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**Freedom within Enslavement and Confinement in a Comparative
Analysis between B. EMECHETA's The Joys of Motherhood (1979)
and F. FAQIR's Pillars of Salt (1996)**

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Dedication

For my mother.

For my father who encouragedd me and did not hesitate to offer his help whenever I asked.

For my husband whose enthusiasm gave me the energy I lacked sometimes.

For my joy, Ali.

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Abstract

African and Arabo-Islamic womanist ideologies are applied to Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) and Fadia Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* (1996) to answer the following questions: How did Igbo and Arab women negotiate their space within "unhomeliness" during the colonial period? How are patriarchal and colonial "unhomeliness" represented and resisted in both novels? How do the means used for unfolding freedom lead to the female characters' decline? In the first chapter literary and sociological notions are defined. Motherhood, storytelling and different narratological tools are first given a definition in order to be used in the next chapters to demonstrate the way they turn from freedom to enslavement and confinement of the female characters of both novels within a form of patriarchal "unhomeliness"; hence the necessity to define freedom and "unhomeliness", and also, patriarchy and power. Enslavement, confinement and other forms of oppression noticed through psychological phenomena like sadism, alienation, neo-patriarchy and madness equally present in the novel, are defined. Colonialism, imperialism and orientalism are other forms of oppression used by the authors and thus explained in this chapter. Other literary notions used in the narrative and structure analysis are given an explanation in this part of the work. The second chapter consists in exploring the different traditional values necessary to the construction of the female character's identity and how these values are used by the female characters to negotiate their space within the "unhomeliness" of the patriarchal system. It also intends to demonstrate how the authors portray colonized men and women in traditional and pre-colonial setting. Such portrayals show the author's womanist ideology. This ideology is reinforced by their African and Arab identities in their use of English. Their "Africaness" and "Arabness" are highlighted through their linguistic strategy and plot structure. The third chapter will be devoted to demonstrating how modernism, as epitomized by colonial cities could represent "unhomeliness" within which the female characters negotiate their space using traditional material. This "unhomeliness" is represented in *Pillars of Salt* as a hegemonic orientalist vision of the storyteller as well. Emecheta's Africaness and Faqir's Arabness are expressed through their use of time in the narrative as well. The fourth chapter will show how negotiating space turns from freedom to enslavement and confinement leading to the male and female protagonists' decline.

INTRODUCTION

Hegemonic western discourse has established a tradition of representing the African and the Arab people as enjoying an inferior status, thus shaping academic thinking to emphasize such premise.

The emerging class that gave birth to the African novel was the same represented by the colonial African intelligentsia, or the African intellectual elite, that is the product of colonial missionary education and of historical conditions. Representative of it are writers like Achebe and Ngugi. The African Novel arose, not only with the emergence of a category but also at a time of a social upheaval that explains the influence of the African literary writing. Between 1957 and 1967, this social upheaval represented a period of political agitation for African countries' independence. The new literary trend was expressed artistically, reflecting the rising political consciousness of the African peoples. One cannot probe an African Novel without taking into account its historical context; to ignore the African novel's historicity is to sink into empty and sterile academism (Ngugi, 1985: 37).

For the Middle East, the twentieth century represents an era of violence and continuous aggressive confrontations. Arab men writers were the principle actors depicting this violence. Yet inevitably it had an impact on countless generations on Arab women's daily life and consciousness. This impact motivated many Arab women writers to enhance their agency and voice their struggles for survival and independence from foreign conquerors on the one hand, and from social and cultural constraints, on the other hand. We may find traditional material, such as storytelling, reflected in their literary participation.

Africa was literarily anonymous for many centuries. Yet that does not mean that it has no history, or no literary tradition. This was argued by Hegel's dictum, considering Africa as the unhistorical and undeveloped continent, still acting primitively, inducing it to be presented as the threshold of the world's history (in Andrade, 1990: 91). On the contrary, this literature has a long oral tradition. 'Orality' has been inserted into the African way of writing although the language used is the colonisers', not the native one.

The modern African and Arab writers expressing themselves throughout European languages bring their originality into literature by using some efficient tools of expressions

such as proverbs, sayings, folktales and songs. These elements are used to alter the European languages to suit the native surroundings and this, partly, represents the African writer's "Africaness" (Emenyonu, 1974: 293), called also "tropicalities" in African literary writings in English, and the Arab writer's 'Arabness' where literary aesthetic, language use and discourse are culturally embedded (Taoua, 2001: 203).

History has contributed to combine this oral tradition with the written one. One of the results of that combination is a "nativized English" where various linguistic devices such as lexical innovations, translation equivalence, contextual redefinition, rhetorical and functional styles are used to contextualise English in the native culture of the author (Kachru, 2000: 142-4).

The contact between Africa and Europe is, most of the time, expressed in African authors' literary writings either in the form of a confrontation (Peter Abrahams, Alan Paton or Alex Laguma), or of a dilemma (Buchi Emecheta, Bessie Head or Flora Nwapa) questioning their cultural identity. The concerns in such literary writings may be summarized as, on the one hand, nationhood implying history and politics, and on the other, culture implying myth and folklore (Ogundele, 2002: 125). In both cases the writer could not isolate the native ways of expression (the traditional ways of Africa including customs and beliefs) from the European ones where culture is intertwined with the politics of nationalism. By writing their culture through their literature, using colonial languages, African authors are claiming their identity. This writing could be considered more as a reaction to a specific historical moment than an expression of culture, this historical moment being colonialism. Achebe, for example, deemed his writing as "an adequate revolution" to help his society regain belief in itself (in Ogundele, 2002: 125).

The African and Arab novels can be considered as a hybrid of the Oral tradition typical to Africa and Arab literary heritage and the imported literary form of Europe. The conflict generated by the meeting of the African or the Arab and the European in African and Arab literatures written by women is quite interesting for Algerian women sharing a common history of colonialism to know more about the consequences of these contacts as illustrated in literature, and makes of Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) and Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* (1996) two cases which are worth investigating through a post-colonial reading in a comparative analysis.

It is through literature that Arab women have made themselves heard. In Arab culture, literature occupies a prominent place. Women have sensed the importance of using it as a vehicle of displaying their cause. For a long time, within Arab and Western literary writing, men monopolized the representation of Arab women. Arab women's literature invites re-consideration of the authenticity of these representations.

The African voice, also, started as a male voice and writing literature in sub-Saharan Africa was from 1930 to 1960 a men's task. This task included representing the image of the African woman. This image tended to be faulty and biased. To correct it or to represent it faithfully, African women had to produce it themselves. It was necessary for the African woman to be seen from the "inside"; in other words the image of the African woman had to be rendered by women (Ward, 1990: 83).

Three main categories have been identified by Halim Barakat in his exploration of Arab novels: novels of reconciliation, novels of exposure, and novels of revolutionary change. He defined the first trend as novels that reflect a description of a social reality in a state of harmony and the threatening changes that may intervene. The second trend is concerned with a pure exposition of society weaknesses and its institutions without real commitment in restructuring the existing order. The third trend is characterized by commitment to radical change, highlighting the conflict rather than harmony. Through the revolutionary novel, the individual or psychological issues in relation to social issues are depicted. Inner and external struggles are portrayed. (Ibid in Babana-Hampton, 2002: 25) Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* belongs to the third category.

The choice of corpus in this research work was of a woman writer belonging to one of these categories. A comparison is conducted between her fiction work and different postcolonial texts and contexts to show the use of a common gendered and anti-colonial ideology together with the colonizer's language both writing from exile.

The adaptation of the term "post-colonial" was coincident with and dependent on the eclipse of an older paradigm, that of "third world". The term post-colonial represents a new label for critical discourses concerning issues resulting from colonial relations and their consequences, covering a long historical period of time including the present (Shohat, 1992: 101). Literature that makes of the encounter of the colonized and the colonizer a

socio-political issue to discuss, fluctuates also in terms of focus on cultural and gender issues.

Despite of earlier attempts, the Arab woman writer contributed significantly to the genre of novel until the second half of the twentieth century. From the 1960s to the 1990s, this form developed bringing to the fore a post colonial writing representing the encounter between the East and the West. As argued by Rasheed el-Enany, progressively, this form reaches a staggering degree of artistic maturity and originality of vision. (Ibid in Suyoufie, 2008: 224)

Arab women writers produce novels, in Arabic or in European languages, examining various aspects of their societies confronting the injustice of occupation of the colonial powers, social backwardness and its contradictions and corruption.

In Jordan, education was not an independent entity before 1920. Jordanian women's participation in the cultural production was very tiny, a reality resulting from a high level of illiteracy. This is well reflected in the Jordanian writer Faqir's female characters' illiteracy.

History has contributed to the shaping of women's literary participation in Jordan. In that part of the world, women writers emerged in the 1940's. Among the reasons of this delay in comparison to Palestinian women's literary production, which started earlier during the same century, is the Jewish immigration that was challenging and had to be confronted by many Palestinian women's movements and association which boosted the literary production. (Achour, 2008: 208)

Among the first Jordanian contributors to literary women's writings in Arabic we find Taysir Zabyan who published in 1940 a series of letters in his paper *al-Jazira* written in a woman's voice entitled *Where are the Protectors of Virtue?* Critics like Radwa Ashour doubt the fact that Taysir was the author of that book. It was a text attributed to a woman but in reality written by a man who chose to write in an anonymous woman's voice and attribute the work to her to help in spreading and disseminating the text. Yet it was not oriented to a female audience principally since female education did not achieve a high level at that time.

Another contributor to that feminine space is Ayman Abu-l-Shi'r who dedicated a space to "women's affair" in his journal *al-Ra'id* in 1945. That space published articles written by women and signed with their real names, others with pseudonyms or only their

initials. It represented an important phase in the development of women's literature in Jordan. (Achour, 2008:210-230)

The first novels written by a woman in Jordan were Julia Sawalha's *Salwa* (1976), *al-Nashmi* (A Man of Courage) (1978) and, *al-Yatima* (The Orphan) 1985. The literary critic Radwa Achour considers that through a confused structure with a tendency to use rhymed prose and poetry and in a simple approach this writer explores Jordanian rural life in the first decades of the twentieth century. In her literary writing, Sawalha brings to light an acute awareness of women's oppression by local poverty and traditions. (Ibid, 2008: 214) When we read Faqir's novel *Pillars of Salt* (1996) we notice traces of Sawalha's confused structure like the narrative technique and references to rhymed prose like songs and poems.

Fadia Faqir is one of these writers who utilize her female characters to illustrate the violence endured by the Arab woman. *Pillars of Salt* is a literary corpus whereby the writer crystallizes the gender issue via an anti-colonial ideology.

The Palestinian Nakba of 1948 represents a critical but crucial historical event that intervened in the modern history of Arab culture and literature. Different categories of writers emanated from this event in that region: writers living in the occupied territories and carrying Israeli passports, Jordanians, or Palestinians living abroad. Generally, Arab women writing in a post-colonial context (in Arabic or in English) use historical events as novelistic plots. Examples of this are Liyana Badr's literature. In *A Compass for the Sunflower* (1978), she addresses the confrontation between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian resistance in September 1970. *A Balcony Over Fakhani* (1983) refers to a historical reality and represents the novelistic plot. Leila al-Atrash also writes novels inspired from historical background of Palestine. She writes with a critical spirit, bringing together a feminist and nationalist consciousness. (Ashour, 2008: 217) Fadia Faqir's *Nisanit* (1988) is another example inspired from Palestinian historical background depicting a love story in an atmosphere of conflict and oppression.

In the Levant, the conflation treated by ideologies like womanism of both colonial occupation and obsolete gender treatment with unjust traditions typical to patriarchal communities is relevant in the literary production of many Arab women's writers writing

in Arabic like Sahar Khalifeh, Lyana Badr, Salwa al Banna, Leila Al Atrash or in English like Ahdaf Soueif and Fadia Faqir. Faqir and Soueif are among the writers who experienced the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and after as an “induced memory”. This traumatic event is incorporated in the cultures of the Arab World and thus reflected in the literary productions of such writers. The generation of writers they belong to has acquired this traumatic event as ‘already narrated,’ in the form of an ‘induced memory’, and not necessarily drawn from actual, direct experience. (Cariello, 2009: 336)

However, there is another aspect that should be taken into consideration while referring to Arab women writers. It is the use of the coloniser’s tongue to liberate their mind and expressing the same preoccupation as the use of Arabic by other Arab writers. Fadia Faqir is among these authors who use the former colonizer’s tongue. Her novel *Pillars of Salt* offers the possibility to show how means of constraint are used for liberation. This is one among the several common points we find in Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood* who chose to write in the same language.

Language is an important and problematic aspect of post-colonial literature. Despite the oral traces in African literature and the Arabic literary heritage, the fact that the African and Arab novelists write in European languages makes African and Arab critics blame them for such a choice of language and consider them bourgeois in their orientation, reflecting only the interests of the Intelligentsia.

For Ngugi, to write in English while producing African literature is a way to perpetuate cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism (Ngugi, 1985: 42). However the African or Arab writer’s aim was to reject the colonial domination using the colonial language, and the language the African or the Arab writer uses expresses the cultural reality of those countries. For that reason, while speaking about African literature or Arab literature as being a part of African Art or Arab Art in general (there is no such thing as art for art’s sake independent of politics), we may join Mao Tse-Tung considering literature as being geared to definite political lines (in Ngara, 1985).

By writing ‘his’ literature, the African or the Arab writer is an insider. He avoids to his national culture to resonate with the voices of the powerful colonizer being the outsider and be filled with the silences of the colonized. This is what makes the native novelist

experience the “pain and pleasure of writing” (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 8). He masters the western language and uses it to speak, to denounce on behalf of those who are silent or silenced, a process called by Soyinka the “voice of vision” (Ibid: 8).

Art for art’s sake could never help define these literatures because, though these writers use western languages, they always feel the need to write about their people, their culture and their oppressions. Literature had always had a social function, from the time it was oral to the time it became written through western languages.

African and Arab literary writings of authors like Buchi Emecheta and Fadia Faqir bring to light the rich diversity of their culture. The English language used by these writers has the role of a connector. It connects the local culture to the global one. This function may raise one’s incentive to go deeper in this field.

Buchi Emecheta is among the female writers who use literature as a subtle weapon for the intellectual liberation of women. Her autobiography *Head Above Water* (1986) reveals that her whole life was a struggle against two sorts of discrimination: that of a black person in a white people’s country, Great Britain, and that of a woman in a society where women are “second class citizens”.

In most of her novels like *The Bride Price* (1976) or *The Slave Girl* (1977), Emecheta depicts the Igbo women’s image in the traditional society, the image of a situation constructed by the Nigerian society itself and its culture.

In comparison to her compatriot Flora Nwapa who is seen as a challenger, Emecheta is considered by critics as a fighter who reflects through her writing Igbo women’s subjugation by their fathers, uncles, husbands, brothers and sons (Mezu, 1995: 1).

Buchi Emecheta’s writing is a realistic. As argued by Marx and Engels, what represents the most crucial aspect of a work of art is the accurate depiction of reality in an imagined world; it is this depiction that makes a literary text last, despite the ideological orientation of the author. Engels defines Realism as implying besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances (Marx and Engels, 1976: 90). Through Emecheta’s characters, the reader may imagine how at that time people lived in that place. Her vision of reality helps the reader know more about the Igbo people,

since characters in fiction do not act in the vacuum; their actions reflect the type of environment they live in, actions that derive from social and historical conditions reporting the interests and activities of a social group, (in this case the Igbo people), in real life. Yet her literary writings remain an imitation or a representation of beings and actions that do or did not exist, thus fictional. Sentences that compose her literary texts are neither “true” nor “false”, they are fictional (Wellek, 1991: 213).

Emecheta does not privilege Igbo traditions for the women’s status in the Igbo community. It is a constant “crusade” against this male made society. She is a committed writer in the sense that she uses literature to denounce every form of oppression be it racial, sexual or colonial, an oppression that human society has created (Ward, 1990: 83). Committed writers take their themes from reality. They treat problems of their own society, having some faith in their people’s capacity to accept changes in some traditions and beliefs (Gakwandi, 1977: 8-9). The writer may be committed either in terms of solidarity when the author belongs to the category of people he is writing about (Emecheta belongs to this category) and feels the duty to write about his people, or in terms of ideology. Ideology here means the medium through which one’s consciousness and meaningfulness operates and makes one live as a conscious actor in a world that makes sense to one at many levels (Therborn, 1980: 2). In this case, the writer may not belong to the oppressed category but feels the duty to denounce the injustice the oppressed category endures.

Emecheta’s works: *In The Ditch* (1973), *Second Class Citizen* (1974), *The Bride Price* (1976), *The Slave Girl* (1977), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), *Naira Power* (1982) and *The Rape of Shavi* (1983) are committed novels in the sense that the constant themes she focuses on are traditions, rituals, customs, poverty, immigration, colonization and society as being an obstacle to her female protagonists’ progress and the source of their suffering.

Emecheta’s literature is committed but not revolutionary; she does not take sides explicitly while depicting situations, and this is nothing but the definition of realism according to Trotsky (in Ngara, 1985: 15). Yet that does not mean that Emecheta’s realism means ideological indifference.

We notice through Fadia Faqir's novels *Nisanit* (1988), *Pillars of Salt* (1996), *My Name is Salma* (2007), *At the Midnight Kitchen* (2009) and *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014) that she is among these authors whose literature is never void of a double criticism deconstructing "the Occident's logo-centrism and ethnocentrism." (Mehrez in Abdo, 2009: 242) Faqir represents her characters as victims of tradition, religion, history, geography or politics in her literary writings. She depicts the power structure existing at different levels and domains. (Moore, 2011, 4)

There is a double criticism which is very salient in *Pillars of Salt*. In this novel, Faqir deconstructs and critiques the hegemony of the androcentric and western representation of Arab women. In fact, the linguistic strategy and the narrative technique used by Faqir demonstrate that her ideology bears a "multiple criticism", that we will coin "Arabo-Islamic womanism" in this research work.

Fadia faqir's *Pillars of Salt* is a good illustration against stereotyping. This novel could be a good case study whereby Arab literary studies and Post-colonial studies can meet. It is a novel which is set in the contemporary Middle East, it is considered by critics as a "gendering nationalist" writing. (Nash in Bibizadeh, 2012: 2)

In her autobiographical essay in *In the House of Silence* (1998), Scheherazade is the character (of *The Arabian Nights*) used by Faqir to qualify herself as a writer who writes literature to liberate herself from dictatorship, fundamentalism and the mutilation of the mind that she suffered from in her country of origin. But not only this, she also writes to fight reductionism, colonialism, and misrepresentation in the Western media that she experiences in the host country. In England, the country of adoption, she uses [their] language to write [her] literature and a "multiple criticism". Faqir has no choice than to borrow a womanist tradition to achieve this target.

Pillars of salt was written in a period of hesitation (after the Gulf War 1990) about doubt and when she felt confined in exile. She tried to imagine herself in Western works—*The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, *Cry Freedom*, *Heart of Darkness*. She watched films made by the host society, like *The Sheltering Sky*, and argues that the vast majority of Arab women have profession other than the oldest one, that Arab men are not "lascivious beasts" and that the societies of that land have changed since the Western observer first

landed, and that this people did not need the white middleman to represent and legitimize it. (Faqir, 1998: 60) One notices this aspect of multi-layered criticism in *Pillars of Salt* through the female protagonist who is telling her story from confinement just as Scheherazade is writing literature in exile using the colonizer's language. Both character and writer chose asylum and exile for freedom of expression.

Emecheta also uses aesthetic realism in *The Joys of Motherhood* as a means for freedom; this realism is considered by Alaa Alaswany as claiming "the right to say anything and everything in literature." (Elmarsafy, 2013: 18) This is a point that both Emecheta and Faqir share. Their literary works are used to say what they want, as a means for freedom. They want to achieve a form of democracy through their literature using English. Derrida's maxim: "*No democracy without literature; no literature without democracy.*" (Derrida in Elmarsafy, 2013: 17) reflects this literary production.

Literature is a good means of resistance within which the writer can avoid committed transparency. It succeeds to confuse the readers. The characters in a novel may be considered universal. A literary work may be viewed as an artistic representation whether it is transparent, realistic or convincing. Yet the identification between that representation and reality is never entirely complete. "*The inevitable inadequacy of representation is precisely what makes art operate.*" (Elmarsafy, 2013: 19)

Language is also an issue in African and Arab female literature. Through her use of English, Emecheta recognises that her 'Africaness' had been diluted as a result of her constant contact and use of English. This fact is considered as a tragedy, a "de-africanisation" by Ojo-Ade, a "slavery of language" by Ngugi or as a "nauseating illness" by Fanon (in Ojo-Ade, 1991: 16). However while using academic English, Emecheta surpasses criticism upon whether the language used in her literature is good or bad, worth analysing or not.

In addition to the "de-africanisation" noticed through the use of English by Emecheta in *The Joys of Motherhood*, this novel was considered as purely westernised under feminist writing (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 17). This work aims to demonstrate that this novel does not belong to a feminist category of writing but an African womanist category of writing where the process of nativization, as defined by Kachru, may be noticed and thus reflects the author's Africaness. *The Joys of Motherhood* could be read as a good

illustration of the impact of colonialism on Igbo men and women during the colonial period.

The English used by Emecheta and Faqir embraces a dimension of power. It will be demonstrated that it is a language that has been “nativized”, either “africanized” by Emecheta or “arabized” by Faqir in the novels under analysis. This strategy results in a process of defamiliariation for the English speaking reader where “*the language of the majority to explore the plight of the minority is [...] empowering.*”(Bbizadeh, 2012: 6)

This comparative analysis of Emecheta and Faqir seeks to challenge simplistic readings of African and Arab women’s lives that would privilege gender above all other categories of analysis and to underline instead the complexities of the post-colonial contradictions experienced and voiced by African and Arab women writers.

Though Emecheta and Faqir possess different cultural values and heritage they have in common: British colonization in their home country, English as a language they write their works in, exile as a host country. This work intends to demonstrate that the same ideology under the heading womanism is used to express their preoccupation and to carve a space for themselves within the world of literature.

The narrative produced by such an ideology wins plausibility and thus verisimilitude (or *vraisemblance*) as called by Gérard Genette while read by Algerian readers. The logic of the story is accepted by the reader as common-sensical logic. Post-colonial literature written by women bears the stamp of verisimilitude and maintains the hegemony of African or Arabo-Islamic womanism as ideology. Thus the Algerian woman reader goes through the naturalization process. We, Algerian women readers recognize ourselves in such stories like those of *Pillars of Salt* and *The Joys of Motherhood*, this verisimilitude may push one to pass off the arbitrary literary logic as real-world logic. The naturalization process was enhanced by the African and Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology of both authors and this is what helps me select these two novels for this research work.

Through the study of significant scenes in these novels, plausible interpretations will be considered as an answer to one main question:

How did Igbo and Arab women negotiate their space within “unhomeliness” during the colonial period?

An answer to the set forth query invites answers to three other questions:

How is patriarchal “unhomeliness” represented and resisted in both novels?

How is colonial “unhomeliness” represented and resisted in both novels?

How do the means used for unfolding freedom lead to the female characters’ decline?

Emecheta and Faqir use all the ingredients to raise the question on gender issue to write their novels. They apply the three elements defining African and Arab women’s experience in their society; constraining and liberating traditions, constraining and liberating identities, and finally power that their female characters are trying to renegotiate all along the novel.

In a traditional setting, Igbo and Arab men’s importance is measured not only through money but through their physical strength and courageous behaviour as well. These three elements represent an Igbo or an Arab man’s wealth.

In the village of Ibuza, money is not the only component of an Igbo man’s wealth; it forms only a part of it and is not enough to give him power and freedom. Yet, wealth gives him more freedom among the members of his community and justifies his authority. Before going to Lagos, these are the values that had been inculcated to the male character of *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnaife. His means to freedom, a wealth represented through virility and courage in Ibuza is materialized to money as the only possibility to be free in Lagos; from secondary, money turns to be the primary source of freedom in colonial Lagos. In his quest for money, he loses his dignity and becomes enslaved through the “white man’s jobs” he exercises, and this is what leads to his decline.

In *Pillars of Salt*, male characters are described positively in a traditional setting and time (the village of Hamia) whereas their portrayal in the city of Amman is negative.

In both novels, the past (in fiction time) represents the phase through which female characters' identity is constructed. For Igbo and Arab (Bedouin) women (as epitomized by Nnu Ego in *The joys of Motherhood* and, Maha and Um Saad in *Pillars of Salt*, motherhood is equated with freedom. When Nnu Ego goes to colonial Lagos, she negotiates her space through the only way she inherits from her traditions; yet, it becomes enslavement. In her quest for freedom, the female protagonist uses the only way her traditions taught her in order to be considered as a "complete woman" in her traditional environment, on the one hand, and to survive and cope with the "unhomeliness" of Lagos with all its changes, on the other hand. Through this motherhood; Nnu ego is smothered, and this is what leads her to decline. Nnu ego's motherhood and Nnaife's (her husband's) lust for money could be considered as the major cause of their decline and at the same time one of the consequences of British colonialism in colonial Lagos, where Nnu Ego feels threatened and thus obliged to claim her traditional role through.

The decline of the female characters (Maha and her roommate Um Saad) in *Pillars of Salt* is caused by the identity crisis they experience within an "unhomely" colonial space and time. They reject the traditional values that help in the construction of their female identity and become designated as mad. This madness of "non-conformity" allows them to speak and negotiate their space using the traditional material of storytelling borrowed from *The Nights*. Maha is the character that underpins the anti colonial and the womanist discourse of Faqir. Her confinement in a madhouse is the consequence of her resistance. Resistance is perceived as insanity.

Um Saad rejects the "unhomely" patriarchal system because it homogenizes Arab women's identity and thus immobilizes and stifles their agency. She wishes she could "move to another identity", liberate it and be considered as an individual. Through this character we distinguish how identity could be constraining and liberating at the same time just like tradition.

Faqir's narrative technique makes of Maha, a focal narrator. She tells her story and that of Um Saad countering the spurious narrative of the declared narrator of the novel, The Storyteller. The storyteller's description of Maha may be regarded a pure projection of the orientalist image the Arab woman is trapped in. The orientalist authority of travel writing is reserved to occidentals. Faqir could be considered as employing such a style in

the storyteller's fallacious version of Maha's story to condemn the systematic orientalist discourse of power and the imaginary geography that divides the world into two unequal and hierarchical parts positioning the Arabs in general, and the Arab woman in particular, in an inferior position.

These novels could be considered as an indictment against the Igbo and the Arab traditional societies that prevented women from education and taught them to exist and struggle only through their traditional role (of sister, daughter, wife or mother) or using traditional material (storytelling), that according to these novels, shackles them. At the same time, it states an indictment against colonialism that corrupts the native men and makes them lose their values for material comfort. Women feel the need to reject colonialism and the changes it brought to their lives, and they do it through traditional role and material (motherhood or storytelling), whereas men are unconscious about their enslavement while adopting the capitalist device: money.

In addition to our use of the genderless identity theory as defined by Lichtenstein and Holland and the western feminist "female identity theory" as distinguished by Chodorow, we intend to apply African and Arabo-Islamic womanism in our analysis focusing on "social structurally psychological induced processes" pinpointing the female personality of the female characters within their traditional community on the one hand and, the behaviour they borrow in a colonial context on the other. These congruent elements of identity analysis will help us to understand better how these women writers use identity in negotiating their space. This space negotiation is present on a thematic level as well as on a linguistic one.

The intention (and method used), in highlighting the linguistic strategy of both authors, aims at constituting a sense of the trope of "Africaness" and "Arabness" in post-colonial context.

What is suggested here is a reading of Emecheta's and Faqir's works in which modernism is the cause of colonized men's enslavement and alienation, and an indirect obstacle to colonized women's emancipation during the colonial period, pushing them to hide behind their traditional role of mother or using traditional material to negotiate their space.

Faqir tackles maybe the most important aspect reflecting the imbalance of power of the East representation by the West. Her narrative technique and Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology, make of it a conflating colonial/gender encroachment that her female protagonist resists negotiating a space through her voice. This very technique questions the fact why the narrative of the West is given legitimacy over the narrative of the East.

The dissertation intends to find the principle that in most African communities, such as the Igbo community, subjected to socially binding traditions, on the one hand, and to colonialism on the other, the world of dreams and the capacity to imagine remain a strong means to anticipate a fairer future for men and women through fiction. In this sense, even if mostly descriptive, as some would label it ethnographic, literature provides tools and assets to discriminated categories (here the Igbo men and women) for bending social and historical resistance to the advent of their full citizenship.

This work unfolds into four chapters:

The first chapter sets the theoretical background that will allow the explication of the conceptual apparatus. Before applying African and Arabo-Islamic womanism to these novels through the last three chapters, these theories are defined and distinguished from feminism and other forms of womanism in the first chapter. Gender and ideology are given precise definitions to be used in order to underline the utilization of the concept of subalternity in our analysis. Other concepts and notions helping in the construction of this reasoning such as identity theory, otherness, madness, motherhood and money giving power and freedom, or oppression under the form of slavery and colonialism (where psychological phenomena like sadism, “unhomeliness” and alienation are noticed), imperialism, orientalism, exoticism, are defined in this chapter as well. To demonstrate that the means used by the female characters to negotiate their space within traditional and colonial “unhomeliness” is enslaving and, for Maha and Um Saad, speaking from asylum is confining, the concept of illusion is used and thus explicated in this chapter. Definition of different temporalities, narrative technique and organisations and plot structure (used to pinpoint the author’s African and Arab identity and to underline their womanist writing) will be first given in this part before being applied to both novels through the three remaining chapters.

The second chapter explores the different traditional values inculcated to construct the primary female identity of Igbo woman (Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood*) and, Bedouin and Arab women (Maha and Um Saad in *Pillars of Salt*) and how despite the “unhomeliness” of this heritage female protagonists use it to negotiate their space within their patriarchal communities.

The third chapter will be devoted to demonstrating how modernism, as epitomized by colonial Lagos in the first novel, and the city of Amman in the second, corrupts the Igbo and the Arab men and makes them lose their values. It will also examine how this modernism, present via colonialism in Lagos, felt as a threat by the Igbo woman (in *The Joys of Motherhood*), could be considered as a cause of her sheltering in her traditional role of mother. This threat is represented in *Pillars of Salt* as a hegemonic orientalist vision of the storyteller as well. The Arab woman, epitomized by a Bedouin focal narrator Maha, negotiates her space using madness as a pretext to speak.

The fourth chapter will show how negotiating space turn from freedom to enslavement and confinement and thus lead to the female characters decline. The quest for freedom is present at two levels in *Pillars of Salt*: on an ideological level through Arabo-Islamic womanism and on a narratological level through a womanist narratology. Faqir’s narrative technique using two narrators characterizes the novel. Analysing focalization thus stands at the heart of the novel’s thematic concerns whereas Emecheta’s novel’s thematic concerns are highlighted through characterization, setting and temporalities. It will be demonstrated through the last chapter how the notion of freedom is used as response to many oppressing elements. Freedom is noticed through enslaving means like motherhood and confining means as madness.

CHAPTER ONE:

Sociological and Literary Notions

I.1 Introduction:

This work of research is primarily concerned with answering the questions asked in the general introduction. It is useful to have some broader ideas and information about the sociological and literary notions necessary for such a task. This chapter attempts to provide essential definitions on a wide range of terms, concepts and theories used in this comparative analysis.

I.2. Identity Theory:

In a post colonial context, the concept of identity is a key issue. Probing identity entails examining otherness¹. The identity of an individual could not be built without the interplay of this very person with other people², “*it is itself constituted in a dialectical process that interacts with the other.*” (Fludernick, 2007: 261)

A post-colonial reading could not be undergone without taking into consideration this dialectical process. Identity and otherness are key concerns in a post-colonial studies’ context. It is important to define such concepts in order to understand the relationship between oppressed and oppressor and how space is negotiated by the subaltern as mirrored in the novels under analysis: Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood* (henceforth, *The Joys*) and Fadia Faqir’s *Pillars of Salt* (henceforth *Pillars*).

The psychoanalytic literary critic Norman Holland borrows Heintz Lichtenstein’s Identity theory to define identity, as follows: “*Identity refers to the whole pattern of sameness within change which is a human life ... There remain a continuing me who is the style that permeates all those changes.*” (Ibid in Gardiner, 1981: 351)

The former definition is genderless. It means that the identity reflected in an individual’s behaviour is the same found in his or her literary writing, reading, analyzing and other forms of behaviour. Holland thinks that this theory “*unlocks the “personal role” in reading, writing, teaching, popular arts, political choice, jokes, and psychological experience.*” (Ibid: 351) This statement explains the presence of autobiographical elements in the authors’ literary production.

The set forth identity definition could be joined to Luangphinit’s as he states that the individual identity involves more than the identification of a racial superior or

subordinate “other”. In other words, identity “*only emerges in-between disavowal and designation.*” (Bhabha in Luangphinit, 2004: 78).

The process of identification through which identity is constructed is constituted of two opposed desires, the claim of absolute sameness, a matching with a group (like a historical identity located in the past) or a person (like the mother) and, a process of individualization and the construction of a unique personality. It is crucial to demarcate the frame in which identity is constructed in order to understand how the paradoxical poles necessary to this process operate. As Homi Bhabha argues: “*the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of the frame, the space of representation, where the image-missing person, invisible eye, Oriental stereotype-is confronted with its difference, its Other.*” (ibid in Müge Göçek and Balaghi: 1995: 17)

I.2.a. Otherness:

Identity construction and the definition of the ‘self’ and ‘the other’ are two important elements treated in this comparative study.

The “other” in this framework refers generally to the native, the “self” being the western colonizer. In a post-colonial analysis, otherness or alterity may be regarded as “*a reflection of the colonial scenario in which imperial power and knowledge impact on the native population.*” (Fludernik, 2007: 266)

The use of the “other” in the study of *Pillars* is the one described by Edward Said in his imagination of the concept of Orientalism, described mainly as:

... the West’s othering of the East in terms of knowledge, power, and status.” The most crucial point demonstrated in Said’s theory is that the East (implying Near and Far East) becomes a label, in the sense that people living in the East are taken to be all the same by colonial knowledge and are regarded as the inferior native other. This people “has been subjected to a totalizing and disempowering glance by European scholars and politicians.” Considering them as “racially, morally, intellectually, and culturally inferior. (Said in Fludernik, 2007: 267)

I.2.b. Primary Identity:

Primary identity is a fundamental phase for the construction of the ‘self’. In the realm identity theory, “primary identity” is distinguished by Lichtenstein as the identity

which is formed by any individual from a very early age. It is constructed as a response to explicit expectations expressed by his or her first caretaker, like the mother for example. This is the core identity that will shape his or her social behaviour and his or her relationship with other people. “*Out of the infinite potentialities within the human infant, the specific stimulus emanating from the individual mother ‘releases’ one and only one concrete way of being this organism, this instrument.*” (Lichtenstein in Gardiner, 1981: 350)

I.2.b.1. Female Identity:

Helene Chodorow completes the genderless definition of Lichtenstein’s primary identity and distinguishes a gender identity by labeling it “female identity” or “female personality.” According to her, the girl³ forms her identity positively. First she identifies herself with the person with whom she begins life in a symbiotic merger. She has facility to resemble her mother and is predisposed to recreate an identical symbiotic fusion with her child. She considers the nurturing role of the mother and dependence as positive characteristics that she adopts easily once she becomes a mother. Independence and autonomy become difficult for her. The self is determined and defined through social relationship. (Ibid in Gardiner, 1981: 352)

Motherhood thus, represents a crucial element in the construction of one’s primary identity. It is a social and biological tool experienced by women writers and reflected in their literary production.

I.3 . Motherhood and its Power:

Motherhood is the only indisputable and unquestionable feminine specificity. For women, it offers power at three different levels: biological, affective and social (Knibiehler, 2008: 13).

The biological power lies in the fact that it assures the survival of the human race, hence the unconscious desire to have children for women. This desire is entirely transfigured through culture. Each civilisation has been incorporating it in its myths and popular rites, where women’s fecundity is most of the time joined to Earth, both representing the source of life.

One example of a myth that takes motherhood as the woman's biological power, and that will be used in the second chapter (p.85), is the Jewish myth of Lilith. In this myth, Lilith was the first woman and thus, the first wife of Adam, and not Eve. A sumptuous and feminine creature that suddenly appeared and came out from dust just like Adam, shaped by the hands of The Great "Potter" in a unique and exclusive mould destined only to her creation. She was a rebellious and an independent woman⁴ (Bitton, 2008: 69).

After having a quarrel with Adam about their equality, she left him. Adam asked his Creator to send her angels to convince her to return. So did The Creator who threatened her that if she did not return she would have to accept to lose each day one hundred of her sons. Lilith refused to return and thus, accepted the pact. From that moment, Lilith was considered as a malefic female responsible for the death of infants. In other words, she was the killer of humanity before Eve (Ibid: 71-4). Lilith has been used as an icon to support many feminist spheres of influence claiming women's equality to men, a feminist claim present even before the existence of humanity.

This biological power has been explained through philosophical issues⁵ as well. The natural and innate power the woman has, lies in the possibility of her body to give something else than her body (Dermenjian, Guilhaumou & Lapied, 2008: 22)

The second power is the affective one. It lies in the family bonds that motherhood engenders within a family, the relationship between a mother and her child being the most salient one. Psychoanalysts also recognized such a power. For Freud and Winnicott, the affective power of motherhood exists between mother and child even before the former gives birth to her child, regardless of the father⁶. Every human being (man or woman) is, from the outset, dependant and affectively attached to a woman, since he or she develops in a uterus before his or her birth (Ibid, 2008: 23).

Then the power at the social level merges. Mothers transmit, through child rearing, principles and values acquired from their social community, hence their social role of perpetrators of lineage or of custodians of tradition⁷.

These three forms of power are found in the female protagonist's behaviour in *The Joys*, a power used by female characters as a means of freedom during their lives.

I. 4. The Concept of Freedom:

Berlin made no distinction between freedom and liberty⁸. He rather distinguished between positive and negative liberty. Through this latter, he defined freedom as the absence of restraints. He called it negative because it focuses on the limits of the individual's actions. "*To know my freedom ... I have but to ask how many doors are open to me, and how wide they are open: 'The rest is extension of this sense, or else metaphor'.*" (Alford, 2003: 158). Positive liberty is the freedom to realise one's deepest ambitions, to participate in one's own governance, "*to become who one truly is*" (Ibid: 159). The use of freedom in this work is the combination of both positive and negative meanings.

Freedom could be explained as the absence of coercion, coercion meaning the initiation of the use of force, or a substitute for force by one person against another, with the effect of depriving the second person of a part of one's net worth or of making one's actions serve the will of the first (Dolan, 1971: 1090). As the power of motherhood and that of money are contrasted in the characters' search for freedom in *The Joys, Pillars* female characters negotiate their space through Faqir's narrative technique. Negotiating space in this research work means the quest for freedom.

I.4.a. Negotiating Space:

The term "negotiating space" will be used to qualify the narrative of the female protagonist in *Pillars*. It will also refer to Emecheta's and Faqir's English use serving to carve a space for themselves as writers in exile.

The use of space in this analysis corresponds to the definition Doreen Massey gives in her book *Power-Geometries and the Politics of Space-Time* (1999) As she puts:

The term space is better suited than any other term to express the spheres of juxtaposition and coexistence [...] In this sense spaces are, first, an expression of the possibility of pluralities; second they point to the possibility of overlapping and reciprocal relations; and third, and for this very reason, they are always open and indefinite with respect to future formations. This applies no less to national territorial spaces than it does to the microspaces of everyday life. (Ibid in Löw, 2006: 120)

Such study will take into consideration the dichotomy of private/public space. Here the term "private space" will essentially come to represent the home, sanctuary, segregated

places or privacy wherein women live. On the other hand, “public space” will refer to anywhere else that is outside the home or in non-segregated places. In both novels, space is negotiated for women’s empowerment using different tools and resisting different powers.

I.5. Power and Authority:

Webber defined power as the possibility that “*an actor in a social relation will be in a position to exercise his will despite [...] resistance.*” (Webber, 1947: 152). As for Kotter, he views it as the possibility to influence other people and events (in Kocev, 2002: 1). Foucault’s definition of power, which is rooted in Webber’s thinking, entails the ability to influence the actions of others. For him “*a society without power relations can only be an abstraction.*” (in Haour, 2005: 552) Foucault explains power as something that could not be localized with precision because it functions like a chain. It could be analyzed only in circulation. It operates as a net-like organization. The individuals, whether exercising or undergoing it, are inert and consenting elements of its circulation. They represent the vehicles of power, not its point of application. (Foucault in Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2013: 226-7)

Power differs from authority. The latter is a specific source of power. It represents “*power vested in persons by virtue of their office, or of their “authoritativeness” where relevant information and knowledge is concerned*” (Arendt, 1996: 2). Authority, as reflected, through the female protagonist’s father’s behaviour in *The Joys* and the female character’s (Um Saad) father and husband in *Pillars*, in the second chapter (p.67-83), could represent one of the possible means by which strength is achieved by individuals as leaders or participants in decision making, which enables them to have persuasive power. This very authority denies the agency⁹ of these female characters.

Money, just as motherhood, is an element used by male and female characters as a means to freedom, a freedom that enslaves its seeker. Yet, it would be demonstrated through the following chapters that freedom, through money (in both novels) or motherhood (in *The Joys*), is just an illusion.

I. 6. Illusion from a Philosophical Point of View:

Illusion¹⁰, being peculiar to desire, from a philosophical point of view, means the imaginary satisfaction of desire which refuses to be refuted. It is a conviction that prevents the consciousness of the subject to perceive it as unreal (Llappasset, 2007: 1).

Illusion is the medium of transitional experience. Key to illusion is the way in which it resides in a realm between me and not me, neither inner nor outer... illusion connects and separates internal and external reality that is also a fusion with it. In this way illusion buffers the swings between losing and fusing. (Alford, 2003: 163).

The idea of money as an illusion of freedom is shared by Marx, who believed that money embodies concealed social meaning, in the sense that it signifies “*the alienation of labor and the brutal exploitation of workers in the process of producing surplus value*” (Wolfenstein, 1993: 279).

In the Igbo¹¹ culture¹², when money is only one of the components that determine men’s freedom, motherhood is the only element that represents women’s freedom, as it will be demonstrated in the second chapter (p.70-82). Another peculiarity of this culture and found in the Arab¹³, or more precisely the Bedouin¹⁴, culture, as represented in *Pillars* underlined in the same chapter (p.76), is the importance it gives to the community over the individual. This point is reflected through Emecheta’s and Faqir’s writings.

To define *The Joys* and *Pillars* as a feminist writings may be inappropriate, though power and freedom are gender issues that are central to both feminism and female writing in Africa and the Arab world. Actually, one recognizes a womanist ideology, different from feminism, used by Emecheta in *The Joys* and Faqir in *Pillars*.

I.7. Gender and Ideology:

In both novels, Emecheta and Faqir are raising gender issues with subtlety and agility. As Joan Scott defines it, gender is the difference between sexes within the social organization. (Ibid, 1988: 2) Generally, three important elements are crucial to the construction of gender: tradition, identity and power. “*The construction of gender contains within it significant elements that, when juxtaposed against societal processes, informs us about the nature of tradition, identity formation and power relations inherent in the society.*” (Müge Göçek and Balaghi, 1995: 2)

Both novels hint at these overlapping elements through the description of their female characters’ ordeal, one with the other. One cannot speak about gender without

considering women's experience and without studying these three dimensions, very relevant in the Igbo and the Arab contexts.

Gender is a term used to “refer to the socially constructed norms, practices, and codes which facilitate the identification of an individual or his or her behaviour as “masculine,” “feminine,” “butch,” “sissy,” androgynous, and so on.” (Page, 2007: 191)

When one speak about gender we tend to think of feminism as the most appropriate ideology. The term “ideology” is used in this research work as it was inspired from the works of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci, in Herman's and Vervaeck's definition as being a set of “norms and ideas that appear natural as a result of their continuous and mostly tacit promotion by the dominant forces in society.” (Ibid, 2007: 217)

I.8. Feminism, African Feminism, Islamic and Arab Feminism:

Feminism could be defined as the fruit of individualism. It is an ideology where women try to distinguish themselves from a group. It is in this type of ideology that a realist novel develops.

The realist novel develops precisely in a society in which the ideology of individualism embodies the notion of a free individual who, realizing his own interest, facilitates the interests of the whole. ‘Equality, freedom, justice’ are the bulwarks of liberal ideology, but they are individual, not collective values (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1971: 209).

The first part of this quotation can partly suit *The Joys and Pillars*, whereas the second part focusing on individual values suits only Feminist writing since “*Feminism ... values personal growth and individual fulfilment over any larger communal needs or goods*” (Andrade, 1990: 92). Hence, the necessity to define an approach such as Womanism, where liberal and collective values are both used by Emecheta and Faqir in their writing, because even in its most “*westernised modern form [the African or the Arab society] places the values of the group over those of the individual*” (Ibid: 92).

The reproach made by people like Nnaemeka, to western feminist critics such as Florence Stratton, Katherine Frank and others by African critics, is that even when the African rebellious woman does not exist in a literary text, the feminist literary critic

invents her. Nneameka speaks of feminism of negotiation or “Negofeminism” where African women are negotiating with realities or possibilities available to them just like other women, realities that are not governed by the tradition/modernity paradigm as stated by Frank¹⁵.

Some literary critics, such as Badejo, refer to African feminism when speaking of African female characterization, where power and femininity are intertwined rather than antithetical. For Badejo “*African feminism embraces femininity, beauty, power, serenity, inner harmony, and a complex matrix of power. It is always poised and centred in womanness.*” (Ibid, 1998: 94). This ideology is founded upon the principles of traditional African values. The result of such a combination, that of an individualistic philosophy and the African values found in the notion of African feminism, seems to be a contradiction (Andrade, 1990: 92).

The presence of the Islamic references in *Pillars* could attribute to Faqir’s writing the qualification of Islamic feminism. According to Miriam Cooke’s definition¹⁶, Islamic feminism is an ideology used by women activists and intellectuals who question the existing interpretation of the Qur’anic text. Their role is to re-read the circumstances of the revelation of the Qur’anic verses, highlighting the relegated Muslim woman’s role and status within her social and religious community and is concerned about the Muslim woman all over the world. This ideology is characterized by its resistance to globalization, nationalism, Islamization, and mainly the patriarchal system. (Cooke, 1995: 160) As argued by Ahmed:

The rise of Islamic women’s movements throughout the Arab world has further challenged the secular, liberalizing assumption feminism by focusing primarily on progressive readings of Islamic texts to argue for a more egalitarian Islamic tradition that enhances women’s rights. (Ibid in Saliba, 2000: 1090)

The narrative technique of Faqir in *Pillars* does more than negotiate a space for the Arab woman in an Arab and Muslim society, she offers a voice to the female protagonist to negotiate her space resisting an imperial and androcentric hegemony. She makes the subaltern speak.

I.9. Subalternity and Post-Colonial Feminism:

The word “subaltern”, as will be used in this study, refers to the concept used by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. This concept derived from the term “subaltern¹⁷ classes” used by the Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci in the early 1980’s to denote the oppressed population. Then it was taken up by a group of intellectuals called the Subaltern Studies Group working on Indian historiography.

Gayatri Spivak was among the post-colonial feminist that reshaped and altered the gender dynamics of Subaltern Studies scholarship. She used it as an anti colonialist reading of the colonial rule that presented itself at that time as: “*white men saving brown women from brown men.*” This sentence promoted the colonialist anti-*sati* campaign (*Sati* was an Indian rite abolished by William Bentinck in 1829) (Spivak in George, 2006: 216)

Against this colonialist argument Spivak answered by the phrase “*the woman actually wanted to die.*” As she put in her essay “Can the Sublaltern Speak?”:

“*The two sentences go along way to legitimize each other. One never encounters the testimony of the women’s voice-consciousness. Such a testimony would not be ideology-transcendent or “fully” subjective, of course, but it would have constituted the ingredients for producing a countersentence.*” Through such an argument or a “*countersentence*” Spivak intended to create a space where the “*gendered subaltern could speak despite oppressive conditions.*” (Ibid: 216)

The definition of the Womanist critical approach could partly fit the one given to post-colonial feminism. It is an approach that emerged in the early 1980s in the West and that is concerned with the terms in which “*knowledge about non-Western women was produced, circulated and was utilized.*” It belongs to post-colonial literary analyses in general, where “*issues of location, of representation, of “voicing” female subjecthood, and of the expansion of the literary canon emerged as important foci.*”(George, 2006: 211)

Post-colonial feminism brings to the post-colonial revisionary reading that aims at valorizing the non-European ideology and culture by insisting on the humanity of colonized people, a keen sense of gendered post-colonial critique. Even so, post-colonial feminism explicates and fits the Indian context¹⁸ better. In *Pillars*, Faqir creates a counter-discourse through the narrative of her female protagonist. Actually, she gives voice to the subaltern. This aspect of her writing may be deemed a post-colonial feminism. Though it has many similarities with the womanist ideology present in Faqir’s writing., what is central for post-colonial feminism¹⁹ is the British colonial occupation of India and the post-

colonial Indian state (that is why the majority of post-colonial critical writing emanates from India).

Black feminism, African feminism, Islamic and Arab feminism and, Post-colonial feminism as all defined earlier are all theoretical perspectives offering each a small different emphasis from the other and, all concern the African and the Arab-Muslim woman experience. Still, we cannot state that Emecheta and Faqir are using one of these ideologies, though theirs go in the same sense. None of the former ideologies encompasses the totality and the specificities of the issues raised by both authors in the novels under analysis. Their ideologies bear a ‘double critique’ aspect and reflect a ‘multiple consciousness’, most of the time contradictory. Actually, it is a multiple critique. Within their ideologies, we perceive two oppositional and post-colonial modes of thinking that support discourses targeting, simultaneously at, local and global antagonists.

Further to that, in a post-colonial context, feminist ideology (be it Black, African, Islamic, Arab or post-colonial) may be regarded as a western and thus a colonial product, hence the necessity to introduce and define a more adequate ideology under the generic term of womanism.

Feminism under its different forms could not be applied to many African, African-American or Arab Muslim women’s writings, and thus, while feminism applies to Western women writers, womanism refers to the African or the Arab Muslim woman writer. African-American women writers are included because there are extra literary determinants (such as colonialism for example, where the control of Western culture over black women is noticed) that explain similarity in aesthetic attitudes between African and African-American women writings and thus, their difference with their western counterparts.

I.10. Womanism and African Womanism:

In other words, the African woman writer recognizes that “*along with her consciousness of sexual issues, she must incorporate racial, cultural, national, economic, and political considerations into her philosophy*” (Ogunyemi, 1985: 64). Womanism, as defined by Ogunyemi, is to recognize in Black women writings, in addition to the aspect of sexism, the impact of racism, neo-colonialism, economic instability and psychological

disorientation on Africans' lives. In such literary writings, one notices the predominance of the demands of native culture over the demands of sexual politics (Ibid: 64-6).

In 1983, before Ogunyemi's definition of Womanism, Alice Walker conceptualized an alternative to Feminism that she called Womanism. For her, it was necessary to formulate a specific approach that focuses on black women's identity and commitment to gender issues. She defined a womanist writer as "*a black feminist or feminist of color [who is] committed to survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female*" (Ibid in Arndt, 2000: 711). It implies that womanist writers are concerned not only with gender discrimination, but with discriminations based on race and socioeconomic status²⁰ as well.

In 1996, Ogunyemi distinguished her definition of Womanism from that of Walker's by adding a modifier and called it "African Womanism". She dissociated it by stating that it was "*necessary to reiterate that the womanist praxis in Africa has never totally identified with all the original Walkerian precepts. An important point of departure is the African obsession to have children*" (in Arndt, 2000: 712).

Another difference between both approaches is their attitudes towards lesbianism. While Walker emphasized such a relationship, Ogunyemi put the stress on the intolerance of lesbianism. Ogunyemi explained that women in Africa needed a theory with its own peculiarities, treating issues like extreme poverty and in-law problems, older women oppressing younger women, women oppressing their co-wives, or men oppressing their wives²¹.

It is very important to make the difference between Womanism and Black Feminism. Patricia Hill Collins recognizes that Womanism has a nationalist affiliation. Hudson-Weems defines the "agenda of Africana Womanism" and distinguishes eighteen characteristics of this ideology and that we will examine in Emechata's novel: "*self-naming, self-definition, role flexibility, family-centeredness, struggling with male against oppression, adaptability, Black female sisterhood, wholeness, authenticity, strength, male compatibility, respect, recognition, respect for elders, ambition, mothering, nurturing, and spirituality.*" (Alexander-Floyd and Simien, 2006: 69)

For Ogunyemi, to give a new terminology to Feminism and thus distinguishing it as “African Womanism” is a question of power. Naming is power in her Igbo culture; every name has its meaning and a psychological purpose. By giving a new terminology, and as an African womanist, Ogunyemi considered that she is dealing with African men’s and women’s oppression and not only women’s. To name it differently is to be conscious about this double oppression (Ibid: 721).

Aniagolu argued that though both ideologies, womanism and African feminism, seem equally revolutionary, African and African-American critics refuse to express loyalty to feminism by calling their ideology “a shade of feminism”. This new terminology of womanism asserts a “*hard-line pro-black position ... in favour of the positive representation of black people as a whole*” (Ibid, 1998: 98).

A sociological concept that seems in close relation with African womanism is the concept of “Female consciousness”. According to Kaplan, it manifests itself collectively when women feel their social role threatened and the survival of their community to be at stake, so they use their traditional network to resist any interference threatening their ability to nurture and preserve life and to restore the balance. This concept maintains pre-existing gender relations (Drew, 1995: 5-6).

The concept of “female consciousness” may be part of the “inherent ideology” defined by Rude as:

A belief system based on oral tradition, folk memory, and direct experience. Inherent ideologies [...] promote restorative movements; on their own; they cannot generate forward-looking visions. The development of such visions in traditional society [...] would depend on the introduction of an ideology derived from recorded ideas through contact with other societies or social groups (in Drew, 1995: 6).

The link between both is that female consciousness may exist as part of a society’s inherent ideology, yet both are continually restructured, based on derived ideas.

History shows that Igbo traditional women were able to influence their society through their remarkable abilities of organization, and Emecheta seems to hint at this female trait in *The Joys*.

I. 11. The Aba Women's War 1929 and the Alutaradi Organisation:

A multitude of women rising in defence of their traditions reminds us of a historical event; an event reported by Ezeigbo (1990:152) stating that between 1929 and 1931, in the old Owerri Province, a riot was waged by Igbo women, claiming their traditional social role and the right not to be taxed in their trade as well. It was called The Aba Women's War.

Drew defined it as an uprising, where women united across class lines in anxiety over the rapidity of economic and political changes undermining their nurturing role. It occurred during a period of increased colonial intervention. Women used "*ritualised sanctions dating from pre-colonial days, in order to restore the moral balance of their community and to control family and sexual values*" (Ibid, 1995: 10).

Another Igbo women's organization was the Alutaradi organization (Organization of Patrilineage Wives). It was an organization through which women made their grievances and wishes heard, and implemented by their men. According to Amudiume:

At worst, if lineage men proved stubborn, wives went on strike, in which case they refused to cook for or have sexual intercourse with their husbands. In this culture, men did not cook: control of food was therefore a political asset for the women (in Ezeigbo, 1990: 152).

