

## Women and Education: A Gynocritic Study of *La Petite Fille Du Réverbère* by Calixthe Beyala and Unpublished Manuscript by Ambai

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**Citation:** Visalakshi, R., Daniel, A., Khanjan, Mishra, S. (2025). Women and Education: A Gynocritic Study of *La Petite Fille Du Réverbère* by Calixthe Beyala and Unpublished Manuscript by Ambai, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(4), 4231-4239. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i4.3754>

**Published:** December 28, 2025

### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the presentation of women, their hurdles in family life and professional life and how they gain their space and identity through education in the works of Calixthe Beyala and Ambai. Both the authors present in detail the atrocities of patriarchy and the marginalisation of women in the Afro-French society and the Tamil society. Elaine Showalter's "Gynocriticism" theory is applied in this article to bring into light the socio-cultural pressures, resilience and self-establishment of the female protagonists in Beyala's *La petite fille du réverbère* and Ambai's *Unpublished Manuscript*. These two authors suggest education to be the best critical tool for women to assert their identity and claim their space with dignity. The analysis proves how education empowers women to proclaim and affirm their voices and overcome patriarchal domination, highlighting the themes of female solidarity, self-respect and identity issues. The article finally contributes to feminist literary criticism by focusing on women's experiences and affirming the transformative power of education in the quest for gender equality.

**Keywords:** Comparative Literature, Woman writing, Women's studies, Gynocriticism, Marginalisation, Gender Equity, Women Empowerment, Women's education.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper analyses the presentation of women, their challenges in family life, professional life and how women succeed in their life through education. Calixthe Beyala is a renowned francophone woman writer who has written a lot for the upliftment of women especially the African women. All her writings strongly put forth that education is a main means of women empowerment.

Ambai is a famous Tamil contemporary woman writer who presents women characters as they are in the real life. She focuses on the suppression of women by the patriarchal representatives (both men and women) and how woman prove their identity and thereby their existence through education.

Both the above mentioned authors show how women are being oppressed, marginalised by the society and how the same women find their ground in the patriarchal society. Education is the major key factor which gives women the mental strength and external security to face life.

The female protagonist in this text "*La petite fille du réverbère*" gains respect from society when she clears an exam. Since she scored good marks, many men in her locality proclaim to be her father. Similarly in "*Unpublished Manuscript*", Thirumagal, the chief protagonist of the short story, was beaten up to unconsciousness and admitted in a mental asylum stating she has mental disorders, androgyny. But, finally she comes out from there and she lives for her daughter. She works as a college professor and she leads a decent and peaceful life in the same patriarchal society.

The story of the protagonists in the writings of these two authors prove that education is a great solution for woman to prove their identity and existence in a patriarchal society.

### Gynocriticism

The term gynocriticism was coined by Elaine Showalter in 1979 in her essay "*Towards a feminist poetics*". Gynocriticism concerns with recovering and republishing novels of female authors as the literary canon is skewed towards male authors.

Gynocriticism traces the evolutions or laws of a female literary tradition. It aims to re-evaluate history so that women are brought to centre from the margins of discourse. It also focuses exclusively on female authors.

Hobbes, a writer during the religious civil wars (1640-1651) states that the power doesn't come from God but from a contract between men. Based on this idea, the marital power and maternal power is of the same nature as that of the sovereign.

Hobbes states that the power of the man in the family doesn't come to him from God but by the consent of his wife. Women have made history with men but it was not put into black and white. Male were the historians who registered history and hence women were not mentioned.

The female characters in the writings of Beyala and Ambai represent women as per the ideology of the phallogocry. The image of patriarchal womanhood is both virginal and sexually available to the male partner.

The woman is unable to speak and make her understood by speaking the language of the power and the responsibility for her speech and expression is assumed by the men who surround her with disastrous consequences for her selfhood. Showalter praised feminist critics for exposing the ideology of representation.

Elaine Showalter Englished *la gynocritique* as "gynocritics" in 1979 in order to describe the positive side of the feminist critical enterprise, namely the positive side of the feminist critical enterprise, namely the study of "woman as the producer of textual meaning"

In 1981, Showalter defines Gynocriticism as follows:

"Woman as writers.... the history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution and laws of a female literary tradition."

Feminist literary criticism analyses the representation of woman in literature. Gynocriticism is evident in the works of Elaine Showalter, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Juliet Mitchell and many others. It concerns itself with developing a specifically female framework for dealing with works written by women.

