

## **Women's Sympathy as a Surviving Strategy in Zimbabwean Novels: A Nego Feminist Approach**

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### **Abstract**

Nego Feminism is one of African type of feminism. It confirms that African feminism challenges through negotiation, accommodation and compromise. It asserts that gender difference can be approached through negotiation. Nego Feminist theory has been used for the analysis of this paper. This analysis is useful in the African context for certain reasons. First most Zimbabwean writers reflect the relevance of empowering women for the transformation of a given nation in their workings. Secondly, Zimbabwean writers raise their pen to echo women's issues after 1980's and they resist western hegemony and neo-colonialism in their literary texts. This new terrain involves demanding changes in the political and social aspects of the societies in which they exist. This paper utilizes Nego Feminist reading as a research tool for collecting relevant extracts from the selected texts, and Chanjeri Hove Bones and Tsitsi Dangarembaga's *Nervous Conditions* are sources of data.

**Key Words: African Feminism, Nego Feminism, No Ego Principle, Sympathy, Complementarity**

### **Introduction**

As certain sources revealed Zimbabwe was under the influence of colonialism for longer period than other African countries. Like most of the African countries, Zimbabwean cultural, social, political and religious practices nourished from women ignorance and exploitations. The dominant tribes, around 79 percent, are Shona, and the remaining are mostly Ndebel. Before colonialism, even though the indigenous cultural practice of the country had been subordinating women rights and equality in many ways, Zimbabwean women were able to experiences some informal powers in the house and in the community. Here are Schimdt's words in this regard; "The pre-colonial *Shona* women had a substantial amount of informal power in the home over their daughters, as mothers-in-law or as aunts to their brothers' wives. Women did not own any means of production, and they were excluded from the allocation of land" (1992, p. 234).

The exclusion of Zimbabwean women from owning land was negotiated by the cultural practice which is held during marriage. Different authors wrote about this cultural gift that is expected to be paid by the family of the man who is going to marry the girl. This gift or dowry is once paid does mean the legal exclusion of the woman from land allocation. In line to this Beach pointed out that;

Women position as producers and reproducers was authenticated by the payment of *lobola*, in the case of *Ndebele* and *roora* in the case of *Shona* as a dowry that was paid to the parents of the woman as a token of appreciation. This *lobola* or *roora* is usually a mix of cash and cattle. *Lobola* or *roora* was paid to compensate the woman's clan for the loss of productive labor which also served as enough reason to exclude women from direct control of the means of production" (1980, p. 342).

Here the point is the woman is at the middle between the family of her husband and her own family. The gift goes to her family thus they get benefit because of her, and her husband approved her exclusion from land allocation. Thus, she is there for the benefit of others on behalf of her. This means that women were used as objects of exchange, an exchange which is perceived as implying equality. Once the family of the woman received this gift, they did not bother about the safety or situation of their daughter. It is up to the will of the man who gave that dowry to decide about the woman. The gift gave husbands legal control over wives and children and their labor.

Moss and Lorraine also confirmed that "the *roora* or *lobola* legitimizes the husband's right to his wife's labor and to sexual access to her body. He also gains legal authority over her reproductive organs. He had the right to possess all children born to her" (1999, p. 298). Since this practice is adored and confirmed by Zimbabwean people, the woman is supposed to respect and accept her subordination after the dowry. The life that she could have with her husband is up to her to continue leading it in what matter and situation she is in. No one is expected to worry for her once the gift is served. This means that the success or failure of the woman's life is directed by the personality of her husband. In addition to this, Seidman stated the expected praise woman should do for men around her: "Zimbabwean women would bow their heads and bend their knees or kneel when speaking to adult men, an exercise which is still very prevalent in today's Zimbabwe" (1984, p. 102). This practice is not done for elder women in the society. From this, the male section is the most prevailed and superior section in the family and in the society. Since this position is approved socially, men stay the patriarch in the family and in the society.