This kind of organization made it possible for women from several communities in the wide area of Igboland to unite and act during the Women's War of 1929.

I. 12. The Notion of the "Male Daughter":

Ezeigbo also mentions another social condition that gave power to Igbo women. It is the case, when an Igbo man has no son, and hence, no heir, he could appoint his daughter as his son, this daughter having then the right to keep lovers, but not marry them, and in case she had a child (especially a male child), the latter would belong to her father to assure the lineage and thus fill the lack of male children in the family. "*Such a daughter had power (though limited) in the lineage to control and preside over her father's property, especially land.*" For anthropologists it is known as the notion of "*the male daughter*" (Ibid: 152).

To understand the importance of the male child in the Igbo culture, one should first understand the social organization of that culture which is patriarchy.

I.13. Patriarchy in the Igbo and the Arab Contexts:

Patriarchy is characterized by androcentricity, that is, the norms and values are perceived through male perspectives, interpretations, experiences, needs and interests. (Cooley, 1990: 9-10).

Patriarchy refers to the social organization of a culture into systems that are hierarchical and male dominated in terms of power and value... As the word patriarchy means the fathers rule the system. Just as arche or “rule” assumes difference in rank; so pater or “father” presupposes sexual difference. (Ibid:9)

This social organization is reflected among other elements, typical to the African, and more precisely the Igbo culture, in *The Joys*. The same social organization is represented in *Pillars* under the form of a social power²² or a hegemony²³ resisted by the female protagonist.

In the Arab context, patriarchy could be defined as “*the prioritising of the rights of males and elders (including elder women) and the justification of those rights within kinship values which are usually supported by religion.*” (Joseph, 1996: 14) Generally, it is a traditional social form. Yet, when the same patriarchal values advocating “*a hierarchy of authority that is controlled and dominated by males,*” (Krauss in Joseph, 1996: 14) exist in a modern context, it is called “neo-patriarchy.”(Joseph, 1996: 14) This concept is reflected in both novels, its definition will be given later in this chapter (p.46).

Patriarchy in the Arab and Muslim context is well highlighted in the novel of Faqir. Like Emecheta, Faqir borrows womanism to write patriarchy. The religion of Islam is a very important element in the definition of patriarchy in the Arab and Islamic context. Without a deep analysis of Faqir’s *Pillars*, the presence of all these ingredients (Qur’anic references and patriarchy) in this novel gives the impression that Faqir is practicing Islamic womanism.

I.14. Islamic and Arabo-Islamic Womanism:

Sharifa Zuhur defines Islamic Womanism (*al-niswīya al-islāmīya*) as the Muslim woman’s awareness of the social inequality she experiences, within the religious

framework of a well interpreted Islam, and her activism to achieve freedom in the public domain with more access to education for the sake of her sons, the future generation of men, and not to achieve equality with her husband. Some Islamic Womanists stated: “[they] are not like European women whose goal is the destruction of their family and by extension of their society.”(Cooke, 1995: 149) Yet, such a fundamentalist reasoning was considered as a fruit of ignorance by feminists like Nawal al-Sa’adawi and Islamic feminists like Zaynab al-Ghazali who were incarcerated with such fundamentalist women. (Cooke, 1995: 160)

To reframe Islamic womanism in the light of a literary work of fiction, the female character, representing the secular voice which is silenced by man, western power and Qur’anic verses’ interpretation, may seek freedom within Islam. Islamic womanism shares the same ideological aspect of “contradictory consciousness”²⁴ that characterizes African womanist’s writing like Emecheta’s *The Joys* and also, with the ideology used by Faqir in *Pillars*. Actually, all womanists aspire to higher social and economic status while preserving traditional respectability. The different emphasis put through our reading of *Pillars* entails to precise the type of womanism Faqir is using. It is a term newly coined in this research work as Arabo-Islamic womanism²⁵.

In Arabo-Islamic womanist writing, Faqir presents a multi-layered criticism where two important aspects of oppression are tackled and resisted by female characters. On one hand, we find the indictment against the androcentric and the colonial systems represented by the traditional patriarchy in the Arab and Muslim context and by colonialism. On the other, the western hegemony represented under the orientalist vision of the Arab Muslim woman is condemned. Though criticized, tradition is preserved and the traditional man regretted. It is used by the Arab Muslim woman (character and writer) to resist different types of domination.

Thence one can borrow Müge Göçek and Balaghi’s reasoning in their essay and define Arabo-Islamic Womanism as a theory about Subaltern Third World Discourse that emphasizes on colonial and neo-colonial hegemony of the West over the translation and interpretation of the Third World on the one hand, and on the other hand, patriarchal hegemony of current explanation of gender relation. (Müge Göçek and Balaghi, 1995: 1) We would complete this definition by clarifying that traditional material is used to resist this hegemony.

Arabo-Islamic womanism is to be recognized in Arab and Muslim women's writings, in addition to the aspect of sexism, the impact of racism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, orientalism, exoticism and psychological disorientation of Arab and Muslim women's lives. Through the use of traditional means to carve one's a space for more freedom, we notice the predominance of the native culture claim over the claim of sexual politics.

The process of characterization of both writers in both novels and the description of the different rituals and beliefs, as demonstrated in chapter two (p.71, 83-88), hint at the existence of womanism before feminism. It is a reasoning that may be supported by the Cradle theory of Diop. One can also surmise that the African or Arabo-Islamic womanist approaches adopted by both authors in both novels were inspired from such a theory

I.15. Cradle Theory:

A racist argument justifying the subjugation of the African men, women and children to European domination sees African people as one unity since they are all considered as inferior to the white race. For many years, such a fact was supported by and was fed into the academic world and scientifically proved in different fields such as history, biology, sociology, anthropology, psychology and education. (Diop in Dove, 1998: 519)

Diop's (1959-1990) 'cradle theory' distinguishes two distinct cradles of civilization. The southern cradle which is African and where humanity began produced matriarchal social system. The northern cradle is Europe. Over time, the migration from South to North created patriarchal male-centered societies to the north, a system that was imported then to Africa through different forms of domination. In the concept of matriarchy characterizing the southern cradle, there was a complementarity between the man and the woman. It was a nonhierarchical system where both men and women worked together in all areas of social organization.

Diop attributed matriarchy to an agrarian environment in "a climate of abundance" and patriarchy to "*nomadic traditions arising from harsh*" lifestyle. In a matriarchal system "*the woman is revered in her role as the mother who is the bringer of life, the conduit for the spiritual regeneration of the ancestors, the bearer of culture, and the center of social organization.*" (Diop in Dove, 1998: 520)

In the same theoretical analysis about the North's and South's cultural distinction, Diop also refers to a third cradle where these former cradles meet and form a zone of confluence: the area known nowadays as the Middle East. This region was religiously composed of Islamic, Judaic and Christian worshipers. According to Stone "*it is through the imposition of these male-centered religions [...] that the earlier (southern cradle) reverence for the female goddess was eventually destroyed.*" (Stone in Dove, 1998: 522) Following such reasoning, one can surmise that the creation of the region of the Middle East may be deemed a conquest of matriarchy by patriarchy. It was a region where the religions imposed claimed that the domination of women by men may be considered as morally essential.

Diop²⁶ offers a cultural analysis that contributes to enrich the theory of African Womanism through his critical essays and books. One can suppose then that the conquest of Africa by Europe from the ancient era up to the present time may be considered as a conquest of matriarchy by patriarchy. As he states:

The domination of African women, men and children by European women, men and children leads to the potential subjugation of African women by white men and women, as well as by African men. In this light, it is possible to understand how the imposition of Western values on African people's more egalitarian female-male relations is so insidious, especially when humanity is required to view this condition as progressive, universal and natural.²⁷ (Ibid in Dove, 1998: 523)

In the light of Diop's reasoning, we also understand that the origin of racism comes from the xenophobia (being the fear of foreigners) that characterized the patriarchal Indo-Aryan culture. He attributed it to the harsh existence in the northern environment. In his cultural analysis, he states that xenophilia (the practice of making strangers welcome) characterized the matriarchal society²⁸, "*Black, White and Yellow (wo)men had already been admitted to live as equal citizens.*" (Ibid: 523) At the time of the development of city-states in Greece and Italy, killing visiting strangers was not considered a crime. One can deduce that with cultural transference it is possible to make the link between xenophobia and the later development of racist behaviour and ideology which is noticed in present times in the behaviour of the West toward the East manifested through the fear of foreigners or of difference.

Historically Womanism as a women's consciousness existed before feminism. In his cultural analysis, Diop explains the conquest of Africa by Europe as the conquest of matriarchy by patriarchy. He also stated that the zone of confluence that the area of the Middle East represents today was originally populated by Africans before the Indo-Aryan conquest. Hence the influence of patriarchal Europe by the values and beliefs of female gods practiced by matriarchal Africans.

During and after the conquest of Kemet (Egypt), Greek and Roman women were inspired from them and from the African people who had settled in Europe before the Moorish. The presence of the Moorish in Europe with their Islamic faith (which was till influenced by matriarchy and opposed to the patriarchy of Catholic Christianity of Europe at that time) was an additional aspect that had an impact on European women's influence.

In both novels, *The Joys* and *Pillars*, we find references to beliefs of female goddess and hedonistic practices (see chapter two p.72, chapter three p.140) that are part and parcel of the African and Arab womanist ideology of Emecheta and Faqir. Yet, these are not the only "African" or "Bedouin" elements found in these novels. Time is also used in a specific way by both authors to mirror their womanist ideology.

I. 16. Traditional Synchronicity versus Western Diachronicity:

Two temporalities are noticed in *The Joys*, traditional synchronicity and Western diachronicity. These temporalities are defined as a time perception, i.e. how time is measured, viewed and lived by male and female characters in this novel.

As for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains repetition and eternity from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations. On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock, but whose regularity and unison with what is experienced as extrasubjective time, cosmic time, occasion vertiginous visions and unnameable jouissance (Kristeva, 1981: 16).

This time perception provides a gauge with which one can measure each character's alienation from his or her traditional culture and his or her own movement towards western ways (Barthelemy, 1989: 561).

Traditional synchronicity corresponds to synchronic or cyclical time, a temporality whereby the African sees life as more than a linear progression of events. Through such a temporality, life is seen as a series of cycles through which one passes. It is a cycle corresponding to nature, moving from season to season, always returning to the starting point. The same thing happens to human beings, they move from immortality to immortality, passing through the same stages more than one time.

This sense of time places the African in a world in which recurrence and repetition is acknowledged as a higher order of existence and assuring continuity and hope. For Barthold: “*Metaphysically, being was equivalent to duration: each moment embodied a recurrence of a past moment, and implied was a potential future recurrence, so long as the cycle remained unbroken. Time included or perhaps ‘belonged to’ the community as a whole...*” (in Ibid: 560). Community here includes the living and the dead, in other words the living physical world and the world of immortals, the spirits and dead ancestors. The living and the dead are synchronically united. “*The feeling of communion in the family and the community is projected backwards into time, and also into the transcendental world, to the ancestors, to the spirits and, unconsciously, to God*” (Senghor, 1976: 39).

Western diachronicity on the other hand is represented by the imperial culture, “*inseparable from western industrial time and its extended and hegemonic manifestation*” (Barthelemy, 1989: 561). This temporality is brought in the case of *The Joys* through colonialism and imposed under oppression.

I.17. Western Synchronicity:

In *Pillars*, traditional synchronicity is resisting western synchronicity. We notice that the mummified image and static vision that is represented by the orientalist narrative becomes a “western synchronicity”, in the sense that it reflects a repetition and recurrence of a projected image of the Arab woman by the orientalist narrator. It is a temporality whose stereotyping is contested by the female protagonist’s temporality. The orientalist projected image is deconstructed by the temporality of the female protagonist’s narrative which is also synchronic, explaining the present using the past (telling her story through flashbacks) using the traditional material of storytelling as a reference to *The Nights*²⁹, typical to Faqir’s Arab cultural heritage. Although her narrative is given rhythm by the conditions of her internment and the recurrent visits of the British doctor, she tries to alter the mummified image of the Arab woman as projected by the orientalist narrator.

Both temporalities, Western diachronicity and synchronicity, in both novels are referring to the imperial culture. These temporalities are imposed under oppression.

I.18. Oppression:

Oppression is understood here as a situation where one individual objectively exploits another individual or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person. It is a situation of violence because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. We consider an act as oppressive when it prevents the individual of being fully human (Freire, 2000: 55-6).

The definition of violence here, includes "*the use of physical force to inflict injury on others*" and, "*improper treatment or verbal abuse.*" It may exist on a macro level, when it is applied among nation states and within communities. It also takes place on a micro level, when it operates within a family or intimate relationships. (Faqr, 2001: 65)

Cases of oppression that are epitomized in both novels through the male and female characters and that will be shown in the third and the fourth chapters (pp.115, 134, 176) are colonialism, slavery, Orientalism and confinement.

I. 18. a. Colonialism:

It may be defined as a form of domination, an idea that is closely related to the concept of power. It is the control by individuals or groups over the territory that may include the control over the behaviour of other individuals or groups as well. It has also been considered as a form of exploitation with emphasis on economic variables and as a culture change process³⁰.

To situate *The Joys* in history it is important to know that Nigeria was colonized by the British from about 1850 to 1960. That colonialism could be described chronologically through three phases or periods. In the first phase, there was the formation of a captured colony. The second constituted the education and inculcation of British ways, "*the taming of the colony*" through Christianity. The third stage represented the immediate aftermath of colonialism, that is to say the independence of the colony. The second phase began around 1903 under the leadership of Lord Lugard in North Nigeria. South eastern Nigeria, that was inhabited by the Igbo people, was economically very important to the British because of its

natural resources. In 1929 the British set up a warrant chief system to impose taxation on products and services in that region, hence the protestation of Igbo women through immense rioting to contest that pauperizing taxation (Ihuegbu, 2003: 1).

It is also important to locate *Pillars's* setting in history and geography. The 17th century represents the era of the Ottoman Turkish conquest of the almost all the Arab world, except: Morocco, some countries in the Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf. Transjordan, including “historical Palestine”, was occupied by the British colonizer during World War I. It was known as the British mandate of Transjordan from 1922 to 1947. Jordan was known as Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1949. It was established as an independent monarchy in 1946 after being subsumed into the British Transjordan Mandate in 1922. This region emerges after the political boundary had been set as the British Mandate. The Kingdom of Jordan was created after Arab resistance against the Ottoman. This resistance was instigated by the British colonizer during World War I and was known as the Arab Revolt of 1916³¹. Three sons of the Hashemite family, with whom the British mandate transacted, were given thrones. Abdallah became king of Transjordan (now Jordan), Faisal briefly ruled as king of Syria who then became king of Iraq, and ‘Ali ruled the Hijaz (for a short period of time before being overthrown by the Saudi family).

Cultural, racial, or administrative discrimination is an oppressive practice that results from colonialism. Colonized populations are:

...tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power [...] The discriminatory effects of the discourse of [...] colonialism, for instance, do not simply or singly refer to “a person,” or a dialectical power struggle between self and Other, or to a discrimination between mother culture and alien cultures. Produced through the strategy of disavowal, the reference of discrimination is always to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different--- a mutation, a hybrid. (Bhabha, 1994c: III in Luangphinit, 2004: 70)

While Emecheta’s female protagonist is resisting the colonial power, Faqir’s female protagonist struggles against the imperial domination. Edward Said distinguishes between the terms ‘imperialism’ and ‘colonialism’. In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, he posits:

“imperialism” means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; “colonialism,” which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. As Michel Doyle puts it: ‘Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire. In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism ... lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices.’ (Said, 1993: 9)

Faqir’s novel is denouncing the imperialist practice that lingers through orientalism. Orientalism is a discriminatory discourse that we find in *Pillars* through the storyteller’s voice, this discourse will be analyzed in chapter three (pp.134-8).

I.18. a. 1. Orientalism and Exoticism:

For the purpose of analyzing the storyteller’s orientalist representation I use Edward Said’s following definition of the paradigm of Orientalism in the Middle Eastern context.

Said developed the concept of Orientalism in the context of the Middle East as an “*influential paradigm in studies of travel writing.*” Briefly, he defines it as:

an academic tradition, a style and, most importantly, a way of ‘making sense’ of the Middle East that draws on a binary epistemology and an imaginary geography that divides the world into two unequal and hierarchical positioned parts: the West and the East, the Occident and the Orient, Christianity and Islam, rationalism and its absence, progress and stagnation. (Melman, 2002: 107)

Edward said gave three interrelated meanings to Orientalism. According to him, “*anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient—and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist—either in its specific or its general aspects, is an orientalist.*” It is also defined as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the ‘Orient’ (and most of the time) ‘the Occident’ . Taking the late eighteenth century as a starting point, Said considered that “*Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statement about it, authorizing views of it,*

describing it, by teaching it, settling it: in short Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient.” (Ibid, 2003: 88) Though the three definitions are interdependent, in our analysis we are more concerned with the last meaning of orientalism given by Said.

In his book *Orientalism*, Said argues that “*the modern Orientalist was, in his view, a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation, and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished.*” (Ibid, 1995: 21) This is the best pretext to impose on it the British (and the French) culture and language.

Said distinguishes between two types of orientalism in his book: *manifest* and *latent* orientalism. The manifest orientalism “*focuses on the discriminating clichés used against natives from the East (e.g., the sly, idle, and cowardly native), latent orientalism emerged in what seemed to be very positive images of the oriental other (the East as exotic, alluring, resplendently wealthy, and martial).*” This latter image has a correlation with the secret desire of the Western subjects for what is prohibited (wealth, violence, tyrannical power, promiscuity, lust). (Fludernik, 2007: 267)

To reflect the latent orientalism in the voice of the storyteller, Faqir utilizes exoticism. The term “*exotisme*”, or in English “*exoticism*”, appeared in the first half of the nineteenth century. It has two meanings: “*one signifying an exotic-ness essential to radical otherness, the other describing the process whereby such radical otherness is either experienced by a traveller from outside or translated, transported, represented for consumption at home.*” (Forsdick in Valassopoulos: 137)

For Nawal El Saadawi, Arab literature and early Western literature (before the mid twentieth century) rely on a dichotomy of two contrasting categories for the representation of women: either the female character is portrayed as seductive and sexual (what is reflected through the narrative of the storyteller in *Pillars* as shown in chapter three pp.134-8) or as a mother, pure and virtuous, devoid of sex and passion (like the portrayal of Um Saad in *Pillars*) (Ibid in Bibizadeh, 2012: 10)

Although this concept of exoticism is used by the writer in *Pillars*, within a range of other concepts central to post-colonial thought it can be critiqued and appreciated by post-colonial thinkers. For example, Fanon considers it as “*a means of simplifying,*

objectifying, neutralising and ultimately mummifying the colonised culture.” (Forsdick, in Valassopoulos, 2007:139). Yet, Faqir³² uses it in her literary production to criticize this very imperial aspect and also as a clear reference to travel writing.

Travel writing on the Middle East³³ as a western literary practice was characterized by the Western curiosity about the Orient. It indicated the Western and especially the British political and military superiority. It reflected the “asymmetry of power” that existed between Britain and the Middle East.

The storyteller in Faqir’s novel is a reference to travel literature. It is a traditional genre in both cultures: the Arab and the Western culture. Arab travel literature has its roots in the pre-modern period; an example of it is “Ibn Battuta’s (d. 1369) account of his journey from Morocco to East Africa, India, China, and back again.” In the Western culture, the interest devoted to narrative travelogues in the nineteenth century was representative of this trend. (Al-Musawi, 2015: 112) The gaze also refers to the Western traveler’s eye characterizing the curiosity of the British travel writing about the Orient. This curious gaze is referred to as the “*imperial eye*, *performing a colonial act of appropriation.*” (George, 2002: 119)

The first half of the nineteenth century corresponds to the era when the Western interest of the Middle East arose. It also coincides with the revolution of transports (steamships, carriages and railways) and the revival of the actual practice of pilgrimage inaugurated by Thomas Cook in 1869 and catering for British and American clientele labeled ‘Cookites’. The spiritual journeys had two routes: the shorter one including sacred places in Syria and Lebanon and Palestine, the longer one included Transjordan. With that type of spiritual journeys evolved two kinds of textual reporting their writing experience and expanding the corpus of Orientalist texts: the evangelical travelogue ignoring the Muslim culture and society turned mainly around the description and survey of Egyptian antiquities, and the ethnography which focused on Muslim customs and way of life.

The storyteller’s narrative represents a combination of these two kinds of writing. On the one hand, he reflects the British modern pilgrim influenced by the style of *The Nights*, on the other, like an ethnographer, he is interested in the description of the people’s customs and manners. His narrative results in an Orientalist vision.

By utilizing exoticism Faqir is criticizing the orientalist representation that is experienced as an imperial oppression by the Arab woman. *Pillars* could be considered as a post-orientalist literary production. Post-orientalist scholarship of the Arab women that has developed during the 1980's and 1990's aimed at critiquing exoticised, reductive representations of Oriental and Muslim women oppressed by their culture. (Ahmed in Saliba, 2000: 1087)

Oppression manifests itself under some psychological phenomena such as sadism, on the part of the oppressor (the coloniser), and alienation, madness, identity crisis or neo-patriarchy on the part of the oppressed (the colonised).

I. 18. a. 2. Sadism:

It is a characteristic reflected in *The Joys* and in *Pillars* considered as part and parcel of the oppressor's consciousness. It is the pleasure felt by the oppressor in his possibility to dominate another person (or other animate creature), according to Fromm "*the aim of sadism is to transform a man into a thing, something animate into something inanimate, since by complete and absolute control the living loses one essential quality of life—freedom*" (in Freire, 2000: 59).

I. 18. a. 3. Alienation:

It is hinted at in *The Joys* through the male protagonist's behaviour as well (see chapter four, pp.166-7, 175). The intention here is not to analyze the novel from the point of view of alienation but to highlight the behaviour of the male character Nnaife. Hence the necessity to refer to Marx's definition of alienation as a process "*by which man is turned into a stranger in the world his own activity has created*" (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1971: 212), where an accumulation of wealth leads to a devaluation of human life.

Dolan emphasizes three components of the alienation syndrome (1971: 1085-6):

- a. Powerlessness: for Seeman, it refers to the incapacity of the individual to rely on his own behaviour to provide himself with the outcomes and the reinforcements he seeks (in Dolan, 1971: 1085).
- b. Meaninglessness, which refers to the inability of the individual to perceive a coherent pattern of cause and effect relationships in the

environment. It deprives him from decision making and organizing his behaviour intelligently.

- c. Absence of intrinsic reward in labour, in the sense that the individual works only for external rewards.

I.18.a.4. “Unhomeliness”:

This concept will be used in our comparative analysis of both novels to qualify the psychological pressure experienced by the female characters of both novels. It will also serve to describe the feeling of displacement engendered by the different oppressions the female characters experience and resist. As defined by Homi Bhabha : “‘*unhomeliness*’ is perceived as having a direct bearing on identity awareness and its reconstruction amidst the overwhelming external forces of dislocation and depersonalization.” (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 271)

I.18.a.5. Madness and Confinement:

Madness as a psychological disorder has always been considered as an important aspect while studying the colonised world. “*It turns out that the darkness at the heart of the colonial experience may be a certain history of madness*” (Clingman in Luangphinit, 2004: 59) This psychological disorder plays a pivotal role in *Pillars*’ female protagonist’s space negotiation and identity maintenance.

Michel Foucault’s understanding of madness does not reside in an alternative to logic or reason but as a “*methodology to review the definition of both.*” (Luangphinit, 2004: 79) The modern conception of mental illness is inspired from the Classical Age definition of madness. Michel Foucault compares the treatment of madness to that of leprosy in the middle ages. Both lepers and the mad were excluded from their society and confined in isolated houses that were designed more for separation from society than for cures. For him the Classical treatment through confinement was not practiced for therapeutic purposes because the mad people were not considered ill. (Cutting, 2012: 53-4) Classical madness is regarded as a form of unreason, a disorder of the will. According to Foucault, there is “*an obscure connection between madness and evil [that passes] through the individual power of man that is his will. Thus madness is rooted in the moral world.*” (Foucault in Cutting, 2012: 58)

It has been noted that within the colonial context the basis for social identities was represented by binary reasoning. According to Sadowsky it is the main reason why the

“decision to build asylums was made almost immediately after formal colonialism was established.” (Sadowsky in Luangphinit, 2004: 61) Within the colonial scenario power helps in defining madness. *“Both asylums and empires are constructed by pathologizing “dangerous” classes in society, wherein those in power master those who are not.”* (Luangphinit, 2004: 61)

I.18.a.6. Identity Crisis and Neo-Patriarchy:

The female characters of *Pillars* suffer from identity crisis as a result of different oppressing elements. When one fails to fit in the cultural storehouse constituted by a majority of many individuals' stable identities, this mismatched person risks identity crisis. Because, though variable according to individuals, the primary identity should fit into the mould of his or her society in order not to be lost. The society also depends on the stability of the individuals' identities forming it. Otherwise culture may suffer catastrophic change. As stated by Lichtenstein: *“loss of identity is a specifically human danger, and maintenance of identity a specifically human necessity.”*(Ibid in Gardiner, 1981: 350)

Neo-patriarchy was considered by Hicham Sharabi in 1988 as a reaction to a crisis of identity in the Arab world after the defeat of the united Arab nation by Israel in 1967. The Arab patriarchal structures have been reinforced after that event. Neo-patriarchy was spoken about by Frantz Fanon while considering the colonized men violence upon their women after being themselves victims of violence from the colonizer. This violence could be considered as a form of neo-patriarchy and it is well epitomized by male characters, Daffash in *Pillars* and Nnaife in *The Joys*. (chapters three pp.115-122, 130-2, and four, pp.166-70, 175)

I. 18.b. Slavery and Pawning:

Another instance of oppression where man loses his freedom is slavery³⁴. In Africa, slavery differs from one society to another and sometimes even within one single society. It is also different from the plantation slavery of the New World that arose in response to clearly defined historical demands (Northrup, 1979: 1). The Igbo community had its proper patterns of slavery. In Igbo lands, in the south east of Nigeria, there were two distinct systems of slavery, slaves used in agriculture and slaves for trading (Ibid: 12). Slavery in such an area represented the major source of income in a society where *“success is primarily measured in terms of wealth”* (Harris, 1924: 46). Pawning is another

phenomenon of bondage that consists in placing someone in the service of a creditor as collateral for a debt (or guarantee for a loan) (Testart, 2002: 176), and that may be assimilated to the male protagonist's situation (see chapter four p.166).

In Igbo communities, purchasing a slave could be a type of investment with the interests returned in the form of the bride price fees paid for the daughters of the slave, or could help to increase the size of families in danger of extinction. It was also considered as an effective means of ridding the community of undesirable members, since the cause of one's enslavement may be his social misconduct or after repeated offences. An adulterer, a debtor or a quarrelsome person may be enslaved for such a behaviour³⁵. An unknown proportion of slaves were sacrificed during the funeral rites of wealth and powerful individuals³⁶. (Ibid: 40-6)

In this work, the notions of enslavement and pawning are used to designate the female and male characters' social exclusion in *The Joys* as a result of different bondages, as it will be shown in chapter four (p.162) through the description and the narration of Emecheta in *The Joys*.

Emecheta's African womanism in *The Joys* and Faqir's Arabo-Islamic womanism in *Pillars* are expressed and pinpointed at through their characterization, choice of setting to distinguish the "modern"³⁷ from the "traditional"³⁸ and temporality as well. Their female and male protagonists experience, consciously or unconsciously, situations of oppression such as colonialism, Orientalism, confinement and enslavement where they are deprived from their freedom, and thus turn to be completely alienated or insane and interned. Yet, they express their African and Arab/Bedouin identity through other literary and linguistic devices that must be underlined to highlight their Africaness or Arabness that is part and parcel of their womanists' literary writings.

In the second, third and fourth chapters (pp.92, 100, 150,187-194) a part will be devoted to analyze, using literary and narratological concepts, Emecheta's and Faqir's narrative techniques and plot structures in order to show the importance of traditional material such as storytelling for an Arab woman, and the traditional role of mother for the Igbo woman. The authors' indictment against colonialism and orientalism expressing their African and Arabo-Islamic womanism and, African and Arab identity when they write in English will be highlighted in the chapter two (p.90).

Yet before moving from purely cultural concepts (hinted at through their narration and description) to the way they organize and structure their narration to reinforce those cultural concepts, as it will be shown in the next chapters, the literary and narratological concepts used for such a task are defined:

I. 19. Description/Narration and the Narrative Technique:

Description and narration have been distinguished by Genette. In every narrative we find a close combination, variably proportioned, of representations of actions and events constituting the narration, on the one hand, and representations of things and characters constituting the description, on the other. The opposition between narration and description is what represents one of the major traits of the literary consciousness (in Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 54).

Further to this, the narrative is seen as a chronological and sometimes causal string of discontinued units. This implies that there are two types of relationship between the units: succession and transformation, where at least one combination of the following five elements (constituting a complete cycle in a tale) is found (Todorov, 1987: 47-51):

1. A balanced situation at the beginning.
2. An action causing the degradation of this initial situation.
3. A situation of unbalance.
4. An action to re-establish order or a balanced situation.
5. The reestablishment of the initial balanced situation.

In the narrative, the author may use a complete combination of the five elements; he or she may omit the first two or the last two elements. In other words, in every elementary narrative, two phases are found, one phase describing a balanced or unbalanced situation (element 1, 3 and 5) and the second one describing the passage from one situation to the other (actions causing balance or misbalance; element 2 and 4) (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 42).

In her narrative, Emecheta uses an extradiegetic³⁹ narrator for her description and narration. Through this type of narrator, she has an unlimited vision. She is able to describe

the female protagonist's feeling and desire after she is dead as it is demonstrated in the fourth chapter (p.173). Flaubert said, about the use of such a narrator, that the artist must be-in his work like God in His creation, invisible and powerful, felt everywhere but not seen (Ibid: 62).

In *Pillars*, Faqir utilizes storytelling as a traditional material to underline her womanist ideology. The following definitions will encompass all the narratological⁴⁰ tools used in the female protagonist's narrative to negotiate her space. These elements will help us to apply on Faqir's novel a womanist narratology⁴¹ that could be characterized as "*the study of narrative structures and strategies in the context of cultural constructions of gender.*" (Page, 2007: 189)

As argued by Barthes, a study of narrative could be fruitfully combined to that of ideology. This is what we intend to demonstrate through the narrative technique of Faqir and her anti-colonial ideology. From the structure of the story and its framing, we will show how identity is constituted and space negotiated by the Arab woman as represented by the female protagonist, in a patriarchal and a colonial context. What will be highlighted in *The Joys* is the various connections between narrative and ideology that intersect.

I.20. Storytelling and Tellability:

The different functions of storytelling are well exposed in the novel of Faqir. "*...stories are told for a reason and they fulfil multiple simultaneous functions: sharing personal news, entertaining listeners, revealing attitudes, constructing identity, inviting counter-disclosure, etc.*" (Norrick, 2007: 127)

Through the narrative technique used, Faqir intervenes at the level of the tellability of both narrators as a way to bring to the fore her ideology. This aspect will be shown through the analysis of the storyteller's narrative in chapters three and four (pp.134-8, 180-2). "*The tellability of a story is [...] something [the storyteller] negotiates in the given context...A would-be narrator must be able to defend the story as relevant and newsworthy to get and hold the floor and escape censure at its conclusion.*" (Norrick, 2007: 134)

The narrative uttered by the storyteller lacks tellability and relevance when we compare it to the female protagonist's story because there is no evaluation in it. Labov focuses on the importance of evaluation in determining reportability or tellability of the story. This is part and parcel of Faqir's narrative technique to give more value to the story of the female protagonist.

I.21. Story and Narrative:

In our analysis of *Pillars*, we may refer to the utterances of both, the storyteller and the female protagonist, as ‘story’ or ‘narrative’ depending on their narrative function.

Narrative is defined by Norrick as: “*any representation of past events, but for a text of discourse to qualify as a story proper it must be a narrative with a point in context. Narratives may include travelogues, project reports, and comparable kinds of texts with no evaluation by the narrator, but a story will always possess personal and contextual relevance and contain evaluation by the teller.*”(Norrick, 2007: 128)

In the case of the female protagonist in *Pillars*, we shall rather use the term story than narrative to refer to the means used to resist in asylum since she is using it with a great personal and contextual relevance; whereas in the case of the storyteller, his utterances will be referred to as narrative. Yet, in both cases, their utterances are provided from the same event. That is to say that the “same story” has received different narrative treatments voiced from different tellers or narrators.

According to Gerald Prince, we have the tendency to substitute narrative for many terms like: explanation, argumentation, theory, hypothesis, evidence, ideology or message. For him: “*Narrative is the representation of at least two real or fictive events in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other.*” (Prince in Ryan, 2007: 23)

As Peter Brooks argues about narrative: “*While I think the term has been trivialized through overuse, I believe the overuse responds to the recognition that narrative is one of the principal ways we organize our experience of the world- past part of our cognitive tool kit that was long neglected by psychologists and philosophers.*” (Brooks in Ryan, 2007: 22)

I.22. Narration and Focalization:

Narration may be defined as the process of telling a story. (Porter Abbott, 2007: 39) Labov also defines it as “*a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events reported. Thus a narrative consists of a sequence of past tense clauses sequentially ordered with respect to each other.*” (Labov in Norrick, 2007: 128)

In our analysis, we may refer to narration when we speak about the way the storyteller reports some events happening in the female protagonist’s life where he reverses

the order of sequences and thus destroying the narrative as told by this very female character and thus her story changes. (see chapter 3 p.188)

It is very important for our analysis to distinguish between narration and focalization as used by Faqir. Narration is *“the telling of a story in a way that simultaneously respects the needs and enlists the co-operation of its audience.”* Focalization is *“the submission of (potentially limitless) narrative information to a perspectival filter.”* (Jahn, 2007: 94)

“Figural narrative” that we find in the modernist⁴² “novel of consciousness” is *“a third-person narrative in which the story-world is seen through the eyes of a character.”* This is a very important concept that has been given so many terms by narratologists. Such central perceiving characters were called in Henry James theoretical writings, *“centres,” “mirrors,”* or *“reflectors.”* Franz K. Stanzel called them *“figural media,”* Gerard Genette *“focal characters,”* Chatman *“filters,”* and Bal *“internal focalizers.”* (Jahn, 2007: 95) We will borrow Genette’s term for such a concept in our analysis.

Genette made a clear distinction between the function of the narrator and the reflector. As he stated:

most of the theoretical works on this subject [perspective]...suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here mood and voice, a confusion between a question who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective? and the very different question who is the narrator? – or, more simply, the question who sees? And who speaks? (Genette in Jahn, 2007: 97)

Few years later, Genette replaced “who sees?” by “who perceives?” (Ibid: 101) By his first question “who perceives?” Genette refers to the focal character, while “who speaks?” hints at the one who utters the narrative discourse that is to say the narrator. Through these two questions he renders focalization independent from narration. This is well reflected in Faqir’s novel and demonstrated in chapter four (p.188).

As Genette added to his clear distinction that both questions determine, the *“criterion of focalization is not only “who perceives?” but the gradable feature of “restriction of narrative information.” From a scale of increasing degrees of restriction he distinguished three categories:”*

1. The mode of *zero-focalization* where there is no restriction or omniscient point of view. The narrator has access to limitless information (unperceived by ordinary humans).
2. The mode of *internal focalization* where we find one or more story-internal reflector characters and where narrative information is restricted to perceived data. In this very category, Genette distinguished three sub-patterns of internal focalization: (a) *fixed focalization* in which the story is told from a single focal character's point of view. (b) *variable focalization* where we find more than one reflector, the same event is variously seen through the eyes of many characters. (c) *multiple focalization* in which the same event is seen by various characters and told repeatedly, each time seen through a different focal character. Genette considered this pattern of focalization as a dynamic one allowing various shifts between patterns.
3. The mode of *external focalization* typical to dialogue of "stage directions," in it, there is a reduction of narrative information and only what might be audible and visible to a virtual camera is reported.

Genette defined real-life perception as represented literarily as *online perception*. This is complemented by *offline perception* which is the same technique but this time used to represent the imaginary sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. Though it is difficult for the reader to make the difference between them but the specificity of overcoming real-life constraints makes offline perception less realistic than online perception.

Mieke Bal criticized Genette's theory of focalization. She redefined external focalization. She proposed to subsume Genette's external and zero focalizations under the single pattern of external focalization. She called it external "*not because things are seen from the outside (as in Genette's etymology of the term) but because they are imaginatively seen by the narrator who, in Bal's definition, is external to the story [...] Bal's narrator now acquires an additional function, namely that of being a possible "external focalizer" (or "narrator-focalizer") systematically opposed to the internal focalizer character [...] residing within the storyworld.*" (Bal 1991 in Jahn, 2007: 101)

It is also necessary in the case of our narrative analysis of Faqir to define the term 'discourse' and distinguish it from 'story'. Analysing the narrative of this novel is quite

impossible without the analysis of these two temporalities that make up the narrative. The “story” is “*the sequence of events that can be abstracted from any narrative telling,*” whereas the “discourse” is the “*presentation and reception of these events in linguistic form (in other words, the act of writing resulting in the written text and the act of reading that text).*”(Bridgeman, 2007: 54)

Time is another pivotal element and the first part of the narrative’s fabric, “*given that we tend to think of stories as sequences of events.*” The second crucial part that is inseparable from time is space. It has always been considered as “*static description which slows up and intrudes into the narration of dynamic events.*”(Ibid, 54) Time and order are manipulated by Faqir in a way to highlight her ideology. Faqir uses flashbacks. The flashback or analepsis is when an event is told out of the order in which it occurs and fills in an important part of a character’s past. It belongs to “order” of events, one of the three main areas suggested by Genette that may be constituted from the temporal relationships between story and discourse. (Bridgeman, 2007: 54) This order of events is well manipulated in *Pillars* by Faqir and will be demonstrated in chapters three and four (pp. 134-138, 176-82).

While considering special relationships in a narrative the concept of “container” could be necessary to our understanding of outside and inside. “*Containers may be rooms, houses, vehicles, or entire cities.*” (Bridgeman, 2007: 55)

I. 23. The Folktale and the Plot Structure:

Plot has been given many definitions by narratologists. It is considered as the artful construction of a story: Paul Ricoeur defined it as “*the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in a story... A story is made out of events to the extent that plot makes events into a story.*” Other narratologists Like Genette regarded it as “*the artful disclosure of a story.*” According to such narratologists “*the plot re-arranges, expands, contracts, or repeats events of the story. By such temporary delays, concealments, and confusions, plot enriches the experience of what would otherwise be just a story.*” (Porter in Abbott, 2007: 43) We will be concerned in our analysis by the second definition while referring to the plot structure of both novels.

When analyzing the narrative technique of Emecheta and her plot structure in the second chapter (p.92) with the function, for example, of Agbadi’s journey to the bush,

Vladimir Propp's principle about the folktale will be used. This principle claims that tales of the same functions belong to the same type (Propp, 1970: 30-4), that is if the features found in different tales and narratives follow the same pattern of expression and combine with other elements in the same manner, they should be considered as performing the same type of functions and thus belonging to the same type.

Despite the fact that both writers' borrowing of traditional material, as the folktale plot structure or *The Nights*' storytelling, may seem arbitrary, the ideological approach applied in both novels highlight the motivation of both authors.

The analysis of Verisimilitude (or *vraisemblance*) by Genette in "*Vraisemblance et Motivation*" is based on the linguistic distinction between motivated and arbitrary signs. The elements composing a story are arbitrary since they bring their meaning solely from the relationship they have with other elements without referring to the logic of the real world, they have an arbitrary literary logic. Thus they are not motivated. Yet, for stories regarded as verisimilar these elements pass off these arbitrary literary logic as real-world logic. "*The artificial construction seems natural because it is implicitly translated into the common-sense logic that people accept without asking for motivation.*" After this linguistic phenomenon the naturalization process, central to every ideology constantly transforming what is artificial constructs into natural givens, takes place. (Genette in Herman and Verveack, 2007: 218)

I. 24. Greimas' Actantial Model:

The three basic elements of both stories help us understand the ideology of the authors: the first one is: action and event. Through A. J. Greimas' actantial model we can understand the authors' ideology at the "story" level of each novel, if we consider the story as the most abstract level of narrative.

It was on Propp's theories that Greimas based his actantial model. It is a device that can theoretically be used to analyze any real or thematized action, particularly in literary texts and images. According to Greimas, in the actantial model, an action may be divided into six components called "actants". An "actant" does not correspond always to a character. It may be an anthropomorphic being (a human, an animal, or a talking thing...), it could be a concrete (or not), inanimate elements including things or a concept like

freedom, for instance. It may be individual or collective, a society for example. (Herbert, 2006: 1) The six components proposed by Greimas are:

- 1- The subject: the “actant” at the origin of the action.
- 2- The object: the aim of the action.
- 3- The sender: the “actant” that instigates the action.
- 4- The receiver: the “actant” that benefits from the action.
- 5- The helper: the “actant” that helps to accomplish the action.
- 6- The opponents: the “actants” that hinder the action.

These six components correspond to three axes of description:

- A. The axis of desire: where we find the subject’s desire to reach the object. The relationship established between both is called the junction.
- B. The axis of power: the helper assists in achieving the desired junction, whereas the opponent hinders it.
- C. The axis of knowledge (transmission): the sender is the element requesting the establishment of the junction between subject and object. The receiver is the element that benefits from achieving this junction.

An actantial analysis consists of assigning each element of the action being described to the various actantial classes (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 48-9).

To apply these concepts to both novels in order to bring an African and an Arab womanist reading to both texts, many “actants” will be chosen, among them, male and female characters.

I. 25. Choice of Characters in the Novels:

Through their narrators, Emecheta and Faqir offer the reader, or may be, it would be better to say narratee, a complete physical and psychological portrait of some of their male and female characters. This is, on the one hand, what helped in the choice of the male characters for the analysis. On the other hand, there are female characters in *The Joys* such as Ona and her daughter, the female protagonist Nnu Ego, that have a past, or what is called “anteriority”⁴³ or precedence, that helped the choice as well. This is what makes

them characters sufficiently representative of their social group. For Ngosi “*The characters have a collective rather than an individual hold upon our imagination which is intended to emphasize the strength of their shared responsibility*” (in Dseagu, 1992: 596).

The following tables give the different characters in both novels and their characteristics used in our analysis through the next chapters:

Characteristics Characters	Relationship with the female protagonist	Characteristics and place of development in the novel
Nnu Ego	The female protagonist	Born and lived in Ibuza then moved to Lagos
Nnaife Owulum	Nnu Ego’s second husband	Lives in Lagos
Nwokosha Agbadi	Nnu Ego’s father	An important chief in Ibuza
Ona	Nnu Ego’s mother	A rebellious woman living in Ibuza
Amatokwu	Nnu Ego’s first husband	Lives in Ibuza
Agunwa	Agbadi’s senior wife	Lives in Ibuza
Adaku	Nnu Ego’s co-wife	A wealthy trader in Lagos
Idayi	Agbadi’s friend	Lives in Ibuza
The Meers (a couple)	Nnaife’s white masters	Live in Lagos
Nwakusor	Nnaife’s friend	An Igbo who lives in Lagos
Ubani	Nnaife’s friend	An Igbo who lives in Lagos
Oshia, Adim and Nnamdio	Nnu Ego’s sons	Were born and live in Lagos
Taiwo and Kehinde	Nnu Ego’s twin daughters	Were born and live in Lagos
Mama Abby	Nnu Ego’s friend	An educated woman living in Lagos

I. Table 1. Table of Characters in *The Joys of Motherhood*

Characteristics Characters	Relationship with the female protagonist	Characteristics and place of development in the novel
Maha	The female protagonist	Bedouin woman. Born and lived in the village of Hamia. Interned in Fuhais mental hospital
Um Saad or Haniyyeh	Maha's roommate in the asylum	Daughter of Syrian emigrant City woman from Amman Lives in Castle mountain
Sheikh Nimer	Maha's father	Lives in the village of Hamia from Beni Qasim
Daffash	Maha's brother	Lives in the city
Nasra	Best friend	Lives in the village of Hamia
Sami el-Adjanibi	The storyteller	Half an Arab
Harb	Maha's husband	Lives in the village of Hamia from Beni Qasim
Tamam	Harb's mother	Lives in the village of Hamia from Beni Qasim
Dr Edwards	The British	Doctor in Fuhais hospital
Maliha	Maha's mother	From Beni Qasim, lived and died in the village of Hamia
Samir Pasha	Daffash's friend	Foreigner

I. Table 2. Table of Characters in *Pillars of Salt*

In the fourth chapter (p.191-4) it will be demonstrated that in *The Joys*, motherhood (just like money) is an important “actant” that has the function of helper and of opponent at the same time. In *Pillars*, the helper is the story uttered by the female protagonist and

madness that enables her to speak. To highlight the importance of motherhood in *The Joys*, Emecheta uses one type of organization at the beginning of this novel and then, moves to another one through her narrative.

I. 26. Gnoseological and Mythological Organizations:

Through the narrative analysis of *The Joys* two types of organization⁴⁴ (or what is called earlier transformation in the narrative) are noticed in the narrative of Emecheta: mythological organization and gnoseological or epistemical organization.

The first one is found in the simplest and most elementary narratives where a transformation operates from one situation to its opposite, the passage from balance to misbalance, called also negation. The epistemical organization is found in narratives where the event is less important than the perception or the knowledge we have about this event. The reader is already informed about the event that the action's (doing the transformation) power is lessened, hence the lack of interest of the narratee for the succession of events in the narrative.

Creative works, as creations of reality, have their own reality that is not strictly identical to historical, sociological or anthropological 'truth'. Yet, definitions from these disciplines could be used to understand better the symbolic representation offered by these creative works.

Chapter one: Sociological and Literary Notions

Notes:

¹ We can also use the term alterity to signify otherness. The definition given in this chapter fits otherness and alterity.

² For Jacques Lacan “*the ‘I’ is constituted in the mirror stage by the perception of itself as other (small o, petit a), the other person whose regard reinforces the identity construction of the self. Lacan describes the relationship between self and other under the label of imaginary. By contrast the Other in Lacan’s theory refers to the Real, that lies outside symbolization and imaginary access.*” (Lacan, in Fludernick, 2007: 272)

³ According to the same source, contrary to girls, at the beginning of their life, boys perceive themselves negatively distinguishing themselves from their first caretakers, their mothers. The boy achieves autonomy and independence once he outgrows the mother-child symbiosis. He adopts then the role of the father, he becomes active and individual and valued within his social environment. Yet this stage is achieved after a sealed separation from the mother with Oedipus complex.

⁴ “*Elle n’acceptait pas de se soumettre. Comble d’indépendance et summum d’impudence, elle se mettait au-dessus, à côté, rarement en dessous de son homme, le monde à l’envers*” (Ibid: 69). “*Lilith did not accept to submit. At the height of independence and impudence, she stood above, next to, hardly underneath her man, the world upside-down*” (my translation).

⁵ “*L’âme est un être en puissance, ou bien plutôt une entéléchie*” (Dermenjian, Guilhaumou and Lapied, 2008 : 22).

⁶ According to Freud, “*Le premier objet de l’amour du garçonnet, c’est sa mère à laquelle il demeure fixé pendant la formation du complexe d’Œdipe et, en somme, pendant toute sa vie.*” (in Ibid : 23) “*The first object of love of the son is his mother to whom he remains attached during the formation of Oedipus’s complex, in other words, during all his life.*” (My translation)

⁷ When we use the term tradition (in *The Joys*' analysis) or traditional material (In *Pillars*' analysis), we mean a designation of one's literary, religious, or folk heritage. It can assume "values in its being the collective residue of the past." In the case of *Pillars*, "such designation naturally includes references to Arab turāth, especially to *The Arabian Nights*, in addition to popular folk material—proverbs, songs, as well as religious and social folk practices."(Suyoufie, 2008: 220)

⁸ "According to John Locke, "the natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth"" By "superior power" he means "all forms of internal or external social forces constituted by a section of men that may undermine others [and] that attempts to endanger their existence."(Chinaka, 2013: 133)

⁹ Agency could be defined as: "The capacity that all human persons and culture in principle possess to understand their actions and evaluate them in terms of their (social and historical) significance for them." (Mohanty in Abu El Naga, 2002: 61)

¹⁰ This definition should not be confused with the illusion of senses: mirage... which means error that may be rectified with reason.

¹¹ The Igbo people (called Ibo by the English) inhabit South Eastern Nigeria. They caught the world attention for a while as chief protagonists of the Biafran tragedy. Igbo is both the people and the language (Achebe, 1975: 93).

¹² Before speaking about motherhood in the Igbo culture as reflected in this novel, a tentative definition should be given to culture. Kramersch contrasted culture with nature. This latter "(from the Latin word *nascere*: to be born)" refers to "what is born and grows organically", and culture refers to "what has been grown and groomed", in other words, what has been cultivated since its origin is from Latin *colere* meaning to cultivate (Kramersch, 2000: 4). She defines it as the membership in the discourse community that has in common a social space, a history, and that shares as well the same system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. In the Igbo culture, people give a great importance to community.

¹³ This term is used to refer to the population living in Jordan as epitomized by male and female characters in *Pillars*. In this study, the term includes Bedouin characters from the desert like Maha and Arab characters from the city of Amman like Um Saad. It can also refer to the population living in the Arabian Peninsula. The term Arabia is used in the twentieth century to refer to the Arabian Peninsula. Inclusively it covers Transjordan and a part of Mesopotamia. The Arabian Peninsula is composed of modern Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait. The characterization of Faqir (the Bedouin Maha, the Arab city woman Um Saad, and the half Arab the storyteller hints at the various identities of the different ethnic groups present in the Arab Middle East and that compose modern Arab culture. “Arab” becomes a “*fluid concept that changes according to context.*” (Reynolds, 2015: 6) The dominant religion in the Arab Middle East is Islam. Yet Arab identity is not based on this religion mainly. Though Islam becomes a part and parcel of the Arab culture and “Arabness” that took roots with the spreading of the Arabic language, we can be Arab and Jewish or Christian and speak Arabic and we can be Muslim without being an Arab. The Arabic language is the bond that unifies the Arab Middle East and North African into a category of its own referred to as “The Arab World.” The classical Arabic “*is no one’s mother tongue and is rarely used in daily life. Instead, it is learned in school, is now used primarily for written communication, and is essentially the same wherever it is taught.*” What is spoken in this region of the world are the diverse dialects of Arabic. (Ibid: 2)

¹⁴ The Bedouins represent a part of the population of the Arabian Peninsula; they are the Arabs living in the desert of Arabia. This latter “*came to be imagined as an iconic place, the locus of a pristine and authentic Arab way of life, a land of utopian dreams and, for of its most renowned explorers, an asylum from an ailing and degenerate modern Western civilization.*”(Melman, 2002: 113) The Bedouins are Arab tribes that “*led a nomadic existence that took them on migratory routes through the desert of the Arabian Peninsula.*” (Reynolds, 2015: 4) The Bedouin tribe, from the simularic origin, also referred to as *sharif*. (Cooke, 2000: 160)

¹⁵“*...the contemporary African woman [can] negotiate her way between the claims of tradition and modernization*” (Frank in Nnaemeka, 1995: 107).

¹⁶ For Miriam Cooke, it is used in the writing of “*diasporic feminists from within Muslim society who suggest that feminism within an Islamic framework will bring together two juxtaposing epithets, which celebrate multiple belonging. This allows for women to occupy a position within the religious community, without abandoning their freedom and rights.*” (Cooke in Bibizadeh, 2012: 11)

¹⁷ “*That “subaltern” was the highest rank that an Indian could achieve in the British colonial army and was a nice detail of not too much import.*” (George, 2006: 230)

¹⁸ In the Indian context, it was believed that colonialism had left the spiritual and private realm of culture unchanged and untouched because it was embodied by the Indian woman. Women were considered as spiritual and cultural private realms. In the Igbo and the Arab contexts, like in both novels, this area did not remain untouched because we see that the female protagonists feel the necessity to protect and safeguard their “territory” which is constantly threatened. This is what pushes Nnu Ego, in *The Joys*, to safeguard and negotiate constantly her space using motherhood and Maha, in *Pillars*, using narration (as borrowed from the traditional storytelling of Scheherazade) to maintain her identity and resist the orientalist misrepresentation of her image.

¹⁹ Post-colonial feminism reviewed the anti-colonial discourse to alter the status women were granted by nationalists in post-independence periods where their status remained unchanged both “*central (as symbolic figures) and marginal (in terms of actual changes in their material circumstances) to nationalist projects.*” “*While women may make minimal gains when mobilized as symbols of the nation, they are easily returned to the domestic or to a depoliticized private sphere when independence is achieved.*” (George, 2006: 222)

²⁰ Another alternative to feminism is “Africana Womanism” by Clenora Hudson-Weems (1993, 1998)

²¹ “Religious fundamentalism is another African problem that is not really relevant to African American—Islam, some Christian denominations, and also traditional religions.”(Ardnt, 2000: 715)

²² For the use of power in this context, we can borrow Foucault’s definition in his book *The History of Sexuality* as: “the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relation find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or, on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design and institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of law, and in the various social hegemonies.” (ibid, 1981: 92)

²³ Gramsci defines hegemony as “the absolute and unquestioned dominance of a particular view or group.” (Ibid in Herman and Vervaeck, 2007, 218)

²⁴ Arlene Macleod in Cooke, 1995 : 161.

²⁵ This ideology is a term coined in this analysis to refer to the ideology used by Faqir in the novel under study. It refers to the multiple criticism present in this text. A definition is given in this chapter based on the different elements demonstrated in the other chapters and that distinguish Faqir’s ideology from other forms of womanism and feminism, already known and defined in the academic sphere.

²⁶ Diop’s works have been referred to by Dove, among them we find three books: *The African origin of civilization: Myth or reality?* (1974) and *The cultural unity of Black Africa* (1990), *Civilization or barbarism* (1991), and one article: “Origins of the ancient Egyptians” (1991)

²⁷ The idea of skin colour and the conflated race/gender oppression is found in the works of the Greek philosopher Aristotle being one the Europe’s greatest classical thinkers, as he stated in *Physiognomy* according to the citation of Diop: “those who are two black are

cowards, like for instance the Egyptians and Ethiopians. But those who are excessively white are also cowards as we can see from the example of women, the complexion of courage is between the two.” (Diop in Dove, 1998: 528)

²⁸ “As has been documented in Kemet during the 12th dynasty (4,000 years ago).” (Dove, 1998/ 523)

²⁹ Alf Laila wa-laila or One Thousand and One Nights began as a series of Arabic tales transmitted orally and influencing the foreign travellers reporting their experience in Orientalist texts. Yet its first transcription was done by Antoine Galland as *Mille et Une Nuits* between 1704-14. Over a century before appearing in Arabic it was considered as a Western oriental text. Galland’s version was followed by many other editions and translations in Turkish and Persian: Edward William Lane’s edition between 1838-41 and Richard Burton’s edition between 1882-4. It also inspired pseudo-oriental tales such as William Beckford’s *Vathek* in 1795. (Melman, 2002: 111)

³⁰ The main difference between imperialism and colonialism appears to be the presence or absence of significant numbers of permanent settlers in the colony from the colonizing power. Colonialism is that form of domination in which settlers in significant numbers migrate permanently to the colony from the colonizing country. Whereas imperialism is a form of domination wherein few, if any permanent settlers from the imperial homeland migrate to the colony (Horvath, 1972: 46-7).

