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Title as a Clue to Magical Realism in Selected Anglophone African Post-colonial Novels

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Abstract **Original Research Article**

This study deals with realism of titles as one of the hallmarks of postcolonial African literature. Conducted through the theoretical lens of Gérard Genette's 'paratextuality', which echoes the work of other pioneers of 'titrology' such as Claude Duchet (1973) and Léo H. Hoek (1981), it analyses how the choice of certain paratextual elements such as titles and subtitles by the authors selected for this study forms the basis of a literary work, if not a key indicator of the thematic concerns raised. This analysis shows that titles and subtitles are not limited to simply designating or identifying the work; they shape and condition the interpretation of its critical reception even before the first page is turned. Titles and subtitles in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, Sefi Ata's *Everything Good Will Come*, and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and *Glory*, for instance, globally reflect a deliberate and nuanced engagement with the socio-political realities of post-independence Africa. In the first two novels, these paratextual features reflect the realistic way in which these feminist authoresses challenge patriarchal ideologies, resonating in a very interesting way, as an anthem for all African women subjugated by a conservative society. In *We Need New Names* and *Glory*, however, titles and subtitles emerge as indicators of a moral and political outrage in Zimbabwe, taken as a microcosm of post-independence African countries prone to unspeakable turpitude. These narratives respectively express an outcry for a paradigm shift in identity and leadership, since the abjectness depicted here draws attention to the failure of African leaders who, through their mismanagement, have disillusioned young people in particular. The latter have no alternative but to flee in endless waves, risking their lives and leaving behind an empty and devastated continent.

Keywords: Paratextual features, realism of titles, post-colonial African novel, patriarchal ideologies, paradigmatic change of Identity.

INTRODUCTION

A literary work can give rise to many interpretations that diverge to the extent that critics are convinced of holding the truth and they become irreconcilable enemies. Quite simply, no critic can be sure of fully grasping the message of a literary work. The message of a work of art is independent of the various interpretations that can be given to it to the point that several methods are helpful to enlighten it in convergent ways as Charles Mauron (1977:136) writes:

> Un phénomène aussi complexe et aussi obscur que la création littéraire exige plusieurs méthodes d'approches. Loin de s'exclure, elles se complètent. Toute méthode me semble valable pourvu qu'elle s'appuie sur les faits et les textes.

This position has been shared many years before by critics who have theorized about literature and literary criticism. Accordingly, Thomas Stearns Elliot quoted by Scott Wilbur (1962:11) enunciated an interesting split of judgement that "*The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards.*" In the same wake, Scott Wilbur (1962:11) himself posits that "*the field of literature studies is currently a heterogeneous configuration of competing practices and epistemologies…. .*" Therefore, this author wants critics of any work of art to bear in mind that:

> There are many good critical pieces which defy the compulsion to pigeonhole; and it is equally foolish to suppose that any critic deserving of continued attention will stay within the confines

> of a single approach. On the contrary, he is likely to employ that method or better those methods in combination-which best suit his knowledge, his particular work of art before him. (Wilbur:1962,12)

Yet, it is a matter of critical agreement that two essential dimensions have to be considered in the appreciation of any work of literature whatever its genre: the referential or the thematic dimension meaning the content, and the literal dimension related to the form of the text. These two realities are connected to each other to the point that at a deepest level of the literary practice, one reinforces and echoes the other. In other words, a good and more rewarding appraisal of a literary work requires that one takes into account both aspects as Palmer Eustace (1973:x, xi) better puts it:

> The message is certainly important, but 'artistic' criticism of technique is not invalid. The well-made novel is a composite of message and technique, and any work which is deficient in either is open to criticism. [...] One expects of a good novelist, therefore, that apart from his preoccupation with his message, he should have some concern for the appropriate style and show signs of technical competence.

This pronouncement that seems to be the backbone of the stylistic criticism which finds credence in Palmer Eustace who, in reference to the ideas put forward by stylistic critics, comes to the following conclusion (1973: x):

> Surely what transforms the novel from a political or sociological work to a work of art is the novelist's technique, the devices he uses to shape, explore define, and finally evaluate his material. Discussion of the novel cannot afford to neglect technique.

A position clearly shared almost a decade later by Emmanuel Ngara in his seminal work entitled *Stylistic Criticism and the African Novel* (1982:11) when he writes:

> Although a work of art consists of various elements such as plot, theme, characters and ideas... without language these elements would not be what they are; in other words, they are realized and given form through the medium of language. In our analysis of literature, therefore, we need to have a sound understanding of the phenomenon called language, of its nature and functions.

The above assertions match the main concern of this study since the hypothesis here is that authors selected as templates purposefully use all kinds of artistic materials to create aesthetical appealing novels. This does not mean that every novel by each of them is a perfect work of art but it seems that their works, taken as a whole, indicate however authors' mastery of their art.

From the forgoing, one easily deduces that most of the time, African works of literature have been addressed from a purely thematic perspective with reference to one or two novels only. The current analysis, drawing from the Gérard Genette's theoretical pronouncements on 'paratextuality' furthered by other pioneers of 'tetralogy' such as Claude Duchet (1973) or Léo H. Hoek (1981), seeks then to broaden the view in order to fill the lacuna. As a matter of fact, although novels under scrutiny, namely Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* [1], Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*[2], and NoViolet Bulawayo' *We Need New Names*[3] and *Glory*, have already received a great amount of international critical attention, little has been written about the magical realism of their titles or other paratextual items. Indeed, one of their respective authors' achievements lay on their skill depicting social burning issues. For, beyond aspects of thematic considerations such as disillusionment, betrayal, woman condition, environmental emergencies to mention only them, this paper is an examination of the social criticism undertaken by the selected post-colonial writers, with respect to their ideological stance, through some of the paratextual devices they deploy.

In reference to Gérard Genette who defines 'paratext' (1996:40) as "*those things in published a work that accompany the text, things such as the author's names, the title, preface or introduction, or illustrations*," in the framework of this study, the analysis will centre only on two of them: titles and subtitles showing how far they operate as clues to the writer's thematic concerns. Yet, for this French narratologist, the title is one of the paratextual elements that can describe the content of the novel and allow the reader to distinguish a book from others. According to G. Genette (1987:80), the title carries different functions which are: "*Identification, description, designation, connotation and attraction.*"

Since Art for art's sake in African Literature is out of question, titles and subtitles of novels, despite their fictitious dimension, are purposely chosen. They are very expressive, since they, most of the time, contain the crucial information which is necessary to seize the meaning of the novel's content. This reminds of Jean Pierre Makouta Mboukou who accordingly emphasizes the paramount importance on these paratextual features in African literature and especially for the African novel when he writes:

> Le roman africain est un genre qui s'exprime réellement aux nègres d'Afrique. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle les romanciers choisissent avec soin le titre de leurs œuvres. Celui-ci, en effet, n'est pas indifférent ; il résume en un, deux ou plusieurs mots, l'œuvre toute entière. Tout comme son contenu, le titre du roman est profondément réaliste, c'est-à-dire qu'il vise déjà la nature réelle de 'l'objet' en évitant de l'idéaliser. (Makouta Mboukou:1980, 226)

[1] Subsequent quotations from this novel will be inserted in the text as *The Joys* followed by the page number.

[2] Subsequent quotations from this novel will be inserted in the text as *Everything Good* followed by the page number.

[3] Subsequent quotations from this novel will be inserted in the text as *We Need* followed by the page number.

Indeed, the title of a literary work is one of the paratextual elements of prime importance for not only does it act as the threshold or the gateway to the narrative but it establishes the initial relationship between author and audience. A position in tandem with L. Hoek (1981: 17) who, considering the title of a book as "*un phénomène psycho-social, une insertion dans la société et dans l'historicité*" defines it as:

> Ensemble de signes linguistiques […] qui peuvent figurer en tête d'un texte pour le désigner, pour en indiquer le contenu global et pour allécher le public visé. […] Le titre, en tant qu'incipit, est cette partie de la marque inaugurale du texte qui en assure la désignation et qui peut s'étendre sur la page de titre, la couverture et le dos du volume intitulé » (Hoek : 1981, 19)

The forgoing statements about this magical realism of titles and subtitles in the African postcolonial novel lead us to consider gender-based narratives prior analyzing novels epitomizing the youth's disillusionment, appealing then for ideological and paradigmatic change of identity and leadership.