Gynocriticism aims at creating "woman-centered criticism" by highlighting the female experience rather than adopting male models and theories. The female (woman-centered) psychologists show how the humanitarian values of woman (care, nurturing, empathy and other values) are unrecognised in favour of the so-called male virtues of power, success and careerism. Obviously, the practice of these patriarchal values lead to woman's devaluation and it leads to woman's enslavement and society's degeneration.

Care, tolerance, nurture and empathy are female attributes. They form the strength and empowerment of woman but due to phallogocry domination, they become the source of suffering for women.

Female friendship is significant for woman's healthy self-image. Female friendship is possible even between granny and granddaughter as in Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*". Ambai exhibits a similar strong female friendship between mother and daughter in "*Unpublished Manuscript*".

The problem arises when elderly women play the power game of patriarchy. The male model of independence and female model of independence is totally different. Women want to live in a relationship and yet remain whole, which is unacceptable by patriarchy. The works of Beyala and Ambai also affirm Adrienne Rich's "revisionist mythmaking". Gynocriticism mainly focuses on making woman "visible" and her voice "audible in the male dominant society."

This study of Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*" examines how fiction retrieves woman history and expresses woman's exploitation and locates women's voices within the patriarchal discourse. Both Beyala and Ambai admire woman's intelligence and solidarity. They stress on female bonding and promoting women's self-respect.

To our astonishment, the woman characters created by Ambai are serious candidates to think new forms of liberated feminist identity, survival, solidarity, and imaginative choices, leading to unexpected life stories. Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*" presents the hidden pattern of woman's oppression across time and span.

Beyala and Ambai portray woman who battle for their self-identity in a male dominated society. Their woman protagonists are the representatives of the present day intellectual women. Their female protagonists are thought provoking for the female readers. Beyala and Ambai portray how women are treated in male dominated society and how they struggle for their self-identity. Their women characters love to face the risks offered by life and they are brave to the core. The following quote of Beyala affirms the above discussed notion.

"Tant qu'il y a la parole, il y a la vie". The right to speech is a proof of existence.

### **"La petite fille du réverbère"**

The daughter, the punch bag of the mother she replaces, whom she cares for, for whom she sacrifices herself and for whom she "works" as "old-age security", and the abusive mother, who is herself a scorned woman, abandoned or deceived by her lover, these are two facets of the same woman's destiny, which is traced for the girls through their mothers in the novel of Beyala.

In Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*", the story of mother and daughter, here the protagonist showers love, care and freedom for her daughter. Even when her life partner leaves her, the heroine decides to continue the journey of her life with courage and determination. The universe of the individual is dominated, influenced by the school, the friends, and the discovery of sensual pleasures during adolescence, the family, the social setup, the surrounding, and the friends of the parents. Gynocritic analysis is used to emphasise women's experiences. The selected works of this research is a complete exhibition of women's experiences in all the arenas of life.

## **RESEARCH METHODS/ MATERIALS**

The research design of this study is a mixed method approach used for the analysis of Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*". Mixed-method approach in research is a suitable method for exploring multifaceted and subjective phenomena. After thorough analysis of the text's context, content, characters and themes, the study aims to trace the journey of the protagonist through gynocriticism.

Mixed-method research consents to an in-depth study of individual experiences, emotions and reactions, providing valuable insights into the life journey of a woman, her resilience, and her transition.

The data compilation for this paper is gathered by searching for theme related theory books and previous thesis from the library and internet.

The data analysis in this thesis begins with the reading of the two works: Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*". Then we carry out the textual interpretation about women's experiences and analyse them with gynocriticism. Gynocritics consists of style and theme. We hereby trace the presence of women in the novel and history.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Elaine Showalter's "Gynocriticism" serves as the means by which the goal of this study can be achieved. This theory focuses on understanding women's experiences from a woman's point of view. This paper analyses Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*" using gynocriticism.

Gynocriticism helps to map how women face life challenges, societal pressure, and patriarchal domination and establish themselves as a woman.

### **Data Collection**

The primary resource for this research is the novel of Beyala "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and the short story of Ambai "*Unpublished Manuscript*". We have done an in-depth textual analysis of both the works, concentrating on the life journey of the protagonist and the different phases of her life like childhood, adolescence and youth, emotions and transitions into a strong woman who is self-sufficient. The text is analysed in detail to reveal the instances that add to the gynocritic analysis of the text.

