilled according to the specified parameters of the patriarchy; hence, she cannot be anything but a witch. All in all, she is the reason why her sister is put through an enforced marriage. Becoming a victim of her marital status, Lucia defines another burden that marriage brings about for the women to carry on:

> Well Babamukuru … maybe when you marry a woman, she is obliged to obey you. But some of us aren't married, so we don't know how to do it. This is why I have been able to tell you frankly what is in my heart. It is better that way so that tomorrow I don't go behind your back and say the first thing that comes into my head (*NC* 174).

Implying that married women are under the influence of their husbands and are prevented from asserting their own individuality, Lucia underscores the idea that marriage is deadweight for women. Her sexual affairs, moreover, make her a whore, causing an incline in the respectability of the cultural norms, thereby becoming a worthless role model for the younger generations. In fact, she should get rid of her sexual desires as well as forgetting about her very humanely instincts in order to become a convenient example. Nevertheless, if she did that way, she would lose her autonomous identity as a woman. Lucia, therefore,

> upsets the gender dynamics on the homestead asserting herself against and in spite of the limitations placed on her by cultural expectations: she is sexually promiscuous, speaks her mind in front of the male elders, exposes Babamukuru's chauvinism, refuses to be a subservient wife, becomes a single working mother in town going to school part-time (Treiber 90).

By disregarding the enforcements, she lives as an unchaste woman, but still as a woman out of convention. Her sensible speeches force the patriarchal referents to "need a good strategy to outsmart that woman. She is vicious and unnatural. She is uncontrollable" (*NC* 148), for as a woman, who is "energetic, independent and unashamedly lustful, … Lucia deflates the pompous male authority voices with most success" (Gunner 145). Because she does not carry out her attributed gender roles, Lucia is referred as uncanny, unnatural and vicious. Besides, as this is the same case with Nyasha since she has resisted against the roles and simultaneously to the patriarchal figures, "she is like a man herself" (*NC* 174). This is exactly a

reminiscent of Nyasha's accusation of whoredom because of her disloyalty to her role of daughterhood. Apparently, this is why questioning, reasoning, resisting and assertion of identity are prohibitions, as dark as the continent of the natives. The inherent problem, as Dangarembga conveys it through her fictional narrator, is

> [t]he sensitive images the women had of themselves, images that were really no more than reflections. But the women had been taught to recognise these reflections as self and it was frightening now to even begin to think that, the very facts which set them apart as a group, as women, as a certain kind of person, were only myths; frightening to acknowledge that generations of threat and assault and neglect had battered these myths into the extreme, dividing reality they faced, of the Maigurus or the Lucias (*NC* 140).

The division, which the narrator Tambu defines, underlines the inactivity of women in fighting against these cultural enforcements through gender roles owing to their fear against patriarchy, which punishes women as if they sinned against God. They are given objectives to commit, responsibilities to fulfil, and roles to be acted in order for the patriarchal system to survive as long as possible, and the colonizers, the contributors of the system, benefit from this victimization process.

3.2.3. Assimilation and Alienation

Assimilation and alienation in *Nervous Conditions* are experienced by both male and female characters within the novel. As for the female characters, while Tambu is oblivious to the assimilative and estranging effects of the colonial patriarchal system, Nyasha is aware of them since the beginning of the novel. The other female characters such as Ma'Shingayi and Maiguru are subservient to their current condition; not resisting the colonial codes but becoming more familiar with their daughters' alienated selves. As for the components of alienation and assimilation, it is rather obvious that besides the patriarchal enforcements, language and education serve for the given processes, too. Katrak argues that education and language impositions are so powerful that it is nearly impossible to keep one's own cultural and sexual identity. "Colonial power has consolidated with the chalk and blackboard, more crucial ideological tools than military might" (92). Thus, by enjoining their own literature, language and culture on the natives, the colonizers struggle hard to make them alienated to their own culture, literature, language, and

most importantly, to their own sexual identities. The natives' history is re-written, and is re-directed to them. By this way, the settlers made profits. The native women, colonized mentally, cannot make up their minds according to their own cultural heritage, thereby becoming victims of alienation and assimilation.