*Shona* women especially married once were supposed to overcome household chores. This subordination was visible on daily bases. Cooking food culturally is allotted for the woman. As Beach (1994) stated, in the gathering of both men and women, the women were supposed to sit on the mats, and men sat on top of them on the mud ledge. It was necessary to arrange *Shona*'s home in the style of mats on the ground and on top of it, the raised mud ledge where male could sat on above. But such style of arrangement was changed after colonization. The culture of chair and sofa becomes the new way for sitting equally with men in the house. Even if such subordination was there, women were able to have an influential power over their husbands. In this regard Schmidt said that "despite the sexist customs, women appeared to have exerted some leverage even in the traditional household" (1992, p. 19). That can mean that women were trying to negotiate with men for sharing the household-chores with men or boys in the house. It is up to the woman to negotiate and persuade

the male section to do something, but otherwise household chores are the responsibilities of women culturally.

Zimbabwean women, as Schmidt (1992) argued, were trying to approach their male counterparts systematically to hear them on those issues that were not welcomed by the culture of the society. He said "Shona woman was not the downtrodden timid individual she is often supposed to be" (1992, p. 19). This means that women were exercising some approaching strategies as much as they can in that patriarchal situation.

Moreover, the status of *Shona* women deteriorated under colonial rule. As Khadir (2000), documented in his book, before the colonial period, women served as mediums, mediators in local disputes and even heads of communities. However, by the late 1930s very few head women remained in power. The missed up of women from this position could emanate from their mounted task in the house and in the field. Since their men left them for labor work for colonizers, women were supposed to handle the family by covering the field work which was culturally done by men; therefore, they could not have time and courage to continue working in these heading positions. This is the indirect exploitation of women by colonialism. In addition to this, the introduction of colonialism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century changed the state of Zimbabwean women in certain ways. Here are Meeker's words in this regard:

Many factors external to traditional society, such as education, urbanization, migration to urban towns, and of course, religion influenced indigenous women during the colonial period. The Shona customary laws were rigidified through structural enactment of laws. For instance, a Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 was introduced as a law governing the allocation of native land (Meeker 1993, p. 40).

Colonizers took the fertile lands of the native Zimbabweans, so that people ran to urban for labor work for feeding their family. Women who could no longer resist those burdens could run to cities for better life comparatively. Schmidt (1992) narrated that women could escape to a town, where they would have to find a male patron, whose domestic and /or sexual needs they could satisfy in exchange for shelter. Those other expenditures mostly those routine costs were supposed to be covered by women. Women did their best for these costs since family is very important for them than their own safety and interest. Therefore, violence related to labor and sexual abuses of men are inevitably unquestioned since the seen judge of the society is on the responsibility of men who provides house.

As Seidman (1984) pointed out, religion introduced Christian marriages, additives that cannot count as 'customary', but in today's Zimbabwe they are part and parcel of expected 'customs' or 'traditions' of the *Shona* people. But the cultural practice of giving *roora* or *lobola* and its expected regulations are still working in today's Zimbabwe. The researcher was contacting a woman called Dr. Rose Chikafa who is currently a lecturer at Harare University. In the conversation, she assured that the payment of *roora* will mount up if the women's level of education is higher. The amount is proposed by the brothers of the women family. But after this ceremony, people are going to remarry in church. Therefore, the practice of marriage in church did nothing about the equality of women with men than show off. In this regard, Cheater confirmed that "the commercialization of *lobola* or *roora* means that the more educated the bride is, the more the groom has to pay" (1986, p. 68).

Hence, the woman is expected to be obedient and super 'wifely' in what is termed 'traditional' sense because of how much has been paid for.

Furthermore, the production aspect of women has been 'naturally' eliminated in post-independent Zimbabwe due to improved status of women who no-longer have to work the fields, for they have to be gainfully employed and at the end of each month surrender their payment to the husband who is the head of the household. The sense of women's self-respect and their right on their own wage is concluded with the gift that their husband paid to their family. Since this is the accepted culture, women know their place and live according to the norm.

The payment of *lobola* in *Ndebele* and *roora* in *Shona*, as Cheater (1986) asserted, continued through the colonial period, and is ironically still practiced today in independent Zimbabwe, despite the fact that the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was ratified in the mid-1990s. The issue of *lobola* and *roora* as a token of appreciation is insignificant as this has now been commercialized. Women whose parents have received *lobola* are expected and obliged to play the 'traditional' roles expected of wives.