I- Theoretical Framework: Realism of Titles in Literature

As said earlier, this study is conducted through the prism of Gérard Genette's theoretical pronouncements on 'Paratextuality' which echo ideas put forward by other pioneers of 'titrology' such as Claude Duchet (1973) or Léo H. Hoek (1981).

Gérard Genette (1930-2018) is looked upon as the coiner of the neologism 'paratext' which, according to him, brings together all the discursive elements – but also non-verbal units accompanying literary works, in a way, thus encouraging or even facilitating its reading. Drawing much from structuralism, Gérard Genette (1996:40), in his seminal works, *Palimpsestes* (1982) and, above all, in *Seuils*, defines 'paratext' as

> Those things in a published work that accompany the text, things such as the author's names, the title, the preface or introduction, or illustrations. […] those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publishers' jacket copy are part of a book's private and public history.

Genette further elaborates more about among the others discursive elements that surround or relate to a literary text, the 'epitext,' and 'peritext' respectively dealing with the internal and external paratextual features. The peritext includes aspects such as the title, preface and book cover illustrations.

Dealing with titles, Claude Duchet (1973) is credited with coining the neologism of 'titrology'. Derived from the French word 'titre' which etymologically comes from Latin word 'titulus' having connotations of a small piece of parchment or inscription used to label or identify something. The word was borrowed into the Old English as 'titul', maintaining the meaning of heading, label or inscription. It then evolved into the Middle and Modern English, clearly appearing as 'title', a 'standard' word encompassing its connection to a written work.

'Titrology' is a relatively recent and specialized word to the pint that it is still rarely found in classical dictionaries, making it a bit of a hidden gem in literary and linguistic circles.

In literature, 'titrology' is literally referred to as the study of titles the art of crafting evocative titles, whether in literature, journalism, cinema, or other creative fields. Put in another way, 'titrology' is a discipline that analyzes the titles of intellectual and artistic works, often within the broader framework of paratextual studies—a concept popularized by Gérard Genette. Applied to literary works, 'titrology' offers some fascinating insights into how titles and subtitles shape readers' thematic before they even dive into the content.

The title of the novel, for instance, is undoubtedly the most striking feature if not the first catalytic and paratextual element within view of a potential reader as soon as he ventures into the novelistic universe since it more or less clearly suggests the book's content. In this regard, C. Grivel (1973 referred to as one of the theorists and pioneers of 'titrology', C. Grivel (1973: 173) opines:

> Si lire un roman est réellement le déchiffrement d'un fictif secret constitué puis résorbé par le récit même, alors le titre, toujours équivoque et mystérieux, est ce signe par lequel le livre s'ouvre : la question romanesque se trouve dès lors posée, l'horizon de lecture désigné, la réponse promise. Dès le titre, l'ignorance et l'évidence de son résorbement simultanément s'imposent. L'activité de lecture, ce désir de savoir ce qui se désigne dès l'abord comme manque à savoir et possibilité de le connaître (donc avec intérêt), est lancée.

Actually, titles in literature play a powerful role in shaping readers' expectations by signaling the thematic, emotional, and ideological terrain of the narrative. They often act as a kind of literary compass, guiding readers toward the core tensions and questions the text will explore. Max Roy (2008 :47) lends credence to this position, in "Du titre littéraire et de ses effets de lecture" when he writes :

> Un titre ne fait pas un livre, encore moins une œuvre… Mais on l'en détache difficilement, et plus encore avec le temps. […] Indissociables des textes qu'ils annoncent, les titres restent parfois le seul souvenir des lectures passées, voire le seul segment de texte lu. Qui ne connaît pas certains titres d'œuvres qu'il n'a pas lues mais dont il sait ou soupçonne l'importance ? Tout lecteur, pourtant, apprend tôt ou tard à se méfier des titres de livres.

As for 'epitextual' elements such as subtitles, Serge Bokobza (1986) opines:

> Parallèlement aux titres des œuvres littéraires, les titres internes, sous-titres et intertitres jouent un rôle singulier. Ils ponctuent le texte d'informations redondantes ou nouvelles pour accompagner ou éclairer la lecture. Tout cet appareil titulaire concourt à l'efficacité du texte,

> lui assurant une cohérence et une lisibilité. Les titres des chapitres […] ont plus qu'une fonction de repérage dans le texte. Ce sont des résumés ou des canevas, doublement parodiques, du récit qui va suivre.

From the forgoing, one easily concludes that titles and subtitles are somehow the grounding or the basic of a literary work, the key to its comprehension as John Fisher (1987:2) argues:

> Attending to titles, even subtitles, in some instances absolutely essential to understanding; evaluating, and interpreting of literary work, altering our listening, seeing, or reading of the work, and pointing the way to its correct perception.

In Anglophone post-colonial African literature, titles and subtitles reflect a deliberate and nuanced engagement with the socio-political realities of post-independence Africa. Put in another way, titles and subtitles don't just name the work, they shape how readers interpret the story before the first page is turned. They act as thematic signposts or gateways, inviting readers to engage critically with the post-colonial condition since they, most of the time, encapsulate the tensions between tradition and modernity, colonial legacy and cultural resurgence, and individual identity versus collective memory.

II- Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*: A Hymn for all African mothers in a conservative society.

II.1- Synopsis of the Novel

Fourth published novel by Buchi Emecheta (1944-2917), a Nigerian novelist resident in London from 1962 onto her death, *The Joys of Motherhood* is critically received by the audience and editors as one of African gender-based masterpieces thanks to their appreciations. New York Times, for instance, reads: "*Emecheta writes with subtlety, power and abundant compassion.*" In the same vein, Essence argues: "*A rich, multi-layered work of fiction, full of drama and written with deceptive simplicity.*" Finally, Washington Post Book World appreciates Buchi Emecheta's novel through these words: "*Emecheta tells the story in a plain style, denuding it of eroticism, displaying an impressive, embracing compassion...[She] writes compellingly and utterly without condescension.*" (see back cover page of the Edition published by Pearson Education Limited 2008)

The Joys of Motherhood's dedication page reads: "*To all mothers*" for the authoress addresses it as an 'hymn' for all African women challenging the patriarchal stereotypes which still keep them are confined into social marginality. Set in the Nigerian Second World War and subsequent years, the novel tells the story of Nnu Ego, a young Ibo woman called who dreams of living a traditional life as a mother of many children. In fact, Nnu Ego the protagonist is the favorite child of Agbadi, a polygamous father for she grows into a beautiful woman. She is firstly married to Amatokwu, the son of a wealthy and titled family. Unfortunately, it is a failure for, she is unable to get pregnant. Her husband takes another wife who quickly conceives. Nnu Ego loses almost all her weight because of that emotional infliction. And, soon she goes back to her father's compound, she is engaged in a second, but arranges marriage with Nnaife, a man who works in Lagos as a washer for a white family Dr and Mrs Meers. Although Nnu Ego does not like this kind of job but she finds in Nnaife, an ideal man since he quickly makes her become pregnant. Regrettably, this son dies and then the unfortunate freshly mother is nearly to commit suicide. After being advised to not jumping off the bridge, Nnu Ego returns back and becomes pregnant rather rapidly. A joy of motherhood altered for her husband loses his job. With the breaking out of the World War II, Nnaife finds another job on a ship and is obliged to leave home for months while Nnu Ego struggles to support the family through a little trade. back home, it is very difficult in the sense that Nnaife is to be greeted by the news that his eldest brother is died and he has inherited all his brothers' wives and children. So, he becomes polygamous, although most the wives remain in Ibuza but, ones of them, Adaku comes in Lagos and moves with Nnu Ego and Nnaife. Nnu Ego learns to become a senior wife and starts to share Nnaife's pitiful salary with Adaku one of the wives of Nnaife's elder brother.