Tambu, for instance, is deprived of her own culture through her most desirous education opportunity; while she is her mother's assistant before going to the missions and has never ever complained about helping her, on a visit to her homestead after an interval of educational imposition, she feels herself as a person who has never been there before. On her first vacation back home, Tambu sees the toilet irritably dirty and unhygienic; therefore, she asks her mother why they do not clean the toilets anymore in a very foreign tone of voice. Although she was in charge of cleaning them before she went to the mission and never complained about the dirt in the toilets, now, as a civilized and whitely cultivated girl, Tambu does not feel satisfied with the hygiene in her own house. On this, for sure, Ma'Shingayi cannot put up with her daughter's alienated self and bursts out Tambu as follows:

> You think your mother is so stupid she won't see Maiguru has turned you against me with her money and her white ways? You think I am dirt now, me, your mother. Just the other day you told me that my toilet is dirty. "It disgusts me," that's what you said. If it is meat you want that I cannot provide for you, if you are so greedy you would betray your own mother for meat, then go to your· Maiguru. She will give you meat. I will survive on vegetables as we all used to do. And we have survived, so what more do you want? You have your life. Go to your Maiguru and eat sausage (*NC* 143).

Becoming the symbol of the whitish way of life and of the white culture despite the fact that she, too, is the victim of the same concepts, Maiguru stands for the powers that shape Tambu according to the colonial ideologies. As inferred from Ma'Shingayi's protest, Tambu is not very close to her own mother anymore and by doing so, she marginalizes her mother, too; "Tambu's new learning does exclude her mother who is entrenched in constant childbearing and poverty. She feels betrayed by Tambu who relates more to her educated aunt than to her mother" (Katrak 132). Furthermore, she is alienated to her own homestead, where she lived until she has been a young girl. However, the present environment does not seem appealing to Tambu anymore. She is a foreigner to her own family and people, thereby becoming a black-skinned white young girl by leaving her cultural identity behind since

"consenting to colonial education is fraught with dangers of colluding and co-operation into the master's values that may lead to alienation and exclusion from one's own community" (Katrak 98). Stepping into Babamukuru's house, Tambu believes that "[t]he absence of dirt [is] proof of the other-worldly nature of [her] new home" (*NC* 70), thereby marginalizing herself from her origins and her native identity one more time. Since Babamukuru's house stands for the temple of whiteness, she equalizes herself to the very nature of the White; hence, she becomes alienated to her identity through the educational assimilation once again. From then on, although she criticizes Nhamo because of his whitish blackness, she has been an Anglicised black girl, thereby putting her family and the natives who share the same destiny into the position of the *other* (emphasis added). Bhana puts forward that

> [c]ulturally specific practices of hygiene become a way of defining the body, with the blackness of dirt demarcating the African from the clean whiteness of the imperial self. Evidence of the African's 'filth' is the blackness of her skin as, with an imperial slight of hand, the 'blackness' of dirt blurs into the racialised blackness of Otherness (120).

Thus, Tambu defines her body through the cultivated and civilized norms of the White and lets the colonizers erase her identity of African heritage. From then on, she is under the influence of the settlers' mental colonization and she moves her identity away from her culture and community.

Another example of her cultural alienation shows up when she goes to Nyasha's school and finds her previous friends Jocelyn, Maidei and others playing netball. However, she moves so far away from her identity and community that she cannot name her friends' strange reaction on seeing her:

> Don't waste our time … [w]e're practising for the team. They don't play netball where you're going, do they? So what are you doing here? Basketball …and hockey and tennis and swimming. That's what you'll be doing. With your Whites. Knowing you, the next thing we'll hear is that you've gone to the Olympics (*NC* 191).

She is exposed to the defamiliarization process so much that she is on the edge of being an enemy to her friends, or more generally to her community, for the longer she is in the process of colonial education, the farther she moves away from her own circles. As Tambu, too, questions the reason why she is recommended not to forget

the people around herself, everybody around her, Nyasha, her mother, and her friends, implicitly warns her against the assimilative powers that alienates her to her own identity; nevertheless, as an alienated self now, Tambu is never able to discover the reasons behind their warnings; "questions, questions, questions, but not a single answer" (*NC* 191). The reason why she cannot find any single answer to the questions aroused is of course the fact that she is a native only because of her colour now, she is mentally white now and she can no longer contemplate in the way the black community does. As Katrak argues it in her article, *"This Englishness Will Kill You": Colonial[ist] Education and Female Socialization in Merle Hodge's "Crick Crack, Monkey," and Bessie Head's "Maru",*

> the entire process of schooling from girlhood into adolescence, the inculcation of British values, leads to the experience of multiple marginalities – from the colonizer's culture, from one's own people, even from one's own voice as it articulates English and other 'forgotten' and consciously re-memoried tongues (70).