Thus, the current research is interested to examine how women characters approach their men sympathetically to achieve their goal or to live peacefully in this patriarchal society as reflected in the two novels; Chanjeria Hove's *Bones* and Tsitsi Dangarembaga's *Nervous Conditions*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is Nego Feminism which was developed by Obioma Nnaemeka. The theory is built around African traditional values, especially in terms of how women operate within the society, and more specifically, how women navigate their way in patriarchal setups. Nego Feminism, as Nnaemeka proposes, is neither a radical nor aggressive approach, but one that gives room for collaboration and mutual agreement; one which sometimes involves sacrifice; but ultimately, one that builds on negotiation, co-operation and togetherness without arrogance. The central focus of this theory is to eventually facilitate a harmonious relationship between the two sexes.

No ego or no self-feminism is one aspect of Nego Feminism. The essence of this concept in this theory means that the women are supposed not to be selfish and individualistic. The ground of this idea is the culture of the continent-Africa. Nneameka in her theory asserts that African culture is mainly based on give and take or share principle. Since Nego Feminism is based on indigenous culture, it affirms the sociocultural perspective of the continent to bring about an indigenous solution to gender treatment. Hence, the theory maintains that it is through meaningful association and accommodation that gender equality in the continent could be possible.

Particular to this holistic approach Nego Feminism asserts that the African woman should not be selfish and ignorant; rather she should believe in giving or sacrificing her interest for others around her for the sake of helping others to feel good and live a meaningful life. In line with this, Nneameka said "I was inspired by the philosophy of no ego feminism ... critiques and cautions against the ego trip that engenders feminist arrogance, imperialism, and power struggles. However, the cultural dimension remains the dominant force" (Nnaemeka, 2002, p. 2).

Here, the point is that the African culture mostly appreciates togetherness and communal sharing and communal assistance in difficult times. In this togetherness more value and respect is given to community interest rather than individual interest. Nnemeke believes that such a culture should enhance a peaceful life in which the woman is a chief factor. Furthermore, the woman should also be sympathetic and give priority to other people's interest and well-being. This is what Nnemeke implied by "No ego, No self". This will be her reward. Sacrificing self-interest brings about reward which can be in different forms. It can be psychological or tangible.

### **Methodology**

The study is qualitative and is limited to the analysis of the representation of women sympathy as a strategy in the two novels using Nego Feminist theory. The study will use data and information obtained through the close reading of Dangaremba and Hove postcolonial texts. Textual analysis is employed as a method to portray the various perspectives and thoughts of the authors in the selected texts for scrutiny. Basically, textual analysis involves "discovering the author's potentially unintended connections between different texts, asks what a text reveals about the context in which it was written, or seeks to analyze a classical text in a new and unexpected way" (Dodds, 1989, p. in this study).

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The first novel to be analyzed and interpreted with the principle of no ego approach is *Nervous Conditions* (1988) by Dangaremba.

To begin with Tambu's family was poor and was not able to cover the school fees for her and her brother at a time. The family only paid Nhamo's schooling. Teaching boys was preferred in that setting since it was believed that teaching girls could not help their family because when the girls got married, they are supposed to leave their salary for their husband. Thus, their own family could not get any benefit from them. In addition to this, the traditional patriarchy appreciates male sections to educate than females. Females are expected to stay home for household works. For these reasons, it was Tambu's brother who was sent to school, and she was supposed to stay at home. This was the decision of the family because women were not required in the fields of self-cultivation. On the contrary, what they were required to do was to be engaged in feminine jobs that were instructed and allocated by the family and the society. Tambu said their mother started boiling eggs and sold them to the passengers for covering Nhamo's school payment. It was Tamubu's mother who was responsible for working such jobs that could incur money for supporting the family but not their father who did take this responsibility. In this incident, Tambu did not insist on her family to send her to school in any way. Rather, she began to think about reasons that pushed her parents to make such a decision. "I understood that selling vegetables was not a lucrative business. I understood that there was not enough money for my fees. Yes, I did understand why I could not go back to school, ... my circumstances affected me badly" (Dangaremba, 1988, p. 15).