One day, Nnaife goes to Ibuza and gets another young girl named Okpo pregnant and comes back with. Fortunately, she is a good girl and has the same traditional values that Nnu Ego has, so their relationship is a good one, almost like that of a mother and daughter. But the fact Nnaife has now many wives frustrate Nnu Ego because they can hardly afford the children they have.

Apart from the son who dies, Nnu Ego gives birth to many children including two sons to her idea man, Nnaife. So, they decide to send their children to school and this of course involves spending a lot of money. The eldest son is graduated in an American university and gets married to a white woman. The youngest also follows his brother's footstep. They can now live abroad and become rarely in contact to their parents. This attitude affects their mother and even father who thought that if they succeed, they can help paying for their younger brothers' schooling. Furthermore, one of their daughters gets married to a Yoruba man; this is strongly forbidden according to Ibo tradition. As a result, Nnu Ego is blamed by her family and the villagers consider it as a betrayal. Nnaife assaults the father of his daughter's husband and he is sent to prison. Then, Nnu Ego moves back to Ibuza where she is not welcome on Nnaife family's compound so she moves into her father's household with her youngest children. She lives out her remaining days and dies there.

II.2- *The Joys of Motherhood's* Title and Subtitles

The choice of the above title seems ironic. For, at a deep level of analysis, the reader easily infers that instead of centering on the issue of motherhood as a fortune, *The Joys of Motherhood* rather epitomizes the plight of a mother who sacrifices everything for her children but finally experiences a life full of sorrows. Indeed, Nnu Ego, the protagonist is a prisoner, trapped by excessive love for her children. Yet, she utterly and entirely devotes this love to ensure her children a flourishing life as the narrator puts it:

> After such wandering on one night, Nnu Ego lay down by the roadside, thinking that she had

> arrived home. She died quietly there, with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her. She had never really made many friends, so busy had she been building up her joys as a mother. (*The Joys*, p.253)

What the authoress shows is that motherhood and the responsibilities can dramatically turn into a king of enslavement. The sentence "*so busy had she been building up her joys as a mother*" evidences that Nnu Ego is completely involved in her children's welfare, a reality which pushes her to give a maximum of affection and care expecting happy old days. But none of these cherished children 'returned the lift' to her because "*she died quietly there, with no child to hold her*". This reminds of African women who dedicate their entire lives investing in their children's welfare to the detriment of their own happiness.

Coming to its inner structure, *The Joys of Motherhood* falls into eighteen subtitles which, for most of them go with the authoress' ideology that of dramatizing the woman's condition characterized by an unfair treatment. This is mainly true for substiles such as '*The Mother's Early Life*', '*First Shocks of Motherhood'*, '*A Failed Woman'*, '*A Mother's Investment*', '*Sharing a Husband*', '*A Good Daughter*', '*Women Alone*', '*Mother of Clever Children*', and '*The Canonized Mother*' which express the exploitation, the marginalization, the creation of stereotypes, violence, polygamous.

As an illustration, the third chapter, '*The Mother's early life*' has been chosen to better depict the protagonist in her first union with Amatokwu. A pathetic life paved with sorrows waving between her incapacity to give birth and the coming of the second wife. In effect, not only is Nnu Ego considered as a useless woman because she is infertile, but she is reduced to a status of her co-wife's babysitter. Later, she goes back to her father's compound, after being beaten by her husband who finds her appealing the baby. The bride price is returned to him. For, Agbadi, her father has found her a new husband, Nnaife a washer man, in Lagos and she is obliged to go and join him there.

Again, '*First Shocks of Motherhood*' the fourth chapter paints Nnu Ego' plight in Lagos with her new husband Nnaife. It deals with Nnu Ego's antipathy with Nnaife that she does not look as an ideal partner with his fat belly. And contrary to all expectations, she gets pregnant of Nnaife and give birth to a beautiful son, Ngozi. Unfortunately, this joy turns into a shock when she discovers the death of her baby.

Nnu Ego's desolation reaches a menacing pitch in the fifth part '*A failed woman*' with her attempt to commit a suicide after discovering the passing away of her most expected and only begotten son. A four -week- old baby that she was unable to take care. And through this loss she becomes a failed woman.

'*A man is never ugly*' the subtitle given to the sixth chapter talks about the desolation of Nnaife who qualifies himself of ugly after the passing away of their boy. Booted by his friend Ubani who reminds him that a man is never ugly, Nnaife finally realizes his manliness when he makes Nnu Ego pregnant of in few times even though, the baby was dead. Yet, good husband, he provides them with all life amenities.

The tenth subtitle '*A man needs many wives*' talks about the status of Nnaife which turns from monogamy into polygamy after the death of his elder brother. As a result, traditional custom of Ibo people stipulates that he must inherit all wives and children of his dead brother. And the first wife to come is Adaku. Finally, against her will, Nnu Ego becomes the senior wife.

As for '*A good daughter*', the thirteenth chapter presents Nnu Ego as a good daughter because, when her father was about to die, she has gone to Ibuza although her pregnancy to show him her accomplishments as a mother of a many children; sons and daughters. And after his death, she has given birth to a baby boy whose name is Nnamdio meaning this is my father, in order to pay homage to her father.

'The Canonised Mother', the title given to the closing chapter, is rather an ironical for is it in contrast with 'The Joys of Motherhood'. The authoress dedicates it to all mothers that she wanted to praise for the investment and sacrifices they make for their children. As a mother, she knew what, giving birth and raising a child imply, as she almost confesses it in a conversation with Adim, one of her 'beloved' children:

> "It was true what they said, she thought, that if you don't have children the longing for them will kill you, and if you do, the worrying over them will kill you." One day she called the boy and talked to him seriously.
> "Look, Adim, it seems I am alone with you in this game of living. Your father blames me and you, my children. Ibuza people blame me: they say I did not bring you all up well because I spent most of my time selling things in the market. They are predicting that none of you will come to any good. Are you going to fulfil their hopes by rejecting yourself too? You can blame me if you like, but listen, good son; so far you and your sister Taiwo are my only hope. I hope in you two, not only that you will feed me in my old age but that you will wipe the tears of shame from my eyes. So don't let yourself go. Face your school work; it is your salvation." (*The Joys*, p.239)

All things considered, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* is a hymn for "*To all African mothers*" in which the Nigerian feminist has succeeded to link each subtitle to each chapter. A peruse of the novel's title and all its subtitles helps the reader easily infers Emecheta's evident inclination to denounce the mistreatment of women and the abuse of power by men. For, since being a mother in Africa can turn into a form of enslavement, she depicts the hardships times African mothers or women face in their daily every day.

III- Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*: The Growing up of the female child from adolescence to adulthood.

III.1- Synopsis of the Novel

Published in 2006, *Everything Good Will Come* is Sefi Atta's debut novel. It examines the socio economic and political landscape of Nigeria and how it affects the psychology of the woman. Accordingly, many praises are visible on the cover page of the novel where *The Times Literary Supplement* (First

Chapter *Everything Good Will Come* by Sefi Atta Myriad Editions…) reads:

> Sefi Atta's first novel is a beautifully paced stroll in the shoes of a women growing up in a country struggling to find its post- Independence identity...The main characters are well realized, and the supporting cast- campaigning journalist, put- upon mother-in-law, co-wives in a polygamous marriage, stroppy secretary- avoid caricature. The related tempo of the narrative allows for proper development. *Everything Good Will Come* depicts the struggle women face in a conservative society. This is convincing more remarkable is what the novel has to say about the need to speak out when all around is falling apart.

