A Literary Theoretical Exploration of Silenced African Women from Psychoanalytic and Feminist Perspectives

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Abstract

The study explores the gender relationship in the three English speaking regions of Sub-Saharan Africa through three novels: *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga; *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; and *Parched Earth* by Elieshi Lema. The aim of this research is to raise awareness of, and contribute to, the general discussion regarding gender equality and promoting the empowerment of silenced African women through the study of fiction. This research examines the discourses underpinning the lives of Africa women through a literary theoretical perspective, with feminism and psychoanalysis the primary modes that are utilised.

The study further uses autoethnography as a qualitative research approach that seeks to systematically describe and analyze personal experience to understand cultural experience. It is a form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher's personal experience and connects this autobiographical account to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings. Findings from textual analysis reveal that the texts do convey strong messages in favour of deconstructing the primacy of male perspectives, and further argue that literature can offer a concrete and particularist understanding of the felt and lived realities of oppression. The findings also reveal the hidden sufferings of African women and critique the traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity portraying women as subordinate to men and victims of domestic violence, and certain strands of traditional African practices, while acknowledging the differences in different countries.

The thesis concludes by appreciating the contribution made by women to African literature, especially in voicing the unvoiced and in deconstructing patriarchal hegemony. It is recommended that a more critical engagement with gender issues is important in bringing change and promoting a fair representation and treatment of women in contemporary African society.

Declaration of Originality

Declaration: I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and does not contain the work of any other individual. All sources that have been consulted have been identified and acknowledged in the appropriate way.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late loving father, Magnus, and to the living legend that is my incredible mother Adelina. Mum and Dad, you have been my inspiration and motivation for continuing to improve my knowledge and move my career forward. You are my ‘Rock’, and to both of you, I graciously dedicate this thesis.

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Epigraph

‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’ (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 283)

Introduction

The fundamental purpose of this research is to analyse the literary representation of trauma, agony, and grief of specific African women, and to demonstrate how African female writers painfully express the sufferings of their fellow African women in homes and in society while the victims of those traumas are deprived of a voice. This research analyses texts through a psychoanalytic and feminist lens. While the psychoanalytic lens enables the researcher to enter the internal forum of the author's characters, subsequently touching on their feelings and experiences, the feminist lens explores a culture in which women, purely because they are women, are treated differently from men in a social context, and because of that differential treatment, women are societally placed at a disadvantage.

This research looks at fictional representations of how African women are being treated by men and society in the three English speaking regions of Africa, namely: West, East and Southern Africa. This study examines one text from each region, in order to demonstrate the fallacy of using the proper adjective 'African' in an unproblematic manner. Postcolonial feminist discourse has had a liberating effect on the production and reception of writing from Africa; but it, too, can fall into the rhetorical trap of metonymy, taking the part to stand for the whole. In this thesis, the plural will be used to denote the many different 'Africas' that appear in fiction. The study examines the work of a Nigerian feminist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* from West Africa; *Parched Earth* by Elieshi Lema, a Tanzanian, East African writer, while Southern Africa is represented by the Zimbabwean writer, Tsitsi Dangarembga in her work *Nervous Conditions*. These texts are critically analysed by using feminist and psychoanalytic theoretical perspectives to probe their deep implications, and their sense of difference from each other. This helps to highlight how the relationship between men and women in Africa has usually been unequal and oppressive to African women. It also demonstrates how all major social institutions are characterised by male dominance: the economy, the political system, family, and religion; and how this has led to women being oppressed by patriarchy, economically, politically, socially, and psychologically. The chosen novels, deriving from their own local conditions, demonstrate the emotional and affective aspects of this across different languages, regions, and cultural conditions. An autoethnographic perspective, further outlined in chapter one, will also be used to show the alignment of the fictional and the Real in the narrative of African women.

This research shows that in every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other: she is marginalised, and defined only by her difference from male norms and values. Patriarchal ideology is the primary means through which this state of affairs is implemented, as one gender is deemed structurally inferior to the other. This exploration reveals how the concepts of sex and gender are different. While sex is a biological category, gender is a social condition. The epigraph of this thesis cites Simone de Beauvoir’s telling observation that ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’. Males and females are socialised to become masculine and feminine. These are social characteristics, not biological essences. The social requirement of being masculine or feminine is oppressive to males and females respectively. Compulsory masculinity is oppressive to males, even though they use it to dominate women. Therefore, while biology determines our sex (male or female), culture determines our gender (masculine or feminine).

This research tries to identify how and why the hidden sufferings of African women are mostly taken for granted but have long-term tragic effects on the victims. Through Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the research probes the subconscious minds of the female characters and explores the traumatic experiences that influence their behaviour. This theory allows investigation of the psychoanalytic dimensions of the text for both the author and the reader and enables them to examine the ranges of hidden meanings in these texts. Characters’ behaviour, narrative events, and/or images can be explained in terms of psychoanalytic concepts and can be seen as a primary indicators of psychological identity, and of the operations of the Freudian triad of the ego – id – super-ego.

This study also demonstrates how fiction can be used as a tool for voicing the unvoiced in different parts of African society, where the victims are deprived of the chance of speaking about their sufferings. Therefore, to a great extent, this investigation recognises the role played by three African female writers in changing aspects of African thinking on women, while at the same time, rejecting stereotypes and arguing for the fair representation and treatment of women. This leads to not only the appreciation of the contribution of women in African literature, but also challenges patriarchal hegemony. Findings from textual analysis show that challenging the patriarchal system and treating women fairly brings change in some specific areas of contemporary African society. Furthermore, such challenges open opportunities for in the public spheres of society. This is the goal of all feminist activity: to change the world by prompting gender equality.

This research also deconstructs the overarching opinions that all postcolonial experiences can be seen as similar; the three novels, each translated from a different language, speak of their own experiences and none other, and while extrapolations can be made, there is a danger in a one size fits all approach, and the theories are corrective to this tendency. So while they share an overarching agenda of offering a more positive paradigm for the female characters and, by extension, for a female and indeed male readership, we must take note of the culture-specific aspects of each narrative and each society in which the book is set.

This study is comparative in nature. The societies from the three regions are compared to see how similar or different they are. Additionally, the three authors are compared to see what they have in common, as well as what differentiates them from each other. The comparative nature of this research emanates from the fact that Africa as a continent has many countries. Subsequently a brief analysis of as many of these countries as possible will increase the validity of this study. This work does both, discussing the development of psychoanalysis and feminism in general from the 20th century, and their development to the present on the one hand, and on the other hand, modelling the application of these theories in helping to reveal hidden meanings in the literary texts. Some insights from both discourses will be used to offer deeper readings of aspects of the three novels. It will begin with a literature review, offering a brief conspectus of some of the current thinking on the three novels.

Literature Review

Nervous Conditions, by the Zimbabwean author, Tsitsi Dangarembga, critiques, not only on the laws of Africa that affect women, but also social conditions concerned with marriage, personal, and sexual relations, with property and with children, and in the wider field of education and conditions of work. That is why Tasmia Moslehuddin says that:

> The novel *Nervous Conditions* examines unequal power relations between men and women in the Sigauke clan which was largely steeped in tradition. Women (Nyasha, Maiguru, Lucia, Tambu and MaShingayi) in the novel challenge the practices of male domination in various ways, usually unsuccessfully. Each of these women makes an effort to question some of the decisions that were the prerogative of the patriarch. The woman also attempts to break out of the role of domesticity and servility to the surprise of the man. (Moslehuddin, 2011, p. 78)

The novel challenges unequal power relations between men and women and questions the practices of male domination. Women in this novel make some efforts to question some of the decisions that were the prerogative of the patriarch. They also attempt to break out of the roles of servility and domesticity. It is a story about women's suffering and struggle to liberate themselves. About this Moslehuddin says:

> The novel appears not only to be the story of Tambu and her ambition to educate and develop herself in the face of a myriad of obstacles but also it is very much about Nyasha, one of the central characters of the novel, who was alienated from her own clan by virtue of her 'Englishness'. Social injustices conspire against her to the point that she suffers a 'nervous condition'. The story is also about MaShingayi, a traditionalist who was complacent with the status quo and could not tolerate womenfolk who were rebelling against it. It is also about Lucia who had the audacity to gate-crash into the meeting of the patriarchs. Lastly and not least there was Maiguru who was

> balanced perfectly between the two conflicting cultures to the dismay of her daughter on one side, and her in-laws on the other side. (Moslehuddin, 2011, p. 80)

This novel is about the entrapment of the African women and their efforts to fight against all kinds of oppression and injustice that ensures that they are always in a 'nervous condition'. That is why Dangarembga, in explaining the purpose of writing this novel, states very clearly that:

> my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion – Nyasha, far minded and isolated, my uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not in the end have been successful. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1)

Moslehuddin claims that women's deprivation of education is a strategy used by men because when women are not educated, they will not be able to fight for their rights, and as a result of that they will be grounded in the kitchen and depend on men for everything else:

> African cultural practices and traditions perpetuate the illiteracy of women. Women are thus economically dependent on others, especially their husbands. In addition, illiteracy leads to decreased participation in the formal economic sphere, and in leadership positions. In the proper use of education lies the salvation of sex. As long as she is ignorant, so long will she remain dejected, oppressed and incapable of sharing men's pursuits and ideals. (Moslehuddin, 2011, p. 81)

Moslehuddin says that this is evident in the novel when Dangarembga presents the protagonist, Tambu, as being denied access to education because she is a girl.

Tambu's father is influenced by cultural assumptions that education is a necessity for boys and not girls. Upon this refusal, Tambu questions why she, too, cannot be educated and her father replies: 'Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15). This fictionally suggests how men in African societies have stereotyped ideas about their mothers and sisters; they seem to feel that women are born to do all household activities, and that the jobs or studies that allow them to go outside are not for them. They can only go outside if they are asked to do so by men or if they are allowed by men.

Moslehuddin claims that Dangarembga portrays Tambu as someone who wants change in the male-dominated society. The protagonist, Tambu, wants to be educated like her brother. She was born a girl, and thus faces a fundamental disadvantage, since traditional African social practice dictates that the oldest male child is deemed to be the future head of the family, a practice that is widespread across the continent but of course there are differences from country to country. Talking about how a male child is favoured Moslehuddin writes:

> All of the family resources are poured into developing his abilities and preparing him to lead and provide for his clan. When Nhamo dies, the tragedy is all the more profound since no boy exists to take his place. Tambu steps into the role of future provider, yet she is saddled with the prejudices and limitations that shackled most African girls of her generation. Her fight for an education and a better life is compounded by her gender. (Moslehuddin, 2011, p. 81)

Moslehuddin sees that Dangarembga has been very successful in showing how men and women are treated differently to the disadvantage of women in African societies. Laws and the entire culture are set in favour of the patriarchy:

> In the novel, inequality is as infectious as disease, a crippling attitude that kills ambition, crushes women's spirits, and discourages them from supporting and rallying future generations and other female relatives. (Moslehuddin, 2011, p. 81)

For Moslehuddin therefore, a woman is bound not only by the laws of her culture, but also by the social stratification of colonialism, where she is in fact doubly colonised. A woman is reduced to the level of being the possession of men in their society.

Another critique of *Nervous Conditions* is by Ann Smith. Smith, in her article 'Girl power in *Nervous Conditions*', considers Dangarembga as a novelist who has been very successful in exploring the relationship that exists between ideology and power. On the one hand, it is very evident that education empowers people, but for Tambu, or rather for a woman, education becomes a tool of oppression:

> Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* lends itself admirably to an exploration of the relationship between ideology and power – between, in this case, education and the ways in which education serves not only as a means to the empowerment of the young female protagonist, Tambu, but also as a site of her oppression as a black girl in Southern Africa. (Smith, 2000, p. 246)

This reality is not only true to the southern part of Africa only, but in many ways, can be found in other parts of Africa as well. Therefore, the novel is capable of offering us a way of understanding the implications of girls' education and some of the complexities of benevolent patriarchy.

One of the themes in the novel is gender inequalities. Smith sees that the expectations of African culture represented in the novel create gender inequalities. She shows that women are expected to be 'servants', and to accommodate men; an expectation that renders limited opportunities and choices to women in their society. In contrast to women, men on the other hand are viewed as breadwinners and heads of the families. Due to all this, women struggle with the gender inequalities created by the cultural expectations of gender. Tambu and Nyasha work hard to fight against such oppression:

> The girls represented in this work, Tambu and her cousin, Babamukuru's daughter, Nyasha, are feisty young women who, in different ways and with different degrees of success, try to counter the oppression to which they are subjected. (Smith, 2000, p. 246)

We are therefore given an opportunity of seeing Tambu and Nyasha as representatives of two different ways of dealing with aspects of this oppression of women.

As a feminist writer, according to Smith, Dangarembga challenges the patriarchal system in a very skilful way, especially in her use and subversion in her novel of two literary generic antecedents: the traditional *Bildungsroman*, or novel of growth and development, and the traditional colonial novel. Smith sees that:

> These genres are both based on the belief in the didactic significance of realism, which, to put it reductively and somewhat colloquially, suggests that in offering 'a slice of life' to his or her readers, the author, through the omniscient narrator, is enabled, also, to offer them a learning opportunity based on what happens to the characters depicted in

> the novel. Both genres have to do with cause and effect and, therefore, with the consequences of various actions performed by, and behaviours manifested in, the characters. (Smith, 2000, p. 247)

Smith believes that Dangarembga's insistence on the power of the omniscient narrator to achieve this purpose, and the didactic purpose of these linear realist narratives, have much in common with the patriarchal world view out of which realism grew.

In this novel we see how the author concentrates: 'on the development or education of a central character' (Thamarana, 2015, p. 22), just as Lema and Adichie did in *Parched Earth* and *Purple Hibiscus* respectively. In all the novels, each author: 'intends to lead the reader to greater personal enrichment as the protagonist journeys from youth to psychological or emotional maturity' (Thamarana, 2015, p. 22), thus making the authors successful in depicting the protagonists' battle to establish an individual identity with various conflicts from outside the self or their psychological or internal struggle. That is why Thamarana claims that:

> *Bildungsroman* intends to lead the reader to greater personal enrichment as the protagonist journeys from youth to psychological or emotional maturity. The growth and maturity occur according to a specific pattern: so the sensitive, intelligent protagonist generally leaves home and undergoes stages of conflict and growth, he or she is tested by crises and love affairs and then finally finds the best place to use his / her unique talents (Thamarana, 2015, p. 22)

So, each writer's social and moral opinions are presented through the main character in the way that the protagonist embarks on a quest for the meaning of life.

The portrayal of Nyasha in the novel is from a colonial perspective in the sense that she is a young woman retuning from England to Zimbabwe. Being brought up and educated in Europe and coming back to live in Africa, Nyasha does not only behave in a different way but also, she reacts in a different way towards things she experiences:

> Babamakuru's patriarchal privilege has been endorsed and consolidated in the very place where Nyasha has been given the liberal education which has taught her to think freely and independently and which has taught her to question the very patriarchal ideology and practice which her father has been empowered to entrench back home in Rhodesia. (Smith, 2000, p. 249)

Smith says that Dangarembga shows female characters to be very vulnerable in the novel, and one thinks of how Jeremiah and Nhamo constantly pressurise Tambu, which appears to be totally insensible to Tambu who says: ‘my father was not sensible’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16). She continues to show this quality when she says: ‘Nhamo tells her she can’t go to school, “Because she is a girl” (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21). Due to that Smith says:

> Dangarembga’s depiction of Tambu as a young girl desperate to go to school is set against the backdrop of local traditional opinions and attitudes. Here we are presented with a belief – so typical of many Sub-Saharan African men – that women count for much less than they do. (Smith, 2000, p. 247)

That is why even after Tambu earns money to pay her own fees, her father audaciously attempts to claim the money back from the school for himself, and this clearly shows aspects of oppression that are seen as normal by this society, as well as his sense of patriarchal ownership of his daughter.

Women in *Nervous Conditions* face patriarchal constraints and struggles with gender inequality all the time, as they are treated like slaves in their homes. Tambu’s brother, Nhamo, continues to suppress the expectations of women by mistreating them. When Nhamo arrives home from school, he always leaves his luggage for Tambu and her cousin to deal with and put away. Tambu addresses this by saying:

> Once or twice, because there was too much for [my cousin] to manage on her own, I went with her. Knowing that he did not need help, that he only wanted to demonstrate to us and himself that he had the power the authority to make us do the things for him, I hate fetching my brother’s luggage. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 10)

Gender inequality that Shona women face is symbolised by the luggage that Nhamo expects his sisters to carry for him. Tambu does not like the fact that she has to carry the luggage for her brother and so she is fed up; she represents the servile expectations that a Shona woman must comply with for their men. On this Smith says:

> Near the start of the novel Tambu says: 'the needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority or even legitimate' (p. 12). She goes on to tell us of her sense of injustice at the fact that her brother, Nhamo, as we have learned earlier, was sent to school so that he, 'if given the chance . . . would distinguish himself academically'. (Smith, 2000, p. 247)

Babamukuru is not satisfied with Nyasha's behaviour. His abuse of Nyasha is always associated with her femininity. He accuses her of indecency, calls her a whore and finally accuses her of having a sexual relationship with the Baker boys. His continuous bullying becomes intolerable to Nyasha. Dangarembga shows that in African societies 'patriarchal violence combines European models of violence against women with models of patriarchal oppression that existed before and after colonialism' (*Nervous Conditions,* 77). Nyasha's response to patriarchal violence is her refusal to eat, which may be interpreted as metaphorical and political.

Explaining the same point Smith says:

> Dangarembga's investigation of Nyasha's response to the pressures of her life can provide a useful starting point. Nyasha is oppressed not only by the sexism so entrenched in her community but also by her status as a postcolonial young woman thrust back into a colonial situation in which she is both daughter and student of the ruling patriarchal school principal. (Smith, 2000, p. 249)

Nyasha shows that she is unable to cope with patriarchal dominance, cultural norms, and the inconsistencies of a modern society, which secure masculine privilege.

The narrator begins by showing Maiguru as an independent, elegant, and smart woman, and as a true role model:

> Although the missionaries who had offered him the scholarship to study in England had offered Maiguru a scholarship as well (so anxious were they that this intelligent, disciplined young couple be trained to become useful to their people). (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 14)

But Tambu comes to understand her later as a dependent and frustrated woman who complains all the time. She does not have access to her own wage, which her husband appropriates to provide for his own family. That is why Tambu says: ‘my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia’s; about my mother’s and Maiguru’s entrapment’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1). As Tambu deconstructs her myth of the empowered Maiguru, the aunt explains to her niece that for a woman in her country, to be married always means ‘to have to choose between self and security’ (*Nervous Conditions* 101). Despite the fact that Maiguru is an educated woman, she has been enculturated by norms she cannot avoid, and she has done all she could to meet ideological expectations. She confesses to Tambu that she does not have access to her own salary. Commenting on this, Meyre Ivone Da Silva says that:

> By taking the wife’s wage to help his brother Jeremiah and other relatives, the husband follows traditions, thus meeting cultural norms regarding masculinity. From his point of view, what women, such as Maiguru, Nyasha and Tambudzai, consider violence and tyranny, Babamukuru considers as established norms that should not be disrupted. His role in the family is symbolically connected to his role in society as someone who helps to maintain the regular order. However, women characters in the novel understand that this maintenance of order is a way to perpetrate invisible forms of violence. In the private space, Babamukuru continuously inflicts epistemic violence on women through his authoritarian and tyrannical discourses, and sometimes physical violence. (DaSilva, 2019, p. 6)

The consistent maltreatment of women builds anger in them, and consequently that make them respond in an overly aggressive way in showing that they can no longer tolerate such treatment. This is clearly shown when Tambu attacks her brother, Nhamo, with fury. Tambu’s parents cannot afford to send both children to school, and they decide to pay the fees for the male child. Tambu decides to grow maize so that she may pay for her own fees. Unfortunately, her crops start to disappear from the field. To her surprise she discovers that her own brother, Nhamo, is stealing her maize. Frustrated with her situation and surprised by the cruelty of the brother, Tambu utilises physical violence to make her voice heard. On violence, Smith said:

> On one level, in transposing forms of violence to a discursive level, Dangarembga pushes the reader to the limit, while on the other, her narrative challenges the ways in which violence of representation has defined black and African women in hegemonic discourses. In revealing invisible forms of violence that define the lives of those who, most of the times, are considered by hegemonic groups. (Smith, 2000, p. 4)

Turning now to the critical context that has been established about *Purple Hibiscus*, Gloria Ada Fwangyil's 'A Reformist-Feminist Approach to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*', is a brilliant analysis of the novel that examines closely the exploitation and suppression of women in the novel while highlighting areas of oppression that undermine the position of African women in their society. In her own words, Fwangyil says:

> Women in Africa, to a large extent, are virtually regarded as 'second class' human beings who are meant to be seen and not heard or are simply a pair of eyes behind the veil in the Islamic world. Their lives revolve solely around procreation, motherhood, merging into the man's world without protesting. (Fwangyil, 2011, p. 262)

Fwangyil claims that *Purple Hibiscus* clearly portrays the oppressive and stifling social environment in which women live, under Christianity and Catholicism as well.

African women, as portrayed in this novel, undergo oppressive and dehumanising situations in an extraordinary way, but these are real life stories that have been modified and recreated for society's awareness. Fwangyil says that Adichie has been remarkably successful in expressing social realities:

> This statement lends credence to the fact that literature is a mirror of the society and draws from human experiences in order to give the true reflections of realities in the society. This social context thus explains why the term 'verisimilitude' aptly defines literature; for it is basically an imitation of life, as is lived in the physical world. (Fwangyil, 2011, p. 262)

According to Fwangyil, *Purple Hibiscus* aims at changing and reshaping the mindsets of men, regarding gender discrimination and inequality. Adichie challenges, not only the political, economic and societal beliefs, but also norms and values that are detrimental to women. Therefore, there is the need for reforms and for changes in those prejudices and negative notions about women; changes that will eventually reduce and eradicate the subjugation of women in our societies:

> In spite of the obvious radical feminist perspectives portrayed in Adichie's novel, the reformist feminist critique of the text has helped to demonstrate that men with

> oppressive tendencies and habits can change. This angle of approach stems from the fact that reformist feminists believe in the possibility of a reformation of the criticized society and individuals in particular. Reformist feminists are also of the view that the movement towards the full equality of men and women should be gradual and incremental. (Fwangyil, 2011, p. 263)

Najeeb Washaly in his article 'The Representation of Gender Violence in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*', says that gender violence is one of the major themes in the novel. He notes that Adichie has been successful in showing that domestic gender violence is an everyday phenomenon in different African societies and had increasingly dominated social issues. This has been contributed to by factors like patriarchy, religion and culture. Washaly thus, claims that this domestic violence is mostly taken for granted in many ways:

> It is crucial to note that most of the events revolve around domestic violence. Adichie questioned the established social norms that legitimise and justify violence for sustaining proper conduct. The majority of Africans condone the dire consequences of gender violence (domestic violence). She calls for collective consciousness to confront any form of violence. (Washaly, 2018, p. 2047)

The violence that Adichie speaks about is that which takes place in the household. That is why *Purple Hibiscus* is seen as a perfect critique not only of gender violence, but also of domestic violence because Adichie in her novel reveals the overwhelming impact of assorted types of violence on family relations. Of this Washaly says:

> What is shocking in *Purple Hibiscus* is that violence is practised within the family. Adichie has vividly visualised the various atrocities committed by a father against his dearest ones– wife, daughter, son, and father – in the name of religion. She, in addition, reveals that religion is being utilised to justify violence and oppression. She, thus, tackles with the issue of gender violence from different perspectives particularly the religious one. (Washaly, 2018, p. 2048)

Due to all these kinds of oppression against women, Adichie represents a culture of peace and tolerance between those who have power and who are weak: between men and women. She does that through other characters in the novel in contrast to the culture of violence and intolerance that exists in the society. Eugene's sister Aunty Ifeoma is a significant character in the novel, who stands in front of her brother and is able to tell him the truth. Washaly addresses this point by saying:

> Throughout the novel, Adichie sought to convey a message that both men and women should free themselves from any harsh cultural or religious norms that are obstacles in their progress and wellbeing. In doing so, she repeatedly asserted the importance of empowerment, self-respect, tolerance, forgiveness and peaceful coexistence regardless of religion, culture or attitudes. Such trends would ultimately bring about emancipation. (Washaly, 2018, p. 2064)

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie centres her focus on women in homes, and on what they undergo in life. She also pays much attention to, not only their love for the family and respect for their husbands even when they treat them shabbily, but also to how some of them were able to say no to all forms of violence or subjugation by the men folk. Ibeku Ijeoma Ann argues that:

> Adichie in her novel presented two types of women: the good woman (Mama) and the real woman (Aunty Ifeoma). Mama even when her life was endangered to the extent of losing her pregnancy endured her husband's maltreatment but Ifeoma is a kind of woman who is not afraid of anyone and will speak up when things are going wrong. She tactically presented Mama as quiet and obedient at the beginning of the novel, but she became radical towards the end of the novel to show that she can react when pushed to the wall. (Ann, 2015, p. 427)

Therefore, Ann contends that Adichie in this novel concentrate on issues that concern women and so joins other women in the literary movement that tends to bring about change in the society especially in terms of how women are being unjustly treated. This is done by discouraging the discrimination and humiliation of women, and by focusing attention more on the emancipation of women. She portrays women as often downgraded to the background and subject to decisions made by men without their consent: 'most African novels present female characters as sex objects, inferior beings, and those who must obey the rules made by men' (Ann, 2015, p. 427). That is why Ann says that:

> Adichie presented the two different types of feminism: African feminism which is often seen as being liberal and tolerates men and Radical feminism which uses violence in

> order to gain their freedom. The novel made it clear that Radical feminism is usually a reaction to violence. It is a measure taken by the victimized to gain his/her freedom. (Ann, 2015, p. 430)

So, Ann argues that Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a feminist work that challenges the dehumanising tendencies of patriarchy. She does this by showing women like Mama (Beatrice) as a good woman who tolerates everything and nevertheless undergoes a chain of humiliation, dehumanisation and denial at the hands of her husband.

Parched Earth has also been the subject of critical commentary and engagement. Elizabeth Kweka says that in *Parched Earth*, Doreen centres all her future dreams on her brother's dreams and the only right place for her to be is in the kitchen. This implies that girls were trained to consider marriage as the surest occupation for women. In her own words, Kweka says:

> Doreen's words suggest that as a woman she has not thought of obtaining education which will make her subconscious dream similar to those of Godbless. The only dream she believes will not fail her are dreams of staying home to cook and wash. Nobody in the novel tells Doreen that it is a must that she will be washing and cooking but it is her experience from what women have been doing. (Kweka, 2012, p. 28)

So, while boys are trained to aim high in their lives like being ministers or engineers, girls are limited in what they aim at in life, and mostly they confine themselves to the kitchen and to acting in ways that please men. That is why Doreen says:

> When he acted as a minister, I wanted to be someone going along with the minister. It was Godbless who spoke and knew just what to do. He knew how to be authoritative, and in the make believe, he made me believe him. (Lema, 2001, pp. 8-9)

Kweka claims that patriarchy has been successful in making women believe that education is not necessary for them, which results in a self-fulfilling prophecy, as women are unqualified for good positions and jobs, though outwardly the education system would seem to be open to both girls and boys. However, due to these ideological and cultural constraints and lower expectations, many girls are still vulnerable:

> Doreen has a chance to go to school, like her brother and the society does not seem to be a hindrance. All that she needs is to put efforts in her studies, but what has prevailed in her mind for a long time is that women are inferior and incapable of achieving higher positions or superior jobs. This situation disturbs her and tears down her dreams. (Kweka, 2012, p. 29)

While the opportunity is ostensibly there, the ideological conditioning prevents many girls from taking advantage of this opportunity. Instead, there is a normative expectation that the lifegoal of girls should be to get married. In this way, marriage becomes their main cultural and societal achievement.

African women are loaded naturally with heavy responsibilities in families such as giving birth to children and domestic duties; after birth, the child belongs to both parents. When Doreen fails to give birth to a child, she is told by her aunt that it is the responsibility of a woman in marriage to make sure that they have a child and take care of children when they are born. According to Kweka, women are unjustly overburdened by responsibilities that weaken their self-esteem and frustrate their dreams in life:

> The responsibility of looking for children is given to women while men are never responsible for it. The question which arises is, if children belong to two partners, why is it when couples fail to get children it is the women who should be responsible? The reality is that, even a man can look for children especially because in other incidences one would find that it is the husband who has problems that has caused the couple not to have children. One would agree that it is not easy for a woman to go and sleep with another man who is not her husband so as to have children. (Kweka, 2012, p. 30)

Kweka feels that such environments in African families frustrate women who find these situations difficult to deal with because they are wrapped in the patriarchal culture that is not easy to dismantle. It can be exceedingly difficult to achieve a position outside of these prejudices and ideologies from which to critique them.

Lennox Odiemo-Munara, in his Article ‘Women Engagement with Power and Authority in Re-writing East Africa’, has offered a fascinating analysis of *Parched Earth,* and says that Lema tries ‘to bring out the lives of ordinary women and their dynamic contestations of patriarchal societal arrangements in the Tanzanian society’ (Odiemo-Munara, 2010, p. 13).

According to him the portrayal of the male/female relationship in this novel is steeped in social and psychological maturity. For him, in *Parched Earth*: 'there are to be found men who are senselessly fixated in culturally determined patriarchal residuals of power and authority' (Odiemo-Munara, 2010, p. 13).

Efforts have been made by women in trying to liberate themselves from the snares of the patriarchal system, but the fight has not been easy. It was and still is an exceedingly difficult and long struggle which needs unceasing joint efforts until victory is achieved:

> To escape oppressive, etherising societal processes, what is metaphorically defined as the 'spider's web' in the novel, the women have to continuously evolve strategies of avoiding being trapped. This they do through outright rebellion against the patriarchal societal expectations, reformulating paradigms of woman's life and existence, and so forth. (Odiemo-Munara, 2010, p. 13)

Munara claims that the lives of most of the African women are very much affected by the succession of contestations of the effects of the patriarchal system, which always traps them like a 'spider's web'.

