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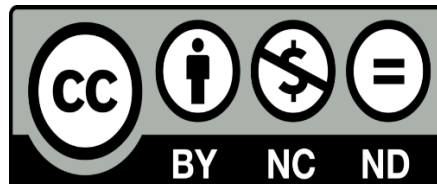
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EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony-contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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ÉDITORIAL

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre dateraient de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie- contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écrits en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle, tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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FEMALE EMPOWERMENT AND THE RESHAPING OF GENDER ROLES IN ZAKES MDA'S *BLACK DIAMOND*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to represent the fight conducted by African women to subvert phallogocentric norms. Through the lens of feminism, this insight first discloses features that actually present women's humiliations. Second, female empowerment is stressed. Z. Mda proposes an inter-gender struggle in which women, belonging to the female gender, stand against the male gender and their patriarchal system in a third instance. This struggle is seen as a means used by women to challenge the phallogocentric ideologies. The last section deals with the remapping of gender roles. After their successful campaign, women reorganize their society.

Keywords: *empowerment, female, phallogocentric, remapping, subvert.*

L'AUTONOMISATION DES FEMMES ET LA REDÉFINITION DES RÔLES DE GENRE

RESUME

Cet article ambitionne de représenter le combat mené par les femmes africaines pour subvertir les normes phallogocentriques. A travers le féminisme, cette réflexion dévoile d'abord les traits réels qui encouragent des humiliations contre les femmes. Ensuite, l'autonomisation de la femme est renforcée. Z. Mda propose une lutte au sein du genre féminin, dans lequel les femmes appartenant au même genre, et se dressent contre le genre masculin et le système patriarcale dans un troisième temps. Cette lutte est perçue comme un moyen pour défier les idéologies phallogocentriques. La dernière section traite de la redéfinition des rôles par genres. Après leur succès, les femmes réorganisent la société.

Mots-clefs : autonomisation, femme, phallogocentrique, redéfinition, subvertir.

INTRODUCTION

In South African literature, gender conflicts have most of the time opposed males to females on a racial basis. This is the case of André Brink's novel entitled *An Instant in the Wind* and *Cape of Storms*. Even in post-Apartheid literature, African women continue to undergo inequities perpetrated by men. In such societies, the

female gender is believed to be inferior to the male gender. Because of their biological constitution, which is assumed to be less powerful than the one of men, women are deemed worthless. That is the reason why they are considered as the weaker sex which should accept all kinds of humiliation without raising the single finger in protest. This is what is portrayed in Zakes Mda's post-Apartheid novel *Black Diamond*.

Scholars and critics have profusely led scientific works on the topic of women's upliftment in literary productions inherent in Mda's abovementioned novel. In their article "The Path of the Mother is Trodden by the Daughter: Stepping Stones for Entry into the Middle class in South Africa" (2015), D. Darkey and H. Ibsen sort out an important aspect of women's promotion in men dominated societies in South Africa by emphasizing the increase of their economic power. If the previous article is framed in the context of feminism, N. P. Qokela's "Perspectives on Female Characters in D.P.S Monyaise's *Ngaka Mooka* and Zakes Mda's *Black Diamond*" (2014) uses the theoretical frame of narratology to show that Mda's narrative perspective turns the stereotypical roles of the female gender upside down.

Like these works which insist on females' subversion of the male version of the world, my study aims to emphasize how the law is used, as a feminist strategy, to deconstruct men's egocentric posture in patriarchal worlds. Yet, to attain this objective the feminist theory will be used. L. Tyson (2006, p. 83) defines this approach: as follows "Feminism is a field that feminists can show the ways of their thinking to oppose the traditional tendency to believe that there is a single best point of view". According to the feminist ideology, in the relationships binding men to women, males should not think that their version of the world is what prevails. They should understand that women also have their say. The scholar actually shows that with feminism there is no exclusive center. It promotes the fact that there are many centers. It not because men seem stronger than females that they should muzzle them and impose their vision of things. And, building upon their supremacist postures, men are radically inclined to exert forms of oppression on women. The role of feminist criticism is to highlight such situations in works of literatures. L. Tyson (2006, p. 83) writes in illustration that "feminist criticism examines the ways in which literature (or other cultural productions) reinforces or undermines the political, economic, psychological, and social oppression of women".