Before she attended the education, given in the mission, she was a victim of the colonizers, too; however, after her continuing education, she becomes a tool to victimize her own friends and relatives. She marginalizes her commodities by allowing the settlers to marginalize herself; she becomes a stranger to her feminine inequality by assisting to the disempowerment procedure by the masculine domination. Actually, at the end of the novel, the fictional narrator Tambu makes the character Tambu's current condition clear that she no longer belongs to her own community:

> With all those new books, reading took up so much of my time that there was none left in which to miss Nyasha, or my uncle and aunt; and if I had ever really missed my home, I had long since stopped doing that during my stay with Babamukuru (*NC* 199 – 200).

The books are full of information about the other countries, cultures, and politics, which are probably portrayed as superior to African communities but inferior to those of the Europeans' or Britain's. Absorbing those instructions, she is explicitly unaware of the fact that it is Tambu who is absorbed by the whitely impositions, thereby by assimilation and alienation. Her processes of assimilation and alienation take so much time that she cannot remember the fact that she has a family. By the same token, as she underlines it one more time, Tambu's entrance to Babamukuru's

house is a milestone in her education process and that she is defamiliarized from that point; therefore, she is apart from her family and culture mentally and spiritually since her arrival to the temple of the White. “The very system of selective education for "token" Africans that tears Nhamo … from his family and culture, threatens similarly to separate Tambudzai from her familial and cultural identifications” (Aegerter 235). On leaving her homestead to live under the instructions of the White with the authority of Babamukuru, Tambu, in a long paragraph, defines the differences between her old presence and prospective outcome as an educated young girl, correspondingly the differences between the ignorant native women and the cultivated white women:

> When I stepped into Babamukuru's car I was a peasant. You could see that at a glance in my tight, faded frock that immodestly defined my budding breasts, and in my broad-toed feet that had grown thick-skinned through daily contact with the ground in all weathers. You could see it from the way the keratin had reacted by thickening and, having thickened, had hardened and cracked so that the dirt ground its way in but could not be washed out. It was evident from the corrugated black callouses on my knees, the scales on my skin that were due to lack of oil, the short, dull tufts of malnourished hair. This was the person I was leaving behind. At Babamukuru's I expected to find another self, a clean, well-groomed, genteel self who could not have been bred, could not have survived, on the homestead. At Babamukuru's I would have the leisure, be encouraged to consider questions that had to do with survival of the spirit, the creation of consciousness, rather than mere sustenance of the body. This new me would not be enervated by smoky kitchens that left eyes smarting and chests permanently bronchitic. This new me would not be frustrated by wood fires that either flamed so furiously that the *sadza* burned, or so indifferently that it became *mbodza* (*NC* 58 – 9).

All these things, she assumes as referents of a peasant girl, are actually the properties that make Tambu a real native girl; however, the others, which she postulates as qualities attributed to those cultivated women, make her more and more distant to her native identity, thereby making her assimilated in the white traditions and alienated to her own female national body and identity. She always refers to herself as new and old. Old signifies her fading native identity while new stands for her real whitish self. Treiber argues it in her article, *Strategic Fusions: Undermining Cultural Essentialism in Nervous Conditions*, that “in Tambu’s own filth complex, the modern seems to be equated with the clean and uncontaminated, the polarization between Western/clean/heavenly and homestead/dirty/backwards is complicated” (88).