Doreen equates patriarchy and its techniques with the spider and its web; she wonders at the way the spider spins its web from the very inside of its stomach for trapping others into its power. 'Death for one, life for another. The spider spins its power web from the secretions of its stomach in order to survive' (Lema, 2001, p. 4), and this is an eloquent metaphor for how men treat women in most of African cultures. Lema challenges these techniques used by men to oppress women, and she presents female characters who show a strong will in fighting against dependency, and who struggle to create a new road map towards better and more equal male-female relationships. Commenting on such women, Munara says:

> The text's major women characters, Foibe Seko, Doreen Seko and Aunt Mai, are driven by a strong sense of survival into a newness (they are creatively and intelligently interpreting Aunt Mai's insightful life philosophy that a woman is a 'social orphan', and incipient here is that as women they have to always be searching. (Odiemo-Munara, 2010, p. 13)

Munara sees Doreen as the only girl child to carry all the responsibilities in her mother's household, and as following the example of her mother in how to survive as a woman. She learns that, as a woman, she is destitute in this society, but she resists being trapped in the societal web that entraps women in traditional East African societies.

Another person who has made a very substantial critique of *Parched Earth* is Eliah Sibonike Mwaifuge in his book *Politics and Ideology in Tanzanian Prose Fiction in English*. Mwaifuge sees *Parched Earth* as a novel that highlights issues like inequality, human rights and justice. For him, the title *Parched Earth* is symbolic, referring to not only dry but also infertile land incapable of producing anything. Women in *Parched Earth* are compared to the dry land that is incapable of producing anything in their society, something which is not accepted by Lema. Mwaifuge claims that:

> Lema in *Parched Earth* calls for positive change so as to bring an end to the power the structure and the value system based on rigid gender roles. *Parched Earth* is marked by the female protagonist's questioning of the culture of patriarchy, a strategy that enhances the narrative's high dramatic impact and invites her reader actively to engage with the fact of patriarchy and contemplate the possibility of alternatives. (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 161)

Mwaifuge contends that the preferential treatment boys receive in a traditional society compared to girls is not left unnoticed by women. There are several female reactions in the novel against these societal impositions and restrictions. Doreen's mother passively accepts the patriarchal values that imprison her and to a great extent, they make her unable to assert her independent self. On the other hand, boys are treated in a way that allows them to be free and independent in thinking and so be prepared to lead and control women. On this Mwaifuge says:

> Society treats boys as special because they are the bearers of the family name. As the only daughter, Doreen can but naively marvel at how her three brothers, especially Godbless, are favoured and given preferential treatment by their mother. It is evident that Doreen's mother has resigned herself and her children to their gendered fates. (Mwaifuge, 2019, pp. 161-162)

In most African societies, marriage is more of a social event rather than the concern of the individuals themselves. This begins from the exceedingly early stages of process of choosing husband and wife. Doreen decides to marry Martin without informing any of her family members. When she visits her family and tells them that she is married, her mother and her brother are not happy. Doreen's mother as well falls in love with Sebastian, but the parents of Sebastian object to that relationship: 'But the married Sebastian continued seeing Foibe until he impregnated her' (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 162).

Structure of the thesis /Chapter summary

This thesis consists of an introduction and five chapters:

- The introduction outlines the research question, the rationale of the thesis and offers a review of some of the relevant criticism of the three writers;
- Chapter one outlines the history and value of autoethnography from the 20th Century to the present;
- Chapter two reviews the development of feminism and psychoanalysis and outlines some ideas that will be significant in the later analysis;
- Chapter three offers psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations of *Nervous Conditions*;
- Chapter four offers psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations of *Purple Hibiscus*;
- Chapters five offers psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations *Parched Earth*;
- Conclusion.

Why is this study important?

The study is justified on the grounds of raising awareness of, and contributing to, the general discussion regarding gender equality in a broadly African context, and on the grounds that it promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women. By examining literary theories, specifically psychoanalysis and feminism, which by definition interrogate and critique existing power structures, the thesis poses questions to issues of patriarchy and colonisation in terms of the role of women. This research is particularly important because it does not only study psychoanalysis and feminism, but also it shows how the theories are applied in analysing literary texts; it investigates and shows at the same time the efficacy of psychoanalysis and feminism, both as hermeneutic devices to read new meanings in texts, but also to critique the societies from which those texts originate, and to generate discussion on issues of gender and social justice.

The two major theories that have been used, namely psychoanalytic and feminism, have been used to unearth new meanings in the three texts respectively to demonstrate how the assumptions of each theory can be used as a lens through which one can view the text. Used as the basis of interpretation, the theories have helped to throw light on the ideas, issues and difficulties that come up in the text.

Therefore, any serious thinker will not ignore the fact that the study and application of literary theory remains an important field in contemporary literary criticisms. Such a reason is important enough to offer a rationale of the dominance of theories over the study of literature and the dismissal of theory will no longer do. They remain the ground-breaking source in theorising literature and provide premises and methodologies of appraising works of art which are enlightening; it is unthinkable to consider them as sterile, redundant, or irrelevant because they play a greater role as questioning and interiorised companions which help to reveal the in-depth or hidden meanings in the text.

Research Aim

This study provides a thorough analysis of the texts and reveals how successful the authors have been in expressing the cry of African women to their fellow African men and the entire society. The research attempts to offer something of a new perspective on African women. While on a personal level, the research increases the knowledge and understanding of literary theories as important tools of analysis of literary texts, on a professional level the researcher uses this knowledge to not only participate in the wider literary debates existing on modern literature through conference papers and presentations, especially in an African context, but also to publishing monographs and articles on the issues at the heart of the study over the course of this academic career, and to bringing new light to the subject while refining academic speciality and authority on the topic. In a wider sense, this research proves how rich and resourceful the literary texts are, and how powerful literary theories are in unveiling deep implications in the different texts. Thus, upon unveiling the hidden truth in the texts, this research plays an integral part in the process of bringing about change in people's lives so that we can create a society where women and men can treat one another fairly and with dignity.

Chapter One: Autoethnography (My story and the stories in the novels)

The concept of Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a qualitative research approach that seeks to systematically describe and analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. It is a form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher's personal experience and connects this autobiographical account to wider cultural, political and social meanings and understandings. For Ellis and Bochner**,** an autobiographical genre of writing is one 'that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Autoethnography is a useful qualitative research method used to analyse people's lives. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product:

> Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 273)

It is also a genre that places the self of the researcher and/or narrator within a social circumstance and refers to works that provoke questions about the nature of ethnographic knowledge by troubling the constant dichotomies of insider versus outsider, individual versus culture, the distant versus the familiar and the objective observer versus the participant.

Autoethnography 'reflects a view of ethnography as both a reflexive and a collaborative enterprise, in which the life experiences of the anthropologist' (Reed-Danahay, 2017, p. 145), and our relationships with our interlocutors should be interrogated and explored. Autoethnography 'stands at the intersection of three genres of narration and critical reflection that may overlap in any particular work'. These include 'portraits of a social group the author-anthropologist is affiliated with; life writing or other autobiographical acts that incorporate ethnographic description of their social group; and anthropological writing that includes reflexive descriptions of research' (Reed-Danahay, 2017). It differs from ethnography, which is a qualitative research method in which a researcher uses participant observation and interviews in order to gain a deeper understanding of a group's culture, in that autoethnography focuses on the writer's subjective experience rather than, the beliefs and practices of others, as it challenges formal and canonical ways of approaching research, and instead 'treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 273). According to Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative research developed historically over time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). From the early 1900s, researchers intended to present objective accounts of their field experiences. This was followed by the period after the first and second World Wars to the 1970s. Researchers during the post-war period were primarily concerned with formalising qualitative research to be as accurate as quantitative research. The period from 1970-1986 was a very unclear and challenging period for researchers characterised by varied research strategies and formats.

Autoethnography then emerged in the mid-1980s due to the 'calls to place greater emphasis on the ways in which the ethnographer interacts with the culture being researched' (Holt, 2003, p. 2). Basically, autoethnography permits researchers to draw on their own experiences to understand a particular phenomenon or culture:

> One emergent ethnographic writing practice involves highly personalized accounts where authors draw on their own experiences to extend understanding of a particular discipline or culture. Such evocative writing practices have been labelled autoethnography. (Holt, 2003, p. 2)

Therefore, in the 1980s, there was a reform in social science and forms of social science inquiry. Scholars were increasingly troubled by social science's ontological, epistemological, and axiological limitations (Bochner, 2000). So, they began to illustrate how the 'facts' and 'truths' scientists 'found' were inextricably tied to the vocabularies and paradigms the scientists used to represent them. Indeed, such books suggest that 'scientific methods are simply the ones illustrated by the manipulative techniques used in gathering textbook data' (Kuhn, 1996, p. 1), which then use a formal discourse to discuss such data. Hence, they started to understand the impossibility of master or universal narratives, and as a result they started to be aware of the new relationships between authors, audiences, and texts. That is why Derrida says: 'we've had enough of the confusion engendered between author and audience through the medium of producers and actors' (Derrida, 1978, p. 242). As a result, they came to realise that: 'stories were not only complex and constitutive but also meaningful phenomena that taught morals and ethics, introduced unique ways of thinking and feeling, and helped people make sense of themselves and others' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 274):

> Three interrelated concerns and considerations about social scientific and qualitative research contributed to the formation of autoethnography: (1) new and changing ideas about and ideals for research, a recognition of the limits of scientific knowledge, and an emerging appreciation for personal narrative, story, the literary and the aesthetic, emotions, and the body; (2) a heightened concern about the ethics and politics of research practices and representations; and (3) the increased importance of social identities and identity politics. (Adam, et al., 2015, p. 8)

So step by step, scholars started to question not only what social sciences would become if they were closer to literature than to physics and if they proffered stories rather than theories, but also if they were: 'value-centred rather than pretending to be value free' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 274) The answer to these questions involved a turn to autoethnography, because scholars were seeking a positive response to critiques of canonical ideas about the nature of research, and how research should be done. Scholars focused on ways of producing meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience, research that would sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experiences covered by silence: 'and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 274).

Scholars, such as Fine and Ellis, found out that personal experiences can influences the research process in various ways as they can give a researcher the options to change the names and places of protection; to compress years of research and to construct a study in a pre-determined way. A researcher may decide who, what, when, where and how to research, with the criteria for making these decisions being necessarily tied to institutional requirements, resources, ethical criteria and personal circumstances:

> Autoethnographers recognize the innumerable ways personal experience influences the research process. For instance, a researcher decides who, what, when, where, and how to research, decisions necessarily tied to institutional requirements (e.g., Institutional Review Boards), resources (e.g., funding), and personal circumstance (e.g., a researcher studying cancer because of personal experience with cancer). A researcher may also change names and places for protection (Fine, 1993), compress years of research into a single text, and construct a study in a pre-determined way. (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 274)

Autoethnography then is one of the research methods that accommodates and acknowledges emotionality, subjectivity and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they do not exist. Instead, it challenges notions of scientific objectivity and makes the point that such objectivity often stands in silent metaphor for 'a white, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied perspective, disregarding other ways of knowing, and rendering them as unsatisfactory and invalid' (Ellis, et al., 2011). Therefore, autoethnography helps people understand how the kinds of people we claim, or are perceived, to be can influence interpretations of what we study, how we study it, and what we say about our topic and so expand and open up a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research. Basically, autoethnography is a combination of Autobiography and Ethnography where by what is being retroactively written is about the past experiences that are carefully selected. (Freeman, 2004)

The author is free to consult journals, photographs and even recordings. Such experiences are assembled as hindsight and in order to make them part of the published work, the author usually does not live through those experiences solely (Ellis, et al., 2011).

Authors of autoethnography often write about moments remembered to have impacted significantly the trajectory of a person's life (Bochner & Ellis, 1992). They would not only analyse the lived experiences and the epiphanies, but also they would: 'write about times of existential crisis' that 'forced a person to attend to and events after which life does not seem quite the same' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 275). The written epiphanies show how intense situations and effects, recollections, memories, images and feelings that linger could be negotiated long after a crucial incident is supposedly finished: 'epiphanies can motivate trauma, confusing us and moving us to sadness and discomfort, and sometimes resulting in a more satisfying life' (Adam, et al., 2015, pp. 26-27). Some would consider epiphanies are self-claimed phenomena and transformative experiences while others would not (Bochner, 1984, p. 592). As a researcher, an autoethnographer is surpassed to 'retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that originate from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 276). Apart from telling about experiences, autoethnographers are required by social science publishing conventions to analyse these experiences. As clearly attested by Mitch Allen, an autoethnographer must look at experience analytically: 'what makes your story more valid is that you are a researcher. You have a set of theoretical and methodological tools and a research literature to use' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 276). Therefore, autoethnographers in conducting their researches must not only employ their methodological tools and research literature to analyse experience, but also they must also consider ways others may experience similar epiphanies. That is to say, by comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research, they must use personal experiences to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders.

For an autobiography to be aesthetic (practices of imaginative, creative, and artistic craft), evocative and engage readers, then the use of conventions of storytelling such as character, scene, and plot development are important and can also illustrate new perspectives on personal experience on epiphanies by finding and filling a 'gap' in existing, related storylines. The techniques of 'showing' and 'telling' can facilitate in making an autoethnography aesthetic, evocative and can bring readers into the scene particularly into thoughts, emotions, and actions in order to experience an experience:

> Most often through the use of conversation, showing allows writers to make events engaging and emotionally rich. 'Telling' is a writing strategy that works with 'showing' in that it provides readers some distance from the events described so that they might think about the events in a more abstract way. Adding some 'telling' to a story that 'shows' is an efficient way to convey information needed to appreciate what is going on, and a way to communicate information that does not necessitate the immediacy of dialogue and sensuous engagement. (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 277)

Altering authorial points of view is another technique that autoethnographers use to make a text artful and evocative. They may use first-person narrative, if observed personally or through participation in an intimate and immediate eyewitness account; while to describe moments that are felt too difficult to claim, they may use second-person narrative. The use of the third-person is for the establishment of the context for an interaction and for presenting what others do or say. Authors of ethnographies write thick descriptions in order for the insiders and the outsiders of the cultural experiences expressed in a story to understand the episodes. In the social sciences, thick description is a description of human social action that describes not just physical behaviours, but their context as interpreted by the actors as well, so that it can be better understood by an outsider.

Therefore, for the purpose of producing aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience, autoethnographic researchers discern patterns of cultural experiences evidenced by field notes, interviews or artefacts. These patterns are then described by using facets of storytelling such as character and plot development, showing and telling, and alterations of authorial voice. By so doing, the autoethnographer makes the personal experience meaningful and cultural experience engaging. However, more importantly, by producing accessible texts, the researcher may be able to reach a wider and diverse audiences that traditional research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people.

In the current study, autoethnography has been of great value to me in allowing me to see the connections between the characters in these three fictional African novels, and events, attitudes and norms in my own life. Throughout the thesis, I will draw attention to these connections as a way of demonstrating that fiction has a way of telling truths that may not be available to people who have no forum or voice. Reading the stories and narratives of these books allows me to frame a different perspective on my own life and on the narratives that conditioned me and my parents in our lived lives.

Personal Narrative

I grew up in a rural area of Tanzania, in a family of seven children and two parents. My father worked as a teacher in a catechetical college that was far from our rural home. He received an extraordinarily low salary from this college. My father took us to live with him in his place of work. Consequently, we were far away from our close relations who were important to us in our extended family. With no grandparents, aunts or uncles around us, our nuclear family mattered a lot. People of this region were of a different tribe and they did not speak '*Kindamba*', our tribal dialectal. My parents decided to take me to my aunt at our rural home so that I would be able to learn our language and to experience our cultural life. That was an unforgettable experience for me.

In my aunt's village, people lived in a communal clan system sharing the same compound. Every evening all the men of the clan would gather in the same place called '*kubwalu*' around the fire. The patriarchal system was maintained this way as the women were living separately and so it was easier to control them. The young males would make sure that there was enough firewood to keep the fire alive. Boys received special treatment to perpetuate the system; even in childhood they know that they are special. The evening meal was particularly important and was eaten by the men of the clan together. Every house would bring food in a big wide dish to the fireplace (*kubwalu*), where the men and boys sat together. The men would eat together one dish after another until the plates were finished. This allowed them to taste variety of foods from the whole clan, while women did not have the same range or scope of food. It really was a fantastic experience of sharing. That was also the time when men shared stories. During these sittings, the men of the clan discussed important clan affairs while women were deprived a chance of contributing and decision making.

Different rules governed the behaviour of the female population in my clan. Mothers and their daughters ate in their individual houses. Women were excluded from all discussions that touched on important clan affairs. Additionally, women were excluded from the decision-making processes in the clan. They were simply informed by their husbands about the decisions made by men. Such are the things that women were deprived of, which made their lives very vulnerable because:

> Decision-making power is the ability to influence decisions that affect one's life – both private and public. Formal access to positions of authority and to decision-making processes is an important, if insufficient, condition for women to have decision-making power in the public domain. In fact, decision-making power is a composite of access, capabilities and actions that shape whether women have influence over the polity or decisions about their private life. (Tam & Pilar, 2015, p. 2)

My aunt's husband had a second wife. That was not strange, because polygamy was a normal practice in our culture. For a man to have more than one wife was not only normal, but also prestigious. My maternal grandfather had six wives, and he built every wife a house in the same compound:

> Polygamy remains common in much of Africa. In the ‘polygamy belt’ stretching from Senegal to Tanzania, it is common for more than one third of married women to be polygamous. Polygamy has been cited as a possible contributor to Africa’s low savings rates, widespread incidence of HIV, high levels of child mortality, and of female depression. (Fenske, 2012, p. 1)

My grandmother was his first wife, and her position earned her respect from her co-wives. In this family set-up, my grandfather visited each wife on a rotational basis in terms of conjugal matters for the purpose of ensuring order. Sadly so, it was order meant only to suit the ‘man’, of the house, namely my grandfather. It was indeed not easy for him to manage the six wives though. He had to be tough and strong. In such situations, marriage was not seen as a partnership of equals at all.

This was not easy for the wives either because most of the times they would end up in disputes with each other. This is like the issue of Lucia and Tekesure in *Nervous Conditions*, as while Lucia is accused of being a loose woman, Tekesure is not. This would normally happen when my grandfather intentionally or unintentionally confused the timetable resulting in some woman waiting for too long for their turn to come. This created a feeling of neglect, guilt, regret and ambivalence: ‘we present a review of the literature on polygamy and …throughout, we highlight evidence that is both consistent with and contrary to the notion that polygamy is harmful’ (Lawson & Mhairi A, 2018, p. 178). It was hard for these wives to express their feelings; instead, they held rigid housekeeping standards. The man was the boss, and the women displaced their feelings into keeping their houses clean and neat as a way of exercising some levels of control in a situation over which they had no control. The domination and subordination of women by men was taken for granted and tolerated. Mine was a culture where male domination in marriage was the practice and the norm. I stayed there with my aunt for about two years; then I returned to my parents.

It so happened that my uncle died. Following the burial of the deceased, the family would gather after one year for a final ritual related to the departed person. During this event, his property would also be distributed according to the wishes of the clan elders. There were no written 'wills' with regard to property distribution when a man died. Only men possessed property in my clan. Distribution of the dead man's property was symbolic; it was essentially a way of saying, 'let us now forget the past and focus on the future.' I was privileged to accompany my father as he attended my uncle's final rites, following a year's mourning by his immediate family.

During this final rite that in my opinion was very well carried out, many of the things that happened made sense to me because I was in my early adolescent years. One of the things that struck me most was how our tradition dealt with a widow. According to the tradition of my tribe, after the death of a man and when his funeral was over, the extended family would have a meeting normally after three days following his burial. During this meeting, the widow would be asked where she would like to stay during the one year of mourning. The widow then would typically choose a close relative of the deceased husband. The chosen person has the responsibility from then on of taking care of the family and providing for them as would a father, so that the widow and children have support with their daily needs. This is common in many tribes in Africa, though not in all countries. In Kenya for example:

> Luo widows are encouraged to get a surrogate husband within the family of the deceased husband through *ter* (culturally-sanctioned 're-marriage'), a situation that has often been controversially referred to as 'wife inheritance' or 'widow inheritance'. Through *ter*, as a Luo cultural practice, a male relative of the deceased takes over the guardianship of the deceased's family, including the wife. (Gunga, 2009, p. 169)

During that one-year period before the final rite, the widow has time to consider if anyone from the family is interested in taking her as a wife. Therefore, at the end of this one year, during the final rite, the widow is asked where she wishes to go, and selects a person who will take responsibility for her if there is one. If there is no one, then she says so. Therefore, basically the widow is free to choose to stay with one of her husband's close relatives or not. In some tribes like the Luo 'the widows are not permitted to formally remarry or take other sexual partners in addition to the surrogate husband' (Gunga, 2009, p. 169). The man who was chosen to replace the late husband would then become totally responsible for the widow and her children. Acting as a 'husband', this man would have either the widow alone as his wife, or he would have her as an additional wife to his other wives if he were already married by the time the widow named him as a replacement to her late husband. On occasions when widows failed to identify anyone who would inherit them, the widow would be free.

Now during the Event (final rites) for my uncle after one year of his death, the widow (whom I can call my aunt) was asked where she would like to go, she mentioned my name. This shocked me as I was not even fifteen years of age. The chairman of the meeting who was my father repeated the question, and my aunt responded exactly as she had done before. She mentioned my name. This was a case calling for some clarification, many, including me, thought. After clarification was sought, it was realised that the widow was trying to push so that my father should assume responsibility for her. Unfortunately, my father had no interest in her. Aware of the situation, my aunt therefore used my name artistically to mean my father. Even if she wanted to be inherited by my father, I do not think that my father would have been able to do so, because of the scarce resources available to support his existing family.

Due to our father's low income, the family had to sustain itself by small scale cultivation which assured the family of food throughout the year. This was a big achievement since with the availability of food, the family became very stable in a foreign region. The family relied entirely on my mother for the cultivation of the family farm. This was because my father was employed in the Catechetical College, and we the children were all attending school. Alone on the farm, my mother worked very hard for six days a week except on Sundays. My mother worked extremely hard like grandmother in *Nervous Conditions*: 'I used to spend many productive hours working with my grandmother on the plot of land she called her garden' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17). and like Foibe in *Parched Earth*: 'Hard work was a practical lesson I internalised just by watching my mother. She was always up by five in the morning and would drag us both out of bed at six (Lema, 2001, p. 9). My mother would wake up early in the morning and prepare breakfast before going to the farm, two kilometres away from our home. She walked to and from the farm, and this is quite common in Africa: 'women comprise just over 40 percent of the agricultural labour force in the developing world' (SofaTeam & Cheryl, 2011, p. 3).

Working on the farm was a difficult task. There was no machinery available for the price that our family could afford. Hence, my mother did the entire cultivation using a hand hoe. Sometimes she hired people to help her, paid for from my father's salary, but this was seldom. There were other tasks she had to carry out in order to get the meals ready for the family. These tasks included but were not limited to: gathering vegetables in the nearby bush, or going to the river to fetch some water and sometimes using a rice pounder to supply rice for the family. She handled all domestic chores, and now I see how widespread such practices are in agricultural communities like ours:

> Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. (SofaTeam & Cheryl, 2011, p. 2)

So, while other members of the family had time to rest after completing what was allocated for them to do, my mother would just switch to a different type of activity. Such was the multi-tasking nature of the African woman, always on the go for the family.

When I look at things today, I clearly see that a number of tasks can be shared by fathers and mothers, and by boys and girls, in families. A male can perfectly do whatever biology permits him to do and the reverse is also true. My mother was conditioned to be everything and do everything in the house under the mantras of 'mothers are managers' of the houses, or that a kitchen is 'a woman's office'. That is how a woman trains her daughters, thereby perpetuating a system of control. Unfortunately, by so doing, she is unknowingly diminishing the role of the fathers. The suggestion given by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2018) is very true that:

> Sometimes mothers, so conditioned to be all and do all, are complicit in diminishing the role of fathers. You might think that… he might not wipe her bum as perfectly as you do. But so what? What is the worst that is going to happen? She won't die at the hands of her father… Share child care equally…it does not have to mean a literal fifty-fifty or a day- by-day score-keeping but you'll know when the child-care work is equally shared. (Adichie, 2018, p. 13)

My mother's return trip from the farm was always more challenging. Not only because she was normally tired, but also because she usually had to carry with her some firewood for cooking when she arrived home.

The children in the house would help our mother when we returned from school, and we carried out similar tasks as we grew up. But all of these obligations in my culture would be considered as 'female chores'. These were domestic duties that were unfortunately deemed to belong to the female domain. So, my sisters were expected to carry out additional responsibilities as preparation for what we would call being 'accountable mothers and wives' in the future.

This is because in that culture, the idea of marriage was seen as a prize for women, so that girls must equip themselves well with all the necessary skills to enable them to get a man to marry them, in order that they may win that prize. Otherwise, they will not get someone to marry them; they will not win that prize. The said skills necessary for girls to have would be: cooking, housekeeping, showing respect to her husband (her man) and his relatives, with all of these being summed up as examples of a woman ‘having good behaviour. That is why Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*, questions this by saying:

> We also need to question this idea of marriage as prize to women, because that is the basis of these absurd debates. If we stop conditioning women to see marriage as a prize, then we would have fewer debates about a wife needing to cook in order to earn that prize. It is interesting to me how early the world starts to invent gender roles. (Adichie, 2018, p. 16)

Young males were not expected to carry out ‘female tasks’. So, after school I would normally go to play football with my friends. We had small soccer teams around the village according to our localities. Each area had its small ground encompassing one football team. There were matches arranged with nearby teams. I was a very good goalkeeper. I was well known as a goalkeeper for not allowing a ball pass through the posts. Only one thing prevented me from improving my football career, and this was my mother’s wish that I attend college. Parents wish the best education for their boys, so just as it happened to Nhamo and Godbless, so it did to me.

My mother believed that further education was much more important than sports. She believed that engaging more with sports could distract me from my studies. She also wanted me to stay home so that I could do more important things to support the family rather than playing football every evening. Sometimes I would go hunting birds with friends and make traps to catch these birds, or I would go fishing along the nearby river. These were activities for boys. But all these activities were done as leisure pursuits and not as responsibilities as in the case of girls. Distribution of labour in my clan favoured boys like in the case of Nhamo in *Nervous Conditions*, and Godbless in *Parched Earth*.

My sisters and other young females were not playing football. There were no football teams for girls even at school. Girls played netball, but there were no grounds available for netball in the village. My sisters would mostly spend their time at home helping my mother with domestic work. None of them would dare ask for permission to go and play with other girls. The more they stayed at home, the more they were seen as the girls who were well behaved. In fact: ‘parents unconsciously start very early to teach girls how to be, that baby girls are given less room and more rules and boys more rooms and less rules’ (Adichie, 2018, p. 20). I was given more room than my sisters, and this is also true for Nhamo and Godbless.

So, what happened in my family was very much seen was seen as a normal practice. I remember very well my mother warning my sisters with words like ‘who is going to marry you with this kind of behaviour?’ Everything in the training of girls was geared to making them get someone to marry them, just like the way Doreen fought alone to get married. Getting married was an award which every woman was fighting to achieve.

On our farm, we grew paddy, a crop that is suitable for our climate and a staple food for our region. The whole process was a daunting task indeed for a single woman. There were two old tractors shared among the population in the seven villages, but only for the people who had the money to pay for the use of the tractors. Due to their age and overuse, these tractors were prone to occasional breakdowns.

Rice-growing is very difficult because after tilling the land one needs to soften the soil so that rice may grow in it. All this work is done manually. Three to five weeks after planting, the rice comes out, but with weeds which look similar to rice. Weeding must start immediately, and, in my tribe, the women would do the weeding. Men would also do minimal weeding as they would go to the farm late in the day and leave early. Most of the time, weeding would be repeated twice or even three times if it were needed, and this mostly would be done in adverse situations. It was probably because we never used pesticides that weeding had to be repeated twice or thrice.

Some people in our area would also grow maize. This would be done in highlands because maize does not need too much water, while rice does. Other people would do mixed farming by planting paddy and maize together. Rice and maize are the main food crops, but most people would use them as cash crops as they would sell some of the produce to get cash for some other uses like school fees and health services. Most men would want to get some of this money as pocket money, which was usually used to buy drink. Women would be extra careful in the use of the harvest for food security and health services because of the care they had for the children who were always with their mothers.

My father would normally finish work around four o'clock. When he arrived home, he would drop his bag, take his bicycle, and go for a cycle which he used to call 'a walk'. I could not understand him going for 'a walk' while riding a bicycle. But who would dare ask that question? The earliest time my father returned home was nine o'clock, but normally he would come back around ten or eleven o'clock. He would always arrive home drunk.

The type of drink that was mostly consumed was made up of either maize or rice and it was made locally by women. Once ready, this drink would be sold to the adults of the village. Men were not involved in the making of this drink, perhaps because it was because it was made by cooking and cooking was associated with women. There were a few bars with local beer where adults would go and enjoy themselves in the evenings. Women would take the beer made locally in their houses to the bars to sell it. There would normally be a radio playing very loud music to entertain the consumers in a bar. Some other women would bring other things to sell, such as foods that would sharpen the desire for more drink.

There is another type of beer that is made from bamboo juice or coconut juice. This type of drink is easy to prepare and normally men prepare it. It is made from the young shoot of a bamboo or a coconut that is cut with a very sharp knife, and the dripping juice is carefully collected. The longer it brews the stronger it becomes. This kind of beer is stronger than the other one made from cereals. My father would drink any of these beers, but his favourite was the coconut juice, which had an extraordinarily strong smell. When one drank it, one's clothes would smell of the drink which came out through sweat for about two days unless one changed one's clothing. After enjoying his drink for a day, my father would come back home and demand food. He would never eat outside. He liked my mother's cooking.

My mother would give him food, and sometimes he would want all of us to wake up so that when he ate his food, we would watch him. He would ask me to bring him a red pepper which he enjoyed eating a lot and if it was not available, he would instruct me to go out to the back of the house to get one for him. My mother sometimes would sit with him while he was eating, she would wait patiently as sign of not disagreeing with what he was doing. We would clean the dishes when he finished and then go to sleep. This was basically his normal routine.