³¹ We notice that after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during World War I the political boundaries were set. Yet the map of the Middle East was redrawn after World War II by the British colonizer and the state of Israel was created splitting “historical Palestine”.

³² Exoticism for Faqir as for Assia Djebar in *Women of Algiers in their Apartments* is a “productive mode of resistance [...] “For Djebar, a “post-orientalist” aesthetics enables the body captured by the orientalist gaze of the past to return as a liberated, yet ghostly, figure from the colonial era. Indeed, Djebar, Fanon and Alloula equate a post-colonial discursive practice with a slow exhumation of the sexualized and orientalist body of colonial history. Yet, the liberatory performance designed to articulate the post-colonial

moment conflates the traces of the orientalised body with the discursive traces of a colonial past now dissolved, even if manifested in radically new forms.” (O’Riley, 2001 :51 in Valassopoulos, 2007: 139)

³³ “The term ‘Middle East’ is a neologism, invented in 1902 by US naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan to designate the sea and land stretching between a farther East-India- and a nearer one, extending towards the westernmost territories of Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. The centre of Mahan idiosyncratic map was the Persian Gulf-anticipating later US interest in the area. The new epithet was immediately taken up by *The Times*, put into circulation by officialdom, and gradually extended to include the mass of land under Ottoman rule- stretching from the Black Sea to equatorial Africa and from India to the heart of the Mediterranean.”(Melman, 2002: 105)

³⁴ Slavery (or enslavement) is a form of bondage. The notion of slave could be defined as an existing status different from other social categories. The legal content of such a status differs from one society to another, but in all societies it is based on one common principle: “*a slave is an outcast*”. A slave is excluded from what a society may consider as an essential social feature or dimension. Both exclusion and dimension are proper to each society. In societies, for example, where there is a predominance of kinship, the slave is excluded from kinship ties. In ancient societies, the exclusion is both from kinship and citizenship. In Islamic societies, the slave was excluded from kinship and if he or she belonged to a different religious group from that religious group and so forth (Testart, 2002: 176).

³⁵ To abolish slavery meant to reduce sources of wealth on the one hand and to create a social imbalance in the Igbo community. The British abolition of slavery in Nigeria could explain the Igbo people’s hostility towards Europeans in places like Asaba and Ibuza as described in the novel (Emecheta, 1979: 142).

³⁶ The abolition of slavery was in March 1807 but much later in Igbo lands (Pilington, 1957: 158). “*Direct interference with the internal affairs of the Igbo country began in*

1884, when the Niger Coast Protectorate was established. Still, no attempt was made to stop slavery before 1900 ... After that, general abolition became part of colonial political discourse.”(Nwokeji, 1998: 329)

³⁷ By modern we refer to modernism in its urban form, pre capitalism, nuclear family and many other notions linked to this modernism that are the consequences of the British colonisation in African countries. Modernism may be defined as “*the rejection of tradition and authority in favour of reason, science, and objectivity, closely associated with “western” thought and scientific method.*” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002: 337). The European ways are considered modern.

³⁷ Beliefs or customs taught by one generation to the next, often orally. For example, we can speak of the tradition of sending birth announcements. Tradition could be defined as “*the vast body of world views and thought systems which contrive to inhabit the consciousness of the majority of Africans*” (Irele, 1983: 10).

³⁹ “ *Une personne ou un personnage de la narration enchâssante peut être ou bien absent de la narration enchâssée (on le dira **extradiégétique**), ou bien acteur lui-même de cette narration enchâssée (**intradiégétique**)*” (Charaudeau and Maingueneau, 2002 : 485). “*A person or a character who narrates the setting may be either absent from this setting (we will call it extradiegetic), or he may be actor in it (intradiegetic)*” (my translation).

⁴⁰ Roland Barthes used the word narratology to refer to the study of narrative and narrative structure. He also indicated that it is possible to combine it with the study of “the beliefs, norms, and values that constitute what has come to be termed ideology.”(Herman and Vervaeck, 2007: 217)

⁴¹ Faqir’s narrative technique uses focalization as a subtle tool to negotiate her space within the androcentric bias of Arab narrative theory, but not only, she uses it to point to and amend the orientalist discourse typical to colonial literature. The result of such a combination could be called Womanist narratology.

⁴² Modernism as an ideological form includes various and diverse aesthetic practices like Futurism, Symbolism, Imagism, Vorticism, Expressionism, and Surrealism. Modernism can be defined as a range of “*multiple revolts against traditional realism and romanticism.*” It is characterized by “*paradox and ambiguity, a tendency toward aesthetic self consciousness, an interest in techniques of montage and juxtaposition, or a fascination with the demise of integrated individual personality.*” (Mullin, 2006: 136)

⁴³ “ *L’antériorité: donner un passé à un personnage lui donne de l’épaisseur ainsi le hero sera enraciné ou non dans une famille, une tradition, une région, etc...*” (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 46). “*Anteriority: to give a past to a character gives it depth so that the hero will be rooted or not in a family, a tradition, a region, etc...*” (my translation).

⁴⁴ “*Voulant attacher tel récit particulier à tel type d’organisation, on doit chercher la prédominance, qualitative ou quantitative, de certaines transformations, non leur présence exclusive*” (Todorov, 1987 : 54). “*Before naming the organisation of a particular narrative, we must look for the predominance, qualitative or quantitative, of certain transformations, and not their exclusive presence*” (my translation)

CHAPTER TWO:

Patriarchal “Unhomeliness”

II. 1. Introduction:

The portrait of a submissive and helpless woman and that of a strong and healthy man, both brought up in a traditional environment, is most of the time found in African and Arab women writing. The African and Arab women writers' status in their societies in the post-colonial period induced painful conditions which they felt the need to voice through their literary production¹.

In both texts, we notice traces of feminist ideology through the construction of both authors' womanist reasoning. The conflicting ideological forces noticed are explained by Bakhtin's analysis of the novel as a polyphonic genre in which we find multiple voices and registers. This aspect has been noticed mostly in women's narratives, and the narrative of oppressed people. (Herman and Vervaeck, 2007: 226)

This research work compares two novels from different cultures and nations with the objective of highlighting a common ideology and reasoning, one tries to avoid making of their literature and characters what Chandra Mohanty calls "*a singular monolithic subject.*" (Mohanty in Al-Sudeary, 2012, 67) Each text will be examined with the cultural values typical to the identity of its author.

II. 2. Identity Construction:

Identity is a term that bears contradictions. It means both sameness and distinctiveness. Its paradoxical aspect proliferates when it is applied to women. (Gardiner, 1981: 347)

We notice a progressive female identity construction from scenes describing young and adult female characters in both, *The Joys* and *Pillars*. Based on Lichtenstein's and Chodorow's reasoning in identity theory, our analysis will demonstrate how traditional values construct the "primary identity" as "female personality" of the female protagonists from a young age.

The values inculcated through women's primary identity construction in both cultures will be used by female characters to negotiate their space and cope with patriarchal "unhomeliness" represented through different social systems.

II. 3. The Traditional Setting:

Ibuza is used as a setting by Buchi Emecheta in most of her fiction. In *The Joys*, this setting represents the traditional life, a way of life typical to the pre colonial period, typical to the past.

Emecheta's turn-of-the-century Ibuza [...] is not a utopian, pre-colonial paradise. [This] Igbo village presents moral dilemmas to its occupants, as well as to the readers of the novel, in the form of slavery, polygamy, and ritual murders [...] Emecheta's subtle interweaving of often contradictory perspective suggests a flexibility of social and cultural roles, rankings, and relationships that precludes any authoritative perspective or voice from telling us how to view the village or, indeed, read the novel (Ward, 1990: 92-3).

In any literary text, space² constitutes, on the one hand, an indication of a place, and on the other, the creation of fiction. It is a combination of the space of the world and the space of the artist's imagination. In this novel, Emecheta produces a realist piece of writing. Space in this text could be considered as a mimetic geography of reality. Through her description of Ibuza, representing the traditional setting or the compound, she tries to create reality through her writing. It is in this traditional setting that she develops and describes her male and female characters' childrearing.

In *Pillars*, Haniyyeh's (the urban Arab female character also called Um Saad after having her first son) and Maha's (the Bedouin female protagonist) childhood description is mainly set between the village of Hamia and the city of Amman. It gives us the necessary ingredients to understand how the primary female identity of the Arab woman is constructed from her childhood and highlights the social expectations towards her.

The Arab woman's primary identity is constructed within a patriarchal system drawn from religion, Islam. Joseph named it 'religious patriarchy' (1997: 17). It is a social system whereby the privilege of males and elders is supported by religious practices and men's interpretation of Islam. In the Arab Muslim world, "*the cultural articulation of patriarchy (through structures, social mores, laws and political power) is increasingly justified by reference to Islam and Islamic doctrine.*"(Shaheed in Moore, 2000: 151)

In Igbo or Bedouin girls' childrearing, there is a gradual accumulation of values. These values differentiate their way of life from others', from that of the colonizer's. Being themselves Igbo and Bedouin women, Buchi Emecheta and Fadia Faqir, share the same cultural background as many African and Arab writers who have accumulated the same values they depict in their fiction. They have a distinctive culture and history³.

II. 4. The Traditional Values Within Patriarchal "Unhomeliness":

Education in the African or Arab communities has always had its own system of transmitting values and teaching norms from one generation to another, different from the European classroom system⁴.

II. 4. a. The Veil:

Faqir voices through the character of Haniyyeh the "unhomely" values' transmission from a mother to her daughter, strengthened by religious patriarchy. In the asylum Haniyyeh tells her roommate Maha how she was treated by her mother when she was very young: "...they sent me to school. My mother made me wear a long black skirt, a black cape, covered my head and my face with a black veil. Hot, masked and unable to breathe, I walked to the Kutab, the religious school run by the mosque..." (Faqir, 1996, 38)

Faqir uses her female character's voice to express her reluctance to the wearing of the veil in particular. In her interview with Lindsey Moore, Faqir said that when she was young, wearing the veil⁵ was imposed by her father⁶ and that her writing was influenced by this factor. (Moore, 2011, 1)

Yet, though suffocating under her veil Haniyyeh was very excited to learn to write and read. As she said to Maha: "*My favorite surah was the Blood Clot. 'Read: In the name of thy Lord who created. Created man from a blood clot...Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not.'*" (Ibid, 1996: 38) A year later, her happiness disappeared with her young age. Her father ordered her to stay at home with her mother because she was growing up. (Ibid: 39) The female character appreciated the Islamic education and so did her classmates: "*I lifted the veil and saw the faces of my classmates. The faces of Transjordanian girls beamed with happiness.*" (ibid: 38) Yet, this happiness was interrupted and invaded by patriarchal domination. This scene reflects with strength Faqir's Arabo-islamic womanism.

Haniyyeh enjoyed going to the Qur'anic school because it provided her with an excuse to leave their house and escape her father's wrath. (Ibid: 39) The house where she grew up in is described as an "unhomely" environment because of a patriarchal system where men were granted rights women were simply not. "Unhomeliness" is lived as a displacement. *"In that displacement, the border between home and world becomes confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting."* (Bhabha in Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 286)

II. 4. b. Virginité and Marriage:

Haniyyeh's growth represented a threat to her father's purity. She must stay at home to preserve her virginity. She was forced to marry a man she did not love and Haniyyeh becomes Um Saad after marriage. (Ibid: 39) About the importance of women's virginity for the Arab man, Mernissi writes:

Like honor, virginity is the manifestation of a purely male preoccupation in societies where inequality, scarcity, and the degrading subjection of some people to others deprive the community as a whole of the only true human strength: self confidence. The concept of honor and virginity locate the prestige of a man between the legs of a woman (Ibid:183).

In the Arab Muslim culture, the purity of the men in the family is determined by the sex organs of their daughters and sisters⁷. This is well represented by Maha. As Harb asked Maha to see her in the night before marriage, her answer was: *"Are you mad? For a girl to be out at night is a crime of honor. They will shoot me between the eyes."* (Faqir, 1996: 10)

In Maha's culture a woman must preserve her sexual reputation because the spreading of rumors plays an important role and may instigate honor crimes. Faqir emphasizes the importance of bride's virginity in the utterances of Maha more than in that of Um Saad although they belong to the same Arab Muslim culture. It highlights the degree of importance that exists between the urban areas and rural areas. Faqir argues in her essay on honor killing in Jordan:

Within centres the honour of the individual is related to that of the family, but in rural areas the honour of the individual has wider connotations and is related to that of the family, clan, community and tribe. Tribal law, or 'urf, considers honour as something that

does not belong to one individual, but to the whole community.
(Ibid, 2001: 75)

The importance of young girls' virginity is an aspect typical to patriarchal communities and which is controlled by marriage. Faqir criticizes the patriarchal system giving so much importance to this aspect through the voice of Maha. During their wedding night, to help her husband prove her chastity Maha asked Harb to give the whole tribe, waiting outside their room for the cloth with Maha's virgin blood, a cloth with the blood from the tip of her finger as she nicked it. Maha says to Harb: ““*We can fool them.*”... “*It is my blood they are after.*”... “*Prick my little finger with the end of your dagger...*”... “*Give them the proof of my chastity. Quickly*”” (Faqir, 1996: 45-6)

Yet, through the marriage of the Bedouin Maha with Harb (the Arab warrior who died while fighting against the British colonizer and whose name means war in Arabic) Faqir is reflecting another dimension of the importance of the Arab girl's virginity. The importance and the protection of the purity of the colonized Arab woman represent a way to resist the Western influence and preserve the national identity during the British mandate. Faqir writes: “*The protection of 'ird or women's honour was perceived as the last resort against Western influence and modernization during the British Mandate in Palestine and Jordan.*” (Faqir, 2001: 76) This shows that traditional patriarchy operates as a harsh protector within a colonial context and this is nothing but Arabo-Islamic womanism in action.

Yet, while highlighting this aspect in *Pillars*, Faqir's portrays the Arab woman as a container with consumable objects. (Abdo, 2009: 260) For instance, when Maha was confirmed virgin on her wedding night, she says: “*the honey in its jar was safe; I was pure.*” (Faqir, 1996: 46) or in songs like: ““*Dark haired beauty. / Oh dark haired beauty. / You are the glass. / And your lips are wine.*”” (ibid: 79)

This portrayal strengthens the “unhomeliness” that marriage represents in such a culture. “Unhomeliness” within traditional sphere or private sphere is well described through the marriage of Maha with Harb. The first time Maha enters the house of her husband she describes her feeling:

Harb's well lit house looked unfamiliar in the darkness –our own roof was dome-shaped and low, Harb's was flat and high. When my father built our house he patted the doors into arch-shapes. Harb's house had straight lines which met to form sharp angles. The lines in our house were circular and stooping. My body would not fit through the rectangular door. It was my new home. I must loosen up. I repeated that several times, until the minaret of the shrine caught the echo and repeated, "loosen up, Turn into rectangular, Allah-u Akbar". (Ibid : 43)

"Unhomeliness" within marriage is experienced more harshly by Haniyyeh as she was forced by her father to marry a man she did not love. Haniyyeh was prevented from marrying the man she loved. This instance makes reference to the prohibition of love and desire in the predominant discourse of the patriarchal system that regulates and controls the bodies and desires of women and men. Haniyyeh was beaten by her father when he discovered her secret meeting with a man she loved: "*I ate about a hundred lashes*" (Ibid: 100)

Emecheta's description of women's status within patriarchal system reflects the "unhomely" traditions that help the Igbo woman construct her female identity. In *The Joys*, Nnu Ego's (the female protagonist's) childrearing reflects perfectly how the primary identity of an Igbo woman is formed and how values are transmitted. From early stages, the importance of the role of the mother is well inculcated. The social expectations from any Igbo woman to be a mother are very strong. The task of transmitting values is carried out in the Igbo community, mainly by women, more precisely by mothers who enjoy the privileged status of senior wives in their old age.

It is through her role of mother that the African woman exists as a complete woman. Procreation for women determines their lives, and enables them to enjoy this privileged status of the senior wife. It is this status that shows how motherhood turns from a purely biological powerful desire to a social power.

II. 4. c. The Privileged Status of Senior Wives:

In *The Joys*, a female character, the Owulum senior wife, after the death of her husband, created a stable life around her numerous children, and their spouses in the compound. She was a respected old woman whose role as the custodian of traditions gave her a respectful and a privileged status in her traditional community in Ibuza.

The status of the senior wife provides the Igbo woman with the power to control the other wives of her husband and the household⁸. When the senior wife Agunwa was very ill, her husband Agbadi, the female protagonist's father, explained to his sons that their mother was a good woman because she was so “*unobtrusive*” and “*quiet*” (Emecheta, 1979: 22), and that he would be lost without her help in keeping the household and controlling the other young wives.

Since the Igbo woman gains status and respect from motherhood, her fortune as a wife rests on her fertility, hence the vulnerability of the childless woman, (Drew, 1995: 13) hence the “unhomeliness” of the Igbo traditions. That was the case for Nnu Ego, the female protagonist, with her first husband in Ibuza, and Adaku, her co-wife, in colonial Lagos. Nnu Ego was constantly insulted and denigrated by her first husband. Her childlessness humiliated her in her traditional village, infertility humiliated the husband as well. It prevented him from proving manhood. Indigenous patriarchy is hinted at through this passage when Nnu Ego's first husband explained furiously to his wife: “... *I am a busy man. I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile. I have to raise children for my line' ...*” (Emecheta, 1979: 32).

II. 4. d. Infertility:

Having children is considered as assurance and security for the woman in her old age, as the father explained to his daughter Nnu Ego: “*When one grows old, one needs children to look after one. If you have no children and your parents have gone, who can you call your own*” (Ibid: 38). In this novel, joy, happiness and fulfilment are enjoyed only through that “biological function”.

Motherhood is associated with power. The Igbo woman's social role is based on her capacity to reproduce and nurture life. This nurturing role transcends the domestic sphere; it is also in close relation to the land and agriculture. The passage where Amatokwu, Nnu Ego's first husband, compared his barren wife to a desert shows the link of women's fertility to the land (Ibid: 39).

Nnu Ego's infertility prevented her from the privileged status of the senior wife with her first husband. This is what pushed her father to send her far from Ibuza to get

married in Lagos. It is also the case for Adaku in Lagos who was neither appreciated nor respected.

The social power women enjoy from motherhood could be negative to barren women. Motherhood becomes a conservative force to the detriment of women who are not mothers. “*Mothers against women*” is a phenomenon whereby women uphold patriarchal systems and use them to abuse and oppress other women (Lacoste Dujardin in Segarra, 2008: 140) and in some cases, impose violent practices on them.

This phenomenon is noticed in Nnu Ego’s behaviour (when she becomes a mother of many male children in Lagos) towards her co-wife Adaku, who did not succeed to have a male child and was thus treated unjustly⁹. When both co-wives, Nnu Ego and Adaku had a quarrel in Lagos, Nwakusor and his friend took Nnu Ego’s defence although the latter was guilty. All of them knew that it was Nnu Ego’s fault, but the fact that she was the one who was “*immortalizing*” her husband by giving him male children justifies such a biased behaviour (Emecheta, 1979: 166).

In *Pillars*, the same phenomenon of mothers denigrating barren women is described through Maha’s difficulty to have a child with Harb. Aunt Tamam, Harb’s mother, almost forced her to endure violent practices, such as cauterization, in order to give a child to her son. Faqir demonstrates through her female characters how though women suffer from the restricting values of their culture, these women perpetuate these values and eternalize negative stereotypes about themselves.

Maha formulates what her mother used to say when Daffash brutalized her: “...*my mother...Her gentle touch on my plaits used to wipe out the pain of Daffash’s slaps. “What do you expect? He is a boy. Allah placed him a step higher. We must accept Allah’s verdict,”*” (Faqir, 1996: 33)

When Maha suffered from cauterization for procreation she utters a statement to Tamam accepting and justifying polygyny: “*I did not want children. I was barren. Barren. Do you hear me? “Tamam, get your son another wife”*” (Ibid: 75)

II. 4. e. Violence and Female Bodies:

Before giving birth to her first son Mubarak, Maha’s infertility represented an important phase in which her “unhomeliness” in a patriarchal society could be easily gauged. Her body, privacy and domestic space are invaded by the intrusion of Hajjeh

Hulala's investigation and cauterization. She described her mutilation for procreation to Um Saad as a descent into hell. (Ibid: 73)

In *The joys*, violence and hostility a barren woman experiences do not end at psychological oppression¹⁰; Nnu Ego was even beaten by her husband, an act approved by her father. Since she could not have children, she deserved to be beaten. The father said to the husband Amatokwo that he was not going to blame him because he had beaten Nnu Ego so badly and proposed to take her home some days; may be, afterwards she would be "*cool enough inside to be fertile*" (Emecheta, 1979: 35). She was repudiated in Ibuza because of her sterility.

Through the physical pain, violence and female body are bound together to shed light and criticize the "unhomeliness" of the patriarchal system by both authors. In both novels, the phenomenon of beaten daughters, sisters or wives is described as an act of violence on women's bodies. They condemn the patriarchal system of the Igbo and the Bedouin communities.

In the asylum Um Saad shares her story with her roommate Maha. She tells her how she was beaten by her father without reason: "...*They just beat me without a reason...*" (Faqir, 1996: 79), or when she states:

"...my father shouted at me, and started beating me with his leather belt. The buckle was cold and sharp ... That night, I dreamt of the Vanishing Cap. I wanted to be invisible like ether. I wanted to slip into another identity. Can you cast off your identity like dirty underwear? Can you?" (Ibid: 80)

The scene describing Um Saad's wedding night is another stance reflecting violence her body receives as she is raped by her husband: "*He looked at me assessingly, patted my hairless stomach with his cold fingers, forced my legs open, then penetrated my discarded body. I hugged myself tightly and kept repeating the name of al-Shater Hasan.*" (Ibid: 109-10) Then Um Saad tells Maha how during the early days of their marriage her husband, Abu Saad the butcher, beat her before sleeping with her. (Ibid, 179)

Maha narrates how she was kicked with her brother's boots to the face because she refused to cook to his English friends. (Ibid: 164) She was beaten another time by Daffash

when she refused to marry Sheikh Talib (A man who, prior to this, has tried to rape her one night as she was walking alone in the bush.) Daffash's brutal behaviour was supported by the utterances of Imam Rajab who reminded his as he was beating Maha: "*Allah said in his Wise Book, 'Beat them up.'*" (Ibid: 217) Through this passage we may notice how Faqir emphasizes male misinterpretation of the Qur'an (without taking into consideration the context of the verses.)

Maha's narrative describing the way the physical pain is firstly lived through violent practices when she wanted to have a child, then when she was beaten by her brother Daffash as she refused to obey then, the experience of a beaten wife and daughter as told to her by Um Saad, reflects how the female body can betray its owner. They are tortured and their bodies mutilated because they are women. It is through such an experience of violence that Maha finally understands what was meant by Um Saad when she says she wants to change her identity as her father refused to marry her to the man she loved:

I collapsed and started calling al-Shater Hasan at the top of my voice. Roll into oblivion. Roll into another identity. Depart this body. I could not stop the flooding tears; I could not move my arms or legs, I could not stop shouting [...]. I rubbed my eyes, I began understanding what Um-Saad meant when she spoke of 'identity' (Ibid: 101).

Though oppressing, patriarchy is an important pillar in the construction of female identity. As argued by Joseph: "*...patriarchy in some Arab societies is linked to a 'connective' (or relational) notion of self that is embedded in relationships.*" And this is partly what contributes into the persistence of such a system. (Joseph, 1996: 18)

In both novels we notice that the oppression experienced and the "unhomeliness" lived by the female characters operate as violence at a micro and a macro levels. The patriarchal oppression represents a micro violence when it is between the female characters and their husbands, brothers and fathers. It can also be macro violence when the men and women of the village use and safeguard oppressing values by imposing them on the female characters and perpetuating them through the inculcation process of female identity construction. Women's role, as mothers, sisters or wives, is reinforced by preserving the patriarchal suppressive culture that renders them acting as patriarchal agents. In their essay Müge Göçek and Balaghi state that: "*Rather than giving agency to women, experience can*

end up reproducing and legitimating the ideological systems that constrain women." (Ibid: 4-5) We notice it through the female characters of both novels that safeguard and perpetuate tradition though they are constraining them.

In the case of Um Saad, we notice that economic dependence augments her vulnerability to potential violence within her private sphere. "*Jordanian women are economically dependent on male members of their families. This leaves them more vulnerable to potential violence within the home.*"(Faqir, 2001: 66) This fact is mainly due to the control of the father over his daughter's mobility as demonstrated earlier in the scene where Hanniyeh was prevented from education.

II. 4. f. Women's Mobility:

Arab social and cultural norms emanate from a patriarchal social system where there is an important gap between men's and women's mobility. There are less cultural and social restrictions on men's mobility than on women's. The Arab women limited spatial mobility determines their role inside the house and outside it. Generally, men are associated with public sphere, and women with private sphere¹¹.

At an economic sphere patriarchy represents the primary source of economic security (Joseph, 1996: 15) for men. We notice that though Maha is the only one who is economically active in the father's farm, the inheritance rules favor Daffash being a male descendent. (Faqir, 1996: 180) Yet, it is through the character of Um Saad that Faqir exposes the anxiety related to the Arab woman's mobility and "transgression" of home boundaries, as demonstrated earlier.

Through the character of Maha and her farming activity (Ibid : 23), Faqir underlines Arab women's participation to the economic activity through farming. Maha is the only peasant woman we see in the act of farming. She is aware of that fact and also about the fact that this participation is ignored and unacknowledged by men. This is well expressed in her narrative when she realizes that women of Qasim work "*all their lives [...] sweat and dig the soil to build nests for their men and children and at the end they die and are forgotten. Ants without names, past or future.*" (Ibid: 145) This statement hints at Maha's female consciousness. In addition to be ignored by the Arab man her contribution on the

farm is denigrated by the patriarchal system of inheritance and by the storyteller who sees it as a disguised intention to take over her father's household. (Ibid: 140)

When we compare both female characters in *Pillars*, Maha and Um Saad, we observe that Maha is given, more or less, more mobility than Um Saad by the author. Before marriage, Maha could leave her father's house more freely while Um Saad was imprisoned despite the fact that she is a city woman. As if to say that modernity represented by the city is not a liberating factor for the Arab woman. It does not prevent Um Saad from experiencing patriarchal "unhomeliness", it rather extends it, first in her father's house then in asylum. This is an Arabo-islamic womanist characteristic claiming women's freedom within their native environment. It may be considered as a positive aspect of the Bedouin culture reflected by Faqir in comparison to the modern one.

Emecheta also highlights the negative and the positive aspects of the Igbo culture.

II. 4. g. Solidarity: a Shelter within "Unhomeliness":

Every culture has its strengths and weaknesses, and Igbo culture is no exception. This is probably what Emecheta tries to underline through such a depiction of a beaten wife as being a negative aspect of the Igbo culture, on the one hand, and pinpoint the positive aspect of this culture on the other. This positive aspect is underlined when Nnu Ego was beaten by her first husband in Ibuza; her father's home represented a shelter, the father did not reject his daughter although he understood her husband's disappointment. This is because her bride price had been paid. This is a tradition that represents a protection for women in the Igbo culture¹².

In Igboland, women call marriage "ije di" (literally 'husband journey'). Igbo women are aware that, like all journeys, marriage is unpredictable and harbors the possibility of accident. In order to ensure that the natal home's door is open for her in the event she has to retrace her steps. (Nnaemeka, 1995: 111)

After retracing her steps to her father's home, Nnu Ego's bride price was returned to her first husband. Nwokocha Agbadi was an important chief. Despite the fact that he had the right to keep it, he returned it as an insult to the husband (Emecheta, 1979: 36). Emecheta offers us the image of a protecting father who cherished his daughter through the

male character of Agbadi. This is a scene that shows how African womanism is applied by Emecheta in this novel. Despite the feminist trashing of the African traditions with its patriarchy, Emecheta shows that the Igbo culture has many privileges and advantages for women.

Similar positive characteristic is underlined by Faqir. We notice that when Maha became a widow she had the choice to go back to her father's house or stay with her mother in law. The five camels given to the father as a part of the dowry represent a protection. (Faqir, 1996: 31) This dowry allows Maha to retrace her steps to her father's house after marriage whenever she wants. This is not the case in all patriarchal systems. In the Arab context, though married the woman is still a member of her father's kin group. In this sense, patrilineage represents a source of economic security for women as well.

Another instance describing the solidarity between Arab women is when the women of Maha's tribe encourage her to take the farm of her father, as one of them says: "*You are the ploughwoman of this land. You must fight. We will support you.*" (Ibid: 201) Women's empowering solidarity is also mirrored through the meetings of women in Maha's house, before her internment in the madhouse, where they drank tea, wove rugs and unloaded "*the burdens of their hearts.*"(Ibid: 193-4)

It is an aspect that hints at the traditional solidarity and hospitality of the Arab culture. Solidarity between women, as represented by Maha's and Um Saad's kinship is a very important aspect that reflects and transports patriarchy into all levels of social life. It determines the Arab woman position in the family and in society. The passage where Maha was about to refuse to get married to Sheikh Talib shows women's solidarity to protect her from men's violence and help her to escape. As Tamam utters: "*If you see evil in the men's eyes, say that your throat is dry and that you need to get a glass of water*" (Ibid: 204) Women understand the anger of men in such situations because an Arab woman does not have the right to refuse or even give her opinion. Yet, it highlights solidarity between women. This aspect reflects the awareness of the Bedouin women about the inequalities of the patriarchal system and their attempt to support one another.

In both novels, the writers bring to the fore the negative impact of colonialism on women's lives, as will be shown in chapters three and four (pp.115-32,162,170-3, 176-7), and the negative effects of a patriarchal community on women as well, as it is

demonstrated in this chapter. Seen from this angle, the authors could not make of the Igbo and Arab men faithful allies to their female characters, something which seems to be contradictory in these novels. On the one hand, they reject the traditional way of life with its indigenous patriarchy by presenting “*the ... male as the ‘other’, a ridiculous ‘object’, to borrow Simone De Beauvoire’s [...] vocabulary*” (Ogunyemi, 1985: 67). On the other hand, they look for solidarity, a typical traditional value, to save their female characters from starvation. This confusion shows their female characters’ alienation.

Colonial arbitrary action to put frontiers and create Nigeria as a nation helped the many ethnic groups of that region to be one unit, one nation (Achebe, 2000: 428). Nnu Ego’s ignorance of the existence of a nation called Nigeria shows that and, her attending the meetings in Lagos highlights this solidarity between the natives of this region (Emecheta, 1979: 48). This solidarity helps them resist and maintain their culture. The marriage of Nnu Ego’s daughter with a Yoruba could be considered as a symbol of this melting as well. In addition to motherhood, solidarity helped Nnu Ego to bear and face all the changes of colonial Lagos, as if the writer wanted to create “one Nigeria”, opposed to the British colonizer, through this melting. After being ignorant of Nigeria as one nation, once in Lagos, Nnu Ego made a clear distinction between the white men and the natives. The meetings between the natives were used to resist the foreign intrusion of British culture into their lives.

Another instance that highlights Igbo solidarity in Lagos is in the opening chapter of the novel. When Nnu Ego intended to commit suicide in Carter Bridge she was saved by Nwakusor, an Igbo man who lived in Lagos. Another Igbo woman intervened as well and slapped Nnu Ego for that deed and blamed her for forgetting her principles and traditions in Lagos (Emecheta, 1979: 62). Emecheta’s voice is enmeshed with that of the narrator in the following passage that sounds as a rejection of feminism and its ideology of individualism:

...a thing like that is not permitted in Nigeria; you are simply not allowed to commit suicide in peace, because everyone is responsible for the other person. Foreigners may call us a nation of busybodies, but to us, an individual’s life belongs to the community and not just to him or her... he must interfere, he must stop it happening. (Ibid: 60).

Through Nnu Ego's vision and reaction towards life in colonial Lagos, one may have the impression that "*speaking for anticolonialism produces a voice that serves patriarchy*" (Ward, 1990: 86), and this explains why African womanism fits better Emecheta's *The Joys*, rather than feminism. Yet, the fact that she could quite easily be published in Great Britain makes her different and sound feminist, since she has the opportunity to concentrate better on women. She does it from different angles, using different settings and temporalities. The patriarchy analyzed by the white feminist is that of world power but the patriarchy analyzed by the "womanist" is a domestic affair.

Balancing between negative and positive sides of the Igbo and Bedouin cultures, both authors describe the positive aspect of hospitality found in the behaviour of the people in traditional setting. This is highlighted when Nnu Ego returned with her children to Ibuza and are received with a warm and hearty welcome (Emecheta, 1979: 151) or through the scenes describing Maha's marriage reflecting the generosity and the solidarity of her tribe. (Faqir, 1996:40)

Yet, one cannot ignore the pervasive negative aspect of both cultures as shown through polygyny¹³, and motherhood just like infertility may be the cause of it.

II. 4. h. Polygyny:

We notice that there are many contradictions concerning polygyny and motherhood in Igbo culture. A cause for polygyny may be determined by inheritance. The brother may inherit his dead brother's wives, but childlessness, just as motherhood, may be the cause for polygyny as well. Motherhood is a logical consequence after marriage, and a failure in conception is always a woman's failure. Between motherhood and polygyny, the Igbo woman finds herself in a kind of trap: on the one hand, women are obliged to have children in order to be considered as "complete women", if it is not the case, the husband would look for another wife. On the other hand, if she gives him children, he would look for another wife too, a younger and a healthier one, and consequently, this very womanhood is questioned. The motherhood, so long looked for, becomes degrading to womanhood.

Through the narrative, this contradiction in the Igbo culture is sustained. In the novel, women's suffering from polygyny in Ibuza is well highlighted through Agunwa, Okonkwo's senior wife. Knowing that her husband was sleeping with Ona in the same courtyard, she became very ill until she died. This instance was meant to highlight the

unhomeliness women experience through polygyny. When buried, Agunwa's slave was buried alive with her. As a good slave she was supposed to join her mistress¹⁴ as mentioned earlier. In this case, being a mother of many children pushed Agunwa's husband to look for another younger wife.

As a womanist, Faqir also does not hesitate to expose Arab women's miseries within their patriarchal society. This novel is described by Trabelsi as:

The production of a new discourse that "defies the constraints and taboos of the culture of origin (such as the 'sacredness' of the Arabic language or the subaltern status of women) by putting it in dialogue with a different culture. The purpose is neither soft-edged amalgamation nor slavish mimicry. (Ibid in Abdo, 2009: 260)

In *Pillars*, women are addressed as slaves and servants. The following songs¹⁵ used by different female characters in this novel demonstrate this slavery vocabulary:

"Hey Saideh, listen to your master. / I am having a bath. / Obey you master. / Go to your master" (Faqir, 1996: 95) *"Girl, do you have a protector with a sword and shield? / No, I don't have one, but to you I will yield"* (Ibid: 56)

It is also reflected in Haniyyeh's words as she refuses to marry the man chosen by her father and says to this latter: *"I will be you slave girl for the rest of my life"* (Ibid: 108) Um Saad was ready to serve her father for the rest of her life rather than marry that man with whom she became of victim of polygyny afterwards.

The issue of polygygy is raised by Faqir in *Pillars* to expose women's "unhomeliness" within the Arab patriarchal social system. Polygyny is the main cause of Um Saad's internment in Fuhais Mental hospital.

With the coming of a new wife to Um Saad's house, this latter was thrown out from her bedroom to the kitchen, then completely outside her house. As she tells Maha: *"That night, I slept with my kids on the floor. Did I say slept? I could not shut my eyes. The minaret of the Big Mosque was crying 'Allahu-Akbar' when I found my belongings flung on the floor of the sitting room."* (Faqir, 1996: 178-9)

Um Saad kitchen¹⁶ is a significant place where she negotiates space¹⁷ in her husband house. It is a place where she exists and has a “full role”. The kitchen becomes an interesting site of articulation of gender relation. As she states:

I put on my brown Kaftan and went to the kitchen. You see, the kitchen was my domain, my space. I would shut the door and nobody would disturb me there. I wanted to talk. We never ever talked, Abu Saad and I. He gave me orders and I listened ... roll into another beautiful body and another identity. (Ibid: 151)

In this passage, Um saad expresses her desire to negotiate her space differently than in the kitchen. She wanted to speak. She was prevented to exist differently as she said to Maha that she was prevented to enter other rooms than the kitchen in her house. (Ibid: 185)

In both novels, the kitchen is one of the spaces used by female characters to negotiate their space. In *The Joys*, women decided to stop cooking for their men as they felt oppressed, as it will be demonstrated in chapter three (p.122). In *Pillars*, the Pasha's kitchen becomes a space of negotiation between the Arab man, the cook of Samir Pasha and the Bedouin Maha who was ordered by Daffash to prepare local dishes to Samir Pasha's friends. (bid: 155)

Um Saad domestic sphere is invaded by the intrusion¹⁸ of the new wife. This intrusion causes her madness. (Ibid: 178) This passage is given more depth with the intervention of the call prayer ‘*Allahu Akbar*’ as a way to highlight the religious support for such a behaviour. This could be read as an anti-islamic feminism. Yet, Faqir ideology is condemning Arab men's use of Islam supporting and validating women's oppression rather than the religion of Islam as will be shown in the following chapters.

Combining linguistic and womanist discourses in the Arab context, Assia Djébar compares her use of the colonizer's language, French, to the intricate relationship that exists between co-wives (rival women who become united in suffering,) as she states in *A Sister to Scheherazade*: “*Derra [durrah]: the word used in Arabic to denote the new bride of the same man, the first wife's rival; this word means ‘wound’—the one who hurts, who cuts open the flesh, or the one who feels hurt, it's the same thing.*” (Ibid in Suyoufie, 2008: 240)

Um Saad experiences polygyny as a psychological wound. The analogy made by Djebbar may help us understand the intricacy of kinship between co-wives on the one hand and, the difficulty and the necessity of the Arab writer writing in the former colonizer's tongue to cope with this latter. An Arabo-Islamic womanist reading would emphasize that Um Saad's madness is nothing but the result of her failure to cope with this 'wound'.

Polygyny may be caused by male childlessness. In Igbo Culture, it may push the husband to look for another wife. This case is highlighted in *The Joys* through Adaku's male childlessness, and her husband Nnaife who brought a new wife, younger than Nnu Ego, his senior wife, and who would give him the male children Adaku, his second wife, did not succeed to give him.

II. 4. i. The Importance of the Male Child:

In *The Joys*, the importance of the male child is well characterized through the female character, Adaku, who could not bear any male child for her husband. She ended up by rejecting her values and decided to become a prostitute, as if her body had no importance since it could not accomplish its biological function, that of having male children. The fact of being a wealthy trader in Lagos did not prevent her from selling her body, this body that provided no male children. After realizing that she was treated unjustly by her husband, just because she had no male children, she said fiercely to Nnu Ego: "*My chi be damned! I'm going to be a prostitute. Damn my chi!*" (Emecheta, 1979: 168).

Adaku in Lagos was considered as a "failed woman". She did not have the right to speak nor complain about her situation. Adaku's prostitution meant that a woman without male children is a poor woman, although she is financially rich.

Children, mainly male children, are the only richness an Igbo woman could rely on; this is what her values taught her. Infertility just like male childlessness are equated with poverty. In her first marriage with Amatokwu, Nnu Ego's co-wife accepted to share her baby with Nnu Ego as an act of charity. Even in the extreme poverty that Nnu Ego was going to experience in Lagos, she would be treated with more dignity because she was going to be a mother.

Two poverties are contrasted in the opening chapter of *The Joys*, the poverty of a beggar who had no money contrasted with a mother who had just lost her baby and had no

children any more. In her foolish haste to commit suicide in Carter Bridge, Nnu Ego, blinded by her sadness and despair due to the loss of her first baby, collided with a blind and hostile beggar. (Emecheta, 1979: 8-9)

“*My sons, you will all grow to be kings among men...My daughters, you will all grow to rock your children’s children.*” (Emecheta, 1979: 29). These are the prayers addressed to young Igbo people by the elders. They underline what represents wealth to Igbo men and to Igbo women, through Idayi’s greetings to the youngster in the compound. Female and male wealth are contrasted.

The importance of the male child is reflected in Faqir’s novel as well. I found in women’s greetings to Maha accompanied with the prayer “*May Allah give you a son.*” (Faqir, 1996: 67) When Maha returned to her father’s house the first time after marriage she was deceived to return with “*No wealth, No son.*” (Ibid: 125) The first time Maha saw Daffash smiling to her was when he took her son, Mubarak in his hands. (Ibid: 144)

The importance of the male child is more underlined in Emecheta’s *The Joys* than in Faqir’s *Pillars*. In Igbo culture having children is not enough to consider an Igbo woman as a “complete woman” as we have already mentioned before. She must have at least one male child. This trait of the Igbo culture, giving more importance to male children, is hinted at through another female character, Nnu Ego’s mother, Ona.

II. 4. j. Ona: “the Male Daughter”:

The Igbo values are well epitomized through Nnu Ego’s behaviour, and the distinction is even stronger in her mother’s, Ona, behaviour. The latter is a female character through whom we find the notion of the “male daughter”. In African fiction, either oral or written, female characters are determined either by their social relationship to men, as daughters or wives, or by their “biological function” as mothers or non mothers (Arndt, 2000: 713). Although liberated, independent and assertive, Ona is not fully developed in this novel, in the sense that she dies young. That was, probably, Emecheta’s intention in order to leave a place to develop another female character (Nnu Ego) who lived in a colonial period to highlight the difference between the two women’s generations.

Through Ona, Emecheta hints at an exceptional case in the Igbo community, “the male daughter”, that could be considered as a case of power and of oppression at the same time. This type of discourse and symbolic representation as epitomized through this female character finds support in the Igbo community’s cultural practices. This is a case where the Igbo woman could assume the social role of a man (a privileged position) on the one hand, and this same position of “male daughter” represents an oppressive situation for her on the other.

In the case of Ona she was allowed to keep lovers but not to marry any of them (Emecheta, 1979: 12). In this flexible gender system, Ona is the victim of her mother’s male childlessness.

She is allowed to have children; if they are males they will belong to her father to bear his name and assure the lineage, if they are females, they will belong to her lover. This distribution of family lineage shows the importance of male children in Ibo. This importance is closely linked to immortality. Lineage and inheritance assure the immortality of the father’s name.

The female character Ona is meant to represent the image of the Igbo woman in a traditional setting before the intrusion of British colonialism in the Igbo community.

II. 4. j. 1. Physical and Psychological Portrait of Traditional Women:

Ona is described as being physically and psychologically strong; such a female strength is well highlighted by the narrator’s description of Ona’s portrait:

...a very beautiful young woman who managed to combine stubbornness with arrogance. So stubborn was she that she refused to live with Agbadi...he preferred spending his free time with...this woman who enjoyed humiliating him by refusing to be his wife...she refused to be dazzled by his wealth, his name or his handsomeness (Ibid: 11).

She had the traits and character of a liberated and independent woman in her traditional Ibo, and was well respected for this behaviour. “*One who is not thoroughly knowledgeable in Igbo history might consider a character like Ona a myth or fantasy*” (Ezeigbo, 1990: 160). This kind of women in the past was considered by Igbo old men like Idayi as attractive and the best in comparison to the young generation (Emecheta, 1979:

30). Emecheta writes through the narrator's voice: "...*In his young days, a woman who gave in to a man without first fighting for her honour was never respected...*" (Ibid: 10).

This character could support Diop's cradle theory that considers that women's rights' ideologies existed first in matriarchal Africa before Europe. To think that speaking about women's rights and agency is typical to Europe and to what the West calls Feminism and that it is a purely western concept, theory and ideology that was born in that region of the world is to admit that humanity and history began with colonialism and ignore the existence of Africa before the rest of the world.

Ona reminds us of the legend of Lilith, both of which have almost the same portrait in both female characters.

II. 4. j. 1.1. Ona: the Lilith of Ibuza:

The characteristic of Lilith as a killer of infants is reflected through the slave girl who was sacrificed with her mistress, Nwokosha's senior wife who died from the jealousy she felt towards Ona. Buried alive, the slave girl promised to return as a chi (the personal god of Nnu Ego). As an act of revenge, this chi prevented Nnu Ego at the beginning from having children. According to Igbo beliefs, the chi is responsible for Nnu Ego's loss of her first baby. Having such a power, this female character with the traits of a killer of infants completes the rebellious portrait of Ona and thus produces an analogous¹⁹ characterization to that of Lilith.

Just like Lilith, Ona, while described as an independent and rebellious woman, reflects a feminist behaviour in a past where feminism did not exist yet in such places. Probably this is meant to show that women were liberated before the intrusion of feminism through colonialism, a different way to say that feminism in Africa, supporting the idea of women's equality to men, existed even before its importation through British colonialism that pretended to humanize the colonized people, and if it is about women's possibilities, as stated by Nwapa²⁰, then Ona is a metaphor of that feminism. Ona as a character is "*a positive way to reaffirm womanhood*" (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 22).

Yet, through such a depiction, Emecheta does not forget to pinpoint the control of the indigenous patriarchy over women's life and the extent this notion of "male daughter" is psychologically oppressive for women.

In *Pillars*, Faqir portrays Maha's mother, Maliha and grandmother Sabha, as Emecheta does for Ona. The image of the Bedouin woman Maha had in mind was that of a woman "free like a swallow and as courageous as [her] grandmother Sabha." (Faqir, 1996: 14) She considers herself pure and noble, as Harb describes her as an Arab mare. (Ibid: 155) Even Um Saad describes Bedouin women as wiser than Arab women living in the city. (Ibid: 159)

The portrayal of these female characters as courageous and strong in both novels hints at the South cradle of Diop's theory that explains the traces of matriarchy found in the history of African and Bedouin women, a characterization that states that women's consciousness in these areas existed before the European ones and it even inspired Feminism in Europe, and thus that womanism existed before feminism.

Ona's life was shaped by her father's desires. "*She grew to fill her father's expectation*". Even her behaviour should be that of a man, she should not show her feelings, as a "male daughter" she was expected to behave like a man. She was deprived from her freedom to marry her lover and bear him children, and that represented a psychological pressure on Ona (Ibid: 16). Nnu Ego's life was shaped by her father's desire as well; the traditional father has the power to decide for his daughter's marriage (Ibid: 36).

It is through all these traditional values that the Igbo and the Bedouin women construct their female identity and build an image of how a man should be. This image is epitomized by Nnu Ego's father and her first husband in *The Joys*, and in *Pillars*, it is portrayed through the traditional man of Bani Qazim. It is epitomized by Maha's father, and husband.

II. 4. k. Physical and Psychological Portrait of Traditional Men:

Through Nnu Ego's father and her first husband, the traditional man is described as being a strong and healthy farmer, well respected among the members of the village.

Nnu ego's father, Nwokocha Agbadi, is described, through the narrator's voice, as a hunter, with a supernatural strength enjoyed by that male character in a pre-colonial period, a description that may reflect the pride of a glorious past:

Nwokocha Agbadi was a very wealthy local chief. He was a great wrestler. [...] He was taller than most and, since he was born in an age when physical prowess determined one's role in life, people naturally accepted him as a leader. (Ibid: 10).

In *The Joys*, traditional men are described as pure and strong human beings in close relation to nature, men belonging to "*the clear sun, the bright moon, to his farm and his rest hut, where he could sense a nestling cobra, a scuttling scorpion, hear a howling hyena*" (Ibid: 46). This is how Nnu Ego's first husband, living in Ibuza, is described.

Despite this description of a strong and important chief who ruled his family "*as if he were god*", Agbadi is described as being weak in front of Ona, the rebellious woman. Through another male character's voice in Ibuza, Idayi, Emecheta pinpointed what was expected from a 'real' man. The Igbo man's harshness and arrogance made his manhood. Those traits attracted Ona and made her see Agbadi as a "*real man and not a snail*" (Ibid: 17). He gave her his "*love without reservation, and she enjoyed it...*" (Ibid: 15). This weakness reinforces Ona's strength.

In *Pillars*, positive male portrayal in a traditional setting, the village of Hamia caters to the Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology of Faqir. Sheikh Nimer, meaning tiger in Arabic, is described by his daughter Maha as a strong and a courageous man: "*The daughter of the tiger of the desert must be a tigress.*" this is what he used to say to Maha as he taught her hunting like a man. (Faqir, 1996: 11) Maha describes a sensitive and fragile father, a loving husband to her mother Maliha. He understands Maha's suffering from "unhomely" traditional ways of the village of Hamia and expresses his regrets as he says: "*When I was young I wanted to leave this place. Your mother, Allah forgive her, prevented me.*" (Ibid: 105) Maha loved her father and promised to compensate him as he was deceived from his son's behaviour. (Ibid: 31)

Sheikh Nimer preferred his daughter Maha to his son Daffash. Before dying, he said to Maha: "*I always wanted to be strong and protect you, but Allah wrote something else.*" Then promised: "*The land must go to its ploughman. No, ploughwoman. The land is*

yours, Maha. This is my will. I have said it in front of the Imam ... Daffash does not deserve one span of it. It belongs to your son after you. They have witnessed my will.” (Ibid: 180)

The positive description of the traditional man extends into Harb’s portrayal. Maha loves and admires her husband before dying violently in the battle field²¹ fighting against “*metal eagles*” (the British colonizer) in order to free the future Arab generation. (Ibid: 84) He is described as a strong and a courageous man, with “*a lovely high forehead. Dignity.*” (Ibid: 9) and a “*shining face [and a] thick moustache, the golden tooth, and his tall, lean body. His firm thighs told the story of endless days of riding strong Arab horses.*” (Ibid: 43)

Faqir epitomizes the anti-colonialist Arab man through this character. Every time Maha speaks about Harb and his companions she uses “*our men*” (Ibid, 82, 111) It does not include Daffash whose behaviour when he raped Nasra was condemned by Harb. (Ibid: 56) Harb fought against the imperial invasion. Violence in this case was necessary, as Fanon put it in *The Wretched of the Earth*, about the process of de-colonization:

Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons. (Fanon, 1965: 36)

In *The Joys*, another characteristic attached to Agbadi, justifying his position of leader, and described through the narrator, was his oratory skills.

II. 4. k. 1. The Traditional Man’s Orality:

Through the narrator, Emecheta hints to the “orality” of the past as a quality of a great man and a wealthy chief in pre-colonial Ibuza²² “[He] was glib and gifted in oratory. His speeches were highly spiced with sharp anecdotes and thoughtful proverbs.” (Ibid: 10).

An effective and persuasive speaker or story teller in traditional African society is usually one who can smoothly and almost effortlessly (and without self-consciousness) integrate proverbs and sayings and witticism within the mainstream of his speech (Emenyonu, 1974: 392).

By giving to one of the male characters the trait of orality²³, Emecheta points, consciously or unconsciously, to the African writer (being herself one of them) who writes in English but uses linguistic devices from their culture in their English writing and thus reflects the writer's commitment to his language and to his society.

The use of characters such as Ona portrayed as a rebellious and a liberated woman, and Agbadi portrayed as a strong and a courageous hunter could be considered by critics as a device of evasion and an “*absence of a vigorous historical imagination [...and...] a preoccupation with the immediate colonial past and the admittedly all-absorbing post-colonial present, to the almost total neglect of the more distant past.*” (Ogundele, 2002: 126). Yet, one may consider that through the use of notions, such as “the male daughter”²⁴ and men's oratory skills for example, Emecheta is not using devices of evasions but rather reflecting a “*historical imagination*” faithful to the Igbo people's reality of the past. Through this characterization, Emecheta describes, on the one hand, the pre-colonial period, and on the other, expresses an anti-colonial protest. That is through a love story in a pre-colonial past of a wealthy and strong Nwokosha Agbadi with a rebellious Ona which is contrasted with a sad story of a submissive Nnu Ego married to an enslaved and alienated Nnaife in a colonial period (see in next chapters). While it is considered as a lack of “*historical imagination*” or an evasion by Ogundele, it may rather be viewed as African womanism or Emecheta's Africaness in action. This African identity is equally noticed in Emecheta's use of English.

In *Pillars*, Faqir also expresses her Arabo-Islamic womanism and Arabness. On one hand, she proposes a positive male and female characterization in a traditional setting, the village of Hamia. It is reflected through the Bedouin character's (Maha's) mother, father and husband contrasted with the negative portrayal of an alienated brother Daffash influenced and corrupted by the city way of life of Amman, and that of the city woman's (Um Saad) father and husband, as it will be demonstrated in the next chapters (p.130-2, 175). On the other, Faqir uses traditional material in addition to a linguistic strategy reflecting the oratory skills and the Arabness inherited from her Arab culture and literature.

II. 5. The Enhancement Emecheta's Africaness and Faqir's Arabness in their Novels:

Borrowing Donadey's analysis of Djébar's²⁵ writing in French we could argue that through the English language used by Emecheta and Faqir in their novels they create "*multilingual palimpsests*" mirroring "*the process of violent [English] colonization of their nation(s) and subvert it linguistically*" by nativizing it. They propose polyphonic texts based on "aesthetic difference." (Donadey, 2000: 27-8)

Post-colonial writers consider the appropriation of the former colonizer's language as a medium of their own literatures. Language may be defined as a "*cognitive means of communication,*" it "*represents individual identity as a member of a whole group. Identity therefore constructs and is constructed by language.*" (Falemban, 2012: 43-44)

In the linguistic strategy that both writers use while employing linguistic devices we find an interlanguage strategy, defined by Selinker in 1972 as "*the separateness of a second language learner's system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and the target language.*" (Brown in Falemban, 2012: 44) to nativize English and highlight both authors' Africaness and Arabness.

II. 5. a. Emecheta's Africaness:

Texts from African or Arab literature cannot be analyzed without considering some aspects of their aesthetic ideologies²⁶.

In *The Joys*, Emecheta writes "her" realism²⁷, a realism that involves the adoption of this aesthetic ideology. She writes in the classical realist fashion, just like Achebe did before her (Ngara, 1985: 109). This may be due essentially to two major facts. First, she was exposed to fictions written in the critical realist mode. Secondly, the chronological form of presentation proper to the African folk tale influenced her writing and resulted in the linear structure of "her" realism. Her mother tongue affects her use of English as well.

II. 5. a. 1. Emecheta's Linguistic Devices:

In this novel we notice the use of linguistic devices to contextualize "*a non-native language in [the writer's] own 'un-English' culture*" (Kachru, 2000: 142-4), considered as part and parcel of the author's aesthetic ideology. Through such a use, Emecheta is, in some ways, claiming her "Africaness".

In her article “Buchi Emecheta: The Shaping of a self,” Ogunyemi recognizes Emecheta’s affirmation of her African identity through this novel, and concludes that with *The Joys of Motherhood* Emecheta seems at last “to come to terms with her Africaness” (Ward, 1990: 84).

Her “Africaness” is felt in the choice of local words: “*For, from a word, a group of words, a sentence and even a name in any African language, one can glean the social norms, attitudes and values of a people*” (Ngugi, 2005: 146).