It is only at the very end of the novel, in the last paragraph, that the grown-up Tambu explicitly puts forward she is brainwashed especially by Sacred Heart and that she is taken away from her own history, culture, customs and traditions, correspondingly, from her cultural identity (*NC* 208). There she points out the fact that this first novel (a sequel to the novel, *The Book of Not*, came up in 2006) is actually penned in order to tell the story of the women's agony while the sequel of it is authored to underscore the inequalities as well as discriminations. Therefore, from this point of view, it is inferred that it is only at the end of the novel that Tambu is illuminated and dehypnotized from her dream of the colonizers' selfless struggle to light her dark continent. As Nyasha also asserts it "it's bad enough … when a country gets colonised, but when the people do as well! That's the end, really, that's the end" (*NC* 150).

Nyasha's case is pretty different from that of Tambu's due to the fact that Nyasha is self-aware of her alienated and assimilated identity. This is why she is very active in resistance to the impositions of the colonial patriarchy, though it is in total contradiction with the inherent status quo. She was educated in England, at the very heart of the colonizers' home base, Anglicised and deprived of her African culture and tradition as well as her native language Shona, which she forgot how to use. As a matter of fact, "English education provides particularly contradictory empowerments for women – both benefiting them and rendering them outsiders from their bodies, families, and communities" (Katrak 98). Considering this, Nyasha is an outsider in her own family due to her rebellious existence (see 4.2.2), and in her body owing to her anorexia nervosa, caused by the patriarchal enforcements, and in her community as a consequence of her unfamiliarity to Rhodesian culture and Shona. Once Nyasha arrives in Tambu's homestead, she is extremely disintegrated from the on-going speeches in Shona and has difficulty in understanding what her cousin Tambu asks her to do, thereby becoming *the other within the others* (emphasis added). Hence, Maiguru assures her that they were in England for such a long time and spoke nothing but English only, thus their Shona nearly faded away completely (*NC* 42). Though greeted with astonishment by Tambu, Nyasha is a stranger within her own culture and mother tongue; so she is marginalized from her community by way of the colonizers' great assimilative impact on her. Because she was taken to England at a

very early age, at an age that made it more convenient for her to be shaped more effortlessly in accordance with the indigenous system by the environmental facts, she forgot how her traditional home was and what Shona was like. What is more, in her native land it is admitted as a great offense, for it seems as if she were not a part of the whole, independent of the available culture and traditions. Considering this, she is more unvoiced and thus, she is estranged in her own community. Katrak provides that "the power and privilege gained by knowing English may marginalize one from one's un-English educated family. Such linguistic outsiderness is accompanied … with a fatal "forgetting" of one's mother tongue" (98). As for the offense, Nyasha is aware of the fact that although she is not responsible for her whitish attitudes within the community, for she does not perform them consciously and on purpose, she gives offense to her family, relatives, and friends. She is disapproved by her friends, for her English is authentic but her Shona is not; by the same token, she is thought to be a snob, who thinks that she is superior to the people around because she does not consider that she is inferior to men (*NC* 200). She becomes a matter of discussion among the people she lives with. On one occasion, Tambu gives an account of what Nyasha's friends talk about her at school: "[s]he thinks she is white, … [s]he is proud, … [s]he is loose, … [t]he way she dresses for the Saturday night dances! And the way she was acting with George … It's obvious. It shows for everyone to see" (*NC* 95). The English way of life penetrates into Nyasha's character to such a great extent that it is impossible for her to get rid of it, although she does not want to be a particle of the Anglican society. Since the effects are difficult to be erased, she herself is erased by the rest of the community and she cannot do anything to change it in anyway. She is forcefully stolen from her own society.

Nyasha is also excluded from her body because of the dominating external culture. Owing to her Anglicized way of attitudes and thoughts, she is controversial to the indigenous ideologies and colonially modelled patriarchal society. Due to the fact that she is too English to become an inhabitant *of* (emphasis added) a black community, she becomes an outsider and suffers from her emotional disease, which is anorexia nervosa. Katrak proposes that

> [e]ducation creates autonomous and thinking women who sadly, often un-belong to their communities where they are expected to follow traditional

> female behavior. Their outsiderness often plays out destructively on the site of their female bodies in exilic expressions – outsiders because they are more proficient in English than in their own languages, outsiders in their newly acquired ways of thought and dress (99).