Things changed completely for me when my eldest sister, who was the first born in our family, decided to become a nun. The gap between the two of us is five years; I am the second-born child. Following her desire to become a nun, she was given permission by our parents to join a religious congregation. This created a gap in the family that needed to be filled. My sister's absence required another child to perform all the chores she was doing, so the situation demanded that I fill the gap because I was older than the others and therefore more capable of doing them.

My mother was positively clear that this 'female work' required execution, and I being the eldest child in the house had to do it no matter what. But that was impossible for me because boys do not do the pounding, do not pick vegetables, and do not deal with kitchen matters. The kitchen is a woman's domain. No one among my male friends was doing such duties, so I became reluctant to do them. This created tension between me and my mother. She thought that I was pretending to be bold, but in fact I was adamant about this. She did not welcome any discussion with me on those matters.

I remember one day my mother went to a forest to pick firewood, and she asked me to mind the baby and to ensure that the baby did not to get out of the house before she returned.

She left some porridge for the baby. My friends were playing in a nearby house. They were playing '*Kombolela*' (Hide and seek). It was a children's game, where children would go hiding and one of them had to find all the rest of them by mentioning their names; failure to do that meant they would go hiding again and the task of finding them one by one would begin afresh. I heard them shouting now and then so I decided to lock my younger sister in the house and go out to the game. She was too heavy to carry. Now and then, I went back to see how the baby was, and I gave her a lot of toys to play with. When I went for the third time to see her, I found my mother was in the house. She was terribly angry with me for what I had done. 'How could you lock your little sister in the house, then go watch the game?' she wondered.

On another occasion, my mother went to the farm leaving instructions that we had to pound the rice when we came back from school. My sisters did this, but I went playing football thinking that my sisters would do the pounding. To my surprise they did their share and left some rice for me to pound. When my mother came back, she asked why we did not finish the job she assigned us to do. One of my sisters explained that I refused to do the work and I went to play instead. She added that I said it was girls' work and I was a boy. In fact, she cheated for I do not remember having said that. This made my mother explode with anger. I had some difficult questions to answer. She was extremely angry with me because she felt I was being unfair, and she told me in her house I should never again discriminate against my sister and that the house chores could be performed by both girls and boys. 'Cooking – domestic work in general – is a life skill that both men and women should ideally have. It is also a skill that can elude both men and women' (Adichie, 2018, p. 16). In order that I should not forget my mistake, and so not repeat it, my mother said I had to be punished.

Having disobeyed my mother, I deserved to be disciplined. In my tradition mothers are never wrong. Following the dictates of our custom, I received profoundly serious punishment. Several times I received beatings from my mother to discipline me. These were severe beatings.

In retrospect, I now realise that all the pain and sufferings I incurred was the price for what the patriarchal system instituted, ss perhaps, my mother was displacing her anger at the system which controlled her life onto me. Was I a scapegoat? I am not sure, but I am sure of one thing that whatever patriarchy does, the repercussion of it does not only goes to women but to men as well.

The house we lived in was fenced and so when my mother wanted to give a punishment, she would give it in the evening from around 7 o'clock when all children were at home. She would close all the doors and windows so that there was no chance of escaping or neighbours arriving to rescue whoever was being beaten up. My dad would be away: gone for 'a walk' by that time, and when he returned home my mother's form of discipline was already executed.

To maintain peace with my mother and in order to avoid the beatings, the only alternative I had was to learn the 'female role'. Yes, I learned it, though in a hard way. I learned to cook, to clean the house, to pound the rice, to take care of the baby when my mother was not around, I learned how to calm a crying baby and change nappies, I learned how to pick vegetables, I went to fetch water and firewood. When I look back at such experiences, I can now acknowledge that domestic jobs and care-giving roles are gender neutral.

Due to this new role, I started missing gatherings with my friends. When they realized that I was working at home, they started laughing at me. They called me a woman. They considered me as a male who does not behave like a boy. So, behaving like a boy is not being supportive at home, not being helpful at home. On the other hand, girls are encouraged to behave like girls. Girls play with dolls while boys play with toys, cars and helicopters and so have a better chance to explore and could become revolutionary engineers. Those girls who tried to explore were restricted and told 'not to behave like boys'. The so called:

> 'behaving like a boy' was simply behaving like herself…the mothers of baby girls were very restraining, constantly telling the girls 'don't touch' or 'stop and be nice'…and the

> baby boys were encouraged to explore more and were not restrained as much and were almost never told to be 'nice'. (Adichie, 2018, pp. 19-20)

So, being called a girl was very difficult for me to accommodate. For a man being called a woman was a very big insult in our culture. They used my name as a reference for those who behaved like women. I was a target for jokes among my friends. It was not easy, but I survived the experience. On deep reflection, now I do not blame my mother for what she did to me. I thank her for all the skills she has helped me to acquire. In short, I ended up being able to do a lot of domestic tasks and I am grateful to my mother for this. I now see the ideological constructions that pre-dated us all and which shaped all our behaviours.

As I grew up my parents had a lot of arguments at home. These occurred more or less every week. As a child, I never knew the reason why my parents were arguing. In my view, my mother always started the fights. She was very angry and aggressive. She would beat our father, and my father would never beat her back. Physically my father was very well built and stronger than my mother. He, however, did not like fights. As children, we would all cry, asking our mother to stop the fights. My parents usually argued in low voices in their bedroom before the fight, and that did not give us a chance to know what the real reason for the fight was.

One day my mother started the fight as usual. She pulled my father into their room so that she could fight with him. After about a minute we heard my mother crying in a loud voice. On that particular day, my father decided to fight back. When my father opened the door, I saw my mother holding her arm and she was crying. They both immediately rushed to the dispensary. We were later told that my mother's arm was broken. The following day she was taken for further treatment in a hospital about 40 kilometres away. We do not know exactly what our father did to my mother, but he was responsible for the assault. We were warned by both parents never to tell people the reason for the assault. If anyone asked what had happened to our mother, we were to say that she fell down in the house. Up to this day, this remains the explanation.

Following the assault, my mother was unable to work on the farm. My dad's salary was small, so life became very tough for the family. To supplement my father's meagre earnings, my mother started a small business of making donuts. She sold them in front of our house. After a short time, this small business flourished, attracting a good number of customers. The success of this business can be attributed to my mother's hardworking spirit. Having been an only child with only stepsiblings, my mother learned the benefits of hard work right from her childhood. In her own mother's house, my mother was trained to do all the house chores, and hence became brave and responsible from an early age.

As time passed, I started seeing other children introduced to our family as new stepbrothers and sisters. With growth in age and reasoning, I started to connect the dots and to answer the difficult questions which were yet to be answered since my childhood. This was the reason for all the arguments in the family. My mother had a harsh time; she had no close relatives with whom to share her anxieties, in a strange land. Psychoanalytically such feelings influenced her behaviour. She had to carry all the worries and burdens herself. While my mother was working ridiculously hard; my father was using his wages to drink, thereby disadvantaging the rest of the members of the family. Hence, I can now very well understand why my mother was aggressive to my father to the extent of fighting him. She was trying to release her anger in response to his behaviour. I now understand why I also became a victim of the situation. I forgive my mother for the beatings she gave me. I know that many people would question why my mother did not divorce my father, but staying is also an option, especially when you discover that by leaving, you lose more, including your family. In the situation of being betrayed by a man she trusted so much, and to whom she had given herself completely, my mother's consolation was found in the wellbeing of her children. Prudence tells us that 'when one is lost, speed is useless'.

My mother worked very hard and concentrated on the education of her children. She brewed local beer so that we could pay our school fees while my dad was busy with some other women. I do also understand why my dad found it difficult to fight back. He nursed a guilty conscience, and the guilty are always afraid. He was, in his own way, also able to let the family know that there were other children outside our nuclear family that were our relatives too. I do not remember how exactly I came to know about this relationship between our families. Eventually my mother was forced by the situation to surrender, and in doing so she opened conversations with those other women and children; especially those who discovered and showed that they were the ones who were in the wrong. This made it easy for the children to come into the house and mix with their brothers and sisters. We then became one big family. That was when I was in secondary school.

When I was 29, my father passed away. Life changed again greatly. We had to move from his former place of work to where he had built a house. This was a small town, so life was not like when we were in the village. Everything had to be bought. There was no forest to go and pick firewood for free; no bushes from which to pick vegetables. There were a few close relatives there who helped my mother. As an elder son, I was responsible for taking care of my young brothers and sisters who were still in school. My elder sister who had unsuccessfully tried to be a nun, stayed at home and had no job or career. She was just like many who were unemployable because they had no education, and so they lacked qualifications when job opportunities came up.

Soon after returning home from the congregation, my sister was sent to do a course in home craft. She did home science, earning a certificate in home-economics. That course did not qualify her for a job; hence she ended up staying at home doing sewing and other domestic work. I do not know why my father did not send my sister to secondary school. In my view, she was intelligent enough to enrol in secondary education. She was treated just like Tambu in

Nervous Conditions who was not thought of for education. That is true of many families, we do not think well when it comes to the issue of empowering women: ‘therefore, it is urgent for us to know the importance of women’s education, which would, in turn, give a motivation to the process of women’s empowerment’ (Sundaram, et al., 2014, p. 78). Of course, there was the fear that educating a girl was risky. There was the belief that should this girl get pregnant while in school, the fees spent on her would be a waste. This belief was responsible for many girls being excluded from school. It is no wonder that my sister ended up being the only one who did not get secondary education in my family.

One would be tempted to ask if girls were not taken to school, then what? Most parents who had girls would be happy to get their daughters married. That would bring respect to the parents who were judged to have brought up their daughter well. This respect mostly went to the mother who would have trained the girl well to become what was seen as wife-material. On the other hand, the father would be happy as he would receive a dowry when his daughter got married. A dowry was paid in many forms, for instance an identified sum of cows would be cited as a reasonable dowry price in some communities.

My own journey that led to questioning

I have dwelt a lot on the life around me as I grew up. I have spoken about my culture and shown how it influenced the gender roles that men and women played. I grew up academically finally gaining an MA in English Language and Literature, majoring in literary theories. With the help of these ‘glasses’, the world no longer looks the same. Looking back, I certainly admit much of African traditions and customs are sacred, essential and good, and that their positive values must continue to be respected and retained at all costs. I am not speaking against those Godly and nourishing traditions that bring life to a society. Rather, I am referring to those negative practices and customs, found in most ethnic groupings that hold woman enslaved; and that prevent her from developing into a full human person intellectually, economically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and politically. Unfortunately, there are still many such traditions present today that cripple women and prevent them from walking upright with dignity and a true sense of self-worth. Such are the traditions of the multi-tasking nature of the African woman, always on the go for the family.

As long as she lives, she works for her family, providing for their needs. She does well for them every day. She rises early in the morning and tills fields that she may never own. She harvests the crops and sells her produce in the streets and markets of the towns. With her meagre earnings from the farm, she pays the bills, the rent and school fees. She wants the best for her children. In the margins of her day, she cooks, launders, cleans, mends, and wipes runny noses and unhappy tears. She weaves baskets along with her dreams, which remain largely invisible; she struggles along valiantly: her generosity unnoticed; her labours ignored and unsung. She retires late at night exhausted; yet knowing that she has done all she could. She dresses simply and economically, putting off till tomorrow her deep inner longings for more stylish fashions, remembering the needs of her family. She is strong and resourceful, yet derives little pleasure from these strengths, insecurity holds her unwillingly captive. Her identity is most often submerged in the man or the children she bears, her self-image, fragile as glass, is easily shattered. Though used and abused, her spirit rises anew with each day, scarred but unconquered.

In times of deep trouble, she frets and she worries, concerned for her and her family: ill health, borne on the winds of anxiety, weighs heavily upon her. Her deep thirst for knowledge and personal growth is frequently blocked, but she holds fast to her dream and rarely gives up. She is a victim of the whims and compulsions of society, yet she retains an inner dignity that sustains her through her sufferings. She is a survivor. A woman of trust, she looks forward in hope to the new day that is surely dawning, the day that will welcome her wholeheartedly and value her unique contributions to a world grown weary of discrimination of every sort. On that day she will receive at last the respect and the credit that is her due.

In patriarchal societies, like my own, laws and traditions mainly benefit men. Men are the ones holding the reins of power and authority. In order to retain this power, men often feel they must oppress and control women, and they accomplish this largely through laws and traditions that dominate women. Men are quite happy with this arrangement because they are the beneficiaries, so if societies desire change, then men and women must work together to bring this about. Change can only come then, through men and women joining together to address and fight all the issues, forms of discrimination and domination. Societies need to ask themselves, 'Which customs or practices in our communities oppress women?' 'What traditional values do we want to keep?' 'Which ones do we want to change or abandon altogether because they are oppressive?' Discrimination and oppression of all kinds are forms of injustice.

In order to effectively challenge male domination in our communities, we need to join together in support groups, sharing our stories and designing new strategies for mutual respect and love. But these strategies must include not only steps towards justice and equality between the genders; they must also serve to bridge the anger-isolation gap that presently exists between men and women. Perhaps the reason that I can look back on my own story, and see it in terms of gender, is because of my exposure to literary theory and to different ways of looking at the world. In my studies, I have looked at a number of different literary theories, and these have opened my eyes to reading my own story in a different way. In the next sections, I will offer an overview of the most important of these theories for this thesis – feminist and psychoanalytic theory – and will show how they have influenced my reading of my own story, and how I hope they will allow me to critique three African novels to underline how the voices of African women can be enunciated again through a careful theoretical reading of core texts. The value of literature and theory in creating new paradigms is at the centre of this study, and it is my hope that this study will advance this process.

Chapter Two: Psychoanalytic and Feminist Theory

(i) Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is principally a therapeutic exercise as well as a literary theory; unlike other literary theories: ‘it is a clinical and therapeutic methodology. However, it has a long and complex relationship to practices of reading and writing and to the assumptions that we make about why people write and how texts affect their readers’ (Green, et al., 2001, p. 143). Green continues to attest that the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature can be looked at in different ways, though we can summarise it to the question of what is being subjected to the analytic process, and what repressed meaning we thereby hope to uncover (Green, et al., 2001). According to Kelly Griffith (2002), psychoanalytic theory, is a vast critical category, which employs many approaches. Sigmund Freud, in his study of the human mind, developed a number of concepts, which act as the basis of the theory. He noted that: ‘the assumption that there are unconscious mental processes, the recognition of the theory of resistance and repression, the appreciation of the importance of sexuality and the Oedipus complex’ (Freud, 1957, p. 122).

Psychoanalytic theory is considered to be a complex theory containing various sub-theories such as the concept of personality, the concept of mind, Dream analysis, psychosexual theory and Oedipus complex (Farrel, 1981, p. 21). Freud himself says that: ‘these constitute the principal subject-matter of psychoanalysis and the foundations of its theory’ (Freud, 1957, p. 122). Tyson puts it very well by saying that: ‘we can use psychoanalytic criticism to read works of fiction, poetry, drama, folklore, and nonfiction, and we can use it to interpret paintings, sculptures, architecture, films, and music’ (Tyson, 2006, p. 37). This is how psychoanalytic theory came to be used in the study of literature and has proved to be a very important tool in helping to provide a meaningful literary interpretation in the field of literature. The foremost figure in this discourse, of course, is Sigmund Freud, who developed a clear outline of the concept on personality. The most well-known of Freud's accounts of the structure and operation of the mind is the model of the id, the ego and the super-ego. According to Freud, the human personality is made up of three parts, the id, the ego and the super-ego.

Sigmund Freud

The id

The id is a primitive part of the personality that pursues only pleasure and instant gratification. It applies to the instinctual drives that relate to the needs of the body. The id is primitive and needy; it cannot deny itself. According to Freud, the id is the only component of personality that is present from birth. It is the aspect of personality that is entirely unconscious and includes the instinctive and primitive behaviours. For Freud, the id is instinctual need: it is 'primitive and needy, incapable of denying itself. The ego develops out of the id and it pacifies the drives, by offering itself as a substitute for what must be denied the id (a kind of psychic equivalent of a baby's soother)' (Green, et al., 1996, p. 148). Freud claims that the id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality because as new-borns, it allows our basic needs to be met. 'The id exists at birth and is the source of psychic energy and the instincts, the most important of which are sex and aggression' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 5), and Aniket Jaaware would agree: 'the id… contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is fixed in the constitution' (Jaaware, 2001, p. 176).

Freud believed that the id is based on the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants, and needs. If these needs are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state of anxiety or tension:

> The logical laws of thought do not apply in the id, and this is true above all of the law of contradiction. Contrary impulses exist side by side, without cancelling each other out or diminishing each other…no alterations in its mental processes is produced by the passage of time. (Freud, 1933a, pp. 73-74)

In other words, the id wants whatever it feels good at the time, with no consideration for the reality of the situation. When the child is uncomfortable, in pain, too hot, too cold, or just wants attention, the id speaks up until its needs are met. The id does not care about reality, about the needs of anyone else, only its own satisfaction. When the id wants something, nothing else is important.

The ego

The ego is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality and is in contact with the outside world. Freud holds that the ego develops from the id and ensures that the impulses of the id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world and so it functions in the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind. Freud claims that normally:

> there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our own self, of our own ego. This ego appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else. (Freud, 1933a, p. 724)

However, psychoanalysis has shown this feeling of certainty to be 'deceptive' and suggests that in fact 'the ego is continued inwards, without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious mental entity which we designate as the id.' However, he acknowledges that:

> Towards the outside . . . the ego seems to maintain clear and sharp lines of demarcation.' In other words, the conscious ego is continuous with the unconscious mind; but it is still fairly clearly distinguished from the external world (Freud, 1933a, p. 724).

Freud (1923) claims that the ego is that part of the id that has been modified by the direct influence of the external world. The same point was well explained by Thompson that: 'the ego is the executive of the personality because it controls the gateways to action, selects the features of the environment to which it will respond, and decides which needs will be satisfied and in which order' (Thompson, 2003, p. 383). This means that the ego is the decision-making component of personality.

Operating under the reality principle, the role of ego is to mediate the conflict between the id and the super-ego. It finds some outlet for the instincts of the id and at the same time, it has to restrict them within the demands of super-ego. It always strives to satisfy the id's desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways. Freud says that the ego is often caught between the id and the super-ego, and also it has to compensate for the demands of external world:

> We are warned by a proverb against serving two masters at the same time. The poor ego has things even worse: it serves three severe masters and does what it can to bring their claims and demands into harmony with one another. These claims are always divergent and often seem incompatible. No wonder that the ego so often fails in its task; its three tyrannical masters are the external world, the super-ego and the id. (Freud, 1933a, p. 110)

The reality principle considers the consequences of an action by weighing the costs and benefits of the action before deciding whether to act upon, or abandon, impulses, and it deals with the demands of the id and super-ego. James *et al* affirm that the ego works according to the reality principle which 'postpones the discharge of energy until an object that will satisfy the need, or reduce tension, is found' and instead attempts to respond to reality 'through a plan developed by thought and reason' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6). It understands that other people have needs and desires, and that sometimes being impulsive or selfish can hurt us in the long term. It is the ego's job to meet the needs of the id, while taking into consideration the reality of the situation. Freud makes the analogy of the id being a horse while the ego is the rider. The ego is like *'a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse' [italics original]* (Freud, 1923, p. 15). Ideally, the ego works by reason, whereas the id is chaotic and totally unreasonable. Moreover, the ego discharges tension created by unmet impulses through the secondary process, in which the ego tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the id's primary process.

The super-ego

The super-ego is the aspect of personality that holds all of our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society – our sense of right and wrong. On how it is formed, Freud says:

> The long period of childhood, during which the growing human being lives is dependence upon his parents, leaves behind it a precipitate, which forms within his ego a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged. It receives the name of super-ego. (Jaaware, 2001, p. 3)

It incorporates the values and morals of society, which provide guidelines for making judgments. 'The super-ego is the moral, social, and judicial branch of the personality; it represents the ideal rather than the real' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6). By the age of five, or by the end of the phallic stage of development, the super-ego develops. The super-ego's function is to control the id's impulses, especially those which society forbids, such as sex and aggression. It also has the function of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply realistic ones, and to strive for perfection 'rather than pleasure or reality. It develops as a result of the need to control the aggression that results when needs are not immediately satisfied' (James & Gilliland, 2003). He argues that the super-ego consists of two systems: the conscience and the ideal self.

The ideal self (or ego-ideal) is an Imaginary picture of how one ought to be, and represents career aspirations, how to treat other people, and how to behave as a member of society. It includes the rules and standards for good behaviours. Such behaviours include those which are approved of by parental and other authority figures. As James attests, 'the ego ideal is composed of the child's conceptions of what the parents consider to be perfection, or the perfect person. These conceptions are established through experiencing parental acceptance' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6), and furthermore 'obeying these rules leads to feelings of pride, value and accomplishment' (Chowdhury, 2019, p. 159).

The conscience includes information about things that are considered as bad by parents and society. These behaviours are often forbidden and lead to bad consequences, punishments or feelings of guilt, anxiety, inferiority and remorse. Giovacchini supports this by saying: ‘the conscience is composed of the child’s conceptions of what is considered to be morally bad and is established through experiencing admonitions, punishment, or lack of acceptance (Giovacchini, 1977, p. 22). The conscience can punish the ego through causing feelings of guilt. When the ego for instance, accepts what is claimed by the id or any kind of behaviour which does not follow ideal standards, then it is the super-ego which will influence the guilty feeling in the person concerned. The super-ego can also reward us through the ideal self when we behave ‘properly’ by making us feel proud. If a person’s ideal self is too high a standard, then whatever the person does will represent failure. The ideal self and conscience are largely determined in childhood from parental values. However, the ego will then employ mechanisms to defend itself such as denial, displacement, intellectualization, fantasy, compensation, projection, rationalization, reaction formation, regression, repression, and sublimation. These mechanisms are not manifested at a conscious level, they arise when the id’s behaviour is in conflict with reality like society’s morals, norms, and taboos or the individual’s perception of these morals, norms, and taboos.

In a healthy person, according to Freud, the ego is the strongest aspect, so that it can satisfy the needs of the id, and not upset the super-ego, and still take into consideration the reality of every situation. If the id gets too strong, impulses and self-gratification take over the person’s life. If the super-ego becomes too strong, the person would be driven by rigid morals, and would be judgmental and unbending in his or her interactions with the world. A person who is dominated by the id will tend to be impulsive; one who is dominated by the super-ego will be overly moralistic and perfectionist. The ego functions to keep the individual from these two extremes (Hansen, et al., 1982, pp. 20-30).

Freud's concept of mind

Freud's primary aim was to understand how influential the mind might be in shaping our personalities and behaviours. He believed that the mind was the most powerful influence on an individual's actions. In psychoanalytic theory, 'the mental processes are essentially unconscious, and those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and part of the whole psychic entity' (Freud, 1969, p. 22). He introduced the threefold division of mind into conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious mind. The conscious mind is the part of mind that is responsible for logic and reasoning. The conscious mind also controls all the actions undertaken with conscious deliberation, as it is 'constituted by events, memories, fantasies and the sensations from sense organs along with the feelings emotions' (Pangestu & Sunardi, 2016, p. 21). Of these three divisions of mind, it is the conscious mind of which we generally are most aware. It is constituted by events, memories, fantasies and the sensations from sense organs along with the feelings and emotions (Rajeevan, 2011). The conscious mind is also known to be the gate-keeper for the mind. If someone tried to present us with a belief that does not match our belief system, then our conscious mind will filter that belief. The same will happen when someone criticizes us or calls us names; our conscious mind will filter this statement to suggest that it is not true or applicable to us.

The pre-conscious mind, also known as subconscious mind, or contemporarily known as available memory, consists of the past psychic experiences and desires which are readily recallable, and is the storehouse for conscious mind. Freud explains:

> The majority of conscious processes are conscious only for a short time; very soon they become latent but can easily become conscious again….in the condition of latency they are still something psychical. We call the unconscious which is only latent, and thus easily become conscious, the 'preconscious' and retain the term 'unconscious' for the other. (Freud, 1933a, pp. 102-103)

It is the part of the mind that is responsible for all of one's involuntary actions. Thus breathing rates and heartbeats are controlled by subconscious mind. The subconscious mind controls our emotions and as a result, sometimes we feel afraid, anxious or depressed without wanting to experience such a feeling. In the subconscious mind, our beliefs and memories are stored and our affirmations make no sense and can never improve our situation. Affirmations are done on a conscious level and are always filtered by the subconscious mind because they usually do not match our belief system.

The term 'subconscious' is sometimes used interchangeably with the term 'unconscious', but it is important to differentiate these two ideas from the very beginning to avoid confusion. We talk of the subconscious when we refer to that part of consciousness that we are not actively aware of in the moment, but that can influence us nonetheless, such as things that are seen and heard or remembered. On the other hand, the unconscious is a term that refers to a part of the mind that cannot be known by the conscious mind, and includes socially unacceptable ideas, desires, wishes and traumatic memories and painful emotions that have been repressed.

The unconscious is that part of the mind that stores all our experiences, especially those of a traumatic or unpleasant nature. In his studies, Freud 'found that certain unacceptable events and thoughts people had consciously experienced were sometimes repressed into an area of the mind he called the unconscious' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 3). The unconscious mind is a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that are outside our conscious awareness. Freud went on by claiming that our childhood events, especially the traumatic and all unpleasant ones, are those that influence the unconscious. He reasoned that everything forgotten by a patient must have been somehow distressing, alarming, painful, or shameful, and so he concluded that this was precisely why such things have been expunged from the conscious memory. Consequently 'Freud hypothesized that, in the neurotic, any powerful impulse or instinct that was embarrassing continued to operate in the realm of the unconscious where it retained its full 'cathexis' or investment of energy' (Habib, 2005, p. 574). The fact that we repress them does not mean that they disappear because energy is never lost – simply transformed. He believed that our greatest destructive and creative achievements originate from forces denied their natural release (Burns, 2006, p. 70). Hence, blocked instinctual drives or repressed memories appear at the surface as non-existent but in reality, they are still there.

Freud argued that, in order to keep all of this conflict buried in our unconscious, we develop defences: selective perception, selective memory, denial, displacement, projection, regression, fear of intimacy, and fear of death, among others. He arranged those events in developmental stages connected with parents and drives of desire and pleasure where children focus 'on different parts of the body . . . starting with the mouth . . . shifting to the oral, anal, and phallic phases' (Richter, 1989, p. 1015). The desires involve fear of loss (loss of genitals, loss of affection from parents, loss of life) and repression: 'the expunging from consciousness of these unhappy psychological events' (Tyson, 2006, p. 15). It is this part that exerts the most influence upon our behaviour, and all the answers to our behaviour and actions lie in this hidden, inaccessible area that makes up four-fifths of the mind. 'For psychoanalysis, literature, and indeed all art forms are largely products of unconscious forces at work in the author, in the reader, or, for some contemporary psychoanalytic critics, in our society as a whole' (Tyson, 2006, p. 37). His methods attempt to use various psychoanalytic techniques to examine the powerful influence this part of the mind has on individual's behaviour.

Therefore, after considering all these we see that Freudian concept of conscious mind is equivalent to the modern notion of subjectivity of conscious experience. His notion of the pre-conscious mind and unconscious mind may be compared with those neural processes that never give rise to consciousness. In this way, it can be seen that Freud's triple division of conscious, preconscious and unconscious mind are not ontological entities, but rather the functional levels of consciousness.

Freud's Dream Analysis

Freud developed this interpretive strategy, basing his argument in the claim that we learn through fairy tales, myths, jokes, folklore, poems and linguistic usage. These same symbols are used in our dreams, so Freud thought that by analysing recurring dreams and traumatic experiences of his patients, levels of understanding of symptoms could be achieved. This is the ‘royal road to the unconscious’, and through interpretation, can indicate areas that need to be investigated by the patient and therapist. There is a need for interpretation as each symbol is heavily disguised.

Dreams had significance in ancient times such as foretelling what is going to happen in future or being considered as a means of communication between the divine and human. Modern science, however, considered the reading of dreams as being superstitious. Precisely speaking, dreams are the disguised expression of wish fulfilments: ‘a dream as the disguised fulfilment of a repressed wish’ (Freud, 1901a, p. 28). Like neurotic symptoms, they are the effects of compromises in the psyche between desires and prohibitions in conflict with their realization.

During sleep, Freud argued, the ego is focused on withdrawing energy from all the interests of life and relaxes its expenditure of energy upon repression. Although sleep can relax the power of the mind’s diurnal censorship of forbidden desires, such censorship, nonetheless, persists in part during nocturnal existence. ‘The unconscious impulse uses this opportunity to make its way into consciousness via the dream. But the ego maintains some of its repressive resistance as a kind of censorship of the dream’ (Habib, 2005, p. 577). The latent dream thoughts are obliged to undergo alteration, a process Freud called dream distortion, so that the forbidden meaning of the dream is unrecognizable.

Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* provides a hermeneutic for the unmasking of the dream’s disguise, or dream works, as Freud called it. The manifest content of the dream, that which is remembered and reported, must be understood as veiling a latent meaning. Dreams defy logical entailment and narrative coherence, for they intermingle the residues of immediate daily experience with the deepest, often most infantile wishes. Freud argued that 'among the latent dream thoughts, one in particular stands out from the others (which are residues of waking life) and governs the construction of the dream, using the day's residues as its material. This prominent, isolated thought is a wishful impulse and the dream represents the satisfaction of this impulse' (Habib, 2005, p. 577), yet they can be ultimately decoded by attending to four basic activities of the dream work and reversing their mystifying effect. So Freud claimed that the dream-work, or process by which the latent thoughts are converted into explicit content of the dream, occurs through the following activities:

The first of these activities is *condensation* of the component parts of the preconscious material of the dream. This operates through the fusion of several different elements into one. As such, it exemplifies one of the key operations of psychic life, which Freud called over-determination, meaning that no direct correspondence between a simple manifest content and its multidimensional latent counterpart can be assumed.

The second activity of the dream work, *displacement* of the psychical emphasis of the dream, refers to the decentring of dream thoughts, so that the most urgent wish is often obliquely or marginally represented on the manifest level. Displacement also means the associative substitution of one signifier in the dream for another, say, the king for one's father. The third activity Freud called *representation* or *dramatization* of the entire dream by translation into visual images, by which he meant the transformation of thoughts into images. Decoding a dream thus means translating such visual representations back into inter-subjectively available language through free association.