Marxist feminism will also be used to analyse this work. Known as a movement which studies female exploitation through the lens of Karl Marx's notion of class struggle this theory works for the defense of women's rights. In fact, for Marxist feminists, capitalism accommodates space for women oppression. They see capitalism as a form of female sexual exploitation by men. This theoretical framework will help to interpret some forms of women subjugation in my corpus. In defining this theory as a form of criticism which addresses women's inequities, C. C. Robinson (2007, p. 26) claims that "The Marxist perspective of feminism examines prostitution as a result of capitalism. In a society where class structure exists, there will be a ruling class and a laboring class. Hence, the ruling class is in the position to exploit the working class".

Taking into account this theoretical background, the study consists in showing women's oppressions in African patriarchal societies. Then, the second section will shape some forms of women empowerment. And finally the last chapter will talk about the reorganisation of African phallogocentric societies.

1. WOMEN'S OPPRESSED INTO PROSTITUTION SYSTEM IN PATRIARCHAL AFRICAN SOCIETIES

The narratives of feminist literature are interspersed by issues related to women's oppressions in phallogocentric societies. The reading of Mda's novel *Black Diamond* discloses two features which actually present women's ill-treatment in male-dominated settings in Africa. The corpus reveals that women are entrapped in the vicious circle of prostitution. The sex work the book is about showcases cases of pandering perpetrated by some male individuals. It is a system of exploitation of the female gender by the male according to feminists' perspectives. This practice consists for women to be put together in small houses where they practice sex work for money. This activity organised by men objectifies women's body in a certain way. They use them as commodities which can generate more benefit. In the narrative of *Black Diamond*, Mda hermetically depicts this form of female abuse into different aspects. The sexual oppression of the female is transcribed in Mda's narrative through the word group "sex trade" (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 156). The study also suggest that such negative practices "have broken families and destroyed the moral fibre of the community—the sex trade in all its forms" (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 156). To show the acuteness of this evil practice, the book likens prostitution to "strip joints" and "so-called escort services" (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 156).

The existence of prostitution shows that women are trapped in an economic system that victimizes them. These females are thus entrapped into a capitalist system in which they have become commodities that men sell to get rich. This opinion fits into the Marxist feminist considerations which show how women have become marketable things in the service of less scrupulous men. In illustration, A. Jaggar (1991, p. 375) opines:

Just as the capacity to labor becomes a commodity under capitalism, so does sexuality especially the sexuality of women. Thus prostitutes, like waging laborers, having an essential human capacity alienated. Like wage laborers, they become dehumanized and their value as persons is measured by their market price. And like wage laborers, they compelled to work by economic pressure, prostitution, if not marriage, may well be the best option to them.

This quote likens female prostitution to the story of class struggle in Marxist theory of capitalism whereby the working class is the women. They practice sex work as a labor to provide profit to the ruling class which is composed of men. The quote apparently assumes that females are victimised of male domination through the business of sex trade in phallogocentric realm. Indeed, this extract shows that the body of women is commodified and sex becomes the commodity leading to her exploitation.

Additionally, female oppression through prostitution is conducted by men known as “pimps” (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 29). In fact, the use of this notion reveals that males are at the center of women ill-treatment in Africa. As a matter of fact, men reduce ladies to sex. Indeed, in the narrative of Mda’s *Black Diamond*, I notice this aspect of feminist posture through the following passage “the Visagie Brothers, are on trial for running a brothel, men pimping the girls” (Z. Mda, 2009:, p. 5). From this excerpt, I can assert that in patriarchal system, African women are entrapped by men in the vicious circle of sex work. By analyzing this above quotation, it seems obvious to say that “pimps” in the novel understudy reinforce the alienation and the depravity of morals code in African societies.

Though, Marxist feminists analyse this aspect of female exploitation in their productions. They show that in men dominated societies, pimps are the ruling class. Given this, they exert some pressures on the women in order to make profit. That is the reason why K. Marx (1975, p. 350) likens the state of prostitution to that of proletariat worker when he argues that «prostitution is only the specific expression of the universal, the prostitution of the worker». This sentence by Marx stands that women are sexually abuse in phallogocentric system. In fact, by linking the notion of lady’s sex

industry to the awful condition of the working class in the capitalist system, Marx wants to show that patriarchy opens doors to the dehumanization of the female gender.

