Rescinding Orthodoxy, Resuscitating the Mother Tongue: Daughter Tongue interference in African Female Narratives

OGAGA OKUYADE

The *Bildungsroman* remains one of the most remarkable contributions that German cultural arts have made to the ever growing vocabulary of international literary studies. The form offers a vibrant template to appreciate the relationship between human development, environment and the socio-cultural context in which the developmental process is negotiated. The *Bildungsroman* is associated with the growth process of a male character who achieves a harmonious relationship with his social surroundings after a more or less conflictive process of acculturation (Karafilis 63); the sort of novel in which the main protagonist develops his personality throughout the narrative in the key life stages from adolescence to maturity (Estébanez Calderón 99). Nadal M. Al-Mousa defines the *Bildungsroman* as a type of novel in which action hinges on the fortunes of an ambitious young hero as he struggles to live up to his poetic goals against the negative forces of prosaic reality. The typical hero in the novels of development is a male who "grows up in a humble family in the provinces, but, endowed with an adventurous spirit, leaves home to seek his fortune and realize his ambitions" (223).

The prototypical examplum of the *Bildungsroman* protagonist is the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 19th century hero Wilhelm Meister, who embarks on a quest "[…] to seek self-realization in the service of art […]" (Buckley, 9). The aim of the young artist's quest is self-development and improvement through a series of challenges and trials encountered along the way as he journeys towards the realization of the self. The *Bildungsroman* genre encompasses the Entwicklungsroman (novel of general growth), the Erziehungsroman (novel of educational development) and the Künstlerroman (novel of artistic realization). Interestingly, my focus is on the *Bildungsroman*, or the novel of development, per se.

Feminist literary criticism is a veritable medium which has given room for alternative appreciation of the gender drama in the literary enterprise and business of intellection. Invariably, the most outstanding contributions of feminist literary criticism has been its assertion that literary genres, like most cultural products, explore not just a one-sided socio-historical and cultural orientation, but also a sexual one as well. The *Bildungsroman* becomes an ideal case in point. As noted above, the genre of the *Bildungsroman* is primarily Western, the characteristics ascribed to it, both thematic and structural, have usually referred to the traditional male variant defined in 1913 by Wilhelm Dilthey:

> A regulated development within the life of the individual is observed; each of its stages has its own intrinsic value and is at the same time the basis for a higher stage. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony (qtd in Swales 3).

However, for the last several decades, the foremost reference on the British novel of formation has been Jerome Hamilton Buckley's *Season of Youth*: *The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, published in 1974. The book presents a broadly taxonomic definition of the genre. Buckley contends that, the *Bildungsroman* is a novel that portrays all but two or three of a list of characteristics, among them "childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, larger society, self education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation and a working philosophy" (18). Buckley's seminal work gives the anatomy of the typical *Bildungsroman* as a narrative where:

> A child of some sensibility grows up in a country or provincial town, where he finds, constraints, social and intellectual, placed upon the free imagination. His family, especially his father, proves doggedly hostile to his creative instincts or flights of fancy, antagonistic to his ambitions, and quite impervious to new ideas he has gained from un-prescribed reading. His first schooling, even if not totally inadequate, may be frustrating in so far as it may suggest options not available to him in his present setting he therefore, sometimes at quite an early age, leaves the repressive atmosphere of home, (and also the relative innocence), to make his way independently to the city (in English novels, usually London). There his real education "begins not only his preparation for a career but also and often more importantly his direct experience of urban life. The latter involves at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraises his values. By the time he has decided, after painful soul searching the sort of accommodation to the modern world he can honestly make, he has left his adolescence behind and entered upon his maturity. His initiation complete, he may visit his old home, to demonstrate by his presence the degree of his success or the wisdom of his choice (17-18).

From Buckley's succinct anglicized structure of the genre, the growth of the protagonist occurs according to pattern; the sensitive, intelligent protagonist leaves home, undergoes different states of conflict and growth, is tested by crisis and love affairs, then finally finds the best place to utilise his/her unique talents. However, Buckley's elastic thematic and taxonomic approach to the genre makes the concept lithe, corresponding well to the general free-floating use to which the term *Bildungsroman* has been put in the English-speaking world.

The early 1980s engendered new conceptual approaches to the novel of formation which radically transformed the discipline. Tobias Boes (2006) opines that several factors contributed to this new direction of the genre. One of such factors was the remarkable number of outstanding studies which made the fruits of German research available to English speakers for the first time (Bruford, Beddow, Miles, Swales). The second factor that contributed to this new direction of the genre was the impact of structuralism which encouraged comparatists to approach the genre no longer merely as an inductive and taxonomic construct, but to look rather at large-scale symmetries across European traditions. Thirdly, the impact of Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* presented a dialectical and historical dimension to genre criticism that contributed greatly to adjusting the rigid traditional structures. Jameson aptly contends that literary genres are "experimental constructs" (145) which are regularly renegotiated by new works that come into contact with them. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, feminist critics revolutionized the genre as they began to examine the phallocentric thrust of both traditional novels of formation and the literary criticism that dealt with them. By thus calling attention to the link between aesthetics and ideology, rhetoric and reality, these critics inaugurated a standard and tradition that was initially neglected in previous Anglophone *Bildungsroman* scholarship.

A book which occupies an inaugural and canonical position in this regard is the groundbreaking contribution, *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, edited by Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland. This book indicated a paradigm extension or expansion, and not a shift, as some critics have noted. This study contends that the publication of *The Voyage in* only extends the paradigm because it considered specifically the issue of gender – the exclusion of female development in previous studies on the form. Though the authors carefully distinguished between the male and the female variants of the genre, their attempt to strike a polarity does not exhibit remarkable distinction from the male variant. The emergence of the female tradition only broadened the tradition. The polemics begins from the introduction of the volume, where the editors registered their disgust over critics' lack of consideration of the gender equation in previous Anglophone *Bildungsroman* scholarship. The postcolonial female *Bildungsroman* this essay deals with constitutes part of that extension.