Tambu was not selfish and ignorant about her family's economic status. However, she didn't stop thinking about her education too. Even if her goal was to continue her education, she logically tried to identify strategies that could help her go back to school without affecting the economy of her family. Instead of blaming her family and giving up her education, she looked for a solution for her

financial problem. She had started planting maize cobs for sell. But her brother Nhamo was so selfish and inherited patriarchal ideology from the family and the society. He was not happy to see his sister going back to school. He wanted to be the only one who should get educated and respected in the family. This was evident that when Tambu's crops of maize were ready for selling, they disappeared. The narrator told this to the reader as: "A few days later, when the cobs were ripe for eating, they began to disappear" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21).

Tambu was disappointed by the happening. It was her brother who stole them and gave them to school friends as her friends told her later on. He did this as he didn't want Tambu to go to school. When she faced him about the matter, he responded that: "what did you expect?" Nhamo said. 'Did you really think you would send yourself to school?' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21).

This shows that Nhamo was very self-centered and insensitive about how Tambu would feel. She did not stop planting the cobs. She continued working hard on the farm since she had decided to continue her education in any way. Even if she was staying at home with routine house chores and besides he was her younger brother, she was serving him without any complain. Therefore, Tambu was not selfish and ego centric as he was. This helped her to create good relations with the family and at the same time this could teach the society about the relevance of selflessness. Here the researcher interpreted this event as follows. Since Tambu respected her culture, she did not confront her family or her brother; rather she used the cultural production of maize to solve the problem. This is what the principle of Nego Feminism wanted to be the way out for the patriarchic culture of Africa.

In the novel, the writer describes two important situations through the characters. First, there are characters who hate their cultures and identities that they nurture from the family and the society in that specific setting. This was seen in Nhamo's reaction to the news which was about his shifting to his uncle Babamukuru's house so that he could have a decent education.

"I shall no longer be Jeremiah's son. ... I shall wear shoes and socks, and shorts with no holes in them, all brand new, bought for me by Babamukuru. He has the money. I will even have underwear – a vest and pants. I shall have a jersey in winter, and probably a blazer too. I shall stop using my hands to eat. I will use a knife and fork" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 48).

Here what fascinated the boy was the values that he was going to stray from, and the values that he was going to hold in his uncle's house. This means that this boy was not happy with the identity he had developed at his home. He went to the extreme of forbidding his father. His father was too poor and uneducated; that was why Nhamo has got such identity. The luxuries that he was eager to have did not belong to him. He did not rationally think about how he would handle the benefits he would get from the new situations, from his uncle Babamukuru. He was self-centered and material-minded.

Unlike her brother, Tambu was proud of being who she was, and she adores her culture which was the source of her identity. But she hated those consequences of poverty driven aspects. She didn't hate the values she acquired from her family and the society. She dreams to see a new personality when she went to her uncle's house; the new personality which was not irritated by economic insufficiency. This was mentioned in the extract under:

"Corrugated black callouses on my knees, the scales on my skin that were due to lack of oil, the short, dull tufts of malnourished hair. This was the person I was leaving behind.

At Babamukuru's I expected to find another self, a clean, well-groomed, genteel self who could not have been bred, could not have survived, on" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 58-59).

The wish of Tambu was personal improvement. Since she was worrying about economic insufficiency, the only way out was education. After she got educated, she could help the family like Babamukuru. This can be inferred from the fact that she was frequently mentioning her uncle's support to her family. She was always fully committed to education because she wished to be educated like him since education brings about social and economic advancement.

The best example that represented no self/no ego personality in the novel was the wife of Babamukuru, Miaguru. Babamukuru and his wife, Miaguru, had been studying for their Degree in South Africa and got MA degree in England. But when they came back to the family of Babamukuru or Rhodesia, relatives and people around gave great respect and praise for Babamukuru. No one was greeting and even noticing Miaguru. Tambu narrated the situation as follows:

"Babamukuru stepped inside, followed by a retinue of grandfathers, uncles and brothers. Various paternal aunts, who could be relatives of the lower strata. Miaguru entered last and alone, except for her two children, smiling quietly and inconspicuously" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 37).