Third, in patriarchal societies, whatever their social position, African women are devaluated. Although they hold a higher social and professional status in the society, they are still despised by the male gender. So, in patriarchal societies the position of females is nothing in the eyes of men. Their social ranking does not prevent them from being dominated and abused by men. This is the case of the magistrate in the narrative of *Black Diamond*. The magistrate in spite of her position, she is humiliated in a male-dominated society. This humiliation can be perceived through the following passage in the novel:

Now, you gonna dance for me,' says Stevo. He sits on the bed and places his carving knife and his gun next to him. He lights a cigarette and puffs with aplomb. He is really enjoying himself. The magistrate's lowest point is his highest. He claps to switch the disco lights on. But it is not the appropriate rhythm, so nothing happens. He tries again. Nothing happens. 'OK, bitch,' he says. 'You do it. Switch the damn thing on.' But the magistrate just stands there looking at him (Z. Mda, 2009, p.306).

From this passage, one may argue that women are victims of indignity. Because whatever their social status, men consider females as worthless and valueless human beings. For this reason, they are thought to be second class people. Indeed, the character of Stevo in this excerpt shows that females are victims of humiliation in a phallogocentric Africa. By analysing this quotation, it becomes obvious to assert that the characterisation of this man in this feminist narrative highlights another form of female subjugation in patriarchal system. In fact, through the following abuse against the magistrate female in the aforementioned citation, I can claim that men put shame on the portrayal of women in Africa. A deep analysis of this portion helps me to underline that the image of lady is reduced to degradation. This is well presented in the following sentence «the magistrate dignity is injured» (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 24). This loss of dignity of the magistrate happens when Stevo treats her as thing without any value. Through this expression we notice that patriarchal system opens doors to women slavery and their disesteem in phallogocentric setting. Because, this system classifies women as people with less dignity.

Though feminist scholars have underlined this form of female exploitation in a phallogocentric Africa. For the advocates of this movement, women are victims of a

systemized humiliation. In effect, this idea is developed by A. Thiam. By demonstrating this aspect of female subjugation in her scientific book, she opines that:

[P]eople, rather men, have often reduced the problem of women to a problem of complementarity. Who defines this complementarity? The men who prescribe it for us. This complementarity has been systemized, giving excuses for all the forms of women oppression and exploitation that the patriarchal system imposes on a woman, by the virtue of her sex” (A. Thiam, 1986, p. 13).

Through this aforementioned quote, one can assume that women are exposed to all kinds of humiliation in a phallogocentric setting. In fact, this passage by the critic highlights the oppressive face of the patriarchal system upon female. Although this scholar does not say so, she apparently assumes that the victimization or the degradation of the females’ image is well managed by a system called patriarchy which negatively abuses them. By interpreting this citation, it sorts out that men exert negative forces on female that dismount their self-assertions. In effect, one may notice that there is a link between this quotation and the character of Stevo in the narrative of *Black Diamond*. As a matter of fact, Stevo is described as a man who tries by all the means to put disgrace on the reputation of the magistrate in the novel under study.

2. FORMS OF WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT: TOWARDS AN INTER-GENDER STRUGGLE

For women’s empowerment, Z. Mda proposes an inter-gender struggle in which women, belonging to the female gender, stand against the male gender and their patriarchal system. This struggle is seen as a means used by women to challenge the phallogocentric ideologies. The corpus reveals that women have settled an important way of challenging the patriarchy in their way. The character of Kristin in the study of the plot is seen as an example of women’s authority in men-dominated societies. She comes to justify the fact that the women are the main force in the process of their empowerment. Indeed, in the novel *Black Diamond* many events show that women are ready to take control upon men in the modern societies.