Taking her notions of bodily exile into consideration, it is possible to claim that Nyasha is also deprived of her mental and emotional health due to her cultural difference, sourcing back to her education in England. On her final crisis of anorexia nervosa, Nyasha tries not to lose her autonomy by resisting against the components of the colonial education, regardless of her fragility; she tears her history books apart by rebelling furiously and shivering: "(Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies)" (*NC* 205). She believes that it is the Englishness that makes her psychological disease deteriorate gradually.

> She realizes that she can't continue to absorb and be absorbed by the histories of colonialism; she refuses to submit peacefully to a role of well-educated and respectable wife in alliance with the dominant ruling powers (McWilliams, 111).

Obviously, Nyasha is victimized by the colonial education due to the fact that her mind is shaped in the way to serve for the colonial powers despite her reluctance in it; therefore, she is entrapped in her own fluctuation of nativity and Anglicized identity. Hence, "female identity [for Nyasha] becomes something that has to be created out of the fragments of a rapidly changing Shona culture impacted tremendously by the structures of modernity and colonisation" (Bhana 134).

Nyasha's early assimilation in England before her arrival to Rhodesia, therefore, is her worst and biggest obstacle in her assertion of her national identity. It made her a stranger within her own people, leaving her helpless and passive in founding her individuality and autonomy. As she puts it herself, "[The English] deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other. We're grovelling. Lucia for a job, Jeremiah for money. Daddy grovels to them. We grovel to him" (*NC* 205). In fact, they are grovelling for their identities, both national and individual as well as sexual identities of their own.

To sum up, the assimilation process is one of the most predominant properties of the colonial patriarchy, which defines the gender roles of women and oppresses them with such components of the patriarchy. Women, thus, are alienated bodily and

spiritually from their own communities, leaving their identities behind. Because of lacking a male genital organ biologically, females are forced to wear their socially constructed identities as women. By doing so, they are arrested culturally, mentally, and psychologically under the dominance of their socially constructed supreme sex, which enforces them to experience and to endure irreplaceable losses.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Penned in accordance with the consequences of the historical background of Zimbabwe, both *The Grass is Singing* and *Nervous Conditions* dwell on some issues concerning women's oppression and subordination such as racism, class, culture, gender roles, objectification, assimilation, and alienation. Though the protagonist of *The Grass is Singing*, Mary, is a white middle-aged woman, she is victimized within the parameters of a colonially modelled patriarchal society. As for the characters of *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu, Nyasha, Maiguru, Ma'Shingayi, and Lucia are the native victims of the same patriarchal group because of the same problematic constitutions of the society. Although each problem has similar effects on the characters of both novels, there is only one significant difference between them, the colour of the skin. In convenience with the theory of Third World feminism, women are not described as the natives, but as *women of the Third World* (emphasis added). Therefore, the inferred meaning is that not only the black women but also the white women suffer due to the postcolonial consequences of the historical upbringings, for the white, too, have to be subservient in the indigenous culture and societal norms, seeds of which were planted years before the end of the colonial era.

One of the most problematic issues that affects women badly and makes them subservient to the patriarchal jaws is the racist approaches, both practised and witnessed by the characters. While Mary, in *The Grass is Singing*, becomes an applicant of the racist approach, she becomes the victim herself and the fact that she was raised in the way to detest the natives and to be frightened due to their presence makes her prepare her end. Moreover, she is not only objectified by her white husband but also by Moses, the native slave in the homestead, which emphasizes the fact that the liability of women's oppression is not limited to

race or skin colour only; on the contrary, both Dick and Moses are in the victimization process of Mary in a co-operative way. While the racially coded patriarchal system, which corresponds to Dick in the farmhouse, undermines Mary's individuality and identity, Mary is full of detestation and fear against the black people. This is why, according to Wang, "[i]t is only in the presence of her black servants that she feels able to release the full-blown rage and intolerance that have clearly erupted from elsewhere" (41). Therefore, her racist approaches to the black servants, especially to Moses, by way of colonialism might be defined and read as struggles of a mediocre woman's assertion of her underestimated identity on a more vulnerable and inferior individual, Moses, who puts an end to her *adventure* (emphasis added). Moreover, as Lynne Hanley also argues, "Mary Turner profits far more from colonialism than she suffers from sexism" (497). She applies all her racist practices on the black people by benefitting from the colonial power, which is provided naturally by her skin colour. Nevertheless, her white body brings about a dark consequence because of her racism. "She is destroyed by her inability to reconcile a human emotion with her own deep commitment to the rigid line her society maintains between white and black" (Gindin 20).