The final function of the dream work is *secondary revision*, which provides some order and intelligibility to the dream by supplementing its content with narrative coherence. The process of dream interpretation thus reverses the direction of the dream work, moving from the level of the conscious recounting of the dream through the preconscious back beyond censorship into the unconscious itself.

The Oedipus complex

The Oedipus complex is a term used by Freud in his theory psychosexual stages of development to describe a boy's feelings of desire for his mother, while experiencing jealousy and anger towards his father. In fact, it generally speaks of a desire which children have for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex, and an associated sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. According to Freud, the complex occurs in children from ages three to five. Up to this time, the child identified with the parent of the same sex and repressed its sexual instincts. On the occasions when the child experienced a loving, healthy, non-traumatic relationship, and if parental attitudes were neither excessively prohibitive nor excessively stimulating, the stage is passed through harmoniously. Contrary to that, in the presence of trauma, infantile neurosis is likely to occur which is also an important forerunner of similar reactions during the child's adult life.

Freud says that in order to develop into a successful adult with a healthy identity, the child must identify with the same-sex parent in order to resolve the conflict. The boy then experiences castration anxiety – a fear that his father will castrate him as a punishment for desiring his mother. Keith Green and Jill LeBihan commenting on this point say: 'it is Freud's assertion that sexual identity is constructed on a basis of guilt and repressed incestuous desires' (Green, et al., 2001, p. 155). In a discussion on how children become socially adjusted, Freud asserts that sexual identity is constructed on a basis of guilt and repressed incestuous desires, and adds that the gender of a child is not solely dependent on her or his genitalia, but on the development of her or his psyche (Green, et al., 1996, p. 154).

He claims that 'what constitutes masculinity or femininity is an unknown characteristic which anatomy cannot lay hold of' (Freud, 1973, p. 147). To resolve the conflict, the boy then identifies with his father. It is at this point that the super-ego is formed as a sort of inner moral authority, an internalization of the father figure that strives to suppress the urges of the id and make the ego act upon these idealistic standards. He says that the unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex was responsible for neurotic symptoms. Freud considered the reactions against the Oedipus complex as among the most important social achievements of the human mind and that the Oedipus complex played an important role in the phallic stage of psychosexual development. The completion of this stage involved identifying with the same-sex parent which ultimately would lead to the development of a mature sexual identity.

Carl Jung

He was a keen reader of Freud and sent Freud a copy of his first book in 1907. He admits: 'I was extremely interested in dreams and… the writing of Sigmund Freud, who was (Jung's) mentor early on in (his) career' (Snowden, 2010, p. 7). In reply; Freud invited Jung to Vienna in the same year. When they first met, it is said that they talked continuously for 13 hours, and that marked the beginning of their professional and personal relationship that lasted for 6 years.

Analytical psychology

Analytical psychology is the movement started by Carl Jung and his followers that primarily explores how the collective unconscious, that part of the unconscious that is cross-cultural and common to all human beings, influences personality. After his break with Freud, Jung developed his own distinctive approach to the study of the human psyche. He began the school of analytical psychology for the purpose of taking a close look at the mysterious depths of the human unconscious based on the experience he received from his early years working with psychotic patients in a Swiss hospital. Analytical psychology does not believe that the structure of the unconscious is limited to contents that were initially a part of consciousness in the way that psychoanalysis holds:

> While it does not deny the psychoanalytic view that the unconscious includes contents that were once conscious, it does hold that the unconscious also includes contents not yet capable of becoming conscious (i.e. the symbolic manifestation of the archetypes of the collective unconscious). Moreover, analytical psychology maintains that the dynamics at issue in the formation of the unconscious are not exhausted by repression. (Nemeroff, 2010, p. 95)

Jung believed that the psyche was the great world within, and was as great as the world without; making life to be a great mystery, of which we understand very little: ‘He never hesitated to say, “I don’t know,” and readily admitted when he came to the end of his understanding’ (Daniels, 2011, p. 2). Jung saw modern man as sick as we can imagine and is in constant search of the soul. That is why Daniels claims that according to Jung: ‘Mankind is in great danger, and the only solution is to become more conscious. The only real danger that exists is man himself. He is the real danger’ (Daniels, 2011, p. 2). Thus, in the human condition in normality, the modern man today is even more sick than in the asylum.

In his *Collected Works*, Jung writes: ‘by psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious’ (Jung, 1921, p. 797). Jung believed that it is important to integrate opposites such as masculine and feminine; thinking and feeling; science and spirituality. His contributions to dream analysis were influential and extensive though he was not the first to analyse dreams. Many of his studies extend into other fields of the humanities. While Jungian ideas are seldom mentioned in college psychology courses, his contribution extends from humanities courses, comparative religion and philosophy to criticism of art and literature.

Jung’s approach accentuated understanding the psyche through exploring the worlds of art, mythology, anthropology and others. For Jung, the psyche is divided into three parts: the ego, which is also called the conscious mind; the personal unconscious, which includes the individual memories which are not currently conscious but that can be brought back into consciousness; and the collective unconscious, which contains the ‘psychic inheritance’ of human experience which is stored in the form of archetypes and revealed in dreams and other mystical experiences, as well as in the symbolism found in myths: ‘Jung regarded the psyche as made up of a number of separate but interacting systems. The three main ones were the ego, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious’ (McLeod, 2018).

In doing this, Jung’s main goal was the reconciliation of the life of the individual with the world of the supra-personal archetypes. This is because for Jung, the individual’s encounter with this process of the unconscious was very important. In his efforts to understand the encounter with the unconscious, and the reconciliation of the individual’s consciousness with this broader world, Jung made the exploration of this ‘inner space’ his life’s work, and he set out some core concepts for this exploration.

The Archetype

According to Jung’s original structural view, archetypes are conceived of as sorts of psychological organs, directly analogous to our physical, bodily organs: both being morphological givens for the species, and both arising at least partially through evolutionary processes. Speaking about the origin of the archetypes Jung said:

> I have often been asked where the archetypes or primordial images come from. It seems to me that their origin can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity. (Jung, 1972, p. 109)

Jung discovered that certain symbolic themes existed across all cultures, all epochs, and in every individual. The self is the most important archetype and be described as the ultimate pattern of psychological life. It can be characterised by not only the process of becoming the complete personality, but also by the totality of the personality, conscious and unconscious.

The Collective Unconscious

The collective unconscious, which is sometimes called the ‘objective psyche’, is a psychological concept proposed by Jung which refers to the idea that a segment of the deepest unconscious mind is genetically inherited, and is not shaped by personal experience: In his own words he says:

> We speak of the latter also as the *collective unconscious,* because it is detached from anything personal and is common to all men, since its contents can be found everywhere, which is naturally not the case with the personal contents. (Jung, 1972, p. 103)

Therefore, the collective unconscious refers to that part of a person's unconscious that is common to all human beings, and is responsible for a number of deep-seated beliefs and instincts, such as spirituality, sexual behaviour, and life and death instincts:

> Jung's theory on the collective unconscious was that it is made up of a collection of knowledge and imagery that every person is born with and is shared by all human beings due to ancestral experience. Although individuals do not know what thoughts and images are in their collective unconscious, it is thought that in moments of crisis the psyche can tap into the collective unconscious. (Fritscher, 2019)

This was the major difference between Jung's and Freud's explanations of the unconscious. While Freud believed that the unconscious was the product of personal experiences, Jung held that the unconscious was the product of collective experiences inherited in the genes. Thus, for him the collective unconscious is: 'is formed by instincts and archetypes that are symbols, signs, patterns of behaviour, and thinking and experiencing, that are physically inherited from our ancestors' (Adamski, 2011, p. 563). In his psychology, Jung spent most of his time on the task of exploring and attempting to discern the mysteries stored in the collective unconscious.

The Complex

This was an emotionally charged group of ideas or images, also known as a 'feeling-toned idea' that accumulates over the years around certain archetypes, such as the mother, wise man, or child. He claimed that complexes operate relatively autonomously, and interfere with the intentions of the will, disturbing the memory and conscious performance. They are the architects of dreams and of symptoms; the building blocks of the psyche; and the source of all human emotions. Jung stressed that need to paraphrase:

> Jung seemed to see complexes as quite autonomous parts of psychological life. He stressed that complexes are not negative in themselves, but their effects often are. The possession of complexes does not in itself cause neurosis, but the denial of their

> existence causes the complex to become pathological. Likewise, identification with a complex is a frequent source of neurosis. The key in analysis is not to get rid of the complexes, but to minimize their negative effects by understanding the part they play in eliciting behavioural and emotional reactions. (Snider, 2016)

Jung went even further by claiming that these patterns of suppressed thoughts and feelings cluster or constellate around a theme provided by some archetype. Complexes cannot only disturb the memory and conscious performance but can also interfere with the intentions of the will. A good and clear example of a complex is Freud's Oedipus complex.

Individuation

According to Jung, Individuation is a process of circumambulation around the Self as the centre of personality. It is the search for wholeness within the human psyche. The person aims to become conscious of oneself as a unique human being, while at the same time as no more, nor less than any other human being. For Jung, in order to become more conscious, one must be able to bear conflict because conflict is inherent in human psychology and is necessary for growth:

> Individuation means becoming an 'in-dividual,' and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self. We could therefore translate individuation as 'coming to selfhood' or 'self-realization'. (Jung, 1972, p. 266)

There are many internal opposites as well as those in the outside world. If the opposites clash, then out of this conflict something new and creative can grow. And this 'something' will contribute to a new direction which not only does justice to both sides of the conflict, but which is also a product of the unconscious rather than of rational thought.

The process of individuation was used in pioneering the psychotherapy of the middle-aged and elderly, particularly those whose lives had lost meaning. Jung thought that such people would become more complete personalities if they could rediscover their own meaning as expressed in dream and imagination. For Jung individuation is a natural process of maturation inherent in the nature of human beings and is not just an analytic process. When the process of individuation is complete, that is when the conscious and unconscious have learned to live at peace and to complement one another, then the person can become whole, integrated, calm and happy.

Synchronicity

The concept of synchronicity is understood as two simultaneous events that occur coincidentally, which are not causally related but which result in meaningful connection. Jess Carpenter tried to put it succinctly by saying that synchronicity is: ‘a meaningful coincidence of two or more events where something other than the probability of chance is involved’ (Carpenter, 2019). It is the meaningful coincidence of an inner image with an outer event, which leads to one seeing the world in a new way, particularly if one very deeply responds, with one’s being to the meaning of the event. Jung coined this term for the meaningful coincidence of a psychic and a physical state or event which have no causal relationship to each other. Their connection may be so compelling that they ‘can no longer be regarded as pure chance but, for lack of a causal explanation, have to be thought of as meaningful arrangements’ (Daniels, 2011, p. 12). In life some events happen seemingly beyond the realm of chance without explanation or cause. Such coincidences often occur at emotional times, such as in times of death, grief, love, or any high emotion, and are meaningful only to the person who experiences them and are difficult to explain to others without the accusation that one is being superstitious or reading too much into events.

Jung, being a psychologist, collaborated with Wolfgang Pauli, who was a physicist. Their common reflections lead far beyond psychology and physics, and this brought them to the realm where the two meet in the philosophy of nature. Consequently, synchronicity was transformed from an empirical concept into a fundamental explanatory-interpretative principle. Their work in synchronicity contributed to a more holistic worldview by bringing unity to mind and matter:

> With the advent of seventeenth century European science, mind was separated from matter, and the two have never been reunited. Pauli recognized this missing aspect, and sought to do something about it in his philosophical explorations, mostly during his mature years. He saw in the psychological metaphysics of Carl Jung the potential for a holistic philosophy of matter and mind… Two-sidedness was in Pauli's psyche. He was a rationalist of the highest order and attempted to move physics away from non-rational, intuitive, visualization methods. Secretly, he used them. By day he was a heady intellectual, a young professional academic respected by his colleagues. At night, he was a psychological mess. (Gustafson, 2004, p. 17)

Psychological Types

Jung realised that we could gain insights into why we act and feel the way we do by understanding the way we typically process information. This was one of especially important discoveries in Jung's thinking. Two psychological processes were identified by Jung namely, the extrovert, preferring the external world of things, people, and activities, with the extravert orientation finding meaning outside the self in Jung's original usage; and the introvert, who is introspective and finds meaning within, preferring their internal world of thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and dreams. He says:

> The first attitude [introversion] is normally characterized by a hesitant, reflective, retiring nature that keeps itself to itself, shrinks from objects, is always slightly on the defensive and prefers to hide behind mistrustful scrutiny. The second [extraversion] is normally characterized by an outgoing, candid, and accommodating nature that adapts easily to a given situation, quickly forms attachments, and, setting aside any possible misgivings, will often venture forth with careless confidence into unknown situations. (Jung, 1953/1972, p. 44)

Jung also insisted that 'type preferences' are not constructed socially through interaction with one's family, parents, culture and other external influences but rather they are inborn.

Therefore, for Jung, the quality and strength of the development of an individual has great impact on his or her preferences. A supportive environment will facilitate inborn preference development; a contrary environment will impede or retard their natural development. Nature and nurture are both at play.

Jacques Lacan

Jacques Marie Émile Lacan (April 13, 1901 to September 9, 1981), sometimes referred to as 'the French Freud,' is one of the important figures in the history of psychoanalysis. He was an influential figure in Parisian intellectual life in the twentieth century. Lacan trained medically as a psychiatrist, and in 1932 he published his doctoral thesis in psychiatry titled 'On Paranoid Psychosis in its Relations with the Personality'. In 1936, Lacan gave his first presentation of the now-famous theory of the 'mirror stage' at the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) conference at Marienbad. This marked the beginning of the crucial period of Lacan's development, and his work is influential across psychoanalysis, psychiatry, philosophy, art, and literature, among other areas.

Register Theory

Lacan's teachings are pivoted on the Register theory, whereby he sees the psyche as being divided into three major structures that control our lives and our desires. They are called the *Real*, the *Imaginary* and the *Symbolic*. These forms: 'the skeletal framework for the various concepts and phases of most of Lacan's intellectual itinerary' (Johnston, 2018). He thought of the three as the fundamental dimensions of psychical subjectivity and emphasised that the three have mutual dependence on one another in the unconscious, which he sees as 'structured like a language' (Lacan 1977, p. 20). He was attempting to make clear distinctions and connections between 'those elementary registers, whose foundations I have since laid, known as the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real—a distinction never previously made in psychoanalysis' (Lacan, 2006, p. 255). This is a crucial aspect of his own work

The Real

From his doctoral thesis on psychosis, Lacan started to develop the concept of the Real. This was as far back as 1930s when the term was very common. People like Émile Meyerson referred to the Real as 'an ontological absolute, a true being-in-itself' (Evans, 1996, p. 162). The Real is a deliberately ambiguous term that suggests both material reality and that which cannot be symbolised, and which is experienced as traumatic and ‘the impossible’. This concept marks the state of nature from which we have been forever severed by our entrance into language. The Symbolic and the Imaginary are opposed to the Real. Lacan avoided discussing the Real for a while in his career but returned to the theme of the Real in 1953. He then continued to develop the concept until his death:

> After appearing in 1936, the term disappears from Lacan’s work until the early 1950s, when Lacan invokes Hegel’s view that ‘everything which is real is rational (and vice versa)’ (*Écrits*, 226). It is not until 1953 that Lacan elevates the Real to the status of a fundamental category of psychoanalytic theory. (Evans, 1996, p. 162)

Lacan defines the Real as the impossible because it is impossible to imagine, impossible to integrate into the Symbolic, and impossible to attain. It is this resistance to symbolization that lends the Real its traumatic quality. The Real is that which is outside language and that resists symbolization absolutely. Lacan, who has explained that the Real, his term for that which is beyond expression, but behind experience, ‘is always and in every case in its place; it carries its place stuck to the sole of its shoe, there being nothing that can exile it from it’ (Lacan, 2006, p. 17). Finally, the Real is the object of anxiety, insofar as it lacks any possible mediation and is ‘the essential object, which is not an object any longer, but this something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail, the object of anxiety par excellence’ (Lacan, 1991, p.164). The Real is at all times in its place whereas the symbolic opposition between presence and absence implies the permanent possibility that something may be missing from the Symbolic order. Imaginative language is often a way of acceding this, through image, symbol or metaphor: what does not “come to light in the Symbolic *appears in the Real*” (Lacan, 2006, p. 324 *[italics original]*). In summary, the Real is that which resists symbolization and is outside language, though it can appear, in glimpse or shadow, in dreams or the language of the unconscious

The Imaginary

The imaginary is a register that has the closest links to what people experience as non-psychoanalytic daily reality about, not only who and what one imagines oneself to be, including from the imagined perspectives of others, but also about who and what one imagines other people to be, or what one imagines they mean when communicatively interacting: ‘it is the realm of imagination and illusions. The principal illusions of the Imaginary are those of wholeness, synthesis, duality, and similarity’ (Veanheule & Arnaud, 2016). The Imaginary is the internalised image of this ideal, whole, self and is situated around the notion of coherence rather than those of fragmentation. Lacan tends to associate the Imaginary with the restricted spheres of consciousness and self-awareness, and to relationships between the ego and the specular image: however, ‘while the Imaginary always retains connotations of illusion and lure, it is not simply synonymous with ‘the illusory’ insofar as the latter term implies something unnecessary and inconsequential’ (Evans, 1996, p. 84). The Imaginary can roughly be aligned with the formation of the ego, which serves as the mediator between the internal and the external world. The Imaginary also becomes the signified, the concept symbolised arbitrarily by a sign: Lacan ‘emphasized the dependence of the Imaginary on the Symbolic’ meaning that ‘more sensory-perceptual phenomena… are shaped, steered… and determined by socio-linguistic structures and dynamics’ (Johnston, 2018). Thus, the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real are bound together in a special way:

> As Lacan integrates his early work of the 1930s and 1940s with his structuralism-informed theories of the 1950s, he comes to emphasize the dependence of the Imaginary on the Symbolic. This dependency means that more sensory-perceptual phenomena (images and experiences of one’s body, affects as consciously lived emotions, envisionings of the thoughts and feelings of others, etc.) are shaped, steered, and (over)determined by socio-linguistic structures and dynamics. With the growing importance of the Real in the 1960s and the Borromean knots of the 1970s, it becomes clear that Lacan conceives of the Imaginary as bound up with both of the other two registers. (Johnston, 2018)

However, what is special with these registers is the way they can easily be mistaken for each other. That means what is Symbolic can be mistaken for the Real and what is Imaginary can be seen as Symbolic. For example, mental illness can be considered as a physical problem and the physical illness can manifest itself as a mental issue. Or rather the happenings that are seen in real life to be meaningless and having no importance at all are seen to be very significant signs and symptoms of a very deep meaning upon careful and smart scientific analysis:

> What is Real is misrecognized as Symbolic (for example, as in particular sorts of obsessional-neurotic and paranoid-psychotic symptoms, certain meaningless contingent occurrences at the level of the material world of non-human objects are viewed as though they were meaningful signs full of deep significance to be deciphered and interpreted) and what is Symbolic is misrecognized as Real (for example, as in psychosomatic-type 'conversion symptoms,' unconscious mental conflicts encoded in language and ideas are suffered as bodily afflictions and ailments). (Johnston, 2018)

Therefore, by choosing the term 'Imaginary', Lacan means that which is fictional, virtual, simulated and the like. The Imaginary connotes necessary illusions or real abstractions, and this indicates not only that the Imaginary is an intrinsic, unavoidable dimension of the existences of speaking psychical subjects; but also that the fictional abstractions of the Imaginary: 'far from being merely "unreal" as ineffective, inconsequential epiphenomena' (Johnston, 2018), are integral to, and have very concrete effects upon, actual factual human realities.

The Symbolic

According to Lacan, the Symbolic refers to the signifying order, signifiers, in language, which determine the subject; it is the relation between the Imaginary and Symbolic in unconscious and conscious thought. It refers to the laws, rules and agreements that govern social exchange relations, and since the 'most basic form of exchange is speech, the Symbolic is essentially a linguistic dimension. The signifier is the elementary building block of the Symbolic' (Veanheule & Arnaud, 2016). This is the core of Lacanian psychoanalysis. The Symbolic also refers to the customs, institutions, mores, laws, practices, norms, rituals, rules, traditions, and so on of cultures and societies which are entangled in language. Seeing the entire system of the unconscious/conscious as manifesting in an endless web of signifiers/signifieds and associations, Lacan claims that,

> Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world…The Symbolic Order functions as the way in which the subject is organized and, to a certain extent, how the psyche becomes accessible. It is associated with language, with words, with writing and can be aligned with Peirce's 'symbol' and Saussure's 'signifier'. (Loos, 2002)

According to Lacan, individual subjects are what they are in and through the mediation of the socio-linguistic arrangements and collections of the register of the Symbolic. The Symbolic, through language, is 'the pact which links ... subjects together in one action. The human action *par excellence* is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts' (Lacan, 1991, p. 230). But again, there is the exchange with desire which is always deferred by language and deflected by language. One of the most significant and indispensable conditions of possibility for singular subjectivity is the collective Symbolic order, which is also called 'the big Other'. In a Lacanian context, all subjectivity is defined with respect to the Symbolic order, and this order is the structural matrix through which our grasp of the world is shaped and enunciated. For Lacan, the Symbolic order is what actually constitutes our subjectivity: 'Man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man' (Lacan, 2006, p. 229). The Symbolic order is the matrix of language and culture, and it is the locus through which individual desire is expressed: 'The moment in which the desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into language' (Lacan, 2006 p. 262). In the context of this dissertation, it is interesting and telling that for Lacan, the Symbolic order is gendered in that he speaks all the time of man, which suggests that his place is given in this order, whereas women are silenced and need to work to find a voice.

The Symbolic, then, is made up of those laws and restrictions that control both desire and the rules of communication, which are then perpetuated through societal and cultural hegemonic modes. The gendered and patriarchal sense of this term is codified by Lacan in the term the ‘Name-of-the-Father’, a cluster term for patriarchy and the existing system of laws, rules, and ideological expectations of the social structure into which one is born. Through recognition of the ‘Name-of-the-Father’, one becomes a member of a society or culture: ‘it is in the ‘Name-of-the-Father’ that we must recognize the support of the Symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law’ (Lacan, 2006, p. 230).

The Mirror stage

The idea of the ‘mirror stage’ is a significant early component in Lacan’s teachings. Here, Lacan claimed that there is an important stage of development not covered by Freud called the ‘mirror stage.’ This is a stage that human infants pass through especially from the age of 6-18 months. This aptly named stage is initiated when infants look into a mirror at their own image. Most infants may even try to interact with it and become fascinated with the image that they see in the mirror. Eventually, they realise that the image they are seeing is of themselves and an external image of the body reflected in a mirror, produces a psychic response that gives rise to the mental:

> According to Lacan, when the infant stumbles upon a mirror (see Mirror), she is suddenly bombarded with an image of herself as whole – whereas she previously experienced existence as a fragmented entity with libidinal needs. The image itself in the mirror is described by Lacan as the ‘Ideal-I’ (Lacan, Mirror, 2). This ego ideal, for Lacan, provides an image of wholeness which constitutes the ego. (Loos, 2002)

The infant then identifies with the image, which serves as an *imago* of the infant’s emerging perceptions of selfhood, but because the image of a unified body does not correspond with the underdeveloped infant’s physical vulnerability and weakness, this image is established as an ‘Ideal-I’, toward which the subject will perpetually strive throughout his or her life:

> The moment of identification, when the subject assumes its image as its own, is described by Lacan as a moment of jubilation (E, 1), since it leads to an Imaginary sense of mastery; ‘[the child’s] joy is due to his Imaginary triumph in anticipating a degree

> of muscular co-ordination which he has not yet actually achieved'. (Evans, 1996 , p. 111)

Therefore, realisation of this key fact enables the subject to incorporate what it sees into its sense of 'I,' or sense of self. At this young stage, the image they see may not correspond to their inner understanding of their physical self, in which case the image becomes an ideal that they strive for as they develop. So, for Lacan, the mirror stage establishes the ego as fundamentally dependent upon external objects, on an-other. As the so-called 'individual' matures and enters into social relations through language, this 'other' will be elaborated within social and linguistic frameworks that will give each subject's personality its particular characteristics. For Lacan, this development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the individual's formation into history: 'the mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation' (Lacan, 2006, p.178), and is part of the mechanics of desire in the subject – the reflection will always be better and the subject will always desire to reach that stage of development, often called the ideal-ego.

For Lacan, selfhood was a complex construct in which the self took on reflections and refractions from the societal context in which it was placed. His notion of the 'mirror stage' stressed the Imaginary and fictive nature of the ideal-self, which he saw as predicated on a desire for an unattainable ideal which could never be actualised. In a culture where repression of desire was very much part of the socio-religious mindset, this view of language and desire would have revolutionary implications for any analysis of culture and sexuality. His view of the Oedipus Complex, as a structural moment in the life of the child, where the sexual desire for the mother is counterbalanced by a culturally driven identification with the father, and specifically the 'Name-of-the-Father' would open up the constructions, and constrictions, of patriarchy to scrutiny.

For Lacan, a seminal stage in the construction of identity is the defining of self in terms of a misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) of an image of that self in the mirror; the mirror stage is key in crossing the frontier from the 'Imaginary order' (the dyadic world of mother and child) into that of the 'Symbolic order' (concerned with symbolic systems, and particularly language), since the human attempts to find a wholeness and unity of meaning through a form of imitation or mimicry of this image. In the establishment of the ego, the desire for some form of identity is paramount.

(ii) Feminism

The term feminism covers a wide range of cultural, economic and political movements that aim at establishing legal protections and equal rights of women: 'Feminists challenge sexism through many means, particularly as they confront exploitation, harassment, and objectification in numerous spheres of their lives' (Swank and Fahs, 2017, p. 1). Feminists been campaigning for their autonomy and bodily integrity; reproductive rights and abortion, the use of contraceptives and prenatal care; protection from rape sexual harassment, and domestic violence; women's rights in workplace regarding equal pay and maternity leave and all forms of discrimination against women. In most countries, and until comparatively recently, women had no voting rights; their education was generally truncated, and they had only limited access to the public sphere; 'their legal status was similar to children's, for example married women did not have a title and their earnings were their husbands' possession' (Popov, 2018, p. 374). All these forms of discriminations were well stipulated by The United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979:

Feminism in Africa 'began to surface in the middle of the 20th century, facilitated by the increasing independence of many African nations' (Ozoya M. I., 2017, p. 308). The term 'feminism' is basically an import to Africa just like all other English words. However, the concept of opposing patriarchy is not foreign because Africa had already some of the oldest civilizations in the world. Thus, while they did not always call it 'feminism' as a noun, as far back as we can trace we know that there were some women who were feminist already in practice, and who had found ways of opposing patriarchy. Feminism is an important part of African women's story.

African feminisms were pioneered by some brave and courageous women, like the Sierra Leonian women's rights activist Adelaide Casely-Hayford. She widely contributed to both pan-African and feminist goals. Writing about her Rothbone says:

> She returned to Freetown and immediately hurled herself into public affairs. She involved herself with the YWCA and the Women's Branch of the UNIA, and was particularly active in urging the creation of a technical training school for girls in Sierra Leone. In 1920 at the age of 52 she left for a two and half year period of lecturing and learning in the United States. (Rathbone, 1987, p. 320)

Due to her great contribution, she is referred to as the 'African Victorian Feminist'.

Another woman is Charlotte Maxeke who is well known for having founded the Bantu Women's League in South Africa in the year 1918. In 1923 the Egyptian Feminist Union was founded by Huda Sharaawi. The movement was given force from the women fighters who fought in the liberation struggles alongside their male counterparts for state autonomy and women's rights in Kenya, Guinea, Algeria, and Mozambique; women like the Mau-Mau rebel, Wambui Otieno: 'whose own heroic acts in the liberation movement stem from her great-grandfather's heroism and shrewd leadership' (Waliaula, 2014, p. 74), and freedom-fighters like Margaret Ekpo, Lilian Ngoyi, Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti and Albertina Sisulu, among many others. This proves what Ellen Fleischman writes about the power and the contribution of women, as they had established 'an organized and often militant movement that was actively involved in social, political, and national affairs' (Fleishmann, 2000, p. 16).

African women have played a crucial role in resolving different conflicts. They have participated in all forms of resistance violent and nonviolent. Their struggle for personal sovereignty cannot be seen independently from the history of all Africans' struggle for independence. However, through their struggle for both personal and national independence, African women have encountered a number of colonial, political and social challenges. With the help of education and exposure, they have been always persistent in their fight against both patriarchy and colonialism:

> Education has empowered women to use different platforms to resist oppression. Literature, poetry, song and symbolism are used by women to resist patriarchy in their own ways. Highly educated women with university degrees may use their writings to protest oppression. (Chisale, 2017, p. 18)

In the United States, two groups of women movements emerged in the 1960's. The first one identified itself as the equal rights feminists, and the second group were known as the radical feminists. The difference between them threatened the split of the women's movement into two. The Equal rights feminism advocated for equality in homes: 'that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities' (Caprino, 2017), and in the workplaces, and for this reason they sought policies like anti-discrimination laws in the job market. The radical feminists, on the other hand, demanded a more radical shift in patriarchal society and so they looked past policies and start a literal feminist revolution and even sought to deconstruct gender roles. In the words of Ellen Willis: 'they see the primary goal of feminism as freeing women from the imposition of so-called male values and creating an alternative culture based on female values' (Willis, 1984, p. 91)

For the purpose of reconciling the differences in 1969, the Congress was organized by The National Organization for Women to Unite Women. Unfortunately, neither side understood one another. For example, people like Adrienne Rich from the radical feminists were irritated that equal rights feminists did not recognize lesbian existence. Moreover, there was a huge gap in race, class, and age between the two groups, with the Equal rights feminists being more diverse and primarily older white women.

Responding to these diverse interests, NOW (National organization for Women) called the Congress to Unite Women, which drew more than 500 feminists to New York City in

November 1969. The meeting was meant to establish common ground between the radical and moderate wings of the women's rights movement, but it was an impossible task (Burkett, 2020). The UN decade for women 1975-1985 solidified Modern African feminism. This helped greatly in feminist activism and scholarship spreading widely across the continent and abroad. It is dealing with not only confronting patriarchal mythmaking but also with tackling racist stereotypes:

> The UN Decade for Women and its conferences helped establish the legitimacy of women's issues regarding their roles as workers in the home and outside it. The decade also brought the many inequalities women face in education, health care, and work to the attention of national leaders and the general public. (Gemelli, 2014)

The African feminist movement today has to do with both grassroots activism and intellectual activism. African feminists and politicians such as Leymah Gbowee, Joyce Banda and Simphiwe Dana (Salami, 2013) are working hard to improve the situation. The movement has indeed expanded in policy, legislation, scholarship and in the cultural realm.