Through these words, one can assert that themes developed in Atta's novel are quite relevant. In the same connection, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie states: "*There is wit, intelligence and a delicious irreverence in this book. But it is Atta's courage in choosing to look at her fictional world through fiercely feminist lenses that I most admired.*" Finally, Buchi Emecheta also admires Sefi Atta's novel as follows:

> *Everything Good Will Come* is like listening to an old friend recounting and bringing-up-to-date and to life the happenings in our beloved city of Lagos. From Ikoyi bordering the Marina, to the south nearing Yoruba towns, every part is reawakened and alive: red, throbbing, like the heartbeat of a healthy newborn. I was sorry when I came to the end. (see; First Chapter *Everything Good Will Come* by Sefi Atta Myriad Editions…)

Everything Good Will Come is a novel dealing with the growing up of the female child from adolescence to adulthood. Its plotline follows Enitan, the protagonist who grows up in post-colonial Nigeria and England and becomes friend with her neighbor Sheri Bakare. Together they went through a rape, heartbreak and divorce. In fact, the two young girls who later become adults, try to build their future in a country where the disorder is king. In her childhood, the protagonist lives in a broken household, with a dominant and uncaring father; Sunny Taiwo, and a deeply religious and mother; Arinola. Enitan is the unique child of her parents because her young brother dies after a sick cell crisis. Years after, she was sent to England for law studies, behind her, her parents divorced. Then, at her return to Lagos she starts working with her father as his legal assistant. And she meets Sheri again after her rape scene that Enitan witnessed in their childhood. Also, the young Muslim adult becomes the financial support of her family after the death of her father, and the mistress of a jealous and dominant Muslim officer Brigadier Hassan. So, while working for her father, Enitan falls in love with Mike Obi an artist who finally cheats on her. Later, she discovers that her father too has an affair with a woman, and this affair gave birth to an illegitimate son unbeknown to the Taiwo family. The betrayal of Mike does not discourage her, for she finds another lover Niyi Franco a banker to whom she gets married with against her father's approval. At the very beginning of their relationship, Enitan lived a total happiness with her husband although, she did not submit to his patriarchal orders, such as cooking all the time, remain at home, mostly, while being pregnant, she partakes to a reading activity for the release of political prisoners with Grace Ameh the female journalist who informs her about her father arrest. After the activity, both women are arrested too, for public disorder. A news which puts Niyi into a silence state because her wife always disobeys him. At the end of the novel, the protagonist succeeds since her father is released, even though her mother dies alone after taking expired tablets. Then, she gave birth to a little daughter and decides to divorce with Niyi, in order to be free of his domination and to better live her life of activist. Indeed, Sheri on her side decides not to depend to Brigadier Hassan anymore by starting her catering business which helps her to buy a house and car.

III.2- *Everything Good Will Come's* Title and Subtitles.

Everything Good Will Come opens with and follows the growing up of Enitan, an eleven-year-old protagonist, from adolescence to adulthood. Indeed, Sefi Atta singles herself out by using dates as subtitles instead of words or sentences to show the various stage of growth of that female protagonist. These subtitles predominantly indicate her footsteps into maturity, that is to say from a naïve, ignorant, and inexperienced child leaving in a father's house as a patriarchal hostage to self-asserted woman made up to achieve her dreams since she moves out of any space that limits her aspiration. In fact, the authoress has divided her novel into four dates which introduce each of its four parts.

The first part '*1971*', shows the early stages in the life of Enitan and her friend Sheri. This date explains the death of Arinola, Enitan's brother. Being alone at home, she becomes friend with her neighbor Sheri, a Muslim and stubborn girl against her mother's agreement. That friendship is still seen when Enitan is about to go to the Royal College boarding school. As for Sheri, she is described by Enitan as a hibiscus that attracted insects in the following passage:

> Prettiness could encourage people to treat a woman like a doll, to be played with, tossed around, fingered, dismembered, and discarded. Prettiness could also make a woman lazy, if she were congratulated for it too often and remunerated too long. Sheri was the Nigerian man's ideal: pretty, shapely, yellow to boot, some regard for a woman's station. (*Everything Good*, p. 86)

As the story unfolds, Sheri is raped and later she described as a scarlet hibiscus, because this sexual abuse and its subsequent abortion left her with a damaged womb. The authoress depicts the plight of motherhood through Sheri who cannot give birth due to the fact that, she gets pregnant after her rape and makes an abortion which damages her womb and never allows her to be a mother. Sheri's sorrow is expressed through her speech:

> And me, myself, she said. What did I know? Taking a hanger to myself, with all the biology I studied. I still thought I had a black hole inside me. So, which single man from a normal family would have a person like me?

> Better to be, to be crippled, to be a thief even, than to be barren. (...) a woman had to have a child. (*Everything Good*, p.102)

This assertion not only confirms the mother's image attributes to a woman but also, the loss of significance in man's life to the one who does not fulfill the criteria of motherhood. Because, no man desires an infertile woman. Again, through the sentences "*better to be ugly, to be crippled, and to be a thief*" the author indicates that the prowess of woman dwells neither in her physical appearance nor her social status but in her ability to give birth. And "*a woman had to have a child*" tells us how it is compulsory for her to have a child to prove her womanhood.

The second part set in '*1975*' portrays Enitan's life in the boarding school. It deals with Enitan's puberty and all its subsequent body as well as psychological changes. She recollects this year as follows:

> Outside our school walls, oil leaked from drilling fields on the Niger Delta into people's Swiss bank accounts. There was bribery and corruption, bit some of it concerned me, particularly in June 1975. It was as vague as the end of Vietnam. I was just glad our fourth-year exams were over. […] I was captain of our debating society, though a longed to be one of those girls chosen for our annual beauty pageants instead. Those cranky nodules behind my nipples didn't amount to breasts and my calf muscles had refused to develop. The girls in my class called me *panla* […] in our country, women were hailed for having huge buttocks. I wanted to be fatter, fatter, fatter, with a pretty face, and I wanted boys like me. (*Everything Good*, p.35)

In effect, away from her family circle, the teenager lady not only begins flirting with boyfriends; but gets socialized with people of other tribes, countries, and religions. A life period that will heavily impact and shape her social mood as she confesses:

> Away from my own home, my days in boarding school were like a balm. I lived with five hundred other girls and shared a dormitory with about twenty. […] Royal College girls came from mixed backgrounds. In our dormitory alone we had a famer's daughter and a diplomat's daughter. The Farmer's daughter had never been to a city before she came to Lagos; the diplomat's daughter had been to garden parties at Kensington palace. There were girls from homes like mine, girls from less privileged homes, so a boarder might come back from class to find her locker and had been broken into. […] I met Moslem girls: Zeinat, Aisha who rose early to salute Mecca. […] I met Catholic girls: Grace, Agnes, Mary who sported gray crosses on their forehead on Ash Wednesday. There were Anglican girls, Methodist girls. One girls, Sangita, war Hindu and we loved to tug on her long plait. […] I met girls born with sickle cell anemia like my brother. Some were sick almost every other month, others hardly ever. […] I learned also about women in my country, from Zaria, Katsina, Kaduna who decorated their skin with hyena dye and lived in Purdah; women from Calabar who were fed and anointed in fattening houses before their weddings; women who were circumcised. I heard about towns in western Nigeria where every family had twins because the women ate a lot of yams, and other towns in northern Nigeria where every other family had a crippled child because women married their first cousins. None of the Women seemed real. There were like mammy-water, sirens of the Niger Delta who rose from the creeks to lure unsuspecting men to death by drowning. (*Everything Good*, pp.33- 34)

As it can be seen, Enitan's passage in Royal College symbolizes her transition from childhood to adulthood, that is to say, from innocence to responsibility. For it was a socialization place where Enitan and her school mates were exposed to each other's cultural values in order to help them shape not only their temperament as growing girls, but above all, a national consciousness for a successful social insertion.