### **Data Analysis**

Content analysis has been used as the main method of data analysis. We have rigorously verified to identify the recurring themes, associated with the author's life and the protagonists' life journey. This reveals the content of gynocriticism, women's public and private sphere, women's status in family, women's empowerment, women's responsibility towards their kids, and women's life as an example for the future generation.

## Limitations

Like any other study, this study too has its limitations. The first limitation is subjective interpretation. This study seeks to offer significant insights into the life path of a woman, encompassing her hardships, her evolution as an activist, and her transformation into a self-established woman. The study exclusively examines the central protagonist but also brings into light all the women characters present in the text of study.

## Research Significance

This research sheds light through the prism of gynocriticism over francophone woman (African woman) and Indian woman. It also explores the childhood, domestic sphere, public sphere, marital life, conjugal life, education and professional accomplishments and the psycho-somatic wellness of the protagonists. This research aims at a profound understanding of the theory of gynocriticism. The findings have emphasized the importance of education in the upliftment of the life of women in the African society and the Indian (Tamil) society.

## Relevance Of The Study And Its Contribution To The Field

This study is primordial to understand the evolution of a woman's life. It analyses the following aspects: patriarchal domination, societal pressure, cultural identity. The series of events affirm how women face challenges and how the experiences mould them into the person they ought to be. Understanding the experiences of woman from a woman's writing gives the readers a raw feel of what it is to be a woman in a phallogocentric society. Readers do get a chance to understand how woman balance life and career, motherhood and career, family responsibility and social identity and how they establish their self-identity and empower their lives.

## Plot Overview

Beyala's novel "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and the short story of Ambai "*Unpublished Manuscript*" provide a vivid account of the history and the struggles of francophone women and Indian women. Beyala's novel presents the protagonist who longs for maternal love and the biological father in order to prove her identity in the African society. Finally as she clears a tough exam, her locality celebrates her. She gets recognition from her society because of her education. Ambai's short story presents the protagonist Thirumagal who experiences a peaceful life with her father and then experiences the worst of conjugal violence from her husband. Finally thanks to her education she is able to handle her life with safety and security. In this scenario, Thirumagal works as a college professor and assures a peaceful life for her daughter too. This paper makes a captivating exploration of identity, struggle, resilience and self-empowerment of woman characters in the selected works of Beyala and Ambai.

## The Backdrop of the Novel

The selected texts offer a significant inquiry into human emotions, an important contribution to understand African and Indian woman. *La petite fille du réverbère* is an autobiography of Calixthe Beyala. This novel depicts the childhood of Beyala, how she longed for maternal love and care.

"*Unpublished manuscript*" is a short story written by Ambai to witness the struggle of educated woman in the private sphere. This short story witnesses the hegemonic patriarchy (husband torturing woman) and the supportive patriarchy (father supports daughter).

The selected texts encapsulate the woman protagonist's journey from a challenging childhood to adulthood, marked by questions of paternal identity and discrimination. It also sheds light on the struggles of francophone women and particularly Afro-French women.

These texts explore the complex socio-historical attributes of patriarchy entrusted over women, forced assimilation of female behaviour taught to women by the patriarchal hegemony, absence of mother's love. Separated families result in the loss of cultural continuity and a deep sense of displacement. Beyala also presents social dynamics of racial discrimination and marginalisation. We do have images of stereotypes and stigmatisation. The psychological scar of the physical absence of the mother is deep rooted in the protagonist's life.

The issues of identity crisis and societal discrimination result in mental health issues like regular mood swings, irritated behaviour towards others and insecurity in the step of life. It deeply affects their personality development.

In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", Beyala exhibits the quest for identity through her protagonist, Tapoussière. It's more of a reclamation for her identity, illustrating the ongoing struggle for recognition, healing and cultural revival.

Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*" is a testimony of emotional exploration of the lasting effects of patriarchal domination and conjugal violence enforced on the protagonist. The narrative technique of Ambai is both a testimony of the patriarchy with humane values (father of the protagonist) and hegemonic patriarchy (husband of the protagonist).

This text presents the protagonist life within the sphere of patriarchy and outside the world of patriarchy, her struggle for recognition, healing, cultural and intellectual revival. This text offers a window into the resilience of women in the face of conjugal trauma.

