



Gendered Spaces and Ruptured Identities

Representation of Women in
African Literature



Editors

Hem Raj Bansal
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CHAPTER 7

Decoding the Politics of Denial of Female Identity: An Analysis of Beryl Subia Awuor's *Black Moon*

Roshan Lal Sharma and Prakash Kumar Meher

"Is there hope, to dream, to dare, to live
and just be me?" (Awuor 14)

This chapter undertakes textual analysis of Beryl Subia Awuor's debut collection of poems titled *Black Moon* from the viewpoint of issues concerning female identity, its denial and politics involved therein. Awuor, who is a powerful and young poetic voice from Kenya, currently teaches in Dubai. She is a graduate in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Nairobi (Awuor, "Committed"). The poetic universe of her debut collection is poignantly nuanced, layered, daring and challenging, evidencing denial of female identity in a deeply patriarchal society wherein "to dream" and "to dare" seems to be an impossibility. The chapter has been divided into three parts: the first briefly theorises the notions of identity, identity politics, and female identity; the second part examines Awuor's poetry from the viewpoint of decoding politics behind denial of female identity; and the third and final part offers summation of insights based on problematising female Kenyan identity as a genderised construct in Kenyan context through textual examination.

I

Whereas at one level the term 'identity' signifies distinctive personality and character of a person; at another, it includes her/his thoughts, beliefs, mindset and individuality which distinguish her/him from others. Gender identity refers to "an individual's personal sense of identity as masculine or feminine, or some

CHAPTER 13

Representation of Women Suffering under Regressive Traditions in African Literature: A Reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*

Priti Paul Verma and Roshan Lal Sharma

The word 'tradition' means an indigenous heritage, foundational, unwritten beliefs and customs handed down from distant past to be used in present and carried forward in times to come endlessly. We all knowingly/unknowingly give acquiescence as well as acceptability without much grumble or grouse and adhere to them in our day-to-day lives. It is the emotional fabric, which binds us to our forefathers and makes us distinct from one another. It enjoys the privilege of being followed blindly. The *Mariam-Webster* describes 'tradition' as "cultural continuity in social attitudes, customs, and institutions" (Merriam-webster.com). In fact, some of the finest memories in our lives comprise moments when we uphold the traditions of our family, clan or country. Men have laid down their lives for upholding noble traditions and have become immortal and great like patriotic warriors who can do anything and even die to uphold their traditions. Tradition is a stimulus to progress and it lays down guidelines for simple and complex decision-making and leaves us free to live our life, obeying those set customs and rules.

Every country has its distinct set of culture and tradition that suits it best according to its geographical location and instills a discrete quality in its social relations and practices. South Africa is famously referred to as the rainbow nation due to its diverse and synchronized cultural tradition and religion that on close scrutiny seem to be deeply rooted with their sacredness. Myriad of tribes with their unique tradition live in South Africa making it spellbindingly

Ruptures, Wounds and Convalescence: Analyzing Complex Contours of Slavery in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*

Prajya Parmita Mishra and Roshan Lal Sharma

Slavery has been a historic blow to human civilization – a wound that may perhaps never heal. Richard Hellie views slavery as a “condition in which one human being was owned by another” (n.pag.) It implied “dependent labour... usually, but not always, involuntary” performed by the slave who was “deprived of personal liberty and the right to move about geographically as he desired.” This chapter paper seeks to look into the complex contours of slavery, its ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ alongside its devastating impact on several African generations in general and the way it impinged on the lives of black women and their achingly glorious survivance in particular. It will also try and encompass the indigenous life with its richness of customs and rituals and a dignified Black existence until it was disrupted by slavery. The wounding effect of enslavement and sturdy surviving instinct of the black populace and especially the black women will be the major point of consideration in this chapter. An attempt has been made to compassionately grasp and study the ruptures, the wounds and the scope of subsequent reconciliation and convalescence in Yaa Gyasi's novel, *Homegoing* (2016) in which slavery is the common thread that interlaces a series of interconnected stories to form an empathetic fabric of the novel.

Slave trade, which signifies “the capturing, selling, and buying of enslaved persons” (Britannica), has always engendered illimitable curiosity and has supplied infinite material for writers like a