In recent years however there is an increase of awareness on the rights of women to the extent that today, African feminists writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Elieshi Lema as well as feminist organisations such as the African Feminist Forum and the African Gender Institute are 'at the forefront of using activism, knowledge and creativity to change situations that affect women negatively' (Salami, 2013). The truth is that the current situation disadvantages women tremendously. Women are still being systemically marginalised within both local and global societies. That is why the three writers mentioned above have written to reshape the narrative of African womanhood.

The concept

Feminist theory explores the ideas and beliefs of what culture is like for women as women, compared to what the world is like for men as men. In other words, feminism describes a culture in which women, because they are women, are treated differently to men, to their structural disadvantage. Feminism assumes that such treatment is cultural and thus amenable to change and not simply the way the world is and must be; feminism looks to a different culture as possible, and values moving towards that culture; and feminism consists of activism, individually and in groups, to make personal and social change towards that more desirable culture; a culture which advocates or supports the rights and equality of women and men.

Feminists in the West until the 1980s continued to use the term ‘women’ to represent a universal group of all women in the world, though their issues were mainly those of Western mainstream feminism. The women in non-western cultures felt misrepresented by these universalising tendencies. That is why a Black American feminist, Barbara Smith, notes that she is not just talking about women in the United States, be they Native American, Indian American, Latina, Asian American, Arab American women; instead she is ‘talking about women all over the globe’, as she notes that ‘Third World feminism has enriched not just the women it applies to but also political practice in general’ (Smith, 1984, p. 27). The struggle to differentiate a different position from that of Western feminism resulted in Postcolonial Feminism. Postcolonial feminists wish to integrate the ideas of indigenous and other developing countries’ feminist movements rather than grouping them together and define them only by their gender and not by social class, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference.

Global South women are struggling to make their silenced voices heard and to change the face of feminism in the West. The truth is that the history of the West is, in large part, the history of exploitation of its non-white, non-Western Others. Trying to group all women together does not deny the fact that, for a long time, mainstream white Western feminism paid scant attention to the question of race. Many white women took a liberal, colour-blind position, which claimed not to see difference or act upon it. It took a long, hard struggle by black women to have racism included on the feminist agenda:

> By and large within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class and age. There is a pretence to homogeneity of experience covered by the word sisterhood that does not in fact exist. (Lorde, 1984a, p. 116)

That is why postcolonial feminists claims that as Global South women they clearly have a different relationship with racism than white women, 'who can "afford" to remain oblivious to these effects. The rest of us have had it breathing or bleeding down our necks' (Moraga & Anzaldua, 2015, p. 58).

Historical background of Feminist Criticism

Feminism is not a uniquely twentieth-century phenomenon as many people think it to be; rather, the concept can be traced back to the classical period where some works show how women were treated unjustly and so this is seen as one of the early efforts taken to pinpoint and fight shortcomings in the treatment of women:

> It has antecedents going all the way back to ancient Greece, in the work of Sappho and arguably in Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata*, which depicts women as taking over the treasury in the Acropolis, a female chorus as physically and intellectually superior to the male chorus, and the use of sexuality as a weapon in an endeavour to put an end to the distinctly masculine project of the Peloponnesian War. Feminism also surfaces in Chaucer's Wife of Bath, who blatantly values 'experience' over authority and was more than a match for each of her five husbands. (Habib, 2005, p. 667)

According to Habib, in those early days, women were already showed their ability by trying to do things that raised the attention of many and caused them to question their incorrect perception that women are inferior to men. In the Middle Ages, for example, women like Christine de Pisan showed their courage and even dared to enter into debate with the predominant male critics of their day. 'Feminism basically is a critique of male dominance and of the male point of view which has forced itself upon the world' (Tandon, 2008, p. 26). In France and England, a number of women poets emerged during the Renaissance period such as Catherine Des Roche; and writers such as Aphra Behn and Anne Bradstreet, in the seventeenth century, were pioneers in gaining access to the literary profession.

The publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), by Mary Wollstonecraft, can be seen as marking the beginning of modern feminism: ‘though the extent to which the book was initially ignored and its author vilified is often forgotten’ (Sanders, 2006, p. 15). The work criticises the stereotypes of women as emotional and instinctive and argues that women should aspire to the same rationality prized by men. She says: ‘they are made to take on an artificial character before their faculties have acquired any strength’, and she goes on to add that because beauty has long been the aim of women, as enculturated by patriarchal ideology, ‘the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming around in its gilt cage it only seeks to adorn its prison’ (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 46). Even after the French Revolution, Wollstonecraft claimed that the ideals of the Revolution and Enlightenment should be extended to women. She wanted to revolutionise the society because in her thinking, the time had come for women to receive all of the same social privileges that men did and to become equal members of society. That is why she says: ‘it is time to effect a revolution in female manners’ (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 47). Wollstonecraft ‘believed that women should enjoy social, legal, and intellectual equality with men and drew support from the work of progressive social philosophers’ (Castle, 2007, p. 94). Such were the efforts made by women in making sure that they are given due respect in society.

In the seventh and eighteenth centuries, women were victims and suffered much. They were deprived of their basic rights such as education and financial independence. Not only that, but they also had to struggle against a male ideology which condemned them to virtual silence and obedience, as well as with a male literary establishment that poured scorn on their literary endeavours. Indeed, the depiction of women in male literature as angels, goddesses, whores, obedient wives, and mother figures was an integral means of perpetuating these ideologies of gender. In response to that:

> The nineteenth century witnessed the flowering of numerous major female literary figures in both Europe and America, ranging from Mme. de Staël, the Brontës, Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Margaret Fuller and Emily Dickinson. Modernist female writers included Hilda Doolittle (H. D.), Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf. (Habib, 2005, p. 667)

It was only with women's struggles for political rights after the nineteenth century that feminist criticism arose in a systematic way in the academy. Since the early twentieth century, feminist criticism and theory has grown to encompass, not only the rewriting of literary history so as to include the contributions of women, but also the tracing of a female literary tradition; theories of sexuality and sexual difference, drawing on psychoanalysis, Marxism, and the social sciences.

However, since the 1960s, feminist literary critics have successfully challenged these perceptions, and many more women now than ever before teach, interpret, evaluate, and theorise about literature. Literary genres practised by women, such as diaries, journals, and letters, have gained more respect, while numerous anthologies, literary histories and interpretive studies explore women's contributions to literature. Today, a new movement, 'gender studies,' has evolved out of feminist studies in order to address broader issues; notably, the nature of femininity and masculinity, the differences within each gender, and the literary treatment of men and homosexuals. Feminist reading thus aims at making a change by critiquing the outrageously phallic visions of writers such as D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer, and also by refusing to accept the cult of masculine virility and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex and a submissive other. This is put very well by Judith Fetterley, as she says that feminist criticism is a 'political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read'; for her a feminist reader is a 'resisting rather than an assenting reader' (Tandon, 2008, p. 34).

The second stage of feminist criticism, which began in the early 1970s, was characterised by the shift from concentrating on the works by males to concentrating on works by females: the approach which Elaine Showalter called 'gynocriticism.' In her own words as reported in *Critical Inquiry*, she says that to see women's writing as our primary subject 'forces us to make the leap to a new conceptual vantage point and to redefine the nature of the theoretical problem before us' (Showalter, 1981, p. 185). Gynocritics urged women to become familiar with female authors and to discover their own female language, a language that supposedly enters the subconscious before the 'patriarchal' language of the dominant culture. They tried to delineate female poetics, use of literary conventions and genres that seem typically female.

The third stage of feminist criticism rebelled against the assumptions of gynocriticism about the cultural creation of identity. It attempts to distinguish between sex and gender, and holds that while sex is the biological difference between males and females, gender is the cultural difference. Gynocritics strive to define a particularly female content and to extend the canon so that it might include works by lesbians, feminists, and women writers in general. It is a culture which is responsible for the determination of traits and behaviour that set masculinity apart from femininity. According to Showalter, as explained by Jonathan Culler, gynocriticism is concerned with the idea of woman as producer of meaning by engaging 'with the history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women'; as well as looking at creativity, language literary careers 'and, of course, studies of particular writers and works' (Culler, 2007, p. 50). Feminist critics hold that patriarchal ideology works to keep women and men in traditional gender roles with the aim of maintaining male dominance. They also embrace the idea that women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically, and patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept so. They claim that in every domain where patriarchy reins, a woman is the *other:* she is objectified and marginalised, defined only by her difference from male norms and values, and by what she (allegedly) lacks but which men (allegedly) possess.

Feminist criticism in literature

Feminist criticism in literature is that form of literary criticism that is based on feminist theories; that is to say, it is a type of literary criticism that uses feminist principles to critique the male-dominated literature and politics of feminism. It is rooted in women's social, political, economic and psychological oppression with the aim of viewing women in a new perspective, and so recognises women's contributions to their societies. In feminist criticism, theorists 'examine the language and symbols that are used and how that language and use of symbols is "gendered" (Appleman, 2007). In literary history, feminist criticism aims to reinterpret the old texts for the purpose of establishing the importance of women's writing and save it from being ignored, or from being swallowed up in the male-dominated world. By so doing, it could strike a balance between female perspectives and male perspectives.

Feminist critics maintain that in patriarchal cultures, women's oppression has gone on for ages in such a way that it is tied directly to the traditional system of male dominance at the head of the family while leaving women with grave social, economic, political and psychological effects. Feminist theorists invite us: 'to pay particular attention to the patterns of thought, behaviour, values, and power in those relationships' (Appleman, 2007). Most of these would focus on biological differences or physical strength, and as a result women are often granted few decision-making powers and are considered as secondary.

This view is seen in many books and literature across cultures and societies. Even some religious books position women as the causes of sin and death, and a classic example of this trope is the story of Adam and Eve, in which Eve causes the first man and woman's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. This to a certain extent depends very much on who writes a story and who reads the story. This is why Deborah Appleman claims that 'the gender of the reader often affects our response to a text', especially when a writer addresses a seemingly male audience and ignore women (Appleman, 2007). So, stereotypical representations of genders are at the core of feminist critical concerns. Though many ideas can be considered through a feminist lens, basically feminist criticism not only strives to examine and understand gender politics in texts, but also traces the subtle construction of masculinity and femininity within literary works. That is why many feminist critics look at how the' portrayal of female characters "reinforces or undermines" sexual stereotypes' (Appleman, 2007). Therefore, for the better understanding of the whole movement, Feminist criticism is roughly aligned with the three waves of feminism, each with their own defining characteristics that correspond with each phase of women's overall political emancipation.

First wave feminism (late 1700s-early 1900s)

First wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activities during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. It started by focusing on inequalities between the sexes especially in matters related to equal legal rights of contracts and property, ownership of married women (and their children) by husbands.

As already noted, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, disputed not only the stereotyping of women in domestic roles and the failure to regard women as individuals in their own right, but also protested against the failure to educate girls and women to use their intellect; and that was a germinal essay of feminism. Ann Sofia-Rothschild attests to this, noting that Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was written in response to an education system that would women to 'remain in ignorance, and slavish dependence' (Sofia-Rothschild, 2009, p. 9). As years went by, activism primarily focused on gaining political power and women's suffrage. Some women though were far ahead of others by being active in campaigning for women's sexual, reproductive and economic rights. Good examples of these are feminists like Voltairine de Cleyre (1866-1912) and Margaret Sanger

(1879-1966). As a result, in Great Britain, the Representation of the People Act (1918) was passed, which granted the right to vote to women over the age of 30 who owned houses, and by 1928 this right was extended to all women over eighteen years of age:

> The Representation of the People Act of February 6, 1918 marked a radical change for British women. This act was the first to give all men over 21 years old the active and passive voting right, but only women over 30 who held £5 of property or had husbands who did. It extended the franchise by 5.6 million men and 8.4 million women, and legislated a number of new practices in elections, including making residency in a specific constituency the basis of the right to vote. (Arenas, 2018)

In the United States, things were a little different. According to their situation, they campaigned for the abolition of slavery prior to championing women's right to vote. Their first wave involved women from a wide range of backgrounds, some belonging to conservative Christian groups. The first wave in the United States ended up granting women the right to vote, something formally achieved with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in the year 1919. Some women activists involved in the movement include Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Olympia Brown, and Helen Pitts. However, in the context of this dissertation, it is important to note that this right to vote was given to white women only: 'Women of colour were still practically disenfranchised, and the victory was only for white women. Black women were stopped from exercising their right to vote through tedious disenfranchisement tactics, facing bodily harm and even arrest' (Anand, 2018).

In the United States, black women in the first wave were marginalised and discriminated against based on gender and race, which was in contrast to when the movement started, as it included suffrage for both white and black women. However, the goal changed to become white-centric for tactical reasons as, due to widespread racism, 'white women were afraid of letting black women gain political power. With this increase in exclusion, black women formed separate organizations to work towards black suffrage' (Anand, 2018). African

American women felt betrayed and decided to fight for their own cause. In the year 1896 the *National Association of Colored Women* (NACW) was founded, and in 1913 the *Alpha Suffrage Club* was founded. Both had the aim of fighting for black suffrage and raising awareness amongst black communities:

> African American women… had come together in clubs to address immediate and long-range issues that impacted upon their communities. These formal and informal groups were a means of self-expression and a vehicle to assure self-determination over their lives and their communities. (Williams and Boehm, 1994, p. vii)

An argument used by white females in support of their side-lining of African American women was that they wanted the 'educated voters'. To substantiate their argument, many white women in their campaign in favour of suffrage argued that their education and political awareness would enable them to be good voters and they would make informed decisions:

> Antony and Stanton were among the majority of middle-class suffragists who favoured 'educated suffrage,' believing that voting was a privilege better left to the educated and well off. Precisely because of these sentiments, these women thought they were better qualified to vote than poor, 'ignorant' former slaves or, for that matter, northern immigrants who might be dependent upon machine politics for jobs. (Burton, 2007)

Black women, who by then did not have access to similar higher education, did not meet these criteria and became even more marginalised in the movement, as they ended up having no share in the triumph of the *Nineteenth Amendment.* Therefore, when we speak of the first wave of feminist criticism to a great extent we focus on how male authors and novelists view and portray women in their literary works. Literary Critics when making criticisms of those works then consider the ways in which authors discriminate against and marginalise female characters.

Second wave feminism: Gynocriticism (early 1960s-late 1970s)

The second wave occurred during the 1960s and 70s, initially in the United States but gradually spreading across the mostly Anglophone world. This wave unfolded in the context of its dedication to social and economic justice. It encouraged women to fight for equality in all aspects of society, including the household; it blurred the difference between public and private spheres with slogans like 'the personal is political' or 'sisterhood is powerful' serving to emphasise the 'gendered rationale underpinning the distinction between supposedly all-important public issues and unimportant domestic matters' (Norris & Knellwolf, 2008, p. 196). Sexuality and reproductive rights in this wave were dominant issues, and much emphasis was focused on the passing of the equal Rights Amendment to the American Constitution, in order to ensure Equal Rights and social equality regardless of sex. The wave began with protests against the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City on Sept. 7, 1968, when a group of about women 200 from different places in the US, converged on New Jersey to protest the 42nd Miss America pageant:

> Carrying signs that read, 'All Women Are Beautiful,' and 'If you want meat, go to the butcher,' railing against the pageant as sexist because, in their view, women were judged mostly on looks, with a smidgen of attention paid to talent. (Bland, 2019).

But the movement's agenda was greater than that because protests organised by New York Radical Women not only wanted to end the annual beauty contest, but also called out the pageant for its commercialism, and for its support of the Vietnam War by sending winners to entertain the troops. There was also a racial issue because the first Miss Black America that same night was crowned down the street at a separate pageant:

> Because millions of viewers watched the pageant, aired live on NBC, the event gave the women's liberation movement unprecedented media coverage, launching it into the national spotlight. The coverage also helped foster the image of feminists as bra-burners, though in reality, no bras were burned. (Bland, 2019)

The event was pivotal for American feminism, both for those who were on opposite sides whether protesters or anyone who participated in any way; all had an opportunity to look at their differences and find a common ground. For many, that was the start of a new wave of Feminism:

> When feminists tore down the barrier between private and public, issues such as domestic violence and the sexual abuse of children were brought to light. Rape crisis centres and women's refuges were established. Pornography came under attack for propagating misogynist images and for claiming that women enjoyed the role of the passive victim of male sexual aggression. The fight against violence towards women and struggles for childcare facilities, abortion on demand, protection against sexual harassment and discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation were prominent on the feminist agenda. (Norris & Knellwolf, 2008, p. 196)

Because this wave found voice in the middle of so many other social movements (such as the peace movement; the equal rights movement; anti-discrimination movements; the overall counter culture movement), it was easily marginalised and seen as less pressing than other movements, such as efforts to end the war in Vietnam and black power. They then responded by forming consciousness-raising groups and women-only organisations to advocate for their place in the sun. This was the wave that was increasingly theoretical because of the fusion of neo-Marxism and psychoanalytical theory and started to associate the subjugation of women with a wider range of social issues: 'sex and gender were differentiated—the former being biological, and the later a social construct that varies culture-to-culture and over time' (Rampton, 2015). Unlike the first wave, which was generally propelled by middle class, Western, cisgender, white women, the second wave included women of colour, and those from 'developing' nations, seeking sisterhood and solidarity, because they believed that: 'the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together (Mohanty, 2003, p. 7). It is easier to win when efforts are joined in a struggle. That is why Mohanty clarifies even more by saying that: 'reflective solidarity is crafted by an interaction involving three persons: "I ask you to stand by me over and against a third" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 7).

Feminists in this phase initiated a concentrated effort to rid society top-to-bottom of sexism, from children's cartoons to the highest levels of government because 'we must be part of every fight against the manifestations of women's oppression but all the time with a vision of how we can win a society free from oppression altogether' (Orr, 2010, p. 28). Simone de

Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter established the philosophical groundwork for feminist theories during this time and helped them spread more broadly. Even studies which built upon Simone de Beauvoir pioneered the claim that: ‘sexuality and reproduction were the reasons for women’s oppression and treated women’s fertility both as a symbolic and a material corner stone in a male dominated society’ (Norris & Knellwolf, 2008, p. 202). A good number of feminist works highlighted that the idea of women’s inferiority is embedded at the very structural levels of syntax and semantics; that is to say, it is expressed both as a part of what is said and of how it is said. Language enforces gender difference.

Third wave feminism (early 1990s-present)

Feminism evolved and had branched out into different areas of discourse to make it even more difficult to define and demarcate a wave and its time period. It is easier to narrate the suffrage struggle for the vote in the First Wave, and the Equal Rights Amendments in the Second Wave, than it is to define Third Wave Feminism. Understanding the so called ‘sex wars’ that took place post second wave, will make it easier to grasp the Third Wave:

> In the feminist ‘sex wars’ of the 1980s and 1990s, prostitution was a defining issue. This activist and academic confrontation over … competing claims of sexist oppression and sexual repression constructed the sex industry as either the linchpin of women’s inequality or a site at which radical and dissident sexualities could be enacted and explored. (Phipps, 2017, p. 306)

In the years following the second wave, there appeared an open debate between groups within feminism. The debate was over pornography and sexual activity between the anti-pornography feminists and the sex-positive feminists. The anti-pornography feminists were not happy with pornography, and in fact they wanted to limit the porn industry because they believed it catered only to men, and worse still, that it encouraged violence towards women. They wanted to end prostitution and addressed it as a worst-case scenario for any woman, ‘situating the sex industry as the pinnacle of gendered objectification and men’s entitlement to women’s bodies’ (Phipps, 2017, pp. 306-307). However, On the other side stood the sex-positive feminists, who claimed that sexual liberation was a vital component of equality for women, so any efforts to ban pornography were repressive and undemocratic. They believed in giving women freedom to choose what they want, because according to them, there were some women who chose sex work and they are happy and they are making their living out of that, so that had to be accounted for. So together with LGB and BDSM sexualities:

> sex work was positioned as a challenge to the status quo, opening up spaces for experimentation and constituting an explicit sale of sex for money which highlighted the tacit commodification of sex through the marriage contract. (Phipps, 2017, p. 307)

Therefore, Third Wave feminism focused on race and gender, and grew out of the sex-positive debates of the second wave. It began in a generation that had not only grown up with feminism, but that tended to take the hard-earned accomplishments of the first and second wave for granted. It criticised the exclusive nature of the earlier feminist movements, and its mainstream tendencies which isolated minorities. Therefore, this wave basically tried to bring communities that were previously left out of feminist movements into the fold and recognised the intersectionality of oppression.

From the 1990s, one can see a great deal of progress in political representation and equality for women. In 1991, Anita Hill accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. Supporting Hill and heralding the beginning of the Third Wave: ‘Rebecca Walker famously wrote, “*I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the third wave*” (Anand, 2018). That is why the year 1991 was often called the ‘Year of the Woman’. By 1993, five women had joined the US Senate, and therefore the beginnings of the 1990s are often demarcated as the beginning of the third wave of feminism.

Women’s reproductive rights were to a great extent a main focus of the third wave of feminism. For the purpose of allowing a woman to be free to make her own choices about her body, feminists advocated for a woman’s basic rights to have access to birth control and abortion:

> When the Supreme Court upheld the *Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act* and restrictions on abortion, there was a huge protest march called the 'March for Women's Lives' in Washington DC in 2004. Attended by activists, Second and Third Wave feminists and celebrities, the march showed how important the issue of reproductive rights was to the Third Wave. The Act was not repealed, and methods of limiting access to abortion such as parental or spousal consent continued. (Anand, 2018)

The scope of the Third Wave was very broad. Its spread covered pop culture and the media and laid emphasis on the voices of the young that helped spread messages of female empowerment through punk rock. All these helped in initiating discussions of not only patriarchy and body image amongst teenagers listening to their music but also expanded the dialogue on violence against women.

Strong female feminist characters became more common in movies and television shows, giving an impact to the narrative of the Third Wave while adolescent girls grew up in a completely different feminist environment making them become more powerful than their mothers The discussions of gender, body image and sexuality that defined the Third Wave of feminism made it more inclusive to trans-feminists despite the fact that even today, there is still ignorance among many about the identity of trans persons.

Marxist feminism

Marxist feminism is a theoretical framework that examines the various forms of systematic inequalities that lead to the oppression of marginalised individuals. It was 'a powerful strand of the second wave during the late 1960s and 1970s, in Britain in particular' (Selden & Widdowson, 1985, p. 125). In this perspective, Marxism uses class inequality as the axis of oppression in capitalism, while feminism uses gender inequalities as the axis of oppression in patriarchal society. Hence, Marxist feminism looked at women's subjugation as a core part of capitalist economics, stressing the 'relations between capitalism and the oppression of women' (Habib, 2005, p. 693). Marxist feminists hold that gender inequality is not only a distinct feature of capitalist society, but it is also a product of the tendency of capitalism to shift costs for social care onto the private family, for example the placing of childcare in the remit of women. Such responsibilities are shifted to women to perform through unpaid labour in the home. This relieves men (patriarchal capitalism) of having to pay for services, and hence allows them to generate more capital over time.

Women for years had no control over their fertility, so they were bearing children and nursing them in homes. This automatically ruled them out of the paid labour force, leaving men to win favour in the labour market, while women remain the only disadvantaged, and Marxist feminism works on an 'analogy with use-value, exchange-value, and surplus-value relationships' (Spivak, 1998, p. 106). In addition, for the work force to be able to continue working, it must be fed, have clean clothes and children had to be raised to produce a new generation of workers. All these jobs are done by disadvantaged women in homes because men have to earn wages for them to live. In this paradigm, what women are doing in homes is not counted as work by either society or the economy, and most of the time taken for granted.

After a long time of struggle, women were accepted in the working-class population by the 19th century. This raised their hopes that, as they were taken into paid labour inequality would end, and things might now change for the better, but this was not the case because of the 'double day'. This refers to the situation where women finished the paid working day only to begin the home care work. Marxist feminism aims at bringing change in the lives of women socially and economically, especially in terms of how 'the family and women's domestic labour are constructed by and reproduce the sexual division of labour' (Selden & Widdowson, 1985, p. 125). Therefore, the purpose of the Marxist feminist framework is not only to transform the conditions of women, but also release them from exploitation, oppression and more importantly, to liberate them from all unjust treatment. Therefore, for Marxist feminists, the true liberation of women can only be achieved by dismantling the capitalist system in which they contend much of women's labour. Silvia Federici has demonstrated the oversight in Marxian theory of one of the fundamental features of capitalist accumulation: namely, the subjugation of women and women's productive and reproductive labour. Federici is known for her focus on the struggle against capitalist globalization and, more recently, on developing a feminist theory of the commons. In 1972, she co-founded the International Feminist Collective, which launched the campaign Wages for Housework internationally. (Federici, 2020)

Postcolonial feminism

Postcolonial feminism, also known as 'third world feminism', is a critical approach that rejects Western feminism on the grounds of its utter 'eurocentrism' by claiming that it is fallacious to hope that postcolonial women will be valued, appreciated and justified by the Western standards that tend to homogenise and universalise women and their experiences all over the world. This is often referred to as 'third world feminism' (Mishra, 2013, p. 131). Postcolonial feminists aim at making a transformation in the world whereby the differences that exist among people are celebrated and enjoyed. They believe that this can be achieved by working together towards finding peaceful solutions in attaining freedoms in religious, social, cultural, and economic contexts for all the world's marginalised women. Narayan attests this by saying that looking at connections and divisions between Western and Third-World is 'a project that is crucial and central to any truly "international" feminist politics' (Weedon, 2007, p. 298). The primary purpose of postcolonial feminism is to critique the homogenised tendencies of Western feminism, and by so doing, to bring into light the typicality of problems of women of the developing nations. Academics and the activists are the ones who initiated this movement; those who belong partially or fully to once colonised countries for the women of postcolonial origin amelioration.

Western feminists believe that they can represent and justify the stand of women living in once colonized nations but the truth is that experiences, lives and circumstances of postcolonial women are completely different from those of Western women, which is why feminists of postcolonial origin feel the need to expose those differences, and make them acceptable across different cultures: ‘postcolonial feminists disapprove postcolonial tendencies to construct a single category of the colonized ignoring differences’ (Mohanty, et al., 1991, p. 132).

If lives, experiences, and circumstances of women of postcolonial settings are different, then they should be judged, evaluated, and treated as such; in this way, ‘postcolonial feminism’ is strengthened. On the other side, some people thought that postcolonial feminists posed a threat to the idea of the universal sisterhood. In answer to that, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park claim that this is neither feminism nor postcolonial studies, but rather an intervention that changes both: ‘postcolonial feminism is an exploration of and at the intersections of colonialism and neo-colonialism with gender, nation, class, race’ (Mishra, 2013, p. 129). Contextually then, postcolonial feminism is a response to Western feminism which is mainly a white discourse predominantly covering West European and North American women’s experiences. Emerging from the history of colonialism which is the history of the exploitation of the non-white, non-Western others, postcolonial feminism deals with the issues of the colonised countries which have been deeply affected by the exploitative racist nature of colonialism.

The claim of postcolonial feminists is that colonial oppression especially racial, class, and ethnic oppression, has been overlooked to a great extent. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park say that: ‘postcolonial feminist critics… attacked both the idea of universal “woman,” as well as the reification of the Third World “difference” that produces the “monolithic” Third World woman’ (Mishra, 2013, p. 131). Instead, these critics insisted on the specificities of class, race, and gender. The number of such postcolonial feminists is small, but growing:

> This field of study is mainly identified with the works of feminists of once-colonized nations. Chandra Talapade Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak, Uma Narayan, Sara Suleri, Lata Mani, Kumkum Sangari, are some of the few postcolonial feminists. Postcolonial feminists are closely associated with Black feminists (Alice Walker, Angela Davis,

> Kimberla Crenshaw to name a few) because both strive for recognition not only by men in their own culture, but also by Western feminists. (Mishra, 2013, p. 131)

Postcolonial feminists are appealing to first world feminists to acknowledge the differences that exist between them, and to recognise the historical specificity of women in other places and times. They call upon first world feminists to do away with their reproduction of orientalist categories of thought and unexamined ethnocentrism, and instead to engage in the work of uncovering and contesting global power relations. They warn first world women that they should in no way take these concerns lightly as Chris Weedon notes; postcolonial feminism is not just a mimicry of Western feminist agendas: 'Indian feminism is clearly a response to the issues specifically confronting many Indian women' (Narayan, 2010, p. 401)

Postcolonial feminists inveigh against first world feminists who downplay differences regarding racial, location and class issues and Eurocentric colour blindness. Western feminists tend to totalise identity and 'they examine their own culture and customs to evaluate the rest of the world'. Such Universalist aspirations have been very common among western feminists' (Mishra, 2013, p. 131). Postcolonial feminists not only dislike the tendency of universalising everything as if there were no differences between the two, but also warn strongly against the reproduction tendency of colonial hierarchy. Maithreyi Krishnaraj attests to this by showing how postcolonial feminist are disenchanted with the more Eurocentric feminist paradigm, as 'subordination was never uniform even within the same period across all groups nor even within the same group. Women enjoyed spheres of influence and power as well as been victims of subjugation' (Krishnaraj, 2000, p. 5).

This perspective is also put forward by Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) in her article *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, when she criticises Western feminism on the grounds that it is ethnocentric and does not consider and pay attention to the unique experiences of women residing in postcolonial nations. That is to say she disapproves of Western feminism regarding all women as a homogeneous group without having any sense of difference pertaining to race, class, and circumstance. Mohanty vehemently opposes and brings into light various colonial tricks applied in the production of the Global South women as a singular monolithic subject, as she says:

> I argue that assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality, on the one hand, and inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of Western scholarship on the 'third world' in the context of a world system dominated by the West, on the other, characterize a sizable extent of Western feminist work on women in the third world. An analysis of 'sexual difference' in the form of a cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance leads to the construction of a similarly reductive and homogeneous notion of what I call the 'third world difference'. (Mohanty, et al., 1991, p. 53)

Mohanty criticises the tendency of portraying developing countries' feminists as substandard, second class, poor and ignorant, seeing it as a negative universalism, and in 'such negative characterizations scant attention is paid to history and difference' (Mohanty, et al., 1991, p. 133). It is an undeniable fact that a good number of men and women's sentiments were severely hurt by colonial oppression; however, women suffered double colonisation in the sense that they suffered first under colonial oppression and second by simply being women under the oppression of their own brothers, fathers and husbands (patriarchy): 'just as men reduced women to the other, so the white women had constructed the Third World women as the other to herself' (Tolan, 2006).