The selected texts encapsulate the protagonists journey from a challenging childhood to adulthood, marked by issues of identity and discrimination in the writing of Beyala whereas in Ambai's short story we can witness the evolution of a woman from childhood to adulthood, craziness of love, the positive and negative aspects of conjugal life and how education helps woman to establish herself after having experienced the painful storms of patriarchy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both Ambai and Beyala address the brutality and social injustice done to women. Beyala presents her protagonist in search of maternal love and a father figure. The protagonist was well brought up by her maternal grandmother but still she faces lots of problems in her society.

Ambai presents how a well-educated career woman, due to her wrong choice of love, experiences conjugal violence, loses her identity, quits her hometown and finally gains her identity through her career in a new city.

Ambai and Beyala reshape the experience of shame by using the transformative nature of power and faith in the journey of self-identity. The identity of a woman is within herself. Neither the society nor the patriarchy has to approve the identity of woman based on any criteria of convention. A woman by birth has the right to live as any other human being on the planet.

In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", Beyala exposes the challenges faced by African woman to sustain in the society with respect and dignity. Ambai presents the Tamil society in India, where woman experience freedom at their birth family before marriage and how they live in the patriarchal cage after marriage irrespective of their financial and educational status.

### Education Gives Eternal Identity

Great authors have stated that the power of belief, success and inspiration will change everything. The little girl's granny motivated her from her childhood. Her education helped her to approve her identity and gain respect from her society. Once she cleared the exam, all the men in her society proclaimed to be her biological father, a few even gave her gifts and tried to earn fame and power through her.

Tapoussièrè has cleared the certificate exam. They have just announced in the radio... Before I could even ask for anything, the ladies of the locality screamed with joy: "Tapoussièrè has succeeded her certificate exam! It was just announced in the radio!" The elderly people followed, toothless, carrying all their left over energy to felicitate me: "Kassalafam has given a genius to the world! The men too joined. They touched me: "Ha, finally! They hugged me: "Great, Tapoussièrè!" They lifted me from ground: "Hats off, Tapoussièrè!"...Everyone looked at me as they saw a poem.

In Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*", Thiru was able to stand alone and fight for her rights. Thiru's father supported her by stating that education is important for life and she would learn to cook when she feels hungry.

Ramaswamy likes to cook. ..He permits mom to do only little works of help. He used to say "you study ma. Now only you can study. If any distant relative comes, they used to say a woman should know to cooking... she doesn't even know to cook rice.... he used to reply to them: My daughter has to study. Cooking is not a big affair. If she is hungry, she will do it by herself.

The father of Thirumagal was very supportive to her academic growth and he gave utmost priority to her studies. Whereas after marriage her husband was nonstop accusing her for not aligning to gender-based roles of women's adherence to housekeeping especially cooking. Once her father supported her in front of her husband's friends stating, she is pregnant, she needs rest.

### Overcoming Gender Based Subjugation

The protagonists tried to overcome all the battles thrown at them in the name of their gender. In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", Tapoussièrè is guided by her granny to focus on the goal. Thereby she overcomes the stones thrown at her in the name of her gender. Once Tapoussièrè achieves in the field of education, her whole life changes into red carpet welcome and recognition. Each male member in her society claims to be her biological father. Thus education gives an eternal identity to Tapoussièrè. In Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*", Thirumagal joins job at Benaras. She constructs her future through education and let's go of her past.

### In Search of Peace and Happiness

In "*Unpublished Manuscript*", Thirumagal is at the mental asylum admitted by her husband.

"He is ur father or.....?"

Thirumagal didn't even hesitate for a moment. She got up, walked towards him and she kicked in his groin with her right leg.

He screamed "Ayyo", while having his hands in between his legs and fell down and started crying. He suffered of pain.

She stood straight looking at him.

Then she turned to pick the crying baby Senthamarai. Suddenly something hit her back head.

When she opened her eyes, she was left with her hands and legs locked up. Then many questions were thrown at her.

Thirumagal illustrates the pain she had undergone due to the hegemonic patriarchal nature of her husband. If her father was alive, she would have been safe. This paper also concentrates on the ways woman authors reclaim narratives and assert their identities against the phallogocentric ideologies.