Moreover, recent postcolonial African female narratives seem to have extended the form beyond just the dialectic of progress and fulfilment. The Postcolonial African female *Bildungsroman* does not only articulate the burden of growing-up for female characters; it has equally reacted against and subverted it in order to assert alternative views of subjectivity and ways of becoming adult. These narratives demonstrate how female characters face their own inner turmoil and negotiate ways of bending the barriers of tradition without completely violating or destroying them. Although the *Bildungsroman* theoretically evolved from the West, the experience of growth is incontestably universal. I therefore, attempt to argue that the form cannot be confined to a masculine tradition which celebrates the process of becoming of a male protagonist, but it has also become a template which vibrantly signifies the distinctions between the growth processes of both male and female protagonists and most importantly, it foregrounds the female subject in the process of *womaning*. *Womaning* in this context gives expression to the complex and cumulative process of growing up for the girl-child. The term articulates the numerous stages the girl-child undergoes to become a woman in a patriarchal space. Furthermore, it underpins the variety of ways the girl-child struggles to find her voice and claim space for herself as a woman. Interestingly therefore, the term becomes the calibrating indices with which to ascertain how successful the female protagonists in these texts negotiate their growth process from girlhood to womanhood. Invariably, the *Bildungsroman* for the female writer becomes a collective trajectory of ideological training entrenched in the narrative shaft of individual growth.

This essay among other things, examines how the authors of purposively selected narratives explore trope of the daughter as a strategy for drawing attention to the burden of growing up for the girl-child. The essay equally appraises the daughter as agency in the process of identity formation in postcolonial African women's narratives. This will in turn help to foreground the various rebellious strategies the protagonists of these narratives employ to locate, retrieve their voices and claim space to render themselves visible and liberate their mothers from burdens of tradition. Azuah's *Sky High-Flames*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Dangarambga's *Nervous Conditions* and Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* form the basis for textual analysis.

The African female *Bildungsroman* falls into the compass of texts described as novel of "self-discovery" (Felski, 133), even though there are slight or slim distinctions from the traditional variant which charts the story of a young man leaving the periphery and going to the metropole which dazzles as a perfect ideal of universal modernity. The African female *Bildungsroman* has four distinct characteristics. To understand why the novels chosen for analysis fall within the geometry of the African female *Bildungsroman*, the essay defines the paradigm and makes glaring the traits that make up this variant. Although Pin-chia Feng argues that both the male and female *Bildungsroman* share in the belief that there is a "coherent self, faith in the possibility of development, insistence on a time span in which development occurs, and emphasis on social context" (11-12), the female development is characterised by socio-cultural closure where her developmental progression is rather clouded and stunted.

Society in the narratives chosen for analysis, denies the girl-child those photosynthetic positionings and opportunities through which she can generate energy from the outside to animate her growth process. For the girl-child to grow up, she builds up from the inside rebelliously in order to transcend her gender limitations because of her desire for freedom, self-fulfilment and dignity on the one hand and attaining her goals as an individual on the other. The insistence of growing up independently outside the patriarchal acceptable standards makes these female characters negotiate their identity outside the ideal and construct their identity in an 'in-between space. The most controversial challenge the girl-child encounters in her

growth process is her struggle to overcome the patriarchal dictates of her society which has been designed to curtail her ambitions. This pre-designed developmental graph of the girl-child eventually makes her grow apart from the society.

The restrictive arrangement turns them into nuisance[1] because they rebel against the dominant order and negotiate their existence outside the popular phallocentrically defined centre of morality. Thus the major concern of these female narratives of growing-up borders on how the power configuration defines the relationship of both sexes in familial and civic spheres. Simply put, it defines how the powerful relates to the powerless. This will bring to the foreground the operations of systems of power relations as well as the practices of their textual resistance to them. The systems of power relations, in this context, refers to (neo)-colonialist and patriarchal discursive practices, which are embedded in the textual space of these writers' prose and polemic, on the one hand, and also operate on the production and reception of their writings, on the other. As Clifford J. Kurkowski (2005) argues, "the transformation of a character is an important element in the African-American female *Bildungsroman*" (6). This transformation is not sudden or galloping, but rather incontrovertibly programmatic and uncompromisingly progressional.

The growth process of the girl-child begins with an inarticulate provocation of an awakening, when the character becomes aware that her condition of life is a limitation to the aspiration of a better future. She begins to exhibit tendencies of her resentment for and discontent with her circumstance, which she hopes to transcend. The reference to circumstance in this context could be spatial and at the same time psychological. The recognition of this awareness of a salient awakening prompts the character to question her values as a human being or a victim, her social status and her gender. Secondly, the main character gains self-awareness through her relationships with a network of women, who guide and support her in becoming self-reliant in a society ruled by phallocentric standards. This network provides the character with moral guidance in the face of gender adversity. Thirdly, the character explores her femininity and begins redefining her identity as she journeys into adulthood.

Finally, as the character reaches a point of maturity and independence, she concludes her transition or journey of self-discovery[2]. The character reaches this pinnacle with the help of women who guide and guard her. It must be noted that some female *Bildungsromane* follow this paradigm more closely than others; it is not an exact blueprint, but in order to easily commit the structure of the African female *Bildungsroman* to memory, the shorthand description of this variant is that it is a novel of formation or "awakening" that maps and traces the development of a female protagonist through the rite of passage: from childhood innocence and ignorance through various experiences, usually involving a spiritual crisis into maturity and eventual recognition of her role in the social system.

Besides exploring the mother-daughter relationship in these texts, the essay essentializes how daughters rebel against the moral-ethical codes of their various societies in order to come to terms with challenges of *womaning* and constructing identity for themselves. The strategic rebellion of the daughters is what I call daughter

tongue interference – the refusal to allow the mothers' stories to be re-enacted in their lives. These strategies take different shapes and shades. However, it is end result derivable from the rebellious strategies that is of utmost importance for our analysis.

Sky-High Flames begins with a startling announcement of the exigent and exacting responsibilities of occupying the marginal privileged position of the eldest daughter and child of an African family in a rustic pastoral community:

> I was almost driven to hate my parents. My father never approved of anything I did. He felt he knew what was best for me, and my mother picked on me like a bird with a sharp beak. As the first daughter, I've always had to cater to everyone's needs but any minute spent by myself was called daydreaming. Maybe my father was impatient because he had two wives. He was either settling a quarrel or wondering what they were up to. They kept him busy. The first he inherited from his father. My mother, he married out of love. Maybe my mother was afraid I would fail her as a first daughter if she were not harsh with me. But for whatever reason my parents were the way they were, I couldn't wait to leave home and attend high school (7).