As for Tambu, in *Nervous Conditions*, it is clear that she does not witness a whitely way of patriarchal oppression; on the contrary, her experience is a socially constructed racism, committed by the white people in Sacred Heart in order to prevent her improvement in her own profession. Nevertheless, it is pretty undeniable that Babamukuru, who was given shape according to the prevalent ideologies of the British settlers, is the white patriarchal figure irrespective of his national identity and his black skin.

> The white man is an interloper, attempting to wrest independence or security from the African soil or asserting himself in a colonial office established to govern the alien country. The white man carries his European culture and attitudes with him, preserves his religion and his heavy oak Victorian furniture, and brings up his children as he would in England (Gindin 19).

As a representation of the British settlers, Babamukuru, too, obeys the unwritten rules, which are defined by Gindin, except for the fact that he is not Anglican but he is anglicised. Hence, considering the fact that Tambu is under the influence of Babamukuru and that she is observed and forced to obey his rules, it is observed that

Tambu, too, experiences the racist patriarchal hegemony. Her oppression is not only related to her black skin but also to her feminine identity.

Nyasha, as another example of the racist patriarchal society's victims, suffers in the way Tambu does. Always under the gaze of her father, Babamukuru, Nyasha is oppressed by the whitish style of her father. By the same token, she is forbidden to wear some sort of dresses that signify her whoredom in terms of the patriarchal societal norms; she is prevented from hanging out with boys of her age, for it is not something that a decent daughter is expected to do, she is deprived of her own body. All these values are the impositions of the white settlers onto Babamukuru; therefore, Nyasha is exploited racially by her mentally-white, biologically-black father in the same way with Tambu.

Maiguru is another eternally-destined female victim of the racist patriarchal system. Not different from that of Tambu's and Nyasha's, her victimization is also doubled by her husband, Babamukuru. Although they are both well-educated with a Master's Degree in England, Babamukuru is not prevented from admitting his own autonomy through working in his profession while Maiguru is deprived of her right of occupation and salary, correspondingly, of her economic independence, because of Babamukuru's racist patriarchal dominance over his wife. As it is emphasized multiple times throughout the novel, the racist patriarchy does not allow women stand as independent individuals once they are married, for they can be accused of indecency and being rebellious by the indigenous system, as experienced by Nyasha.

To continue with the class system or poverty, it is evident that all the characters within both novels are the victims of their economically devastating and manacling conditions. Mary is dependent on her husband after her marriage since she had to quit her job in the town. She is forced to perform the domestic works, imposed on her in the farm house. Because she was a free individual woman during her professional life, she led a life designed only by her. However, after her marriage and with the poverty of her husband due to his failure in everything he attempts to do, Mary is inefficient economically and suffers from boredom and a monotonous way of life. Her poverty prevents her from living in resemblance to her old experiences as a working woman, which, in the end, increases her subservience to her husband.

Therefore, she is victimized by the colonial disempowerments and she makes her way to self-destruction.

As for Tambu, the poverty problem is on a different route in her life since it makes her a child labourer in her own homestead. Because of the dominant idea that if there is not enough money for all the residents to attend school, it is only the son who should be given the chance to go to school, Tambu is forced to plant and grow her own vegetables and earn for her school fees in order to continue her educational life. The colonization impoverishes the natives and makes them more dependent on the white settlers' conscience, thereby colonizing female individual twice since females are unnecessary to be educated according to the imposed societal norms of the patriarchal society.

Lucia, too, is a victim of poverty, enforced by the colonial powers, since she is dismissed from the homestead of her parents with a great pleasure due to her *infidelity* (emphasis added), for the family is rather poor and a female's dismissal can ease their economic conditions. Again, the capitalist patriarchal society disempowers the natives economically and enforces them to *sell* (emphasis added) their daughters literally as wives to men around in order to purchase cattle or farm animals to feed themselves, which, for sure, is an unbearable perspective, which equalizes women to farm animals because of their economic dependence on the patriarchal figures in their homestead.