She uses lexical innovations, with the borrowing of local words into English, words for instance like: house buba (dress) (Emecheta, 1979: 8), otuogwu cloth (cloth) (Ibid: 13), dibia (healer) (Ibid: 31), chi (personal god) (Ibid: 32), abada cloth (cloth) (Ibid: 54), ogogoro (local wine) (Ibid: 111).

Translation equivalence is found as well in this text. A linguistic device whereby Emecheta translates from Igbo into English, like this praise name addressed to Idayi: “*He who roars like a lion.*” (Ibid: 29). This is a mode of address to the elders. It indicates power and authority of the elders in the village of Ibuza. It underlines the importance and respect given to an important chief in the traditional village.

There are also contextual redefinitions of lexical items of English in the Igbo context noticed in the use of the kinship terms of husband, wife, and mother. For instance, mother is a kinship term addressed by a son or a daughter to the biological mother and to all the co-wives of the father. The senior co-wife too takes the kinship term of “Mother”, addressed to her by younger co-wives (Ibid: 206). The term of “little husband” is used by young co-wives addressing the sons of the senior co-wife (Ibid: 196).

In addition to all these devices used in the writing of Emecheta, there are Igbo proverbs translated into English, an instance of which is the use the extradiegetic narrator to describe the quarrel between Nnu Ego and another Igbo female character in Lagos: “*If the tongue and the mouth quarrel, they invariably make it up because they have to stay in the same head.*” (Ibid: 63).

The proverb, as used in this passage, serves to emphasize and deepen the force of the meaning of solidarity, mainly between Igbo women, in Igbo culture. Since it implies

Igbo female characters, this proverb could also be considered as an emphasis put on the African womanist theory, in the sense that African women do not need feminist issues to solve their problems and speak for them, they have their own issues. Emenyonu described the proverb as the “*palm oil with which words are eaten*” (1974: 392), using an Igbo saying for such a description. This could be considered as a partial definition of the writer’s Africaness while using the colonial language in his or her literature.

Emecheta’s African identity may be noticed through instances like the one describing the ceremony of the death of Agbadi’s senior wife as well. Emecheta reflects the idea that in her culture there were other forms of expression, other forms of literature²⁸ before the existence of the written word. She brings her African touch to the plot structure of the text as well. A plot structure similar to that of the folktale is noticed in this novel. This is one more trace from oral tradition inherited by the writer²⁹. It could be considered as part and parcel of Emecheta’s rhetorical and functional style which is culture dependant (Kachru, 2000: 145).

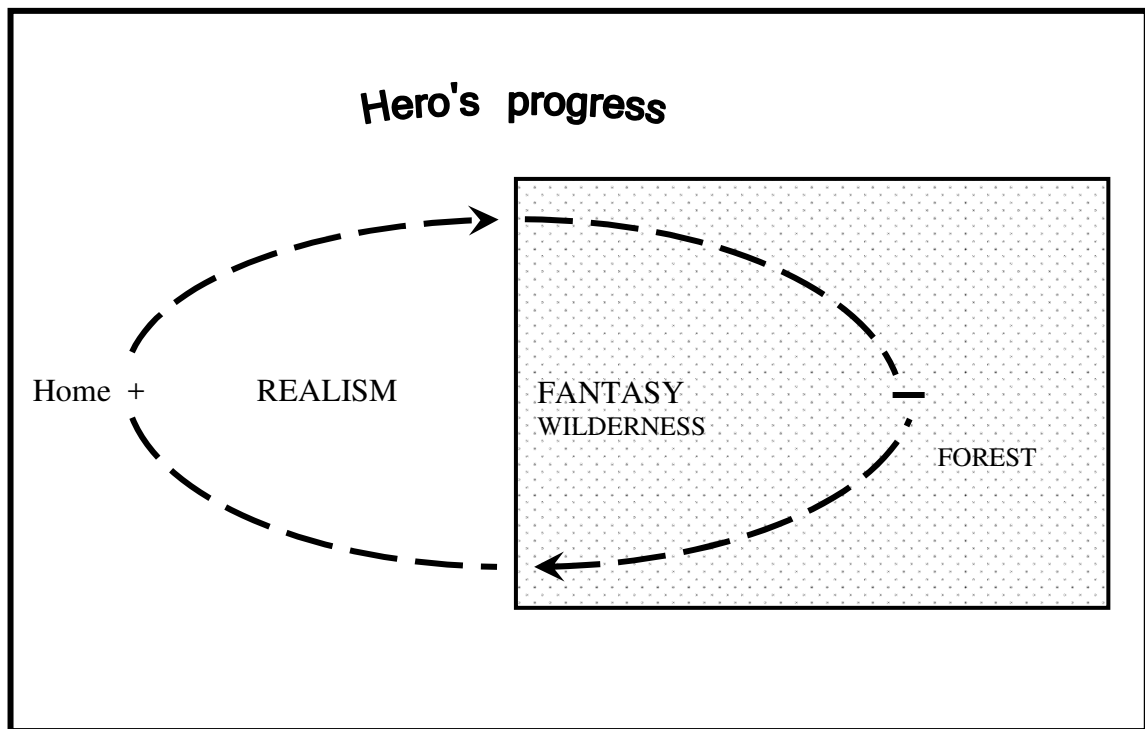
II. 5. a. 2. Emecheta’s Plot Structure:

The male plot structure is characterized by “*a quest-like progression that moves in a chronological sequence from a perceived beginning to a conclusion where obstacles have been overcome and goals achieved.*” (Page, 2007: 198) In Emecheta’s plot structure we find the chronological sequence typical to the male plot structure as it is explained by Page. Yet we notice that she has been inspired from her cultural background as well.

The similarity between the plot structure of the folktale and that of the novel may be demonstrated through two characters’ progressions, that of Nwokasha Agbadi and of Nnaife. Only the second chapter of the novel, *The Mother’s Mother*, is considered to demonstrate the similarity, since it is in this chapter that the male character Agbadi is developed. The story begins in Ibuza, more precisely in the village (in the compound). The village functions as the place of birth and the place of innocence. The story of this character reproduces the similar movement like that of a folktale marking the passage of an individual from one age to another, that is, “*the second stage of the rites of passage is marked in the folktale by a withdrawal from home into the region of the forest wilderness: the world of strange behaviour, the world of fantasy*” (Dseagu, 1992: 593). In Agbadi’s

story this withdrawal corresponds to his journey to the forest, the bush marshes called Ude to hunt some elephants with his age-group (Emecheta, 1979: 13).

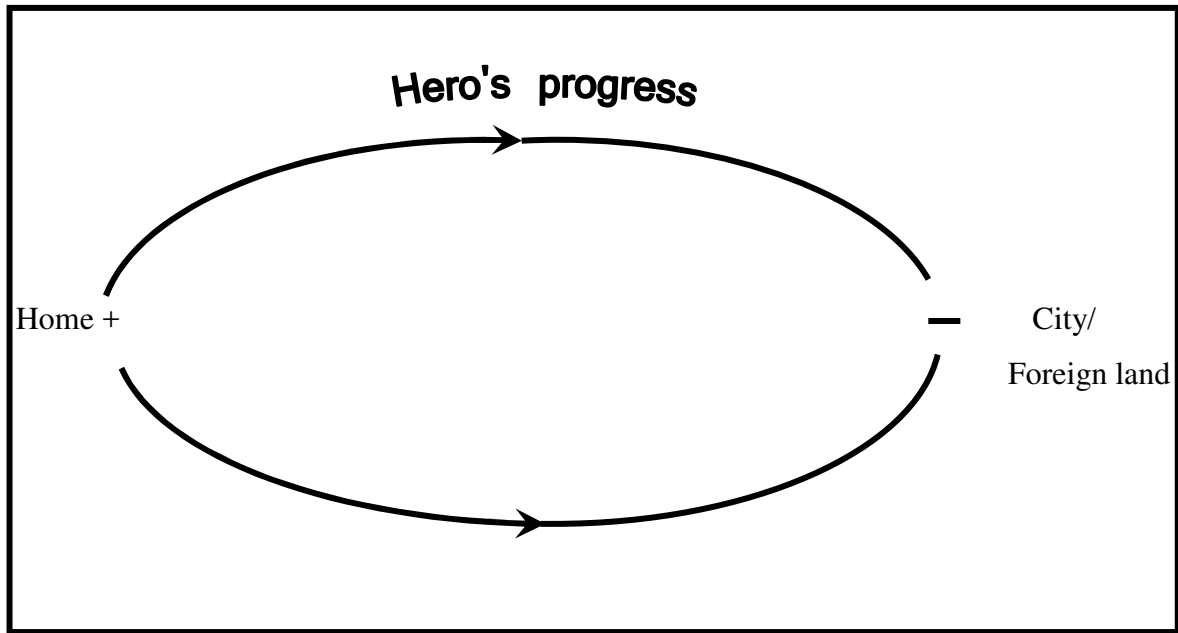
Dseagu's following figure represents graphically the plot structure of the folk tale as explained earlier (1992: 594), where he shows a linear progression of plot in a folktale:



II. FIGURE 1

Linear Progression of the Plot in a Folktale

Dseagu proposes the linear progression of the plot in novels (figure 2) as well, where the movement of passage is from home to the city or the foreign land; yet, the functions of withdrawal, of the place of birth and innocence and of the place of adventure are the same in both plot structures:

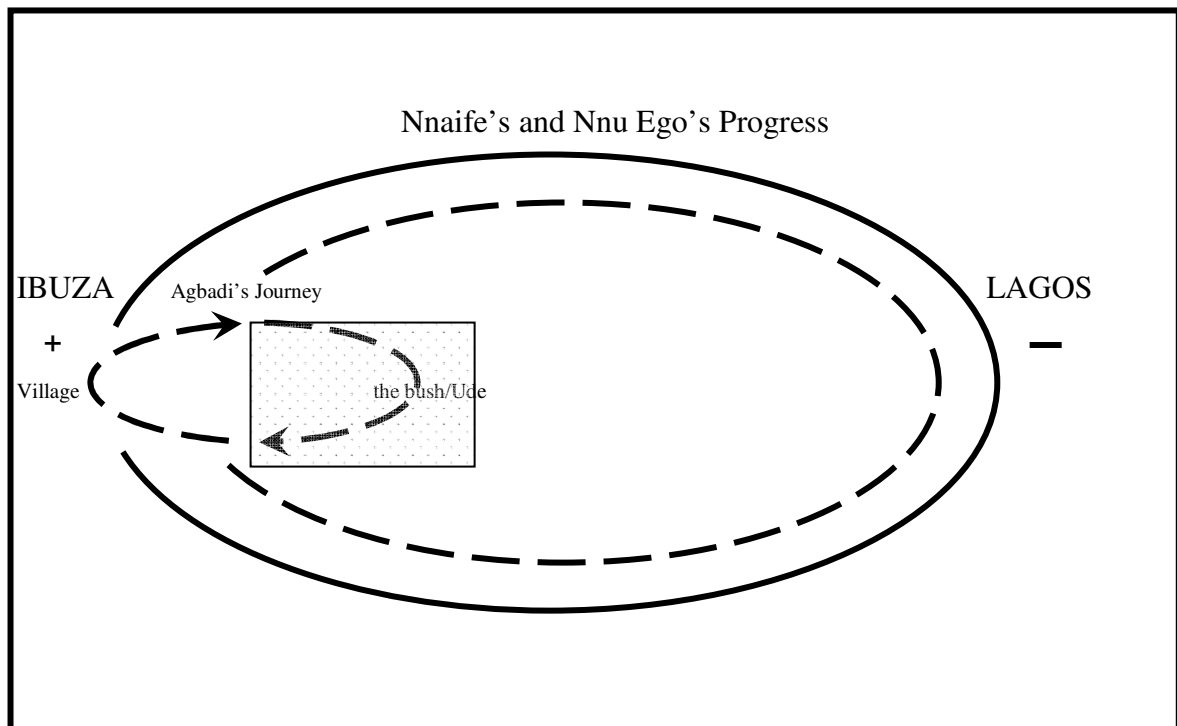


II. FIGURE 2

Linear Progression of the Plot in a Novel

By applying the two figures to *The Joys*, a different figure is suggested (figure 3) where both are interlinked with the progress of the female protagonist and her husband, on the one hand. On the other hand, there is an explicit imitation of the folktale plot structure with the story of Nwokosha Agbadi in the second chapter of the novel (before the progress of Nnu Ego and Nnaife). It may be deduced that there is a double use, one reproducing, possibly, consciously the folktale, as a way to mark the author's aesthetic ideology, and the

other, profoundly influenced by this ideology while producing the linear progression of the plot structure of this novel.



II. FIGURE 3

Linear Progression of a Folktale Plot within the *The joys of Motherhood*

Figure 3 shows that this novel closely reflects the folktales in plot structure. Yet both fiction forms have the same function upon their public; both tell stories and are considered as modes of cultural education: “*Stories, are to a certain extent, the mirror of life: they reflect what people do, what they think, how they live and have lived, their values, their joys, and their sorrows.*” (Mbiti in Ibid: 595).

II. 5. b. Faqir's Arabness:

In *Pillars*, Faqir's Arab identity resides in her use of the narrative technique of *The Nights*. The use of a traditional material by Faqir could be seen as a revival of the indigenous tradition and a reference to the authenticity of the native culture. *The Nights* is a cultural heritage for Arab writers, some of them viewed it negatively and others reproduced³⁰ its narrative mode searching for indigenous Arabic narrative.

There is a narrative proximity whereby the author hints at the way in which “*stories in The Nights echo and reinforce one another*”. (Abdo, 2009: 263) Through the female characters of the novel, Faqir describes the physical violence the Arab woman's body experiences as mentioned earlier. The story of Maha beaten by her brother Daffash is followed by that of Um Saad's as she was beaten by her father, then emphasized with Maha's torture and mutilation for procreation through some practices to fit societal norms and expectations.

In *The Nights*, Scheherazade employs a frame-story device while narrating her stories, it is an Indian narrative mode³¹. (Enderwitz, 2004: 188) The same mode of narrative is borrowed by Faqir in *Pillars*. The author juxtaposes two narratives, that of the storyteller where Maha is the central character and that of Maha where she and Um Saad are central characters.

In the following passage told by Um Saad to Maha, there is a clear reference to *The Nights* supporting the post-orientalist writing of Faqir in this novel and compelling the reader to condemn western misrepresentation of the Arab woman as represented in the storyteller's narrative (see chapter three p.134-8):

“If I cross the threshold of the big buildings, I said to myself, I will never be able to get out again. I am not a character from the One Thousand and One Nights. I will never be able to roll into another identity, another body, travel to better times and greener places.”
(Faqir, 1996: 17-8)

Like Dunyâzâd³² in *The Nights* Um Saad is the companion of Maha, the Scheherazade of Faqir in *Pillars* and, is continuously instigating the storytelling act. And like this very character of *The Nights*, Um Saad calls Maha “sister” every time she starts telling her story or when Maha stops telling hers..

Um Saad is the second character that plays a key role in the novel. As Duniyâd, Um Saad is either omitted in the narrative of Maha or granted an equal footing with Maha and is given a whole chapter in the novel called “Um Saad”. As we don’t find a big difference between the number of chapters devoted to Maha’s story (twenty three chapters) and Um Saad’s story (seventeen chapters) in the novel. We can deduce that Faqir is clearly referring to this cultural heritage that *The Nights* represents in this novel.

Other traces of the fantastic world of *The Nights* are found in instances like the magic escape of Maha by the end of the novel: “*The truth is Maha...survived the series of catastrophes. The jinn carried her...on their wings away from the lava and the fire.*”(Ibid: 226)

A reference to a patriarchal figure in the oral Arab tradition is constantly voiced by Um Saad as she mentions *al Shater Hasan*. Every time she is confronted to “unhomely” situations, when she is beaten by her father or raped by her husband at their wedding night as quoted earlier, she calls this name. It is a way to call for somebody to liberate her by telling her story. It could also be regarded as a reference to a regretted traditional past.

However, it may also refer to the androcentric hegemony of storytelling in the Arab culture; it is challenged by Maha who is now telling their stories, hers and that of Um Saad. According to Fatme Sharafeddine Hassan, though we find various versions of the folk tale of Al Shater Hasan, what is common to all versions is the importance of the values of the tribe (as nucleus of social and political life) such as hospitality, honesty, honor, loyalty, bravery, protecting the weak and helping the poor. (Ibid in Suyoufie, 2008: 225) As demonstrated earlier, these values are brought to the fore through many stances in the novel.

II. 5. b. 1. Faqir’s Linguistic Devices:

Faqir belongs to the category of ‘Arabs writing in English’ (AWE)³³. These are writers whose mother tongue usually is Arabic but who write in English³⁴. AWE represents “*transcultural writing that problematises social issues, sense of identity and terms of reference. It is “neither soft-edged amalgamation nor slavish mimicry”, but proposes*

“creative new identities for the individual and the collective subject”.” (Trabelsi in Faqir, 2004: 169)

The linguistic strategy and the linguistic devices used by Faqir and noticed through proverbial knowledge, popular songs and also the fragmented form of the text illustrated through the narrative technique of the writer partakes of the poetic of estrangement and reflects the concept of “unhomeliness” in *Pillars*.

Faqir states that her intention in *Pillars* was to “Arabize”³⁵ the narrative and the English language creating a hybrid language. To achieve this target she used oral tradition, the Qur’an and *The Nights* in the storyteller’s narrative counterbalanced by Maha’s narrative. It is a linguistic strategy whereby she is claiming her “Arabness” on the one hand, and her Muslim identity on the other. She also intended to criticize the orientalist vision of the Arab world. Faqir says that she uses a “nativized”³⁶ English in her writing in order “to carve a space for [herself] within it.” (Ibid in Moore, 2011: 10)

The linguistic devices used by Faqir to contextualize English into Arab culture are noticed in the use of lexical innovations. She borrows Arabic words and uses them in her English writing, words for example like: “*Rebab*” meaning local instrument of music, (Faqir, 1996: 18), “*Mulaya*” for a local long black dress (Ibid: 80), “*Humous*” meaning a local dish (Ibid: 123), “*Mansaf*” to describe another local dish (Ibid: 147).

There are also contextual redefinitions of lexical items of English in the Arab context noticed in the use of the kinship terms of sister or aunt. For instance, ‘*sister*’ kinship terms addressed normally by a girl to her sister and not to a roommate, it highlights the aspect of Arab solidarity. The term ‘*aunt*’ as well is supposed to refer to an aunt, and not to show respect to an old person.

Translation equivalence is also noticed in her literary production. This is a linguistic device whereby the author translates from Arabic into English. One example of such a linguistic device used by Faqir uncovers the misogyny of some folk sayings in Arabic like for instance: “*May Allah damn the devil*” (Ibid: 13) or “*Allah took and Allah gave*” (Ibid: 137)

In her linguistic strategy Faqir inserts Arabic proverbs and translates them into English. Like for instance, “*I loved him like the love of henna for water*” (Ibid: 16) and “*Girls are a worry until [they] are in the grave.*”³⁷ (Ibid: 129)

There is a proverb which supports the ideology of the writer: “*Donkeys cannot climb up the minaret’s steps and call for prayer.*” (Ibid: 187) It is voiced by Um Saad while describing her husband’s behaviour with her. She associates this behaviour to religion as a way to say that Arab men (as epitomized by the city man Abu Saad) are unable to understand women’s status within Islam as donkeys that could never climb up the minaret’s step and call for prayer. It could be considered as a reference to Arab men’s misinterpretation of the sacred book, the Qur’an.

Many instances may help the western reader reinforce his anti-Islamic and feminist obsession for a liberated Arab woman from a Muslim society like the curse voiced by the female character, Nasra “*Curse their religion*” (Faqir, 1996: 97) Yet, for Arabic speaking readership this curse is common in Arabic, though blasphemous for many, it does not necessarily refer to Islam. Furthermore, if we consider the context in which this curse is uttered, Nasra can be seen as cursing the practice of cauterization and beliefs of hajjehh Hulala and Aunt Tamam, which is in itself an aberration for Islam. (Abdo, 2009: 258)

In Faqir’s novel *Pillars*, the female character Nasra³⁸ speaks English with the misuse of the object pronoun (me) or (him) replacing the subject pronoun (I) or (he), negation expressed with the word (no) followed by the element to be negated³⁹. For example, “*Want a child, me*” (Ibid: 43) or “*Hurt me, him*” (Ibid: 11). These features are nothing but a case of “relexification” as called by Zabuss, or “syntactic fusion” by Ashcroft. (in Donaley, 2000: 35) It is when the syntax of the mother tongue is used in a text in a second language. We also notice in Nasra’s utterances the absence of the verbs to be and to have: “*Looking for you, your husband.*” (Ibid: 66)

The English used by Nasra is “immature” English⁴⁰ that reflects the interlanguage strategy coined by Selinker. From a syntactic point of view it is deviant from normal English structure. In Nasra’s case this “immaturity” of English use could be read as a way to show her innocence or to portray her as a subaltern and her utterances reflect her early stages of speaking. Faqir might also use it to refer to the denigrating strategy utilized in orientalist representation that colonial texts bear and in which such characters never acquire agency

and remain flat. This aspect is also noticed in the character of Nnaife in *The Joys*, whose maltreatment of English language causes the hilarity of his white masters. (see chapter three p.116)

Nasra is also described playing music, she plays the flute. Through such a portrayal we can deduce that her difficulty to speak but her mastery of the instrument of music (the flute as a mode of expression) is nothing but a reference to the difficulties of music performance in the Middle East. As argued in Zeydabadi-Nejad's essay: in the Middle East "*Social anxieties over music (and dance) are paralleled with anxieties concerning gender, particularly in relation to women.*" (Nooshin in *ibid*: 226) Nasra uses music as a way to express herself but not only. She utilizes it as a medium to negotiate power within a patriarchal system.

Arabic language is not systematically introduced in Faqir's text. Ashcroft comments on the benefit of such interpellations:

the use of untranslated words as interface signs seems a successful way to foreground cultural distinctions, so it would appear even more profitable to attempt to generate an 'interculture' by the fusion of the linguistic structures of two languages." Faqir's use of English language falls under the category of "appropriation;" "the process by which the language is taken and made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience" (Ashcroft in Suyoufie and Hammad, 1996: 310)

II. 5. b. 2. Faqir's Plot Structure:

For Faqir the plot structure is a site of a narrative struggle influenced by social and psychological values⁴¹, expressed through Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology. She proposes another pattern "breaking the sequence," as Virginia Woolf's much-cited phrase would describe it. This phrase is cited by Ruth Page in her paper "Gender" where she considers the plot structure used by women writers breaking the sequence of chronology as an alternative pattern to male plot structure and regarded as "*a means of emancipation for women writers.*" (*Ibid*, 2007: 199)

Breastfeeding and childbirth are compared to female plot structure by Susan Winnett. She relates in her essay the fragmentation of narrative sequences in female

writing to female experience. (Winnett in Page, 2007: 199) This analogy may help us in our comparative analysis. Both authors use different tools of procreation to liberate their female characters in their novel. Faqir uses the narrative or the story told by her female protagonist as a tool of procreation liberating Maha and her roommate Um Saad from subalternity (imposed by the treatment of the British doctor in the asylum) and from the misrepresentation uttered alternatively by the storyteller all along the novel. We find in the plot structure a kind of repetition of narrative climaxes or unconcluded sequences. Every time she succeeds to liberate her image and tells her version of the story she is either silenced by the British doctor or misrepresented repeatedly by the storyteller's counter-discourse. The repeated liberating acts achieved by the narrative of Maha become acts of procreation as used literarily by Emecheta's protagonist whose children represent repeated means of freedom resisting and coping within the "unhomely" traditional village of Ibuza and the colonial city of Lagos.

All aspects in these women's literary productions, the linguistic strategy in both novels, the structural characteristics such as linearity and closure as used by Faqir or Emecheta's folktale plot structure reflect the African or the Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology of both authors and maintain their Africaness and Arabness through their English writing.

II. 6. Conclusion:

In traditional African communities such as the Igbo community, women are considered as "*the trees which bear fruit*" (Drew, 1995: 13). Motherhood in traditional Ibuza means freedom. It is through this "biological function" that they are recognized as complete. This idea is inculcated to young Igbo girls and boys from their childhood.

Even if in the act of having children, the Igbo woman suffers a lot; what is still important for her is to be respected and free to guide her life. These advantages are found in the status of the senior wife. It is the only way she knows to negotiate her space within the net of "unhomely" traditions. Motherhood determines her womanhood. Motherhood's power turns from biological and affective to social in order to fit in the traditions. The Igbo woman needs to correspond to the standards women set to themselves since it is the women's role to transmit the values.

These Igbo values represent women's expectations from their men as well. The important man in a place like Ibuza is the one who has not only physical and moral strengths but also money; all these elements represent his wealth.

With those values, Nnu Ego faced urban Lagos, where she felt her status changing drastically in parallel with the changes brought by British colonialism (see the next chapter, p.115-28). "*Acknowledging that under colonialism Igbo women enjoyed far less freedom, however, does not blind Emecheta to women's subjection under indigenous patriarchy*" (Andrade, 1990: 101). Yet, although Emecheta commits⁴² herself to denounce all "*the evils of patriarchal institutions and conventions that hold women down in Igbo society*" (Ezeigbo, 1990: 160), in this novel, the reader discovers her strong African identity as well. She does not omit to crystallize her ideas about women in the colonial period into a threat that the Igbo woman faces with her inherited values. Contrasting with the indigenous patriarchy, Emecheta at the same time, tells us the story of a rebellious woman loved and respected by an important chief in the pre-colonial period, and this is nothing but African womanism in action.

Nnaife was brought up in Ibuza, too. He was nourished by the same values as Nnu Ego through their childrearing. It is in his traditional education that his lust for money has its roots, since wealth is important in Ibuza, but it becomes an obsession in Lagos.

Igbo values are imported with Nnu Ego and Nnaife in displacement. In colonial Lagos, women use their motherhood to seek power to face the "foreign", the "new" that they consider as a threat to their traditional role. Men focus on money, the only way they have to replace their respect and dignity. Emecheta does not deny in this novel that community life is very important for Igbo women's traditional role, so no room for category doctrines such as feminism is allowed.

Third world traditions are wontedly negatively represented through the western 'gaze', either through Orientalism or feminism. As explained by Gayatri Spivak "*Western knowledge privileges the western observer or the western-trained native at the expense of her subject...the west 'reactively homogenizes the Third World ... their literatures ... thus subalternizing Third-World material.'*" (Ibid in Müge Göçek and Balaghi: 1995: 5) African

and Arab traditions are portrayed as an immutable force. This representation justifies the West hegemony.

In *Pillars*, Faqir's narrative technique, a traditional material inherited from the author's Arab culture, detects and eradicates the storyteller's orientalist representation of the Arab woman within her traditions and religion through a counter-discourse uttered by Maha. Some Western Feminists consider Arab women perpetuating traditions as a conservatism that they attribute to the "resurgence of traditional thought." (Saliba, 2000: 1089) They are unable to perceive it as a mode to carve a space for themselves within the former colonizer's language and to maintain their identity's stability because they do not consider the colonial aspect as womanists do.

However, in Emecheta's *The Joys*, the female protagonist is utilizing her "third world" traditional role of mother to preserve her identity and resist the hegemonic intrusion in her daily life. Womanism as used by both authors aims at criticizing 'their' traditions positively and negatively, and this is nothing but an attempt to reverse the Western hegemony to which feminism belongs. By producing "the Third World woman" as a singular monolithic subject, feminism reproduces unintentionally this Western hegemony, recreating the colonial discourse based on inequality⁴³. (Müge Göçek and Balaghi: 1995: 5)

The authors of these two novels try to counter-balance the negative description of 'their' traditions by exposing the positive one. As a result, in both contexts, tradition "*emerges as a vibrant force that can be both constricting and liberating*" (Müge Göçek and Balaghi: 1995: 6) as demonstrated in the last chapter (p. 161-95).

African and Arabo-Islamic womanist ideologies emerged in a post-colonial period where the native woman writer seeks to represent through her literary production a reformed society deemed backward and ignorant through the promotion of Western and colonial ideologies such as feminism. Peasant life is represented positively. In the native man's portrayal there is beauty, dignity and courage, along with suffering, oppression and alienation in colonial and post-colonial settings. The farm or the land epitomizes the struggles of the peasantry within a feudal system. This is not specific to womanist writing in female literature, such representation of peasants and rural life may be encountered in

native men's writing as well⁴⁴. This kind of writing testifies generally to a growing political awareness.

Chapter two: Patriarchal “Unhomeliness”

Notes:

¹ Women writers write with their body, they write in “*white ink*” (Cixous, 2000: 166). Emecheta brought up her children in London. They had a different childrearing from that of their parents’. After a quarrel with her daughter Cheidu about her education, Cheidu left the house in anger and Buchi Emecheta decided to write this novel where she put all her anger of a disappointed mother (Emecheta, 1994: 223-5)

² According to Tadié “*Dans un texte, l’espace se définit comme l’ensemble des signes qui produisent un effet de représentation.*”(Achour and Bekkat, 2002 : 51). “*In a text, space is defined as the group of signs that produce an effect of representation.*” (my translation).

³ “*Culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses, through which they come to view themselves and their place in the universe. Values are the basis of a people’s identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. All this is carried by language. Language as culture is the collective memory bank a people’s experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next.*” (Ngugi, 2000: 438)

⁴ “*Education in the western sense of formal instruction and prolonged pupillage certainly came in with the advent of European missionaries and –builders but African society has always had its own system of instilling its mores and norms in the young and preparing them for life in the adult communities.*” (Biobaku,1967: 451)

⁵ The veil in her novel *Salma* is very representative of the female protagonist’s culture and identity. When she was asked to remove it to find a job in Britain she felt as if she were denying her language, culture and clan. (Moore, 2011: 6)

⁶ Faqir’s mother was a liberal woman, her father was a tyrant. (Moore, 2011: 2)

⁷ “*Chastity can be achieved through purity of breed, which is seen as synonymous with the purity of females. ‘in Arab Muslim culture, the honour of patrilineal group is bound up*

with the sex organs of its daughters and a specific term “i’rid’ combines the two.” Girls and women *ca sully their family’s honour and destroy their reputation until they get married and become the responsibility of their husbands.*” (Faqir, 1998: 69)

⁸ This powerful image of the senior wife being in charge of the domestic organization is found as well in a different African setting, in the Maghreb, reflected in the movie La Citadelle of Mohamed Chouikh (1988). We may define this relationship between literature and cinema as an allusion as defined by Genette as a “*Relation de coprésence entre deux ou plusieurs textes c’est à dire eidétiquement et le plus souvent par la présence effective d’un texte dans un autre... sous une forme moins explicite et moins littérale celle de l’allusion.*” (Genette, 1982: 8) “*Relation of co presence between two or many texts, that is to say eidetically and most of the time through the effective presence of a text in another...*” (my translation).

⁹ This phenomenon of “Mother against women” is noticed as well in Maissa Bey’s *Sous le jasmin la nuit* (2004), a novel that represents a good description of the social power mothers enjoy within their community, a power used by women at the detriment of other women.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, cases of such an injustice towards barren women are still reflected in Maghrebin recent realistic novels such as Touria Oulehri’s *La Répudiée* (2001) where Niran, the female protagonist tries to exist through something else than motherhood; she seeks to replace the freedom motherhood offers to women, and uses her body differently than for procreation. This is nothing but intertextuality as defined by Kristeva: “*Le mot (le texte) est un croisement de mots (de textes) ou on lit au moins un autre mot (texte) [...] Tout texte se construit comme une mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d’un autre texte.*” (Kristeva, 1969: 145). “*The word (the text) is a crossing of words (of texts) where we read at least another word (text) [...] Every text is constructed as a mosaic of citations, every text is absorption and transformation of another text*” (my translation).

¹¹ This reality unveils the strong hindrance to Arab women’s participation in the economic and political spheres. (Ismail, 2012: 261)

¹² This case in Western culture is altered by “shelters for battered women”.

¹³ To be more precise, I prefer to use the term polygyny meaning “many wives” rather than polygamy meaning “many marriages” without any distinction of sex (Lacoste-Dujardin, 2008: 92).

¹⁴ The notion of slavery is one that Emecheta picks up again in a subsequent novel, *The Joys of Motherhood*, with which *The Slave Girl* (1977) intertexts through the narration of the story of a slave girl who is buried alive with her dead slave mistress (Olaogun, 2002: 184-5)

¹⁵ About the social importance of songs Herndon writes: “Those points in the human life cycle that are recognized as important in a given society will be marked by song and ceremony. In this instance song marks and gives protection in the liminal phase of the rite of passage.” (Ibid in Suyoufie, 2008: 235)

¹⁶ The kitchen is used in the title of her novel *At The Midnight Kitchen*. It is a novel that unveils the contradictions of humanity and how space is negotiated in exile. It represents Faqir’s opinion about Al-Qaeda and September eleven.. There are three male characters and two female characters in the novel. One of the female characters finds the West liberating and the other finds it oppressive. The one that finds it oppressive was very secular at the beginning. Then she experiences a horrendous immigrant life in London and this is what “Islamicizes” her. There is a male character described as very liberal, he comes from Algeria, he is an FLN member. He gets radicalized by his home and immigrant experience. This novel shows how when people get brutalized they become easily influenced and “recruitable”. For Faqir terrorism and mass radicalization has its root in colonialism and neo-colonialism. “*The novel is an attempt to contextualize the so-called “war on terror” and to make the invisible visible.*” (Faqir in Moore, 2011: 12)

¹⁷ “*Space [...] is produced, performed, and experienced by members of different groups within society, through diversified cultural discourses.*” (Cariello, 2009: 342) “*The person*

is reshaped in time and space defined as an individual through particular spatialities and existence." (Chambers in Cariello, 2009: 347)

¹⁸ This kind of invasion is well described in Assia Djebbar's *A Sister to Scheherazade 1987* where polygamy is lived as the invasion of the domestic sphere: "*the second wife stands on the threshold, devouring the space*" (Ibid: 159) (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 298)

¹⁹ Lilith existed before the union of Adam and Eve, a union that represented the source of humanity. Ona existed before colonialism in Nigeria, a colonialism that pretended to bring humanity to the savage peoples of Africa. Both Lilith and Ona reflect the image of an independent and a rebellious woman claiming equality with her man as claimed by feminists that came after the existence of humanity in the world and after colonialism in Nigeria.

²⁰ Nwapa states in an interview with Clenora Hudson-Weems, transcribed in the article of Nnaemeka, (1995 : 82) that if feminism is about possibilities and if true feminists believe in possibilities and make them happen and not only dwell on them, then she is a feminist with a big 'f'.

²¹ Violent scenes describing war are pervasive in Faqir's Novel *Nisanit* where torn human bodies are described.

²² The notion of power in the pre-colonial period was not necessarily related to space and power over space. Nigerian ethnic groups related master of space "*maître de l'espace*" with master of power "*maître du pouvoir*" lately, with the appearance of political power. This dissociation of the control over space from that of power is typical to Negro African states. (Diagne, 1981: 31)

²³ "*Oral tradition is not an old practice but the beginning and continuity of a culture. It consists of the essence and experiences of a people, passed from one generation to generation, always with a didactic thrust because, from the very first, Africa has placed the human being and the community at the center of life.*" (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 5)

²⁴ This notion of “male daughter” represents the central idea treated in Tahar Ben Jelloun’s *La nuit sacrée* (1987) where Ahmed (a male character’s name) was the daughter of a humiliated father who had no male child and decided secretly that this daughter would be declared as a man and thus brought up as such.

²⁵ In Fantasia Assia Djébar distinguishes four levels of language use by Algerian women of her generation: “French for secret missives; Arabic for our stifled aspirations towards God; Lybico-Berber which takes us back to the most ancient of our mother idols. The fourth language, for all females, young or old, cloistered or half emancipated, remains that of the body.” (Djébar, 1980: 180)

²⁶ This ideology includes the literary convention and stylistic stances adopted by the writer. For Eaglton it includes many levels, namely, “*theories of literature, critical practices, literary traditions, genres, conventions, devices and discourses*” (in Ngara, 1985: 108).

²⁷ “*There is a victory of Realism only when great realist writers establish a profound and serious, if not fully conscious, association with a progressive current in the evolution of mankind*” (Lukàs, 1978: 85).

²⁸ “*The stories and the ceremonies of religious and social import are symbols of continuity and part and parcel of what we call literature.*” (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 6)

²⁹ Emecheta was nourished in her culture from the African oral tradition; story telling. She learnt a lot about her ancestors from stories told by her mothers. These stories, she said in her autobiography, were punctuated by long silences and deep breathing by her big mother (her father’s eldest sister) Nwakwaluzo Ogbueyin. (Emecheta, 1994: 6-7)

³⁰ “... in 1934, 1936 and 1943 Tawfiq al-Hakîm and Tâhâ Husayn depicted Shahrazâd as a symbol for earth-bound baseness, unbound creative fantasy, and a prudent advocate of humaneness.” (Walther in Enderwits, 2004: 194)

³¹ “*The frame story of the Thousand and one Nights – that is the work’s prologue and epilogue, as they are usually termed – is without doubt one of the most powerful narratives in world literature.*” (Malti-Douglas in Enderwits, 2004: 189)

³² “...*Dunyâzâd, Shahrazâd’s little sister...serves as (her) companion during the (roughly) three years of the Nights, but her real importance lies in her instigation of the storytelling. She is the one who raises the king’s interest and keeps it alive by urging Shahrazâd to tell a story, by commenting upon it, and by interrupting it at the end of the night.*”(Enderwitz, 2004: 198)

³³ Leila Abouleila and Ahdaf Souheif belong to the AWE category. Leila Abouleila produces halal fiction. Her fiction represents and propagates an Islamic world view, it is a good example of transcultural and transnational literature. (Faqir, 2004: 169)

³⁴ A third space is created by such authors using linguistic strategies of (dis)placement or linguistic devices and that may be compared by some critics to the linguistic hybridity of *The Nights*: “*Even linguistically The Nights is a hybrid: its wording “comprises a ‘third language,’ neither purely colloquial nor exclusively literary” [...] thus representing a third space that Pillars of Salt inhabits. Pillars of Salt is also similar to The Nights’ “oral performance background [undergoing] the transforming process of written composition”, a third space wherein the presence of this colloquial, this oral “can [potentially] demolish, or at least make pretentious any gestures at higher linguistic affiliations” of written patriarchal texts*” (Pinault in Abdo, 2009: 249)

³⁵ Arabic is seen as the language of “a potential enemy” by the West, because according to Francis Fukuyama to learn Arabic is to learn the “delusions” of the Arabs.

³⁶ The word “nativization” used by Kachru about the contextualization of the English language in a different native culture is labeled “Arabization” by Françoise Lionnet. (Ibid in Bibizadeh, 2012: 4)

³⁷ As translated in Arabic by Suyoufie « Hamm al-banât lal-mamât.” (Ibid, 2008: 234)

³⁸ In Faqir's novel *My Name is Salma*, the the female protagonist shares the same linguistic features of English as Nasra.

³⁹ This aspect is the first step of acquiring negation in the second language. (Lightbrown and Spada in Felemban, 2012: 45)

⁴⁰ Faqir uses the same structure of English in *My Name is Salma* to distinguish her early stages of exposure to English. (Felemban, 2012: 45)

⁴¹ The deconstruction of the traditional form of storytelling inherited and borrowed from *The Nights* makes of Faqir's *Pillars* a postmodern fiction. Faqir's use of Scheherazade's strategy is a way to speak about herself within the Arab literary production circle and represents, at the same time, the Arab woman within her social circle. It is a new space where "*the private and the public spaces are entwined.*"(Suyoufie, 2008: 223)

⁴² Through his commitment, the writer unveils the situation of oppression from the moment he projects to change it. "*A chaque mot que je dis je m'engage un peu plus dans le monde, et du même coup, j'en émerge un peu davantage puisque je le dépasse vers l'avenir [...] L'écrivain « engagé » sait que la parole est action : il sait que dévoiler c'est changer et qu'on ne peut dévoiler qu'en projetant de changer ...*" (Sartre, 1948 : 29-30) . "*To each word I utter I commit myself a bit more in the world, and at the same time, I emerge from it since I transcend it towards the future [...] The 'committed' writer knows that the word is action: he knows that to unveil is to change and that unveiling is possible only if we project to change...*" (my translation)

⁴³ "When feminists look overseas, they frequently establish *their* authority on the backs of non-Western women, determining for them the meanings and goals of their lives. If from the feminist perspective there can be no shared experience with persons who stand for the Other, the claim to a common kinship with non-Western women is at best, tenuous, at worst, nonexistent." (Ong, 1988:80 in Müge Göçek and Balaghi: 1995: 5-6)

⁴⁴ An example of it is the Algerian Abdelhamid Ben Haddouga's *Rih-al-janûb* (1971)

CHAPTER THREE:

Colonial and Imperial “Unhomeliness”

III. 1. Introduction:

Africa and the Arab world witnessed wars, colonization and occupation by the western world. That was a topical issue for African and Arab male and female writers. This suffering served as inspiration for their literature. The result of it is that, in most of their women's writings, there is a conflation of gender/race. The two categories dealt with are reflected one next to the other. Women writers are more preoccupied with their nation than with themselves as women. This is probably due to their psychological trait, privileging the national community over themselves as individuals, and to the fact that solidarity helps them to survive. This solidarity is part and parcel of their culture.

Some literary critics defined Emecheta's works as feminist. The fact that she exposes different indigenous traditions as being oppressing to women, makes her writing belong to a kind of feminist writing. Yet the fact that she incorporates other elements to the Igbo woman's oppression in *The Joys* imposes a definition of ideology¹.

Pillars has been criticized in an orientalist tradition and considered, on the one hand, as ““*Arabian Nights' fabulism and social concern regarding the representation of Arab women,*” a book whose basic concern is “*anti-traditional feminist themes*”” (Steinberg in Abdo, 2009: 266). On the other hand, Bibizadeh considers Faqir as an “Islamic womanist” borrowing Miriam Cooke's idiom. (Ibid, 2012: 10) Yet, a post-colonial reading of *Pillars* entails taking into consideration racial and sexual aspects together. For this reason, one has to qualify her ideology differently.

Imperialism is a focal point where the encounter between East and West or North and South is studied. It is also very important to highlight the imbalance of power in many fields (politics, economy, culture, and knowledge) that operates justifying imperialism and widening the gap of this imbalance. Faqir and Emecheta use literature to expose and question this reality.

The goal of colonialism in Nigeria was to control its natives economically and politically. To make their control efficient and effective, the colonizers imposed their way of life on the colonized people as well. It was a way to control the indigenous culture. “*To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relation to others*” (Ngugi, 2000: 439).

In her novel *The Joys*, Buchi Emecheta writes about Igbo women during the colonial period. She exposes many instances where her indictment against the indigenous patriarchy is expressed, as we have seen in the second chapter (pp70,72,79,82) , but we may consider the novel as an indictment against the colonizer's oppression as well.

We can discern two vital and intertwined processes inherent in European colonization of Africa. The first [...] was the racializing and the attendant inferiorization of Africans as the colonized, the natives. The second...was the inferiorization of females. These processes were inseparable, and were both embedded in the colonial situation (Oyewumi, 2005: 355).

In both novels, the psychological violence, by which British colonialism proceeded in Nigeria as in Jordan, is well epitomized through male and female characters in colonial settings. "*Colonial domination is achieved through a process of disavowal that denies the chaos of its intervention.*" (Bhabha in Luangphinit, 2004: 70) The process of disavowal represents a threat to native characters' identity.

As argued in chapter one (p.21), there is no separate African or Arab female identity theory that we can use and apply directly to our reading. For feminists, it is clearly stated that female identity differs from the male one. This is what Nancy Chodorow (see chapter one, p.21) tries to distinguish proposing a female identity theory. Maha's questioning about identity's meaning: "*Identity? What is identity? I think I have none.*" (Faqir, 1996: 80) This passage could be a reference to this academic gap concerning the definition of a distinct Arab female identity theory in post-colonial women literature. She finally understood it once it became menaced in a colonial setting, in the asylum where she told her story. (Ibid: 101)

In an oppressive system, the emphasis on identity prevents from forming an image of the self in relation to others. (Müge Göçek and Balaghi: 1995: 7) This will be demonstrated through different colonial encroachments affecting the characters' lives in both novels. The colonial domination operates in colonial cities that could be considered as containers, Lagos in *The Joys* and Amman in *Pillars*.

III. 2. Colonial Containers:

A post-colonial analysis of any literary production should entail asking questions on the way the negotiations of post-colonial subjectivity and citizenship is carried out within a colonized territory as an urban space. The representation and the encroachment of such a space is very significant for the negotiations of national identity and culture as well. The city as represented in both novels under study is “*the place where the business of modern society gets done.*” (Holston in Herbert, 2014: 200) It is a “representational space” that is lived by the female and male characters and narrated. It could also be considered as a colonial container. In *The Joys*, the container is the city of Lagos. Nnu Ego’s motherhood allows her to escape it psychologically. In *Pillars*, the city of Amman and Fuhais mental hospital can be considered as containers inhabited only socially by the female protagonists. Flashbacks help the female characters’ minds to escape from these containers.

In both novels we find a juxtaposition of two places. In *The Joys*, we find the village Ibuza and the city of Lagos. In *Pillars*, the desert is juxtaposed with the town through female portrayal, the Bedouin Maha versus the city woman Um Saad.

In both African and Arabo-Islamic womanist literary writings the urban space is contrasted with the farm or the traditional village through which the longing for contact with the land is expressed. The city or the urban space becomes a “*key site of colonial oppression but also of anticolonial resistance.*”(Herbert, 2014: 201)

Faqir uses Maha as a key trope of the oppression experienced by Bedouin woman. She is clearly used as a “figure” in the narrative of the orientalist storyteller and also in the way she is addressed by Um Saad. The first time, the urban woman met Maha in the madhouse: ““*what? A filthy bedouin woman. Cannot you smell the stink of dung. You sleep with your sheep*” ... “*I am an urban woman from Amman. I refuse to share the room with a grinning bedouin.*”” (Faqir, 1996: 6) This scene underlines Faqir’s awareness of the negative image of Bedouin women represented in the West (via the storyteller’s narrative) and even by urban communities in the Arab World. This characterization expresses her tentative to disrupt and confronts stereotypes.

Instances in *Pillars* and *The Joys* that reflect the “unhomeliness” experienced by the colonized populations in urban cities are found in scenes describing the female protagonists’ walking in the contemporary city. Theorists like De Certeau suggest that such

an act of walking in the city in post-colonial texts implies “lacking a place” and that it is related to questions of citizenship, home, and belonging.(Ibid, in Herbert, 2014: 210) In *The Joys* the opening scene describes Nnu Ego walking desperately in the city of Lagos as she lost her first child. (Emecheta, 1979: 62) In *Pillars*, a similar scene describes Maha leaving angrily the villa of the Pasha as she discovered she was cooking for the English people, she cried: ““Foreign killers, all of you” I cried, then I marched past the parked cars, past the flashing lights of lamps, past the mud hut of the guard, and out of the wide gate.””(Faqir, 1996: 162)

III.3. Lagos: the Colonial Setting:

Psychological violence is well epitomized by the female protagonist Nnu Ego who tries to resist through the only weapon she possesses to claim her existence and negotiate her space, through her traditional role of mother. The author incorporates the impact of colonialism into her female protagonist’s ordeal. It is not enough for her to focus only on the oppressive indigenous patriarchy through polygyny and men’s decision taking, as seen in Nnu Ego’s father decision about her two marriages (Emecheta, 1979: 30), but on the white patriarchy, the British colonizer too, when she is obliged to change her way of life according to that of the colonizer’s.

While the white woman writer protests against sexism, the black woman writer must deal with it as one among many evils; she battles also with the dehumanization resulting from racism and poverty...black women writers are not limited to issues defined by their femaleness but attempt to tackle questions raised by their humanity...(Ogunyemi, 1985: 68).

Emecheta takes Lagos as a setting where the female protagonist, Nnu Ego, was faced with a new way of life imported through colonialism and imposed on her people. In such a setting, Nnu Ego is not depicted as a rebellious woman. She was beset on the one hand by an indigenous patriarchy, and on the other, by a problem of survival due to the intrusion of “the white men”. These two disadvantages, as it will be shown, are well exposed in this novel².

The Joys is about “*The colonial impact in gender terms*” (Oyewumi, 2005: 340), about how women react to colonialism. Through the character of Nnu Ego, Emecheta is representing the next generation after Ona, in other words, the colonial period. In this generation, there are changes in Igbo women’s preoccupations. With the coming of

colonialism, Igbo women's power within the Igbo community, as epitomized by Ona, has weakened.

The colonial period in the novel was represented through Lagos, the setting of all the changes brought by British colonialism to alter the traditional way of life of the colonized. Yet, the importance that represents procreation for women could be noticed in both settings (as shown in the second chapter p.71). The opening chapter of the novel depicts the female protagonist's attempt to commit suicide in Lagos because she lost her first baby. This chapter was to underline the importance of procreation for Igbo women in a modern setting.

This change of setting implies a change of time, from Ibuza to Lagos and from the pre-colonial to the colonial period. This change "*conveys the sensation of a society yanked out of the placid gulf of myth and flung into the turbulent, contrary currents of history*" (Ogundele, 2002: 135).

Coming from her home village Ibuza, for Nnu Ego, Lagos stood as an outside world where she tried to combine her traditional mode of life with the imported new socioeconomic structure based on white men's jobs, private ownership, and nuclear family system, a change noticed from the first contact with her new husband Nnaife.

III. 4. Nnaife: a Metaphor for the Colonized Nigeria:

Through Nnu Ego's vision of Nnaife and behaviour in Lagos, the impact of colonialism could be well highlighted. In this novel, the conflation of race/gender may be noticed in many instances. Nnu Ego's second husband is a metaphor for the "new" Nigeria. Nnu Ego's first contact with this man in Lagos reveals the Igbo woman's vision of her colonized country. Nnaife was seen by Nnu Ego as follows:

...Nnu Ego [...] was just falling asleep with a full stomach when in walked a man with a belly like a pregnant cow...His hair, unlike that of men at home in Ibuza, was not closely shaved...like that of a woman mourning for her husband. His skin was pale, the skin of someone who had for a long time worked in the shade and not in the open air... (Emecheta, 1979: 42)

In this passage Nnaife is compared to a woman mourning, a sad image suggesting the impact of colonialism on the Nigerian people. The image of the "shade" is a metaphor for oppression. A person working in the shade is a person who does not exist concretely, a

person who is oppressed. She compared him with her former husband in Ibuza, making reference to the past: “...*She was used to her long wiry Amatokwu...not this short, fat, stocky man [...] He did not smell healthier either, unlike men in Ibuza who had the healthy smell of burning wood and tobacco. This one smelt all soapy, as if he was over-washed*” (Ibid: 44)

The only element that this man had in common with Nnu Ego’s people and made her recognize him as her future husband was his greenish tattoo (Ibid: 43). This is a tribal mark, found in Ona’s physical portrait (Ibid: 12), that made Nnu Ego feel she eventually belonged to the same “world” as that man despite all the differences. In Lagos, the wooden boxes she brought with her and the greenish tribal marks on Nnaife’s shoulder represented all what she kept from her past in that new world.

From his first contact with Nnu Ego, Nnaife was aware of her resentment, but could do nothing to change the situation (Ibid: 43); as if the sacrifice of manhood is necessary for better commodity in Lagos. For her part, motherhood was a consolation and a dream: “ ‘*O my chi*’, she prayed [...] ‘*O my dead mother, please make this dream come true, then I will respect this man, I will be his faithful wife and put up with his crude ways and ugly appearance.*’ ” (Ibid: 44-5). In this passage, she used motherhood as the only issue to bear that man as a husband chosen for her by her father. In fact, she considered him more as the father of her future children than her husband.

Through Nnaife’s way of life in Lagos, Nnu Ego faced the imported culture imposed on her people by British colonialism.

III. 5. The Intrusion of the “White Man’s” Culture in Nnu Ego’s Life:

The Igbo woman has to face many changes in her way of life in Lagos, changes that represent a threat to her values and principles. The image of the man she had in Ibuza was completely different in Lagos. That was the case of Nnu Ego with Nnaife.

III. 5. a. Nnaife’s “White Man’s” Jobs:

Nnaife exercised many jobs in colonial Lagos whereby the Igbo man’s oppression and the Igbo woman’s suffering are well reflected.

III. 5. a. 1. Nnaife: the Meers' Washer Man:

Nnaife's job as a domestic washing the white masters' clothes, if one speaks about the loss of manhood, does not concern only men but it is a "*masculinized version of the concept of the self*" (Oyewumi, 2005: 345), in the sense that it may be applied even for women. This loss of manhood does not narrow the gap between native men and women since this loss is suffered even by women. Generally, the jobs exercised by the majority of the black male characters in Lagos are within the domestic sphere; cook, steward, "small boy" and washer man (Emecheta, 1979: 41).

Through Nnu Ego's description of both men of Lagos and men of Ibuza, regretting her former husband of Ibuza, men's degrading jobs in Lagos as a reference to the self is noticed. She suffered from this new image of men and of husband she was faced with in colonial Lagos. She regretted the men of Ibuza. Nnu Ego was beaten and constantly humiliated by her first husband in her traditional village but he had the right role of a man, a farmer not a domestic, and she was in her right place of a woman.

A sadistic drive proper to the oppressor's consciousness is well reflected through the behaviour of Mrs Meers, through her "*patronizing way, displaying the attitude which white people adopted towards their servants in the colonies*" (Ibid: 83). Nnaife is objectified by this white female character who blamed him for the rainy weather. "*In the illogical way of women, she would thumb into the ironing room blaming him, talking in that strangling voice of hers as if he, Nnaife had sent the rain*" (Ibid: 82). To please his mistress and in order not to be blamed, Nnaife "*squeezed out as much water as he could from the washing by hand, and filled the iron with coal,*" so that his employers would have something dry to wear (Ibid: 82).

Yet, sadism is not the only element Nnaife endures in this job as a domestic servant. Through the passage where Nnaife was insulted by his master, Dr Meers, Emecheta wants probably to show the unrefined and the unpolished language with which the oppressed is addressed. It also indicates the relations of domination and subordination that characterizes the African scene (Ngara, 1985: 91). "*Good night, madam. Good night, sah.*' Nnaife said to the master...Dr Meers peered over the paper, smiled mischievously and answered, '*Good night, baboon*'" (Emecheta, 1979: 41). Nnaife did not react to this insult. He accepted it because, according to him, he must accept that humiliation in order to

have money. Nnaife simply shrug his shoulder and said: “*We work for them and they pay us. His calling me a baboon does not make me one*” (Ibid: 42).

This was an insult following which the white master’s wife got angry, not because Nnaife had been insulted but because her husband had uttered the colloquial word “baboon”³ used by uneducated people. As a result of such a treatment, Nnaife felt inferior and accepted this inferiority. He said to himself: “*‘But I’m only a black man, and I don’t expect to know everything’ [...] He was one of the Africans who were so used to being told they were stupid in those days and that they started to believe in their own imperfections*” (Ibid: 83).

Nnaife’s laziness and evasive mind is nothing but the result of his self-depreciation, “*so often do they (oppressed people) hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness*” (Freire, 2000: 63). This self-depreciation, in fact, is a characteristic proper to oppressed people. It “*derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold on them.*” (Ibid: 63). Nnaife was convinced about that image they had about him, and did not mind to be called a beggar (Emecheta, 1979: 93) or a baboon.