The third part of the novel is entitled '*1985*'. This subtitle shows Enitan with more experiences and is also set in an atmosphere of military usurpation of political power. In fact, this date describes Enitan a young adult living in London for studies and gives her virginity to a boy who later, dates someone else. Then, she goes back to Nigerian to study law and meets her friend Sheri after an extended separation. Again, she is victim of unfaithfulness by a new boyfriend called Mike Obi. Set in an atmosphere of military usurpation and political power, this part shows Enitan's experience namely with the discovery of her father's son Debayo and her new relationship with a man called Niyi Franco without seeking for her parents' approbation. Enitan's father, Sunny rejects her choice of being married to a man he doesn't know and does not choose for his daughter, as Enitan explains:

> But when I told her I was going to marry Niyi she said they had madness in his family. (...). I told my father about my engagement and he, too, suddenly became religious. "Not allowed," he said, raising his forefinger; not allowed by the Pope, he meant. Niyi was a divorced Catholic, so he would not give his blessings. (*Everything Good*, p.157)

Set in '*1995*' the final part of the novel also shows that the heroine has gained and garnered more experiences and has become more assertive. Through this subtitle, one discovers Enitan and Niyi Franco who becomes her husband. Actually, this subtitle highlights the struggle of Enitan as activist who succeeds to liberate her father from prison after her mother's death. Also, it talks about the separation of Enitan with her husband Niyi Franco who does not support her interests and wants her to fulfill her duties as wife and woman; meaning to become a 'kitchen martyr'. Enitan in the last part of the novel, acquires and accumulates more and more experiences through her night to prison with her pregnancy because, she participates to a reading organized by Grace Ameh the journalist in support of journalists in detention. Finally, the protagonist experiences

her mother's death, her father's detention and liberation, her child's birth and her separation with Niyi Franco.

All things considered, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* are gender-based masterpieces which have won many prizes thanks to their appreciation by the audience. As a result, both novels being modernist, portray in a very interesting way, many issues that undermine the African society in all periods and aspects of life.

IV- NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*: an outcry for a Paradigmatic change of Identity.

IV.1- Novel's Synopsis

Published in 2014 by Vintage, *We Need New Names* is the debut novel of the expatriate Zimbabwean writer NoViolet Bulawayo. It tells the story of Darling, a 10-year-old girl, living in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s. Darling is forced to set up in a shantytown called Paradise after her family and many of her friends have been bulldozed in the midst of a political upheaval. She spends her days with her friends, playing games and going to Budapest to steal guavas. Sometimes, an NGO comes to drop off clothes, toys, and food. On Sundays, Mother of Bones takes Darling to a church congregation that meets on top of a mountain called Fambeki, led by Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro while her father works in South Africa and her mother sells goods. Darling and her friends experience the harsh realities of society around them through their games and conversations, such as wondering about the gender of their friend Chipo's baby, pretending to be the people who killed a young man named Bornfree for his political involvements, and arguing over which world powers they get to be when playing country-game. Darling's father returns, sick with AIDS, and she must care for him for a time, which she hates because it takes her away from her friends.

Soon, Darling migrates to America and lives with her Aunt Fostalina. She hardly adapts to the American culture and misses her home and her friends.

She sometimes behaves inappropriately, such as disciplining and hitting someone else's child while at a wedding. Darling lives a difficult high school student's life: dabbling in porn, going for joyrides with her friends, and taking on two part-time jobs to save money for community college. However, her connection to Zimbabwe always nags at her as she grows further apart from her friends and family, exacerbated by her inability to return for a visit because she has already overstayed her visa. In a climactic moment, Chipo accuses her of abandoning her country and tells her she cannot call Zimbabwe her country any more. The novel ends with her uncle telling her that they have found bin Laden, which causes Darling to remember a game she and her friends used to play.

IV.2- *We Need New Names'* Title and Subtitles

We Need New Names, like all its subtitles have been chosen to better express Bulawayo's ideas. In fact, it is a very significant tittle which carries functions such as identification, description and designation. The readers understand that NoViolet Bulawayo's title is brief and allusive since it allows to identify the book and guess its content. However, during the interview broadcasted on Tuesday 4th June 2019 at the London's Southbank Centre, NoViolet Bulawayo explained:

> *We Need New Names* demands asking a question, which would reveal who the "We" is, and the whom this call-to-arms is addresses? She explained that the meaning behind her imperative was the necessity for Africa and its inhabitants to establish "new ways of imagining our realities". By using names like Godknows, Bornfree, Messenger, Mother Love, Darling to quote but a few, Bulawayo wants to show that people need new ways to view their realities including their identities.

Moreover, in the search of new identity, Darling sees her father leaving his own country for South Africa hoping to get a better life. That situation divides the family, for, Darling's mother believes in the 'Eldorado' but in her own country because, leaving is not the solution when she asserts:

> Things will get better, Mother said, finally. There is no night so long that doesn't end with dawn. It won't stay like this, will it? And besides, we can't all abandon our country now. (*We Need*, p.92)

Additionally, apart from her own father, Darling starts also to observe other people leaving the country as she states:

> Look at them leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves. Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambitions are crossing borders. Those with hopes are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those with pains are crossing borders. Moving, running, emigrating […]. They flee their own wretched land so their hunger may be pacified in foreign lands, their tears wiped away in strange lands…. (*We Need*, pp.145-146)

These words describe people who are fed up with all the mores of their land and have no alternative than migrating, searching for new ways that can provide happiness and better future.

Further, Darling simply goes away searching for the Eldorado in the United States of America. She leaves her country which is burning as the following passage is persuasive:

> Why did you run off to America, Darling Nonkululeko Nkala, huh? Why did you just leave? If it's your country, you have to love it to live in it and not leave it. You have to fight for it no matter what, to make it right. Tell me, do you abandon your house because it's burning or do find water to put out the fire? And if you let it burning, do you expect the flames to turn into water and put themselves out? (*We Need*, p. 286)

This quotation really shows that Bulawayo deplores people who abandon their own countries. She rather appeals them to reconsider this hopeless vision and see things in another way. Indeed, '*We Need New Names*' is a title chosen as an indicator of each character's deep desire for a change of identity. Through names of characters such as Godknows, Bornfree,

Messenger, Mother Love, to quote but a few, Bulawayo wants to show that people need a new way of imagining their identities. Bornfree, for example, means someone born after the independence, like the authoress herself. In the same way, Bulawayo has herself changed her name. Indeed, Born Elizabeth Tshele, she now calls herself NoViolet Bulawayo. In an interview with Bulawayo, Adah Musati Makokha, quoting Ben Greenman (2019: 5540), explains this choice as follows: "*she chose to call herself NoViolet to mean 'with Violet' in memory of her mother who died when she was 18 months old. Bulawayo, her second name, is a reminder of her yearned-for home city in Zimbabwe…*" One clearly understands that by changing her name, she wants to get a meaningful identity in order to keep in touch with the Zimbabwean culture generally speaking and particularly the Ndebele one. It is also a way to keep in touch with her homeland, Zimbabwe and precisely Bulawayo. 'Bulawayo' is NoViolet's home city. It means a place of slaughter. This name derives from the 'Ndebele' word '*Bulala*' meaning to kill. Furthermore, Bulawayo decides to call herself 'NoViolet' in memory of her late mother. In an interview with Sabine Peschel quoted by Adah Musati Makokha (2019: 5545), Bulawayo explains the meaning of 'we need new names' in these terms:

> I wrote the novel at a specific time of my country's history. Recent history, I should say, when the country was coming undone, due to failure of leadership. And by saying 'we need new names' I was speaking for the need for us as a people to sort of re-imagine, rethink ourselves, rethink our way, thing about where we were going. We needed new ways of seeing, of doing things, new leadership. It was basically a call for renewal.

One easily infers that Bulawayo's title '*We Need New Names*' is an outcry for paradigmatic change. For, assuredly, '*We Need New Names*' is an answer to the deficiencies of leadership not only in the authoress's homeland, Zimbabwe, but wherever people are oppressed by all those Africans whose actions contribute to hinder steps undertaken by the pioneers of forces of progress. Indeed, while entering the 2000s, for instance, things begin to fall apart in Zimbabwe with reference to the political unrest, the repression, the economic collapse and many other evils. That is why people need new ways of envisioning themselves, new ways of seeing life or their future. Yet, Bulawayo expresses her desire and people's thirst for getting not only a new president but also renewing a corrupted leading system in Zimbabwe as Darling, one of novel's characters, impatiently contends: "*[…] and about how things are back home, our old president who doesn't want to die so we can get a new leader at last*." (*We Need*, p.179). In an interview with David Smith (2013: online), Bulawayo echoes her heroine's overriding longing when she confesses:

> I feel like we need a new breed of leadership, not just a presidential figure but a new gang. For me the answer lies with the young people because I feel the current generation is old, it's outdated and it has failed the people. The government has been in power since just before I was born and I think it's time to give the ball to better players. I feel like Zimbabweans are capable enough and the reality is they don't have a voice or the space.