The protagonist Ofunne, is trapped within the familial base, where her growth process suffers arrested development. Ofunne's home is not without problems, there are serious tensions within and as such her parents spend more time ensuring that the tensions do not lead to rupture. However, from a very tender age Ofunne's destiny has been decided. She is to remain docile in the domestic domain where she has to understudy her voiceless mother in order to survive as a wife and mother. Her upbringing is strictly domestic in order that she becomes reticent to adequately fit into the office of an object or a mere ornamentation in her future home. Parenting, for Ofunne's parents is geared towards creating a daughter who is likely to lead a moronic marital life in the future. Her parents would do anything to ensure that the route to her destiny is not altered in any way.

She becomes ensnared at a very tender age. Although her parents' plans for her to become a fulfilled woman are a recipe for her disaster, she pragmatically and psychologically maps out strategies for her liberation from the imposed lethargic state that her parents intend to plunge her into. The leeway from her entrapment is education. According to F.M.L. Thompson "an education was a passport to respectability and a necessary ticket for entry into many trades" (136). Hazal Carby (1987) amplifies Thompson's position on the importance of education for the girl-child when she opines that education of females with prompt social changes can move women into a different sphere where they are no longer subject to domestic positions which outrageously demonstrate their inefficient use of human resources, which in turn leaves their potentials grossly unutilized. Ofunne as a girl-child already understands societal biases against her feminine status and that as a girl her existence is biddable. She also knows that education is necessary for the girl-child, as it equips her with the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to creating self-identity and contributing to societal development.

Azuah uses the *Bildungsroman* to articulate the importance of bonding as strategy for transcending the dictatorial temperament of patriarchy in both familial and civic sites, and the dangers of the experience of separation as obstacle for successful *Bildung*. This is so because Ofunne suffers most when removed from the midst of other women. Azuah's appropriation of the form equally reveals how women can negotiate their existence around the margins, without compromising their sexuality. The protagonist, Ofunne continues to disappear as she develops. This is as a result of her background; she is from a family that can barely afford regular meals. Thus when the opportunity comes to off load her into matrimony, her father does not hesitate. The unfortunate marriage eventually marginalizes her completely because she is deprived of any space for self assertion. As her crisis deepens in the only space left for survival – the kitchen, she rebels against the popular norm of tradition by refusing to be defined as a successful woman by matrimonial standards. She beats up her mother in-law and liberates herself from the suffocating borders of marriage. By this assertion of her desire for freedom her growth process runs counter to the traditional form of the *Bildungsroman* because she grows against the very standard by which her society defines the successful African woman. Rather than been socialised her identity stands in opposition to the moral-ethical standards of the society. Beating a mother-in-law is a taboo, but the act itself is what eventual frees her from the Okolos. Ofunne is tormented by an existential discontent and disruption of selfhood, stemming from her privileged marginal position as eldest daughter. Invariably, she counters the process of her integration into a society that threatens her wish for self-assertion and self-definition.

Ofunne's *Bildung* may be confused as a failed growth process, because she seems to fail at every attempt to liberate herself from the phallocentric dictates of her society. However, her refusal to be beaten down and the willingness to start afresh every time her growth process is curtailed by patriarchal forces is an eloquent expression for the continuous search for a viable self. Azuah gives voice to the ordinary experiences of a young African girl, by letting Ofunne tell her own coming-of-age story, thus articulating the subjective experiences of the female "I" who resists entrapment within socio-cultural norms and expectations. The narrating "I" stands in a dialectic relationship to her socio-cultural context, and it is through the very act of constructing and telling her own story that Ofunne resolves the contradictions that inform her life. Her quest for education, that is, her search for a viable self, becomes a leitmotif throughout the novel. It is significant that in the course of the story the initial "we," Ofunne's sense of herself as being part of the collective identity of her family, gives way to the subjective "I" who begins to audit and edit herself from the context of her community.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* begins in *media res*, realized through flashbacks. The novel eloquently maps the physical and psychological development of the protagonist, Kambili, and her brother, Jaja. However, Kambili occupies the focal point of this evolutionary process. From childhood, Kambili's growth process is not dynamic, but fogged up. The development of the protagonist and her brother designate their

struggle to define themselves beyond the stiffened and funless world their Calvinistic father has designed for them. Their fussy mercantile father builds a world that lacks ventilation that will guarantee a steady relationship with the outside when the inside becomes too suffocating. The narrative is woven around Palm Sunday, yet the development of the protagonist and her brother has a quadrilateral dimension; their father's mansion at Enugu, school, church and Nsukka. Nsukka has the most amazing effect on their developmental process. Adichie describes her setting with unpretentious fidelity.

The Achike children are very typical of children from the aristocratic class, yet they are empty psychologically. The family again, like in *Sky-High Flames*, becomes the foundation on which the protagonist and her brother must construct their identity and negotiate their growth process. Kambili is alienated socially, culturally and psychologically from everyone around her – except her brother, she easily loses perspective and focus. Kambili is not just divided through the unconscious or alienated by the 'myth of the modern' – the loss of natural self; she is fragmented most importantly through emotional sensation and psychological drive and what Mary Lou Emery describes as eclipsed "geo-cultural locations" (16).

The journey towards the retrieval of her voice and dignity as a person begin with what would have been a permanent ritual of silence during Christmas celebration, if her aunt Ifeoma had not shown up with her family. The conservative mindset and authoritarian personality of their father makes them observe as abominable anything he labels as evil, without any rational or dialectical questioning. Kambili's doughty aunt, Ifeoma, becomes a symbol of iconoclastic identity and a de deauthoriser of patriarchal and despotic establishments. Though a Catholic devotee like Kambili's father, she creates the leeway that gives her brother's family ventilation from domestic captivity. In addition to her strength of character, Ifeoma is a thoroughbred, not by class placement derivable from education and social status, but by carriage. Ifeoma has the ability to transcend geographic and social borders. If Kambili has to grow stably she has no choice other than to see beyond her father's religious fanaticism and her mother's docility, which is indicative of the hollowness of the unfounded notions of traditional African maternity.

