

ABSTRACT

Behind Those Cultural Walls: Tradition, Modernity and Liberatory Acts in
the Work of Four "African" Women Writers (Myriam Warner-Vieyra,
Mariama Bâ, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Buchi Emecheta).

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This thesis, "Behind Those Cultural Walls: Tradition, Modernity and Liberatory Acts in the Work of Four "African" Women Writers," assesses the routes "African" women take to further their struggles for liberation. These women operate from the bases of male dominated African cultures which insist on the continuation of many of their traditional practices, in spite of the countervailing claims of modern practices, including the derivatives of the colonial era. Consequently, each woman's acts, as structured in the literature, reveal her assertive undertaking to complement problematic or antithetical elements from these claims, specifically those areas of traditional and modern cultures which the respective woman considers beneficial to the emergence of selfhood and, given the all-inclusive nature of "African" women's political persuasion, nationhood.

Unorthodox measures are often employed by these women in their attempts to individuate. They have undertaken operations to raze and/or rebuild structures within yet without the traditional walls of their respective African cultures, as well as within yet without those modern walls that have been erected, partly as a result of Africa's encounter with the Western world.

My research, therefore, explores some of the unique standpoints from which "African" women launch their attacks against oppressive systems.

Keywords: Lavern C. Kerr-Harvey; cultural walls; tradition; modernity; liberatory acts, women; Africa; "African" feminism.