Literary works by authors like Beyala and Ambai highlight the importance of registering woman's lives as a means of educating the future woman and create a reservoir of resilience ideas for women. Literature is a powerful tool for articulating women's issues, histories and contemporary issues. In women's studies, literature is examined for its portrayal of historical representation of women resulting from (colonisation, violence and cultural disruption).

Women's studies literature is used for consciousness rising in the society. These selected texts help us to understand themes of identity, empowerment and resistance against patriarchal oppression. The analysis of the selected texts in contemporary academic literature highlights its multifaceted contributions to discussions on identity, trauma and the importance of education in woman's empowerment.

The research reveals a comprehensive analysis of Beyala's challenges as portrayed in "*La petite fille du réverbère*" texts. We herein give a special focus on her journey from childhood to adulthood and the self-empowerment that emerges through her adversities. The study highlights the resilience of the protagonists in establishing their self-identity in the patriarchal society. The texts of this research prove that woman gain their mental strength, social status and space in both the public and private sphere through education. Finally, Ambai and Beyala emphasize that woman can be empowered profoundly only through education.

This research paper is an attempt to highlight the struggles for survival and transition of female protagonists in Calixthe Beyala's "*La petite fille du réverbère*" and Ambai's "*Unpublished Manuscript*".

The protagonists in these texts exhibit three stages in life: survival, recovery, challenge. Every life is a mixture of happiness and sorrow. Women must inspire themselves. The texts of this research prove that education helps woman to handle the struggles of life with stability, clarity and security. Every woman like our protagonist Thirumagal should overcome the limitations, by finding new meaning and by evolving into a new stronger version of oneself. Coping with the flow of life with courage and positive attitude is the resilience technique applied by the protagonists of our research.

The patriarchal domination and its extreme power of getting admitted Thirumagal into the mental asylum is the starting point of Thiru's action to reclaim her selfhood and her own space out of the patriarchal cage of conjugal life. This short story is a story of hope for women to be liberated from the patriarchal chains of supremacy and slavery. Through education, the protagonists pave their identity, especially in Ambai's work, education assures livelihood with dignity and security for Thiru and her daughter Senthamarai.

Beyala's work reveals themes of survival, identity and racism widespread over the women characters. These texts portray the struggles of women to the self-establishment of their identity through education thereby realising one's own identity and purpose of life.

## ANALYSIS

Ambai in "*Unpublished Manuscript*" presents the quest for love, the exploitation in the name of love and the consequences of love in the life of the chief protagonist Thirumagal.

Thiru chooses her life partner based on her literary exposure. She accepts the drug use habit of her lover as many Tamil poets have that habit of intoxication to produce marvellous literary works. When Thiru opened her love story to her father, the latter reacted as follows.

Thiru When she said to Ramaswami, he didn't refuse.

Then he slowly said "Thiru, he has alcohol consumption habits.

She replied.... "He doesn't seem to be a binge drinker. May be a social drinker when he is with his friends.

"Naidu said: he also consumes drugs. His house is nearby Naidu's house."

She explained: "Drugs are not poisonous. Didn't Bharathiyar consume drugs? These are all petty things.

After that happened a violent journey. It started within a few weeks after marriage. Mom has written it in detail. Among them a few incidents were breath-taking.

After marriage she experienced the exploitation in the name of love which leads to conjugal violence and so on. As a consequence of her love life, she lost peace in life. In most of her works, Ambai portrays the realistic experience of the subjugation of women by patriarchy in various aspects of life.

In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", Tapoussièrè witnesses conjugal issues of women around her. Because of the affairs of Andela's mother, the little girl has experienced various insults in her childhood life.

As a gynocritic trait, Ambai presents her protagonist who describes their male counterparts from a feminine point of view.

The poets describe women in many ways. Amma has described in detail that on that day only she understood, how a woman perceives a man. He was totally wet due to rain. His dhoti and shirt was stuck to his body. Through the wet white dress, his black body was visible, as per the folds of his dress. Half hand shirt, so his wet hand was dropping down.

Droplets of rain water were on his hand. When he stood against the wall with his leg folded and dhoti folded, his dark legs strengthened by walking were visible. Rubber slippers. Wild legs. The nails of his foot weren't cut properly. They were improper. The feet were spread like a hand fan. Cracked lines in his soles. Why do they say that male gods have lotus like feet? Who wants feet like lotus? Do they have the prints of dust and dirt caused due to walking, running, stumbling, falling and jumping? Muthukumaran's feet were those bound to the earth. Moulded according to its movements. Those feet had some stories to tell. Just opposite to those stories, he had soft fingers in his hands. Thirumagal was thunderstruck.