It is through the character of Nnaife that Emecheta voices the impact of the colonizer on the Nigerian man, and indirectly on the Nigerian woman. In describing Nnaife’s emasculated job, the writer describes how he was treated by his white masters as well. Nnu Ego criticized Nnaife for his acceptance of such a humiliating job and his passivity towards the injustice he was treated with (Ibid: 47).

Nnaife, after the departure of his masters, the Meers, finds himself in a situation of unemployment. Dr Meers was called to go to fight for his country against the Germans (Ibid: 84). In this passage through the narrator, Emecheta makes a hint at the “invisible freedom” of Ghandi. She shows that even if the Meers seem free in Lagos, they are called to leave their peaceful life and go to war; they are enslaved by their culture of oppression:

Ghandi created such a universalism in his conception that freedom is invisible, not only in the popular sense that the oppressed of the world are one, but also in the unpopular sense that the oppressor too is enslaved by the culture of oppression. (Nandi in Brown, 1993: 671)

Nnaife had a difficulty to express himself in English with his employers. “*To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support a weight of a civilization*” (Fanon, 2000: 419). In other words, to speak is to exist. Through Nnaife’s way of expressing himself in English with his masters, a psychological weakness is pinpointed and the colonial “*domination of the mental universe of the colonised*” (Ngugi, 2000: 439) is well shown. He was handicapped by the problem of language, and that handicap maintained the social distance between Nnaife and his employers. This is noticed when he wanted to ask why the Meers were obliged to leave Nigeria but could not express himself (Emecheta, 1979: 84).

In other instances, he was either laughed at by his employers or treated as a child by white men. This is well shown when the new boss addressed Nnaife the first time before taking him to Fernando Po: “... ‘*Is there anything we can do for you? If not just go and go quickly before I call the police.*’ [...] *They laughed again*” (Ibid: 93).

Before going to Fernando Po, Nnaife remained jobless for a long period of time. This unemployment made Nnu Ego resent Nnaife’s passivity towards British colonialism’s oppression and evasive mind while playing the guitar instead of looking for a job⁴. Even in his work as a domestic, Nnaife was still in an informal sector. Nnu Ego compared her husband to a slave (Ibid: 50).

III. 5. a. 2. Nnaife in Fernando Po:

The second job after the departure of the Meers to England to work on the ships that went to Fernando Po. Men would stay months on those ships without seeing their families and women suffered a lot from that kind of work (Ibid: 75). This new job in shipping could be compared to those coastal slaves serving in the transport of palm oil in the nineteenth century, who worked as canoe men brought to paddle the canoes laden with European goods to the island markets of Fernando Po and returned with the bulky casks of oil and sacks of palm kernels.

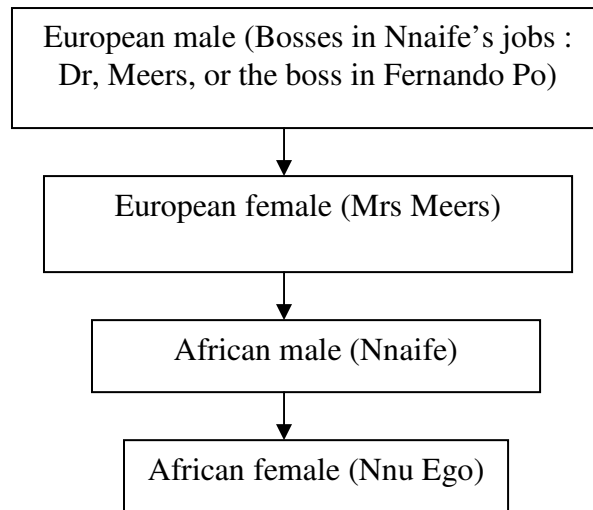
In 1828 and 1829...Fernando Po appeared destined to become the most important British settlement in West Africa, functioning as a collection point of palm oil and as a place for liberation for African captives from the slave ships seized by the British Navy. (Northrup, 1979: 13)

Yet Nnaife's hard work, as described through this job, seems to be more like enslaving him than liberating him. So it could be considered as an indictment to the British colonialism's pretention of liberating slaves in Fernando Po at that time.

In fact the features of slavery of the Igbos is similar to those of the New world plantations⁵, and to reproduce the same effect in her writing, Emecheta is stating an indictment against the British colonizer who treated the Igbo men as slaves in a period when Igbo slavery normally had been abolished by that same colonizer. In other words, through Nnaife's work in shipping to Fernando Po, Emecheta seems to state that the British who abolished Igbo slavery in the nineteenth century reproduced the same kind of institution by offering such jobs to Igbo men in the twentieth century. In fact, it is nothing but a new version of slavery. Through the narrator, she describes working on ships to Fernando Po as a job where:

The masters, not able to buy these workers outright, made them work like slaves ... They were paid –paid slaves—but the amount was so ridiculously small that many a white Christian with a little conscious would wonder whether it was worth anybody's while to leave a wife and family and stay almost a year on a voyage. (Emecheta, 1979: 112)

What results from the contact between the colonized, epitomized by Nnu Ego and Nnaife, and the colonizer, epitomized by the white employers, is only intimidation, pressure, arrogance, contempt and mistrust (Cesaire, 2005: 62). The way Nnaife was treated by his masters influenced his behaviour towards Nnu Ego. He was ill-treated by his employers and, in return, he ill-treated Nnu Ego. His degrading job had an indirect impact on Nnu Ego. One form of oppression influences the other. By incorporating the gender factor in the hierarchy of British Colonialism, the following system of classification⁶ is induced:



III. Diagram. 1.

Hierarchical System of Classification in Colonial Lagos

Such a classification is a way to make others do and be what one wants. This classification goes somehow unnoticed, or is implicit in the novel because the function and the label of the characters are enmeshed, in the sense that Dr Meers is called the Master and Nnaife is the servant who lives in the “servants’ quarters.” (Emecheta, 1979: 9).

Being classified at the bottom of this hierarchy, one may deduce that, in addition to the fact that the Igbo woman suffers from indigenous patriarchy, she equally endures European patriarchy. There is a native female exclusion in the relationship between the white employers, the colonizer, and the native employees, the colonized. The colonial state is mainly patriarchal, the colonial staff being male. The jobs are given mainly by the colonizer to native male characters in the novel, either as domestic jobs or in the railway. So motherhood for Nnu Ego was to exist doubly, in her traditional environment and in the colonial one.

This hierarchy is sustained even through Nnaife’s third job as a grass cutter in the railway department.

III. 5. a. 3. Nnaife: the Grass Cutter:

Nnaife’s dancing and tuning in rhythm, cutting grass in the Nigerian railway department (Ibid: 143), is an artistic recreation of the atmosphere of slavery in the New World in this novel, relevant to the heritage of the blues “*whose spiritual dynamics ensure*

equilibrium in a turbulent world—perhaps because... there is a connection between the blues and the capacity to experience hope”⁷.

The blues could be defined as a music and poetry of an individual’s confrontation with himself, with his family and loved ones, with the oppressive forces of a society, with nature and with fate (Henderson, 1980: 32). Nnaife, with his different “white man’s” jobs and the hostility he was treated with faced all these confrontations in Lagos.

Nnu Ego was the only one to object to Nnaife’s jobs in Lagos. Through Agbadi addressing one of his friends in Ibuza,

Emecheta writes:

...I would have liked her to marry into the Owulum family, but the man in question is not in Ibuza. He is in a white man’s job in a place they call Lagos. They say any fool can be rich in such places. I don’t trust men who can’t make it here in Ibuza. (Emecheta, 1979: 37).

For Agbadi, only lazy men who could not face farm work went to Lagos to work (Ibid: 37). As for Nnu Ego in Lagos, she dreamt one night of a handsome man practising a respectful job, a free man in a better “Nigeria” in the future. To have a son for her meant to make that dream come true (Ibid: 79).

Nnaife, a male character depicted as “*weak, flabby and unsuccessful*” (Ogunyemi, 1985: 67), through the different jobs he practised, represents the effect of colonial Lagos on the native man rather than a feminist vocabulary against the Igbo man as Ogunyemi labelled it (Ibid: 67). The traditional man of Ibuza, as epitomized by Nnu Ego’s first husband or father, is described as courageous, strong and healthy (see chapter two, p.86-7). The writer weakens the black man in colonial Lagos, where the Igbo woman is disoriented and the Igbo man humiliated and, empowers him in a traditional setting, a setting where roles are well balanced. Nnu Ego tried to find the same balance in colonial Lagos, a setting where most of the native men practised emasculated jobs, jobs that are mainly described as the taking away of the manhood of the colonized. This loss of virility was felt as a threat for Nnu Ego’s womanhood. She tried to redefine her traditional role through motherhood. In Nnaife’s emasculated job of a domestic washing the white masters’ clothes, race, and not gender, is the most salient category. This job could be considered as a metaphor for the violence of colonialism, not only on native men, but on native women as well.

Another instance reflecting this violence and the degradation of the colonized manhood of the colonized is when Nnaife was forced to join the British army in India.

III. 5. a. 4. Nnaife at War:

Nnaife and other African men were taken by force to join the British army and to fight with them in India. Their families were sent money in return for that task. They were humiliated and, as they were caught, some of them “*screamed like women*” (Emecheta, 1979: 144). Nnaife was shocked. He thought to himself and wondered: “*We don’t have slavery anymore, so why should grown men be captured in broad daylight?*” (Ibid: 145). Yet, when he was told that money would be sent to his family, he forgot humiliation and injustice and was relieved.

After Nnaife’s forced departure to war, Nnu Ego was visited by British soldiers and was told to leave the servant’s quarters; she was handicapped by their language which she did not understand. She felt oppressed, threatened and even “denuded”: “*She shook with fear and anger while Oshia tugged at her lappa as if he would pull it off her, they soon marched away, their horrible dogs with them*” (Ibid: 96).

In almost all the jobs Nnaife practised in Lagos, he was corrupted by the money he earned or the advantages he got from those jobs. Those advantages had a real effect of “softening” the power of domination under which he was exploited. It blinded him and rendered him unaware of the fact that it was “false generosity”⁸. It is highlighted behind “*the decorum of a meaningless smile*” of Mrs Meers when she announced to Nnaife their departure and offered to him and his wife the privilege to use their sheets (Ibid: 85). It is equally underlined in the job of Fernando Po where Nnaife was allowed to take with him all the useless goods which were no longer of any value to the masters (Ibid: 118), or through the money sent to his family in return of his departure to India.

This pre-capitalist system underlines the imported socioeconomic structure that was imposed on the colonized people in Lagos by British colonialism.

III. 5. b. Pre-capitalism: a Threat to Nnu Ego’s Nurturing Role:

Igbo women’s traditional role of mothers was strongly linked to the land and was threatened by the coming of pre-capitalism⁹ to Africa during the colonial period. Through her husband’s job of washer man, she felt this rupture with the land. He disliked rainy weather because there would be no place where to dry his washing and that would

disappoint Mrs Meers (Ibid: 82), whereas a farmer in Ibuza would welcome rainy days for his land.

That rupture with the land was felt by Nnu Ego in colonial Lagos, where there was no more farming, as a threat to her nurturing role. Igbo women's reaction to pre-capitalism is different from that of Igbo men because the link with the land means a link with their wombs, with their fertility. It alters their biological role of mothers and undermines their capacity to nurture. There was an expansion of the European Economic system in Lagos. "*The capitalist economic system shaped the particular ways in which colonial domination was effected*" (Oyewumi, 2005: 341).

This expansion of pre-capitalism in colonial Lagos represented more disorientation to Igbo women. The strike depicted in the novel, the two co-wives, Nnu Ego and Adaku, deciding not to cook for their husband so that he would give them more money (Emecheta, 1979: 134), could be considered as a hint to Igbo Women's 1929 War, considered by Drew as:

One of the early anti-colonial struggles that set the stage for a developing Nigerian Nationalism...which indicates the articulation of gender and class in a colonial capitalist framework. In one sense, these women responded as beleaguered peasants and petty commodity producers threatened by rapid economic changes ... In another, they acted as members of communities whose social structure and customs were threatened by colonial conquest. (Ibid, 1995: 17-8)

This strike was violently stopped by Nnaife in the novel, just as the women's war, had been stopped by British colonialism in 1929. Both co-wives, in this scene of the strike, could be considered as homage to the Alutaradi wives and their strike of cooking. This strike¹⁰, hinting at different Igbo women's organizations in the past, represents an act of emancipation for women. Yet it was not successful in Emecheta's fiction as a way to say that pre-capitalism¹¹ could not help in the liberation of women. What pre-capitalism has created in Igbo women's life is only "*subsistence and petty commodity production rather than wage labour*" (Ibid: 3).

Through the narrative, Adaku in Lagos appears superficially under the light of a rebellious woman supporting a feminist sphere of influence. With her prostitution, she is considered as a victim of the indigenous traditions and the patriarchal social system. Nnu Ego, with her imported values from Ibuza, as seen in the second chapter (p.82), causes the

unhappiness of Adaku. She is one of the causes that drive Adaku towards prostitution. This peripheral character bears Emecheta's tiny feminist tendency in this novel. Adaku is a character that could be used as an "*argument for agency ... against victimhood and self-inflicted wounds*" (Nnaemeka, 1995: 89). A feminist argument could be made on the perspective of Adaku's survival, contrasted to Nnu Ego's death (see the following chapter 173). Adaku saw her daughters not as her whole life but as a part of her life, "*As for my daughters*", she said to Nnu Ego, "*they will have to take their own chances in this world. I am not prepared to stay here and be turned into a mad woman, just because I have no sons*" (Emecheta, 1979: 168-9).

Yet feminist criticism¹² of African literature has chosen to "*herstoritized African women by putting the so-called 'African tradition' on trial*" (Nnameaka, 1995: 90) because a more serious analysis, and less biased one, would highlight the fact that Adaku, who rejected her traditions, remained unhappy because what really caused women's pain in Lagos was the colonial situation. Adaku suffered when her husband Nnaife went to fight for the British in India. The following passage shows both co-wives speculating about their husband's long absence in Burma:

No, he is not dead; he is alive, only they have forced him to join the army..." "How can they force a person to join the army?" was Nnu Ego incredulous question... Adaku, shocked, began wailing and shouting. "I don't know if death isn't better than this! ... There is nothing we can do. The British own us just like God does, and just like God they are free to take any of us when they wish. (Emecheta, 1979: 147-8)

A close attention to the character of Adaku reveals that she was more preoccupied with the Igbo men's fate than by the oppression of traditions on her. If one is benevolent enough to seek the Igbo woman's opinion in this matter "*they will probably shout with one voice, 'knock down the tradition, save the men.'*"(Nnaemeka, 1995: 90). Adaku, in *The Joys of Motherhood* would, certainly join them: "*They [men] do have their uses*" (Ibid: 171).

This pre-capitalist system led to the commoditization of sex through prostitution. It signifies that sex was separated from reproduction and biological fertility and that was also a threat to women's nurturing role. This is well epitomized through the same female character Adaku. One may say that this character was used by Emecheta to highlight the

consequence of pre-capitalism on women, in addition to show the importance of male children through the same character as shown in the second chapter (pp.82-5).

Igbo women's disorientation is equally highlighted through scenes incorporating the British administrative system that was applied in colonial Lagos. These scenes demonstrate Nnu Ego's suffering because of illiteracy as well.

III. 5. c. British Administrative System and Nnu Ego's Need of Education:

There is the administrative system depicted by the author as being a colonial change in native women's way of life. The importance of education is hinted at in such situations. The Igbo woman was not prepared for this new system of managing her money. It was a new thing for her to learn, "*She learned early in their married life to economise, since Nnaife earned little...*" (Ibid: 48). The domestic power Nnu Ego enjoys thanks to motherhood was limited and constantly compromised in a modern setting like Lagos by her ignorance. Women need to be educated in such places. Nnu Ego solicited Mama Abby's help to manage her money (Id: 150).

Nnu Ego was unable to contact Nnaife when he went to war because of her illiteracy. Through the narrator's voice, Emecheta describes how the Igbo people were ill-prepared for such a place like Lagos. She voices the need of this people to move from orality to the written form to face life in the colonial period, hence Nnu Ego's necessity to have children and to educate them:

...she promised herself that all her children, girls and boys, would have a good education. If she herself had had one...she would at least have been able to contact Nnaife...she and her husband were ill-prepared for a life like this, where only pen and not mouth could really talk. Her children must learn. (Ibid: 179)

Christianity and British legislation in colonial Lagos, as highlighted in the novel, also were changes introduced through British colonialism in Igbo men's and women's culture.

III. 5 .d. Christianity and British Legislation in Nnaife's and Nnu Ego's Culture:

For the Igbo people in Lagos, Christianity as a new faith could be considered as "*merely the advance guard paving the way for the administrator with his new form of government*" (Losambe, 1986: 149). To justify their domination, the dominators establish

categories, then moral hierarchies, that distinguish the pure, that is to say, the British ways of life, and the impure, or the Igbo ways of life. In fact, all cultural differences are turned into absolute natural opposition (Brown, 1993: 660). This could explain the imposition of The Meers' religious practices or the imposition of Christianity over Nnaife and his wife. The passage where the white masters obliged Nnu Ego to get married in church before announcing the birth of her first baby reflects this moral domination (Ibid: 50). Christianity, in this sense, "*undermined the fertility cults so central to women's self image*" (Drew, 1995: 14).

Nnaife accepted more easily Christianity as a new faith than did Nnu Ego. Actually, he was converted into Christianity by convenience rather than by conviction. This is noticed after the departure of the Meers. He did it in order not to lose his job of washer man (Emecheta, 1979: 50). Yet, he had a false perception of reality¹³ because he was blinded by his lust for money. If he rebelled against or resisted his white masters' desire, his interests would be threatened, and that was also the cause that pushed him to accept an emasculated job.

The scene where Nnaife obliged Nnu Ego to hide the birth of their first baby pinpointed the idea that there was a double oppression for native women, the one inherited from their traditions and the one exported by the European colonizer. The Igbo woman had to cope with both. One may say that there were changes in the Igbo traditions during colonialism, following which they evolve to become "*new traditions*" (Oyewumi, 2000: 344), or rather say it was a construction of new traditions concerning marriage since Christianity was a new religion for the natives and it was imposed on them.

Even legislation concerning marriage was new in Lagos. The dissolution of Nnu Ego's first marriage in Ibuza was extra judicial. Her father, a chief in Ibuza, decided to marry her out to another man in Lagos without the intrusion of any law, while legislation intruded when Nnaife was opposed to his daughter's marriage with a Yoruba man and was taken to jail (Emecheta, 1979: 216).

Legislation intervenes at another cultural level in this novel. The law had been passed to abolish the Igbo people's taking their sick children to the dibia, the native medicine man. Nnu Ego was obliged to hide her grief when she lost her first baby: "*It was actually illegal then for anyone to die at home*" (Ibid: 66) as she had been obliged before to hide his birth. Igbo people's life and death were controlled by British religion and

legislation. The traditional Igbo practice of taking sick children to the dibia is a trait that marks the Igbo culture. The intrusion of legislation in such cultural practices shows that this culture is considered as infidel or savage by British colonialism and thus, in need of Christian civilization or Western assistance. This idea was supported by one of the Governors of British Nigeria, Lord Frederick Lugard in 1922:

As Roman imperialism laid the foundation of modern civilisation, and led the wild barbarians of these islands [Britain] along the path of progress, so in Africa today we are repaying the debt, and bringing to the dark places of the earth—the abode of barbarism and cruelty—the torch of culture and progress, while ministering to the material needs of our own civilization...we hold these countries because it is the genius of our race to colonize, to trade, and to govern. (Brown, 1993: 661)

In Lagos, Nnu Ego was faced with Christianity as a new faith and the new system of legislation and administration imposed on the Igbos' way of life.

The scenes describing Nnu Ego's father sending food to his daughter from Ibuza to Lagos, contrasting with the false generosity of the white masters, pinpoint that although the author underwent missionary education in her early days, she is rejecting Christianity as a religion imposed on the Igbo people, showing that they had with the African ethos enough to organize their lives and were not in need of a new faith to "humanize" them.

As shown in the previous chapter (p.79), polygyny is part and parcel of the Igbo women's and men's way of life, thus the colonizer's legislation in Lagos concerning marriage could not be applied nor benefit to the Igbo woman since polygyny exists as a marriage system. These are Nnu Ego's feelings, described through the narrator's voice, when she received a co-wife in Lagos sent from Ibuza:

She tried desperately to control her feelings [...] but she could not. She hated this thing called the European way; these people called Christians taught that a man must marry only one wife [...] yet she knew the reply he would give her to justify his departure from monogamy. He would say: "I don't work for Dr Meers anymore. I work as a grass cutter for the Nigerian Railway Department. (Emecheta, 1979: 119)

It is well demonstrated that religion is adopted only to suit the white masters. Christianity as an imposed religion "... [bears] partial responsibility for the fact that many Africans have suffered psychological and moral disorientation" (Ogunyemi, 1985: 75) as well. Christianity remained imposed on Nnu Ego; it did not possess the power to

emancipate her. She must live in both cultures. To highlight the changes Christianity had on the image of women and made them more vulnerable and weaker than in the past, Emecheta writes through the narrator: “...*To regard a woman who is quiet and timid as desirable was something that came after this time, with Christianity and other changes...*”(Ibid, 1979: 10).

Once more she used motherhood as a consolation in Lagos to bear that situation as she decided to ignore the new co-wife Adaku by stuffing her ears with cloth and made sure “*she also stuffed her nipple into the mouth of her young son Adim, when they all lay down to sleep*” (Ibid: 124).

A case of oppression, where British legislation intervenes, is voiced through Nnu Ego’s voice speaking about the prevention of the Igbo people neither to commercialize nor to consume a local product, *Ogogoro*, which was considered illicit and people were jailed just because they drank it (Ibid: 111). It is a way to dominate better the oppressed people. It is a way to dominate “*The earth, property, production, the creation of people, people themselves, time—everything is reduced to the status of objects*” at the disposal of the oppressor’s consciousness (Freire, 2000: 58).

By imposing their culture on the culture of Nnu Ego and Nnaife, the British colonizer is recognising his cultural superiority over that of the Igbo people. It is through such a process that the Igbo people can be properly subjugated. This situation is nothing but a definition of colonialism¹⁴.

The British way of life and culture as imposed on Igbo people could be noticed through urban habitation and the nuclear family system Nnu Ego and Nnaife were obliged to adopt in Lagos.

III. 5. e. Urbanisation and Nuclear Family System in Colonial Lagos:

For the Igbo community in Ibuza, the right to land for women was given through lineage or through marriage. To own a land individually was neither possible for a man nor for a woman. This is well noticed in the novel through the notion of “one big family” and of the “compound”. This idea of owning a land, a property, a room in Lagos was new for Nnu Ego. This new notion of owning properties individually in Lagos is disadvantageous for the Igbo woman in the sense that it abrogates the pre-colonial or traditional rights of access to the land conferred by birth. This urban environment was new to Nnu Ego. From the notion of “the compound” and “the big family” in Ibuza, where the notion of the hut enables each co-wife to own her hut and be the matrifocal centre of her children, Nnu Ego

found herself in a single room in Lagos described by the narrator as: “...a square room painted completely white like a place of sacrifice”, or as “blank whitewashed wall” (Emecheta, 1979: 46, 73) hinting at Nnu Ego’s feelings of loneliness. An Igbo woman coming from Ibuza found that urbanisation in Lagos lacked personalisation, that all the houses were built in the same way and that it was difficult to know who lived where (Ibid: 73).

In this novel, there are dates and ages that help the reader locate the text in a specific time and space (Andrade, 1990: 101). For instance, Emecheta, through the narrator writes: “The year was 1934 and the place was Lagos, then a British colony” (Ibid, 1979: 7). Through this description of place and space Emecheta makes a precision about a period of time during which slavery and slave trade had been abolished in Lagos by the British, at the same time she contrasted with other forms of enslavements through Nnaife’s different jobs offered by this same British colonialism and, through a lexical field relevant to slavery. This lexical field is noticed in the depiction of the place where Nnu Ego and Nnaife live in Lagos. Through the narrator’s description, this lexical field is found in expressions and words such as “the white masters”, “the servant’s quarters”, “servants and houseboys”, or as already mentioned “*place of sacrifice*” and so on.

Another disorientating element for Nnu Ego in Lagos was the nuclear family system. The family in Lagos was redefined. It was no more a “*large family*” but rather a man plus his dependent “*wife/wives and children*” (Oyewumi, 2000: 354). Nnu Ego was not really financially dependent on her husband, but her trade was not recognized as a job as her husband’s. Although she was the breadwinner of her family through her petty trading (Emecheta, 1979: 54), she depended on her husband on another level, in the sense that he helped her to be a mother and to assume her responsibility towards her children in colonial Lagos, and through the fact that jobs were offered only to men, as mentioned earlier.

In that room she had to share with that redefined family, Nnu Ego felt really displaced and that was once more disorientating for her. She found herself in a condition one may describe as: “*a hybrid world of the old and the new; the African and the alien locked in the struggle to integrate contradictions*” (Ryan, 1992: 99). She needed to reproduce the same effect of Ibuza in an “unhomely” setting through her motherhood.

In *Pillars*, the setting where colonial “unhomeliness operates and where Arab women negotiate their space using traditional material is the city of Amman.

III. 6. Amman: the Colonial Setting

In Amman, colonial violence, like the patriarchal one in the village of Hamia, intervenes at macro and micro level. We notice that it operates within the female characters’ way of life. It is experienced as “unhomeliness” in the public as well as in the private spheres of Maha (through her relationship with her brother Daffash) and of Um Saad (via her relationship with her husband Abu Saad.)

Every time Um Saad speaks about Amman she describes its “unhomeliness”: “*Amman was like a spacious Ottoman prison.*”(Faqir, 1996: 71), “*Amman has a black heart*” (Ibid: 151) or when she describes it as an absent minded city. (Ibid:178)

III. 7. Arab Men in the City of Amman:

A double representation¹⁵ of native identity is present in *Pillars*. The internment of Maha and Um Saad in a madhouse after a violent and savage behaviour refusing to accept what was imposed on them, (Faqir, 1996: 206) reminds us of the Shakespearean demon in *The Tempest*, Caliban¹⁶ representing only one half of the colonized people. Yet, Faqir describes characters such as Daffash representing the other half of the colonized world, and reminding us this time of Ariel. His friends are mainly British or people from the city. Maha tells to her roommate Um Saad: “My Orchard, the jewel hanging on the forehead of the Jordan Valley, is under the mercy of Daffash. He must have sold it by now to Samir Pasha or to his masters the English.”. (Ibid: 7)

Daffash, meaning literally ‘the bully’, is described by Maha as a man without dignity. We find instances where we notice the colonizer’s condescending view towards the colonized, when the British audience was laughing at Daffash dancing: “...*Daffash [...] held the end of his cloak and started dancing the Dhiyya. They all pointed at him and shrieked with laughter.*” (Ibid: 90)

Daffash epitomizes the ignorant Arab man who sold his past and his history. He helped his friend, Samir Pasha looting archaeological sites: “*They excavated the land and handed the old bowls, pots, and jars to the Pasha, grinning*” (Ibid: 167) His behaviour reflects what theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon call mimicry¹⁷.

Other instances where Arab men's living in the city are described negatively are uttered by Um Saad the daughter of a Syrian emigrant, as she speaks about her father, the author's womanist ideology is well reflected: "*I did not like my father, but I really hated the French who made him restless and dirty.*" (Ibid: 37) She describes him as having: "*big hairy hand*", "*fiery eyes*", "*he stood like an eagle above my head*" (Ibid: 100)

She also makes a negative description to Maha as she describes her husband's physical portrait: "*...the man, my husband, who afterwards I discovered was called Abu Saad, chased me and ripped my dress apart. Then asked me in a weak, thin voice that makes the bulk of his body look like a mistake...*" (Ibid: 109), or when Maha describes men eating at her father's funeral: "*Butter was dripping down their beards and faces were stained with yogurt. They wanted more rice, more meat, more butter to fill their bellies*" (Ibid: 182) It is a negative description which may be considered as a way to express regrets of the Arab man of the past, Sheikh Nimer for example who was dead at that time.

Though this characterization fulfills western expectations about the Arab man catering to feminist representations, traditional patriarchy criticized here is set within the colonial context and contrasted with positive representation of traditional Arab men from the village of Hamia, like Harb and Sheikh Nimer. (see chapter two, p.86-7) This double sided description of male characters in *Pillars* reflects the race/gender conflation that defines womanism in general and Arabo-Islamic womanism in particular.

In *Pillars*, Faqir represents different forms of violence¹⁸ that a woman may experience within the home, through the female characters' bodies. (As demonstrated in chapter two, pp.66-83) Micro and Macro violence is concretely represented in this novel through the rape¹⁹ of Nasra by Daffash. (Ibid: 11)

III. 7. a. The Rape of Nasra:

This scene represents the micro violence within an intimate relationship where it takes the shape of the rape of Nasra by Daffash. Further, this rape is experienced by Nasra as macro violence. On the one hand, at the level of her community: Nasra was accused by the people of her village of having provoked such an act. Daffash says to Maha: "*She asked for it.*" (ibid: 12) On the other hand, the macro level representing the act of colonization: the scene of rape is a metaphor of the British intrusion in the land of Jordan if we consider Daffash as an epitome of the British colonizer and Nasra's body as the land of Jordan.

The metaphorical relationship between land and women has its roots in ancient western, African and modern Arabic literature²⁰. To possess the colonized woman means to possess the colonized land. The colonized woman embodies the colonized cultural identity.

In the Arab context, as Fanon's analysis²¹ about the Algerian case comparing Algeria to a veiled woman, the unveiling of the Arab woman (through rape) indicates this relationship to her cultural identity and to the land. Through the scene describing Um Saad putting her veil on her head and wishing to change her identity, as demonstrated in the previous chapter (p.67), is a reference to this relationship.

To unveil the colonized Arab woman (and rape her like Nasra) targeted destroying her identity and dispossessing the colonized (women and men) from their land. Unveiling in such situations is tantamount to rape²².

III. 7. b. Um Saad Unveiled:

It is through the character of Um Saad that the veil is used to highlight a specific identity. The veil of Um Saad symbolizes the Muslim community membership on the one hand. On the other hand, it is used as a means to maintain her identity²³ as she was in the asylum and to resist the "silencing" treatment given by the British doctor.

In Faqir's novel, the veil becomes a symbol in the anti-colonial struggle as the colonized woman's body becomes the battlefield²⁴. Though feminists²⁵ consider it as the emblem of the Muslim woman's oppression²⁶, in an "unhomely" colonial context, it functions as a traditional material used to negotiate colonized women's space.

Unveiling Um Saad represents for her a source of anxiety²⁷. She told Maha how she felt when the man she loved, when she was younger, tried to unveil her: "*He looked at me. I started crying like a fool [...] He lifted the black veil and kissed the powdered chin. 'No, you must not. Do not touch me.'*"(Ibid: 80)

Though occupying a peripheral place in *Pillars*, the veil could be seen as a place of security²⁸ for Faqir's female characters. This is well reflected through Um Saad who feels naked²⁹ when the British doctor "*snatched the pink scarf off Um Saad's head and Um Saad objected, 'there are men in the room. I shouldn't show my hair to strange men.'*"(Ibid: 207)

Um Saad's identity has been constructed between the disavowal from her people (father, mother and husband) and the British doctor as a free and sane individual on the one hand, and on the other, the designation by her patriarchal community of a girl who must obey her father, a wife who must have children and accept polygyny, she is also designated by the British doctor as an insane person who must be silenced.

Like Adaku in *The Joys*, this peripheral female character may be perceived as supporting a feminist sphere of influence. It is through this female character's voice that the Arab male character is depicted negatively. Yet, through Maha's narrative telling Um Saad's story, Um Saad's mental disorder is clearly underlined. (Ibid: 96)

Another instance that underpins Faqir's womanist ideology over the feminist one expressed through this female character is Maha's and Um Saad's love stories. Maha, the simple peasant woman, discovered the feeling of love with Harb who will become her husband afterwards. She experienced this feeling intensely and counted it as one of the best moment of her life. Whereas Um Saad, the city woman was initiated into an awareness of love alongside with the discovery of the cinema and with the British consumer goods: "*Advertisements for lifebuoy soap, Marie biscuits, and Kiwi shoe polish. All made in England.*" (Ibid: 49) Yet, she had never succeeded to live this love and was jailed in her father's house as long as her father discovered her secret meeting with that man, she was then forced to marry a man she did not love and with whom she "*coexisted*" for the rest of her life. (Ibid: 158)

In Faqir's novel male characters epitomize different oppressions. Some native male characters, like Um Saad's father and husband, underline the patriarchal "unhomeliness" experienced by the Arab woman. Other male characters, like Daffash, Samir Pasha and Dr Edwards (the British doctor) represent the colonial "unhomeliness" for Arab female characters (Maha, Nasra and Um Saad).

Imperial "unhomeliness" is a third oppressive aspect resulting from western domination suffered by Arab women and condemned in this novel. It is represented by "The Storyteller". In *The Joys*, the space of Nnu Ego is menaced by the invasion of the British colonizer as shown earlier. In *Pillars*, the female protagonist's space is dominated by "The Storyteller's" representation. As stated by Löw: "*When boundaries are crossed by gazes, by touches, by invasion, by language, etc., or when different spaces do not coexist in harmony, it is social power and domination that take over.*" (Ibid, 2006: 128)

III. 8. “The Storyteller”: the Imperial “Unhomeliness”:

Through the description of the storyteller we distinguish a colonial narrative presenting a western view of the native other and the native’s country. It is a situation of dominance³⁰ where the female protagonist becomes a second narrator and tries to negotiate her space using her narrative, as will be shown in the next chapter (pp. 180-2, 188).

Faqirs makes of the first narrator, “The Storyteller”, half Arab³¹ and Muslim. Yet, She names him Sami Al Adjanibi to underline his foreign origins and create a conflation through focal character. On the one hand, he is the Arab man epitomizing the patriarchal hegemony speaking on the behalf of the Arab woman. On the other hand, he represents the orientalist vision that stereotypes the Arab woman. The version of the storyteller is doubly mistaken, as a man he could not report correctly what was seen in the private life of Maha since Muslim customs excluded foreigners and males from the segregated Arab house³².

Despite his name Sami Al Adjanibi and his half Arab origin, his narrative reflects the travelogue representing a foreign country and its natives from a superior male/white perspective. From the exoticism with which he describes Maha one may recognize the otherness used in latent orientalism³³.

In *Pillars*, Maha and the storyteller Sami Al Adjanibi never meet. Being a foreigner, he is not allowed to enter the indigenous domestic sphere. Maha is not really aware of his existence but mentioned him only once in her narrative as “*that driveling liar*”³⁴. (Ibid:135)

Faqir names the second narrator “The Storyteller” to hint at its function as a medium of storytelling representing the other place or other person. The “Other” is thus encountered in his voice. As argued by Fludernik:

One very obvious level is that of the medium of storytelling. Most audiences and readers encounter narrative not merely as representing the other place or other person; they additionally encounter it in the voice of the storyteller [...] in which the actors iconically signify the otherness of the fictional world and their inhabitants. Not only the subject but also the medium of narrative therefore relate to a process of othering. (Fludernik, 2007: 265)

The escapism that the unfamiliar fictional narrative³⁵ proposed by the storyteller is in itself another level of alterity for the reader who tries to discover the setting and characters of the story and intends to immerse himself/herself in it.

Faqir gives privileged positions to the storyteller by beginning and ending the novel. “*Beginnings are where we first encounter the narrative world and establish its key characteristics. And endings are where we move towards our final interpretation of the narrative. Rabinowitz calls these “privileged positions.”*” (Bridgeman, 2007: 57) These are narrative positions that capture Maha’s story and image of Arab woman in the storyteller’s orientalist representation and that Maha intends to liberate.

The notion of alterity in narrative is exactly what the storyteller does through his utterances. He needs to create a thrilling story to excite and interest the audience. Maha’s description³⁶ by the storyteller is that of an unfamiliar, strange, superhuman and dangerous woman. Her environment is that of strangeness, forest and the Dead Sea. (Ibid: 86-7) At this level Maha or the “Other” is the space of alterity. Faqir refers to the Western travel writing on the Orient through the narrative of the storyteller. It is a hint at the orientalist description perpetuating the stereotype of the Arab woman as a “lascivious oriental female.” (Ibid: 226) Both Arab male and female negative description are displayed in the narrative of the storyteller. The first depiction of the Arab male character is hardly complementary to the autochthonous Arab man. It is voiced through the orientalist representation of the storyteller:

They went to extremes to entertain foreigners before they even asked them their names[...] the Arabs of Hamia [...] had no dignity themselves, were born in that salty land, caught between the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. They lived there, counting winged cockroaches, then died there and were thus consigned to oblivion. (Ibid: 4)

The lack of mastery of Arabic by the storyteller underpins the unreliability of his version and reflects the impossibility of a total comprehension of a culture by an outsider. It also puts his “tellability” of storyteller at a disadvantageous position. This is well illustrated in the novel when he confuses the word “*original*” describing Daffash’s Bedouin way of dancing uttered by a woman with Aba-al-Jimaal meaning “*father of Camels*” (Ibid: 90) showing that, in the storyteller’s mind Bedouins are fathers of camels. (Abdo, 2009: 251)

The significance of Maha's name could be taken to satisfy the fantasies of a western ideology such as feminism. This name means young gazelle:

“a description that could foreshadow the way she will be ‘slaughtered’ and taken advantage of by these powerful men of the tribe who will use her musk, her sweet reputation, and twist it to their own political and economic advantage later on, in acquiring the land she inherits from her father.” (Ibid: 248)

Yet, this name is used as an emphatic element for Maha's captured image in the exotic storyteller's representation.

III. 8. a. The Storyteller's Exotic Narrative:

Through the storyteller's narrative reviving the exotic within an orientalist representation the author is utilizing exoticisation that could be defined as outmoded and orientalist. The exoticism used by the storyteller to describe Maha and her environment reminds us of the European description of the Orient. As argued by Edward Said: “[*The European invention [that] had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.*” (Ibid, 2003: 87)

Further to this, the clear reference to *The Nights* in Faqir's novel is a means of claiming “*the legacy of exoticism in order to interrogate the discourse from within, whilst at the same time immersing [herself] in it.*” (Valassopoulos, 2007: 133) By juxtaposing the storyteller's narrative with that of Maha, Faqir is joining Valassopoulos' definition of exoticism or exoticisation as a “*process, in authorship, undergone consciously and for a particular narrative effect.*” (ibid: 139)

The fact that the storyteller's narrative is contrasted with that of Maha shows that the author is using this concept for an anti colonial purpose³⁷. She is participating in the creation of a radical otherness through the storyteller's narrative. She then deconstructs this misrepresentation by Maha's intervention through a juxtaposed narrative with which Maha negotiates her space as a focal narrator.

This technique of constructing and deconstructing exoticism “*can be a powerful, conscious tool for reviewing contact [of cultures] across time and space*”; (Valassopoulos, 2007: 137) In this novel, Faqir re-exoticises the orientalist practice through the storyteller's voice as a means of entering into a dialogue with representations of the past.

The storyteller creates a space through his narrative where Maha is the “Other”. Yet, Faqir demonstrates that the ‘private space’ of Maha³⁸ has been violated by the colonial gaze and represented in spurious manner by the storyteller. It is at this very moment that her identity is destroyed and seeks reconstruction through Maha’s narrative.

III. 8. b. The Storyteller’s “Imperialist Eye”:

In *Pillars*, the idea of the gaze creates a space, the storyteller’s space and Maha’s space. It is reflected in the storyteller’s perception and narrative and thus underlines the hierarchic structure of gender and race underlining the social power and domination of the orientalist.

The storyteller is a traveler and he is telling a story about Jordan and the people of the village of Hamia. His curiosity is well mirrored through his gaze. As his name indicates, he is a foreigner in the village of Hamia, his gaze is the “imperialist eye” hinting at the Western curiosity about the Orient. His narrative describing Maha and her people is an index of the British superiority of the colonizer on the one hand and the patriarchal power over the Arab woman on the other.

He creates suspense through the secret gaze in the course of which he describes what he saw. The gaze of the storyteller may be read as a clue to the voyeurism of *The Nights* and, at the same time, referring to the concept of the orientalist gaze, such as gazing lecherously at the closed door of Maha’s room the day of her wedding, or when spying on the scene of consummation in the Dead Sea between Maha and Harb. (Faqir, 1996: 60-1)

The scene of the gaze reflects the storyteller’s excitement³⁹ of penetrating into the prohibited. Another instance in when Maha was examined by Hajjeh Hulala and the storyteller’s gaze went “*through the opening between the large flat stones*” of the dolman to see Maha’s naked body. (Ibid: 88) The same spying scene is reproduced on Samir Pasha’s villa where he watched the semi naked bodies of dancing women at the party (Ibid: 89).

Every time that this foreigner voyeur starts his narrative he uses The Quranic verses to give a sacred and emphatic aspect to his utterances. Yet, for a Muslim audience, his

credibility is lost when these verses are used without reference to their original sūras and, most of the time, out of their immediate context.

III. 8. c. The Storyteller's Demonized Religion:

The Quranic verses are constantly rewritten through the storyteller's narrative with a new meaning to support either an orientalist representation or a misogynistic one. For instance, for an orientalist (feminist) representation he starts his narrative by: “*When Earth is shaken with earthquake, and Earth yieldeth up her burdens, and man saith: What aileth her? That day she will relate her chronicles*” (Ibid: 113) to underpin the grief and oppression Arab women are subjected to within a patriarchal and Muslim society. In this passage the storyteller is rewriting the meaning of the The Quran using the “Earth” to speak about Maha, the Arab woman who will one day denounce the suffering she endures with the Arab man. (Abdo, 2009: 153)

Other instances of The Quranic use condemn the Arab woman are the following: Maha is referred to as the “black widow” by the storyteller and Daffash. (Faqir, 1996: 161) Daffash, who is an Arabic speaker, is using it with its English meaning⁴⁰; the dangerous and treacherous female spider attracting other spiders into its web and devouring them. Maha in her narrative rewrites these words to describe Daffash: “*Was it true that [my father] gave birth to a poisonous spider?*” (Ibid: 174) Abdo comments about this passage: “*By displacing the English “Black widow” into the Arabic of Daffash, a meaning it could not have otherwise had in Arabic is created, and thence connected to the spider of the The Quran, the liar*” (Ibid, 2009: 254)

Yet, in its Arabic allusion, this use compares Maha's actions and the stories narrated to the fragility of the spider's web. This fact is condemned in The Quran in a verse used by the storyteller: “*The Likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh unto herself a house and lo! The frailest of all houses is the spider's house.*” (Ibid: 62) Maha is doubly insulted through this suggestion; she is a “femme fatale” and an impious person whose stories should be destroyed like the “*dangerous house of the spider.*” (Abdo, 2009: 253) Through the combination of these two references the shared misogyny of both Western and Arab cultural and religious narratives demonizing women and Islam is revealed.

About the following passage uttered by the storyteller, Suyoufie states that through the imaginary discourse of the storyteller, Faqir sheds light on the male misinterpretation of women's suffering. She uses it as a begging for forgiveness than a cry of protestation. (Suyoufie, 2008: 236) As the storyteller says: "*If you dive in the sea you find figures made of salt; pillars of salt, with absolute horror on their faces. Wide open mouths, crying for help and forgiveness. Yes, the people of Lot in this most contaminated of lands, and the most evil of nations.*"(Faqir, 1996: 85)

By putting the The Quranic verses in the voice of the storyteller Sami Al Adjanibi (meaning Sami the foreigner) and hinting at its misinterpretation, Faqir is not only condemning the Arab man's misinterpretation of the The Quran but she is also accusing the orientalist of demonizing Islam and misrepresenting the Arab woman in a Muslim society.

The storyteller's narrative is constantly condemning Maha representing the Arab woman. This "unreliable" narrator uses verses from the The Quran reflecting the (mis)interpretation of this text by a man and an outsider as the meaning of his name reveals. Such a rewriting of these verses voiced by the storyteller matches the ideology of the author denouncing the misunderstanding of The Quran when it concerns women. This novel unveils the tendencies of an Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology of the author.

In the opening chapter, the storyteller refers to the pre-Islamic Bedouin society by mentioning the practice of female infanticide. (Faqir, 1996: 3) "*The Bedouins before Islam practiced female infanticide as a safeguard against a girl's future misbehaviour or kidnap.*"(Peristiani in Faqir, 2001: 79) But Maha⁴¹ lives in a Bedouin Muslim society where though the code of honour kept its pre-Islamic principles, it has been regulated by Islam. The description of the storyteller thus reflects the obsolete orientalist vision on the Bedouin woman.

In Pillars, the technique of constructing and deconstructing exoticism using the storyteller's narrative together with religious references rewritten according to an orientalist gaze refer to a past representation of Arab women resisted as an "unhomely" temporality in an "unhomely" setting (the asylum) by the focal narrator's narrative.

Colonial “unhomely” temporality is also resisted by the female protagonist of *The Joys*. Through all the changes brought by British colonialism in Lagos, as cited above, a different way to locate time, used by Emecheta, is noticed. It is a location of time through which the African culture is distinguished from the European one.

III. 9. Emecheta’s Temporalities: Traditional Synchronicity versus Western Diachronicity:

The narrative suggests two temporalities that are found simultaneously in urban Lagos. Nnu Ego lived her motherhood in both temporalities. There is a constant confrontation of the female protagonist with two times in this novel: the western time, that may be called western diachronicity and the African time or the traditional African synchronicity.

The African synchronicity has its roots, first, in a traditional setting, the village of Ibuza. It is highlighted in the passage describing Agbadi’s household making sacrifices, whereby “*goats were slaughtered*”, to appease Agbadi’s personal God (Emecheta, 1979: 154). This is a reference to the world of the dead to save the world of the living. In Lagos, Nnu Ego and Nnaife try to find their place between these two times. In other words, with the drastic change of setting, from Ibuza to Lagos, the novel achieves a drastic change in time, in temporality, from African to Western, from synchronicity to diachronicity.

The writer offers many instances that describe traditional beliefs such as the belief in a chi, the personal God. Nnu Ego is a child who was born with a scar on her head. This scar stands as a reminder of the presence of a dead slave considered as the personal chi of Nnu Ego: “*nothing can stand alone, there must always be another thing standing beside it.*” (Achebe in Philips, 1994: 93) Every time Nnu Ego felt bad in Lagos, she prayed and made sacrifices to that dead slave girl, her chi. This could be considered as a need to go back to the past every time she felt threatened by the present. About Nnu Ego’s chi, Emecheta writes through the narrator’s voice, when the female protagonist decided to commit suicide after the loss of her first child:

...It would all soon be over, right there under the deep water that ran below Carter Bridge. Then she would be able to seek out and meet her chi, her personal God, and she would ask her why she had punished her so... (Emecheta, 1979: 9).

This notion of chi could be regarded as a reference to traditional synchronicity, a way to return to the past. This notion is also a hint at immortality. The natural element which is in close relation to the chi is water. It could also be considered as a reference the female goddess of the southern cradle.

When other natural elements are linked either to death or to life, water could be linked to both, depending on circumstances. When Nnu Ego wanted to die, she went to the river and when she wanted children, she prayed her chi in the river. Water, where her chi rested, could either bless Nnu Ego with a lot of children or simply be the source of malediction, in this case, her childlessness.

The aquatic nature is reflected in African literary writing and other African artistic expressions, and without a “*lucid understanding of the power of water in the constitution of Africa’s identity, it is impossible to interpret correctly African art from yesterday to tomorrow.*” (Diadgi, 2003: 273). This aquatic nature of the African existence is well summed up by a poem written by Birago Diop:

*“Those who have died are never gone,
They are in the water that flows,
They are the water that sleeps,
The dead have not died,
Listen more often,
To things than to beings,
Hear the voice of water,”* (Ibid, 1961:180)

Every time in the novel there is a reference to the personal chi of Nnu Ego, there is a constant movement backward and forward in time. This specific temporality is typical to Emecheta’s culture (Barthelemy, 1989: 560). This traditional synchronicity is noticed in an urban setting such as Lagos. For Nnu Ego to have many children was a way to ensure duration in Lagos, a way to secure immortality through her children in a place where western diachronicity was invading African synchronicity. When Nnu Ego lost her child at the beginning of the novel, she preferred to die, to join her personal chi in the river, another way to go back to immortality. Childlessness stopped continuity and immortality typical to traditional African synchronicity. She sought to replace immortality that she secured through children by death; this is once more African synchronicity in action since death in Igbo beliefs does not mean the end as in western diachronicity.

...birth implied a passage from the spirit world to the material world. Death—a different kind of birth—implied passage from the material world back to the spirit world. Accordingly, the cyclic

continuity between the two worlds was perhaps most vulnerable where issues of birth and death were involved. Children were necessary to maintain the continuity of the cycle, and childlessness was viewed as the “worst fate” that could befall an African. Marriage was seen as inextricable from procreation and therefore sacred. Thus the rituals surrounding childbirth, marriage and death as well were essentially invocations to spirit guardians to maintain the cycle.(Barthelemy, 1989: 569)

The death of Nnu Ego’s father symbolizes this traditional temporality as well. Her farewell to her father was a kind of farewell to the traditional man with the coming of the colonized man. Yet, the father promised to be back through Nnu Ego’s children (Emecheta, 1979: 154). This promise sounds like a better future for Nigeria where traditional synchronicity would be back to liberate the colonized country from the invasion of western diachronicity.

A few instances represent western diachronicity in the novel. In fact, it is most of the time implicit in Nnaife’s way of life. Through the narrator’s voice, Emecheta writes: “*her husband Nnaife would get up at six in the morning by the clock the master and his wife had given him*” (Ibid: 47). The clock given by the white masters to Nnaife links western diachronicity to Lagos. Nnaife was conditioned and controlled by this clock and Nnu Ego hated the way her husband was regulated to wash the British masters’ clothes. Emecheta does not let this go without comment, as the narrator says:

But every time she saw her husband hanging out the white woman’s smalls, Nnu Ego would wince as someone in pain. The feeling would cut deeper when, with sickening heart, she heard Nnaife talking effusively about his treatment of dainty clothes and silk. The man was actually proud of his work, she realized (Ibid: 47).

Nnaife was regulated by the clock and this mechanisation of the Igbo man in Lagos is but a version of emasculation which rendered him useless to his wife. The clock in the novel is the over determined symbol of western time in Lagos. That clock enabled the British colonizer to intrude himself into the intimate life of Nnu Ego and Nnaife. To use “Christmas” as a reference to time by Nnu Ego is also a reference to that western diachronicity and at the same time to Christianity as a religion imposed on the Igbo people in Lagos (Ibid: 85).

Nnu Ego's motherhood served to maintain the continuity of the cycle and to resist the western demands and western time in Lagos. Emecheta gives power to Nnu Ego by naming her children. Because, Emecheta offers the reader the meaning of names as Ogunyemi explained in her interview (Arndt, 2000: 721), the meaningful names of the Igbos have a psychological purpose. For Nnu Ego, naming her children in Lagos, means power⁴². She named her second son, after the death of her first son, Oshiaju, meaning "*the bush has refused this*" (Emecheta, 1979: 80). That hopeful name gave her power and the courage to think that that baby would survive and not be taken by the bush like her first one. Motherhood as a reaction to all the changes cited above (the new way of life brought by British colonialism, felt as a threat to women's traditional role) could meet the concept of "female consciousness" or Rude's "inherent ideology".

Western diachronicity, brought by British colonialism, affected the relationship between the Igbo man and his wife in colonial Lagos. This is highlighted through Nnaife's relationship with Nnu Ego.

III. 9. a. Nnu Ego's Relationship with Nnaife:

Western time prevented Nnu Ego from being happy in colonial Lagos. Nnaife did not have time to take care of his wife. He became corrupted by the money paid by the western employers. One may see that the relationship between Igbo men and women has changed in colonial Lagos. A woman explained to Nnu Ego when the latter complained to her about her husband:

'You want a husband who has time to ask you if you wish to eat rice, or drink corn pap with honey? Forget it. Men here are too busy being white men's servants to be men [...] Their manhood has been taken away from them. The shame of it is that they don't know it. All they see is the money, shining white man's money' (Ibid: 51)

In Lagos, the power of traditional patriarchy lessens. Authority and traditional laws applied upon women by their men disappeared in this colonial setting. Nnu Ego was aware of that situation and did not accept her husband's authority any more. For Nnu Ego, "*the daughter of Agbadi of Ibuza*", a man who washed white women's underwear is no more a man but a "*woman-made man*", and thus had no right to exercise power over her. The loss of the man's power in Lagos was rather frustrating than liberating for Nnu Ego (Ibid: 50).

The Igbo saying, “*a man is never ugly*” (Ibid: 71), was not applied in Lagos. Their loss of respect and dignity for money changed Igbo women’s opinion about their men. This is noticed through the resentment Nnu Ego felt towards her husband. While regretting her first husband Amatokwu, Emecheta, through the narrator, hinted at the changes in the Igbo way of life in Lagos that influenced the relationship between the Igbo man with his wife because of the humiliating jobs they exercised. Even the solidarity between Igbo women that existed in Ibuza had weakened in Lagos because of that urbanisation and nuclear family system (Ibid: 72).

Space and time are two opponents but components that constitute the narrative. Our analysis of both novels is a clear example of such a composition. Through both temporalities that make up the time of the narrative, that is to say “story” and “discourse”, the space of the female characters is negotiated.

While Emecheta’s female protagonist is using a traditional temporality to resist the colonial temporality and to negotiate her space within colonial “unhomeliness”, Faqir’s focal narrator uses narration to resist the foreigner’s (the storyteller’s) utterances and free her image from the static and mummified orientalist representation of the storyteller that is drawn from a colonial past, from a western temporality.

III. 10. Faqir’s Temporalities: Traditional Synchronicity versus Western Synchronicity and Diachronicity:

In *Pillars*, the memory of a colonial past is used by Maha, the female protagonist and narrator, to negotiate her space in a hostile place like asylum representing the ‘unhomelessness’ the British presence in Jordan creates. Maha is creating a space by her narrative through remembrance and a temporality of the past to resist western temporalities.

In Faqir’s narrative technique, focalization intervenes in distinguishing two images or two representations of the Arab woman and thus two temporalities. The temporality of the storyteller narrating the story of Maha in the third person singular represents a static image of the Arab woman in an orientalist temporality that we could consider as a western temporality and that of Maha telling her own story deconstructing the orientalist representation of (her) projected image in a different temporality with reflector flashbacks.

From Barthelemy's definitions of traditional synchronicity and western diachronicity we define the orientalist temporality as a western synchronicity, referring repeatedly to a fixed and mummified figure in the past. Nnu Ego uses traditional synchronicity to negotiate her space against western diachronicity whereas Maha uses it to resist western synchronicity to negotiate her space.

Maha's and Um Saad memories are operating as a traditional temporality. It is a temporality that borrows the traditional material of storytelling and gives Maha's narrative its tempo to maintain Maha's and Um Saad's identity in the asylum.

Though both of them wish to resist memory reminding them of a sad past, it is the unique temporality that helps them negotiate their space against the narrative of the orientalist storyteller and the sedating medication of the British doctor. Um Saad states: "*The past? Who wants to remember the past?*" (Faqr, 1996: 122) For Um Saad "*Forgetfulness is a blessing.*" (Ibid: 130) Even Maha wishes the British doctor would "*wipe out all [...] memories with a piece of white cotton*" (Ibid: 131) Yet, it is through this very past that they recover the "self" and resist the noise of silence that is haunting their room.