Following Kambili's acknowledgment of her limitation as a child, which marks the beginning of her awakening, she begins the struggle of overcoming the burden of her voicelessness. This awakening leads to the introduction of the second characteristic of the African female *Bildungsroman* – guidance from a network of strong women. Her mother lacks the propensity to protect her from Eugene's incessant battery even when it is without justification. What Kambili's mother does is merely to nurse her back to health after regular battering. Her character is weak and for Kambili to grow up a stable woman, she needs more than a nurse. The character of Ifeoma has three-fold effects on Kambili. She is, first of all, the maternal figure that offers guidance. She helps Kambili distinguish between right and wrong through her religious belief, and helps her find her rhythm and balance in a society that is choked by the asymmetric gender

configuration. The process of creating her own voice begins with Kambili freeing herself from her father's schedule and allowing herself to be involved in conversations initiated by her new found friends, especially Father Amadi. Ifeoma's presence in Abba during the Christmas celebration is ventilating, because it initiates the process of her liberation.

As Kambili prepares to return to Enugu, Amaka gives her the incomplete painting of their grandfather she had been working on when he died – the painting symbolically becomes an item she earnestly desires but cannot have. She handles the painting with reverence as their father takes them home to Enugu. The painting becomes the link between her aunt's world and Enugu.

Eugene notices remarkable changes in his children as they settle down after their return from Nsukka. One of such changes, though unprecedented, is Jaja's unpretentious demand for the key to his room. Jaja throws caution to the winds and demands for the key to his room, even when it is unnecessary. However, Jaja's attitude, by his father's interpretations, is now one of hostile belligerence that is symptomatic of psychosis – the sudden turn of events is indeed incredible. Kambili who usually complies with her father's dictates suddenly refuses to adhere to his instructions. Eugene becomes astounded by this demand and decides to take pragmatic and overt steps to ensure he un-teaches his children that have learnt new ideals from their travels. This demand provokes a cleansing ritual, which will purge and purify Jaja and Kambili of the sinful dust of Nsukka and the paganistic temperament of the air of Ifeoma's home. Eugene bathes Kambili's feet in hot water, amidst screams of pain.

The cleansing ritual yields less-than-proportionate returns because it does not produce the contracting effects Eugene desires. The children bring two items from their aunt's Nsukka home; Jaja brings seeds of purple hibiscus while Kambili brings the uncompleted painting of their grandfather. Both items represent freedom from the rigid and despairing lifestyle of their father's world. With these items they are to sustain a steady link with their aunt's airy world en-route liberation.

With these prized possessions they hope never to plunge into the border of frustration, disillusionment, alienation, and the existential solitude of the world they know too well. The items will help them cram the vacuum created in their lives and help them sustain a stable relationship with their aunt's world. Her father suddenly discovers Kambili's painting as she and her brother are admiring their grandfather. Like the extremist that he is, Eugene takes the painting from his children who claim ownership of it at the same time. Stunned by this development, Eugene destroys the painting; Kambili is unable to hold back; she is not ready to watch her father tear something she holds sacred from her just like that – she has remained silent all her life. Having regained her voice, she is unwilling to merely watch her father as he attempts to truncate the stable transition of her development, which the painting will help her realize even within the circumscribed radius of her father's control. Her response to her father's assault is therefore characterized by an enthusiastic silence which is uncompromising. The painting symbolizes freedom, and at the same time the remains

of her grandfather, a character rife with cultural and philosophical agency, who she never had access to before his demise.

Although Kambili's actualizing tendency reaches high frequency when she meets Father Amadi, the destruction of the painting becomes the catalytic event that spurs her to revolt against her lot. Audre Lorde states in *Sisters Outsider* "the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within us" (123). After her first return from Nsukka, the memories of the home at Enugu are sad, destructive and even poisonous. In Kambili's psyche, living at home wears down her ambitions, dreams and hopes for the future. For Kambili and her brother, Jaja, the home front represents a destructive force in their lives, not a supportive base; it is an assaulting and limiting space.

Kambili's future at home with her father is threatened because she is powerless and hopeless in that space. She has to move outside the limiting boundaries of her home to be able to change her situation and take control of her own life. Moving outside may not be physical; she could be in her father's house and yet reject his baseless and biased moral codes. Immediately Eugene destroys the painting Kambili decides to fight for the sustenance and furtherance of the identity she constructed for herself while at Ifeoma's. Kambili instantly recognises her choiceless position. This occasion eventually becomes the deciding moment of her existence. She temporarily snaps and escapes the realities of the moment; she leaves the physical presence and lurches into a metaphysical space of her own or what Virginia Woolf describes as "A Room of One's Own"[3], a space where her father's laws are not operational. In a schizophrenic frenzy, she experiences freedom for the first time.

Rose Ure Mezu (1997) argues that, "In psychosis, the ego is ever under the sway of the *id*, ready to break with reality" (136). Kambili throws caution overboard because her father has violently re-opened a crack in her psyche she has fought hard to caulk. This occasion proves beyond reasonable doubt that it takes courage to escape patriarchal domination. Deleuze and Guattari echoing Maurice Blanchot, opine that "Courage consists, however, in agreeing to flee rather than live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges" such as morals, homeland, and religion (341). Kambili realizes that the disconnection from her father's power and authority will afford her the opportunity to move beyond her home to new connections and geographies, which will in turn facilitate new possibility for growth.

As Kambili begins to string the pieces of the painting with an utmost sense freedom and observes her father with a defiant air of unequivocal expression of rejection, condemnation and disintegration of the unproductive upbringing that he has given her, the furtiveness with which she handles the work of art contradicts everything her father stands for. He becomes stunned at the confutation of his conservative religious standards – an occasion on which he is completely subdued by the first shocking witness of the result of his rigid religious matrix. Kambili's handling of the torn pieces of the painting symbolises the collapse of her father's autocratic

system. Rather than realize and admit that his philosophy is inhuman and inefficacious, with a doleful expression on his face Eugene degenerates into an uncontrollable fit of anger and beats Kambili into a state of unconsciousness to the extent that she is brought to the point that the final rites ("extreme unction") are administered to her. The trip to Nsukka thus comes to have a domino effect socially in the developmental process of Kambili and Jaja.

Through this incident Kambili succeeds in breaking out of the social and religious silence of her father's authority; it is a definitive statement of rebellion against the phallocentric and autocratic set up. The liberational quality of Kambili's voicing is cathartic as she takes total control of her expression, whether voiced or silent. After the death of her father and the incarceration of Jaja, she becomes the head of the home, since her mother suffers a nervous breakdown resulting from her poisoning Eugene. In the concluding chapter, she plays Fela tapes without any form of fear of contravening standards. Fela, Nigeria's Afro-beat maestro was a bohemian artist. He is a symbolisation of freedom of speech, fair play, justice and defiance of highhanded authority. His bohemian lifestyle and the lyrics of his songs pitted him against a succession of Nigerian governments. While alive, he suffered incessant incarceration. On Kambili's first visit to her aunt's at Enugu, the kind of tapes Amaka plays is despicably abominable to Kambili. Since she is now free, not because of her father's death but because she has reached the pinnacle of her development, she can easily discern between good and bad. She need not be goaded to make decisions; she is now capable of private thought.