By showing some women at the head of some important institutions in the phallogocentric settings, I can say that this novel favors the notion of the promotion of the women. In a sense that the female is depicted as someone who is able to transform a society in which she is seen as a thing left aside. This inter-gender aspect of women’s fight shows some women who position themselves as strong and rigorous characters. In fact, they strongly participate in the reordering of things that takes place in

phallogocentric societies. As bold they are, women try by all the means to remind male that it is time for them to transform the society into a world in which their qualities are put forwards. This tough posture of the female is perceptible through the character of Kristin Uys in *Black Diamond*. Indeed, textually speaking there are some evidences who display this magistrate as someone who is struggling against time to take control over the notion of men power in African phallogocentric settings. This fact is justified by the following event in the novel. During a trial in the courtroom, the magistrate tries to make a comment on the dress code of the court. She addresses to an attorney named Mr. Naidoo. In their discussion she says something which has attracted my attention. In the course of my reading of this novel, I have noticed this sentence «you are not dressed, Mr. Naidoo. Next time I will not allow you in my court in that suit» (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 4).

Through this following statement, it sounds better for me to say that the character of that woman is tough. It shows that she is a woman who wants to bring a change in men dominated settings. In fact, this sentence reveals the idea that women have power to challenge the patriarchal system. By ordering this man to be well-dressed before interring in the court is for me something meaningful. She shows that women are ready to stand and make their voice to be heard. The hidden idea behind this scene is that it reveals the image of women rejecting the male version of the world. In fact, the fact of being magistrate in that court for Kristin is something significant in the process of empowering the female gender in phallogocentric areas. Through this utterance, she shows that the female gender is the incorporation of order and authority.

Actually, the inter-gender struggle aspect of women is seen through the fact that they adopt an attitude of strong persons towards men. It is the case of Kristin who is a strong and severe woman. For this reason, it is said that «Everyone is well aware that she is stickler for courtroom decorum» (Mda, 2009: 4). By analyzing this sentence, it is quiet good to say that women conduct an everyday battle to change the norms which have been established by the patriarchal system. Through this sentence, I can stipulate that the story about the character of Kristin mirrors a society in which women have the control over men. This statement portrays her as a woman who is trying by all the means to turn upside down the notion of men authority in phallogocentric context. This attitude of women as the ones who can stand against patriarchal norms does not escape the attention of critics. By putting women at the center of social improvement I will

refer to the critic Lauren Snider position. For the scholar L. Snider (1994, p. 99) «it is through the redefinition of rights and nature of women that real progress is made».

Through this following statement, I understand that the soundness of women empowerment comes through the fact of putting them at the center of decision making position. In effect, this above citation by Lauren puts an emphasis on the fact of giving to the women better status in phallogentric settings in Africa. Because for this scholar women are the source of any social development. For her, while talking about any social improvement, we must first of all better represent the female gender in any given activity. The analysis of the thought of this critic makes me understand that the well-being of any society belongs to the fact of putting women at the front of the organization of society. For this reason, one must note that the female gender is the master piece of social progress. For instance, when one puts women at the center of any social institution, they immediately think at the fact of taking care of this role. This is the case of Kristin in my corpus where she is a magistrate. And by the all means she is trying her best to maintain order in her court.

As a matter of fact, women rejection of patriarchal norms is praised by feminist advocators. Through their writings, they show that female must abolish all the patriarchal practices that oppress them and limit their well-being in society. This aspect of female fight is shown by B. S. Anderson and J.A. Zinsser (1990, p. 334) in their scientific work. In this master piece, their claim that:

Feminism is rejecting much, from basic cultural tenets to casual everyday behavior. Given ancient traditions which insists that women defer and subordinate themselves to men, given traditions which define women only by their relationships with men, given traditions which under-value women and take men as the standard, the only way for women to claim full humanity is to reject those standards.