Sentences such as "*The government has been in power since just before I was born and I think it's time to give the ball to better players*" evidence that many African leaders want to hold on to power preventing the others to exercise power despite their age and their crimes. That is why most of Africans leave their countries, simply because they are fed up with tyranny and are in lack of opportunities. Hence, through '*We Need New Names*' Bulawayo urges people to overstep passivity and fight against the ruling class instead of crossing borders.

As for subtitles, '*We Need New Names*' contains eighteen subtitles connected to each other. These subtitles are titles of chapters that can be divided into two parts. The first part goes from the first chapter to the tenth one and talks about Darling in Paradise. Here, some of the most striking subtitles are: 'Hitting Budapest', 'Country-Game', 'Real Change' and 'How the Left', 'Destroyedmichygen', 'Hitting Crossroads', 'My America' and 'Writing on the Wall',

'Hitting Budapest', the opening chapter is a short story written by Bulawayo and has been annexed to others to constitute a novel. So, *We Need New Names* is an extension of 'Hitting Budapest'. Put in another way, 'Hitting Budapest' is about Darling and her friends' departure to Budapest to steal guavas. Indeed, because they have nothing to eat, they decide to leave Paradise for Budapest to fill their stomachs with guavas.

In the second chapter entitled 'Darling On The Mountain,' Darling, the protagonist, explains how her living conditions has prompted the envy of immigration for a new home which is 'Paradise' as it is written:

> Paradise is all tin and stretches out in the sun like a wet sheepskin nailed on the ground to dry; the shacks are the muddy color of dirty puddles after the rains. The shacks themselves are terrible […]"(*We Need*, p.34).

Here, one realizes that Darling's new home, ironically called 'Paradise,' connotes peace, tranquility, and perhaps religious allusion of heaven. Such living conditions are one of the aspects that has pushed people to search for an Eldorado.

Darling negates Paradise which ironically embodies Zimbabwe and praises Budapest which represents America as the narrator puts it:

> When we get right to the middle of Budapest we stop. This place is not like Paradise; it's like being in a different country altogether. A nice country where people who are not like us live. But when you don't see anything to show there are real people living here: Even the air itself is empty: No delicious food cooking, no odors, no sounds. Just nothing.
> Budapest is big, big houses with satellite dishes on the roofs and neat graveled yards or trimmed lawns, and the tall fences and the Durawalls and the flowers and the big trees heavy with fruit that's waiting for us since nobody around here seems to know what to do with it. […] Budapest

> is not a kaka toilet for anybody to just walk in, it's not like Paradise. (*We Need*, pp.4; 12)

This paradisiac description of Budapest discloses African's desire of migrating for transcontinental spaces. The use of pronouns 'we' and '*us*' not only includes the narrator among victims of poverty in their home country, but also shows Darling's refusal of her identity in so-called Paradise. Because, even hunger pushes Darling and her friends to robbery in Budapest when she says: "*there are guavas to steal in Budapest, and right now I'd rather die for guavas*." (*We Need*, p.1). This deplorable social situation alarms Darling, together with her friends, to escape Paradise for Budapest. Darling and her friends have become organized thieves because of poverty and the search for food:

> We have stolen from so many houses I cannot even count. […] and Bastard says this way we can be better thieves. […] Bastard says when we grow up we'll stop stealing guavas and move on to bigger things inside the houses. I'm not really worried about that because when time comes, I'll not even be here; I'll be living in America with Aunt Fostalina, eating real food and doing better things than stealing. But now, the guavas". (*We Need*, pp.5;10)

This passage explains better how starvation can push people to take the risk to steal just for easing their hunger.

As for 'Real Change', it helps the reader infers the people's expectations for the coming 'Real Change'. This chapter shows how they are mobilized and enthusiastic to vote for a change, hoping that the voting is the only way to bring change in their lives and in the country. The narrator renders men's and women's excitement for a 'revolution' as follows:

> The adults are preparing to vote and so for now everything is not the same in Paradise. When we wake up, the men are already parked under jacaranda, but this time they are not crouching over draughts, no. They sit up straight, chests jutting out, and hold their heads high. They have their shirts on and have combed their hair and just look like real people again. […]. Now when the men talk, their voices burn in the air, making smoke all over the place. We hear about change, about a new country, about democracy, about elections and what-what […]. The women, when women hear the men, they giggle. Now there is something almost lovely in the women's eyes, and from the way they are looking, you can tell that they are trying to be beautiful. […] We haven't seen the women look like this in a while and their beauty makes us want to love them. What happens when the adults go to vote? Godknows asks. We are busy putting up the Change, Real Change…. (*We Need*, pp.58-59)

Hence, people militate for the opponents' election; a way for them to forget about the ruling party's failures and go ahead experiencing a new leadership.

Furthermore, the chapter 'For Real', is concerned with the funerals of Bornfree, who was reported to be killed by the government men who accused him to campaign for change during elections, that is to say, against the ruling party. They even forbade to bury him, but his parents decided to do it against the government's will. Darling and her friends went to attend to the funerals even if they were not, as children, allowed to:

> Look over there, now they are coming, Godknows says, and we see the mourners busting from behind the big anthill and coming towards Heavenway. They are here to bury Bornfree even though they were told what would happen if they were found doing it. We are watching it this way because we can't go to the funeral since children are not allowed inside Heavenway. (*We Need*, pp.131-132)

Here, Bulawayo wants to criticize the behaviour of the ruling class who ill-treated and even killed people after elections, in order to create confusion with a rampant criminality in the country, as MaDube contends:

> Let me go! Better they kill me than kill my son. And then, right there, a fountain of blood shoots in the hair like a, arrow and sprays all over. (*We Need*, p.60)

'Country-Game', the third subtitle is also very expressive. Here, Darling, the protagonist and her friends play a game in which they have to choose countries they like the most. Since these young impoverished are fed up with their homeland (Zimbabwe) like other African countries such as Congo, Sudan, Somalia, to quote only some, they all select the Western ones where life is easy to live as evidenced in the following passage:

> We are back in paradise and are trying to come up with a new game; it's important to do so we don't get tired of old ones and bore ourselves to death. […] Each person picks a piece and write the of the country on there, which is why it's called country-game. But first we have to fight over the names because everybody wants to be certain countries, like everybody wants to be the U.S.A. and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France and Italy and Sweden and Germany and Russia and Greece and them. These the country-countries. If you lose the fight, then you just have to settle for countries like Dubai and South Africa and Botswana and Tanzania them. They are not country-countries, but at least life is better than here. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Sudan, like Haiti, like Sri Lanka, and not even this one we live in-who wants to be a terrible place of hunger and things fall apart? (*We Need*, pp. 48-49)

This excerpt comes out with a ladder which classifies countries in three main groups: the developed on the top, the developing in the middle, and the underdeveloped ones at the lower scale. From the last sentence of this quotation, one easily deduces the reason why most African youths flee 'Kaka-Countries' for transcontinental horizons in 'Country- Countries'.