Tsitsi Dangarembga´s *Nervous Conditions* is set in Rhodesia shortly before independence. The narrative maps the trajectory of a girl-child, Tambu(dzai), from peasant-culture of illiteracy to the exclusive white boarding school which secures her future status as provider for her father's branch of the Sigauke family. The genre of *Nervous Conditions* is not unfamiliar: like the other texts in the study, it charts the growth process of the protagonist and foregrounds how she acquires the knowledge and position necessary to take control of the narrative of her life.

Nervous Conditions, a coming-of-age narrative realized through memory and family romance can be read as an example of a text that eloquently captures the intricacies of what it means for an African female to grow up in the cultural and textual space the colonial power forecloses. The novel brings to the foreground tensions of growing up in the age of empire. To understand Tambu and Nyasha's development as "Policed Daughters", their growth pattern shall be appraised from a bifocal dimension – colonial assimilation and cultural socialization. The former will make a hybrid out of them, while the latter will make them dopey. Thematically, the narrative centres on two girls growing up in Zimbabwe. Our basic interest in the narrative is the mapping of the growth process of Tambu. However, this cannot be adequately addressed as stated earlier if Dangarembga's analysis of bicultural influence and its harmful effects are not discussed. The cousins, Tambu and Nyasha are contrasted – the one only educated in Africa and the other a product of colonial education partly in Africa and partly in England. To

comprehend the growth process of Tambu and Nyasha, especially Tambu's loss of voice and identity when she moves into the mission, the socialization process, which is two-dimensional, shall be foregrounded.

Like the protagonists in the two texts already discussed in this paper, Tambu displays her sense of awakening at a very tender age. She realizes that the only route out of her marginal status is education. For Tambu, the pursuit of a British education is her only hope of escaping her two biological subaltern roles – blackness and womanhood. The novel begins with the startling statement by Tambu, who unequivocally states that, "I was not sorry when my brother died" (1). One will wonder why a girl would show no remorse at her brother's death. She does not celebrate Nhamo's death, but she only resents his arrogance. The narrative examines the difficulties Tambudzai, the female protagonist, experiences in comparison to her elder brother, Nhamo, who revels in his privileged position over the rest of his family. After her unperturbed sensational announcement of her unfeeling of her brother's demise, she equally notes that she owes nobody an apology for her callousness or her lack of compassion. This inequity in education, over which she is very angry and, therefore, refuses to grieve when her brother dies, is, as her father tells her, "the same everywhere".

The depth of Tambudzai's resentment for her brother is difficult to understand, given the importance relationships assumed within the structure of African societies. Yet, the author, Dangarembga, begins her novel with this unusually venomous tone from a young thirteen-year-old girl. Psychologically, the reason Tambu vents her spleen on her brother is understandable. She could not help feeling monstrously piqued by her brother's egoistical demeanour. This open displeasure over her brother's attitude splendidly demonstrates the knowledge of her plight and vibrantly registers her awakening. Ordinarily the gulf socially and culturally created between both sexes seems unbridgeable. However, Tambu's grandmother, before her demise gave her the strategy of crumbling the space when she narrated to Tambu, Babamukuru's diligence with the "Wizard" and his eventual escape and triumph. That story runs in her memory, and it becomes the touchstone with which she measures everything she does.

Tambu is determined to overcome her marginal status, regardless of the fact that there are concerted efforts to make her accept her lot. These efforts are not only orchestrated by the patriarchal order in their calculated attempt not to only tame, but to completely subdue her wild, unnatural, unbridled spirit. The women also try to reduce her determination to attain her goals. This is where the gender tensions and Tambu's conflict with her brother are set. The conflict between the siblings stems from Nhamo's choice as the one from their father's branch of the family who should be given western education. Tanure Ojaide misses the point when he contends that, Nhamo "is so arrogant that when he is favoured over the older and more diligent Tambu [. . .]" (120). Nhamo is the older of the two, but the fact remains that his choice is based on the premise of male superiority – that he is a male and not because he is strong-willed and more determined. Nhamo's choice over Tambu does not only give him a head-start over her, it bares his sister's plight when he callously remarks that,

"Because you are a *girl*" (21). While Nhamo is cheered on, Tambu is talked down and jeered at for her unimaginable and wild ambitions.

Ironically though, Nhamo's school fees are raised by their mother, Mainini, through the sales of vegetables, and other agricultural produce. She does not see the importance of providing education for Tambu, her hardworking daughter. Tambu has to stay at home and learn the basic education that is of consequence to the girl-child's moral education, which is encapsulated in the cultural tenets of the people. After all, as her father asks, "Can you cook books and feed them to your husband?" He admonishes her to "stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables" (15). Her mother's admonition and advice would have been the final straw that breaks the camel's back if Tambu's ambition were not founded on a steely and resolute heart. Tambu refuses to accept the standing order, the stereotype gender roles, which make women accept their positions as the weaker sex and overplay their femininity. Tambu's history has been scripted from her gender and for her to de-scribe this popular script she must grow against the grain and become a nuisance like the other female characters already treated in this study. Though Mainini seethes with an inner rage at her social condition, her fatalistic acceptance of the female condition and status places her in the category of caged women. Rather than choose her mother as role model, she chooses Maiguru her uncle's wife. Her choice of Maiguru as role model symbolises her yearning for education.

Lucia seems to be the only woman who understands how formidable female-bonding and self-help are. Her actions eloquently contrast sharply with those of Maiguru who, in spite of her education, lacks critical positioning and sense of solidarity. Her elder sister, Mainini, is willing to endure the burdens of matrimony regardless of her husband's emasculated identity. Through Lucia, Tambu learns the act of self-confidence and the importance of sustaining an ideal, even if everybody negates it. She is like Ifeoma in *Purple Hibiscus*. Her character becomes an inspiration for Tambu as she journeys towards realising her goals of education and self-discovery.