Postcolonial feminism explores the possibilities of recovering the long-silenced voices of the subaltern women but at the same time it is keen to examine who speaks, for whom and whose voice is being heard on the other side. This is because 'when Western women speak for the others, they only displace them, replacing their voices with their own' (Mishra, 2013, p. 132). Spivak raised this idea in her essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' As a matter of fact, postcolonial women are fighting to put a stop to the male-oppressive environment and want to emancipate themselves through education, struggle, and hard work.

Psychoanalytic feminism

The concept of psychoanalytic feminism refers to a theory of oppression, which claims that men have an inherent psychological need to subjugate women. This desire of men and women's attitudes to subjugation lies deep within the human psyche, and because of these deeply engrained patterns, 'psychoanalytic feminists wanted to alter the experiences of early childhood and family relations, as well as linguistic patterns that produce and reinforce masculinity and femininity' (Graff, 2012). The idea of castration anxiety for boys, and of the absence of a penis for girls, was central to Freud's oedipal theory. While boys renounce their oedipal wish for the mother; girls on the other hand recognise their lack of a penis and struggle to identify with the father while rejecting their mother. When girls recognise that this is impossible, Freud suggests, they attempt to fulfil their 'lack' with a baby. However, in response to these ideas, 'women began to write theory out of their own experience and gradually, different perspectives emerged about the nature of feminine subjectivity' (Mciver, 2009, p. 35).

Psychoanalytic feminism challenges the pattern of oppression integrated into societies and which sustain patriarchy by addressing political and social factors affecting the development of male and female subjects. Through the application of psychoanalytic techniques to studying differences between women and men as well as the ways in which gender is constructed, psychoanalytic feminism sees it possible to reorganise socialisation patterns at the early stages of human life. Hence Lacanian feminists privileged language over biological and psychosocial aspects of parenting and child development, 'arguing that, in order to alter gender relations, we need to change language'. So, whereas for Freud, it was the physical pens that was a core signifier, for Lacan, it is the phallus is symbolic of the child's entry into language and culture under 'The Law of the Father' and Lacanian feminists wanted to interrogate and resist oppressive constructions of gender and sexuality encoded in language (Graff, 2012). Psychoanalytic feminism criticises the notions of women as biologically, morally and psychically, inferior to men because these play a major role in sexual differences and women’s otherness in relation to men. To change this situation, a discovery of a source of domination in men’s psyche and subordination in women’s must be identified. These largely reside unrecognised in the individual’s unconscious mind. There are two major schools of psychoanalytic feminism namely the Freudian and the Lacanian.

The Freudian feminists, mostly Anglo-American, are more concerned with the production of the male dominance and the development of gendered subjects in societies where women are responsible for mothering. Their main aim was to recover Freud’s main analyses for feminist purposes. For instance, Juliet Mitchell, develops the insight indispensable to any feminist reading, that ‘psychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one’ (Mitchell, 1973, p. xiii). Psychoanalytical feminism is, therefore, a branch of feminism that seeks to investigate closely how our psychic lives develop for the aim of not only understanding but also changing the subjugation of women.

Jessica Benjamin’s work, entitled ‘The Bonds of Love’, is an excellent example of the Anglo-American approach. Benjamin is troubled by ‘the psychoanalytic depiction of social life as the world of men, developed on the basis of the father-son relation and its aggression, hostility, love, and mourning’ (Zakin, 2011). She claims that women are merely the triangulating object of desire, and that subjects become bound by love to oppressive social relations in the formation of identity. She worries that ‘domination is anchored in the hearts of the dominated’ (Benjamin, 1988, p. 5), meaning that women are erotically attached to patriarchal power in such a way that it is not easy to detach themselves from that trap.

To Benjamin, psychoanalytic feminism provides insights into an individual’s psyche and into the organisation, distribution, and structure of political power and hierarchy. Her aim is ‘to grasp the deep structure of gender as a binary opposition which is common to psychic and cultural representations’ (Benjamin, 1988, p. 218). Benjamin highlights ‘the role of (contradictory) cultural stereotypes in bringing forth gender as we know and live it' (Zakin, 2011) and accentuates the need for social transformation.

Influenced by some ideas from Foucault, Benjamin examines the way power shapes and forms identities and desires, resulting in gendered relations (Benjamin, 1988, p. 4). Drawing from Hegel, she depicts the dialectic of recognition in the struggle for identity as a 'conflict between independence and dependence' (Benjamin, 1988, p. 33). The mother-child relation then is seen as a revised neo-Hegelian struggle for power, while at the same time preserving the intention of mutual recognition or respect, but jeopardising domination and rebellion. So for psychoanalytic feminism, gender equality thus entails that women be recognised by both themselves and by men, not only as subjects in culture but also that intersubjectivity itself be revalued.

The Lacanian feminists, mostly French, analyse relationships between gendered identity and language: 'they variously ask about the relation between the maternal and the feminine, doubting that we can say what a woman is' (Zakin, 2011). Lacanian feminists are concerned about Freud's lack of attention to mothers. These are thinkers like Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva who play with writing style wondering about feminine subjectivity. They question whether or not women can be subjects or citizens without adapting to masculine norms:

> One group of French Lacanian feminists including Luce Irigarary, Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement is known for their project of écriture feminine, an attempt to write from or to discursively embody the position of woman in order to challenge women's positioning in phallogocentric culture. These writers argued that women needed to forego neutral, scientific masculine language and embrace a rebellious creativity based in subjective experience of the body and the feminine. In this they attempted to realize a female/feminine sex/subject outside of patriarchal definitions of woman. (Graff, 2012)

It is here that we see that psychoanalytic feminism poses a challenge as to whether the structures of femininity and the structures of subjectivity are compatible, commensurable and reconcilable. It has always been the aim of psychoanalytic feminists to disentangle femininity from maternity, and provide a critique of their conflation, taking seriously at the same time the significance of maternity for women and for children of both sexes.

Irigaray examines and engages with the transformation of the ideas of Freud and Lacan, she characterises her own project as taking place in three stages: 'first, deconstructing the masculine subject; second, figuring the possibility for a feminine subject; and third, construing an intersubjectivity that respects sexual difference' (Irigaray, 1995a, p. 96). According to Irigaray the system of domination we need to overcome is not sexual differences but rather a 'cultural process and practice to be achieved and nourished; the actual relations of domination and subordination that characterize' (Zakin, 2011). Having evolved out of a reaction to classical psychoanalytic theory, psychoanalytic feminism, especially the works of Chodorow, Kristeva, Benjamin and Irigaray, showed clearly that psychoanalytic feminism should not only appreciate and work with the paradoxes of the intersubjective approach, but could also foster an awareness of how multiple gendered representations can be a resource for thought and practice, as it may enable women and therapists in clinical practice to imagine alternatives through the use of symbolism and the imaginary or play space. All this is a product of long painful and unrecognised experiences of women that led to questioning about our cultures, women's identity and about human nature: Thus, Irigaray questions:

> If human nature is two, and always divided, Irigaray argues, then civil identity is also two and divided; the two of nature needs to be brought into the two of culture. The one is an illusion of patriarchy, while the two threatens the phallocentric order and challenges the supposition that universality must be singular. The scandalous idea of a feminine subjectivity means that the universal must be doubled. (Zakin, 2011)

Therefore, according to psychoanalytic feminism, all the relational dynamics that exist between girls and boys, males and females emphasise autonomy for boys and render men better prepared for public life and the world of work while girls, who in contrast develop as subjects in closer relation with their mothers, have more fluid psychic boundaries that facilitate a greater capacity for intimacy but leave them less prepared to negotiate the public sphere. Psychoanalytic feminism for that matter is a tool that operates to transform the gender hierarchy of Oedipal to pre-Oedipal focus and revises Freud's perception of women as subordinate and maintains that gender is not biological but is centred on the psycho-sexual development of the individual.

It is important to note the many strands of feminism and to note that there are very specific differences in practice, praxis and outlook across the world, and while one can look at the Global South, or developing countries as sharing the same burden of inequality, and of having a broadly similar experience, nevertheless there are significant differences in the experience of feminists from one African country to another, and within each country, further intersectionalist circumstances such as an urban/rural divide; an educational divide; a social class divide can account from women living very near each other having significantly disparate experiences. And of course, it is also important to note that men, as well as women, and people of plural genders, can also be feminists in term of their ideological outlook on issues of equality.

Chapter Three: Psychoanalytic and Feminist interpretations of *Nervous Conditions*

Psychoanalytic interpretation of *Nervous Conditions*

Psychoanalysis has a long and complex relationship not only with the practices of reading and writing but also with the: 'assumptions that we make about why people write and how texts affect their readers' (Green, et al., 2001, p. 143). This relationship between psychoanalysis and literature can be looked at in terms of what is being subjected to the analytic process, and what repressed meaning we thereby hope to uncover (Green, et al., 2001). The title of the novel '*Nervous Conditions*' calls for the psychoanalytic interpretation since the novel speaks of the Psychosocial effects of patriarchy and the challenges faced by women as they fight to achieve their aims in life, and as they struggle to be able to succeed in life; the aim being to explore the deep implications of the book.

Psychoanalytic theory as a tool of interpretation is a vast critical category, which employs many approaches. Tambu's nervous conditions, and those of Nyasha's and Maiguru's in the novel, correspond so much with the condition of my sisters in my family and tribe. All these find explanations in Freud's study of the human mind. Considering the richness of this work of Dangarembga, the novel will be analysed by using aspects of psychoanalytic theory such as the concept of personality, the concept of mind, Dream analysis, psychosexual theory and Oedipus complex (Farrel, 1981, p. 21). Also, with the help of autoethnography as an approach, it becomes very evident that what I have seen an experienced is also true in some other parts of Africa. Such experiences will help achieve a deeper understanding of the novel and of the wider African culture.

The blending of autoethnography and psychoanalysis makes a good combination, because while autoethnographers tell of 'those remarkable and out of the ordinary life-changing experiences that transform us or call us to question our lives (Adam, et al., 2015, pp. 26-27), it is the hidden meanings behind these very experiences that 'constitute the principal subject-matter of psychoanalysis and the foundations of its theory' (Freud, 1957, p. 122). Therefore, psychoanalytic interpretations of the text offers us new layers of meaning as we read. This is how psychoanalytic interpretation becomes an important tool in providing a meaningful literary interpretation of *Nervous Conditions*, and, indeed, of nervous conditions.

Dangarembga opens up the novel by a striking statement made by Tambu that she was not sorry when her brother died, and had no intention of apologizing for seeming heartless:

> I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologising for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling. For it is not that at all. I feel many things these days, much more than I was able to feel in the days when I was young and my brother died, and there are reasons for this more than the mere consequence of age. Therefore, I shall not apologise but begin by recalling the facts as. I remember them that led up to my brother's death, the events that put me in a position to write this account. (Dangarembgha, 1988, p. 1)

Death always causes traumatic experience, especially for immediate family members. There needs to be an extraordinarily strong reason for a sister to make such a statement about the death of her biological brother. Dangarembga is using Tambu to share with the readers details and emotions about the events that led up to Nhamo's death, which allowed her to write this story. She uses Tambu to share with the readers the experiences of a woman in sub-Saharan Africa. She makes clear that the story is not about Nhamo's death, but rather it is about her and Lucia's escape, Mainini and Maiguru's entrapment, and the many rebellions of her cousin, Nyasa, and indeed about my sisters and my mother's own lives. In a sense, the Real, to use the Lacanian term here, of his death is that it became the ground that allowed her to develop. This is something hard to express in normal discourse, but in fiction, it can be said, and can be developed societally. In patriarchal societies like this, the Real, that which exists but cannot be expressed, is that for women to thrive, men must in some way abandon their positions, so in this case, her reaction exemplifies the Real.

Dangarembga centres the story on women and their sufferings and pains; Tambu makes it clear that her story is not necessarily about the men in her life, but rather about women striving to dismantle sexist power structures in their own way. This power is predominantly owned by men, who mostly feel not only self-important and selfish, but also act as if they are blinded and do not see the needs of others as if this world were only created for them to enjoy and nobody else. We can see this in Nhamo's behaviour. As a spoiled boy in the family, he can even dare to complain and suggest that the mission should hire a special private bus for just two students:

> He did not like sharing the vehicle with various kinds of produce in suspicious stages of freshness, with frightened hens, with the occasional rich-smelling goat. 'We should have a special bus,' he complained. (Dangarembgha, 1988, pp. 1-2)

This suggests that Nhamo is becoming extremely self-important. His desire to be driven shows that he thinks he deserves special treatment and is above walking.

In this image, Dangarembga portrays Nhamo as a person who is guided by that primitive part of the personality that pursues only pleasure and instant gratification, the id; because: 'one function of the id is to fulfil the pleasure principle, which, as we have seen, is a basic motivating force that serves to reduce tension by seeking pleasure and avoiding pain' (Arlow, 1995, pp. 21-22). The id is primitive and needy; it cannot deny itself. This is what Nhamo shows. He wants to be driven home and he cannot resist that desire. He is blinded by his needs to the extent of suggesting that the mission hire a private bus for just two students. That is true of most men in African societies. This reminds me of my own boyhood. After school I was able to play with my friends while my sisters were home with family chores. It also reminds me of my mother who was busy at home after coming back from a heavy day's work in the farm while my dad was going out to meet friends. Dangarembga shows how men are influenced by that aspect of personality that is entirely unconscious and includes the instinctive and primitive behaviours: 'the id applies to the instinctual drives that relate to the needs of the body: the id is primitive and needy, incapable of denying itself' (Green, et al., 1996, p. 148) Dangarembga therefore disputes that in most cases men are blinded and pursue only pleasure and instant gratification without thinking of women and in a patriarchal society all this is taken for granted. I feel guilty when I reflect today how my sisters were treated and how I was favoured as a boy at home. This research helps me to understand that this is also true in some other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. The beauty of autoethnography here is that it accommodates and acknowledges emotionality and subjectivity, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they do not exist.

Dangarembga portrays Nhamo's behaviour as entirely motivated by the id, as he wants whatever it feels good at the time, with no consideration for the reality of the situation. Nhamo does not know that it was only a favour to be taken home by car:

> Sometimes, when my uncle was not too busy with reports and administration at the end of the school term, he was able to come away from his office at three o'clock in the afternoon, sacrificing the remaining hours in the day in order to bring Nhamo home. (Dangarembgha, 1988, p. 1)

Nhamo behaves in a childish way because when a child is hungry, the id wants food, and therefore the child cries. By portraying this, Dangarembga suggests that African men can behave like that; that their childish sense of selfhood is sanctioned by patriarchy. When a woman helps cleaning their clothes, they think it is their right. Hansen claimed that: 'when the infant is hungry, the id seeks immediate gratification to restore the infant to a state of comfort' (Hansen, et al., 1982). When the child is uncomfortable, in pain, too hot, too cold, or just wants attention, the id speaks up until its needs are met. This reminds me of the incident in my autoethnography when I refused to do the pounding of rice hoping that my sisters will do it all. I took them for granted thinking that those were female chores. Nhamo without any shame thinks only of what pleases him and nobody else; he does not care about the needs of others. That is how he behaved when he stole Tambu's maize, without caring about her sister who worked so hard in the field. The id does not care about reality, about the needs of anyone else, only its own satisfaction, and this is well-captured in this book.

Jeremiah and Lucia also behave like children who are not in any way considerate of their parents' wishes. They have no care for time, whether their parents are sleeping, relaxing, eating, or bathing. When the id wants something, nothing else is important. When Jeremiah and Lucia wanted to have an affair, nothing else was important. They just responded to their urges without considering the consequences for Mainini who is Lucia's sister and Jeremiah's wife, and this would embody Freud's notion that the 'logical laws of thought do not apply in the id', as contrary impulses continue to 'exist side by side' in the id (Freud, 1933a, pp. 73-74). That is why Lucia is considered to be a loose woman, since what she does has no logic and she has no fears about having sex when, and with whom, she wants. When it comes to sex, she is driven by the unconscious and embodies the instinctive and primitive behaviours which people would not expect in the society of the super-ego. She easily responds to her desires without thinking about the consequences. This earns her a bad reputation in the society. When she comes to the homestead when Mainini becomes pregnant to help out, she soon begins sexual relationships with Tekesure, and with Jeremiah her sister's husband. Lucia's life is based on the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants, and needs. If these needs are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state of anxiety or tension. By behaving this way Lucia is considered as a loose woman. Dangarembga uses Maiguru to question this attitude of considering women as 'loose women', as Maiguru says:

> I don't know what people mean by a loose woman – sometimes she is someone who walks the streets, sometimes she is an educated woman, sometimes she is a successful man's daughter, or she is simply beautiful. Loose or decent, I don't know. (Dangarembgha, 1988, p. 181)

While Lucia is being criticized by the society and is called 'loose', nothing bad is said of Jeremiah who is also behaving inappropriately. Lucia earns a bad reputation, while Jeremiah is left free of accusation. This kind of unfair treatment of women is what traumatises them silently, and indeed that drives them into silence – there seems to be no one willing to listen to their complaints in the world of this novel. In Lacanian terms, the Symbolic order here is a gendered one in that men acceding to desire is approved of, whereas women doing the same thin is deeply frowned upon. It appears that men are licensed to respond to their desires freely, while women are highly controlled. This reminds me of my own tribe that a boy can come back home as late as 11 pm, but a girl who comes back at 8 pm must have a very good reason for where she has been and for what she has been doing. Chimamanda Ngizi Adichie, in *Dear Ijewele: A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*, says:

> If you criticize X in women but do not criticize X in men, then you do not have a problem with X, you have a problem with women. For X, please insert words like anger, ambition, loudness, stubbornness, coldness ruthlessness. (Adichie, 2018, p. 27)

What Chimamanda says, as does Dangarembga, is that it is unfair to criticise an act done by a woman (Lucia) and not criticise or even say anything about the same act done by a man (Jeremiah); because this is a clear indication that the problem is not with that specific act but rather with the gender of women as a whole.

Dangarembga questions the decisions made by men in life in the novel. They do not think about the consequences of their decisions. Freud claims that the ego is that part of the id that has been modified by the direct influence of the external world. We have already noted Thompson's explanation that:

> The ego is the executive of the personality because it controls the gateways to action, selects the features of the environment to which it will respond, and decides which needs will be satisfied and in which order. (Thompson, 2003, p. 383)

This means that the ego is the decision-making component of personality. Dangarembga shows this when Babamukuru is punishing Nyasha. Maiguru intervenes by asking Babamukuru to examine and think of the consequences of what he is doing to a child: '"Yuwi, yuwi, yuwi!"

Maiguru moaned. “Babawa Chido, do you want to kill me with your anger? She is only a child, Babawa Chido, a child”’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 114). Operating under the reality principle, the role of ego is to mediate the conflict between the id and the super-ego. It finds some outlet for the instincts of the id, and at the same time, it has to restrict them within the demands of super-ego. By behaving in this way, Babamukuru strives to impose his own version of the super-ego on Nyasha, so that she will conform to his expectations. However, at an instinctual level, he is very angry that his patriarchal role is being disrespected, so there is the desire of the id at work here as well. Freud says that the ego is often caught between the id and the super-ego, and also that it has to compensate for the demands of external world.

Another good example of this is when Nhamo decided to steal Tambu’s maize. Tambu had worked so hard for few months tending her crop, just as her grandmother taught her when she was little. She was deeply convinced that she could grow corn and raise the fees herself, although Jeremiah, her father, laughed at her. She was extraordinarily successful after a lot of hard work, and by February her maize was dark green, taller than her and still growing:

> It was a fine feeling. A fine crop. All that remained was to wait for the harvest…A few weeks later, when the cobs were ripe for eating, they began to disappear. ‘What did you expect?’ Nhamo said. ‘Did you really think you could send yourself to school?’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 21)

Then the Sunday after her maize began to be stolen, Tambu is told by her friends that they had been thinking of her: ‘“Especially when Nhamo gives us mealies” … “Nhamo gave you maize?” I asked… “Lots of times,” Nyari assented’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 22). Considering what Nhamo did to her sister, it is quite clear that he never thought of the toil his sister went through. Dangarembga here wants to show that Nhamo’s ego was low because the reality principle considers the consequences of an action by weighing the costs and benefits of the action before deciding whether to act upon or abandon impulses, and it deals with the demands of the id and super-ego. James *et al* affirms that:

> The ego operates by the reality principle. The reality principle postpones the discharge of energy until an object that will satisfy the need, or reduce tension, is found… the reality principle is served by the secondary process, which consists of discovering or producing reality through a plan developed by thought and reason. (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6)

It understands that other people have needs and desires, and that sometimes being impulsive or selfish can hurt us in the long term. It is the ego's job to meet the needs of the id, while taking into consideration the reality of the situation. Freud makes the analogy of the id being a horse while the ego is the rider. The ego is like 'a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse' (Freud, 1923, p. 15). Ideally, the ego works by reason whereas the id is chaotic and totally unreasonable.

Dangarembga shows that there was no reasoning in what Babamukuru did to Nyasha; what Nhamo did to his sister Tambu; and generally what men do to women in African societies. Moreover, the ego discharges tension created by unmet impulses through the secondary process, in which the ego tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the id's primary process: hence beating the child makes the father feel more powerful; stealing the maize makes the boy feel more powerful. In a Lacanian sense, his ideal ego is one wherein he is very much control of his family, and any action that perpetuates that control gives him self-validation; the image he sees in a societal mirror phase is one where he is in charge. Both actions are motivated by desire, and the patriarchal culture allows these desires to be validated by the super-ego which allows fathers to punish daughters, and brothers to be more privileged than sisters.

Dangarembga presents Nyasha and her cousin Tambu as two girls who have different moral standards. This is largely due to how they were brought up as children, because this is where the dictates of society are gradually internalised through the super-ego: 'a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged' (Jaaware, 2001, p. 3). Nyasha, who grew up in England as a child, is able to tell his father plainly what she likes and what she does not like.

When Babamukuru called her a whore, she reacted by saying: "'Now why," she enquired of no particular person, "should I worry about what people say when my own father calls me a whore?" (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 114). Nyasha is that kind of a person who is not to be wrongly accused. She will speak her mind. Tambu on the other hand grew up in a village in Zimbabwe. She is brought up in the habit of respecting the cultural values, and of respecting those who are older than you, especially parents. If one has a different opinion to that of a parent or a guardian, then one must find a nice way of addressing it. We see this in how Tambu struggled to speak her mind to Babamukuru when she didn't like to go for her parent's wedding:

> To me the question of that wedding was a serious one, so serious that even my body reacted in a very alarming way. Whenever I thought about it… I suffered a horrible crawling over my skin, my chest contracted to a breathless tension and even my bowels threatened to let me know their opinion. This also began to happen whenever I thought of Babamukuru and put me in a difficult situation. Naturally, I was angry with him for having devised this plot which made such a joke of my parents, my home and myself. And just as naturally I could not be angry with him since surely it was sinful to be angry with Babamukuru. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 149)

By contrasting Nyasha and Tambu Dangarembga affirms that our moral standards and ideals in life can be different depending on what one acquires from both parents and society within which one lives. Both girls had different versions of the super-ego with which to contend as they grew up, and this is the reason why they are so very different; their respective relationships with patriarchy are diverse. One's super-ego incorporates the values and morals of society, which provide guidelines for making judgments: 'The super-ego is the moral, social, and judicial branch of the personality' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6). In *Nervous Conditions*, Babamukuru is portrayed as a person with very high moral standards. His super-ego was so high that he set everyone else a very high standard of behaviour. He quarrelled with Jeremiah his brother about a church wedding. He had fights with her daughter Nyasha on about what he saw as moral behaviour, and he also removed Lucia in Jeremiah's house to separate his brother and Lucia. Babamukuru's super-ego functions well in controlling the id's impulses, especially those which society forbids, and in persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals. His super-ego is too strong, and that is why he is driven by rigid morals, and he is judgmental and unbending in his interactions with the world.

Tambu's ideal self, pictures Maiguru as her role model. According to her, that is how a woman ought to be: married, educated, decent and open minded. She is a bit disappointed though when she discovers things she never knew before and she: 'felt sorry for Maiguru because she could not use the money she earned for her own purposes and had been prevented by marriage from doing the things she wanted to do' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 102). She appreciates how Maiguru behaves because she conforms to her notion of the ego-ideal: 'the ego ideal is composed of the child's conceptions of what the parents consider to be perfection, or the perfect person' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6); Tambu was brought up to be a hardworking person and respectful, but she also wants to be educated just like Maiguru.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga gives a reader an opportunity to examine behaviours that can lead to bad consequences. These are the behaviours that touch people's conscience, or the child's conceptions of what is 'considered to be morally bad and is established through experiencing admonitions, punishment, or lack of acceptance (Giovacchini, 1977, p. 22). Dangarembga then shows that things like Nhamo steeling Tambu's maize; Jeremiah having an affair with Lucia; and Babamukuru using Maiguru's salary like his own, create feelings of guilt, anxiety, inferiority and remorse in people's consciences. While Jeremiah feels guilty for betraying his wife by going out with Lucia, Nhamo feels guilty for what he did to his sister Tambu by stealing her maize. Dangarembga says this is what women in sub-Saharan Africa are undergoing. They are always the victims of betrayal, but what makes things even worse is that they are betrayed by the people whom they love and who were supposed to love them, and at times are then made feel that they are the ones at fault. In the bigger picture here, Dangarembga aims at touching the consciences of men and punishing them by creating a feeling of guilt due to what they do to their sisters and mothers. A guilty feeling is a punishment given by conscience to any person who does a morally bad thing. As a result of that, the conscience punishes the ego through causing feelings of guilt. So Nhamo and Jeremiah represent all men whose behaviours do not follow ideal standards.

As for those who behave well, like Tambu who worked very hard in her farm to get her school fees, and to pass her exams, her super-ego rewards her through the ideal self by making her feel proud of her success. Dangarembga shows that the ideal self and conscience are largely determined in childhood from parental values, and from how one was brought up; in this way she challenges how boys are prepared to perpetuate the patriarchy from childhood. This is clearly seen in how Nhamo was being prepared in all possible ways to rule the family by being trained to be a provider, while the girls are prepared to be controlled by being housewives. She challenges what we teach our boys and girls. We teach girls to be nice and likeable, but we do not teach boys the same. We teach girls to be false as a result of that many girls remain silent when they are abused because they want to be nice. Many girls spend too much time trying to be nice to people who do harm to them. Many girls think of the feelings of those who hurt them. Nyasha breaks this tradition. She speaks out her mind and she confronts her father.

Dangarembga understands how influential women's mind is in shaping their personalities and behaviours. She shows how conscious women are about everything that is done to them. The female characters in *Nervous Conditions* are shown to us through their conscious minds:

> The conscious mind is constituted by events, memories, fantasies and the sensations from sense organs along with the feelings emotions and the like, of which one is aware at the moment. (Pangestu & Sunardi, 2016, p. 21)

This is true of characters like Mainini, Tambu and Nyasha. Mainini the wife of Joshua who is not educated and does not speak much, is very much aware of the interplay of patriarchy and its manoeuvres in society which always make women victims. Mainini wisely analyses the situation and she speaks to her daughter from the very bottom of her heart: '"This business of womanhood is a heavy burden …. When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them"' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16). There is a clarity and a sense of reality here in the knowledge being passed on from parent to child. The connection between mother and daughter would once have been Imaginary, as the mother provided all the needs of the daughter both in the womb, and as a child. Now, however, it is the mother who must mediate the child into a Symbolic order wherein her desires and needs will not be met, and where she is seen as structurally of less value than her brother.

Her conscious mind reasons very well and logically: she is highly self-aware here. Mainini's strong words to her daughter are a clear sign that women are nearly always fully aware of whatever injustice is being done to them, even if they do not respond to these injustices immediately or overtly. Such actions create traumatic feelings in women and influence how they live and behave. Tambu also thought clearly and consciously about the idea of Babamukuru making her parents have church wedding at their advanced age. She says:

> Babamukuru was sure enough that my parents were sinning to want to provide a wedding for them, a wedding that would cost a lot of money. It was a complex problem, too complex for me to think my way out of, so I pushed it once more to the back of my mind. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 149)

Tambu's conscious mind was in operation here in internally critiquing the issues and behaviours that made no sense to her; as a result, she became angry with Babamukuru for having devised this plot which made such a joke of her parents and her entire family.

Nyasha is also a good example of women who are very much aware of the strategies used by patriarchy and of strongly fighting against them. An interesting instance of this is when Babamukuru called her daughter a whore. Nyasha responded smartly and logically as she fought back: Babamukuru said: '"You, Chido, keep quiet…You let your sister behave like a whore without saying anything. Keep quiet"' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 114). To this Nyasha responded with great intelligence as she argued: '"now why," she enquired of no particular person, "should I worry about what people say when my own father calls me a whore?" She looked at him with murder in her eyes' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 114). So, through these female characters, Dangarembga wishes to convey a message that women are quite aware of what is done to them, and that it is not only painful but also unacceptable. Such things continue to remain in them because, as previously cited:

> The majority of conscious processes are conscious only for a short time; very soon they become latent but can easily become conscious again….in the condition of latency they are still something psychical. We call the unconscious which is only latent, and thus easily become conscious, the 'preconscious' and retain the term 'unconscious' for the other. (Freud, 1933a, pp. 102-103)

That is why Maiguru remembers that when they went to South Africa: 'everybody was saying that we, the women, were loose…People were prejudiced against educated women. That was in the fifties. Now we are into the seventies' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 181). Dangarembga is disappointed that people still believe the same things. So, for her, the available memory, consists of the past psychic experiences and desires which are readily recallable, and is the storehouse for conscious mind.