The present time of the British Doctor in the asylum may be seen as representing the ideological linearity of the western temporality, the equivalent of Barthelemy's western diachronicity. This temporality is resisted by the space Maha is creating with her narrative set in the past from her memory. The time of Maha's narrative is a temporality using "subjective analepses" resisting the western diachronicity and that may be equated to traditional synchronicity. Maha's space is no longer traced in the present, but it is "*retraced, over and over by a reiterated uncanny performance of the (colonial) past.*" (Cariello, 2009: 343) Through her narrative, Maha performs a space resisted or unaccepted by the British doctor. This latter appears to bear the role of, not only the British colonizer who silences the female characters in the asylum but also that of the patriarch who used to silence them in the past in their native village.

III. 10. a. The British Doctor's Medical Treatment:

In the Arab context, to rule the colonized man effectively, the colonizer had to keep the colonized woman in her segregated space. (Cook, 2000: 162) This is what Dr Edwards helps to do through the treatment administered to Maha and Um Saad.

Madness as diagnosed in the case of Maha and Um Saad by the British Doctor brings into view how the colonial power justified their domination by setting and reinforcing a range of “*hierarchized oppositions such as civilized/savage, modern/traditional, mature/childlike, and, most significantly, rational/irrational.*” (George, 2006: 213) Irrationality as a symptom of insanity characterizing the female characters in *Pillars* is well contrasted by the rationality of the British doctor who decides to confine and silence them and this is indicative of the colonial domination's reinforcement.

The British doctor diagnosed amnesia in the case Um Saad. (Faqr, 1996: 130) This diagnosis is completely contradicted by their utterances about their past and their perfect memory. It reflects the doctor's desire to silence these women and to erase their story and history, because as stated by Santayana “*A country without a memory is a country of madmen.*” (Santayana in Bresheeth, 2013: 138)

The British doctor's treatment to Um Saad and the medication administered to erase her memory is a critical scene about the exclusion of women's memories. (Ibid: 220) It is a good illustration of Fanon's statement: “*Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's head of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.*”(Ibid, 1968: 161)

The British doctor's treatment is experienced by Um Saad as a torture threatening her identity. She calls El-shater Hassan and wishes she could move to another one. (Ibid: 222) Fanon refers to this aspect as he stated: “*Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: 'In reality, who am I?'*” (Ibid in Attar, 2010: 1)

Another instance that reflects the systematic negation of the other person is when Dr Edwards cut Um Saad's hair, (Ibid: 207) then Maha's hair. (Ibid: 223) The "pruning" and cutting of women's tongue is highlighted through the cutting of their hair in the asylum. Throughout similar actions they are silenced and deprived from their femininity by means of the cutting of their long hair.

Yet, despite their suffering, Maha and Um Saad try to hark back to their past in search of a rational reasoning to negotiate their space within the "unhomeliness" of the asylum. They try to change their present dis/order. The imposed western diachronicity of Dr Edwards' sedating medication is interrupted repeatedly by their traditional temporality expressed through flashbacks.

Emecheta's and Faqir's use of traditional temporalities presupposes there is no linear time in their narrative. In Faqir's novel, Maha uses the past repeatedly to progress in her narrative in the present and, in Emecheta's novel synchronic temporality, as used by her female protagonist, forms the pattern of the narrative and is nothing but a "*sense of openendedness*," as referred to by Ruth Page describing women's writers narratology. (Ibid, 199) In *Pillars*, the straightforward and chronological sequence typical to male plot structure and represented in the narrative of the storyteller is constantly interrupted by the flashbacks of Maha's narrative. The same phenomenon happens in Emecheta's novel where traditional synchronicity intervenes repeatedly to disrupt the time linearity of the narrative⁴³.

Another characteristic that makes Emecheta's *The Joys* and Faqir's *Pillars* fit the African and Arabo-Islamic womanist ideologies is their description of "white" characters.

III. 11. Emecheta's White Characters:

The portrayal of Mrs Meers highlights a situation that "*signals the extent of the conflict between white feminists and black womanists.*" (Ogunyemi, 1985: 70). Nnu Ego's vision of Mrs Meers is described through the narrator as "*a shrivelled old woman with ill-looking skin like the flesh of a pig ... a female whom she would not dream of offering to an enemy god ... madam crawcraw skin*" (Emecheta, 1979: 50).

Through Nnu Ego's vision of the white master's wife, there is a process by which persons form images of themselves as members of a certain group. It is a reciprocal process in the sense that "*in characterizing others as different, one also characterizes one's own group as different from it*" (Brown, 1993: 660), hence the need to differentiate Emecheta's novel from feminism. This could explain how characterisation proceeds in this novel: men are different from women, as are white characters from black characters and traditional from modern.

The "*black is beautiful*" and "*the white is ugly*"⁴⁴ theme is evident in Emecheta's portrayal of her white and black female characters. Mrs Meers' colour of skin is compared to the colour of the pig's skin. This portrayal carries a negative connotation, and here lies the advantage of the African writer like Emecheta: when she writes in the colonial language, the colonial master himself can experience the "*shock of seeing this new image of himself, an image which corresponds to his own subjective image of the colonized peoples. It is an effective slap in the face of cultural imperialism.*" (Ngara, 1985: 46).

It is clearly reflected through native characterization of both novels that "*when "black" becomes inherently determined in relation to whiteness, there is no choice other than inferiority or dependency for the colonized, regardless of whether or not he resists.*" (Luangphinit, 2004: 67) To view the other in terms of skin colour has long been a colonial aspect. The same aspect is noticed in the native characters' description of the 'foreign' character in both novels.

The "white" characterization as proposed by Emecheta and Faqir is a reference to a 'colonial mimicry'. In Bhabha's view, "*Cultural imitation [...] is a hybrid resistance to the colonizer's ideology of natural racial differences.*" (Bhabha in Abu El Naga, 2002: 63) Both authors' characterization ironically highlights how the practices of colonial domination are explained and justified.

III. 12. Faqir's White Characters:

The imperialist and orientalist discourses present in these novels are highlighted by hierarchy of knowledge and civilization epitomized through "white". Yet, a negative portrayal of white male and female characters is made by female characters in *Pillars*.

An element showing the author's womanist writing is the criticism made on the British people by Um Saad who wonders "*How strong men would chase brainless tiny balls for hours. How they didn't wash themselves with water after going to the toilet. [...]*"

they just wipe themselves with paper. They loved dogs as their children and never worried about their hair and impure saliva.” (Faqir, 1996: 177)

This negative portrayal is also made when Maha describes the friends of her brother coming from the city: *“They were women and I was a woman too, but they were so different...these women were not shy of showing their bodies to the gazing men”* (Ibid: 33) or when she comments a picture in Daffash’s room: *“There was a big picture of a smiling blonde woman in the trunk. She was licking her lower lip. Foreigners and their deeds. Shameless.”* (Ibid: 175)

Through the character of Samir Pasha in *Pillars*, the author states clearly that imperialism produces the subordination of the colonized woman. Maha is obliged by her brother to go to Samir Pasha’s villa and cook local dishes for this man “whose long rubber boots [...] prevented his bare feet from touching the ground” (Ibid: 153) and his friends, when she discovered that his friends were English, the metal eagles who had killed Harb, she refused and was savagely beaten by Daffash. (Ibid: 105)

Emecheta and Faqir have the possibility, as authors and narrators, to explore the inner thoughts and psychological experiences of their characters, and thus reflect how “white” characters are perceived.

In *The Joys*, Emecheta uses the omniscient narrator or extradiegetic narrator technique. The first person narrator would not be appropriate to depict, for instance, the psychological state that induced Nnu Ego’s death.

It is through the narrative technique of the author that one may distinguish between the state of equilibrium and that of disequilibrium and the disruptive element causing the passage from the first to the second and vice versa, or in other words, the narrative technique highlights the elements that cause Nnu Ego’s and Nnaife’s disorientation in colonial Lagos. The same dynamic of narrative’s analysis may be applied on *Pillars*. We can also distinguish the state of equilibrium and disequilibrium of Maha and Um Saad and the disruptive elements intervening in the passage from one state to the other.

III. 13. Emecheta's and Faqir's Dynamics of Narrative:

As already developed in the first chapter (pp.53-54), in every narrative, two types of episodes are found: episodes that describe a state of equilibrium or of disequilibrium, and episodes that describe the passage from one state to another. In *The Joys*, if we take two characters, Nnu Ego and Nnaife, and determine these episodes in the narrative, we may consider Nnu Ego's state in Ibuza before her first marriage as the state of equilibrium, and her state after her first marriage in Ibuza, then her movement to Lagos as the state of disequilibrium.

The passage from one state to the other is principally her infertility, then her movement to Lagos where she is faced with a new culture representing a threat to her traditional social role, or in other words, a threat to her state of equilibrium. The disruptive element is her infertility.

For Nnaife, the initial state of equilibrium is in Lagos, before his marriage with Nnu Ego, then, that of disequilibrium is noticed after his marriage with Nnu Ego (see chapter four, pp 66-7). The element that marks the passage is the loss of his first job, or the departure of the Meers to England. The disruptive element is the loss of his job. Both disruptive elements force the passage from one situation to another, and constitute the dynamics of the narrative, which is summarized and detailed through the following table inspired from Achour's and Bekkat's analysis (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 42):

Episodes Characters	State of equilibrium	The disruptive element	State of disequilibrium
Nnu Ego	Before her first marriage in Ibuza	- Her first marriage - Infertility	In Ibuza after her first marriage
	After the dissolution of her first marriage	Movement to Lagos (European culture)	Life in colonial Lagos
Nnaife	Before his marriage with Nnu Ego	- His marriage with Nnu Ego - The loss of his first job	Unemployment and poverty (alienation)

III. Table. 1. The Dynamics of the Narrative in *The Joys of Motherhood*

These episodes may also be noticed, for instance, through Nnu Ego's poverty in Lagos, where the theme of optimism, as used in realist novels⁴⁵, is present. Each time the female protagonist reaches extreme poverty, for instance, the reader thinks that it is the end of Nnu Ego's life, but Nnaife appears with a lot of money and saves her and their children, or sometimes only his money is sent to save her from starvation. Yet, by the end of the novel, this theme disappears and is replaced by despair through Nnu Ego's and Nnaife's declines (see chapter four, pp. 162-73).

In her narrative technique, Emecheta uses space as an agent of fiction through which she names places existing in reality. Toponyms help the reader situate the fiction geographically and historically. She manipulates the meaning through her choice and depiction of such spaces as we have seen with her choice of Fernando Po to hint at slavery for example, or Ibuza and Lagos as representations of traditional and modern places.

It is through anthroponyms that she manipulates the meaning in her narrative technique as well. The name of Nnu Ego, meaning twenty cowries, underlines, on the one hand, Nnu Ego's position as an individual in relation to the others in a community, in this case to her father within her Igbo community. She is nothing but her father's property. She is equated to a sum of money that determines, from her day of birth, the amount of her bride price, that is, she moves from a daughter to a wife, then to a mother. On the other hand, the meaning of her name determines her position in relation to herself, that is to say, her singularity.

Another example of the function of anthroponyms is that of Ona, that may be considered as an act of onomatancy⁴⁶. Ona means "*priceless jewel*", to mean the father's ornament that he could wear round his neck (Emecheta, 1979: 11). Through this naming, Emecheta gives the key to understand the notion of "male daughter" in the Igbo culture. By giving the meaning of her characters' names in the novel, the writer facilitates the task of understanding her discursive strategy for the reader. Oshia's name helps the reader understand his position towards the old generation as it will be seen in the fourth chapter (p.164). Oshiajulu, meaning "*the bush had refused this*" (Ibid: 80), in addition to the meaning given earlier, could be seen as a reference to the rejection of the educated people by the old generation.

In *Pillars*, the characters that may help us distinguish between both states are Maha and Um Saad. Polygyny and marriage are the disruptive elements that make them move from one state of equilibrium before confinement to that of disequilibrium in the asylum.

Episodes Characters	State of equilibrium	The disruptive element	State of disequilibrium
Maha	Before the Death of Harb	The death of Harb	Life in the village of Hamia as a widow
	As a widow with her son in her father's house	Daffash obliging Maha to accept Sheikh Talib's marriage proposition	Confinement in Fuhais madhouse
Um Saad	Life in the city of Amman with Abu Saad	Abu Saad polygyny	Internment in Fuhais madhouse

III. Table. 2. The Dynamics of the Narrative in *Pillars of Salt*

For Maha, the passage from one state to the other is principally her refusal to marry Sheikh Talib after the death of her father Sheikh Nimer.

For Um Saad, the initial state of equilibrium is in Castle mountains in Amman, before the intrusion of the second wife, then, that of disequilibrium is noticed after her husband imposed on her to accept the second wife.

III. 14. Conclusion:

In both novels, the writers⁴⁷ incorporate the impact of colonialism as one of the causes of the female character's "unhomeliness" that led to their decline.

In *The Joys*, all the changes Nnu Ego faced in colonial Lagos prevent her from being a strong woman⁴⁸. Her traditional education taught her to claim her existence and freedom through procreation; she used this motherhood for the same purpose in Lagos. She used motherhood as a "conservatism of resistance"⁴⁹. Its biological and affective power turned to purely social to resist the foreigner. Through the oppression of British

colonialism in Lagos, Nnu Ego realised the process of dehumanisation of her husband. Motherhood was a way to regain her humanity and cease to be considered as a thing.

As demonstrated in the second chapter (pp. 86-8), the importance of wealth has its roots in Nnaife's Igbo cultural heritage, but that wealth in Ibuza did not deprive men from their manhood. On the contrary, it helped them to be more respected and free within their community. In Lagos, Nnaife used money as a substitute for his freedom. For him, to have money was more secure than to be respected or educated like his son (see next chapter, p. 164).

Through the character of Nnu Ego and Nnaife, Emecheta shows that African manhood and womanhood were really obscured by colonialism and its encroachments.

From Ona to Nnu Ego, and from Agbadi to Nnaife, characterization suggests that Igbo men and women fared better in the traditional and pre-colonial society than in the colonial one, and here lies Emecheta's African womanism.

Faqir's womanism is reflected in the positive portrayal of Arab male characters she describes in traditional setting, the village of Hamia, contrasted with the negative description of other Arab male characters in the colonial city of Amman.

In *Pillars*, Um Saad's ordeal narrated throughout Maha's voice reveals Arab culture's oppression of women in a colonial setting. This peripheral character bears the writer's feminist discourse. She moves from prison to prison. From her authoritative father's home to her husband's house (a butcher whose body and house stink of animal blood, dung and intestines) to finish her life confined in an asylum. Tormented by their past, Maha's and Um Saad's present is worse. They are aware of a double oppression: one of their past (the patriarchal "unhomeliness") and the other oppression is that of the present (colonial "unhomeliness") experienced in the asylum shaped by the British doctor's treatment silencing them.

Their experiences are narrated through Maha's voice. Maha's narration exists in parallel to the storyteller's narration. Yet, the narrative uttered by Maha is different from the patronizing patriarchal discourse and the stereotyping western storyteller's narrative. In addition to former oppressions, Faqir expresses her preoccupation about the orientalist and exotic perception and ideas that still exist despite the fact that they have been challenged in the past. Maha's image projected by the storyteller represents an imperial "unhomeliness" she resists as a focal narrator. (see chapter four, p.188)

The voice of a false historian manipulating both literary and religious discourses⁵⁰ and the name of Sami Al Adjanibi both given to the storyteller emphasizes the fallacy of patriarchal hegemony in religious discourse concerning the Arab Muslim woman, on the one hand, and denounces the imperial hegemony in literary discourse on the other.

Through their female characters' and narrators' voices Nnu Ego, Maha and Um Saad Emecheta and Faqir expose their anti-colonial discourse and womanist ideology where implicitly they criticize the imperial hegemony. On the one hand, they deconstruct British superiority presenting British characters as ridiculous, pompous and arrogant, on the other hand, by empowering traditional male and female characters⁵¹ in tradition settings.

If there is no other, there is no self and thus no identity. The psychological dynamics of Hommi Bhabha, Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon describing the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer comes from the constitutive process of the identity construction. The act of the British doctor silencing Maha and Um Saad in the asylum in *Pillars* and, the scene describing the white masters ignoring and laughing at Nnaife diminishing him in *The Joys*, reflect the colonizers' obstacle to the identity construction of the colonized. The act of ignoring, denying or diminishing produced by the addressee or the other leads the identity construction process into failure, because as Lacan puts it: "we see ourselves as other and as others see us." (Lacan in Fludernik, 2007: 261)

Failure in colonized women's identity construction is expressed as the female and male characters decline in both novels, through enslavement and alienation in *The Joys* and confinement and neo-patriarchy in *Pillars*.

Chapter three: Colonial and Imperial “Unhomeliness”

Notes:

¹ As Chandra Talpade Mohanty explained that “to define feminism purely on gendered terms assumes that our consciousness of being woman has nothing to do with race, class, nation, or sexuality, just with gender.” (Mohanty in Abdo, 2002: 229) This is not the case for our post-colonial women writers who feel concerned with national, as well as, gender preoccupations. That is why womanism as ideology corresponds to the literary production analysis of these authors.

² If we take *The Joys of Motherhood* as an example we may not apply Ogunyemi’s criticism on Emecheta, since this latter does not ignore the complexities Ogunyemi speaks about, while saying: “*If the feminist literary movement desires the illumination of female experience in order to alter the status quo for the benefit of women, the African woman writer’s dilemma in a feminist context becomes immediately apparent. Black women are disadvantaged in several ways: as blacks they, with their men, are victims of a white patriarchal culture; as women they are victimized by black men; and as black women they are also victimized on racial, sexual, and class grounds by white men. In order to cope (with this situation), Emecheta largely ignores such complexities and deals mainly with the black woman as victim of black patriarchy*” (Ogunyemi, 1985: 67).

³ The word “*baboon*” just like “*bliksems*” or “*bastards*” was used by uneducated Africaaner policemen. (Ngara, 1985: 91) Through her writing Emecheta makes hints to language variation.

⁴ “*Avec l’emploi permanent et le salaire régulier, une conscience temporelle ouverte et rationnelle peut se former ; les actions, les jugements et les aspirations s’ordonnent en fonction d’un plan de vie. C’est alors et alors seulement que l’attitude révolutionnaire prend la place de l’évasion dans le rêve ou de la résignation fataliste.*” (Bourdieu in Freund, 1984: 6) “*Through a permanent job and a regular salary, a temporal consciousness open and rational may be formed; actions, judgments, and aspirations sort themselves out according to a life plan. From this moment the revolutionary attitude replaces evasion in dreams and fatalist resignation.*” (my translation)

⁵ “Among the northeastern Igbo in this period (nineteenth century) one finds the closest approximation of New World plantation slavery: the status of a slave was hereditary without amelioration, even when his father was a free man; there was no recognition of marriage between slaves; children might be separated from their mothers as soon as they could survive on their own; and masters held the power of life and death over their slaves, who were regarded as mere chattels.” (Elkins, 1968: 52)

⁶ “Systems of classification provide ways to socially perceive and ignore, to recognize and misrecognize, to be and to act.” (Bourdieu in Brown, 1993: 659)

⁷ “The blues has had a tremendous impact on the Afro-American womanist novel, and, in contrast to feminist novels, most Afro-American womanist novels, culture oriented as they are abound in hope” (Pratt, 1982: 51).

⁸ “Any attempt to “soften” the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this” (Freire, 2000: 44).

⁹ I use pre capitalism instead of capitalism because at that time there was a production for use or with the coming of petty commodity production, production for use and exchange. It was mainly a women’s task. What was to come after with capitalism was the factory production (Drew, 1995: 7).

¹⁰ Although using the same historical event in my analogy, my analysis joins Nnaemeka’s rejection of Andrade’s critique about the scene of the strike in this novel. Nnaemeka considers Andrade’s use of Women’s War 1929, comparing it to the scene of the strike (Ibid, 1990: 98), as a use placing Igbo women on the threshold of history in the same way Hegel placed Africa on “*the threshold of history.*” (Nnaemeka, 1995: 95). For Nnaemeka Igbo women existed as organised and powerful individuals even before this war, and this is what I intended to highlight through the analysis of the character of Ona in the second chapter.

¹¹ While Diop's cultural analysis surmises that xenophobia engenders racism we notice that it is from such a "*xenophobic*" society that the logical, scientific and rational thinking proving the white race superiority has its roots. The Eurocentric scholarship discussed and defined the concept of race and racism. For Marxists, racism rose from capitalism. Yet Diop's and Dove's analyses prove that not only "ideological construction of race predates scientific attempts by Europeans to substantiate supposed genetic inequalities", but also that racism precedes capitalism in the sense that "racism was fundamental to the development of capitalism because racist ideology defined the nature of the terms of global capitalistic development. There is evidence to show that the social construction of racialized power relations was developed in concert with European/Arian control of traditional social structures, which in some cases predates capitalism proper." (Dove, 1998: 524) We deduce that it is from a racist reasoning that was born capitalism.

¹² See Kathrine Frank's Feminist critique (1987: 14-34)

¹³ "...false perception occurs when a change of objective reality would threaten the individual or class interests of the perceiver. In the first instance, there is no critical intervention in reality because that reality is fictitious; there is none in the second instance because intervention would contradict the class interests of the perceiver" (Freire, 2000: 52).

¹⁴ According to Nasreen Taslima's understanding, colonialism just like imperialism "*is not just forcible physical occupation of a land. A people can be subjugated properly only if it can be intellectually subjugated first. This can be done by imposing the "superior" culture of the rulers on the culture of the ruled, which is labelled as inferior*" (Ibid, 1995:118).

¹⁵ This double representation of the native identity is well illustrated in the characterization used by Albert Wendt in his short stories *The Coming of the White Man* and *Flying-Fox in a Freedom Tree*, 1974.

¹⁶ The Shakespearean demon, described as savage, irreverent and self-destructive, who does not choose the fate of Ariel, Prospero's servants.

¹⁷ The behaviour by which the colonized wants to resemble by imitating the colonizer desiring to be considered as equals. The colonizer refuses to consider the colonized as his equal simply because he wants to maintain the position of inferiority of the colonized and despite this latter faithfulness and admiration he would always appear as the cunning, sly native in an orientalist representation. (Fludernick, 2007: 268)

¹⁸ “*Violence against women can take the shape of rape, both within and outside marriage, beating, childhood sexual assault and incest, harassment in the workplace and even the killing of women.*”(Faqr, 2001: 66)

¹⁹ According to Welsing, rape is, in a context of oppression, a cultural norm of the White man, a sick behaviour where genitals become a weapon. “Sexual inadequacy is, she argues, the basis for the development of weaponry as a mode of European conquest or control in the development of white supremacy.” (Welsing in Dove, 1998: 525) Following the line of reasoning, the oppressed male as characterized by Daffash, as a debased human under his oppressor employs the cultural norm of his oppressor to display his aggression.

²⁰ This ancient metaphor equating women to the land and vice versa could be found, according to Fanon, in The The Quranic texts: “*Sura II, verse 223: “Your women are tilth for you [to cultivate] so go to your tilth as ye will.”*” *It is is a metaphor that is shared both in the Algerian and the French psyches. Windfred Woodhull argues in Transfigurations of the Maghreb: Feminism, Decolonization, and Literatures: “The cultural record makes clear that women embody Algeria not only for Algerians in the day since independence, but also for the French colonizers... In the colonialist fantasy, to possess Algeria’s women is to possess Algeria.”*(Fanon and Windfred in Faulkner, 1996: 847)

²¹ The veil is used by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* as a liberation gesture the woman decides to undertake in order not to be “*signified by the intruding, sexualising gaze of male, Western hegemony- she will now take agency of her own, personal corporal schema.*” (Cariello, 2009: 341)

²² “*...Every veil that fell, every body that became liberated from the traditional embrace of the haïk, every face that offered itself to the bold and impatient glance of the occupier, was*

a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer.” Thus women who do not wear veils are equated to ravaged and colonized country. In fact, these particular women are not raped. It is the country with which they are confused which is said to be raped.” (Fanon in Faulkner, 1996: 848)

²³ To resist the colonial power, Islam, as a religion, serves as “a historical marker of belonging and resistance.”(Cooke, 200: 158)

²⁴ Fanon has established the veil as a symbolic in the Algerian colonial struggle and “the perceived of the Algerian woman as a field of battle.” As he reformulates the political doctrine of the colonial administration: “*If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight.*” (Fanon in Faulkner, 1996: 848)

²⁵ Djébar defines the veil as a mental prison added to the physical walls for the Arab woman’s body and mind. She thinks that, in a post-war period, the veil covers the female body and “muffles the voice of the woman inside” at the same time. (Djébar in Faulkner, 1996: 852)

²⁶ The veil is considered by western feminists as a symbol of oppression and as a gender issue. Yet, according to Arab feminists, Western feminists “*devalue local cultures by presuming that there is only one path for emancipating women—adopting Western Models.*” (Abu-Lughod in Abdo, 2002: 230)

²⁷ “[W]ithout the veil [...] she has the impression of being improperly dressed, even of being naked. She experiences a sense of incompleteness with great intensity. She has the anxious feeling that something is unfinished.” (Fanon, 1965: 59)

²⁸ Irigaray explains the importance of the veil as follows: “...*taught by a masculinist society that “woman’s ‘body’ has some ‘usefulness’ only on the condition that she covers her deficiency as a non-male, woman feels “empty” with no being, no truth as her cover is*

taken away from her” (Ibid in Al-Sudeary, 2012: 71) Irigaray’s reading of Nietzsche considers the trope of the veil as restoring woman wholeness. (Ibid: 73)

²⁹ Fanon describes such a phenomenon with accuracy in “Algeria Unveiled,” as he put: “Without the veil she has an impression of her body being cut into bits, put adrift; the limbs seem to strengthen indefinitely ... The unveiled body seems to escape, to dissolve. She has an impression of being improperly dressed, even of being naked. She experiences a sense of incompleteness with great intensity. She has an anxious feeling that something is unfinished, and along with this a frightful sense of disintegrating.” (Ibid in Al-Sudeary, 2012: 71) While unveiled Um Saad feels as the non-other “she engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality, of identity, of property.” Derrida refers to it as “the “untruth of truth” that takes up a space that is “distance’s very chasm”” (Ibid in Al-Sudeary, 2012: 72)

³⁰In *Pillars*, Faqir expresses a post-orientalist discourse. It could be explained by the history of the state of Jordan and its close relationship to Palestine. In this case it is difficult to separate writing from geography and history. These two nation-states have been separated as a result of the colonial enterprise in the early twentieth century. Jordanian women writers’, such as Fadia Faqir’s “...self consciousness was shaped in the context of the collective confrontation with the colonial reality. Anger, and the means used to express it, touched everyone.” (Achour, 2008: 206) Many instances in the novel refer to the historical fluidity of movement in this part of the Levant. The origin of Um Saad as a daughter of an émigré coming from Syria is one example of it.

³¹The storyteller is described half an Arab, we notice negative criticism of some political decisions made by the English, like the description of the Balfour Declaration.

³² During Augustan Enlightenment, Orientalist authority was contested. Western travellers knew very little about the private life of Arab men and women since male presence in the Middle Eastern house was forbidden in the Muslim law and custom that is why domestic ethnography evolved as a female genre. (Melman, 2002: 111)

³³ Faqir said in an interview with a local Jordanian newspaper Al Rai (5 April 2002) that *Pillars of Salt* was written as a representation of the semi-Nomadic Bedouin life-style and

life in Amman of her childhood and a way “to capture the beauty of Amman on paper, since it is beginning to fade.” She also states that “the thesis of the novel is based on the concept that orientalism and patriarchy run in parallel lines,. The orientalist often misrepresents the Oriental (Arab) women and , for him, they are often non-existent or not seen, just as she is for most Arab men.” As she puts it in the same interview: “I started with politics but ended in women issues.” (Faqir in Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 300)

³⁴ According to Faqir, the storyteller’s lies and imagined narrative are analogous to the Orientalist painting Gérôme’s *The Guard of the Harem* (1859) “with a black guard and with a padlock door behind him [...it] crystallizes how much Orientalists wanted to get in, but they were never allowed, so they imagined what lay behind that guarded door. Their narratives were a shabby representation of the complex reality of the Arab world.” (Faqir in Moore, 2011: 7)

³⁵ “The alterity of much third-person literary narrative consists, precisely, in the fabulous access that it affords to another person’s (the protagonist’s) mind. In fact, besides access to consciousness, fictional narrative has started to deploy a whole panorama of non-natural storytelling situations whose allure, at least initially, consists precisely in the impossible scenarios that they enact.” (Fludernik, 2007: 265)

³⁶ The fictive depiction of the setting and that of the female protagonist by the storyteller resembles that of orientalist Harem life “restrictive, erotic and hedonistic.” (Valassopoulos, 2007: 141)

³⁷ Post-colonial critics consider such a practice outmoded “essentializing and objectifying process, as if this pejorative understanding of the word reflected a widespread orthodoxy unworthy of further exploration.” (Forsdick in Valassopoulos, 2007: 136)

³⁸ The Lebanese critic Mai Ghossoub writes about Arab woman identity: “What better symbol of cultural identity than the privacy of women, refuge par excellence of traditional values that the old colonialism could not reach and the new capitalism must not touch? The rigidity of the status of women in the family in the Arab world has been an inner most asylum of Arabo-Muslim identity.”(Ghossoub in Cooke, 2000: 162)

³⁹ “*The sexual puns rampant in travelogues and other colonial texts are, therefore, merely a continuation of the phallogentric patterns of romance, that is of the imposition of male sexuality on the way in which we perceive action.*” (Fludernick, 2007: 264)

⁴⁰ The strategy of displacement Faqir wants to apply through different linguistic devices operates here as a reverse displacement (Abdo, 2009: 253) where Arabic speaker uses a word with its English reference and being alienated from its Arabic reference.

⁴¹ Maha is suspicious about religion; she is described by Faqir as a pagan. For example, her reaction to women’s religious prayers in the ears of her son while he is being circumcised is a fear that her son “deafened by the loud noise.”(Faqir, 1996: 146) another instance is the way she views the Imam of the village.

⁴² Concerning the naming of the characters, there is a female character named Itsekiri by Emecheta. This character is described as a sad beaten wife and childless. The origin of this name is neither “*Igbo nor Yoruba nor Hausa, but simply Nigerian*” (Adams, 2001: 288), it functions as a trope to Nigeria, sad and ill treated by the colonizer.

⁴³ Yet to claim that “*non-linearity and temporal displacements are in themselves [womanist] features is too strong, and overlooks the fact that a great deal of [both novels’ narratives follow] a relatively straightforward time sequence and that textually, [each] novel follows a linear sequence of pages which the reader experiences with a clear sense of beginning and ending.*” (Page, 2007: 200)

⁴⁴ This theme could be noticed in *Two Thousands Seasons* as well, published in 1979 where Armah portrays a white character as a ghost.

⁴⁵ “*The optimism of the realist novel is clearly related to [the ideology of individualism], the value of a ‘rising class’ which, under the banner of abstract rights, acts for all segments of society.*”(Laurenson and Swingewood, 1971: 209). This point of optimism

could be used by feminist critics (feminism engendered from an ideology of individualism) when they claim Emecheta's writing as being purely feminist.

⁴⁶ “*c’est-à-dire, l’art de prédire, à travers le nom, la qualité de l’être. Ainsi, en lisant une fiction, le lecteur attentif devient ‘détective’ onomatomancien! Il doit décoder, à partir du nom énoncé, le programme de comportements et d’actes, l’artiste par le nom, lui délivrant la clé du jeu*”(Achour and Bekkat, 2002 : 81) “*That is to say, the art of predicting, through the name, the being’s quality. In this way, while reading a fiction, the attentive reader becomes onomatomancianary ‘detective’. He must decode, the uttered name, the programs of behaviours and of acts, the artist through the name, gives him the key to the game*” (my translation).

⁴⁷ The African or Arab woman writer has a double task while writing about African or Arab women. “*Because the [...] African and Middle Eastern cultures have long been stereotyped, because the feminist movement ought to be a movement toward human liberation from epistemological domination, women from these cultures cannot satisfy themselves with a mere act of negation when they write about themselves. They must shoulder a double burden, namely, to work toward an epistemological break with the prevailing paradigm and to reevaluate the structure of gender relations in their own societies.*” (Lazreg, 1988: 101)

⁴⁸ Nnu Ego is not “a strong character who struggles against patriarchy.” She dies insane because she was submissive to her traditional community. Because of this, one may have a different reading from Ogunyemi’s (1985), that she exposes in her article, where she states that Emecheta is a black feminist. I think that in *The Joys of Motherhood* according to my interpretation, Emecheta does not ignore the fact that the black woman is disadvantaged on several levels. They are victims as women in a patriarchal society and as black women (together with men) in a colonized country. So if we take into consideration these latter points we may say that Emecheta in this novel fits better the definition Ogunyemi gives of “womanist”. Yet, I may share Ogunyemi’s analysis if we apply it to *The Bride Price* (1976).

⁴⁹ The threat that represents British colonialism with its changes in Igbo people's life pushes them to be in a permanent state of defence against all kinds of threat. This phenomenon is observed as well in the behaviour of the Berbers of Kabylia in Algeria. After the Turkish intrusion for example, they preserved their own structures and cultural values. This phenomenon is called '*conservatisme de résistance*' or '*conservatism of resistance*', principally maintained by women as custodian of traditions (Lacoste-Dujardin, 2008 : 87-8).

⁵⁰ According to Suyoufie, the narrative technique and the demonization of the storyteller in pillars are nothing but postmodern tricks subverting literary and sacred traditions and reflecting thus the third phase of feminist movement.

⁵¹ Through such a characterization they are giving "more agency to the native subject in the plot [...] presenting the protagonist's mind in order to enhance the reader's empathy and understanding for the native hero or heroine." (Fludernik, 2007: 269-70)

CHAPTER FOUR:
Freedom within Enslavement and
Confinement

IV. 1. Introduction:

In a colonial or a post-colonial context an African or an Arab writer represents gender identity differently. The flexibility that characterizes female identity theory proposed by Chodorow's definition stating that "female identity is a process"¹ helps us understand better its difference within a post-colonial context. Actually the construction of female identity is influenced by its environment and could be adapted as a consequence when resistance becomes necessary. This is partly what happens in the case of the female characters in the novels under analysis.

Although the process begins as a "primary female identity" construction, it is transformed with the rise of a female consciousness within "unhomely" environments. This identity construction is either strengthened with the nurturing role of the mother to resist the colonial encroachment then becomes enslaving, as is the case in *The Joys*; or it is destroyed under imperial and patriarchal dominations as it is reflected in *Pillars* where female characters become unmatched individuals experiencing a process of identity crisis.

The Igbo woman had been taught to exist only through her motherhood. The traditions from her childrearing taught her that the children would be her "clothes" and her richness in her old age. To exist as a complete woman and enjoy the privileged position of the senior wife within her community, as seen in the third chapter (p.70), she had to be a mother of male children. Once faced with the foreign culture, imported by the British colonizer to colonial Lagos, the Igbo woman felt threatened and used the same tool to exist, reinforce and safeguard her native way of life. Yet, motherhood was not necessarily the best way to resist foreign intrusion; the female protagonist's decline in this novel is mainly due to her being a mother.

For Igbo men, to bear the situation of domination in Lagos, they exchange their dignity with money. This is why Nnaife accepted the white man's jobs which were emasculating and enslaving. His freedom was substituted for money and this led to his decline.

The Igbo woman, from her childhood, has obligations towards her father, in her adult life towards her husband, then her children. To be a mother in a colonial setting, the Igbo woman made many sacrifices. Nnu Ego consented to her father's decision about her second marriage, and accepted Nnaife as a husband just to be a mother at the beginning and then to protect her children from poverty. This Igbo man represented what colonization

had made of Igbo women's men. Yet, Nnu Ego decided to bear the displacement from Ibuza to Lagos and accept that strange man. About this fact, Emecheta voices through her female protagonist: "A slightly pained look momentarily passed over Nnu Ego's face, but she cheered herself by saying lightly: 'Maybe the next time I come back, I shall come with a string of children'" (Ibid, 1979: 39).

It is through Nnu Ego's scarifying motherhood and Nnaife's emasculating jobs that the notion of slavery is present in the text.

IV. 2. Nnu Ego's and Nnaife's Enslavements:

There are many hints at slavery in the text. The writer highlights the abolition of such a practice in the time of fiction. That fact does not prevent Emecheta from describing the female protagonist as "an enslaved mother". Nnu Ego became an enslaved mother. She put all her life at the service of her children. She wanted to be a mother in order to be a happy woman, but the opposite happened. In the text, there are many instances that show Emecheta's indictment against slavery. Nnu Ego's life, from her birth day was based on a curse of a slave buried alive with her mistress (Ibid, 1979: 23). There is a symbolic element of irony in the way she makes Nnu Ego enslaved to the former slave that was going to become her chi. Before being a mother, Nnu Ego was begging her chi to give her children. Then, once becoming a mother, she became enslaved to her children in a period when slavery should have been abolished.

Even through the different jobs Nnaife practised in Lagos, Emecheta hints at his enslavement. Lagos with its modern way of life offers to Nnaife an enslaving freedom, money being his only means to survive. As a result we notice that money becomes a new form of enslavement, enslavement "whose target is the mind, not the body" (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 7).

Yet, though Nnu Ego's motherhood was enslaving and caused her decline, through her children, Emecheta expresses an idea of freedom, the future of a liberated Nigeria.

IV. 2. a. Nnu Ego: the Motherland:

Children in this novel represent the future; Oshia², Nnu Ego's son represented the future Nigerian Elite. His mother sacrificed all her life to educate him and send him abroad. Nnu Ego lived a life of self-denial and sacrifice, something which shows women's participation in liberating and improving the nation through their role of mothers.

Oshia's colonial alienation³ contributed to his mother's decline. The fact that he went to the United States of America, and forgot his family in Nigeria, made Nnu Ego suffer a lot and feel it as a betrayal. Oshia's education shaped his way of thinking and, his family and community became secondary. About that kind of alienation Irele wrote:

...we are wedged uncomfortably between the values of our traditional culture and those of the West. The process of change we are going through has created a dualism of life which we experience at the moment less as a mode of challenging complexity than as one of confused disparateness. The ideas of cultural nationalism cannot help us out of this agonizing situation, cannot help us to resolve the problems posed by our alienation (Ibid in Taoua, 2001: 193).

Nnu Ego put all her hope in her children so that in her old age they would be her richness and her pride as her traditions had taught her. It was not the case with Oshia whose *"location of [the] great mirror of imagination was necessarily Europe and its history and culture and the rest of the universe was seen from that centre"* (Ngugi, 2000: 440). Through the character of Oshia, Emecheta refers to the missionary educated intelligentsia⁴ of Nigeria of the fifties. Those members of the African intellectual elite *"were...destined to be the champions of intellectual decolonization at the time of Africa's reawakening from the deep sleep of colonial domination"* (Ngara, 1985: 31).

The fact that Nnu Ego's sons were prepared to the new "rules" and had a different education from hers was in itself a kind of suffering for her. She was bound to bring up her children with rules and values of colonial Lagos, values different from the Igbo ones and that made her suffer when they grew older and abandoned her⁵.

Taiwo, Nnu Ego's daughter, is a female character that represents the new generation as well. This character is described as a rebellious woman who speaks her mind and who is aware of Igbo women's situation. This child, the mother's freedom, bears Nnu Ego's hope for change in the future where women would be educated and earn their living monthly just like men⁶ (Emecheta, 1979: 187).

Through Nnu Ego's children, motherhood was put at the service of the nation. Her role evolved from transmitting and perpetuating values in Ibuza to creating the future of a liberated Nigeria in Lagos. Through Oshia's education, Nnu Ego gave birth to the future generation that would be educated, representing the African intellectual elite. She

indirectly participated in the construction of her nation. These powers turn from purely biological, affective and social, to revolutionary and national ones. Nnu Ego could thus be considered as a motherland⁷.

The analogy, in the second chapter (pp.83-5), between Lilith, Ona and the dead slave girl, the chi of Nnu Ego, could complement this analogy of Nnu Ego as the motherland in Nigeria. Lilith in the Jewish legend was the rebellious woman and the killer of children that were to populate the world, humanity at a large scale. In the novel, Ona is the rebellious woman and the dead slave girl (the chi) the killer of Nnu Ego's children that were to populate the nation of Nigeria, hence Nnu Ego's role as motherland. In other words, if we go further with the intertextuality⁸ of the novel with the legend of Lilith, the latter was killing all the new born babies that represent humanity, just as Nnu Ego's chi killed Nnu Ego's children at the beginning representing the new generation of Nigeria.

Emecheta wanted to pinpoint that the English rule bred its own destruction and that the struggle for freedom from English rule, that was going to take place with Oshia's generation, was inspired and carried out by the English educated people of Nigeria. Adim, Oshia's brother, is also educated and may be considered as belonging to the future generation that would represent the elite as well (Ibid, 1979: 199). Whereas Nnamdio, the youngest brother wished to be a hunter of elephants in the future⁹ (Ibid: 201).

This new generation of Nigeria as represented by Oshia caused Nnaife's disappointment.

IV. 2. b. Oshia: a Father's Disappointment:

There was a rift between Oshia, educated in the United States of America, and his family in Lagos. He was blamed and rejected by Nnaife who could not understand his son's neglect towards the family. That rift that Ngugi called "*a horizontal rift dividing the elite from the mass of the people*" (Ibid, 1978: 45) caused Nnaife's psychological decline. This rift is illustrated in the novel through Oshia's derision on the Igbo beliefs and superstitions, about the dibia and his power of healing people (Emecheta, 1979: 132). Through this conflict, Emecheta wanted to underline the misunderstanding or the conflict that existed between the African popular masses and the African elite, educated in English and French, mainly writers, in the post-independence period¹⁰.

By writing in a language which the broad masses can neither speak nor understand, the African writer alienates himself from the people and appears to align himself at best with his own class, the African intellectual elite, and at worst with his colonialist master (Ngara, 1985: 40).

Nnaife's disappointment with Oshia's long education abroad can be seen as a metaphor for the "pains and pleasures" of writing of the committed writer during the post-independence period, with the masses of population considering him as a traitor because of his use of the colonial language: "*You tell them to cultivate the culture of the mind and, they ask you how they can survive without material goods and food on the table*" (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 10):

Nnaife expected money from Oshia, he did not accept the fact that he was still studying and could not send money to his family (Emecheta, 1979: 201-2). In fact, the father's disappointment with his son's long education abroad was principally due to poverty.

IV. 3 Poverty in Colonial Lagos:

The crucial element in this novel that made the female protagonist and the male character of Naife suffer in colonial Lagos was poverty. Nnu Ego's labour became as necessary as ever for the survival of her family. Through the device of poverty, the writer alluded to racism as well. One may "*substitute hunger, poverty, or backwardness for 'racism'...*" (Ogunyemi, 1985: 67). In *The Joys of Motherhood* extreme poverty is a pervasive notion, so we can say that for an African womanist writer like Emecheta "*Racism is a more urgent matter than sexism*" (Taiwo in Ogunyemi, 1985: 67).

The poverty suffered by the female protagonist is a "financial" one (Emecheta, 1979: 108). Through the novel, it is constantly opposed to the wealth of children Nnu Ego enjoyed. Nnu Ego lived between the "financial" poverty imposed by pre-capitalism and the demands of colonial Lagos, and the wealth of having many children defined by her Igbo values. It is this same poverty that pushed Nnaife to accept humiliating and enslaving jobs. The only issue available for him was to have money to save him and his family from starvation. This poverty caused Nnaife's and Nnu Ego's loss of values in colonial Lagos.

IV. 3. a. Nnu Ego's and Nnaife's Loss of Values:

In a new urban setting such as Lagos, there is a rapid change of social values. The way of life of the natives is influenced by that of the colonizer. As shown in the third chapter (p.140), western diachronicity represented a threat for Nnu Ego, as it made her lose her principles. “*Diachronicity ultimately seeks to deny African dignity and pride by validating racist and imperialist misconceptions of African culture*” (Barthelemy, 1989: 561).

The Igbo woman, as epitomized by the female protagonist, in many instances, found herself compelled to alter her values, principles and beliefs not only through Christianity but poverty as well. Her experiences in urban Lagos corrupted her and pushed her to accept her husband's jobs: as a domestic at the beginning and then, as a member of the army. The latter is a degrading job in the Igbo community, yet Nnu Ego ended up by accepting this job for her husband to save her children from starvation. In this colonial setting, she was losing her principles to survive and that fact contributed to her decline. Through an extradiegetic narrator Emecheta describes Nnu Ego's acceptance of old clothes for her child from Mrs Meers: “...*She forgot that in her culture only slaves accepted worn outfits for a newly-born baby [...] But Nnu Ego was so tempted by this new softness that she told herself that it did not matter very much*” (Ibid, 1979: 54).

Nnaife's forced participation with the British colonizer in the war against India worsened his situation; it had an impact on his psychological health. He was obliged to accept it although it went against his principles. He was forced to help his oppressor oppress another population. Nnaife did not understand why he was forced to go to that war, he was really oppressed. Each time he thought of that fact, he turned to drinking “*a glass of palm wine*” in order to escape reality (Ibid: 199).

With Nnaife becoming a soldier, Emecheta underlines the fact that the oppressor, being the British colonizer, became a model of humanity for Nnaife, a model blamed by the Igbo culture where it is considered rather as a loss of humanity, since in that culture a soldier is a person who kills children and rapes women (Ibid: 88). He was obliged to put his values aside. He turned from oppressed¹¹ to oppressor. Before joining the British army, Nnaife, unlike female characters, was unaware of the fact that he was oppressed. He identified himself with his masters and found in the oppressor his model of manhood. After returning from his long journey to Fernando Po and from the war, Nnu Ego noticed that he

had become cynical (Ibid: 111). He realized that the white people were not as knowledgeable as he thought; his self-depreciation turned, by the end, into a consciousness of his situation; yet, it was too late.

Prescription¹², as one of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed, is noticed in Nnaife's behaviour. It is underlined when Nnaife, just like other men, was obliged to join the army without any resistance. Nnaife's submission could be explained as a fear of freedom. He substituted this freedom for money rather than liberating himself from the colonial power.

Emecheta hints at another element to highlight this loss of values, corruption. Through the narrator's voice, she shows that corruption seemed to be an accepted or a tolerated fact of life among the Lagosians. That point also highlighted how money influenced Igbo people's behaviour, and how they lost their values for money. That loss induced Nnaife's alienation and decline (Ibid, 1979: 67).

IV. 3. a. 1. Nnaife's Aggressiveness and Alienation:

This decline manifests itself under different forms in Nnaife's social behaviour. He adopted an evasive and irresponsible attitude (Emecheta, 1979: 116). It is reflected through his alienation, as a result of leaving and ignoring his principles for money. An objectification¹³ of labour through his work of washer man, for instance, results from the loss of his Igbo values. The most important thing for him was how to get money although the jobs he was doing were enslaving or humiliating. An Igbo woman blamed men for the fact that "*They stopped being men long ago. Now they are machines*" (Ibid: 53)

Nnaife's alienation could be explained as a kind of racism against his own race¹⁴, it is an alienation from African genetic origins. As stated by Fanon, they are "*alienated from their own humanity.*"(Fanon in Dove, 1998: 526) This character is portrayed with black physical appearance but mentally and culturally he is Europeanized¹⁵.

Aggressiveness is a trait through which Nnaife is described. This aggressiveness is another element that led him to decline; he was imprisoned after having physically hurt a Yoruba man (another Nigerian man) when he discovered that his daughter was with him. When Nnu Ego went to announce to sleepy Nnaife that their daughter Kehinde was not at home, and he guessed that she was with the butcher's son, his reaction was very violent.

“*He was so wild*” that his family could not hold him. He took a big cutlass and was determined to kill that Yoruba family (Ibid: 209). The cause of his disagreement with that union was not the fact that the man wishing to marry his daughter was from a Yoruba family but that Yoruba people do not pay high bride price to the bride family (Ibid: 215-6).

This violence is recognized as a natural consequence in the colonized man’s behaviour. Fanon said, about the Algerian man colonised by the French:

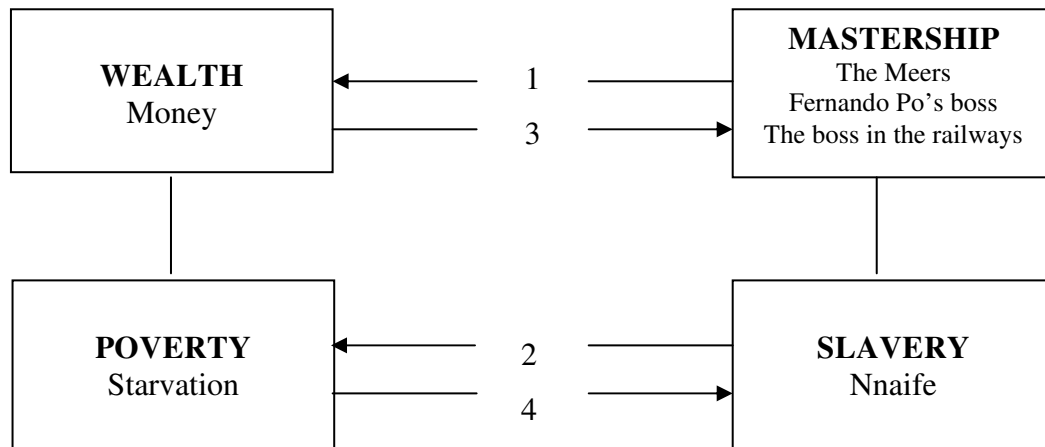
The colonized man will manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people... While the settler or the policeman has the right the livelong day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching to his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; for the last resort of the native is to defend his personality vis-à-vis his brother (Ibid, 1986: 52).

When the Meers left Lagos, Nnaife felt lost. When he found himself jobless after he returned from Fernando Po, then the war in Burma, he felt lost as well. His dependence is well epitomized through every job he practised in relation to a white master. This dependence led him to what Fromm calls a “*necrophilic*” behaviour: “*the destruction of life-their own or that of their oppressed fellow*” (Freire, 2000: 65).

It is well stated in the novel that Nnaife’s aggressive and violent behaviour is a natural consequence of his participation in the war. This statement was uttered by a lawyer defending Nnaife after he was taken to jail (Emecheta, 1979: 214). Through the lawyer’s voice, representing justice, Emecheta announces her indictments against such a situation. In the novel, the cause of such violence could be explained through Nnaife’s enslaving jobs in Lagos¹⁶. Emecheta denounces a feature of a society that accepts not only dependence vis-à-vis the “masters”, in this case the Meers and the bosses in Fernando Po and in the railway department, but also the idea that one can lose one’s freedom for financial reasons; a society in which “*poverty is closely related to the alienation of freedom*” (Testart, 2002: 175).

A society that accepts enslavement for solely financial reasons is a society in which wealth has an important role. Pre-capitalism, as brought through British colonialism, creates a form of bondage between the rich and the poor as the one existing between the

master and the slave. The following diagram (diagram 1), inspired from Alan Testart's diagram (Ibid: 195), could help up schematize Nnaife's social and material conditions in relation to his masters whereby he was always financially dependent on his bosses, just like a slave on his master:



**IV. DIAGRAM 1 –
Nnaife's Social and Material Conditions in Relation to his Masters.**

The position of the master always implies the possibility of accumulating wealth, like the master in Nnaife's job on ships to Fernando Po. Symmetrically, the position of Nnaife in Lagos implies poverty (just like a slave), unless his new job (either as a washer man or on ships to Fernando Po or in the railway department cutting grass) allows him the use and enjoyment of a small amount of wealth. In colonial Lagos, wealth always implies the possibility of the white man (Dr Meers for example) to become a master by offering enslaving and emasculated jobs to the Igbo man (Nnaife). Nnaife's need for money to feed his family, in other words, his poverty, implies the possibility of becoming enslaved if the only way to get money in colonial Lagos is to accept jobs like his.

It could be nonsensical to state explicitly that the Meers' wealth or that of the other bosses constituted a direct power over Nnaife, but if we consider Nnaife as a wage earner being dependent on his remuneration, in this case this wealth confers power indirectly over Nnaife¹⁷.

A close look at Nnaife's social status in Fernando Po shows that he had not been excluded from kinship (as is the case for slavery) although alienated from freedom, and his labour was a heavy form of servitude. This may be assimilated to another form of bondage, that of pawning. Although Nnaife had no debt towards his masters, his work put him in an analogous condition to this form of bondage.

In this analysis, it is not stated that the forms of bondage experienced by Nnu Ego with her children, and by Nnaife with money represent the exact definition of pawning and slavery, but that the social conditions they found themselves in are analogous to these two forms. Yet, apart from these differences, both are cases of bartering of freedom for resources; the first one has a moral value (children) and the second one a material value (money).

It is well stated by Ubani, an Igbo man who worked as a cook for the Meers, that Igbo men selling their pride and losing their values for money in Lagos, just to have enough to go back home, is an illusion, since they became enslaved in Lagos. They would never return to their home village, Ibuza, with a lot of money. Ubani became aware of that fact and regretted traditional farming and the way of life in Ibuza. Ubani said to Nnaife, when he announced to him the death of Nnu Ego's first baby and convinced him to leave his work to be with his wife: "*Oh, damn the Madam! Sorry, friend, but man can not live by bread alone*" (Emecheta, 1979: 67-8).

In addition to this enslavement and loss of values, poverty caused Nnu Ego's social exclusion.

IV. 3. a. 2. Nnu Ego's Social Exclusion:

The social exclusion of an individual may lead him or her to a serious nervous breakdown. What worsened Nnu Ego's situation in this novel was the fact that she had been rejected by her in laws, the changes she faced in colonial Lagos alienated her gradually from the world in which she used to be significant (Ward, 1990: 93). She lived in a "*cultural schizophrenia*" (Nnaemeka, 1994: 142). Nnu Ego felt foreign in both settings, in colonial Lagos as an "*alienated colonized woman*", and in traditional Ibuza within oppressing indigenous patriarchy as a rejected woman. The extradiegetic narrator's voice expresses Emecheta's views: "*...she had been trying to be traditional in a modern urban setting...she wanted to be a woman of Ibuza in a town like Lagos...*" (Ibid, 1979: 81).

She was disappointed by the education of her eldest son Oshia. He had been brought up in a time different from hers. She was abandoned by her husband. She decided to go back to Ibuza but it was not a good decision, since she was rejected by her in-laws: “*At home in Ibuza Nnaife’s people branded her a bad woman...*” (Ibid: 223). She was considered as a bad wife and a bad mother. Her traditional village refused a woman who had been influenced by the modern world. Neither traditional synchronicity nor western diachronicity helped Igbo women to be emancipated during the colonial period. This exclusion made Nnu Ego aware of her situation and her difference with traditional women in Ibuza.