By refusing to accompany the others to her parents' wedding ceremony, Tambu's identity emerges and confronts society, an identity that is familiar to women like Lucia and Nyasha, but seems strange and foreign from the outside. She assumes a socially "uncanny" figure, the embodiment of what her culture tries hard to bury, but cannot wipe out. At this point of her intellectual epiphany, she is willing to throw away all material benefits she enjoys at the mission, including her privilege to acquire education. Babamukuru threatens to withdraw his financial aid to her, yet she holds her ground even firmer. Although Tambu experiences conflict when she wants to translate her emotions into expression, she wants to shout out, "Do not take me at all. I don't want to be in your stupid wedding [. . .] instead (she) says quietly and politely "very well" (164); her absence from the wedding is not only an act of defiance, but the demystification and debunking of patriarchal codes which Babamukuru represents. This incidence amplifies Tambu's development as that of appearing to disappear, the kind of development which aptly demonstrates the growth process which Rachael Blan DuPlessis describes as liminality fluid[4]and a constant transition.

The bonding process in *Nervous Condition* is intriguing because of its symbiotic propensity. Though this symbiotic bonding process does not offer proportional space for characters to grow in, it furnishes them with the possibility of re-evaluating and editing themselves, especially characters like Maiguru and Lucia. The thrust of *Nervous Conditions* does not only map the process of the protagonist's attainment of wisdom, but the mentor figure. Babamukuru is Tambu's benefactor, but Maiguru is her model and by extension her mentor figure, because Tambu chooses her from the outset and her life as an educated woman is inspirational for her. Maiguru's transformation and regeneration shoot from Tambu's rebellion. Dangarembga represents this complex process in which the adolescent and adult characters constantly reconstruct themselves as they come to terms with place, past memories, present experience and insight from their interactions. Maiguru, for instance, garners insight about the importance of voicing and resistance through Tambu's act of defiance and Lucia's assertiveness respectively. Through bonding these women reveal what Tim Crook (1999) describes as "secret private thoughts" (2). Just as Maiguru learns from Tambu's rebellion, sharing her fears and joys with Tambu is therapeutic for Nyasha. It provides her with the kind of healing no other character can offer. Invariably, Nyasha's nervous breakdown becomes total when Tambu leaves.

Romary Moyana suggests that what is being described in this excerpt is a "process of becoming" (25). The dynamics of Tambu's development is fascinating, though she is equally an actor and a victim in her own story because she slowly reaches some painful conclusions about her family, gender roles, the evil of colonization, and above all, the novel is a thought-provoking and brilliantly compelling debut about the burden of growing up a woman. Destined as a woman not to aspire beyond the limitation of her subservient domestic roles, Tambu liberates herself by transcending the social and traditional space constructed for women. She achieves this through awareness and courage. Her triumph becomes a positive statement for women and the society at large, especially the reader who accompanies her on this journey. The reader can garner inspiration from Tambu's story where she overcomes a patriarchal society, colonization, poverty, and racism to establish a sense of self-confidence. To traverse her geography in order to attain self-realization, self-identity and independence, Tambu encounters an awakening of her femininity with the help of a network of women who offer her guidance and education. These building blocks help her transform into a mature, independent woman.

In Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* we meet a protagonist who is unstable and almost voiceless at the familial base because of the constant policing of the mother and a father who wants her liberated from the burdens of maternity. The novel charts a continuous re-awakening of the protagonist Enitan. As the narrative begins, one notices that Enitan is a loner in the home and very knowledgeable, and she exhibits traits of awakening like the protagonist of the three previous novels already treated. She muses:

> From the beginning I believed whatever I was told, downright lies even, about how best to behave, although I had my own inclinations. At an age

when other Nigerian girls were masters at ten-ten, the game in which we stamped our feet in rhythm and tried to outwit partners with sudden knee jerks, my favourite moments were spent sitting on a jetty pretending to fish. My worst was to hear my mother's shout from her kitchen window: "Enitan, come and help in here" (11).

Her mother, like every traditional African woman tries to make Enitan an understudy. She tries to domesticate her daughter in the private sphere where she will be confined by tradition and gender to limited roles. The mother, like the mothers in the narratives already treated, becomes the agent of the socialization of the female-child into her traditional docile roles, preparatory for adult life. She tries to provide an ever-present and powerful role model of mother-as-feminine-ideal and actively works to repress Enitan by encouraging her to accept and imitate her behaviour. Enitan's mother becomes the agent that polices her activities as a child. In contrast to the other novels, she is not only an instrument of socialisation, she ironically becomes the police. The father who should have been the agent of policing becomes the agent of her liberation from being a kitchen martyr. He will ensure Enitan is completely liberated from the life of total domesticity. By this scheme, the father intends to masculinize her, which will in turn make her a hybrid. Her identity becomes a collage of both genders. Biologically she is a female, psychologically she is male. This is how Atta uses hybridity and irony to construct her own *Bildungsroman*. Enitan's father wants his daughter to become a liberated female but ironically does not allow his wife enough yardage in the home.

Invariably, Enitan's development is likely going to be chaotic. This chaos will stem from the possibility of growing stably in a house where the parents are most of the time torn apart by matrimonial feud, and most importantly, the consequences she must brace up to against becoming properly feminized. The latter exposes and legitimizes the process by which women collide in repressing each other; especially through mother-daughter relationships. John Bowlby emphasized in his book, *Child Care and the Growth of Love,* the importance of the mother-figure as provider of affection and security in the healthy development of the child. Children who were denied the close and constant relationship provided by the mother at home were, according to Bowlby, in emotional and psychic, if not physical, danger. They also, he argues, pose a threat to society, since Bowlby posits a relationship between juvenile delinquency and lack (or loss) of mothering through the breakdown of the family. The Bowlbyan paradigm is very significant to the reading of Enitan's psychological and physical development.

However, feminist readings of Freud's theories will identify different patterns in the dynamics of parent-child conflict. A good example is Nancy Chodorow's study, which argues that the pattern of the Oedipal drama is the same, whatever the sex of the child. All children, she contends, are in love with their primary care-giver, who is usually the mother. Therefore, it is the relationship with the mother, and the process by which separation from her is achieved that is primarily responsible for whether a child grows up to be masculine or feminine. As noted earlier, Enitan's development is likely to be chaotic. In contrast to other female *Bildungsroman* protagonists whose gender identity is formed within the psychodynamics of the family, Enitan's development is marked by discontinuity. She has to define herself against her mother, not as feminine, while the other female protagonists discussed earlier develop in connection with their mothers. Since the mother usually stands as the basic care-giver, Chodorow (1998) maintains that, "the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the primary care-giver, while the basic masculine sense of self is separate" (169). Enitan's developmental process finds mooring in the latter.