Thirumagal doesn't use a masculine language. In general, women expect the traits of male gods in their male partners. But here the heroine abandons the ideas imposed by patriarchy in the female minds and practised since ages and she accepts the physique of her lover which is against the conventional description of the appearance of male gods.

In both the texts, the authors present the exploitation of woman in the name of love at intellectual level, physical level, psychological level and financial level. Ambai projects the masculinist hegemony of patriarchy through the words of the hero. The response of Thirumagal questions the masculine mentality. This is a gynocritic trait. Hereby, Thiru puts forth her self-value and the requisites of a woman.

Normally, in order to insult a woman, the phallogocentric society insults all the women belonging to her genealogy. Thiru loves Muthu Kumaran, a man who wants to publish literary articles in the publishing house of her father. By reading his works, she recommends him to her father. Thereby she starts to admire him. At a later stage, when she refuses to publish the articles of Muthukumaran as the ideologies expressed in the writings are against the ideology of her father, Muthukumaran quarrels with her and compels her to publish them. Herein, he establishes intellectual exploitation in the name of love upon his wife.

Phallogocentric literature sees women as an object to be suppressed and dominated. Gynocriticism gives value to feminine silence. Men cannot decipher woman's silence. Through the analysis of "*La petite fille du réverbère*", and "*Unpublished Manuscript*", we understand that women experience same kind of problems in Afro-French society and in the Indian society.

Emma Goldmann suggests that the institution of marriage converts the woman into an absolute parasite. In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", the mother chooses the groom for her daughters. Both the African society and the Indian society want the woman to know cooking so that she manages well her household and facilitates the execution of patriarchal responsibilities enforced over women.

But Ambai presents in "*Unpublished Manuscript*", Ramaswamy, and the father of the protagonist, who stands by the side of his daughter stating that education is only important and she will learn to cook when she feels hungry.

Ambai presents a rational man, who understands the importance of education to enrich the life of a woman. Financial dependence is the major weapon used by patriarchy to oppress women. Education is the key to financial liberty of woman.

In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", Beyala presents the impact of money in the life of Tapoussièrè's mother. The granny gets her daughter, Andela, married to a rich person but with a higher age difference. Andela is in a rich lifestyle but psychologically she is disturbed and unhappy as her husband couldn't satisfy her biological needs. Finally she gets into a relationship with a married man. When Andela realises that he won't leave his family and come for her, she gets depressed and she returns to her birth family. Finally she has to pay back her rich husband the money he gave to her for marrying him. Due to lack of money, she goes for physical relationship with the officers who come in search of her to pay the debt. Finally when Tapoussièrè is born, she leaves the baby with her mother and she quits the hometown.

One fine day when all the men in the hometown proclaim to be the biological father of Tapoussièrè, Andela speaks about her past to her daughter and reveals her true father. Hereby, Beyala presents the expectations and experiences in conjugal life of a woman from a woman's point of view. This trait facilitates to analyse this novel from a gynocritic lens.

Gynocriticism assures woman the position refused to them by phallogocrats. In "*La petite fille du réverbère*", woman is the head of the family. In "*Unpublished Manuscript*", having separated from her husband, Thirumagal becomes the head of the family.

Mohan I have suffered a lot to build this world of mine and my daughter. You can't even imagine it. It's more dramatic than your drama. To build this home without Muttukumaran ...I.....I, at the mental asylum.....the voice of mom broke.

Before separation, Muthukumaran is jealous of her professional success. He induces a guilty feeling in her so that she gives up her profession.

Is it enough if you boil rice? Who will heat the sauce? What work are you engaged in, without feeding the man who has come home with hunger? Murmurs and the sound of dishes crashing.” “Are you a woman? This question resonated”

Muthukumaran insults the character of his wife. Here, the baby serves as a support for the woman to continue her life, even after the separation with her husband. Due to her painful conjugal life experiences, Thirumagal hesitates to get into a marital relationship in future. Thirumagal guides her daughter to face life with hope and positivity. In “*La petite fille du réverbère*” the granny supports Tapoussière to face life without being disturbed by the commentaries of patriarchy.

Besides maternity, a woman has right to engage herself in matters of her passion.