Cultural impositions are other vehicles for Mary in her route to self-destruction, for although she does not have any inclination to have intercourses or love affairs with men, she feels obliged to get married to a man because of the cultural necessities. Her choice of loneliness, therefore, is not considered as an act of free will, which is in sharp contrast with the indigenous patriarchal society, shaped by the inherent culture. Her marriage makes her an imprisoned individual under the gaze of the opposite sex, for her marriage makes her become a dependent woman, who has to endure all the impositions and adaptations by her husband. In addition to her non-self-sufficient condition, Mary is also forced to become the labourer within and outside the house, regardless of the fact that she actually does not intend to do so. Although vacillating because of the economic insufficiency, Dick also tries to

assign Mary as a mother to his children and then quits the idea. Nevertheless, he does not ever ask Mary about it, what is more, when Mary yearns for a baby because of her loneliness, she is refused by Dick again, which highly emphasizes the very idea that Mary does not have any right over her own body and that she should and must play the role of a mother when her husband is ready or desirous of it. In addition to Dick's patronizing attitudes, Moses' masculine presence is also effective in Mary's objectification due to the fact that at some points within the novel, Moses behaves and sounds like Mary's dead father, which reminds her of her gender roles of daughterhood, correspondingly making her a defenceless object in the eye of the beholder again. Therefore, gender roles and the cultural impositions make Mary digress from her quest for identity and self-assertion, which definitely sources back to the culturally modelled gender roles and objectification.

As for Tambu, it is clear that if her brother Nhamo were not dead, she would not be able to achieve her goal of education due to her inherent gender roles as daughterhood and prospective wifehood. The opportunity of education is given to her for only one reason, which is to support her family economically after her graduation until she gets married and becomes the possession of her husband. This makes her fit in the role of a bread-winner, too. Additionally, the opportunities, presented to an educated woman, are accessible through Babamukuru, who forcefully fits Tambu in the role of a decent daughter, thereby objectifying her in the aspect of the culturally designed gender roles.

Nyasha, in addition to Tambu, cannot get rid of her gender roles, imposed upon her. Although she is very rebellious and resistant against the culturally enforced roles due to her gender, Nyasha is put into the cage of daughterhood. Her resistance as well as her existence as a threat to the prevailing patriarchal attributions make her psychological health deteriorate and become a victim of the culturally modelled gender roles. She has anorexia nervosa as a reaction to the inherent patriarchal impositions and she moves farther away from her body. Her free will is the reason why she is victimized by the whitish mannered authority figure of Babamukuru. Because she acts inconveniently against Babamukuru, she is accused of being a whore rather than a decent daughter, thereby defaming Babamukuru, which, in the

end, can result in the loss of the colonizers' grace. Her objectification, therefore, is doubled by the cultural and traditional roles, shaped by the colonial powers.

Maiguru, whose defined and forced gender roles are wifehood, motherhood as well as a labourer, is unequally treated by her husband in an imbalanced way. Once the matter is about the money to be spent, Maiguru becomes one of the relatives to Babamukuru's family; however, once the matter has nothing to do with money, Maiguru is forced to drop the title of the relative to her husband's family. Thus, Babamukuru makes use of her in accordance with his intention, as it is the case with the relationship between the colonial powers and the colonized native, too. Additionally, she is imprisoned in her domestic world, for she has children and a husband to look after, thereby becoming a victim again under the hegemonic titles of motherhood and wifehood. Another reason why she cannot continue her profession is her roles as a mother and a wife, which simultaneously puts her into the positions of a maid within the house.

Ma'Shingayi is also entrapped in her wifehood; she cannot admit her own notions about her son's or daughter's departure from the homestead in order to be educated. Her son dies and her daughter is torn apart from her family spiritually and physically. Nevertheless, Ma'Shingayi cannot do anything to prevent this due to her lack of right to speak when there are authoritative males, who are upper than her according to the patriarchal hierarchy. As a mother and a wife, she should keep silent and watch the on-going occasions without showing the slightest resistance against the authority. What is more, as a wife, she has to endure the passivity, imposed upon her, and obey the desires of her husband's sexual intercourses, which, in the end, brings about another child-birth, irrespective of her control over her body; she has to bear the baby, for productiveness is a very big determinant for the definition of womanhood within the patriarchal societies.