Indeed, from this passage it sounds legitimate to claim that for women under to be free from men domination they must for social reform. This transformation in society comes from female deep commitment. By analyzing this above excerpt, one can say that the rejection of patriarchal norms is the essence of feminism theory. In fact, although these authors do not say so clearly, they apparently confirm that female abolishment of patriarchal ideologies participate in the process of promoting rights as human beings in men dominated settings in contemporary society in Africa. Furthermore, women use law to reshape African phallogentric societies. As a best means for social order, law is the strategy that will help Kristin in my corpus to better

conduct her mission of challenging the patriarchal norms. Indeed, this aspect of women struggle for their empowerment is something real in contemporary writings. In fact, in the corpus selected to conduct this work, I have noticed this form of women struggle. In the chapter three titled “An injury to one is an injury to all” a clash happens between Kristin and the Visagie brother named Stevo. During their opposition the man adopts a disrespectful behavior towards Kristin the magistrate. The attitude of this man who is deeply rooted in patriarchy provokes the reaction of this strong woman. Her will is end such kind of men behaviors towards. By showing her authority she sentences him for prison. This is shown through the following sentence in the novel “I’m citing you for contempt, Stevo Visagie. I’m sentencing you to six months without the option of fine contempt ex facie curiae” (Z. Mda, 2009: 25).

This following statement exactly shows the attitude of women challenging the patriarchal norms. It qualifies women as the decision makers and then people who are ready to bring change in patriarchal societies. The idea standing by this sentence is that women are the ones who can break dawn the norms established by patriarchy through drastic and immediate attitudes. Besides, the analysis of this sentence reveals that women have power to reshape men egocentric behavior. The fact of sentencing this man by the magistrate is something meaningful. It brings out the idea of the take of the power by women in contemporary phallogocentric settings in Africa. This prevailing sentence underlines the notion of a world in which the female is the synonym of authority. Indeed, by interpreting this above evidence, I notice that law helps women to undertake a self-defense battle against men. The story of Kristin in this novel portrays women as the main participants in the process of creating a world which favors the respect of the female gender. This above statement shows the strength that women have in contemporary African phallogocentric societies. Indeed, the protagonist Kristin is the incorporation of new woman in men-dominated settings. Through the character of this magistrate in *Black Diamond* I can claim that law is the perfect for women to set up a solid and consistent base for their empowerment. She is the prototype of a woman who can influence positively, being change and leave ways out for female self-affirmation.

Noticeably, women empowerment through inter-gender struggle is an idea which has been supported by many scholars. Among these critics, it is Lauren Snider

who has captivated my attention. She hermetically talks about this aspect of women fight. For this reason, she opines that:

there is also much to be done without invoking law. On the ideological level, educating the public and convincing people of the validity of feminist causes, through legal, extra-legal, and non-legal struggles, employing a variety of means and embracing a number of institutional levels, is crucial to secure long-term changes (L. Snider, 1994, p. 99).

This above statement by L. Snider comes to reinforce the idea of using law as a crucial means for women liberation. Through this quotation, she shows that women must put emphasis on the law in their process of envisioning a definitive change in male-dominated settings. In this citation, I can say that this scholar encourages female activists to adopt an attitude of warriors in their process of fighting against male supremacist ideologies. L. Snider's words really put emphasis on the fact that women empowerment must be done through a devoted inter-gender struggle. For this form of struggle will effectively help women to reshape phallogocentric communities. In fact, this scholar is demonstrating through a drastic form of resistance some ways of women's taking position. She shows that women must adopt a drastic posture in their process of fighting against patriarchal norms. These ideas come to justify the drastic of the magistrate in my corpus. This scholar critically shows that long-term changes will happen when the female will target directly the main causes of the feminist movement. By promoting this form of struggle, this critic wants to reveal that the best way for women to transform the phallogocentric areas is to adopt is to set up a variety of strategies including the legal forms. A deep analysis of the thought of this scholar makes me understand that inter-gender struggle is a best tool for women empowerment in men-dominated societies. In effect, it is through commitment that a dominated group will be to put an end to their exploitation. And this aspect is seen in Lauren above words.

3. REMAPPING GENDER ROLES: A STEADFAST CULTIVATION OF GENDERLESS SOCIETY

After conducting different forms of struggle in men dominated societies, women have achieved their mission which is to reorganise the African society. One main concern here is the shift of female cultural roles. In contemporary African societies, men actively participate in helping women to do some domestic works. These works have been culturally described as women activities. In fact, some men ironize these

cultural assumptions. This idea is perceived through the character of Don Mateza in Mda's work of fiction. At home, he cooks for his girlfriend called Tumi. I emphasise the attitude of this man because it truly presents a new perspective of the portrayal of women in new South Africa. This idea can be illustrated in the novel through the following passage:

The meal is almost ready when Tumi arrives. Don is still in his apron doing the finishing touches in the kitchenette. In the dining area, the table is extravagantly laid with shimmering silver and expensive china and two unlit candles. Tumi is in her business executive-type trouser suit and is carrying a load of files and catalogues. She starts sniffing and frowning as soon as she enters. 'What's up, Don?' she asks. 'I thought I should surprise you with a wholesome meal of ting the way your mama cooks in the township. And guess what? I have cooked tshotlo too (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 65).