IV. 4. Nnu Ego’s Awareness:

Nnu Ego envied what a traditional woman could represent for her husband. The new wife Adaku, when she first came to Lagos, was envied and seen as a threat by Nnu Ego whose image was changed with the modern way of life (Ibid: 118). Nnu Ego’s awareness of her situation in Lagos made her behave in an anti-social manner. Her isolation from her people in Lagos caused her social exclusion. This fact is illustrated through her jealousy of a traditional woman who came to pay a visit to Adaku in Lagos and was insulted by Nnu Ego. To describe such a behaviour through the narrator, Emecheta writes :

Igbonoba’s wife opened and shut her mouth in wonder. She had never in all her life seen such an anti social behaviour. She had never been so insulted. What was the matter with the woman? She acted as if her nerves were taut and almost at breaking point (Ibid: 164).

In her old age, Nnu Ego became conscious¹⁸ of her illusion; she was caught in a trap and could not save herself from it. Her awareness of the situation was psychologically oppressive for her. She noticed the difference in Adaku’s behaviour and became aware that her motherhood was not the best way to be happy as a woman. Adaku, being a flat character, supports the idea of the liberated Igbo woman. It is not a central character, since what is probably central in this novel is to highlight the impact of colonialism on a woman, Nnu Ego, brought up within Igbo customs. Yet Adaku’s behaviour raised Nnu Ego’s consciousness of her situation, when Adaku said to Nnu Ego: “*...A mother’s joy is only in the name. She worries over them, looks after them when they are small; but in the actual help on the farm, the upholding of the family name, all belong to the father...*” (Ibid: 122).

That statement made Nnu Ego aware of her situation¹⁹. She gradually becomes aware of the techniques of social enslavement through her status of senior wife and her responsibility as a mother (Ibid: 137).

Nnu Ego refused to accept this reality and answered and addressed her husband to stand for his family and explain to Adaku the difficult conditions of life in Lagos, particularly for a worker who had no land for his sons to inherit (Ibid: 122). Urbanization in colonial Lagos affects negatively the role of the senior wife. Now that it is a single room and no more a compound, the importance of that status lessened for Nnu Ego. She became aware of the fact that she could not be traditional in a modern setting (Ibid: 118).

Another type of awareness led to Nnu Ego's decline. Emecheta, through her female protagonist Nnu Ego, and other female characters, underlines that such situations of domination and men's enslaving jobs are more available to Igbo women's awareness than to Igbo men's (Ibid: 51). Nnu Ego reaction towards British colonialism was revolutionary. She expressed her nationalism²⁰ through her rejection of the foreign ruling system and way of life regretting her life in her native village Ibuza and in Lagos, and she resisted through motherhood. Yet, this resistance caused her psychological confusion.

Nnu Ego was psychologically confused. When she lost her last baby, she was released because she did not wish to have another child, but also that it was not a male child. This contradiction is equally noticed in the Igbo tradition when Nnu Ego became aware of the dilemma: "*...if you don't have children the longing for them will kill you, and if you do, the worrying over them will kill you...*" (Ibid: 212).

Nnu Ego's psychological state caused her health decay. She became physically weak. She lost all her strength, being a mother of many children. Nnaife's psychological health led to his decline as well. He was taken to jail by policemen and was described as a mad man who had lost his dignity while naked: "*They bundled Nnaife into the waiting police van but as they were doing so, his night cloth which he had thrown around him loosely was coming off, about to reveal his nakedness*" (Ibid: 211). Nnu Ego's reaction towards such a situation was to cover her man, to give him back his dignity, and once more Emecheta's African womanism appears.

Nnu Ego was doubly oppressed, as a woman within her traditional community and as a Nigerian in colonial Lagos. Yet, she was aware of such a situation and used her motherhood as liberation from the Igbo man, and used it as well as liberation from the oppressor through her children's education²¹. Through that education she was unconsciously leading the struggle to transform the Nigerian situation. "*Liberation is thus a childbirth, and a painful one. The man or woman who emerges is a new person*" (Freire, 2000: 49). This liberation, as mentioned earlier, is led by Nnu Ego through many childbirths, all her children representing new men and new women. They represent enslavement for their mother that had engendered a freedom for their country and their people, and it was a painful one. It is this mother's enslavement that led to the female protagonist's decline, to Nnu Ego's death.

IV. 5. Nnu Ego's Death:

According to her people, she refused to be a chi of fertility after her death. She refused to answer the prayers of childless couples. She refused that kind of immortality. That was a way to break with traditional synchronicity, typical to the Igbo temporality. She decided not to belong to her community and cut the link with her people. Her awareness of her destructive and decaying motherhood may be the cause of her refusal to help other women to become "fertile". This consciousness of a tricky social position rumoured to be a curse following after death, in spite of her life seen as a heroic example for others to be followed (Ibid: 224). Through this refusal of Nnu Ego to be inscribed in traditional synchronicity after her death could be seen as Emecheta's insinuating that although women had participated in the liberation of Nigeria by giving birth to the new intellectual elite of their nation, they had been excluded from political power that is going to take place after independence²².

Her death could be considered as an ironical liberation from her motherhood which brought her only suffering and sadness. It could be considered as liberation from her traditions. The new way of life in Lagos pushed her to shelter in her patriarchal values to feel more protected. These patriarchal values debased her physically and psychologically.

Feminists could claim that Nnu Ego's death is a feminist touch in Emecheta's novel. Nnu Ego's death could be considered, from a feminist angle, as a statement against patriarchy, a way to say that "*Freedom for women will never be possible until they cross*

the barrier of [...] patriarchy” (Talisma, 1995: 129). In other words, as long as women use traditions as a means of freedom, they are directly or indirectly perpetuating patriarchy and would always, for such a reason, be enslaved. Yet, in this work it has been shown that women under foreign oppression need to shelter under their traditional patriarchy by using it as a “conservatism of resistance” or as a “female consciousness” preserving their culture. In this sense, an African womanist definition fits better Emecheta’s *The Joys*.

The fact is that the African culture has been preserved by the women, and thanks to them what has been saved has been saved. The women are less alienated than the men and much more independent than the men (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 20).

This is well reflected through Nnaife’s and Nnu Ego’s means for freedom, one being materialistic and the other moral. So a feminist²³ statement could not be built on the ordeal and the death of Nnu Ego who went “*simplemindedly in pursuit of illusion, the impossible, the moon*²⁴ (*Lunatic*), *she becomes lunatic and dies*” (Nnaemeka, 1995: 89).

The death of Nnu Ego could be considered as a narrative item, to show that it was very difficult during the colonial period for the Igbo woman to reconcile her native ways with the foreign ones. She tried to apply her customs and beliefs inherited from her education in Ibuza to colonial Lagos but failed. This issue “*might also reflect a conscious effort to express a sense of cultural solidarity*” (Nnaemeka, 1994: 151).

Achebe’s saying, used about the chi in the third chapter (p.140), could be applied differently to explain Nnu Ego’s death. “*Wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it*”, could mean that there is no one way to view something. The Igbo people who stated that proverb are very insistent on this. There is no absolute thing. They are against excess; their world is that of dualities. This may explain Nnu Ego’s death after having given birth to too many children; excess may be noticed in this motherhood.

Nnu Ego would not survive [because] she was excessive/obsessive in her pursuit of the joys of motherhood. The Igbo novel speaks against excess because the Igbo world view is informed by balance and the spirit of live and let live, “Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch” (Nnaemeka, 1995: 99).

Being herself an Igbo woman, Emecheta could have meant it to support this proverb, to support her culture²⁵, and propose to the Igbo woman to negotiate with life in order to live harmoniously. Some would call it nego-feminism.

In this novel, some of the Igbo customs and beliefs are exposed to the reader through many instances. There is a gradual change in those customs and beliefs in different settings, in colonial Lagos.

In the novel Emecheta does not attach her perspective to any single character's point of view, it is impossible to determine which perceptions are to be read as ironic and which are to read as "real"...the assumption of Nnu Ego's perspective later in the novel does little to clarify this issue retrospectively; multiple perceptions and perspectives are embodied in this single character (Ward, 1990: 93).

The social exclusion expressed through Nnu Ego's awareness and death in *The Joys* is reflected differently through the confinement of Maha and Um Saad in *Pillars*. This confinement is caused by the patriarchal and the colonial oppressions experienced by these characters. Daffash epitomizes the result of the combination of these oppressions; he is a neo-patriarchal agent.

IV. 6. Daffash: the Neo-Patriarchal Agent:

In her fiction works, Faqir criticizes the oppressive Arab structure²⁶ of the family. For her, it is very important to scrutinize this structure to make the Arab World change. At the head of the Arab family there is the patriarch who decides about everything and treats everybody as infants.

In *Pillars*, it is through the scene of rape that the author hints at the neo-patriarchal²⁷ system that governs in Jordan. Nasra's utterances transcribe "a special" English, she is described as an innocent young woman victim of rape reflecting her subalternity and disfranchisement. Whereas Daffash represents the corrupted Jordanian man whose friends and acquaintance are modern people from the colonial city. Maha described him as "a city dweller and spent most of his time with Samir Pasha and the English." (Faqir, 1996: 65)

When Maha refused to cook to Daffash's friends in Samir Pasha's villa, Daffash's reaction was violent. He beat Maha and said: "*You bitch, you daughter-of-dog. What did you do last night? You humiliated me in front of my friends.*" Maha answered: "*Cursed. Slave to the English.*" (Ibid: 164) Daffash's abusive behaviour shows his helplessness as he loses his patriarchal authority in the process of colonialism²⁸.

This neo-patriarchal behaviour was the main cause of Maha's internment in Fuhais hospital.

IV. 7. Fuhais Hospital: the "Unhomely" Liberating Space:

The confined and limited space of the madhouse provides for the voiceless women, Maha and Um Saad, a space to speak about their subjugations to come to terms with their identities. Despite the recurrent visits of the British doctor²⁹ and his sedating medications they are encouraged by the bondage of "sisterhood" which is a reference to the traditional solidarity that characterizes the Arab culture and that reflects once again the writer's Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology.

The act of confinement³⁰ or internment like that of Maha and Um Saad has "*European dimensions*" according to Foucault. (Ibid in Cutting, 2012: 62) We can deduce then that this very act of confining these two female characters is deemed enough to show that this is a colonial oppression. Maha's madness may be regarded as a rejection to assimilation. It is well reflected through her negative reaction towards the "white man" or the "English" people. Through this strong rejection she unconsciously "*succumbs to the insurmountable power of racial identity*" that finishes by leading her to asylum, "*the only place where a rebel can exist.*" (Luangphinit, 2004: 66)

Fuhais Hospital becomes a new place, a new home, to combat the "unhomeliness" that the colonial oppression represents³¹. Yet, even if madness is used as a pre-text to speak and liberate the female characters' voice and the madhouse is described as a paradise by Um Saad (Faqir, 1996: 188), it is far from being the ideal realm of freedom.

The following passages uttered by Um Saad reflect the "unhomeliness" of Fuhais hospital: "*They brought me to Fuhais where Christians live and where mad people go.*" (Ibid: 17), "*It is a small world, a narrow hospital room with no air at all.*" (Ibid: 47)

Yet, confinement allows Maha to discover and understand the meaning of identity³². The madhouse becomes a space where she negotiates her it. It is in her vague area of consciousness: “*slipping down a bright lit tunnel*” (Ibid: 218) that we notice that “*madness ushers in the light of self revelation.*” (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 295)

This “unhomely” space offers both female characters the opportunity to speak the “unspeakable” and “*pour out the sorrow of [their] heart.*” (Faqr, 1996: 79)

The notion of freedom that the female characters enjoy resides in the short-lived satisfaction of the torrent of speech in asylum. Madness could be considered in *Pillars* as a mode of resistance. It was considered by Foucault as “*a rebellious act that had to be punished. Madness embodies contestation of prevailing order.*” (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2013: 185)

Maha’s and Um Saad’s rejection of social demands for conformity (for Maha accepting an imposed marriage and for Um Saad accepting polygyny) leads to their confinement in Fuhais Hospital where they are diagnosed insane. It is a madness of non-conformity.

IV. 8. Maha’s Madness of Non-Conformity:

Maha and Um Saad both refuse to conform to the prevailing rules within their family in particular and society in general. This state of non-conformity challenges the societal order and the ideology they are living in. This state of non-conformity allows them to express their indictment against the native and the colonial systems in an efficient way in the guise of madness.

The British Doctor like the people of the village both intend to silence the female protagonist, Maha, using madness as a pretext to confine them in a madhouse. Their insanity marginalizes them. Once there, the regular visits of the British Doctor to Maha’s and Um Saad’s room are threatening and reflect the “*cure*” and “*diagnosis*” that Fanon considers as a “*political pacification*”:

Because treatments for psychologically induced impotence [...] and other behavioural disturbances coincide with the suppression of national liberation, Fanon has argued that curing such deviancy effectively destroys the roots of discontent and the “criminality”

that encourages the desire for political insurrection. (Fanon, in Luangphinit, 2004: 71)

Um Saad is constantly wishing to move to another identity when she feels bad and disoriented, as demonstrated in the previous chapters. These repetitive references to identity resonate with the fact that madness and identity are often fused in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

The separation from her past results in such an acute grief that she obsessively rethinks and wonders about her identity. This recurrent questioning about identity refers to the loss of a culture due to the colonial intrusion imposing a cultural and racial hierarchy and also to the decimation of native culture in the colonial city of Amman.

However, madness becomes necessary for Maha and Um Saad to reconstruct the self. Despite the pain, it is the madhouse that allows them to achieve a brief encounter with the self. Madness becomes a good pretext to speak. As Faqir argues in her interview: “*when expression and self-actualisation is not possible, madness is the only way out.*” (Moore, 2011: 6)

Yet, in the asylum, Maha and Um Saad are alienated, “*dislocated physically and psychologically.*” (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 284). The fact that their stories are drawn from their past, from their memory, represents an attempt to relocate the self. However, it does not prevent them to feel displaced in the madhouse far from their families and deprived of the right to speak by the British doctor and here stands the alienating effect of colonial and imperial “unhomeliness.” Maha expressed it as she said:

My father is dead. My mother’s carpet is still unfinished. Not one single word from my lips... I lower my head into the eager hands of the foreign doctor, who rules over us like a king... I realized that I am being besieged by mirages flickering in the distance. (Faqir, 1996: 222)

In this novel, Faqir³³ presents madness³⁴ as a pretext for Maha’s narrative and thus, for her text. Madness as a pre-text of narrative conforms to Bhabha’s national unwellness towards a political existence that the “unhomely” moment expresses, allowing the juxtaposition of the private with the public: “*The unhomely moment relates the traumatic*

ambivalence of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence.” Bhabha rephrases this concept soon enough: “each ‘unhomely’ house marks a deeper historical displacement”.” (Bhabha in Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 285) Following this reasoning, one can deduce that Maha’s and Um Saad’s ordeals reflect the suffering of two marginalized and voiceless women (Maha as a simple peasant and Um Saad as an obscure immigrant’s daughter) during and after the British Mandate as stated by Um Saad. (Faqir, 1996: 177)

The storyteller’s narrative describing an apocalyptic scene by the end of the novel (Ibid: 225) joins Foucault’s religious metaphor when he explains how madness was understood in the classical age placing it at the horizon of unreason: “*What the Fall is to the diverse forms of sin, madness is to the other faces of unreason.*”(Ibid in Cutting, 2012:59)

The measures by which the colonizer pretends assessing the colonized stability, “*signifiers of stability*”, are “*continually under threat from diachronic forms of history and narrative, signs of instability.*” (Bhabha in Luangphinit, 2004: 75)

Faqir’s female protagonist embodies this unspoken narrative. Maha’s utterances mirror a lucid narrator and character that was confined for another reason than madness in the madhouse. The fact that Maha, the rational narrator, is considered as insane by the British doctor without taking into consideration the cause of her forced internment, the context in which she has been judged insane “*enunciates a juncture that question the scientific rationale behind an acceptable identity, the soundness of a nation, and a complete understanding of history.*” (Luangphinit, 2004: 75) This very character of Maha questions the colonizer’s system of knowledge. Maha is “*a larger discontent that always haunts the capitalistic, racist, and misogynistic logic of colonialism.*” (Ibid: 77)

Maha explains in her narrative the reason of her confinement (Faqir, 1996: 217) and it reflects Foucault’s definition of madness in the Classical Age³⁵. Her “unreasoning” behaviour destabilizes the “*human domain of reason*”³⁶ established by the patriarchal and colonial systems, it is a violation to these systems. Um Saad’s behaviour’s description before internment and after in the madhouse reflects an animality typical to the mad. (Ibid: 206-7) It distinguishes her from the behaviour of Maha and which makes the reader understands that Um Saad is really insane whereas Maha is not. Maha’s madness is that of

non-conformity and the best pretext to speak, to express a narrative relocating the “Other” to recover identity.

IV. 9. Maha’s Narrative: the Necessary Otherness to Recover Identity

The storyteller’s outsider narrative counters that of Maha’s insider narrative. In her narrative, we distinguish two oppressions, the patriarchal authority oppression and the colonial one. The outsider reports distortedly, through his version of the same story, approximating colonial discourse. He also reflects the local social and religious authoritative discourse.

Um Saad voices the Arab woman desire to move to another identity. She expresses a lassitude towards the role of daughter, mother and wife and a complete rejection of the imposed relegated role of co-wife, whereas Maha resists and negotiates her space through her narrative.

For Maha and Um Saad, the act of telling their story is a process by which they elaborate an image of the self. “*Narratives construct selfhood as individuality and functional role.*” (Fludernik, 2007: 260) Through their conversational exchanges³⁷ in asylum they are creating identity from a story uttered. This identity belongs to the space they negotiate through their story. It is an imaginary identity existing only in the context of conversation and replacing the real one baffled or denied by the father and the husband (Um Saad’s father and husband), the brother (Daffash) and the colonial intrusion (The metal eagles, the British doctor, Samir Pasha, the storyteller) It is an identity which is constituted in “*interaction with others, in fluid self-presentation.*” Generally this self-projection of the self through one’s narrative is always positive. (Fludernik, 2007: 260-261)

Maha narrates to create continuity between past and present and by so doing she (re)constitutes her identity. She is creating a story of her life where her image is no more manipulated by a (mis)representation, and where she refuses to be the victim of the orientalist representation, that of the storyteller.

Maha's and Um Saad's conversations in the asylum are a kind of therapy. They are producing a narrative with a story with which they can live, or survive in the madhouse. It is a story of hope with no plot and no truth. The most important thing in their story is the evaluation they give to the events, converting their "*failure, depression and, anxiety into placid confidence in the future.*" (Fludernik, 2007: 262)

The narrative of Maha about her story could be regarded as a tentative of reintegrating "*centrifugal material of the past and of memory into the fold of recognized continuity and identity.*"(Fludernick, 2007: 264) Maha's identity construction achieved through "the telling of her story" is a means to resist the otherness represented in the narrative of the storyteller. This otherness constitutes a threat to the image of Maha. Otherness³⁸ is present under different forms in the utterances of the storyteller. He describes Maha as a witch. (Faqir, 1996: 27) After every chapter narrated by Maha about her story, the storyteller gives an exoticised version of the same story. (Ibid: 30, 59, 61, 166, 168, 170)

From the juxtaposition of the storyteller's and Maha's versions, the story can be regarded as the framing technique the author uses to mediate between the world of the reader and the interior of the fictional world. "*The framing technique often serves to prevaricate on the truth conditions of the tale.*" (Fludernik, 2007: 266) Maha is providing the necessary information about the truth of her story, and the narrative of the storyteller serves to prevaricate it. In the narrative of the storyteller, Maha is the "Other". Yet through the framing technique in Maha's version of 'her' story the storyteller becomes the "Other". She reconstructs the self by telling her story.

By making the storyteller's narrative wrong and contradicted by Maha, Faqir tackles a very important point about the reliability of the storyteller. In fact, this is a plot decision to pinpoint the pressure and psychological oppression the interned female protagonist could experience through such a representation. It could be viewed as a direct discourse denouncing the orientalist male made opinion about Arab women.

Faqir's narrative juxtaposition³⁹ of the storyteller's and Maha's version brings under light two positions. On the one hand, it demonstrates the orientalist representation⁴⁰ writing for the west about the "Other" through which the storyteller contributes to the establishment of Western authority and cultural difference. On the other hand, it provides

the Bedouin woman with a voice to represent “the self” through Maha’s counter-discourse and thus liberates her image from the mummified orientalist representation that is present through exoticism.

IV. 9. a. Maha’s Narrative against Exoticism:

An example of exoticism juxtaposed next to Maha’s narrative is noticed through many references to the jinnee in bottles reminding the reader of *The Nights*⁴¹ and uttered by the storyteller in what follows: “*I cannot control the evil jinnee when he decides to leave his bulgy bottle*” (Faqr, 1996: 103) Yet, this orientalising and exoticising element is immediately rewritten through the utterances of Maha removing the exotic reference from its context when she describes her tears in this passage: “*Bitter cold tears, eager to escape their bulgy bottle*” (Ibid163)

The same scenes in both versions, that of the storyteller and Maha describing the scenes of the spying gaze of the storyteller, are ambiguously depicted by the storyteller through “*mirages, light, and shadows*” (Ibid: 4) to pinpoint the credibility and reliability of Maha’s precise and detailed description and to form an Arabo-Islamic womanist narrative to that constructed by an orientalist representation.

In addition to the double critique characterizing Faqr’s womanism in this novel we notice a “multiple critique”⁴² through many scenes and utterances in religious and family context⁴³.

IV. 9. b. Maha’s Religious Counter-Discourse:

Sami al-Adjanibi or the storyteller is (mis)interpretating Islamic text⁴⁴ in many instances. In addition to bear a post-colonial and post-orientalist discourses this novel is a criticism to this religious misrepresentation and misrepresentation. This is highlighted in the fact that the storyteller does not even know how to pray and had to “*imitate the Muslims when they bent their backs and bowed down*” (Ibid: 28) considering this as “*funny*” (Ibid: 28). Through this character the writer expresses “her” Arabo-Islamic womanism, which is nothing but a “multiple criticism”.

On the one hand, Faqr criticizes the (mis)understanding and (mis)representation of Islam through religious references in the storytellers narrative and make her English

audience⁴⁵ feel comfortable to belong to a different religion feeling superior and “Other”. For example, when the storyteller utters: “*one of the jinn soldiers, one of the goblins with strange powers*” (Ibid: 1) This passage could be regarded as a “*faithful English translation of such Qur’anic images [that] renders the imagery, along with Islam and the Qu’ran, ridiculous*” (Abdo, 2009: 250). On the Other hand, this criticism is balanced when a reference is made to a figure familiar in Christianity, that of “*Our master Solomon the Great*” (Faqir, 1996: 1) read as the commander of these absurd soldiers. This use of religious references underlining absurd and inferior figures serves to confront the Western reader to a similarity denied. About this fact, Abdo states: “*Likewise, it is comfortable for the Western reader to feel that the oppression the novel’s female characters endure comes from their own culture and the men who control it. Less comfortable is the realization, if achieved, that this blatant misogyny comes equally from a man who is foreigner and friend of the English.*” (Ibid: 251) like the storyteller.

Though Maha’s narrative support a post-orientalist discourse, we hardly find examples of commitment to change or development in the colonized country. We feel Faqir pessimism in her winding up. Her means for liberation does not express a better future for her country like through Emecheta’s motherhood and children by the end of the novel. The rare example we find is Maha’s eagerness to save her land and cure the orange orchard using the insecticides brought by Daffash from Samir Pasha. (Faqir, 1996: 133) Through the same scene, Faqir’s shows that though she used modern means to save her land the modern intervention did not prevent local oppression to dispossess Maha from this very land by force by Daffash after the death of their father. (Ibid: 202)

In both novels we see that the colonized people as epitomized by different characters achieve national independence from British colonialism (Nnu Ego’s death is narrated in a post-independence period of Nigeria and Maha’s story is narrated after the independence of Jordan). Yet, the ending of both stories seems to join Fanon’s statement that: “*independence was not the same as decolonization, and indeed, independence might well simply lead to colonialism by another name.*” (Alessandrini, 2014: 60) This name is mentioned at by Emecheta through the death of Nnu Ego (an anti colonialist character) and the birth of her children totally “westernized” through modern way of living and education. This name is hinted at by Faqir through the silencing of Um Saad and Maha in the narrative where the last voice was given to the orientalist storyteller.

National independence does not mean women's liberation as voiced by Um Saad: *"The country was happy and free, my sister, but it was the beginning of my slavery...The country had realized its dreams and was giddy with happiness. I slept that night with tears on my cheeks... I see the future and cry over the days to come."* (Ibid: 177)

In both novels, the writers end up their stories giving the voice of their protagonists to another character or narrator, confining the "real story" or "the right version" in the trap of tradition or 'traditional' discourse. In the case of Nnu Ego, whose story was confined in the belief of a goddess in the river and contribute in perpetuating traditions. In the case of Maha, her story was trapped by the orientalist discourse of the storyteller. This latter is called "a humanistic trap" led by systems such as orientalism⁴⁶. The chronology of events in both novels reveals the degree of hope though the winding up in Emecheta's novel is more hopeful than in Faqir's.

The ending of Faqir's novel suggests that though Maha succeeds to tell her story and liberate her image from the orientalist representation of the storyteller; she cannot be free as long as the poor and alienated Um Saad remains in subjugation⁴⁷.

The ending of *Pillars*⁴⁸ by the storyteller's narrative refers to the despair of the Arab woman. After the long narrative of indictment of Maha, Maha and Um Saad are silenced by the British doctor and the orientalist storyteller has the last word. The same idea of unchanging conditions for women is reflected through the unfinished carpet of Maha's grand-mother.

IV. 10. The Unfinished Carpet:

The carpet in this novel represents an act of resistance to different oppressions, from private to public sphere. The weaving of carpet approximates Faqir's spinning of her tale. (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 291) Maha stated about the carpet: *"I leaned forward and hit the fine wheel to produce thin threads. My threads spread over the valley to protect it from aggressive assaulters, from the forgetful sun and the raids of enemies."* (Faqir, 1996: 104)

The carpet in *Pillars* symbolizes women's solidarity as they gather and sing while weaving it. (Ibid: 201) Since it remains unfinished till the end, it could be considered as representative of the obstacles that prevent Arab women to be creative.

It is also a reference to solidarity and attachment to tradition which is nothing but Faqir's womanism in Action. It could be considered as a hint to 'quilting' used as a trope by the Afro-American writers Toni Morrison and Alice Walker⁴⁹ to represent the solidarity of the women and their pride of ancestral heritage. This attachment is noticed in the depiction of this carpet which belonged to her grandmother then to her mother. (Ibid: 63) It is also reflected through her attachment to the circular mirror of her grandmother (Ibid: 77) the unfinished carpet reflects the long way left for the Arab woman's liberation⁵⁰.

This novel is considered as a response the story of Lawrence of Arabia⁵¹. It is an attempt at that story combating marginalization and sequestration of Arab women. Faqir says in an interview that *Pillars* was written after having seen the movie *Lawrence of Arabia* where she noticed that only two voiceless women, backs turned appear in the epic. Faqir states "what if they turned around and told their version of the story?" (Interview in JO in Abdo, 2009: 244)

The storyteller sets the time of fiction in 1921: "Mandate, or no mandate, I did not care. I was half-Arab with an endless hunger for stories" (Faqir, 1996: 3) as a reference to the ancient Arab tradition of storytelling but not only, *Pillars of Salt* also refers to Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and thus could be read as a counter-discourse to the colonial one found in Lawrence's writing.

Additionally this very title, *Pillars of Salt*, could be read as a critique of the religious discourse in Arab-Islamic world.

IV. 11. *Pillars of Salt* as Title:

There is a religious⁵² connotation in the title of the novel evoking the punishment meted out to women who dared to look back. Maha and Um Saad are looking back at their past "at the 'unhomely sites of their domestic lives through their recycling memories.'" (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 283)

Faqir is inspired from the story of people of Lot whose wife, according to the second wave feminist Janice Haaken, “*was turned into salt for the disobedient act of looking back.*” This is considered as Haaken’s “*emblem for transgressive acts of remembering.*”(Ibid in Marecek, 1999: 7-8)

Emecheta reflects her ideology through the title of her novel *The Joys*. From this title, *The Joys of Motherhood*, and its relation to the story of Nnu Ego, one may guess Emecheta’s position towards traditional patriarchy and British colonialism in Nigeria, while writing this novel.

IV. 12. *The Joys of Motherhood* as Title:

*The Joys of Motherhood*⁵³ as a title is heavily ironical⁵⁴, in the sense that the poetic function is accentuated through this title, transforming the information and the sign into a value⁵⁵. Nnu Ego’s children were supposed to be her joy and bring her wealth in colonial Lagos in her old age and respect within her community because she devoted all her life to them. They “*traditionally would have constituted the apex of maternal joy in a child-oriented society like hers*” (Eko, 1986: 216), but what happened is that, by the end, she died alone, abandoned and completely rejected by the Igbo community in Ibuza. Yet, it cannot be called,

‘The sorrows of motherhood’, because the relentless irony within the text operates back and forth. It is the kind of irony that Haraway contends “‘is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true’ (Ward, 1990: 96).

Literature is a space of creativity but of continuity as well. In each literary text, one finds traces of other texts at different levels. Every text is an intertext. In every text there are traces of other texts under recognizable forms reflecting the anterior culture and the surrounding culture. Every text is a web of bygone citations (Barthes in Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 106). The title of this novel, in addition to its referential, connotative and poetic functions, could be considered as an intertext in the novel. It bears the link that represents the intertextuality between Nwapa’s *Efuru* (1978) and Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood*. The title thus has a mnemonic (opposite to amnesic) function. It reminds the reader of the end of *Efuru*⁵⁶. Here the intertextuality operates not between two titles or two

texts but between a title and a text. This type of relationship was labelled by Genette architextuality⁵⁷. In the sense, Emecheta, through this title, is determining the generic status of the text since she takes the expression of “the joys of motherhood” from the last paragraph of Nwapa’s novel:

Efuru slept soundly that night. She dreamt of the woman of the lake, her beauty, her long hair and her riches... She gave women beauty and wealth and she had no child. She had never experienced the joy of motherhood. Why then did the women worship her? (Ibid: 221)

The lake, cited in the last scene of *Efuru*, represents the first setting used by Emecheta in the first chapter of *The Joys of Motherhood*. The first chapter of the latter, *The Mother*, is brought forward with the chronology of the narrative. This device draws the reader’s attention to Emecheta’s narrative organisation and structure.

IV. 13. Emecheta’s Narrative Organization:

A brief narrative analysis of the novel would help to understand the importance of money and motherhood at the level of the narrative. Emecheta highlights these two elements even through her narrative organizations. According to Todorov’s definition of the narrative, it should contain succession and transformation. Through the succession of events in the narrative of *The Joys of Motherhood*, the transformation operates from the point of view of, on the one hand, Nnu Ego’s motherhood that turns from freedom in Ibuza into enslavement in Lagos, and on the other hand, from Nnaife’s freedom through money into enslavement. In other words, in an initial phase, it is liberating and by the end it becomes enslaving and, here lies the transformation of negation. This is what Todorov called mythological organization, which is the predominant organization in the novel.

Yet, at the beginning of the novel, in the first chapter, the fact that the loss of Nnu Ego’s first baby is known, makes the importance of the succession of events, up to the fifth chapter, lessen. Here Emecheta is using another kind of organisation, the gnoseological or the epistemical organisation. From the fifth chapter on, the writer evokes the “whys” and “hows” of the baby’s death and the causes of Nnu Ego’s desperate behaviour. It is a technique used in her narrative to highlight the importance of motherhood for Nnu Ego.

In *Pillars*, Faqir's narrative technique is based on focalization⁵⁸. It operates as a post-colonial counter-discursive strategy to reinforce her Arabo-Islamic ideology and to make the subaltern speak.

IV. 14. Faqir's Focalization: a Voice to the Subaltern

The narrative technique used by Faqir in *Pillars* is a post-colonial counter-discursive strategy. As stated By Tiffin: "*Post-colonial counter-discursive strategies involve a mapping of the dominant discourse, a reading and exposing of its underlying assumptions, and the dis/mantling of these assumptions from the cross-cultural standpoint of the imperially subjectified local.*"(Ibid, 2003: 98)

Faqir uses the storyteller and his unreliable version of Maha's story⁵⁹ to refer to knowledge and power. It is to underline how the orientalist discourse⁶⁰ becomes a canonical pattern representing the Arabs and their culture⁶¹. It demonstrates Faqir's awareness and refusal of such a representation⁶². It is an indictment denouncing the prejudice caused to the Arabs and Muslims in the history of orientalism and orientalist discourse⁶³. Through this narrative strategy Faqir is claiming the power of knowledge the imperial force was handling up to now.

The juxtaposition of the storyteller's and Maha's narratives is borrowed from the Arabic literary background. It is a strategy, generally found in Anglo-Arab fiction and post-colonial Arab discourse that may be considered as the equivalent to the Arabic literary technique labelled *mu-arada*⁶⁴.

Faqir's focalization could be considered as a strategy to liberate⁶⁵ the Arab literary production from a male and western hegemony over language and writing⁶⁶. She seeks to give a voice to the Arab woman to tell 'her' story. This strategy aims at critiquing 'her' own culture and at the same time "*to turn a critical face both ways, towards the country of origin and its tradition and the country of reception. The challenge, the alienation, the 'offence' are two sided*"⁶⁷ (Erickson in Abdo, 2008:243) and this all what "her" womanism⁶⁸ is about. The author gives a voice to the female protagonist Maha using a narrative instrument to do more than speaking⁶⁹.

Many instances in the utterances of the storyteller may be read as an implicit denunciation of the storyteller's narrative; it casts a shadow over the reliability of the storyteller as the narrator. His false stories provide the necessary contrast with the true story told by Maha. Faqir uses focalization in her novel as a principle element to express her ideology. Maha is the focalizer and the focalized subject at the same time. The difference between male and female focalizers has been well contrasted in the novel.

Through the contrast made by the false version of the storyteller, Maha as a narrator "*exerts power and authority*". She becomes "*the source of values and norms in [the] text*". She turns into an important component of what Wayne Booth calls "*the implied author*." (Booth in Herman and Vervaeck, 2007: 226)

The storyteller uses abusively the dissonant psycho-narration in the sense that he criticizes openly all the action and thoughts of Maha. He colours the scenes with his description to an extent that achieves lies and misrepresentation. Through Maha's voice Faqir proposes a consonant self-narration where the distinction between I-character and I-narrator is blurred. We notice no clear criticism about Maha when she is telling her story, "*...character and narrator, past and present seem to be continuously interwoven. This ties in with the main theme and ideological focus of the novel, namely, the inescapability of the past.*" (Herman and Vervaeck, 2007: 228)

The storyteller is a homodiegetic narrator; he is the narrator and also a character. Maha is a character who is telling her story, she is the autodiegetic narrator. If we compare with *The Joys*' narrative technique, Emecheta's narrator is a heterodiegetic, the narrator is not a participant in the story.

For the heterodiegetic narrator the reader does not know the sex of the one who narrates, whereas in the case of homodiegetic or autodiegetic one, the sex is marked. Gendered assumptions may be brought by readers influencing their interpretation. This is one important aspect distinguishing the reading of each novel.

Although the first person pronominal expression of "I" in English does not inflect for gender, the reader of *Pillars* is able to distinguish the sex of each narrator since Faqir's makes sure to precise before each narrative who is speaking by naming the chapter "Maha" or "The Storyteller". The story in Faqir's novel is narrated by these two narrators alternating their narratives.

The variable pattern of focalization to which belongs her narrative is a dynamic pattern that allows shifts between patterns. It is in fact a multiple focalization if we consider the whole novel. The narrative technique of Faqir produces the juxtaposition of contrary apperceptions⁷⁰ characteristic of multiple focalization. The same events are told repeatedly by two narrators and seen through two different focal characters. This literary technique is used to demonstrate the path followed by her female protagonist to negotiate her space and free her image from the storyteller's orientalist representation's trap.

We recognize two narrators and two focal characters in *Pillars*. The storyteller as his name indicates is a declared narrator "who speaks" (to borrow Genette's formula), he is also the one who perceives since he is a focalizer and a character whose third person narrative mirrors the story-world. He is a narrator-focalizer in Bal's terms. Yet, this very story-world he narrates is contradicted by Maha who is a character living the story told by the storyteller, Maha becomes the one "who perceives" and the second narrator "who speaks" and is aware of the presence of the storyteller that she calls "the foreigner." She is an autodiegetic narrator through whose eyes the story-world in her narrative is perceived. She is the focal character of her own narrative. And thus, the story or the narrative is disputed between these two narrators. Yet, Faqir uses elements to render Maha's version more reliable and "truthful" than the storyteller's. The first element is that Maha is an autodiegetic narrator whereas the storyteller is a homodiegetic one.

Her narrative technique intervenes on another narratological⁷¹ level that constitutes another element. Both Maha's and the storyteller's perceptions are offline perception. Yet the offline perception of the storyteller is purely imaginary and thus less realistic than Maha's perception that is a result of a recollection and a subjective analepse or offline flashbacks⁷² (to use Genette's terms). Through this literary representation Faqir strengthens the storyteller's unrealistic perception and highlights his misrepresentation. Then she dispenses her declared narrator (the storyteller) his narratorial intervention, and Maha, the focal character, becomes the narrator. Through this technique, Faqir gives the voice and the function of her declared narrator to the "subaltern" Maha to tell her story and finally achieves directness⁷³.

Within the narrative of the storyteller we recognize the mode of internal focalization (in Genette's sense) and external focalization (in Bal's sense). The first pattern is where we recognize the storyteller as a character used by Faqir to highlight to which extent orientalism that characterizes his narrative is in fact a misrepresentative of the Arab woman epitomized by Maha. In fact, the restriction of information is applied with degrees but clearly with this character to show that the narrative information is so restricted that he invents the story of Maha. Yet, in the same narrative, we may deduce that there is an external focalization (in Bal's sense) that Faqir applies to reinforce the origin of the storyteller being a foreigner (Sami al-ajanibi), showing he is a narrator that sees things imaginatively since he is external to the story, an external focalizer or "narrator-focalizer" in Bal's terms. The storyteller is a narrator but a flat character in the narrative of Maha. Faqir's focalization succeeds to mix two opposed patterns in the case of the storyteller, Genette's internal focalization and Bal's external focalization.

The structure analysis of both novels may also help us to demonstrate clearly the gender and anti-colonial ideology of both authors.

IV. 15. The Structure Analysis of the Novels:

From the point of view of an internal analysis of the text, we should take into consideration that the narrative is structured, inhabited by characters, dated and situated (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 37). Through the narrative technique, African and Arabo-Islamic womanist influences can be discerned from the characterization of the authors in their novels.

IV. 15. a. The Structure Analysis of *The Joys of Motherhood*:

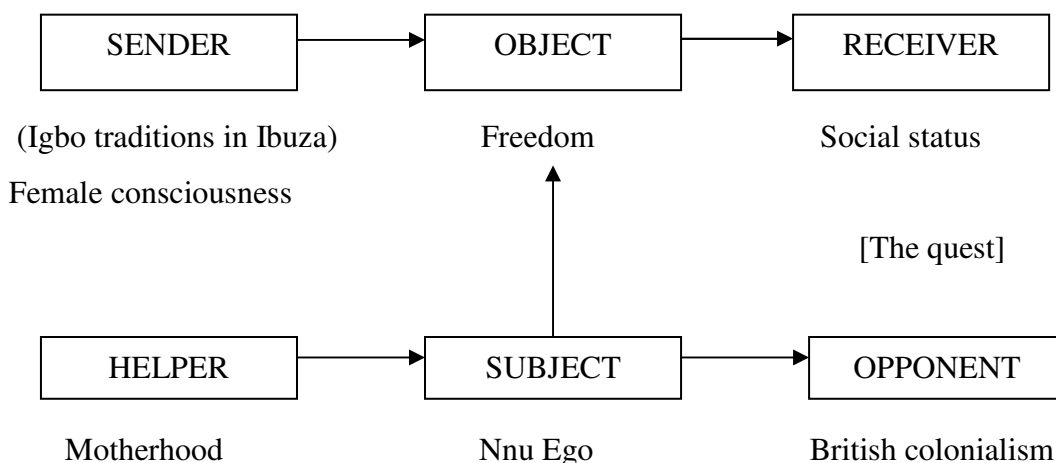
In *The Joys*, Emecheta develops Nnu Ego as a female character all along the novel, but at the same time, she develops other female characters contrasting them with Nnu Ego: at the beginning there is the rebellious Ona in a traditional setting in pre-colonial period, Adaku the liberated woman in a colonial period and setting, then the Owulum senior wife as a respected woman in a colonial period and a traditional setting. These three characters have almost nothing in common with Nnu Ego. From this characterization, one may detect the writer's preoccupations, meaning that during the colonial period all was peripheral (through the peripheral characters) and what was really central was a mother's

commitment to the future of her nation. It is reflected through the female protagonist, through Nnu Ego, the motherland.

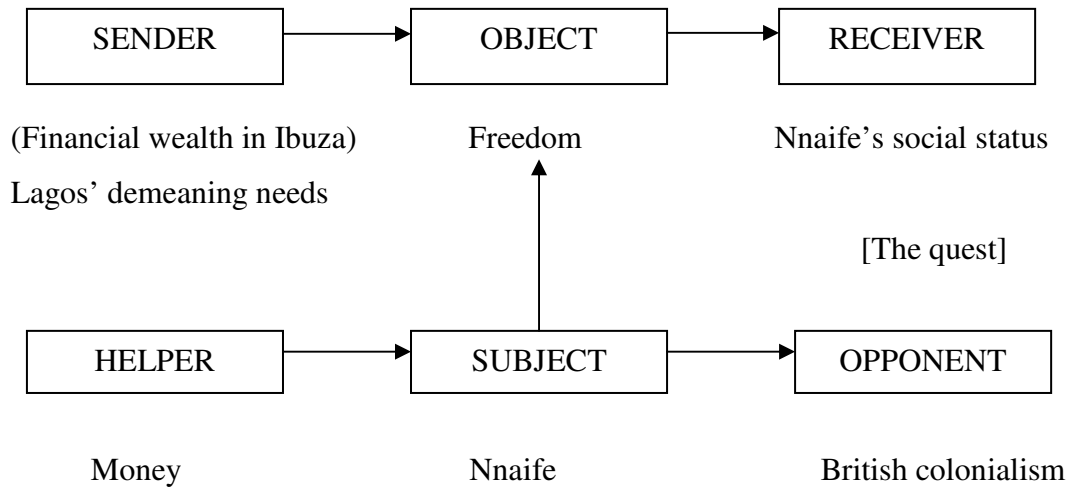
To give a date and the exact place⁷⁴ in a text of fiction like *The Joys*, is a way for the writer to fix fiction in reality. It helps the reader situate the story in history and understand the Igbo people’s subjugation by British colonialism as shown in the third chapter (pp.114-28).

Emecheta’s realistic writing in this novel reveals the influence of African womanism as demonstrated in the previous chapters. Yet, this influence may be discerned through the narrative structure as well. The characterization and other agents, for instance, help detect the writer’s narrative structure. From a narratological point of view, the narrative is divided into fiction and narration. In fiction, according to Greimas, there is A-ACTION and B-ACTANT. The actant has its function and plays a role. The function is determined by the technique of the narration, and the role creates an analogy between real life and fiction.

After having spoken about Nnu Ego and other characters in relation to money and motherhood as a means to freedom, we give them now their roles as ‘actants’ according to Greimas’ diagram that would help to unveil Emecheta’s narrative structure. Nnu Ego’s and Nnaife’s evolution in the story is explained in the following diagrams:



**IV. DIAGRAM 2 –
Nnu Ego as Subject in Greimas’ Actantial Model Applied to the Novel**



**IV. DIAGRAM 3 –
Nnaife as Subject in Greimas' Actantial Model Applied to the Novel**

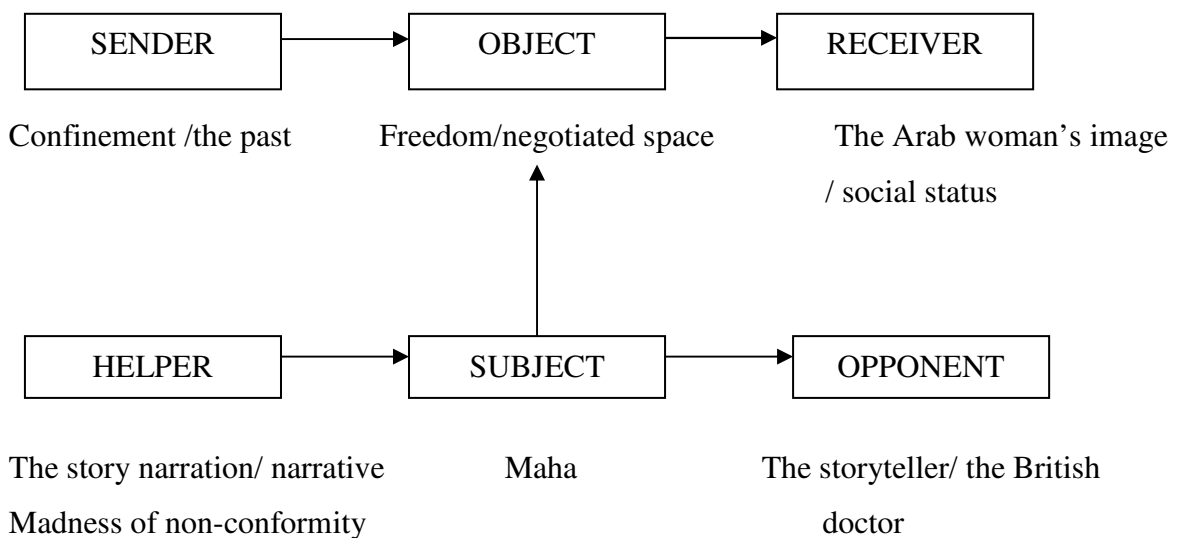
In both diagrams, the aim of action or the object is freedom. The actant that prevents both subjects, Nnu Ego and Nnaife, to reach this object, is the opponent, in this case British colonialism with all the changes it imposes upon the Igbo man's and woman's ways of life. In the first diagram (Diagram 2), the sender that boosts Nnu Ego's quest for freedom is the importance of motherhood for the Igbo community that enables the Igbo woman to enjoy the privileged and respectful status of senior wife (as shown in the second chapter, p.70) which turns into a "female consciousness" or a "conservatism of resistance" in colonial Lagos, as demonstrated in the third chapter (pp.115-28). The second diagram (diagram 3) shows Naife's quest for freedom through money as a helper. He was stimulated by wealth at the beginning to gain importance among his people, which turns in colonial Lagos into fulfilling Lagos' demeaning demands. Then, motherhood and money move from helpers in the quests of freedom which had their roots in the Igbo culture in traditional Ibuza, then to opponent, to the same quest in colonial Lagos, when freedom becomes an illusion⁷⁵.

It is induced that both settings⁷⁶, Ibuza representing the traditional and the pre-colonial, and Lagos representing the modern and the colonial, have each a function in the narrative with the same subjects, Nnu Ego and Nnaife, for the same quest of freedom. In other words, Ibuza is a helper whereas Lagos is an opponent in Nnu Ego's and Nnaife's quests for freedom.

The time of fiction transforms the narrative situation, and it transforms the situation of the characters. For instance, the fact that Nnaife went to the war in India caused Nnu Ego's poverty. The situation of Nnu Ego worsened in Lagos and it is well underlined through the narration and vice versa. The narration changes the time of fiction particularly while reaching the death of Nnu Ego by the end of the novel. This is what gives a rhythm to the text (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 57-9).

IV. 15. b. The Structure Analysis of *Pillars of Salt*:

Our analysis of *Pillars* through chapters two, three and four could be summarized via the following diagram:



IV. DIAGRAM 4 –

Maha as Subject in Greimas' Actantial Model Applied to the Novel

Time and Space on the story level are intertwined in Faqir's *Pillars*. The past becomes a space that Maha creates through her narrative to tell her story and liberate herself from

the orientalist image represented by the storyteller and whose narrative imprisons. This space is a memory helping Maha to break the silence imposed by the treatment of the British doctor in the house of the insane from which she tells her story. The past time Maha uses becomes a character, an “actant” playing the role of a protector on the one hand, and this very memory is a source of suffering on the other.

When Emecheta makes reference to the ancestors of her female protagonist through temporality and plot structure, Faqir uses a figural narrative through her use of the storyteller borrowing the storytelling of *The Nights*. This narrative technique indicts on the one hand the hegemonic male voice in the Arab world and, on the other the orientalist misrepresentation or *apperception* in the Western world.

In *The Joys* space and time are combined successfully. Once in the city of Lagos, the female protagonist is constantly longing for her past life in the village of Ibuza. The story of Emecheta is shaped by a traditional temporality where the past becomes a shelter that is to say a safe space as was demonstrated through the synchronic temporality used by Emecheta in chapter two (p.140). Yet, this temporality enslaves her in colonial Lagos.

This traditional temporality as opposed to the modern one, or this safe space created from the past to resist oppressing elements in the present is nothing but the expression of a general truth by the authors including cultural background and values. These elements of the past are either regretted or condemned by the writers through the female protagonists’ voices and this fact could be regarded as an indicator of the authors’ ideology.

The temporal dimension used in *Pillars* may have various ideological meanings. The temporal organization⁷⁷ of the narrative in Faqir is the feedback that may have an ideological interpretation. It could be considered as a criticism of an oppressed past that imposes itself in the present to seek freedom within another oppressed space and place, that is the present in the madhouse.

IV. 16. Conclusion:

It is essential for an oppressed person to realize that in her or his way to freedom from oppression, this struggle is carried out not only against poverty and hunger like the one carried out by Nnaife but also: “...*to create and to construct, to wonder and to venture. Such freedom requires that the individual be active and responsible, not a slave or a well fed cog in the machine... It is not enough that men are not slaves; if social conditions further the existence of automatons, the result will not be love of life but love of death.*” (Fromm in Freire, 2000: 68)

This is the difference between both freedoms. Nnu Ego’s struggle is carried out through her children until enslavement and then death, and Nnaife’s struggle is carried out through his jobs to enslavement and then imprisonment. In her way to freedom, Nnu Ego resisted the threat represented by the British cultural and economical invasions, whereas Nnaife, in his way to freedom (through money) did not resist but tried to suit the new system. When Nnu Ego was liberated through death by the end, Nnaife was jailed.

Yet, both declines reflect a state of alienation, since Nnaife’s alienation not only “*is incompatible with the freedom of the individual directly afflicted by the syndrome, but it is a threat to the freedom of others as well*” (Dolan, 1971: 1093) and that was the case for Nnu Ego.

Nnu Ego’s motherhood was destructive in one sense. It was because of her numerous children that Nnu Ego suffered in colonial Lagos, but at the same time this motherhood was necessary for her. On one hand, she had to claim her existence and freedom within the Igbo community; on the other hand, she had to face the new way of life in Lagos, since it was the only way she knew to exist and save her nation from ignorance.

“...*money and children don’t go together*” (Emecheta, 1979: 80). This is an Igbo proverb Emecheta used, to say that to be happy in her role of mother; the Igbo woman should pay more attention to her children than to her trade earning money. Yet, concerning the couple of Nnu Ego and Nnaife, Emecheta contrasted both elements of that Igbo proverb through her characters’ means to free themselves from social bondage, a freedom that turns into enslavement in colonial Lagos as if to confirm the proverb.

In *The Joys*, Emecheta does not remain uncritical of the pre-colonial Igbo way of life. As a woman, she feels the need to voice women's suffering in their roles of daughters, wives and mothers. Yet in her task, she does not omit to denounce how colonialism worsened their situation. As argued by Frantz Fanon, to alter women's status in the colonized country was a strategy by the colonizer to better control the situation. A change in local tradition was necessary⁷⁸ (Fanon, 1980: 15). The Igbo woman in this novel, as epitomized by the female protagonist, reacted to this change. She consciously or unconsciously went back to her indigenous customs to claim her role threatened by such a strategy. The colonizer had probably understood that the Igbo woman (as for the Algerian woman during French colonization) had power in her community, as epitomized by Ona in the pre-colonial period. This strategy was meant to take out this power by controlling the cult of procreation through Christianity in order to misbalance her role. Emecheta is probably supporting this idea of a powerful Igbo woman in a pre-colonial Ibuza, through Ona. Her daughter Nnu Ego was weakened in Lagos when faced with the colonial power, and her grand daughter Kehinde brought many changes through her marriage with a Yoruba, a marriage not allowed in the past, and the natives made one unity against the foreigner.

In this novel, the well being of the Igbo woman seems incompatible with the Igbo customs which are mainly patriarchal. It is incompatible with the western way of life found in Lagos as well. The colonial intrusion in the Igbo women's life seems to worsen their situation. They feel threatened by this new social way and protect themselves by reinforcing their inherited principles, through their traditional role of mothers for example. *"For women, patriarchal customs encourage antipathy to culture and tradition and intensify oppression"* (Barthelemy, 1989: 572). Yet traditional behaviour is a mode of resistance to colonialism that one could assimilate to a counter-acculturation⁷⁹. To alter it is to admit defeat, but *"to speak of counter-acculturation in a colonial situation is an absurdity. The phenomena of resistance observed in the colonized must be related to an attitude of counter-assimilation, of maintenance of a cultural, hence national, originality"* (Fanon, 1980: 20).

The ending of the novel opens another perspective by rejecting motherhood as being the best way to exist and to be free, and by Nnu Ego's hope for change for her daughters. They represent the future for a great number of women who gave their life for

the sake of new perspectives for the women of the next generations. In this sense, the reader may feel this type of characters as committed to a cause that knows what it does not want to be any longer, though they have no guaranty of what may happen in the days to come for their likes.

Pillars is an Arabo-Islamic womanist writing for multiple reasons. The most conspicuous one is that the author denounces patriarchal and colonial injustice using a traditional material though subverted and deconstructed in a narrative strategy. Through Maha, Faqir represents the Arab woman who dares to tell and look back to her culture, her society and her religion targeting to negotiate a space for her. Through Maha's narrative from the madhouse space is negotiated and truth is restored from the storyteller's version, we can deduce that "unreason" for Maha was the result of voluntary choice in order to tell her story.

Focalization as used in this novel helps Faqir in empowering her female characters but healing them at the same time, as the act of remembering their grievances hurts and mutilates their mind. One can deduce from this narrative strategy that "*dominance can only contain, but never successfully destroy, the women's voice.*" (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 292)

The Joys of Motherhood and *Pillars of Salt* reflect clearly the consequences of encounter between colonized and colonizer as analyzed by Attar. (Ibid, 2010: 26) According to him, the consequences of this encounter go through three stages. These stages are well epitomized by the characters of both novels. The first stage is resistance. One can notice this first stage through the behaviour of Maha, Nnu Ego and Nnaife. They all refuse to cope with the "unhomeliness" encountered in colonial settings. (Maha's refusal to cook for the British and uttering it through her narrative, and Nnu Ego's refusal to adhere to the city way of life and resisting through motherhood). The second stage, hybridism: Maha is copying with the western way of life through listening to radio, the use of the washing powder, the insecticides to cure the trees of the orchard, Nnaife is occupying many jobs working for the British colonizer and trying to conform to their norms and western ways. The third stage is annihilation, noticed in the confinement of Maha and Um Saad in a madhouse, the enslavement of Nnu Ego and the alienation of Nnaife.

