ABSTRACT

CATIE GODBOLD. Degradation of the Father: The Colonial Source of Familial Corrosion in *The Joys of Motherhood.* (Under the direction of Professor Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi.)

Born in Lagos, Nigeria in 1944, Buchi Emecheta experienced the impact of colonization on Nigerian families firsthand. Her novel *The Joys of Motherhood* focuses on an Ibo family living within the same city. Prior to the opening of the novel in 1934, the British have used military force to establish its hold over Nigeria and installed unequal economic systems that negatively impact the men and women indigenous to Nigeria. Within this capstone, I explain the unequal power structures created by British colonizers, the cultural expectations for Ibo fathers as presented in *The Joys of Motherhood*, and finally the impact of colonization on Nnaife and his family as they struggle to find a balance between their traditional Ibuza beliefs and their life in Lagos. Using the Owulum family as an example, this project examines how colonization degraded indigenous fathers through the installation of these unequal systems that objectified them and gradually corroded traditional family structures. Aimé Césaire’s theories on “thingification” and “the boomerang effect” in *Discourse on Colonialism,* and Albert Memmi’s “Mythical portrait of the colonized” in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* provide the theoretical framework for my analysis of these abusive institutions. I also draw on Bill Ashcroft et al.’s *The Empire Writes Back* and Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*.