Through this above passage, one can claim that not only women are supposed to cook. It reveals the fact that even men can perform this activity for women. In fact, this passage mirrors a world in which women are free to do what they want without any restrictive norms or cultural roles. It better presents a man who truly favors traditional emancipation. Indeed, the hidden meaning of this excerpt is that it sheds light on the fact that men accept to participate in the process of women's cultural empowerment. By analyzing this quote, I can assert that men ironize the tradition tendencies which portrayal females as the ones who should cook for their males. It also shows a shift in women domestic roles.

Actually, men subvert the notion of female cultural roles. And this aspect of women's empowerment is something which is promoted by some feminist activists or specialists. Among these scholars, there is N. Masuku who has truly attracted my attention. Through a very meaningful definition of feminism, this writer shows the scope of that theory which consists in redefining the notion of female and male roles. This activist for women's sake of argues that:

Feminism is a struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is to not benefit any race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. On the contrary, it is a movement that has the power to transform the whole society in a meaningful way. Feminism challenges the "patriarchal" conception of male and female roles in the society. It also draws a distinction between sex and gender in order to redefine male and female roles (N. Masuku, 2003, p. 23).

Through this above excerpt, this scholar suggests that the specific aim of feminist is to create an equal society for both sexes. This passage better shows that feminism is concerned with the reorganization of the patriarchal norms. Through this quotation, I can argue that the change of the cultural roles of women will be an

important trend in the process of women. Because through this shift of female cultural assumptions, we will have a world in which the promotion of female gender will be put forwards. In fact, this above citation privileges the cultural emancipation of women at the expense of men fighting against female cultural roles.

Moreover, men willingly take part in the process of women empowerment. In effect, in the novel *Don Mateza* is thought to be a feminist character in the sense that he is the one who paves the way for women's upliftment. Indeed, he shapes space for the promotion of the female. His behavior in Mda's narrative better highlights a man whose will is to get rid of any stereotypical presentation of the female character. Mateza reveals the image of someone who is truly shaping a world in which there is no distinction between men and women in terms of social organization. In the novel understudy, this characterization of Don Mateza as a man who willingly wants to participate in the female empowerment can be demonstrated through the following passage:

Don Mateza cooks for the love of it. He likes to experiment, fusing dishes from various cultures to create something unique. It is a gift he inherited from his mother. Like most boys growing up in Soweto those days, he learnt that there was no work for boys or for girls. There was just work. Boys in Soweto were taught by their mothers and big sisters how to cook, wash dishes and polish the floors (Z. Mda, 2009, p. 63).

Through this passage in the novel, I can report that women's empowerment comes through a generational teaching process of men and women about the notion social of well-being. In fact, this portion of my corpus sorts out the idea that from childhood, boys learn how to cook. It reveals the idea that traditional gender roles are agonizing. Indeed, in this excerpt the central idea is that when men and women are at the same side, it truly opens doors for women emancipation. This excerpt reveals the posture of men as the partner of women in the process of women's empowerment. In effect, through the character of Don Mateza, I can say that this novel is really creating a space where there is no matter related to the gender issue. By analyzing this above passage, it really seems obvious to claim that positive behaviors towards female participate in the process of their liberation. The term "no work for boys or for girls" is significant because it better shows the notion of no division of labor between men and women in Post-apartheid South Africa. This sentence sounds proper to say that female have been emancipated from the tradition tendencies which promote the idea of separatism between both genders.