From the Chodorow's paradigm, it becomes glaring that it is more difficult for a boy to become masculine than for a girl to become feminine. On the basis of this argument, a boy learns to be masculine in opposition to his mother and to her body, while girls only have to realize that they are like their mothers. However, Enitan's father wants a reversal of this psychodynamics for his daughter, in order to break the cycle by which the existing patriarchal society reproduces itself. He decides to change the "connection" in the relationship between Enitan and her primary caregiver – her mother. This reversal adjusts Enitan's social destiny and not the biological destiny, because every other character in the text discovers that Enitan is not a domesticated female. Invariably, she is not a man; neither is she a complete female by societal standards.

As the novel climaxes, one discovers that Enitan has evolved into a formidable character, who occupies a borderless space, where women take on an identity that is seen as threatening to society especially the patriarchy and brutish Nigerian government. As the woman moves away from the confines of the home, she enters into a borderless existence, the image of the female as the emblem of home becomes a strange, foreign figure. The borderless space in this context exists for women who decide to liberate themselves from the strings of the phallocentric dictates of the society. Enitan successfully enters into this space and negotiates her existence. Within this space she takes decisions privately without the influence of her husband, father and society. Women who occupy this space usually reject any attempt at culturally remaking symbols, values and standards which maintain or strengthen the patriarchy. This is why Enitan is labeled mad at the concluding chapter of the novel. Not only does her identity become drawn as dangerous, Enitan's mouth becomes very powerful as well – Enitan uses her mouth like a lethal weapon turning her words into bullets and firing out at those who threaten or attempt to arrest her advancements or development. The awareness that she is a liberated woman makes her occupy her space both at the familial base and the socio-civic spheres adequately well.

The several awakening and the energy in female bonding help Enitan grow up into a woman with a formidable identity. As she informs Niyi of her intentions to join the coalition in order to agitate for the release of detained individuals, she retrospects as her husband refuses to allow her to be a party to the struggle: "From childhood, people had told me I couldn't do this or that, because no one would marry me and I would never become a mother. Now I was a mother" (330).

Although, Enitan in the end fulfils her biological feminine identity, she achieves this by assuming the status of a wife, and becoming a mother. She is equally socially masculine because she undertakes masculine ventures. Becoming a front-liner in the liberation struggle, a vocation strictly male-preserve, substantiates the above claim. It

is not her becoming a wife and mother that makes Enitan a heroine of the female *Bildungsroman*. Her several awakenings, her revolt against the patriarchal order within the domestic confines and the national level, her intellectual epiphany and her realization of the inverse correlations in her society, translate her from ignorance into cognition, making her a heroine in the female *Bildungsroman* tradition. From close reading of texts, this essay points to a new direction about mothers and mothering.

The narrative design of these texts demonstrates that family relationships in postcolonial African societies exhibit numerous tensions, conflicts and psychological problems. The topicality of the mother-daughter tension is not only vibrantly explored in these novels, but becomes the point where the familial conflict is set. Monica Bungaro attributes these tensions to the "result of new opportunities, new interests and new dilemmas created by increasing gender and class stratification across Africa, but especially across generations of Africans" (67). These generational tensions easily manifest in the conflict between mothers and daughters. These conflicts seem to blatantly foreground women's rejection of existing cultural standards, especially the obligation of women in the society.

The mothers in these four novels are debilitated and overwhelmed by the patriarchal order of the familial base so that they do not see the need to liberate their daughters from the leash of the phallocentric underpinnings of their respective societies. However, as the daughters' identity begins to form through different rebellious strategies they deploy in order to come to terms with the burden of growing up female, the mothers' already compromised position is salvaged. The strategic rebellion of the daughters is what I call daughter tongue interference – the refusal to allow, the mothers' stories to be re-enacted in their lives.

The daughters dismantle the cultural script drafted by an order which lives no space for a rounded growth process for the girl-child. However, as they grow up resist it, the debilitating and restricting cultural norms that demand women "grown down rather than up" (Pratt, 168) are destroyed. In the process the daughters create another text that subverts the traditional female quest story of the thwarted or impossible journey or arrested development that inevitably leads to socio-cultural entrapment of the female hero. Narrating their own *Bildungs* story, the narrating "I" engages in the subversive act of replacing the cultural text with her own. This aspect of the narratives lend a poetic dimension to this postcolonial African quest story: the protagonists' search for a feminine self is at the same time a quest for self-expression for a liberating self-creation that dismantles traditional male-defined myths and texts that have locked the African woman into confining stereotypes.

These narratives are a type of chronicles which consider the feminine viewpoint of the novel an ideal method for studying women's struggles. This combination of fiction/ testimony/feminine perspective can perhaps best describe these female writers' works which, despite its singular protagonist-narrator, is more a collective story – a genealogy of female confinement especially mothers and collapsing of the patriarchal façade with the agency of the daughter, than an individual one. While some have claimed that women's interest in the *Bidungsroman* as a genre reflects a desire to

universalize female personal history, these narratives appear to legitimize a group history narrated from the perspective of a female child. Interestingly therefore, some critics Esther K. Labovitz argue that the male *Bildungsroman* has reached the end of its relevance, the *Bildungsroman* continues to serve, as Mari-anne Hirsch and others have recognized, as "the most salient genre for the literature of social outsiders, primarily women or minor-ity groups" (300). The bourgeoning of the form within the context of the African novel in the last two decades signifiers its viability as a narrative form that articulates the experiences of historically marginalized peoples, who perhaps "for the first time find themselves in a world increasingly responsive to their needs" (Abel, Hirsch, and Langland 13). Considering the arduous journeys these protagonists undertake before reaching the self, the *Bildungsroman* therefore, performs the function of a "genre of demarginalization" (Slaughter 1411).

Mothers feature strongly in the texts, regardless of the fact that they are portrayed as reticent, submissive or compliant. Kambili's and Tambu's mothers fail to protect the protagonists from their father's abuse and neglience of paternal responsibilities respectively and their socialising projects that inhibit their children's becoming. They, equally fail to guide their charges on their respective routes to personhood. Enitan's and Ofunne's mother, in contrast, are complicit with patriarchy, vehemently bent on socialising Enitan and Ofunne. From analysis of texts it becomes glaring that the mother's voice or what I call the mother tongue – though they may not be completely of complicity – is of immense importance in the healthy upbringing of a child. The disproportionate power relations between the mother and father figures lead to the silencing of mothers with regards the nurturing of their children, which, in turn, inhibits the child's growth process.