The tenth chapter's title 'How They Left' is also very interesting for it explores the cultural and social complexities of

the African youths' clandestine immigration. It is what the authoress attributes to political instability, conflicts, and violence plaguing most of countries in Africa. NoViolet Bulawayo shows how people who are fed up with the mismanagement of power in their countries, leave it for overseas. Indeed, these prospective candidates decide to flee Africa, cross borders and embark for the gloomy and risky path of clandestine immigration simply because it is no longer possible to stay home as evidenced in the following passage:

> Look at the leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves. Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambitions are crossing borders. Those with hopes are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those in pain are crossing borders. **Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing**—ton all over, to countries near and far, to countries whose names they cannot pronounce. They are leaving in droves. When things fall apart, the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky. They flee their own wretched land so their hunger may be pacified in foreign lands, their tears wiped away in strange lands, the wounds of their despair bandaged in faraway lands, their blistered prayers muttered in the darkness of queer lands. […] **Look at them leaving in droves**, despite knowing they will be welcomed with restraint in those strange lands because they do not belong, knowing they will have to sit on one buttock because they must not sit comfortably lest they be asked to rise and leave, knowing they will speak in dampened whispers because they must not let their voices drown those of the owners, […] **Look at them leaving in droves**, arm in arm with loss and lost, **Look at them leaving in droves**, (*We Need*, pp. 145-146)

This textual snippet epitomizes the African youth's disillusionment with narrations such as "*Look at them leaving in droves*", and action verbs such as "*Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing…*" which sound like a melancholic refrain or an indignant outcry for a hopeless generation.

The second part, going from the eleventh chapter to the eighteenth one is about Darling in America and is linked to Bulawayo's own experience in the United States as she confirms it in an interview with Jason Steger (2014: online): "*The last half of the novel kind of borrows from my own [experience] more than the first, because I also know what it is like to be an outsider and immigrant. I wanted to articulate the pain and the loss of it*."

As it can be seen, the second part of *We Need New Names* draws the reader back to NoViolet Bulawayo's own life experience as an immigrant in the United States mainly through the character of Darling who is, to some extent, the authoress' alter ego. Some of the outstanding subtitles such as 'Destroyedmichygen', 'Hitting Crossroads', 'How they lived' 'My America' and 'Writing on the Wall,' discuss the multifaceted and intertwined combination of experiences that afflict and characterize transnational trajectory and the complex dynamics of diaspora existence. The eleventh chapter, 'Destroyedmichygen,' for instance, depicts Darling's arrival and debuts in the United States. As the title of this chapter states, Darling is destroyed in Michigan in the sense that she lacks her country as well as her culture when she arrives in America.

Also, Darling is very surprised to see that the place where she is does not look like her America, her real America. Obviously, with all the snow outside and a house in planks, Darling is very disillusioned. To her, America is the country of everything, unfortunately, what she sees seems quite different as she confesses:

> With all this snow, with the sun not there, with the cold and dreariness, this place doesn't look like my America, doesn't even like look real. It's like we are in terrible story, like we're in the crazy parts of the Bible, there where God is busy punishing people for their sins and making them miserable with all the weather. (*We Need*, pp. 150-151)

The fifteenth subtitle 'Hitting Crossroads' raises the burning issue of racism in the United Stated. Indeed, when Kristal drives Marina's mother's car to the Crossroads Mall, they see the police behind them. So, they decide to stop thinking that they are chasing them. Darling then tries to open the door and run, but she remembers that she will be shot down by doing so, because she is black. The following passage brings evidence:

> Kristal pulls over and parks. I turn to look behind us and it's all flashing with blue and sirens. I think about opening the door and running, just running, but then I remembered that the police will shoot you for doing a little thing like that if you are black, so I sit in the car and say, we shouldn't have come, now what are we going to do, what will Aunt Fostalina say? (*We Need*, p. 219)

Through this quotation, one understands that racism is a real problem in America and Darling, as many other immigrants, experiences it when she arrives there.

Another fact raised in this chapter by the authoress is Darling's disillusionment. Indeed, when darling and her friends come out of the car, they see a Lamborghini and she runs to it. She is surprised to see her favourite car. Unfortunately, Marina tells her that the car costs a lot. Then Darling asks herself about what America is for if she cannot not realize her dream by buying a Lamborghini, the car of her dreams, and concludes:

> The thing is, I don't want to say with my own mouth that if the car costs that much then it means I'll never own it, and if I can't own it, does that mean I'm poor, and if so, what is America for, then? (*We Need*, p. 225).

Here, one can understand that what we think about America or the West is not exactly the reality because dreams most of the time remain dreams, but the reality is something else. In fact, Darling thinks that she can easily get everything in America. Unfortunately, once there, she rapidly understands that America is an 'Eldorado'.

In the seventeenth chapter entitled 'My America', Bulawayo also depicts the life of migrants abroad through the main character, Darling. Indeed, Darling does many menial jobs because it's only what she can do as an immigrant. Hence, she cleans toilets, houses, or does other tedious activities:

> When I'm not cleaning the toilets or bagging groceries, I'm bent over a big cart like this, sorting out bottles and cans with names like Faygo, Pepsi, Dr Pepper, 7-Up, root beer, Miller, Budweiser, Heineken. […] I am done cans and just getting started on the bottles […]. The beer bottles are the worst. They will come with all sorts of nasty things. Bloodstains. Pieces of trash. Cigarette stubs drowning in stale beer the color of urine, and one time, a used condom. When I started working here, back in tenth, I used to vomit on every shift. […]. The dusting takes me too Long because there are just so many things to dust and only one of me. Not only that, this house is such a monster; there is ground floor, then the second floor, then the third floor. My problem is that instead of cleaning like I'm supposed to, all I ever really want to do is check things out […]. When I'm not working at the store, I have to come here, even though I don't like the idea of cleaning somebody's house, of picking up after someone else, because in my head this is not what I came to America for. (*We Need*, pp. 251; 252; 253; 262; 263)

This textual snippet really shows that Darling is very disappointed about America. She is disillusioned, as she is embarked in tedious jobs that she did not expect to do. Hence, the title 'How they lived' epitomizes the immigrants' memory of hard living conditions in Africa in comparison to those in America as Darling testifies:

> And when they asked us where we were from, we exchanged and smiled with the shyness of child brides. They said Africa? We nodded yes. What part of Africa? We smiled. Where the life expectancy is thirty-five years? We smiled. That part where the massacred each another? We smiled. Is it where the old president rigged the election and people were tortured and killed and a whole bunch of them put in prison and all, where they are dying of cholera? (*We Need*, p.237)

Narrations such as "*where the old president rigged the election and people were tortured and killed and a whole bunch of them put in prison and all…*" mean that in some African countries, forty years after the independence, the country is ruled only by the same persons inflicting incredible and abject pains on their population. Expressions such as "*Where the life expectancy is thirty-five years*" and "*where they are dying of cholera?"* help the reader figures out the miserable living conditions in most of African countries.

The last chapter entitled 'Writing on the Wall' epitomises Black immigrants' homesickness with regard to Darling's act writing all sorts of things on the wall of her bedroom with a marker. Indeed, one day, when she wakes up in the morning, she realizes what she does and tries to clean the wall quickly before Aunt Fostalina returns home as it appears in the following lines:

> The first thing I notice when I wake up in the morning is the mess on my wall. At first, I don't know what happened, but then my thoughts quickly come together and I remember how I went crazy with the marker the night before. The clock on my bedside stand reads 7:15, which means I have less than half an hour to fix the wall before Aunt Fostalina gets back from work. (*We Need*, p. 282)

Another fact raised in this chapter is the way Chipo is appealing for Darling's home consciousness. Indeed, Chipo blames her to flee her homeland for America seeming to show compassion about what happens back home as it is written:

> But you are not the suffering. You think watching on BBC means you knows what is going on? No, you don't, my friend, it's the wound that knows the texture of the pain; it's us who stayed here feeling the real suffering […]. Just tell me one thing. What are you doing *not* in your country right now? Why did you run off to America, Darling Nonkululeko Nkala, huh? Why did you just leave? If it's your country, you have to love it to live in it and not to leave it. You have to fight for it no matter what, to make it right. Tell me, do you abandon your country because it's burning or do you find water to put out the fire? And if you leave it burning, do you expect the flames to turn into water and put themselves out? You let it, Darling, my dear, you left the house burning and you have guts to tell me, in that stupid accent that you were not even born with, that doesn't suit you, that this is your country? (*We Need*, pp. 285-286)

Here, it is clear that the authoress dissuades potential candidates to illegal immigration. For when one decides to cross borders for whatever the problem, one he is surprised to face new challenges, sometimes more perilous than what happens home. Bulawayo furthers her outcry for paradigmatic change, especially for Zimbabwe, her homeland with the publication of master piece *Glory*.

V- NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory*: Africans' longing for a change of Leadership.

V.1- Novel's Synopsis

Published in 2022, *Glory* is NoViolet Bulawayo's second novel. It tells the story of a country ruled by the Old Horse, a long-serving leader, who after a 40-year rule, is ejected in a military coup, along with his much-despised wife, a donkey named Marvellous. At first, there is a great elation and hope for change under a new ruling horse, Tuvius Delight Shasha, the former vice-president who turned rival of the Old Horse. Hope, however, quickly vanishes into the period of post-coup despair steps a young goat named Destiny who returns from exile to bear witness to a land where greed, corruption and false prophets are flourishing. Bulawayo has dedicated this novel to

all Jidadas, everywhere as the dedication page reads: "*For all Jidadas, evrywhere*." Furthermore, Bulawayo adds: "*And in loving memory of Comrade Pier Paolo Frassinelli*." One clearly understands that the authoress has dedicated her second novel not only to all countries under tyranny but also to Comrade Pier Paolo Frassinelli, a Professor of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

V.2- *Glory's* Title and Subtitles

In *Glory*, Bulawayo depicts the downfall of Robert Mugabe, who is represented by the Old Horse. Indeed, in *We Need New Names*, people have longed for a new president, a new leading system, and in *Glory*, individuals have obtained that new name, that new president and that new leading system. The 'old president' referred to in *We Need New Names* is the same one who is referred to as the Old Horse in *Glory*. So, both of them are the representation of Robert Mugabe. That's why, individuals express their joy, their glory, to have come to the change they have been expecting. In this context, Tuvy, the new leader, addresses his citizens in these terms: "…*that great day of change to say enough is enough, to say a brand-new leader was needed, to say it was time for a new Jidada*." (p.98) Furthermore, Tuvy, the Savior said earlier:

> For God saw our long suffering, let me tell you O precious Soldiers, for he understood that we desperately needed a change, needed a new way, and thus saw fit to give us exactly what we needed and exactly right when we needed it even as we least expected it… (*Glory*, p. 95)

Narrations such as "*…we desperately needed a change, needed a new way, and thus saw fit to give us exactly what we needed and exactly right when we needed it even as we least expected it…*" clearly evidence the Jidadans' expectation for a political change. A change even foreseen by The Prophet while alluding to it as a coming glory. This is what Mother of God faithfully notes when Destiny returns home: "*Our prophet was just prophesying about how Jidada's coming glory will be so spectacular the lost children will return*." (p.154)

This is, may be, what justifies the Jidadans' celebration as they welcome the Father of the Nation's mourning announcement. For, they become very excited since it is a real victory for them as an ugly voice shouts:

> The Devil is dead! He is dead! We're weeping because with the present events, we can all finally say this is the end of an era and an error! Now we can begin again. Breathe again. Dream again. The Devil is dead, Glory, Glory, Glory, he is dead! (p. 396)

As in *We Need New Names* and *Glory*, subtitles are also very expressive. For instance, the subtitle 'Even Monkeys Fall from Trees' depicts the Old Horse's unpredicted eviction from the seat of power by his own defenders and more specifically by the Tuvius Delight Shasha, a very close comrade. Here, it clearly appears that no power lasts for ever since the Father of the Nation who considers himself as a god comes to unexpected end. In the real life, the Old Horse is the embodiment of the Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe who has been evicted from the seat of power by Emmerson Mnangagwa. Although, individuals are very surprised to realize that the Father of the Nation would one day fall as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> The morning appeared like any other morning and indeed would've been any other morning had we not woken up to the seismic rumor that the Father of the Nation had been taken hostage by his very own Defenders in the night. The news felt to us like we'd been shot in the gut, Tholukuthi so stunned, so shaken were we that at first we didn't know what to do, what to say, what to think, where to hold, where to touch and where to let go; yes, we'd always understood, even though some of us no longer believed we'd ever see it happen in our life time, that the Old Horse's dawn would someday arrive, one way or the other, but none of us thought it'd come the way it did. (*Glory*, p. 69)

Another expressive subtitle is 'God of Jidada' where the Savior is depicted as a real God who is able to command and control everything in Jidada. In effect, he is a real dictator who wants to have a total power as evidenced in the following passage:

> When those who know about things said at this time the Savior of the Nation was everywhere, they meant the Saviour of the Nation was everywhere. Tholukuthi Tuvy was suddenly gracing billboards all over Jidada's cities. He was on banknotes and coins. […] On government buildings. On boxes of cereal. […] At the entrances of churches and brothels and hospitals and bars and restaurants and football stadiums. […] Indeed, the Saviour of the Nation's face was on everything so that it seemed his beady eyes were watching the children of the nation from every possible place and from every direction and from everywhere in the Country Country, yes tholukuthi the Savior observing his Jidada the same exact way God kept watch over his entire universe. (*Glory*, pp. 324-325)

As it appears in this quotation, Tuvius follows the Old Horse's way of ruling Jidada. Unfortunately for him, citizens no longer stand such tyranny, that's why they revolt against him until his mysterious ejection from the seat of power. This is what the subtitle 'Second Independence' expresses. Indeed, tired of power abuse and many other evils, Jidadans come to chase the Savior from power and this fact is considered as a second independence since they free themselves from dictatorship because "*Jidada's Seat of Power had fallen at long last.*" (p. 392) Hence, this closing chapter witnesses the down falling of 'Old Horses' breaking new grounds for a radiant life as the population joyfully shout:

> The Devil is dead! He is dead! We're weeping because with the recent events, we can all finally say this is the end of an era and error! Now we can begin again. Breathe again. Dream again. The devil is dead! Glory Glory Glory he is dead! (p.396)

Through this excerpt, Bulawayo condemns African presidents who, though old enough, still hold on to power. For the writer's aim is to see these 'Old Horses' leave the power for other leaders capable of boosting the change that the population has been expecting for decades.

All things considered, Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and *Glory* are constituted of meaningful subtitles. Most of their subtitles disclose the consequences and the impact that the wrecking political situation of the country have had on the lives of population. Through these novels, the reader discovers a new realistic fiction since the authoress contextualizes a harsh account of social life in postcolonial era based on the oppression which leads to discrimination, injustice, killing, intimidation, and houses demolition to quote only a few.

CONCLUSION

The gist of this paper has been to show the title is a paratextual element of vital importance in the process of understanding a literary text. Drawing from Gérard Genete's theoretical pronouncements on 'Paratextuality' furthered by other pioneers of 'titrology' such as Claude Duchet (1973) or Léo H. Hoek (1981), the analysis carried out reveals traces of ample use of paratextual features such titles and subtitles which are evocative and significant since they have been carefully chosen disclose the content of the explored novels. The findings evidence that female writers considered in this study purposely use these creatives artifices as ideological weapons to raise social burning issues. A close reading of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* has shown that these titles as well as their subtitles disclose and foreground themes such as socialization, ambition, sexuality, and marriage. For both Nigerian feminist key figures address Nigerian feminist priorities since they critically examine and expose the ideological working of gender norms while offering counter discourses that empower women. Hence, they question normalized gender roles and contribute to broader conversations on language, feminism, and social inclusion. *The Joys of Motherhood* and mostly *Everything Good Will Come* contribute to feminist literary discourse by demonstrating how literature functions as a platform for challenging and reshaping gendered spaces. For, indeed, women are no longer passive and silent in front of male dominance; some of them such as the protagonist Enitan becomes assertive. Through the exploration of the titles and subtitles used in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* and *Glory*, it has been shown how they also are evocative and significant since they have been carefully chosen to unveil the content of these novels. They respectively express an outcry for a paradigmatic change of identity and an African's longing for a new leadership. These narratives respectively express an outcry for a paradigm shift in identity and leadership, since the abjectness depicted here draws attention to the failure of African leaders who, through their mismanagement, have disillusioned young people in particular. The latter have no alternative but to flee in endless waves, risking their lives and leaving behind an empty and devastated continent.

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