In “*La petite fille du réverbère*”, Andela returns to her home with a huge sum of money. Hence people around her respect her. But in the Indian Tamil society, Thirumagal suffers a lot to construct a safe haven for herself and her daughter.

Mr.Driver opened an eye.

-What's happening?

-It's Tapoussière. She wants to know her father?

-He spoke with a drowsy voice: At first let her learn her lessons. Then, she will have numerous fathers, brothers, and even husbands if she wishes to!”

These words were the true cause for the educational success of Tapoussière. As per the words of this man, when the little girl was academically successful, many men proclaimed to be her father. In both these works of research, women construct their identity by linking themselves to a man. Tapoussière is eager to know her father. Similarly, in “*Unpublished Manuscript*”, Senthamarai is eager to know about her father. These two characters construct their identity in relation to a male.

“Madam wants to know her father? She asked to me ironically. She caught hold of my hand and said: “follow-Tapoussière!”.....

We entered the house and Andela got a chair.

-Sit down, she ordered me.

With a gesture, she gave me a piece of paper and a pencil: Write down!

Family name: Beyala B'Assanga Djuli

Place and Date of Birth: Douala, 1961.

Daughter of: Andela Beyala and of: Awono Betemé.

.....during the days, she announced:” Don't waste your money in buying her gifts! She is the daughter of Awono!”

My fathers, disappointed, shook their shoulders.” She lies. But not for the little one. They forgot me. “If that's what she wants... “And I returned to the anonymous suffering. I didn't have anything to eat and again I was pushed to hunger.”

Tapoussière comes to know about her original biological father and the fake fathers leave her to hunger.

In “*Unpublished Manuscript*”, Senthamarai contemplates the image of her father.

“In her table there was a photo frame. In that she was a little baby in her father's hand. Emerald green skirt. Red shirt. There was a red ribbon knot on one part of the hair. Mom was near him. Dark brown coloured saree. Her hair was thick and curly like her father's hair. Her Kajal drawn eyes were wide open. Anklets were there on her hanging legs. She was seated on her father's left hand. His right hand was spread over her thighs covered by Green skirt.

In this citation, Ambai presents the in depth observation of a father by a longed daughter. In both the texts of analysis, the daughters love their father. They long to know their father and thereby they realise the struggle which their mothers faced because of the same male person.

In “*Unpublished Manuscript*”, having been separated from her husband, the chief protagonist is proud to be Thiru. She considers her intellectual identity to be her overall identity, a professor. In the modern society, Indian or occidental, a solid education and conscious awareness is must for woman to achieve certain stability in life and to prosper amongst any challenge. Education is the only solution for women upliftment, women empowerment. It is the tool of the women of past, today and tomorrow to face life with courage and success. Education assures safety for women at all stages of life. A truly educated woman is the women who are free from any sort of domination. She is a boon to her surrounding and to the nation at a wider context.

Ambai and Beyala insist on the power of education to liberate women from the clutches of patriarchy and to empower her in all aspects of life. This trait helps the selected texts to analyse them from a gynocritic point of view.

## CONCLUSION

History is filled with female subordination. We still need to contextualise the everyday struggle of women in society. The post-colonial women writer Beyala is famous for her writings on women's oppression in the dominant culture. She exposes the old value system through her fictional writing.

Beyala and Ambai focus on foregrounding women's experiences, a return to the inner source of strength by assimilation into the female community and compromise with the culture so that the woman-centred model is given its due place with the male-centred perspective within the dominant culture.

Recent researches of psychologists at Stone Center, USA have recognised women's inner strength and the value of women's basic psychological structure. Some of the findings of Carol Gilligan, Jean Baker Miller and few others are most apt for Indian women and the prevalent Indian culture.

This paper highlights how woman's innate virtue has been devalued in patriarchal society and how the protagonists develop their consciousness by highlighting the centrality of the feminine experience.

Both Beyala and Ambai portray women in their writing, focus on women's sufferings and women's survival tactics. Thanks to gynocriticism, women have started to perceive other women as they are. Many feminists believe that before liberating women it's necessary to dismantle all the parts and pieces of the androcentric culture that keep women under subjugation.

This paper is clear evidence that education assures empowerment and identity to all the women across nations, cultures and races. Education is the key to women's liberation.

## Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## Ethical Approval

This research did not involve human participants, animals, or sensitive data requiring ethical approval. Hence, ethics review was not required.

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