Dangarembga shows that the subconscious mind controls our emotions, and sometimes we feel afraid, anxious or depressed without wanting to experience such a feeling. This is evidenced by the way Tambu felt when she discovered that her brother Nhamo was the one steeling her maize:

> 'Nhamo gave you maize?'… 'Lots of times,' Nyari assented…I went straight for my brother and brought him down in a single charge. The element of surprise was on my side. I sat on top of him, banged his head into the ground, screamed and spat and cursed. Nhamo heaved. (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 22-23)

Tambu felt that way without wanting to experience that way. This is true of many women in life. How women behave depends very much on how they are treated. I remember how my mother used to react to my father; reactions which did not make sense to me as a child, but they make a lot of sense to me as a grown up and educated person. What I saw in my family helped me to understand the wider African culture. Patriarchy most of the time hides under the cover of ignorance and tradition of the people, and of inertial notions of habit and custom. That is how we are trained to believe in the dominance of patriarchy in sub-Saharan Africa, because we unconsciously believe in that, we automatically give license for the patriarch to take the lead.

What Dangarembga says is that we must change what we believe about patriarchy because in the subconscious mind, our beliefs and memories are stored, and our affirmations make no sense and can never change our beliefs. There is a need for the entire society to reason critically and logically about our beliefs. Since affirmations are done on a conscious level, and are always filtered by the subconscious mind, they usually do not match our belief systems. The right way to change a limiting belief is to convince the conscious mind logically to accept it so that it can pass to the subconscious mind and reside there. *Nervous Conditions* is Dangarembga's contribution to make us all think and rethink about what we believe about patriarchal dominance and about female vulnerability.

Dangarembga's fiction highlights many unpleasant actions carried out on women by men. By exposing those experiences Dangarembga, like Freud, wishes to address that those experiences of a traumatic or unpleasant nature done to women do not just disappear, but rather, are stored in that 'repressed into an area of the mind he called the unconscious' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 3). So, those experiences that Nyasha experienced from her father, or that Tambu experienced from her brother, and that Mainini underwent through under her husband, are repressed into the unconscious mind which is a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that are outside of human conscious awareness.

Nervous Conditions challenges patriarchy to examine the damage caused by its tendencies of oppression and depriving women's rights; because according to Freud our childhood events especially the traumatic and all unpleasant events are the ones that influence the unconscious, as they continue to operate there, retaining their full 'investment of energy' (Habib, 2005, p. 574). Based on that, Dangarembga warns patriarchy not to deceive itself that things done to women are easily forgotten or disappear; rather she thinks in line with Freud that everything we think that is forgotten is repressed, but this does not mean they are gone or forgotten. The fact that we repress them does not mean that they disappear because energy is never lost – simply transformed 'and that our greatest destructive and creative achievements originate from forces denied their natural release' (Burns, 2006, p. 70). Dangarembga therefore argues that women's blocked instinctual drives or repressed memories appear at the surface as non-existent but in reality, they are there in the hearts and souls of girls and women, and will find some form of expression. That is why women end up developing a lot of defences like denial, displacement, projection, regression, selective perception, selective memory, fear of intimacy, fear of death, etc. in order to keep all these conflicts buried in the unconscious. Of course, all genders possess and avail of these unconscious strategies, but my argument here is that the especially repressive patriarchal cultures about which Dangarembga writes make this process all the more pervasive.

Dangarembga has written her novel covering all the developmental stages of a person to demonstrate why women behave the way they do. She wants us all to understand the parts that exert the most influence upon our behaviour, and all the answers to our behaviour and actions lie in this hidden, inaccessible area that makes up a significant portion of the mind. Through the person of Tambu, she writes about her own story from childhood to maturity sharing with us what she underwent through as a girl and shows us how she is reacting to them as an adult, experienced educated person. Characters in a literary text are the true representations of human beings. By putting all these experiences of her own life in writing, Dangarembga has enabled literary critics attempt to use various psychoanalytic techniques to examine the powerful influence this part of the mind has on individual's behaviour.

Dangarembga presents Nyasha as experiencing psychological disturbances and as speaking about things that do not make sense in any straightforward manner, as Tambu explains. She is seen as being:

> agitated and nervous and picking her skin. 'I don't want to do it, Tambu, really I don't, but it's coming, I feel it coming.' Her eyes dilated. 'They've done it to me,' she accused, whispering still. 'Really, they have.' And then she became stern. 'It's not their fault. They did it to them too. You know they did,' she whispered. 'To both of them, but especially to him. They put him through it all. But it's not his fault, he's good.' Her voice took on a Rhodesian accent. 'He's a good boy, a good munt. A bloody good kaffir,' she informed in sneering sarcastic tones. Then she was whispering again. 'Why do they do it, Tambu,' she hissed bitterly, her face contorting with rage, 'to me and to you and to him? Do you see what they've done? They've taken us away. (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 200-201)

Examining closely, one can indicate areas of trouble that need to be investigated in Nyasha's speech in order to give us an insight into her personality. There is a need for interpretation, as each symbol is heavily disguised. Looking at what she says suggests that Nyasha is psychologically disturbed by a lot of things. Like neurotic symptoms, they are the effects of compromises in the psyche between desires and prohibitions in conflict with their realization.

And this can be closely related to what Feud said about dreams that: 'a dream as the disguised fulfilment of a repressed wish' (Freud, 1901a, p. 28). Nyasha's confused speech defies logical entailment and narrative coherence, for it intermingles the residues of immediate daily experience with the deepest and most infantile wishes. Again, Dangarembga puts the blame on Babamukuru, who represents patriarchy in its unhealthy treatment of women which causes women to repress many things that erupt in different ways in the future, while men proceed to distance themselves as being non-responsible.

By depicting Nyasha as a girl who can stand up for her rights, Dangarembga argues that it is a wish for women to develop authentically: 'we want those close to us to encourage us to be our most authentic selves' (Adichie, 2018, p. 36). Through Nyasha, Dangarembga calls upon fathers to stop putting pressure on their daughters, and instead to teach them to speak their mind and not only to say what they think and want, but also to speak truthfully. This will help them to develop into a balanced successful adulthood.

On this Dangarembga agrees with Freud about how a boy or a girl can be socially adjusted. She suggests that in order to develop into a successful adult with a healthy identity, the child must be able to resolve conflict in him or her to be able to identify with an appropriate sex. As was discussed in chapter two, 'it is Freud's assertion that sexual identity is constructed on a basis of guilt and repressed incestuous desires' (Green, et al., 2001, p. 155). In a discussion on how children become socially adjusted, Freud asserts that sexual identity is constructed on the basis of guilt and repressed incestuous desires, and adds that the gender of a child is not solely dependent on her or his genitalia, but on the development of her or his psyche (Green, et al., 1996, p. 154). That is why Dangarembga challenges Babamukuru, arguing that instead of teaching Nyasha to be likable by accepting what she is told, he should teach her to be honest, brave and to speak her mind.

On this Dangarembga insists that favouritism given to boys is the core factor which makes the difference between boys and girls: 'what constitutes masculinity or femininity is an unknown characteristic which anatomy cannot lay hold of' (Freud, 1973, p. 147). Freud considered the reactions against the Oedipus complex (which is the basis of this idea), the most important social achievements of the human mind, and he feels that the Oedipus complex played an important role in the phallic stage of psychosexual development, which ultimately would lead to the development of a mature sexual identity. Similarly, Lacan sees much identity as socially constructed by what he calls the big other of society as this is what will reflect images back to the individual as to how they should act correctly or properly. Nyasha's outburst comes as she sees that language, patriarchally constructed, does not have a vocabulary for her and her only reaction to enforced silence is to blurt out this speech.

Simone de Beauvoir, speaking on the same subject in her work entitled *The Second Sex*, says: ‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’ (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 283). In this quote, de Beauvoir sees gender as a societal performative, as something that is created through behaviour, bias and very different treatment according to one’s biological sex. This is what Dangarembga constantly shows in *Nervous Conditions* that girls are not given what is given to boys. While boys are given education, girls are trained to be housewives because they will not be cooking books for their husbands. Girls are trained to be submissive to boys: Nhamo and Chido enjoyed having their hands washed by Tambu who was doing that while she was on her knees. Women are trained to be so, and it is this training that causes the gender difference.

Dangarembga’s argument supports that of de Beauvoir that femininity does not arise from differences in biology, psychology, or intellect. Rather, femininity is a construction of civilization, a reflection not of ‘essential’ differences in men and women, but of differences in their situation. Situation determines character, not the other way around, as we see in the case of Nyasha who suffers a lot at the hands of Babamukuru for a variety of reasons including, her Western habits, and her unfeminine willingness to fight with the patriarch about how men treat women but mostly for being what is considered improperly female.

So, what Dangarembga says is that in a patriarchal society, a woman is not born fully formed; rather she is gradually shaped by her upbringing. Biology does not determine what makes a woman into a woman; instead, a woman learns her role from man and others in society. Woman is not born passive, secondary, and nonessential, but all the forces in the external world have conspired to make her so. That is why Nyasha is forced to develop her own objectively unhealthy coping mechanisms constant studying, anorexia, and bulimia to deal with the stress and the pain of being female in a patriarchal society.

Dangarembga depicts Tambu as a person who influenced by what she wants, education. This concurs with Carl Jung's idea of analytical psychology whereby:

> Jung agreed with Freud that a person's past and childhood experiences influenced future behaviour; he also believed that we are shaped by our future aspirations as well. (Valli & Hoss, 2019, p. 434)

For both of these thinkers, it is prevailing habits in childhood that will condition the shape and scope of the future adult. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga not only accepts that a person's behaviour is influenced by one's childhood and past experiences, but also agrees with Carl Jung that one's aspirations also can influence or determine one's behaviour. This is shown in Tambuzai's desire for education. She decided to cultivate her own farm in order to get her own school fees. She worked extremely hard consistently to achieve what she wanted: when Nhamo disturbed her plan by stealing her maize, this action was not left without consequence. Dangarembga warns that women know what they want, their own freedom, and that their ways of behaving are influenced by their aspirations. They are ready to work for what they want and anyone who tries to disturb their agenda will face the consequences. There is a gradual process of an African societal evolution being raced here in this instance: women, the book tells us, will not stand for having their real or metaphorical maize stolen from them forever.

Dangarembga's approach accentuated understanding of the experiences of African women through exploring the entire fictional life of a woman from childhood to maturity. She not only looks at a woman as a physical being, but also, she explores the woman's psyche and her psychic experiences. In doing this, she borrows some ideas from Jung, who 'regarded the psyche as made up of a number of separate but interacting systems. The three main ones were the ego, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious' (McLeod, 2018). Dangarembga shows the frustration of Tambu after being singled out for school only because she is a girl, causes Tambu to suffer a lot inwardly. Mainini did not like her daughter to be taken away from her by Babamukuru but they did not listen to her, only because she is a woman and she ended up suffering inwardly, and this will cause a certain amount of psychological damage and difficulty in her future interactions.

In exposing all these issues in her fiction, Dangarembga's main goals are the reconciliation of the life of a woman with the world of the supra-personal which is hardly known by others. This is because for Dangarembga, the woman's encounter with this process of the unconscious is especially important. In her efforts to call upon us all to understand this encounter with the unconscious, and the reconciliation of the individual's consciousness with this broader world, Dangarembga invites us all into the exploration of this 'inner space' which is often ignored. Things that are deposited in women's psyche due to injustices done to them that have been very traumatic. We can call them the deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of womanhood. That is why Mainini tells her daughter Tambu that:

> 'This business of womanhood is a heavy burden,' she said. 'How could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can't just decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated! When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy; you have to start learning them early, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on. Easy! As if it is ever easy. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16)

This situation explained by Mainini coincides with that situation in my own family and tribe, when my mother had to experience the hardship of womanhood. She offered sacrifices by doing everything for the family, while my father was doing extraordinarily little. But she never complained. I think she learned that from an exceedingly early age. The earlier the better so that it became easy later on: 'Easy! As if it is ever easy'. At times it can take a functional mirror to show us what has been the truth of our own lives all along, and this is surely one of the reasons for the enduring popularity of this book: it reveals actual truths through its fictional characters.

In this sense, Dangarembga has been of the same mind with Jung's original structural view of the psyche where what he called archetypes are conceived of as types of psychological organs, directly analogous to our physical, bodily organs: both being morphological givens for the species, and both arising at least partially through evolutionary processes. He saw the origins of these as coming from 'deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity' (Jung, 1972, p. 109). That is why Dangarembga shows that what is seen in women is only a small fraction of her experience; it may seem that women accept their roles, but a Jungian interpretation, and indeed a Freudian one, would look to interpret instances of the repressed feelings of anger and disempowerment that exist at different levels of conscience, what Lacan might term the 'Real' of experience. The novel is making the point that there is much more in the hearts of women than what we see. We take that for granted and think it is easy, but the reality is: 'This business of womanhood is a heavy burden' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16). We see them as easy because women out of love make these sacrifices and carry those burdens for us all.

Dangarembga shows that there are sacrifices to be made by women in many cultures and spheres of life. This is just like what Jung discovered, namely that certain symbolic themes existed across all cultures, all epochs, and in every individual in the collective unconscious, because it is detached from anything personal and is common to all men, since its contents can be found everywhere, which is naturally not the case with the personal contents. (Jung, 1972, p. 103). Dangarembga sees these symbolic themes mentioned by Jung as comprising 'the archetypes of the collective unconscious'. That is why Mainini, when advising her daughter, admits that such things are not easy because they are woven in such a manner that is not easy to untie. She says:

> And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16)

Dangarembga questions why always and everywhere women are the ones who must make these sacrifices. My mother as well made these sacrifices as explained in the autoethnography;

because even when her arm was broken, she still had to work hard for the family. The woman is to be understood as a whole being, and not just as a physical being. So Dangarembga defends the selfhood of a woman because the self might be the most important archetype and be described as the ultimate pattern of psychological life. It can be characterised by, not only the process of becoming the whole personality, but also by the totality of the personality, conscious and unconscious.

Therefore, from the perspective of the collective unconscious, there is a sense in associating it with that part of a person's unconscious that is common to all human beings in a community, the part that is responsible for a number of deep-seated beliefs and instincts, such as spirituality, sexual behaviour, and life and death instincts. It is unconscious because while not readily available to consciousness, 'it is thought that in moments of crisis the psyche can tap into the collective unconscious' (Fritscher, 2019). This demarcated a major difference between Jung's and Freud's explanations of the unconscious. While Freud believed that the unconscious was the product of personal experiences, Jung held that the unconscious was the product of collective experiences inherited in the genes. Both of them seem to feel that societal and cultural influences were also of seminal importance in imprinting these patterns on the individual.

Thus, Dangarembga is in agreement with Jung that the collective unconscious: 'is formed by instincts and archetypes that are symbols, signs, patterns of behaviour, and thinking and experiencing, that are physically inherited from our ancestors' (Adamski, 2011, p. 563), and supported by this opinion, Dangarembga invites us all to spend time on the task of exploring and attempting to discern the mysteries stored in the collective unconscious, and this will help all to understand women better and perhaps to allow patriarchy to have a glimpse of what it has done to women.

In line with Jung's notion of complexes, Dangarembga agrees with the idea that these patterns of suppressed thoughts and feelings cluster or constellate around a theme provided by some archetype, and hence disturb conscious experience. Complexes by their nature cannot only disturb the memory and conscious performance, but also can interfere with the intentions of the will, Jung 'stressed that complexes are not negative in themselves, but their effects often are', so that it is important to attempt not to eradicate them, which is impossible, but rather to attempt to understand 'the part they play in eliciting behavioural and emotional reactions' (Snider, 2016).

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga addresses several moments of conflicts between men and women: Nyasha versus Babamukuru, Nhamo versus Tambu, Mainini versus Jeremiah and many others. In most of these conflicts, women express how conscious they are about their rights, about their dignity and who they really are. Dangarembga here is in accord with Jung, who argues about his notion of individuation that, in order to become more conscious, one must be able to bear conflict because conflict is inherent in human psychology and is necessary for growth, in so far as 'individuality' embraces 'our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self (Jung, 1972, p. 266). This is very true of Nyasha, who is not afraid to be her true self in a patriarchal society. She was ready to confront and fight a big fight with her own father:

> The atmosphere in that room was growing hostile, the communication tangential. Voices were rising and threatening to break. Scrambling out of bed I knew I had to do something, because you could see that they were out for each other's blood…we could hear them accusing each other and retaliating, condemning bitterly and stubbornly resisting. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115)

What Dangarembga portrays here is in line with Jung's idea of individuation in that it is a process of circumambulation around the self as the centre of personality. An African woman is in the search for wholeness within her psyche. Dangarembga says that an African woman aims at becoming conscious of herself as a unique human being, while at the same time, no more, nor less than any other human being. There is a sense that the African experience is both unique and universal in terms of women's rights and opportunities in the book. This is women's big fight, and they cannot afford to lose it.

Tsitsi Dangarembga, in *Nervous Conditions*, artistically and in a very skilful way maintains that in one's life, there are many internal oppositions as well as those in the outside world. She encourages other women to see that when the opposites clash, then out of this conflict something new and creative can grow. And this 'something' will contribute to a new direction which does not only justice to both sides of the conflict, but which is also a product of the unconscious rather than of rational thought. In doing so, Dangarembga becomes one of the Sub-Saharan Feminists who are pioneering the psychotherapy of women, particularly those whose lives had lost meaning. Dangarembga thinks that such women would become more complete personalities if they could rediscover their own meaning as expressed in their dreams and imaginations. For her, this is a natural process of maturation inherent in the nature of human beings and is not only an analytic process. When the conscious and unconscious have learned to live at peace and to complement one another, then a woman will become whole, integrated, calm and happy.

Dangarembga uses Jung's concept of synchronicity, which is understood as two simultaneous events that occur coincidentally, which are not causally related but result in meaningful connection. Jess Carpenter tried to put it succinctly by examining synchronicity as defined by Jung:

> A meaningful coincidence as something called synchronicity. It's when something meaningful happens that can reaffirm what you've been thinking. Maybe you have a dream about a certain piece of jewellery. Then, the next day, your friend gives you that exact piece of jewellery…Maybe you've had a moment where you bought something you liked. Little did you know that your best friend was at a store across town buying that exact same item. These things happen in sync, and they can even be a message from the 'universe.' (Carpenter, 2019)

This is seen when Tambu with the help of Mr Matimba was struggling to sell her maize in order to raise funds for her fees. From nowhere comes a white lady, Doris by name, who helped her to pay for her school fees; Mr Batimba told Tambu that:

> Doris had commended him for trying to help me, had donated ten pounds towards my school fees. He showed me the money, the crisp clean note. Ten pounds. We never even talked about that much money at home. Now here I was holding it in my hands! The money, the money, no thought for the method. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 29)

What a coincidence; Dangarembga nicely brings this meaningful coincidence of an inner image of Tambu with an outer event, which leads to Tambu seeing the world in a new way, particularly because she responds very deeply, with her whole being, to the meaning of the special event. This synchronicity is life-changing for her in that it offers her a life of choice and opportunity, and interestingly, this is provided by another woman. In a society riven by racially inscribed discourse, it is significant that it is a woman who helps another woman here, regardless of race. It is as if Dangarembga is looking for gender issues to supplant racial ones in this case.

Another good example of Jung's concept of synchronicity is the death of Nhamo which led to the forgotten Tambu being able to get good education in the mission school. Dangarembga speaks the same language as Jung here, noting that when two things occur which are clearly more than a coincidence, but cannot be explained, then this is synchronicity. The opening paragraph of *Nervous Conditions* is a brilliant example of such synchronicity. Dangarembga speaks through the person of Tambu, who notes that he was not sorry that her brother died as it was this death 'that put me in a position to write this account' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1). In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga shows that in life some events happen seemingly beyond the realm of chance without explanation or cause. Such coincidences often occur at emotional times, such as in times of death, grief, love, or any high emotion, and are meaningful only to the person who experiences them. Indeed, they can be difficult to explain to others without the accusation that one is being superstitious or reading too much into things. This is true of what happened to Tambu and also about her brother's death.

Dangarembga uses one of particularly important discoveries in Jung's psychology in explaining psychological processes of her characters, advocating that some are extroverts and others are introverts. As already mentioned in chapter two, for Jung:

> The first attitude [introversion] is normally characterized by a hesitant, reflective, retiring nature that keeps itself to itself, shrinks from objects, is always slightly on the defensive and prefers to hide behind mistrustful scrutiny. The second [extraversion] is normally characterized by an outgoing, candid, and accommodating nature that adapts easily to a given situation, quickly forms attachments, and, setting aside any possible misgivings, will often venture forth with careless confidence into unknown situations. (Jung, 1953/1972, p. 44)

Dangarembga uses Tambu and Nyasha to elaborate these two core psychological processes. While she depicts Nyasha as the one preferring the external world of things, people, and activities, with the extravert orientation finding meaning outside the self, Tambu is depicted as the one who is introspective and finds meaning within, preferring her internal world of thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and dreams. By showing this, Dangarembga argues strongly that the quality and strength of the development of an individual has great impact on one's preferences and behaviours. A supportive environment will facilitate inborn preference development; a contrary environment will impede or retard their natural development. Nature and nurture are both at play.

Dangarembga also can be seen to echo the register theory of Jacques Lacan, whereby he sees the psyche as being divided into three major structures that control our lives and our desires; he called them the three registers of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. He thought of the three as the fundamental dimensions of psychical subjectivity and emphasised that the three have mutual dependence on one another:

> What is Real is misrecognized as Symbolic (for example, as in particular sorts of obsession-neurotic and paranoid-psychotic symptoms, certain meaningless contingent

> occurrences at the level of the material world of non-human objects are viewed as though they were meaningful signs full of deep significance to be deciphered and interpreted) and what is Symbolic is misrecognized as Real (for example, as in psychosomatic-type 'conversion symptoms,' unconscious mental conflicts encoded in language and ideas are suffered as bodily afflictions and ailments). (Johnston, 2018)

What Dangarembga addresses here is that the happenings that are seen in real life to be meaningless and have no importance at all, can turn out to be incredibly significant signs and signifiers of a very deep meaning upon careful analysis. That is why autoethnography in this study is truly relevant since it: 'is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 273). This is what has been attempted in this work. Dangarembga claims that the tendency to ignore maltreatments done to women has always been the source of disastrous effects on the psychological well-being of women, especially in the African context.

Feminist Interpretations of *Nervous Conditions*

As we have seen, feminist literary analysis uses feminist theory to scrutinise different texts with the aim of obtaining social, political, and economic rights and opportunities for both genders. It is an approach that enables one to speculate how feminist writers use literature as a tool to voice women's thoughts concerning poor conditions in order to influence and establish changes in the life of women and men. By using fiction to voice their own experience of reality, some writers can offer a different type of world to the pre-existing one. African feminism emerged to highlight and discuss the specific issues of African women, and to redefine them in contradistinction the stereotypical gender images that the Western world shared. African feminist writers are the microphone speakers for all African women who are unvoiced, subjugated and oppressed in a patriarchal dictatorial world in voicing themes about oppression, rape, double oppression, identity, patriarchy, colour, sisterhood, women's solidarity, racism, sexism, social discrimination and resistance.

Tsitsi Dangarembga, the author of *Nervous Conditions*, is among the foremost writers of African feminism devoted to unveiling the unfair and patriarchal social framework they encounter which considers women as inferior beings, and which sees their social role to be that of submissive wives. Therefore, she describes how education, courage, resistance, and solidarity could bring change to their lives, and create for them a balanced and independent status in women's lives. Dangarembga artistically portrays different forms of oppression exercised over the female characters and seeks to explore how these females face their life obstacles.

The narrator of the story, Tambu, from the very beginning, tries to help her readers understand the story she is narrating as she makes things noticeably clear that:

> My story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion – Nyasha, far-minded and isolated, my uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not in the end have been successful. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1)

From this quote, it is clear that this story is about female characters and about feminism. This story is about how female characters suffer oppression, not only from their husbands and society, but also from their fathers and brothers. The fact that the core term 'rebellion' is stated on the first page of this book is very much a statement of intent.

Such a restricted and constrained life makes women feel that in a patriarchal society, being a female is hard, and being a daughter is even harder:

> It was a long and painful process for me, that process of expansion. It was a process whose events stretched over many years and would fill another volume, but the story I have told here, is my own story, the story of four women whom I loved, and our men, this story is how it all began. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 204)

Dangarembga shows that women in many African societies have no control over their own lives. They are conditioned to be controlled by men. And this patriarchal power traditionally cannot be questioned, because a man is always the controller, dominator, or the head of the family, while a woman is born to be directed. In such an environment, autoethnography offers an opportunity to reflect about the sufferings of women since it acts as both: ‘a reflexive and a collaborative enterprise, in which the life experiences of the anthropologist’ (Reed-Danahay, 2017, p. 145) is analysed in an ongoing manner. There is really no forum wherein a woman can voice her complaint: she is structurally silenced by her social conditioning: there is no one to whom she can complain who is not always already invested in keeping her in a subordinate position. That is why Mazvita Mollin Nyanhongo, in her work *Gender Oppression and Possibilities of Empowerment*, says:

> Babamukuru reacts in a heavy-handed authoritarian way when he thinks that Nyasha and Tambu are challenging him. Babamukuru feels that he has to enforce his patriarchal authority within his family circle; otherwise, he feels his masculinity will be impaired. (Nyanhongo, 2011, p. 127)

Patriarchy was the social ruling system that gave a man the total right to be the ruler and controller of everything and everyone. Any challenge to the system is de facto a challenge to the gendered identity of any man in control, and as such control would be a Jungian archetype, it would be resisted very strongly.

Dangarembga reveals that to be able to control, men receive education while women are supposed to stay at home and train to be good wives. We see this attitude embodied in Tambu’s father Jeremiah, who sarcastically tells his daughter who wants to study: ‘Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15). Dangarembga here challenges society about why the biological sex of a person is used as a determining factor for going to school, or in a wider sense, as a determining factor in the designated roles to be played out in society. Be it feminine or masculine, society does not question the appropriateness or the equity of such categories; it takes things for granted, adopts such systems, and passes them on to future generations. That is why it was hard for me to participate in house chores as explained in my autoethnographical remembrance of when I was a boy. It was internalised by me that this was necessarily female work, and though I was unaware of it, my gendered identity was threatened by this and I reacted accordingly.

From an early age Tambu is treated unfairly because she is a girl. While Nhamo, her brother, is reading his books, Tambu is cooking, cleaning, or working in the field, and that is also the case with her little sisters. She is not excused from doing such work. Everything is set in such a way that Nhamo gets the best attention of the whole family. That is why Tambu sadly makes the painful comment that: 'the needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 12). This makes Nhamo, Tambu's brother, arrogant about his education, because his sister is not allowed to finish her studies.

Again, Nhamo's mother is supposed to boil eggs and sell vegetables so that Nhamo will not be out of school, though that is the year that Tambu is also of school age, but the family circumstances are poor:

> Fortunately, my mother was determined in that year. She began to boil eggs, which she carried to the bus terminus and sold to passengers passing through. (This meant that we could not eat them.) She also took vegetables – rape, onions and tomatoes – extending her garden so that there was more to sell. Business was fair, and good during public holidays, when visitors from as far as Salisbury, Fort Victoria, Mount Darwin and Wankie would be tempted to buy a little extra to take home with them. In this way she scraped together enough money to keep my brother in school. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15)

Everything is about Nhamo. Each and everything are invested in him while very little or nothing is invested in the girls. This is not done in any sense of personal denigration; it is just the norm that the boy is privileged whereas the girl is not; she is supposed to be happy to act as helpmate. The boy will bring success to the family; he will provide some form of financial security; he is their future in the public sphere. On top of that, the energy of the girls and of the mother is used to invest in the boy in the family. But most importantly, Tambu wants to study, and she is capable of doing so, as she says:

> I understood that there was not enough money for my fees. Yes, I did understand why I could not go back to school, but I loved going to school and I was good at it. Therefore, my circumstances affected me badly. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15)

Dangarembga presents adolescent girls trying to object to unfair treatment. The narrative voice is direct and declarative. Harking back to the notion of rebellion in the opening page of the book, Tambu voices her sense that she has the same right to an education as her brother, and the genre of fiction allows her to do this. The sentences are short and direct, and the micro-narrative here encapsulates so much of the gendered issues that are at the core of these novels.

In a society where such a rebellion has no place to happen in reality, the imagination of the author in the novel provides such a place in her fiction. It provides for a world where such equality can be fictively possible. Tambu and Nyasha try hard to express their refusal of being treated unfairly, sometimes successfully, and sometimes not. Nyasha is always under the control of Babamukuru's threats. He always reminds her that he is the only man in that house and never wants anyone else to have a voice in his house. This then becomes a source of many fights during lunch or dinner times:

> You will eat that food. Your mother and I are not killing ourselves working just for you to waste your time playing with boys and then come back and turn up your nose at what we offer. Sit and eat that food. I am telling you. Eat it! (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 192)

In reaction to such threats, Nyasha gobbles down the food on her plate and goes to her bathroom and vomits. Sometimes she will stand up to Babamukuru, questioning what is right and wrong. The vomiting can be seen as a somatic act of rebellion, possibly at an unconscious level, as her body rejects at a visceral level, the conditions under which it is forced to exist. It is a powerful image of revolt and of how deeply the female body can be affected by patriarchy and repression.

Tambu on her side changes by gaining confidence in the mission with the influence of Nyasha, her rebellious cousin. Even though she respects Babamukuru so much, Tambu must openly express her feelings of resistance loudly to Babamukuru: 'I'm sorry, Babamukuru, but I do not want to go to the wedding' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 169). This is the beginning of Tambu standing up for what she believes. She is firm and clear when she tells Babamukuru what she wants. Even though she is harshly criticised and punished by fifteen lashes and two weeks' housework, she is proud of herself and feels free. Moreover, this decision of not attending her parents' wedding is because of her anger at Babamukuru for blaming Tambu's father and mother for being sinners and the cause of the family's bad luck; she said: 'To me that punishment was the price of my newly acquired identity. Nyasha was not impressed when I let her into this secret' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 169). It is interesting that the punishment is a corporeal one, as it is the body of the woman, and its power to create both desire and life, which is often at the core of patriarchal control. Many of the structures put in place to control other aspects of women's lives are there as a way of trying to control the powers of desire and fertility as well, both of which can confer great power on women, no matter how strict the patriarchal controls in a society. As a feminist critic, Dangarembga presents Tambu's open resistance to Babamukuru to prove that:

> Feminist criticism is a political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read. . . [The first act of a feminist critic is] to become a resisting rather than an assenting reader and, by this refusal to assent, to begin the process of exorcizing the male mind that has been implanted in us. (Tandon, 2008, p. 34)

The young girl shows strong resistance to defend themselves from the oppression under which they live. She confronts the oppressor in the manner that will express her deep dissatisfaction and do away with that tendency of accepting everything. This is different from the resistance I showed when my mother was forcing me to do traditionally female work. Though I was a child, I was able to express my feelings, because as a man, I felt it was my right to be heard, even though I was very young.