Lucia, the victim of her marital status, is accused of whoredom and witchcraft owing to her spinsterhood. That she has control on her body and she can resist against the patriarchal impositions make her seriously threatening for the community. Therefore, she is entitled as a whore and a villainous loose woman. She is out of the

female borders that the patriarchal culture defines, which causes her become a worthless and lusty woman, endangering the dominance of the men over the women.

Assimilation and alienation, as the consequential components of patriarchy, colonization, culture, gender roles, race, and class, are burdening for women. Through her quest of identity assertion, Mary is victimized by these issues and she is forced to live a lonely and desperate life in the farmhouse, alienated to the people around. Her previous experiences of life are in contrast to the indigenous life standards in the farmhouse; thus, becoming more and more introvert, Mary suffers from the norms of the society. Though not with preference, she is entrapped in the colonial patriarchal constructions and is estranged to the people around her due to the fact that she is unable to apply most of the normative elements of colonial patriarchy into her own life. As a consequence of her inability, Mary is a victim of her neurotic disease, which makes her deteriorate day by day. Hence, she is killed by the other patriarchal figure, Moses, as a punishment of the inconvenience of her attitudes to the white collective practices as well as her passivity in preserving Moses' pride. Her alienation, intermingled with her little amount of assimilation, causes Mary's detachment from the community. As Gindin also argues it, "[t]he conflict within Mary, the alienating love and hate toward the Negro, the frightening awareness that she possesses the one emotion her society most violently condemns, leads to her murder" (20).

Additionally, Tambu's assimilation, which is provided by language and education, is the main reason of her alienation from her community and from her own femaleness. She is equipped with the whitish norms, which undermine the autonomy of her family's identical properties as a native family and of her femaleness due to her obedience to the whitish lord, Babamukuru. Unable to think as a native girl anymore, she is a disgrace to her family by looking down on their unhygienic way of life. Besides, she is excommunicated by her friends since she is not a true native girl anymore. She is also alienated to her femininity due to the fact that she is subservient to Babamukuru most of the time and she is shaped according to the necessities of the cultural gender roles; otherwise, she would not be able to have the chance to be educated. She loses her authenticity because of Babamukuru's structures.

Nyasha is also alienated to the community and to her body because of the patriarchal and colonial impositions on her. Because she is assimilated prior to her residence in Rhodesia, she is put through nervous conditions as a result of her educated self, equipped with the norms of Europe. Because of her Anglicized way of life, she is put into the position of a whore. Her father deprives her of her dignity and imprisons her within her anorexia, thereby alienating her to her body, too, for she loses stability of her mental and emotional balance at the end of the novel.

As a result, the components of Third World feminism such as racism, class, gender roles, culture, objectification, assimilation, and alienation are shared both by Doris Lessing and by Tsitsi Dangarembga so as to highlight the fact that the real problem is about becoming a woman within a Third World country, irrespective of the colour of skin. Victimized by the components above, all the women characters in the novels might actually be inclined into one single body, without giving them a proper name, for they all are oppressed by the same determinants throughout the novels. Mary, Tambu, Nyasha, Maiguru, Ma'Shingayi, and Lucia are only the tools to convey this very idea of the femaleness accounted as inferior to maleness in a colonial community. In parallel with the historical background, both novels are in charge of portraying the suffering women owing to the colonially modelled patriarchy, underlining the fact that the women in the Third World countries are also oppressed and victimized by the male dominance with a more burdening manner in comparison to their Western counterparts, for they are colonized by the male dominance only, while the women of the Third World are colonized both by the male dominance and by the powerful, burdening, erosive, and annihilating settlers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	√
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	
Enformatik Enstitüsü	
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	

YAZARIN

Soyadı: KARA
Adı: MUSTAFA
Bölümü: YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜMÜ

TEZİN ADI: A THIRD WORLD FEMINIST APPROACH TO FEMALENESS AS INFERIOR TO MALENESS IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AND TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S *NERVOUS CONDITIONS*

TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans [√] Doktora [ ]

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın. [ ]
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır. [ ]
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) [√]

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