Miaguru was a quiet person who did not like show off. She dressed decently. She had the manners of a decent lady. This could also be seen in the way she walked. She was also devoted to her husband and children. She sacrificed everything for her family. Although she was an educated woman, family members did not give her the warm welcome like they had given to her husband. Since she was behaving as those who were not educated in that setting, no one was giving any regard for her. This made her to be seen like other women in the family and the society. In other words, she lived an ordinary life there peacefully.

Miaguru exposed herself when she was talking with Tambu sometimes later since the above mentioned incident. She told Tambu that she had an MA degree like her uncle. That was very unexpected for Tambu. Here is the dialogue:

"Do you really have a Masters Degree?

Didn't you know'

How could I have known? No one had ever mentioned it to me.

Did you ever ask?

yes, we both studied, your uncle and I, in South Africa for our Bachelor's Degree and in England for our Master's" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).

This dialogue showed that Miaguru did not reveal her educational level unless someone asked her. Another incident which exhibited no ego/ no self was when Tambu asked Miaguru about the amount of money that she had been receiving when she was working in England. Tambu reminded their words as: "You must earn a lot of money, 'I breathed in awe. My aunt laughed and said she never received her salary. I was aghast" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).

This statement showed that Miaguru has been giving her money to her husband. She didn't use it for herself. What matters for her was just serving her husband in any way she could. This could help to build the sense of complementarity and cooperation in her family by practically showing them her

devotion and love. However, marriage should be based on mutual help. In this case, it was Babamukuru who got all the benefits of marriage. In this regard, Nnaemeka (2004) asserted that when one shows more care for another more than self, the other party should react that way so that the two could built mutual satisfaction. Thus, the selflessness of Miaguru was not successful in influencing the sympathy of Babamukuru. He was simply exploiting her in all aspects. Here the researcher needed to say that Miaguru was undervaluing herself for no reward from her husband. Therefore, this woman was not strategical in influencing her husband to start thinking about her and the family. She was there to be exploited and subverted by his authoritative personality.

The other example of no ego/no self that Miaguru revealed was seen when Miaguru asked Tambu about her feelings concerning her trip to South Africa and England with her husband. Tambu replied as follows:

“I thought you went to look after Babamukuru,’ I said. ‘That’s all people ever say.’ Maiguru snorted,’ and what do you expect? Why should a woman go all that way and put up with all those problems if not to look after her husband? Can you tell me now that they aren’t pleased that I did, even if they don’t admit it? No! your uncle wouldn’t be able to do half the things he does if I didn’t work as well.

If it was necessary to efface yourself in order to preserve his sense of identity and value, then, I was sure Maiguru had taken the correct decisions” (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101-102).

Here it is visible that the two women, Maiguru and Tambu, accepted that their femininity was all about serving their male counterpart around them; at homestead work and in bringing money too. Maiguru uncovered that the success of her husband was because of her strength in helping him working outside for bringing money for the family, taking care of the children and her husband too. She said: “Your uncle wouldn’t be able to do half the things he does if I didn’t work as well!” (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).

Here helping her husband to get success in his education is good, and it is an accepted and expected task of the wife. But what matters is in the process of helping this man Miaguru should not leave her own life too. Her help and cooperation should also be shared by Babamukuru in helping her back. He did not show such a reaction. He preferred to continue using her as inferior than him. Thus, she was a subordinated woman by this educated man. Therefore, this selflessness is not a strategical approach that changed the mood of Babamukuru.

For Miaguru, the well-being of her family was the most important thing than her self-interest. She knew what things she would do with the degree she holds if there were not Babamukuru and her children there with her. She gave everything that she had to the family for the sake of the interest and happiness of her husband and the children. We cannot imagine the challenges she might have faced. She speaks of it as follows: “When I was in England I glimpsed for a little while the things I could have been, the things I could have done if-if-if things were-different-But there was Babawa Chido and the children and the family” (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 101).



As it is read in the above extract, Miaguru called her husband as Babawa Chido which means the father of Chido, her son. This implies that she is trying her best to be strategic in approaching him with sympathy. She goes this far, the researcher understood, because this man is very strong and rigid on settling cases and relationships in the family. Miaguru said she was having an opportunity to do more when she was in England. But she prefers to leave these things for the sake of her family. This means she had made lots of sacrifices for the family and Babamukuru. She said: "Does anyone appreciate, what sacrifices were made?" 'As for me, no one even thinks about the things I gave up" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102).