The most striking similarity between the texts is the absence of closure. Closure for these emergent writers is, almost, impossible, since the social context in which their protagonists negotiate their identities are in a state of permanent transition. Significantly, identity negations lack definite closure. An attempt at closure will result in the denial of the individual the liberty to negotiate any other possible course that may lead her to a desired identity. The three novels end with protagonists about to journey on – journeys that will open up new opportunities for them. Ofunne abandons matrimony after beating up her mother-in-law and strips before Onishe, a potent marker of submission to a supernatural force for strength and the desire to start afresh; Kambili is resolves to visit Aunty Ifeoma and her family in the United States; Tambu gets admission to an elite college and Enitan abandons her husband like Ofunne to live on her own. Although their destinations may hold much hope for them, they foreground the primacy of infiniteness of the politics of identity formation.

The female African *Bildungsroman* serves as a modern framework of artistic expression within the broad spectrum of African narratives to account for the African experience. This variant is not only African in temper and characterization, but also abrupt in its ending, communal in orientation, subversive in content and open-ended in structure, a signification for the idea that human development and identity construction cannot be fixated and that the process of its negotiations is continuous.

Invariably, the traditional *Bildungsroman* has been potentially feminized within a postcolonial context to appraise narratives of growth. These narratives celebrate a lifelong journey of self-fulfillment and social responsibility. These postcolonial African female writers offer immense hope for altering and reordering the existing patriarchal ordinances both at the familial and civic spheres so that all women can establish their voices and places – for themselves and for others.

NOTES

1   My use of "nuisance" in this study is not an indication of a negative attribute. The word demonstrates the extent to which these female characters go in order to transcend their limitations as females in a system where their identity is defined by gender. Refusing to be subjected to the space mapped out for them by their societies makes them fall outside the parameters of the ideal. Thus, they negotiate their way outside the centre of morality because the establishment that does the mapping defines the moral order and the standards for othering. It equally details the moral choices the protagonists have to make in order to find and reach the self.

2   Completing the journey of self-discovery does not indicate that the female protagonist has finally reached the end point of her journey of self-discovery; it only indicates that she has attained a point where she has become capable of making independent decisions unguided.

3   Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. London: Hogarth Press, 1989 (1929).

4   This is a growth process where the initiate remains permanently in a particular phase which is usually not childhood or adulthood. Africa's growth indices give expression to the idea of liminality fluid. This is so because it appears African continues to remain in a permanent state of transition.

WORKS CITED

Abel, E, Hirsch, M. and Langland, E. eds. *The Voyage in: Fictions of Female Development*. Hanover and London: UP of New England, 1983.

Adichie, C. *Purple Hibiscus*. Lagos: Farafina, 2004.

Atta, S. *Everything Good Will Come*. Lagos: Farafina, 2005.

Azuah, U. *Sky-High Flames*. Baltimore: Publish America, 2005.

Al-Mousa, N. M. "The Arabic Bildungsroman: A Generic Appraisal." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25.2, 1993: 223-240.

Beddow, M. *The Fiction of Humanity: Studies in the Bildungsroman from Wieland*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1982.

Boes, T. "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*: A Historical Survey of Critical Trends". *Literature Compass* 3/2, 2006: 230-243.

Bowlby, J. *Child Care and the Growth of Love*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953.

Bruford, W. H. *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: "Bildung" from Humboldt to Thomas Mann*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975.

Buckley, J. H. *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1974.

Bungaro, M. "Mothering Daughters and the Other side of the Story in Amma Darko, Ama Ata Aidoo and Nozipo Maraire". *African Literature Today* No. 25, 2006: 67-81.

Carby, H. *Reconstructing Womanhood*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.

Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P., 1998.

Crook, T. 1999. "British Radio Drama: a Cultural Case History" Retrieved May 26, 2006 from http://www.Irdp.co.ukbritrad2.htm.

Dangarembga, T. *Nervous Conditions*. New York: Seal, 1988.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P., 1983.

Felski, R. "The Novel of Self-Discovery: A Necessary Fiction?" *Southern Review* 19, 1986.: 131-144

Feng, P. *Female Bildungsroman by Toni Morrison and Maxine Hong Kingston: A Postmodern Reading*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.

Jameson, F. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981.

Karafilis, M. "Crossing the Borders of Genre: Revisions of the *Bildungsroman* in Sandra Cisnero's *The House on Mango Street* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*." *The Journal of Midwest Modern Language Association*. 31.2, 1998: 63-78.

Kurkowski, C. "Classifying Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* as an African-American Female Bildungsroman" Retrieved 8 May, 2007 from http://www.mindspring.com/mblkgrnt 2005/footlights/foot76.html,

Labovitz, E. K. *The Myth of the Heroine: The Female* Bildungsroman *in the Twentieth Century: Dorothy Richardson, Simone de Beauvoir, Doris Lessing , Christa Wolf*. New York, New York: Peter Lang, 1986.

Lorde, A. *Sisters Outsider*. Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing, 1984.

Mezu, R. U. "Buchi Emecheta's, *The Bride Price* and *The Slave Girl*: A Schizoanalytic Perspective". *ARIEL* 28.1. 1997: 131-146.

Miles, D. "The Picaro's Journey to the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German *Bildungsroman*" *Publications of Modern Language Association* of *America* 89, 1974: 980-992.

Moyana, R. "Men and Women: The Intellectual Hysteric(s) in *Nervous Conditions* and *She No Longer Weeps*." *African Literature Today*. No. 20, 1996: 25-34.

_____. "Irony and the Novel: Reflections on the German *Bildungsroman*." *The German Tradition of Self Building*. Ed. J. Hardin. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP: 1991: 46-68.

Slaughter, J. "Enabling Fictions and Novel Subjects: The *Bildungsroman* and International Human Rights Law." *PMLA* 121, 2006: 1405-1423.

Swales, M. *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Thompson, F.M.L. *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900*, London: Fontana Press, 1988.

Department of English,
College of Education, Warri,
Delta State, Nigeria
alopezva@ucm.es