This shows that in Mda's *Black Diamond*, not only women are known to be feminist. Some men as feminist, participate in the blossoming of female emancipation by favoring female social emancipation. In fact, Mateza truly participates in the fight against female sexist oppression because he is the one who cooks for his wife in the novel. In Mda's narrative, Don displays a man who takes action in feminism struggle in the sense that he does not favor the domination of men over women. Obviously, Mateza is the one who works for the transformation of his society. As female advocate, he fights against traditional gender roles.

In the novel by Mda, feminism hints at the agony of patriarchy. In the narrative of *Black Diamond*, women are truly diamonds that men cherish and endear because they are protected against machoism and phallogocentric ideologies. This work of fiction is a true feminist oeuvre in the sense that not only does it deconstruct men hegemonic vision of the world, but it also puts women in the position of first class citizens. Women now, are playing important roles in Africa. It works for the end of sexist discriminations that drive women in the margin of post-apartheid South Africa. Thus, the book is thought to promote a true collaboration between both sexes. This is what bell hooks shows when she pens that "Feminism defined as a movement to end sexist oppression enables women and men, girls and boys, to participate equally in the revolutionary struggle" (B. Hooks, 1984, p. 67).

Black Diamond is one of African fictitious works that urges for a revolutionary struggle in the framework of feminism in African literature. The author does not bother to insist on the manifest role that men should play for the advantage of women. For this writer, men should discard their egocentric and phallogocentric opinions about women, and they should now adopt some attitudes of people who fight against female oppressors. As a matter of fact, this narrative by Mda fits in the notion of hooks' definition of the women's movement.

As one can notice, the portrayal of men as the partner in the process of women's empowerment is something which is praised by feminist scholars. Among these specialists, it is bell hooks who better analyses this aspect of female empowerment. From this above citation, she wants to show that the process of giving power to the female is truly a fact that relies on the involvement of men in the struggle. Indeed, she emphasizes the fact that women and men should join force together. This citation reveals the fact that the liberation of women must be at the expense of men. Through

this quotation, she makes me understand that men as well as women take significant role in the struggle towards the female empowerment. By interpreting this following affirmation from bell hooks, I can argue that she favors the coexistence between men and women to call for female empowerment.

For a true society rid of phallogocentric ideologies, men should make sacrifices. They should accept to lose some favors and privileges. So far, contemporary feminist movement has been primarily generated by the efforts of women and men. This is the reason why that hooks in going deeper into her analysis, she claims that “The empowerment of women would necessarily be at the expense of men” (B. Hooks, 1984, p. 67). From this claim, it seems obvious to me to assert that she opens doors to male participation in the process of giving authority to women. She advocates a radical involvement of men in the fight for women’s empowerment. Basically, bell hooks is warning that the proposed solution will only make the issue of female liberation possible. In other words, she believes that male should adopt an opened mind posture in women liberationist movement. In making this comment, this feminist advocator urges us to take men as partners in the process of making women powerful.

Actually, the shift of the female cultural roles in this contemporary novel reveals a very important side of women’s empowerment. In effect, in this corpus when I have noticed some men taking part in the execution of some domestic works, it has brought new tendencies about the traditional notions of female roles in men-dominated settings in Africa. In fact, this corpus ironically turns down the cultural assumptions of the representation of women in contemporary Africa. As a matter of fact, I can argue that this novel is a perfect celebration of women’s rights all over Africa even in the world context too. By giving strong voices to the female characters in this corpus, I can assert without any doubt that women’s empowerment in Africa is something which is getting a higher level. In effect the notion of female promotion is a central topic in my corpus.

At the end, it is better to notice that the theme of the shift of female cultural roles in the process of women’s empowerment in contemporary African phallogocentric societies has been the main concern of this first section. In fact, it is a study which has been done through a feminist perspective. As a matter of fact, it better explains how the fact of turning upside down the notion of female cultural roles can open doors to the issue of their empowerment in African modern societies. So then, what’s about the

notion of the continuum collaboration between men and women in African contemporary communities? The upcoming lines will deal with this concern.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, one can say that the struggle for women to change their conditions was the main issue. This feminist fight can be disclosed as follows: first, forms of oppression have been identified; second, the work emphasized the empowerment of women. In the last élan, the remapping of the society is crucial as it helps to establish a genderless society. From what emerges earlier, it is high time women understood that no one will be there to help them. They must themselves alone to be successful always.

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