This extract shows that Miaguru exhibited her love for the family by paying a price. The prior thing that she worries about is her husband and her family too. Priority is given to her family not to herself. As she testifies it, Babamukuru would not have got his present educational and social status if she was not serving him as she did. The family of Babamukuru, including the family of Tambu, got economic benefits and the present social status because of the sacrifice Maiguru had made.

The sacrifices that Miaguru experienced impressed Tambu. Instead of complaining Miaguru quietly shouldered the burden of the family by striving for their welfare. This was evidenced in the novel as:

"If it was necessary to efface yourself, as Maiguru did so well that you couldn't be sure that she didn't enjoy it, if it was necessary to efface yourself in order to preserve his sense of identity and value, then I was sure, Maiguru had taken the correct decisions" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102).

This extract showed that Tambu had a feminine identity, and she believes in the preservation of one's identity and value at the cost of self-sacrifices. Tambu was not only impressed by Miaguru, but she also approved what Miaguru did. According to Tambu, Miaguru is the woman who strives for the welfare and social change of the family. For Tambu Miaguru was right in serving her husband that way. This complementarity helps the two sexes to live peacefully as a family. But the researcher feels differently. The life of Miaguru was full of commitment and scarification. This scarification helped Babamukuru to achieve his own goal. But he did not realize that scarifying for his wife is also important for her to achieve her own goal. He never showed this attempt in the novel. Thus, Tambu was not the right girl to see this fact logically. Second Tambu seemed biased for her uncle. If she was not such a girl, she would understand the subordination of Miaguru even after those troubles. Therefore, Miaguru could not be a sample woman in the family and in the society that portrayed strategic sympathy in her life.

The reflections of selflessness were also detected in the novel *Bones* (1988). In this novel, the two characters, Marita and Janifa were portrayed to reflect selflessness in various circumstances. Hove creates Marita that represents the intensity of motherhood and sympathy for her offspring over her comfort and benefit. This was reviled in the following words of the narrator, Janifa: "But she calls me to read the letter all the time without end, even in the night, everybody else asleep in their huts, on their mats, but she still wants to hear what she wrote to me. I say all the time, I feel ashamed" (Hove, 1988, p. 1).

For Marita the most important thing was hearing the words of her son. As the narrator said it, during the time of sleep, Marita never allowed herself to get rest, so that she could stay safe and strong.

Instead she preferred to spend her time of sleeping for her son's letter. Marita founded the willingness of Janifa in reading the letter, since, the researcher understood that, Janifa had a love affair with the boy who wrote this letter, and Marita realized this feeling. Because of this realization, she got the courage of asking Janifa read the letter even in that mid night. This interpretation is given since Janifa testifies that she feels ashamed when she asked to read the letter. This shame could emanate from the influences of the word there in the letter on her emotion. Therefore, the sympathy of Marita that was detected by Janifa was successful since Marita identified that Janifa could be persuaded to read the letter since she had a feeling to this lost boy. Thus, Marita's sympathy for her son was understood by Janifa in response. Marita got what she wanted; she heard the words of her son.

The other no ego essence was reflected on the sympathy of Janifa to the letter that she received from her boyfriend. She shared the context of the boy while writing that letter to her in her imagination. She gave credit to the letter since this letter was written through the efforts of the boy. She took good care of this letter, since it was the product of the boy's tension and timing. This is evident in the following paragraph:

“That was the first letter a boy ever wrote to me, with his own hands, sitting somewhere, hiding from his parents to write a letter to me. I felt my blood do all sorts of things, then saw how I should hide it even from him so that he continued to think that I had thrown it in the lavatory as the teacher had commanded. They command you know” (Hove, 1988, p. 3).