Chapter IV: Freedom within Enslavement and Confinement

Notes:

¹ Chodorow sees female identity as less fixed and more flexible than male individuality, “both in its primary core and the entire maturation complex developed from this core. These traits have far-reaching consequences for the distinctive nature of writing by women.” (Chodorow, 1978 in Gordiner, 1981: 353)

² Another female character in this novel, Mama Abby, represents the rich elite epitomizing neo-colonialism in the novel. She is the fruit of the mixture of two cultures, European plus African. She is rich and spends all her money on the education of her son.

³ There is a dissociation of the sensibility of Oshia, being a colonial child, from his natural and social environment, which could be called colonial alienation. “*The alienation became reinforced in the teaching of history, geography, music, where bourgeois Europe was always the centre of the universe*” (Ngugi, 2000 : 439).

⁴ “*It was the bourgeois-intellectual elite, who came out with the négritude philosophy, the notion of the African personality and the drive to reassert the positive elements of African tradition which found expression in Camara Laye’s The African Child and Achebe’s two novels, Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God*” (Ngara, 1985: 32).

⁵ “*This novel, which still remains Emecheta’s best, is a powerful protest against the oppression of women. It is also an indictment of those students abroad who exhibit brazen insensitivity towards their families in the villages, a theme that Aidoo also explores repeatedly*” (Eko, 1986: 216).

⁶ This passage could be considered as an indictment against the Igbo male made society, a passage that could be used by radical feminists to consider this work as a feminist writing. Yet, this is not the only indictment stated in this novel that’s why I would rather label it an African womanist writing.

⁷ “*En ce qui concerne notre époque, l’exemple très actuel en méditerranée des ‘mère de la patrie’ en Palestine nous montre une étroite association entre un nationalisme combattant*

et un dispositif idéologique ou la mère occupe une place emblématique, par le rôle qu'elle joue dans la multiplication, l'éducation et le sacrifice des jeunes Palestiniens à la cause nationale" (Dermenjian, Guilhaumou and Lapied , 2008 : 26). "At the present time, a similar case, in the Mediterranean countries, that may be related to the notion of motherland, is in Palestine. A close association between a resistant nationalism and an ideological device, where the mother occupies an emblematic place, through her role of multiplication, of education, and through the sacrifice of young palestiniens for the nation, may be made" (my translation).

⁸ "Tout texte se situe à la jonction de plusieurs textes dont il est à la fois la relecture, l'accentuation, la condensation, le déplacement et la profondeur" (Sollers in Achour and Bekkat, 2002 : 102). "Every text is situated at the junction of many texts of which it represents their rereading, accentuation, condensation, shifting and depth all at once" (my translation).

⁹ This might be considered as a glance to Nationalism or to the Inherent Ideology used by the writer.

¹⁰ "For Ngugi, a foreign language cannot correctly reflect the historical consciousness of a people...to choose a language is to choose a world" (Ngara, 1985: 41).

¹¹ About the oppressed, Freire wrote: "The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity" (Ibid, 2000: 45).

¹² "Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another ... the behaviour of the oppressed is a prescribed behaviour, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor. The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility" (Freire, 2000: 47).

¹³ The object produced from the worker's labour stands opposed to it, as a power independent from its producer. The product of labour is embodied in an object and turned into a physical thing, like Nnaife services to the Meers, this product is an objectification of labour. This product is represented by the services of Nnaife the washer man. "*Capitalism transforms man's labour into a commodity to be bought on the market and used against the worker...Man's labour produces commodities which are the direct result of human activity and participation; they should not be regarded as alien objects*" (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1971: 212-3).

¹⁴ King's theory states that African represents the origin of humanity and that white race was originally a depigmented black African race and racism could be explained as the white men's fear and ignorance of his blackness, "*choosing to run from the ancestral black core.*"(King in Dove, 1998: 526)

¹⁵Through such male characterization the hints at the roots of racism as approached in a Womanist ideology.

¹⁶ "*Lack of freedom breeds fear of freedom, and that in turn breeds intolerance, violence and repression*" (Dolan, 1971: 1093).

¹⁷ For the oppressor, to be is to have. For the oppressed, to be is not to resemble the oppressor, but to be under him (Freire, 2000: 65). This could be applied to the diagram of master-slave relationships.

¹⁸ "*Consciousness denotes awareness. Thus, to be conscious is to attain a state of awareness. Given that 'the locus of consciousness [is] the psyche,' Consciousness raising should re-educate and restructure the psyche towards a growing awareness*" (Okereke, 1997: 28).

¹⁹ "...what Lukacs called ironic disillusion. Tragically, or sometimes comically blocked protagonists are brusquely and often rudely awakened by the novel's action to the discrepancy between their illusory expectations and the social realities" (Said, 1994: 226).

²⁰ “Nationalism thus has the effect of raising the consciousness of subject people; it gradually opens the spiritual eyes of the oppressed so that they can begin to see that it is not right for a foreign power to subjugate them, and as they awaken to this new reality they also begin to reject the ideology of the ruling colonialists and to appreciate their own cultural values”(Ngara, 1985: 26).

²¹ Oshia epitomising the African intellectual elite needed to be educated first by the oppressor or the British colonialism to acquire pedagogy. He is on his way of liberation. This elite would transform the situation of oppression offering a pedagogy of liberation (Freire, 2000: 54).

²² Much has been written by historians and anthropologists within the last decade or two about the loss of political and religious power by women in African societies from the colonial period to the modern period after political independence was achieved by African states. Mba (1982) and Amadiume (1987) could be good illustrations of such writings (Ezeigbo, 1990: 149).

²³ Nor could it be applied on Nnaife letting his wife survive alone since as Nnaemeka said in his article: “*I wonder how effectively he could have romanced and supported his wife from a trench in Burma or wherever they sent him to fight a war he and his people did not start*” (Ibid, 1995: 89)

²⁴ This is a reference to the illusion of senses, the relation to an optical illusion, the moon illusion, it is hinted at through Nnu Ego’s lunatic behaviour. The moon illusion is a phenomenon whereby the zenith moon would appear larger than the horizon moon to an observer lying supine. This phenomenon had been explained through size constancy which is the fact that “*the apparent size of an object depends not only on the size of the retinal image or visual angle but on the distance as well*” (Kaufman and Rock, 1962: 953). In our use of illusion we are more concerned with its definition as related to the desire rather than to the sense.

²⁵ This is another trait of her Africaness.

²⁶ This structure is nothing but a sample of the Arab state “*undemocratic and repressive*” structure. (Moore, 2011: 3)

²⁷ “*Jordanian society in particular, can be classified as “neo-patriarchal”, where power relationships are not only influenced by gender, but also, by class, clan and proximity to the regime. Such relations are based on the subordination of the disadvantaged and the disfranchised.*” (Sharabi in Faqir, 2001: 67)

²⁸ About this Faqir explains that when the Arab man felt insecure after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, he tried to control his surrounding and he started by his family. “*Since the invasion of Iraq [in 2003], Arab women have lost many of the gains made earlier*” (Moore, 2011, 4)

²⁹ The treatment administered to both female characters by the British doctor aims at silencing them and breaking their will. “*Outspoken independent women were sometimes prescribed this treatment and doctors documented that they reacted badly [...] Women such as author Virginia Woolf and activist/writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman were two such cases [...] it] reinforced the archaic notion that women should submit without questioning to male authority in the name of health.*” (Mitchel in Woods, 2012: 37)

³⁰ In all her literary work Faqir represents the idea of prison. A major part of *Nisanit* was inspired from her father’s experience. She imagined that space because when she was young her mother did not allow her to visit her father in prison in 1969. Prison “*became part of [her] mental landscape.*” (Moore, 2011: 8)

³¹ The “*unhomeliness*” experienced by the writer during the Golf War when she was in exile is represented through the female characters of *Pillars*. “[...] *spaces which ‘enclose’ these women have the alienating effect of “unhomeliness”.*” (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 284)

³² In the madhouse, Um Saad asks constantly questions about her identity. This in a close relationship with exile which is compared by Faqir to confinement. In her autobiographical

essay she feels lost in exile. She lived moments that Bhabha calls the “unhomely” (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 274). She herself asks these questions that were voiced by Um Saad in the novel: “*Who am I? where do I belong? Where is my fatherland? To whom should I tell my tales?*” (Faqir, 1998: 54) Faqir compares exile to a “*mental hospital*” (Ibid: 59)

³³ Faqir is considered by Suyoufie as a feminist whose ideology is close to the Western Feminism at its early phase focusing on women’s rights to speak. Yet in such a criticism the orientalist mummifying image of the Arab woman is ignored. It is against this representation that Faqir is claiming freedom for her silenced women.

³⁴ It is Maha’s and Um Saad’s madness that makes the articulation of their narrative possible. Madness used as a pre-text for these female characters to liberate themselves is not something new. Many stances are utilized by Faqir as hints at different forms of militancy borrowed from western feminists. For example, Madness as a pre-text for narrative is in fact a western feminist poetics that we can find in Pillars that we also find in Charlotte Perkin’s Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*. (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 282)

³⁵ Faqir’s novel could also be read as a critique on the practice of internment invented by the Classical Age. It could be considered as an indictment against the moral constraints of madness that is represented by confinement.

³⁶ For Foucault, in the nineteenth century, the mad were confined after being homogeneously mixed with other sorts of deviants like prostitutes, free-thinkers, vagabonds, etc. who deviates from the ideal reason of that time. For Foucault “*the mad, being idle, were a threat to the stability of a bourgeois society in which labor was the central value. Further, Foucault held that, within the category of unreason, the mad were distinctive for their animality, which put them in radical opposition to the human domain of reason [...] confinement was an economic policy meant to deal with problems of poverty, particular begging and unemployment.*” (Cutting, 2012: 53-4)

³⁷ Probably inspired from the most widely spread version of the Nights we may consider Maha’s narrative as an act of procreation. In Heinz and Sofia Grotzfeld’s version of the

Nights, telling stories and giving birth are two parallel acts of procreation present in the story of Scheherazade. According to this version, which is identical to Ibn-Nadīm's summary (an Arabic sources of the tenth century), the king spares Scheherazade's life because at the end of the storytelling cycle she gives birth to three sons. (Enderwitz, 2004: 190) We can consider both maha's telling of her story and Nnu ego's act of giving birth as two acts of procreation and of liberation at the same time reflected by both writers.

³⁸ Through the counter-discourse of Maha is manifesting subjectivity and constructing her identity. Yet one cannot speak about identity without the distinction of many elements representing othering or alterity. The "Other" can be represented under different facets, human or non human. For example, in the novel of Faqir, Maha's others are human: the native man (her father, brother, the storyteller who is half Arab), the colonizer (her brother, the storyteller who is considered as a foreigner, the british doctor, Samir Pasha), Maha's other is also non human like the asylum, the new house of her husband where she feels "unhomeliness". For Um Saad, the human other is: native man (her father and husband), the colonizer (the British doctor), and the non human other is represented by the asylum. In *The joys*, Nnu Ego's human other is the native man (her husband), the colonizer (the Meers), whereas the non human other is the city of Lagos representing the "unhomely".

³⁹ To express alienation Faqir produces a fractured narrative, with no linearity, shifting back and fourth in place and time in order to express alienation. "She favours 'fracturing the narrative in order to create something,'" as she states in her interview with Claire Chambers: "*more tragic and more beautiful than the whole, and perhaps it will capture a larger chunk of the truth if it's told from different perspective. [...] The source of this may be The Arabian Nights, because it contains a changing narrative: you have one story, within a story, within a story, within a story. You don't have a resolution quickly, and perhaps I took something from that.*"(Chambers in Bibizadeh, 2012: 3)

⁴⁰ The problem exposed by Said's paradigm of Orientalism is mainly the production in and for the West. The problem is that Orientalism draws its power from the ability to construct "*the very object it speaks about and from its power to produce a regime of truth about the other and thereby establish the identity and the power of the subject that speaks about it.*" (Abu Lughod, 2001: 105)

⁴¹ “Both Persian and Arabic in origin, *The Nights* was translated into French, which edition influenced later seminal Arabic translation [...] And like [*Pillars of Salt*], it too is a “cultural amphibian”, an organic, growing, metamorphic, “impure”, “inauthentic”, travelling entity, one of “cross cultural history and identity which impels it beyond the confines of any single representation of its identity and which makes it relevant as the only piece of literature which inhabits the nexus of Eastern history and Western being”(Sallis, 1999: 5)” (Abdo, 2009: 249)

⁴² Miriam Cooke had identified in the works of many Arab women writers an aspect that she labelled
“‘multiple Criticism’ in which authors critique simultaneously ‘the global system, their own political regimes, and religious and family contexts and the patriarchal vein that runs through them all and still remain wary of others’ desires to coopt their struggle’ ” (Cooke in Abdo 2009: 242)

⁴³ Amin Malak Observes about Arab and Muslim women’s writing that: “*The works of almost all Arab and Muslim women writers in English reveal an unequivocal sense of affiliation with their Islamic culture, while at the same time condemning and combating the abusive excesses of patriarchy when it appropriates and exploits the religious argument to preserve its own spiritual and material hegemony*” (Malak in Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 282).

⁴⁴ The emphasis put on the fallacy of the storyteller’s religious references shows Faqir’s indictment against the male misinterpretation of Islam. In her autobiographical essay, Faqir explains that among the reasons that push Scheherazade to flee her nation is the distortions of the “*interpretation of the hadith and the Qu’ran*” (Faqir in Suyoufie, 2008: 235)

⁴⁵ The use of English by Faqir could be regarded as a way to enfranchise her text and avoid censorship. Like the scene describing the storyteller’s voyeurism through the secret gaze of a sexual intercourse between Maha and Harb (see in the novel). As Amin Malak observes: “using hybridized English allows “*the conscious [womanist] narrative voice to infiltrate taboo terrain, both sexual and political, that might be inaccessible when handled in*

Arabic. Removed emotionally and culturally from the local scene, the English language accords a liberating medium to the author to broach and delve into issues such as feminine sexuality, politics of power and gender [...]. English here accords a liberating lexical storehouse and semantic sanctuary.” (Malak in Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 309)

⁴⁶ Against which scholars like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Ashis Nnady struggle through their debates around subaltern agency and by doing so, contribute to Edward Said’s understanding of “*the humanistic traps laid by systems such as Orientalism.*”(Said in Alessandrini, 2014: 62)

⁴⁷ Through our analogous Um Saad and Duniyâzâd as sisters to Maha and Scheherazad we can add Hajila as a sister to Isma in Assia Djebar’s *Ombre Sultane* (1987) translated as *A sister to Scheherazade*. Despite her modern way of life and western education, Isma could not achieve freedom as lol as Hajila remains uneducated and victim of traditional patriarchy where she experiences the life of a beaten wife.

⁴⁸ About the semi-closure of the novel by the storyteller the feminist reading of Suyoufie joins Malti-Douglas’s reading about the ending of *The Nights*. According to the storyteller’s version, Maha marries her coloniser (crusader) as an act of welcoming the “Other”. Like Scheherazade, in Malti-Douglas view, “Maha capitulates to the attractions of the body: “Corporeality is the final word, as Shahrazâd relinquishes her role of narrator for that of the perfect woman: mother and lover.”(Malti-Douglas in Suyoufie, 2008: 237) Further to this, Souyoufie adds that this ending is also a reference to Faqir’s use of English. Like Maha who succeeds to seduce the Foreign King, Faqir succeeds to adapt English to her culture and seduce the English reader. (Ibid, 237)

⁴⁹ In their novels *Beloved* and *Everyday Use*.

⁵⁰ Faqir could not imagine a happy ending in her novels *Nisanit*, *Pillars of Salt* or *My Name is Salma* because the issues raised in them are ongoing problems like the Palestinian tragedy, the subordination of Arab women, the mis-representation of the Arab world in medias or honour crimes.

⁵¹ The storyteller is deemed to epitomize Lawrence of Arabia, Abdo states about this: “*He is a Lawrence of Arabia, an historical figure to whom Fadia Faqir returns time and again in interviews and articles (the title of her book, as well as alluding to the desert patriarchalism of biblical story of Lot’s wife, is itself a clear reference to his autobiography, The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, hence can be seen as an Arabist and womanist response to it) as the epitome of western and male representation of the Arab world.*” (Interview in JO in Abdo, 2009: 244)

⁵² The title of the novel is a clear reference to religious (Biblical and Qur’anic) connotations. It “evokes the punishment meted upon women who dare(d) to look back.”(Suyoufie, 2008: 236) Pillars, 85. In Genesis 19:17 and 19:24-26, we find the following account of the punishment of Lot’s People: “Escape for thy life,” the Angel said, “look not behind thee, neither stay thou in the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed [...] Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Upon Gomorrah brimstones and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But this [Lot’s] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” (Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 283) Lot’s people are mentioned several times in the Qu’ran as well: the Sura of The Heights (verse 80), the Sura of Hud (verse 77), the Sura of The Poet (Verse 160), and the Sura of The Ants (verse 54).

⁵³ The word “Joy” was not accepted for the title in most European countries, it is known there as “*The Blessings Of Motherhood*”. The Germans called their edition “Nnuego”, since, they told Emecheta, they have no irony in their language (Emecheta, 1994: 227).

⁵⁴ In this case “*irony which would not only be a form of revenge... but would also allow ... the African writer [using English] to distance himself with regard to the language by inverting it, destroying it, and presenting new structures such that the [English] reader would become a stranger in his own language.*” (Harlow, 1986: xviii)

⁵⁵ “*En simplifiant à l’extrême, ou le roman traduit son titre, le sature, le décode et l’efface ou il le réinscrit dans la pluralité d’un texte et brouille le code publicitaire en accentuant la fonction poétique latente du titre, transformant l’information et le signe en valeur,*

l'énoncé dénotatif en foyer connotatif [...] Le titre résume et assume le roman, et en oriente la lecture" (Duchet in Achour and Bekkat, 2002 : 74). "By extreme simplification, either the novel traduces its title, saturates it, decodes it and erases it or it reinscribes it in the plurality of a text and blurs the advertising code by accentuating the latent poetic function of the title, transforming the information and the sign into a value, the denotative utterance into a connotative focus [...] the title sums up and assumes the novel, and orientates its reading" (my translation).

⁵⁶ There is dialogism between *Efuru* and *The Joys of Motherhood*, as if the novel under study was a response or a complementary to Nwapa's *Efuru*. "L'orientation dialogique est, bien entendu, un phénomène caractéristique de tout discours. C'est la visée naturelle de tout discours vivant. Le discours rencontre le discours d'autrui sur tous les chemins qui mènent vers son objet, et il ne peut ne pas entrer avec lui dans une interaction vive et intense" (Todorov, 1981: 98). "The dialogic orientation is, of course, a characteristic phenomenon in every discourse. It is the natural target of every vivid discourse. The discourse meets some one else's discourse in all the ways leading to its object, and it cannot avoid the happening of a vivid and intense interaction" (my translation).

⁵⁷ It is a type of trans-textual relation that determines the generic status of a text. It is a relationship completely dumb in the sense that the writer used it as an indication through the title or the subtitle in the novel (Achour and Bekkat, 2002: 111).

⁵⁸ The technique of focalization used by the writer in this novel could remind us of Djébar's *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* where she invites the reader to re-view and re-read Delacroix's painting of the same name. The gaze of the storyteller is comparable to le regard volé of Delacroix representing North African women.

⁵⁹The novel could be approached in metafictional terms. The Storyteller's narrative could represent the reading of an audience that misunderstands women literary writing and thus misinterprets Maha's version of the story (Maha being the alter ego of Faqir) regarding it as a blasphemy and also an audience that rejects the use of English and thus considers it as an anti colonialist act.

⁶⁰ Orientalist novels use the “*well known tropes of orientalist fantasy and seduction in order to narrate oriental tales of women in need of rescue from malicious despots.*” (Valassopoulos, 2007: 140) In her novel, through the narrative technique used, Faqir is criticising those writers who consider the exotic as something fixed and there for taking rather than a discursive construct of effect. (Valassopoulos, 2007: 140) Through a post-colonial writing and a use of tools of orientalist discourse, Faqir seeks to highlight the representation of the Orient in general and that of the Arab woman in particular by the prominent orientalist discourse of the past and of the present targeting to free this mummified image.

⁶¹ “...as related to Orientalist descriptions of the Islamic world, as well as to Europe’s special ways of representing the Caribbean islands, Ireland, and the Far East. What are striking in these discourses are the rhetorical figures one keeps encountering in their descriptions of the “mysterious East,” as well as the stereotype about “the African mind,” the notion about bringing civilization to primitive or barbaric peoples, the disturbingly familiar ideas about flogging or death or extended punishment being required when “they” misbehaved or became rebellious, because “they” mainly understood force or violence best; “they” were not like “us,” and for that reason deserved to be ruled.” (Said, 1993: 9)

⁶² About the storyteller Faqir says: “*I see the storyteller as an Orientalist in cahoots with both the colonial forces and indigenous patriarchy – the three work hand-in-hand. That’s what the women are trying to resist through their simple narrative.*” (Moore, 2011: 5)

⁶³ Our reading of Faqir’s novel joins Said when he writes that “*Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient.*” (Ibid, 2003: 90)

⁶⁴ “*Which sets two voices in opposition to one another and allows the author to tell two contrasting stories.*” (Banita in Bibizadeh, 2012: 2)

⁶⁵ “*Yes, women can take liberties with language [...] have had to interpret, manipulate, and modify language, have had to transgress its rigidity, in order to secure ourselves a*

forum of expression, of representation. [...] The hegemonic, dominant discourse keeps us limber, increases our flexibility through the intense linguistic manoeuvres we undertake to make it relate to our experiences as women. It is all the more so when that dominant discourse is twice removed from us, as foreign and colonizing.” (Elia, 2002: 192 in Abdo, 2009: 137)

⁶⁶ In the mental hospital Maha and Um Saad transcend suffering by sublimating it into a form of self expression, through the act of telling their stories just as the act of writing that helps Faqir transcend the suffering of exile.

⁶⁷ John Erickson identifies this form of ““*multiple critique*” in the works of many Muslim writers as “*écriture métissée*,” a third narrative space created by the use of the colonizer’s language. (Abdo, 2009: 243)

⁶⁸ To classify *Pillars* under feminist writing would be inappropriate for its author. In her autobiographical essay and interview Faqir states that this very novel was a response to the western media mis-representation of the Arab world during and after the Gulf war. Further to this, she also states that her perception of Islam has changed from 9/11 and that she considers herself as a secular Muslim because Islam is becoming a culture and not religion. From these revelations we understand that she condemns the Western hegemony that continues ravaging the image of the Arab Muslim Woman and we deduce that to attribute a feminist vision and intervention to this writer in a context of continuing western hegemony is accusing her of perpetuating an Orientalist discourse. Faqir is indicting the static, negative and simplistic image of the Arab Muslim woman represented by orientalists and she does it using the Arab Womanist ideology. She rewrites the orientalist dogma of the Arab woman’s freedom. “*Tradition and Modernity. Harems and Freedom. Veiling and Unveiling. These are the familiar terms by which the East has long been apprehended (devalued) and the West has constructed itself as superior. These are some of what Said calls the dogmas of Orientalism, and they are the very terms that feminist scholars ... brilliantly (call) into question.*” (Abu-Lughod, 2001: 108)

⁶⁹ “*Shahrazad then speaks. But woman’s voice is more than a psychological faculty. It is the narrative instrument that permits her to be a literary medium, to vie with the male in*

the process of textual creation. To control the narrative process, however, is not small task.” (Malti-Douglas in Gauch, 2007: ix)

⁷⁰ This term is used to refer to the possible reason why the same story is perceived and narrated differently. It designates *“both the interpretative nature of perception and one’s understanding something in “frames” of previous experience.”*(Jahn, 2007: 101)

⁷¹ The narratology used by Faqir is Womanist and not Feminist because despite the fact that the storyteller’s narrative is not reliable, she gives a voice to a male character in her literary writing. She challenges gender norms through the focalization she uses. She rewrites the orientalist representation uttered by the storyteller through Maha’s voice. The combination of the ideological and the narratological manipulation engenders what we may refer to as womanist narratology.

⁷²The absence of linearity in her narrative is also present in her novel *My Name is Salma*. As in *Pillars*’ narrative there is a jumping between the past and the present.

⁷³ Faqir could be considered as a modernist writer and her novel a figural text since *“Modernists discovered that the best way to achieve directness was to exclude the traditional mediator, i.e., the narrator... once exposition, comment, and narratorial intervention are dispensed with the interest of directness, the figural text appears to be determined by the filtering and colouring devices of the reflector’s mind, while the reader, seeing the storyworld through the reflector’s eyes, becomes a witness rather than the narrator’s communicative addressee.”*(Jahn, 2007: 96) *Pillars* may also be approached from a post-modern perspective: *“The wider significance of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological “limits” of ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices -- women, the colonized, minority group.”* (Bhabha in Suyoufie and Hammad, 2009: 281)

⁷⁴ The function of such informants is to *“Authentifier la réalité du référent, à enraciner la fiction dans le réel : c’est un opérateur réaliste, et à ce titre, il possède une fonctionnalité incontestable, non au niveau de l’histoire mais au niveau du discours”* (Barthes, 1966 : 10). *“To authenticate the reality of the referent, to root the fiction in the real : it is a*

realistic operator, as such, it processes an incontestable functionality, not at the level of the story but at the level of the discourse” (my translation).

⁷⁵ We join Ghandi’s conception that freedom is invisible as used in the third chapter, and add that in this novel both freedom and enslavement are invisible. This is what creates the illusion.

⁷⁶ “*L’espace est un des opérateurs par lesquels s’instaure l’action [...] La transgression génératrice n’existe qu’en fonction de la nature du lieu et de sa place dans un système locatif qui associe des marques géographiques et des marques sociale.*” (Mitterand, 1980 : 201). “*Space is among the operators through which the action is introduced [...] The generating transgression exists only in function of the nature of space and its place in a locating system that associates geographical and social marks*”(my translation).

⁷⁷ “*The temporal organization of narrative concerns the actual presentation of the events, whereas the temporal dimension of the story referred to the abstract and chronological sequence constructed by interpreters on the narrative.*” (Herman and Vervaeck, 2007: 223)

⁷⁸ In Algeria during the French occupation, after having understood that women were the pivot of their society, the colonizer tried to alter women’s situation, to free them from their status in order to achieve destruction and to reach the Algerian man. Algerian feminists fought and struggled to liberate the Algerian woman from the “barbaric” Algeria man constituted part and parcel of the colonising mission, sometimes including education where women were used to reach men to destroy the Algerian culture (Fanon, 1980: 19).

⁷⁹ This phenomenon “*must be understood as the organic impossibility of a culture to modify anyone of its customs without at the same time re-evaluating its deepest values, its most stable models.*” (Fanon, 1980: 19) this re-evaluation reaches sometimes even the oppressed psychological balance.

Conclusion

To use the colonizers' language as a means of expression in literary works could be considered as a betrayal of one's mother tongue. In the case of the colonized countries in Africa and the Arab world, the colonizers educated the colonized people to control them better, to condition them and make them conform to their norms. Education was a "gentle" psychological violence replacing the "brutal" physical one (Ngugi, 2005: 147). Yet, this education was used by the most intelligent among the oppressed as a weapon to liberate themselves from this control. It helped non native writers in English of the colonised countries in Africa such as Buchi Emecheta and in the Middle East like Fadia Faqir to voice their suffering to the world through literature. In its ability to liberate, literature must proceed from the oppressed people's consciousness (Metcalf, 1989: 16).

This use of the colonial language by an African or an Arab writers was a means to reach more than the writer's ethnic group. To denounce the injustice lived by his or her people in the colonial or post colonial period, the African or the Arab writer must write in a language widely spoken across and beyond the African continent. Because the English language is such a malleable tool, Writers such as Emecheta and Faqir, have successfully used it to reject western imperialist ideology and to depict their cultures in a favourable light (Ngara, 1985: 44).

These writers are in the best position to write about their people, since they are very close to the subject of their representations. They function as a conscience (Soyinka, 1968: 20). This is the case for women writers writing about women. As Simone de Beauvoir has argued in a lecture on women and writing, the woman writer is in a marginal and a privileged position at the same time. Her post on the side-line of the battle offers her the best position to describe it (Moi, 1987: 27).

In both novels *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Pillars of Salt*, English as the language used by Emecheta and Faqir represents a double edged weapon. It is a protector and a means of liberation but at the same time it stigmatizes these writers as traitors of their mother tongue. Emecheta was considered, by critics, as an anglophile who had chosen to live in and for England. (Ojo-Ade, 1991: 21)

Faqir writes in the colonizer's language from exile to escape the confinement that the country of origin together with the host country represent. Writing literature is the best

means to liberate her thoughts and tongue without prejudice. “Arabized” English as used by Faqir in writing her fiction works, affords a space of expression that neither “patriarchal” Arabic nor “colonial” English can afford. Djébar considered writing in the colonizer’s language as an act from a distanced writing arm “*pointed at her like a cannon, pointed away from her like a shield, both protects her from self-pillage and blunders her.*” (Tageldin, 2009: 469)

For these women writers, writing in a situation of oppression and chaos could be taken as a will to intervene in the situation and make a difference. It is this literature of “non-comfort” that teaches one about the oppressions experienced by women in colonized countries. Emecheta’s and Faqir’s literature written in English represents a negotiated space which is ushered by the freedom of *kenosis* (undoing) and *askesis* (attaining independence). (Renza in Suyoufie, 2008: 218)

Like many post-colonial women writers, emecheta and Faqir, write to speak for themselves and their people. Writing African or Arabo-Islamic womanism in their production is a way to negate the existing trend and avoid the influence of both, androcentric and colonial hegemonies. They avoid using feminism, being a heritage of the colonial hegemony. Their ideologies represent strategy to increase the ratios of *kenosis* and *askesis*.

This research work intends to bring to the fore this very double faced means used by both women writers to negotiate their space creating a new one within conflated oppressions, that of race and gender as epitomized by male and female characters and that of colonial and native languages represented through a linguistic and a narratological strategy highlighting the authors’ African and Arabo-Islamic ideologies.

In a piece of African or Arab literature written by a male writer, where he exposes the confrontation between the colonized people and their colonizer, generally, women are peripheral or do not exist at all. If they exist, women’s portrayal in such writings represents only a slice of “their reality”. In *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Pillars of Salt*, Emecheta and Faqir put women at the centre. From these novels, one may know a female point of view through female characters about the histories of both the colonized and the colonizer. It is through such a female writing, that the challenge of speech, which had been governed by men for a long time, is taken up (Cixous, 2000: 165).

To scrutinize women and men's behaviour and reaction to British colonialism during the colonial period within a colonial setting these novels were chosen. The aim of this work is to give a post colonial reading different from a feminist one, of their literary writings.

Both novels unveil a critical consciousness created through literature "*freed from colonialism and forewarned against any attempt at mystification or glorification.*" (Fanon in Alessandrini, 2014: 73) This critical consciousness is necessary at times when the legacy and practices of colonialism have not ended yet.

It is easy to bring an ethical reading to the texts of Emecheta and Faqir for an African and an Arab woman reader. In the sense that theorists like Wayne Booth and Adam Newton explain it, as a reading that "*does justice to the appeal produced by the text.*" (Herman and Verweack, 2007: 219) Either by respecting what is proposed by the text following its ideology or deviating from it to respond to its appeal, in both cases what comes out through a reading informed by an African, Arab and Muslim woman reader's reasoning, is the African and the Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology.

Despite the fact that salient distinctions exist among the postcolonial cultures to which Emecheta and Faqir belong, many common points are noticed in their postcolonial discourse. Culture, style of writing, mother's language cannot prevent from having the same ideology emanating from a common experience that of colonial and patriarchal oppressions. The oppressed population negotiates its space using the same tool, that of traditional materials.

Yet, by using womanism Fadia Faqir shares the same concerns and breathes the same atmosphere and spirit as Buchi Emecheta. The contribution of women's writing using this ideology serves both colonized men and women in their liberation. When womanism is used, be it African or Arabo- Islamic, the woman writer steps "*outside [her] gender, outside any gender.*" (Bakr, 1998:34) In their literary productions both authors are humanizing literature with 'their' own strategies though using the former colonizer's language.

Post-colonial literature is a subversive literary production. The African and Arabo-Islamic womanist ideology is a tool to produce this literature. African and Arabo-Islamic womanism becomes a counter-discourse produced theory applied in a postcolonial text that is written, not as a continuation of a hegemonic practice or as a descent from a “mainstream literature,” but as a counter-discourse. (Tiffin, 2003: 96)

However, the use of some western tools (concepts, theories, and ideologies like Foucault’s definition of madness or Genette’s focalization) to analyze post-colonial literature could be found in this work. It may be regarded, notably by neo-traditionalists, as foreign and irrelevant like the use of the colonizer’s language by these authors. Yet one cannot deviate from the use of these tools for a thorough post-colonial approach. We can only adapt it taking into consideration our context.

Despite the use of English by writers like Emecheta and Faqir in their literary texts and in spite of the existence of western tools to study these texts; the most efficient, reliable and pervasive theory that helps us hear the voice for the liberation of the colonized women as expressed by these authors remains a “non western” theory: African womanism in Emecheta’s novel and Arabo-Islamic womanism in Faqir’s novel.

It is deduced from this comparative analysis of both novels that the problems of Arab and Igbo women are only a part of a larger picture where Arab and Igbo men are as oppressed as Arab and Igbo women, where social forces (patriarchal and colonial) played havoc with the lives of both men and women. This study stands as a literary intervention where possible causes are explored and possible effects are exposed.

It is deduced from the second chapter that, in *The Joys of Motherhood*, the Igbo woman is subjected to a particular pattern of behaviour and her primary identity is constructed from this pattern, where procreation is at the centre of her interests. She is brought up in a traditional environment where her capacity to procreate determines her position in the community. This position is controlled through the indigenous patriarchy representing “unhomeliness”. Motherhood represents freedom and respect for the Igbo woman in this “unhomeliness”. She suffers a lot from these traditional standards, but has the role of a patriarchal agent to transmit and perpetuate them. If she does not suit the norms, she is ejected. It is in her role of a mother that the female protagonist is respected

and considered as a “complete” woman in her traditional environment. Her social position is counterbalanced by the image of a strong, healthy, wealthy and courageous father, husband or son. This male image engenders and justifies at the same time the patriarchal system in the Igbo community.

In *Pillars of Salt*, Arab women as epitomized by female characters construct their primary identity within an “unhomely” environment shaped by a patriarchal system. They learn to negotiate their space perpetuating oppressing values. However, within this traditional environment the Arab man is portrayed positively.

The authors’ womanist ideology, be it African or Arabo-Islamic, is expressed in their use of tradition by their female characters as a means to negotiate their space, and this idea of recycling tradition itself represents a mode of resistance. “*However, between the sublimations of askesis and the rupturing discontinuities of kenosis, the liberating act of appropriating tradition itself remains intriguing—it is a sort of loving with a vengeance.*” (Suyoufie, 2008: 248)

Many narrative elements in *Pillars of Salt* reflect an appropriation of the traditional material of *The Nights* such as storytelling. Storytelling is used as “*a subversive strategy of self-empowerment.*” (Suyoufie, 2008, 216) Another empowering element is the linguistic strategy used by both authors.

In this chapter examples of some linguistic devices and plot structure are used, that underline the writers’ African and Arab identity through their use of English. They also claim this identity through their description of setting, local custom and beliefs. Their aim is, probably, to fill a cultural canvas and to show that their societies have a philosophy of great depth, value and beauty (Ogundele, 2002: 134). This use of English to suit their literary expression could be considered as a culture of retaliation or that of shock (Taoua, 2001: 196) rather than as a betrayal to the writer’s native language and culture.

Actually, the language used by these authors is a variety of English. It is a “nativized” or a “re-territorialized” English. They are producing neither African or Arab literature nor afro-European (as stated by Ngugi) or Arabo-European literature. Their literary productions belong to postcolonial literature, and as Achebe argues, one cannot

deny the existence of such a literature in the language of the former colonizer because “those who reject postcolonial literature in the former colonial languages should therefore also reject postcolonial nation-states.” (Achebe in Donaley, 2000: 35) English language in the case of postcolonial literature is writing a resistance that “talks back” to the English colonizer in no other language than English.

The linguistic strategy used by these authors renders their texts hybrid addressing both audiences (English and native) by creating a third language and space through which the author criticizes both cultures. Through this process they consciously alienate English-speaking readers from their own language and estrange Igbo from the Arabic-speaking readers. In such use of the English language by writers like Emecheta and Faqir together with their womanist ideology English is writing “against itself.” (Cariello, 2009: 323)

In the third chapter, it was observed through the female protagonist of *The Joys of Motherhood* that the Igbo woman feels threatened by the modern way of life she faces in a colonial setting during the colonial period. Through her traditional role of mother, she tries to resist the foreign intrusion. This intrusion is reflected through male characters’ changes in behaviour in a colonial setting where their lust for money blinds them and replaces their freedom. It influences even Igbo women’s relationship with their men. However pleasant or sorrowful, the Igbo woman’s traditional role of mother seems to be the only issue in order to exist in an “unhomely” colonial setting and western temporality. She uses the same issue to look for respect and negotiate her space in both settings i.e. the traditional and the modern one.

It may be deduced from the second and third chapters that *The Joys of Motherhood* is written in the critical realist mode in terms of aesthetic ideology. When one sees how the African past is sentimentalized and romanticized through Ona and Agbadi, we may argue that realism in this case is coloured by idealism.

In *Pillars of Salt*, male characters are described negatively in the colonial city of Amman. This portrayal expresses Faqir’s indictment against patriarchy and colonialism. It has been demonstrated that Faqir’s womanism is, not only, a double criticism of race and gender but also a multiple criticism including the religious aspect. On the one hand, Islam is misunderstood and misinterpreted by the Arab man, and on the other, misrepresented

and demonized by the utterances of the foreign narrator, the storyteller, representing the western gaze.

There are defined borders not to transgress for Arab women writers. They are prohibited from discussions of the taboo subjects of sex and religion. (Faqir, 1998: 52) Faqir's novel is challenging men of religion who consider Arab women's writing as an act of subversion.

Yet, one cannot make of the western feminist movement an ally to the Arab Muslim woman writer because a western feminist who is engaged in the representation of the Arab Muslim woman wields a form of power, a power of interpretation. This ideology accuses the religion of Islam of all the miseries happening or that might happen to the Arab Muslim woman. Western feminists have tried to adapt their ideology to other monotheist religions but never to Islam. (Lazreg, 1988: 92) Feminist studies and Orientalism have "*an awkward relationship*" (Abu Lughod, 2001: 101). A feminist writer cannot write about the Middle Eastern woman without falling under the orientalist representation, that is why Faqir could not be considered as a feminist writer.

Faqir considers that Arab women writers share a common space. There are many elements in their literary production (the use of particular narrative technique and specific themes) that distinguish them from western women's writing. This is the reason why, she thinks, that womanism is more representative of her experience as a woman belonging to an ethnic minority in her country and in the immigrant context. Her struggle is about more than patriarchy. Faqir explains that her literature is a trans-cultural literature. Her preoccupation turns around exile reflecting the conditions of "ex-patriarch". Because of her father she moved from one culture to another. This is reflected through her writing where she attempts to carve "*a small territory within the English language for 'herself'*." (Faqir, 2004: 169)

Arab Muslim women are considered by local patriarchy and perceived by the west as the upholder of cultural values. This stereotyping and fixed image is represented in *Pillars of Salt* through the narrative of an outsider narrator, the storyteller. Arab women are used and abused by the western gaze reflecting a mummified image of the Arab woman under an exotic representation. It is this vicious circle that Maha's (the focal narrator's) narrative intends to shatter. Within both discourses, the local and the global, Faqir

announces her position and her own subjectivity using this focal narrator. She is demystifying the image of the Arab woman through the juxtaposition of two narratives using traditional material.

Maha's narrative is contrasted with that of the storyteller in the novel. Yet, they share the same traditional referent, Scheherazade. The latter is reflected through both narrators in this novel. Maha uses the same means of survival as Scheherazade's to liberate her image from the storyteller's orientalist representation, to negotiate her space within a patriarchal system and androcentric hegemony, and to maintain her identity against the threat of the colonial oppression. In this case, the female protagonist adopts this traditional role to operate as a strategy to subvert existing authorities. Scheherazade's role is also reflected in the frame story of the storyteller and the imaginary and implausible stories (under myths' and legends' aspects) he narrates. This may be regarded as a way undermining the image of Scheherazade as represented in orientalist versions. It also intervenes on a linguistic level, as a recycling of the traditional narrative of *The Nights* offering a wide range of proverbs and songs.

Maha's narrative is a contestation of the relationship of power and domination emanating from the encounter between the Orient and the Occident. The juxtaposition made by Faqir of both narratives undermining the storyteller's utterances highlights the orientalist structure "*of lies or of myths*" (Said, 2003: 89).

The aim of chapters two and three is to bring to the fore the idea that the preoccupations of postcolonial female writing such as Emecheta's and Faqir's is not a purely feminist reasoning denouncing patriarchal injustice and negative traditions but rather an anti-colonial process. These authors may be considered as active actors in the anti-colonial and anti imperial struggle.

In the last chapter, the deduction from *The Joys of Motherhood's* analysis stated that the urban setting, in addition to the ways in which the female protagonist had been brought up, represents the main cause of her decline. The modern way of life that characterizes the colonial setting pushes her to reinforce her traditions unconsciously and resist through procreation, whereas it pushes Igbo men to alienation. Both ways to look for freedom in colonial Lagos, motherhood for the Igbo woman and money for the Igbo man, become just illusions since they turn to enslavement.

In *Pillars of Salt*, Faqir is empowering her female characters by giving them a voice from a confined space, a madhouse. The narrative technique used in this novel sheds light on the preoccupation of Faqir concerning the Arab woman's power to represent, speak and act *for herself* within an oppressive environment. It is a kind of testimony of the Arab woman's "voice consciousness". This aspect is relevant to the concept of the Subaltern. The linguistic strategy and the narrative technique of Faqir become a strategy of survival for her female protagonist in the novel, and for her as an Arab woman writer writing in English from exile.

Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* is a good example where madness could be considered as a "convenient and effective metaphor for portraying normal reaction to the colonial experience" (Green in Luangphinit, 2004: 59) on the one hand. It could also be considered as a pretext to speak and denounce unhomeliness women suffer in a patriarchal society such as the Arab society during and after colonialism. It is a good illustration providing an honest material through which one can gauge the socio-political crises that attend Western imperialism in different shapes, where madness is used to reflect the chaotic and oppressive consequence of colonialism.

Although confined in a madhouse both female characters of *Pillars of Salt* decide to tell their stories. The means borrowed to liberate their tongue and negotiate their space is an inherent ancestral tradition. It is inspired from the oral tradition of *The Nights*. The narrative of the focal narrator Maha shuttles back and forth between past and present, village and city, patriarchal and colonial "unhomeliness". The confusing narrative of the storytellers juxtaposed to Maha's narrative is also reference to the same Arab traditional heritage of *The Night*, but used this time to represent imperial "unhomeliness". The traditional material of storytelling participates in the construction and the deconstruction of Arab women's identities.

It is clearly reflected in this novel that the social expectations and traditions from a very early age towards the Arab woman lead this latter to denounce injustice and revolt. They become aware to which extent the social roles are polarized by gender. They feel imprisoned by the restricted roles of mother and wife. Maha and Um Saad both reject these very social roles attributed to them. They thus become the mismatched Arab woman who experiences identity crisis because she revolts against the well established identity attributed to her. Their confinement in the madhouse could be deemed a social invisibility

where both female characters remain unheard although the act of telling their stories liberates them.

Womanist writers such as Emecheta and Faqir use characters who are deemed victims of enslavement (like Nnu Ego), alienation (like Nnaife), neo-patriarchy (like Daffash) or victims of madness (like Um Saad) to denounce the psychological oppression the colonized people suffer. When the marginalized and silenced category is represented in literature, this could be seen as a cultural revolution. The discourse presented thus becomes a discourse of power challenging and threatening one that of the dominant regime

The Joys of Motherhood and *Pillars of Salt* could be considered as indictments against British colonialism which claimed to be the promoter of a new freedom in colonized countries which, in the case of male and female characters, turns into alienation, enslavement and madness.

Womanism, be it African or as coined in this analysis Arabo-Islamic, is a challenging ideology in the sense that it negotiates a space to speak about, give voice to and represent the colonized woman in a postcolonial era where the West still imposes its own conception of time, history, geography, economic structure, culture and the sense of a liberated woman.

What was intended in this work is to bring a womanist reading to these novels written in English as a way to resist feminist hegemony and its orientalist tendency about the Arab Muslim woman. African or Arabo-Islamic womanist approach could be considered as an antidote to orientalist discourses like the one represented through feminism which is considered as the norm or the standard for comparison concerning gender issues. Emecheta and Faqir use womanism to testify by their literature and denounce colonized women's oppression through a discourse different from the orientalist and imperialist one.

The appropriation of traditional material and the linguistic and narratological strategies as used by both authors to "nativize" the former colonizer's tongue and highlight the authors' ideas and beliefs are nothing but womanist strategies. It is a way to write back to patriarchal and colonial hegemonies. The quest for freedom resides in their intention to

subvert the oppressing patriarchal, colonial or post-colonial order the African and the Arab woman live in, using their traditional heritage.

From Walker's Afro-American womanism, representing enslaved Afro-American women, to Ogunyemi's African womanism representing the colonised African women to Arabo-Islamic womanism, that of the colonized and exoticized Arab women, one could speak about a transnational womanism where there is a multiple criticism of oppression that conditions the lives of women: the patriarchal next to the slave-master, colonial and orientalist hierarchy.

It would be interesting for a future literary reflection to investigate in a comparative study on the process of "unhomeliness" of a foreign language between Fatima Mernissi's autobiographical narrative *Dreams of Trespass* (1994) (written in English as a neutral choice) and Fadia Faqir's *Willows Trees Don't Weep* (2014).

Women's resistance through inherited values to colonialism in these novels is not 'specific' to the Nigerian or the Jordanian woman. The ideas evoked in it have ever since been evoked by many other African and Arab women writers. These authors' work and reflection (essays, criticism, etc) often express views that are ahead of the evolution of women, not only in their countries, but in other parts of the world, where women experience two sorts of discrimination, sexual and racial. Their artistic productions are humanizing literature.

Such women have "leading roles" in Africa and the Arab world, and it would be a fortunate duty to express their preoccupations and contribute to a trans-cultural appreciation of what remains to be done.

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Annex

Summary of *The Joys of Motherhood* 1979

The love story between Nwokosha Agbadi and Ona is a story of an important chief in Ibuza who was in love with the rebellious Ona but could not marry her. Ona's father refused to allow his daughter to get married because he had no son, and thus Ona was born to compensate that lack. She was allowed to have lovers but not to marry them. She was allowed to have children; if they were male they would belong to her father, and if they were female they would belong to her lover. Ona gave birth to a female child, Nnu Ego, from her passionate story with Agbadi and died.

Once Nnu Ego reached maturity, Agbadi decided she would marry Amatokwu, a farmer in the village of Ibuza. Yet, that union did not last. Nnu Ego's impossibility to give Amatokwu children caused the dissolution of that union. She was constantly humiliated and denigrated by Amatokwu. Her father decided to put an end to his daughter's marriage and sent her to Lagos to take Nnaife as a second husband.

In Lagos, Nnu Ego was obliged to put up with that husband her father chose for her in order to have children. She gave birth to nine children and lost two of them. These children represented her only joy in Lagos. She endured poverty, polygyny, and social exclusion but put all her hope in her children. She sacrificed her life to educate and prepare them for life in Lagos. She bore many children in the hope that they would take care of her in her old age. Yet, they were taken up with their lives in their adult age and abandoned her. She returned to her home village Ibuza, and died alone.

Summary of *Pillars of Salt* 1996

The story of *Pillars of Salt 1996* is set in Jordan during and after the British mandate. It tells the story of two Jordanian women confined in a madhouse. The narration is shared by two voices: Maha, a Bedouin woman sent to the madhouse after being harshly beaten by her brother Daffash because of her refusal to marry a second time after the death of her husband. She tells her story and that of her roommate, Um Saad (daughter of a Syrian émigré who has lived in Amman most of her life). Um Saad is a city woman whose husband marries another woman after many years of marriage. The second voice is that of the storyteller. He is a foreigner who provides us with his version of Maha's story.

Résumé

Ce travail de recherche est une étude comparative de deux romans, à savoir : *The Joys of Motherhood*, écrit en 1979 par l'écrivaine Nigériane Buchi Emecheta, et *Pillars of Salt*, écrit en 1996 par l'écrivaine Jordanienne Fadia Faqir. Il s'agit d'une lecture postcoloniale, dans laquelle les théories du « womanism » africain et arabo-islamique sont appliquées, et ce dans le but de démontrer comment l'espace des personnages féminins est négocié, à travers un héritage traditionnel, dans des sociétés patriarcales, en l'occurrence ; celles nommées: « Igbo » et « Bédouine ». En outre, il ressort, de cette étude, que ces dernières soient menacées par de profonds changements sociaux mais également par un regard orientaliste, ayant été importés par le colonisateur Anglais pour leur être imposés de force.

هذا البحث هو دراسة مقارنة بين رواية (سعادات الأمومة) للأديبة بوشي إيميشيطا و (أعمدة الملح) للأديبة فادية الفقير.

هو يهتم بدراسة شخصيات البطلات (نو إيغو)، (مهى) و (أم سعد) خلال فترة الإستعمار الإنجليزي لنيجريا و الأردن حيث أن الهدف هو الإجابة عن مجموعة من الإشكاليات المتمثلة فيما يلي :

- إبراز تأثير الإستعمار الإنجليزي على المجتمع (الإيغو) و العربي البدوي و تحديد أهم التغيرات الطارئة عليه.
- كيفية مقاومة البطلات الإستعمار الإنجليزي مع إبراز الطرق المختلفة المستعملة ضد هته التغيرات.
- إبراز كيفية تأثير طرق المقاومة المستعملة بطريقة سلبية أدت إلى إنهيار البطلات.

الفرضيات :

أعتبرت التغيرات الطارئة على كل من المجتمع (الإيغو) و البدوي مهدد للدور العائلي و الإجتماعي للبطلات. عبرت (نوايغو) عن مقاومتها ضد هته التغيرات من خلال أمومتها.

في حين أن مقاومة مهى كانت عبر تقنية الرواية بطريقة مقترضة من رواية ألف ليلة و ليلة.

الهدف المنشود من هته الطرق هو تحقيق الحرية و تخلص من عبودية الإستعمار الإنجليزي من ناحية و التمثيل المستشرق لصورة الإمراة العربية الموضحة من طرف الراوي في (أعمدة الملح) من ناحية أخرى في حين أن هذا الهدف مالبت أن إضمحل و إنقلب فتحول إلى عبودية و حبس في مصحة عقلية.

هذا النوع من الكتابات ينتمي إلى كتابة نسائية إفريقية للأديبة (إيميشيطا) و كتابة نسائية عربية إسلامية للأديبة فقير.

« Liberté entre Esclavage et Confinement dans une Etude Comparative entre The Joys of Motherhood (1979) de B. EMECHETA et Pillars of Salt (1996) de F. FAQIR »

Résumé :

Ce travail de recherche est une étude comparative de deux romans, à savoir : The Joys of Motherhood, écrit en 1979 par l'écrivaine Nigériane Buchi Emecheta, et Pillars of Salt, écrit en 1996 par l'écrivaine Jordanienne Fadia Faqir. Il s'agit d'une lecture postcoloniale, dans laquelle les théories du « womanism » africain et arabo-islamique sont appliquées, et ce dans le but de démontrer comment l'espace des personnages féminins est négocié, à travers un héritage traditionnel, dans des sociétés patriarcales, en l'occurrence ; celles nommées: « Igbo » et « Bédouine ». En outre, il ressort, de cette étude, que ces dernières soient menacées par de profonds changements sociaux mais également par un regard orientaliste, ayant été importés par le colonisateur Anglais pour leur être imposés de force.

Mots clés : « Unhomeliness », Womanism Africain, Arabo-Islamique Womanism, Tradition, Oppression, Négociation de l'Espace.

“Freedom within Enslavement and Confinement in a Comparative Analysis between B. EMECHETA’s The Joys of Motherhood (1979) and F. FAQIR’s Pillars of Salt (1996)”

Abstract :

The current research work is a comparative analysis between Buchi Emecheta’s The Joys of Motherhood (1979) and Fadia Faqir’s Pillars of Salt (1996). The major argument of this analysis is informed with the concept of “unhomeliness” as defined by Homi Bhabha. It describes the feeling of displacement as experienced by the female characters of both novels engendered by different oppressions: patriarchal, colonial and imperial. It discusses several issues, chief among which questioning the manner in which space is negotiated by these female characters using traditional material and how their quest for freedom turn to enslavement and confinement. The appropriation of traditional material and the linguistic and narratological strategies as used by both authors bring to the fore Emecheta’s African Womanism and Faqir’s Arabo-Islamic Womanism. It is a way to write back to patriarchal and colonial hegemonies. The quest for freedom resides in their intention to subvert the oppressing patriarchal, colonial or post-colonial order the African and the Arab woman live in, using their traditional heritage.

Key words: Unhomeliness, African Womanism, Arabo-Islamic Womanism, Tradition, Oppression, Negotiating Space.

" الحرية بين عبودية و حجز في دراسة مقارنة بين سعادات الامومة 1979 لبوشي ايميشيتا و اعمدة الملح 1996 لفادية الفقير "

الملخص:

هذا البحث هو دراسة مقارنة بين رواية (سعادات الأمومة) للأديبة بوشي إيميشيتا و (أعمدة الملح) للأديبة فادية الفقير. هو يهتم بدراسة شخصيات البطلات (نو إيغو)، (مهى) و (أم سعد) خلال فترة الإستعمار الإنجليزي لنيجريا و الأردن حيث أن الهدف هو الإجابة عن مجموعة من الإشكاليات المتمثلة فيما يلي: إبراز تأثير الإستعمار الإنجليزي على المجتمع (الإيغو) و العربي البدوي و تحديد أهم التغيرات الطارئة عليه. كيفية مقاومة البطلات الإستعمار الإنجليزي مع إبراز الطرق المختلفة المستعملة ضد هته التغيرات. إبراز كيفية تأثير طرق المقاومة المستعملة بطريقة سلبية أدت إلى إنهاء البطلات. أعتبرت التغيرات الطارئة على كل من المجتمع (الإيغو) و البدوي مهدد للدور العائلي و الإجتماعي للبطلات. عبرت (نو إيغو) عن مقاومتها ضد هته التغيرات من خلال أمومتها. في حين أن مقاومة مهى كانت عبر تقنية الرواية بطريقة مقترضة من رواية ألف ليلة و ليلة. الهدف المنشود من هته الطرق هو تحقيق الحرية و تخلص من عبودية الإستعمار الإنجليزي من ناحية و التمثيل المستشرق لصورة المرأة العربية الموضحة من طرف الراوي في (أعمدة الملح) من ناحية أخرى في حين أن هذا الهدف مالبث أن إضمحل و إنقلب فتحول إلى عبودية و حبس في مصحة عقلية. هذا النوع من الكتابات ينتمي إلى كتابة نسوانية إفريقية للأديبة (إيميشيتا) وكتابة نسوانية عربية إسلامية للأديبة فقير

كلمات مفتاحية لنسوية الافريقية , النسوية العربية الاسلامية , التقاليد , الاضطهاد , الحرية