Instead of living peacefully without any tension, the tension that she had if someone got the letter, she preferred to face the consequences than throwing the letter away as her teacher warned her in front of the class. Even if loving someone was one thing, the sympathy of Janifa for this boy was very strong and manifested in taking care of and hiding it from everybody even from the writer himself. This sympathy was assisted by her strategical approach and cautiousness regarding men around her. She said: “they, they command.” (Hove, 1988, p. 3). This ‘they’ is understood to mean men; even if men are there to dictate the woman to do this or that, the woman should recognize their intension and be systematic in winning over their command. That way the men stays as if their command is running safely, and the woman stays fascinated on their success by the strategy that they had as a woman to be had. This is the central concern of Nego Feminism.

Janifa told to her boyfriend that she had thrown his love letter in to the lavatory. At that moment he was too emotional in harming her to the extent of killing. “I told him one day that I had thrown the letter in the lavatory....from that day he did not speak with me....i will kill you, I will cut your head off for you. You bitch...” (Hove, 1988, p. 5).

This boy was so selfish. He did not try to show any sympathy for the emotion of this girl. He saw things from his own perspective only. He did not let her even for a reason. These words hurt her. She was lying about the letters for assuring him the strength of his feeling to her. But she got a psychological violence instead. She said:

“From that day, he injured my heart in all sorts of ways, as if I had swallowed all the needles on this farm, all of them, pains from even the tip of my breasts. Even when I failed at school, I felt I had also failed with him, failed him too. Failing all of us in one

word like that. i don't know how the heart gets injured, but mine was cut in to pieces that day when he said that. He said it over and over again in my dreams, in my food, in my clothes, and I felt death come over me like a flood. Then I felt I should tell you about it" (Hove, 1988, p. 6).

The mother of the lost son, Marita, was the most selfless character in the novel. Even if she was illiterate, she believed that women should get education. Instead of letting them stay home and work household chores, they should learn. This was revealed when she was preparing herself to listen Janifa reading the letter. She said: "it is good to send children to school, my child. Children should not be kept at home like cats and dogs (Hove, 1988, p. 6).

Marita exceeded the safety of others than her own feeling and security. She did not know the city before. Although everything she heard about it was so frightening as revealed on page 19, she did not bother about her safety. Her only worry was her son. But her husband, Marume was self-centered. This was portrayed when she was in a way to go to city to look for her son. She alerted her husband about her journey. He was not willing to accept her decision. The reason of his resistance was related to his own benefit and safety. Here is the evidence. "Do you know what it is to be a husband without a wife... all the cooking, washing for myself, carrying the water from the well over there. It is going to be very hard for me, let me tell you with my own mouth" (Hove, 1988, p. 18).

This showed that he worried for the possible duty that he should undertake, not about the security of his wife. He still resisted her since the white man would be angry on the leave of Marita since she was the strongest worker in the farm. "Now you stand up to tell me you are going to look for your son in the city, leaving me alone to face Manyepo with a story, how do you think he will take it? I will be lucky to come out of it alive, Marita, alive" (Hove, 1988, p. 20).

The white man was very self-centered and ignorant of his workers situation. For him the important point was whether the farming was done well or not. He was not willing to hear their case as Janifa recalled the dialogue that she had with Marita. "I will no longer be working for Manyepo. All he worries about is his work, nothing about me or my son. I have bracken my back working for him...." (Hove, 1988, p. 26).

Marita was sympathetic for Janifa, who was forced to work in the white man's farm. Marita worried for this girl and took the share of Janifa's work before she started her own. Janifa remembered this as:

"When the baas boy gives me my small bit and goes to weed her own shore, child what are you doing in these fields from which you will never harvest anything? You should be in school so that you do not end up in the same grave that will swallow your mother and me?" (Hove, 1988, p. 41).

She was very logical and saw things from different perspective. As a trend when workers in Manyepo's field tired up, it was the children of them who took over the task. Therefore, Marita was doing her best to prevent Janifa from receiving the task of her parents. She did this by helping her in the field work and gave her time for attending her school class in time. Marita told her fear to Janifa as: "I feel sad for you to think that Manyepo wants you to take your mother's place in the fields. We

have better things to look forward to child. Not this endless suffering. You were not born to suffer child?" (Hove, 1988, p. 41).

The story of Marita was mainly narrated by Janifa. She told the story with deep sorrow and sympathy. On the ninth section of the novel, no ego of Marita was portrayed. On one incident some of the fighters whom were known as terrorist had arrived in the farm with no guns so that no one suspected them. They met Marita and had made some dialogues regarding the happenings in the farm land and how the white man was treating them. As Janifa told us and discussed in the analysis, Manyepo was very exploitive and bad man who harassed both men and women workers in many ways. When one of these soldiers asked Marita about the white man, she said that he was a man as any man. He was not that much bad; hence he should not be blamed for anything. Here is the evidence from the novel:

"How is the white farmer you are working for? Does he do bad things to you and other workers? Say it if he is evil and we will bring you his corpse in a short time. We have no time to waste. How is he? Does he call such names as kaffir, boy,...

His badness is just like any other person'

You mean he does not beat workers up like the other farmers we have visited?

He does not beat up workers for nothing. I said his badness is just like any other person's badness. It does not deserve to earn him death.

If you say so and nobody disagrees with you, mother, we shall leave you in peace"

(Hove, 1988, p. 62-63).

Even if Marita was telling the soldiers a different story, Janifa knew the reality and remembered her reaction to Marita's deed to the readers as follows: "did I not see Manyepo kick you as if you were a football? Did I not hear him curse at you, calling you all the bad things that the tongue can still mention and not rot? Marita your heart surprises me (Hove, 1988, p. 63).

Here one could interpret Marita's response to the fighters as a lie. Janifa was also in dilemma for the mismatch that she saw between the words that Marta told her before and the lie that Marita did in this incident. The following is their dialogue that clearly showed the smartness and sympathy of Marita.

"But Marita, why did you save Manyepo's life by lying like that'

Child, what do you think his mother will say when she hears that another woman sent her son to his death?

But Marita, did you not say that the tongue that lies will die shameful death?

Yes, child, but it is better to let that tongue kill itself than to help it kill itself. The white man thinks we are children, that is why his tongue is loose. The day he learns that we are also grown-ups, he will learn to tighten his tongue. He was brought up like that. You do not expect him to think differently from what his mother told him" (Hove, 1988, p. 63).

Marita was the most selfless and smart character in the novel. Instead of revenging the white man who violets her physically and psychologically using these fighters, she chose to resist her pain inside than letting the white man's mother worried if he was going to die. She was so fair and reasonable so that she believed that this white man character was built up by his mother; therefore, he should not be blamed. Here, her smartness is visible in two ways. First she believed that since she knows the pain of losing son, she do not want to see anyone to feel it as her. Second she blamed the

mother of this white man because it is his mother who did not teach him how to be a good man in his childish period. Such a thought is very important for controlling one's emotion and judgment on issues that affect the wellbeing of the individual and the group too. Marita was confident that this white man will be changed to good behavior one day; thus, he will do well in the future. In this conversation she was seen that the hurt that she had in her about her son should not be repeated on another woman even the mother of the one who violated her. Since she was sympathetic for the sensation of the white man's mother, she hides the exploitative approaches of his Manyepo, and she save him from these fighters.

Since Marita was selfless, she saved Manyepo from death. The researcher agrees that if she told the truth about Manyepo and the fighters killed him, the consequence does not cease over there, and there is nothing that she could tangibly get in hand. Rather things could be worsen. Since that time was favoring the whites than the indigenous, these fighters and even Marita would be in trouble severely. But her deed was very logical and a model for Janifa that showed the extent of sympathy. Such instance is crucial for the woman for preserving her environment peaceful.

### **Conclusions**

The basic objective of this research is to examine the reflections of women sympathy in the given socio-cultural context, to analyze the efficacy of women sympathetic approach cross the line of men patriarchy for achieving a certain goal, or for living peacefully in the situation and to examine the impact of colonialism on women operation.

As the analysis showed, women characters in the two novels were approaching men sympathetically. In *Nervous Conditions* MaShingayi was successful with this approach, but Miaguru was selfless for no reward. In *Bones* Marita was successful by this strategy specially with her relation with Chisaga and her husband.

The indigenous patriarchy was possible to be approached by women sympathetic approach than colonialism. In *Nervous Conditions* the colonial figure Babamukuru and in *Bones* the white man Manyepo were very ignorant of women approach.

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