Poverty in Tambu's family is the main reason for her not being able to attend school. Like many other women, Tambu does not accept her parents' poverty. She knows that the best way to fight poverty is to work hard. She asks her parents' permission to let her plant her own maize on her grandmother's land. On this Tambu says: 'I used to spend many productive hours working with my grandmother on the plot of land she called her garden' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17). Here Dangarembga shows the reality of how most women work hard in supporting families without their contribution being noticed. She also shows that the grandmother was the owner of the land, which is not always the case in most African societies. Dangarembga does that to just how regressive are views that women cannot have the ownership of basic properties like land, and she suggest that such thinking is redolent of the Old Testament.

Dangarembga demonstrates the generational gap between the present and the past. The grandmother and Tambu's mother represent the past and they are of that generation that do not complain about the hard labour they must endure; however, this is not the case with the present generation of Tambu and Nyasha. The grandmother is depicted as 'an inexorable cultivator of land, sower of seeds and reaper of rich harvests until, literally until, her very last moment' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17). The grandmother is not only a mentor but also a teacher who would give Tambu 'history lessons while they work in the fields together, with this message: "endure and obey, for there is no other way"' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 19). In this way, the grandmother as a teacher gives Tambu a different kind of education about her family's mythology and cultural beliefs; the kind of education that could not be found in the textbooks, and quite different from what Nhamo is getting in his prestigious missionary school. Those lessons are absorbed by Tambu and she immediately starts working on the maize plot that used to be her grandmother's land.

This grandmother is also Tambu's first teacher about how to be a hard worker on the land. She tells her the history of women's oppression in Zimbabwe. It is these kinds of lessons that instil in Tambu the spirit of liberation and they become the basis for Tambu's resistance and new identity. She works tirelessly because she knows that it is the only way to go to school, and thus liberate herself. So, education is what Tambu works for, she says:

> Consciously I thought my direction was clear: I was being educated. When I had been educated, I would find a job and settle down to it, carrying on, in the time that was available before I was married into a new home, Babamukuru's great work of developing the family. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 151)

The grandmother also tells Tambu about the source of Babamukuru's success. It is due to the fact that she sent him to the mission school and then he earned a government scholarship. He was able to win that scholarship to South Africa because he was disciplined and worked so hard: 'he was diligent, he was industrious, he was respectful' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 19).

While Tambu worked to raise funds for her school fees, her grandmother's generation would never dream of doing such a thing. For Tambu the gender divide is not a barrier in the same way her mother's generation would see it. Tambu's mother even began to prepare her daughter for disappointment long before she would have been forced to face up to it. To prepare her, she began to discourage her lovely daughter: 'And do you think you are so different, so much better than the rest of us? Accept your lot and enjoy what you can of it. There is nothing else to be done' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 20). Instead, Tambu interprets her grandmother's stories and lectures to mean that she, too, can do anything to which she sets her mind. Dangarembga portrays Tambu as a character who realizes the difference between herself and the older generation, as she says: 'my mother admired my tenacity, and also felt sorry for me because of it' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 20).

Dangarembga's narrative uses the character of Tambu to highlight the complexity in, and potential of, the African female subject. The girls in the novel struggle to understand, create, and accept their identity and the forces that shape their views. Tambu believes that hard work and only hard work will greatly contribute to her liberation.

Dangarembga revolutionises the situation in Zimbabwe by depicting the grandmother owning land. This is quite different from what my sister suggested in my family, namely that only boys should own land because they carry the name of the family, while girls do not. The issue of land in Africa especially in Zimbabwe is an important factor, since land is a major means of production. In most patriarchal societies like my own and that of Tambu's society, once one owns land then one is sure of producing food and the remaining products can be sold to cater for other basic needs in life. The grandmother here owns land; she owns a major means of production. This allows the grandmother, not only avoids patriarchal submission and remains independent, but it also this gives her some power in that society. By highlighting this Dangarembga submits to us that not only men and settlers have the rights of owning the land but also women and natives have a similar right. In this fictive account land equates to power and extra money and the fact that Tambu's grandmother is able to sue the land to send her son to school is proof that gender is in no way an impediment to success: only lack of power, possession and money impedes success. Like the white lady, Doris, who provides money that will help Tambu go to school, the grandmother is another figure of feminist synchronicity on the book.

Tambu benefits from her brother Nhamo's death because it is only after his death that she can start studying at the mission school. Tambu's chance comes as an accident. That is why the death of Tambu's brother is also her starting point of strength and resistance and liberation on a journey to escape and build her identity; and that is why Tambu says: 'I was not sorry when my brother died' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 1). The death of her brother marks the beginning of her recognition. This is indicative of how the struggles against an authoritarian system can make us less human. That is why Wollstonecraft urged her fellow women to labour as ‘by reforming themselves’ they would ‘reform the world’ (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 47). Rather than being sad at the loss of a family member, she now sees this as a chance for some form of liberation. While understandable, I think Dangarembga is making the point that all such struggles exact an emotional price from those who engage in them: ‘feminism basically is a critique of male dominance and of the male point of view which has forced itself upon the world’ (Tandon, 2008, p. 26), with the main aim being to challenge patriarchal dominance and creating a society which sees men and women as complimenting each other.

Babamukuru is highly respected by all members of the family. One can easily see the authority he has over women within the clan, which portrays in a single example how patriarchy creates the conditions for women to be exploited, oppressed, and dominated. In admiration, Tambu regards him ‘as the closest thing a human being could get to God’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 199). Dangarembga here does not only want to show Tambu’s view of Babamukuru as a God, but also the amount of power men have over women. She is perhaps also suggesting that religion is another form of ensuring the power of patriarchy, as we have all been taught to identify God with a male identity so even at the supernatural level; it seems that women are in a secondary position.

This novel proves to be a masterpiece of feminist work that covers a range of different ideas, most of which stem from the belief that society is basically patriarchal; is structured by men; and is there to favour men. In addition to that, most of the Siguake tribe / Zimbabwean / African traditional ways of thinking in many ways support the subordination of women and the neglect or undermining of issues affecting women. This reminds me of my own tribal setting. Man, indeed, was the boss of everything. The domination and subordination of women by men was taken for granted and tolerated. My mother worked extremely hard alone on the farm for six days a week, except on Sundays, while my father was doing those white-collar jobs in the office. She would wake up early in the morning and prepare breakfast before going to the farm, two kilometres away from our home. She walked to and from the farm for a day's work in all the scorching heat. Mine was a culture where male domination in marriage was the practice and the norm.

Dangarembga shows that most men think that women are of no use even after investing in them. They will be taken by men like property. That is what Tambu's father tells Mr. Matimba: '"Have you ever heard of a woman who remains in her father's house?" growled my father. "She will meet a young man and I will have lost everything"' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 30). It is interesting here that the use of pronouns suggests that the woman is really only a unit of value to the man, as opposed to being an independent agent herself. In this tale, the fact that the woman meets a young man and sets out on her own life, is less significant than the fact that because of this, the father will have 'lost everything'. By highlighting all these issues in her novel, Dangarembga calls for this patriarchal order to be destabilised and replaced with a system that values equality for both sexes.

Dangarembga therefore, examines the ideas and beliefs of what culture is like for women as women, compared to what the world is like for men as men. Christa Knellwolf writing about this says:

> A theoretical engagement with the claims and rights of women concentrated on representation, both in the sense of protesting against political disenfranchisement and challenging the insidious power of literature to propagate views about women's inferiority. (Knellwolf, 2008, p. 193)

The supposition here is that there is unequal treatment of men and women, and the ones who are always on the losing side are women not men: as in the case of the father losing everything when his daughter moves on with her life. Literature, religion, social structures all represent women as being in a secondary position, and as Knellwolf rightly observes, literature has been part of such ideological structuration in terms of gender. The value of this book is that it offers an alternative in the voice of Tambu who sees the way life is structured but is incredibly determined not to allow herself to be cast in this subordinate position.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga describes a culture in which women are treated differently only because they are women. Her strong belief is that such treatment is cultural and therefore it is open to change, because this is not simply 'the way the world is and must be'; instead, she sees that this is the way that the world has been constructed, and as such, it is possible for it to be deconstructed, and she sees fiction as a mode of agency in this endeavour. Dangarembga sees that many women are desperate, like Tambu's mother who says, about the role of womanhood in a patriarchal culture: '"Easy! As if it is ever easy"' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 16). Here, Tambu is speaking to herself, but also to the reader who is the audience for her philosophical thinking. She is very aware of her embedded position in society and is also aware of what needs to be done to change this position. Dangarembga looks to a different culture as possible, and values moving towards that culture; and feminism consists of activism, individually and in groups, which attempts to empower personal and social change towards that more desirable future culture – a culture which advocates or supports the rights and equality of women and men alike.

The title, *Nervous Conditions* comes from a statement Dangarembga got from Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) which says: 'The condition of "native" is a nervous condition' (Fanon, 1963, p. 20). In *The Wretched of the Earth,* Fanon wrote about the psychosocial effects of colonization on communities. Dangarembga uses this title to write about psychosocial effects of patriarchy on individuals. She provides a Global South women's narrative that unveils problems faced by postcolonial women as they ponder the realities of the class systems in their societies. Through the stories of protagonists in the Novel the title 'Nervous Conditions' becomes significant in Dangarembga's agenda of dramatizing the issues of oppression and gender.

This significance of the title can be seen throughout the novel especially in the recurring events of the arguments between Nyasha and her father, Babamukuru. Each and every moment Nyasha begins to respond back to her father, not only do the characters in the story begin to feel nervous but we, the readers, do as well. This is seen in the iconic scene, already mentioned, when Babamukuru asks Nyasha why she came home very late from the dance. Nyasha behaves disgracefully according to Babamukuru and the anxiety begins to build. Nyasha becomes furious and exclaims: ‘I wasn’t doing anything wrong!’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 114) Nyasha’s mother becomes nervous and intervened in support of her daughter: ‘‘Yuwi, yuwi, yuwi!’ Maiguru moaned. ‘Babawa Chido, do you want to kill me with your anger? She is only a child, Babawa Chido, a child’’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 114). Babamukuru becomes furious and says: ‘You must learn to be obedient,’ Babamukuru told Nyasha and struck her again. ‘I told you not to hit me,’ said Nyasha, punching him in the eye’ (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115). Babamukuru under his patriarchal power has always been violent to his wife and daughter. Nyasha is saying no to this patriarchal hegemony. She deeply believes that:

> this irrepressible violence is neither sound and fury, nor the resurrection of savage instincts, nor even the effect of resentment: it is man recreating himself. I think we understood this truth at one time, but we have forgotten it—that no gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. (Fanon, 1963, p. 21)

And the situation becomes nerve racking for everyone in the house. After all this, Tambu describes:

> The atmosphere in that room was growing hostile, the communication tangential. Voices were rising and threatening to break. Scrambling out of bed I knew I had to do something, because you could see that they were out for each other’s blood. I woke up Maiguru, did not have to explain much because we could hear them accusing each other and retaliating, condemning bitterly and stubbornly resisting, all the way down the passage. Maiguru climbed out of bed, and put on her dressing-gown and slippers, muttering all the while about her nerves and how the inmates of her house would be the death of her. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 115)

Dangarembga is to a great extent, and in skilful ways, capable of making everyone nervous; Nyasha, Babamukuru, Maiguru, Chido, Tambu and even the reader. She is able to achieve this through the way she makes Tambu take control of the description of Babamukuru throughout the novel. Tambu's detailed description enables the reader to know that anyone who does something against Babamukuru's strong values will anger Babamukuru. Therefore, the dialogue between Babamukuru and Nyasha and the language that Tambu uses to describe this particular situation reveal the significance of the title, *Nervous Conditions*.

Dangarembga is one of those women in non-western cultures who feels misrepresented in the universalising tendencies of Western mainstream feminism. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga shows that it is high time to follow the good example given by a Black American feminist, Barbara Smith, who came up with an approach which embraces all as she comments:

> And not only am I talking about my sisters here in the United States-American Indian, Latina, Asian American, Arab American – I am also talking about women all over the globe. . . Third World feminism has enriched not just the women it applies to but also political practice in general'. (Smith, 1984, p. 27)

It is this different position from that of Western feminism that resulted in Postcolonial Feminism; the approach that allowed integration of the ideas of indigenous and other Global South feminist movements rather than grouping them together and defining them only by their gender and not by social class, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference. This is why Fanon discusses the western culture and the post-colonial together as he says: 'let us add, for certain other carefully selected unfortunates, that other witchery of which I have already spoken: Western culture' (Fanon, 1963, p. 19). In this sense, she could be seen as an intersectional feminist in a way, as her postcolonial condition has affected the type of feminism that she is developing.

Dangarembga shows that the tendency of maltreatment can be traced a long way back to the times of her grandmother when: 'the white wizard had no use for women and children.

He threw my grandmother and her children off his farm' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 18), with the use of the term 'wizard' again implicating notions of the supernatural with patriarchal power. If religion and magic are governed by men, then is it seemingly natural that women should be governed by men as well. This novel is one of the works that shows how women were treated unjustly and this is only one of the old examples taken to pinpoint the shortcomings in the treatment of women. Her point is that literature, as well as being a vehicle often used to enforce a male hegemony through ideological structures, can also be a liberating force for those who have been repressed through either race, or gender, or both. She sees literature *per se* as not necessarily normatively ideological; rather that it can be used for ideological purposes both by a ruling group, but also by a more insurrectionist group.

As was discussed in chapter two, Habib notes that from the earliest literature, women have also been written as subversively powerful figures, and she mentions Sappho's poetry, Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata*, 'which depicts women as taking over the treasury in the Acropolis, a female chorus as physically and intellectually superior to the male chorus' and of course the Wife of Bath in the *Canterbury Tales* (Habib, 2005, p. 667). She could also have mentioned Sophocles' *Antigone* wherein one woman defies a whole nation in her need to bury her dead brother. Tambu is part of this lineal female heritage of dissent. She reveres her grandmother in terms of how she was a hard worker, not in the home, but in the field which she owned, thereby challenging patriarchy every time she stepped into it: 'my grandmother, who had been an inexorable cultivator of land, sower of seeds and reaper of rich harvests until, literally until, her very last moment' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 17). Dangarembga tries to challenge the view of looking at women as people who cannot do anything without men. She submits to us all that women are well able to do a lot more than we think and that they have the courage to resist male dominance. Tandon, in the work *Feminism – A Paradigm Shift*, writes that 'feminism basically is a critique of male dominance and of the male point of view which has forced itself upon the world' (Tandon, 2008, p. 26). It exists to ask questions of assumptions like the one that sees a woman as not being able to exist without the help of a man. Every description of Tambu's grandmother is a feminist statement as, by her ownership of land, and by her vigorous working on that land and in the production of crops from that land, she is deconstructing this patriarchal assumption. That is why when enough is enough, Maiguru tells Babamukuru plainly:

> let me tell you, Babawa Chido, I am tired of my house being a hotel for your family. I am tired of being a housekeeper for them. I am tired of being nothing in a home I am working myself sick to support … I am sick of it Babawa Chido. Let me tell you, I have had enough! (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 172)

The final lines are a *cri de coeur* from someone who has decided, both emotionally and intellectually, that her position in society and in the family is no longer one that she can silently tolerate, and her voicing of this is highly significant. Nyasha is very rebellious against unfair treatment from the very beginning of the story.

She holds a different position and never accepts or believes in the stereotype that society has presented to her about women under the umbrella of cultural traditions and values that were set to limit women's freedom. She sees no logic in this, and never believes in gender-roles that make women do everything. As Simone de Beauvoir says: 'all oppression creates a state of war. And this is no exception' (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 849). Nyasha's conversations with her father always end up in fights because she will never accept to be what she calls 'anyone's underdog':

> You've got to have some conviction, and I'm convinced I don't want to be anyone's underdog. It's not right for anyone to be that. But once you get used to it, well, it just seems natural, and you just carry on. And that's the end of you. You're trapped. They control everything you do. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 117)

Nyasha's rebellion is not only against her father and society, but more broadly against patriarchy. Her observation about the normalisation of inequality is well-taken; her point is that as soon as things become normal (through habit, obedience to norms and cultural acquiescence), then one is very reluctant to question the *status quo*. This use of ideology to encourage people to see inequality and disenfranchisement as normal is central to all political structures wherein inequality is part of the structure. In the quotation above, she refers to patriarchy as 'they', meaning that what she says about her father is also true of many other men. Their attitude towards women is in many ways the same.

As we have seen, Mary Wollstonecraft criticised these stereotypes of women in her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), by arguing that men are pretending to be clever by considering women as emotional and instinctive, and by saying that women should aspire to the same rationality prized by men, when in fact women have been educated and acclimatised to valuing the body over the mind, and appearance over substance. She says that 'women are everywhere in this deplorable state', for 'in order to preserve their innocence, as ignorance is courteously termed, truth is hidden from them, and they are made to assume an artificial character before their faculties have acquired any strength' (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 46). Like Wollstonecraft, Dangarembga wanted to revolutionise society because in her thinking the time is ripe for women to receive the same social privileges as men; Tambu should be able to avail of the opportunities of education just like Nhamo. In her thinking, there is no way that this type of change would ever make the world worse. Dangarembga insists that it is important for men and women to become equal members of society because this will only make things better and women will be better prepared to contribute more productively to modern society. This idea is founded on Wollstonecraft's demand to see women as 'a part of the human species' (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 47). Wollstonecraft 'believed that women should enjoy social, legal, and intellectual equality with men and drew support from the work of progressive social philosophers' (Castle, 2007, p. 94), because for a long time they were deprived of their basic rights such as education and financial independence. Not only that, but they also had to struggle against a male ideology which condemned them to virtual silence and obedience, as well as with a male literary establishment that poured scorn on their literary endeavours. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga shows that women in many parts of the African continent are still controlled, not only by the male characters, but also by society. The Eurocentric world of which Wollstonecraft wrote has developed and progressed in terms of gender-equality; there is now a legislative and ideological awareness of gender-equality in societies, albeit with still a lot more progress to make, and of course this differs from country to country. African societies, riven by colonialism and the postcolonial social and economic consequences of this period, have been slower to develop, though again, experiences are different in different countries and social class is also a discriminating factor in the individual experience of women. However, and keeping in mind the danger of sweeping comparisons, I think it is fair to say that in terms of education, Wollstonecraft is applicable to contemporary experiences across Africa where girls are still not educated to the same level as boys, so the comparison between Wollstonecraft and Dangarembga is one that holds true despite their chronological distance. Women, who had knowledge, were seen in both societies as being dangerous to the prevailing patriarchal concerns, and as such needed to be marginalised.

Dangarembga instantiates this in the story of Lucia, who has a very difficult time, as society does not respect her, she is even called 'witch' and cursed by her society as they say:

> look at that Lucia! Ha! There is nothing of a woman there. She sleeps with anybody and everybody, but she hasn't borne a single child yet. She's been bewitched. More likely she's a witch herself'. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 126)

Having no children is enough of a burden for her, and on top of that all fingers are pointed at her by society. Poor Lucia was accused for both her barrenness and her witchery. It is also interesting to contrast the pejorative use of the term 'witch' with the almost hagiographic use of 'wizard' referred to earlier. In terms of their respective roles, these two terms are similar, referring to a person who has some sort of occult knowledge or power beyond that of the ordinary. However, the male version of this term is venerated, whereas the female is denigrated.

The only substantive difference between them is that of gender, and it is a point subtly made by the author through the naive narrator.

Another woman who undergoes such maltreatment from society is Maiguru. Because of her education, society passes a premature judgement on her. With sadness Maiguru expresses:

> Don't you remember, when we went to South Africa everybody was saying that we, the women, were loose.' Babamukuru winced at this explicitness. Maiguru continued 'It wasn't a question of associating with this race or that race at that time. People were prejudiced against educated women. Prejudiced. That's why they said we weren't decent. That was in the fifties. Now we are into the seventies. I am disappointed that people still believe the same things. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 181)

The conflation of education with sexual promiscuity, of which Maiguru speaks, is one which is often used as a way of shaming women who are educated, and of making it seem that they are not 'proper' women in society. Maiguru's sadness that such prejudices maintain in her own present is a real index of the difficulties that women have to overcome in such patriarchal societies. This example is especially pertinent as she is just describing labels that were, and are, being, put on her by men, but Babamukuru 'winced' at hearing it. It is interesting that he did not wince at the discrimination; rather, he winced at its being voiced.

The fear of educated women is something of which Wollstonecraft wrote with some feeling some 200 years earlier, albeit in a different cultural context. Dangarembga reveals how in her contemporary society, these patriarchal ideologies and gender roles are instilled in children from the early days of their lives. She depicts the situation when Babamukuru comes home to visit. Women and girls would always be busy preparing a special dinner and doing other tasks like carrying the water-dish in which all men would wash their hands. Now boys like Nhamo and her cousin Chido would take advantage of that and annoy Tambu purposely by also washing their hands:

> I had to carry the water-dish in which people would wash their hands… Making a considered and perhaps biased decision, I knelt first in front of Babamukuru, which was a mistake because he wanted me to let his uncle Isaiah, our eldest surviving grandfather, wash first. I knelt and rose and knelt and rose in front of my male relatives in descending order of seniority, and lastly in front of my grandmothers and aunts… Eventually the last younger aunt washed her hands and I rose to depart, whereupon my father asked me why I had neglected to offer Chido the water, so I went down on my knees in front of him. Naturally Nhamo took advantage of the situation to wash his hands too. (Dangarembga, 1988, pp. 40-41)

Bodily position is significant here as there is a postural subservience at work: being on one's knees is a metaphor for inequality and disempowerment, but in this case; it is an actual bodily position that is enforced on Tambu. Even though women are to prepare food, their places are in the kitchen and they are left to eat what remains! They are not allowed to join men: 'in the kitchen we dished out what was left in the pots for ourselves and the children' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 41). This can be compared to what happened in my tribe where men of the clan ate together 'kubwalu' while women ate the remaining in the kitchen. Dangarembga claims that women are always seen as the second sex or the other to whom no priority is given, no matter what good they do for their men, and this actually affects them emotionally and intellectually as Tambu expresses: 'thinking about it, feeling the injustice of it, this is how I came to dislike my brother, and not only my brother: my father…in fact everybody' (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 12).

When Babamukuru thinks about the prosperity of the family, he never thinks of Tambu but of Nhamo, and it is he who is chosen to go and complete his studies at the mission. This was also true to my family as not enough efforts were made to educate my elder sister because it was seen as taking a risk educating girls just in case, she gets pregnant. And from autoethnographic perspective, and drawing from my own experience, it is easier to understand why in other parts of African people behave in the same way. Tambu's existence is not seen at all. Nobody thinks to educate a woman as Nhamo tells his sister pejoratively. All this contributes to making Tambu hate her brother, and not feel sorry for his death. The death that makes a change in her life and gives her the opportunity to replace him and go to mission school. It is the death of her own biological brother which becomes a steppingstone to her success. But was it necessary for that to happen as a '*conditio sine qua non*' for a girl to get a chance of education? Dangarembga here shows that boys are empowered with education so that they may perpetuate dominance over women, because education is power. Kate Millett says that: 'if knowledge is power, power is also knowledge, and a large factor in their subordinate position is the fairly systematic ignorance patriarchy imposes upon women' (Millett, 2016, p. 42), which again harks back to the fear of educated women who would be able to translate knowledge into the achievement of more power.

In Tambu's tribe, men are meant to dominate her life no matter the circumstances. As a result, she will do everything that is asked of her, obey the orders, and never question what is told to her. Her life is constantly ruled by men, and even the birth of her new brother threatens her future. This happens especially when Babamukuru starts to think about the future of the baby boy, he says:

> For one thing, there is now the small boy at home. Every month I put a way a little bit, a very little bit, a very little bit every month, so that when he is of school-going age everything will be provided for. As you know, he is the only boy in your family, so he must be provided for. As for you, we think we are providing for you quite well. By the time you have finished your Form Four you will be able to take your course, whatever it is that you choose. In time you will be earning money. You will be in a position to be married by a decent man and set up a decent home. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 180)

This nearly affects Tambu's education when she is looking forward to going to study in the Young Ladies College of the Sacred Heart. Babamukuru is already savings to make sure that the baby boy may not lack fees. As for Tambu, she must get ready for marriage. Opportunity for her is severely limited by gender, and this situation has been so normalised that Tambu is expected to agree with it and, indeed, to acquiesce in her own limitation. Her brother's life-development will be expanded by education; hers will be limited by marriage.

By exposing this maltreatment of women, Dangarembga submits the refusal of women to accept the cult of masculine virility and superiority that reduces women to a second sex, a sex object and a submissive other. Like de Beauvoir, Dangarembga strongly believes that: 'one is not born, but rather becomes, woman' (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 14), and she feels that this must change. She writes so that those who read this may understand the real situation and most importantly, that they may change upon understanding. Dangarembga rejects stereotypes and examines women's lives closely and argues for their fair representation and treatment. Her book tries to make the conditions of women less nervous and more assured. This book speaks to how one person, with drive and help, can change her life and it can act as a beacon for others in similar positions. Dangarembga here agrees with Frantz Fanon in the view that:

> In an underdeveloped country every effort is made to mobilize men and women as quickly as possible; it must guard against the danger of perpetuating the feudal tradition which holds sacred the superiority of the masculine element over the feminine. Women will have exactly the same place as men, not in the clauses of the constitution but in the life of every day: in the factory, at school, and in the parliament. (Fanon, 1963, p. 202)

Dangarembga wishes that postcolonial societies should do away with the propensity for perpetuating the unhealthy tendencies that we all fought against in terms of undermining others by claiming and assuming the so-called masculine superiority over feminine. The world will be a better place when women will have the same place as men in the society.

For Kate Millett, the term 'politics' refers to power-structured relationships or arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another. Dangarembga writes the novel narrating life in Rhodesia before independence, explaining the sexual politics of her society, and showing how much freedom women have been deprived of by the structures of that society, and how they survive under the control of men. Dealing with the same theme, Millet wants women to have their freedom and do away with the old ways of being controlled by men. She says:

> What I want is outrageous: all the possible pleasures of freedom. I want to go beyond the old system of possession, the notion of person as a thing owned. Like so many of us now, I'm experimenting with life, trying to get it right, to do it better, aware how often we're merely rationalizing — but still trying to create a new kind of social existence. (Millett, 2016, p. 123)

Millet like Dangarembga brings challenge to the norm and insists here that it is a shame to see that women cannot enjoy the pleasure of freedom. People like Nyasha, Mainini, Maiguru are portrayed as controlled by the old system of possession. Dangarembga however portrays their continuous struggles to get things right and to do things better in life; their gradual move from silence to forms of utterance. For the purpose of getting a new way of social existence Lucia, Nyasha and Maiguru show active resistance towards this patriarchal notion of looking at women as possessions owned by men.

Every human being naturally would want to enjoy freedom. Depriving women of their freedom as men do and creating a situation that places them under the control of men, is unacceptable. *Nervous Conditions* is a masterpiece feminist work because in it, Dangarembga, like Simone de Beauvoir, challenges those tendencies that 'define man as a human being and woman as a female: every time she acts like a human being, the woman is said to be imitating the male' (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 85).

Therefore, Tsitsi Dangarembga in *Nervous Conditions* addresses the issue that patriarchal ideology works to keep women and men in traditional gender roles to maintain male dominance. Women are oppressed by patriarchy in all spheres of life, and patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept so. A woman is objectified and marginalised, defined only by her difference from male norms and values, such that in every domain where patriarchy reins, a woman is the other.

Chapter Four: Psychoanalytic and Feminist Interpretations of *Purple Hibiscus*

Psychoanalytic Interpretation of *Purple Hibiscus*

Psychoanalytic theory argued that people's behaviour is heavily influenced by the unconscious part of their brain:

> We have learnt from psycho-analysis that the essence of the process of repression lies, not in putting an end to, in annihilating, the idea which represents an instinct, but in preventing it from becoming conscious. When this happens, we say of the idea that it is in a state of being 'unconscious', and we can produce good evidence to show that even when it is unconscious it can produce effects. (Freud, 1915, p. 166)

Part of the value of psychoanalytic theory is that it allows us to analyse seemingly unspoken and unimportant events as having a real significance in a narrative. Fiction is a vehicle whereby the unconscious can be a little more easily accessed, and hence its effects can be more easily understood. In the analysis of this book, the motivations, and unspoken thoughts of the characters, provide us with access to unconscious motivations, and allow for deeper meaning of the book to be derived. This chapter will look at Freud's ideas and read them into the text in order to liberate a fuller range of meanings from the test.

This is exactly what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie does in *Purple Hibiscus* by depicting Papa Eugene as someone who keeps his family under many kinds of suppression, repressing all their ideas, instincts, and desires, and making them behave in a strange way and swallow whatever they want to say or express. Kambili outlines their situation: 'I lay in bed after Mama left and let my mind rake through the past, through the years when Jaja and Mama and I spoke more with our spirits than with our lips' (Adichie, 2003, p. 14).

Adichie presents the contrast between silence and speech as an important motif throughout the novel, to the point that it becomes a recurring theme or trope. The titles of two of the novel's sections deal with this theme as well: 'Speaking with our Spirits' and 'A

Different Silence.' Adichie associates silence with the fear of Papa Eugene that his wife and children always experience. This is different from the silence of my father in my autoethnographic experience when he was quarrelling with my mother. That was a silence motivated by his guilty conscience due to what he was doing to her. The daughter of the family especially, who never wants to anger her father, rarely speaks, because she is afraid. She and her brother Jaja have a 'language of the eyes' (Adichie, 2003, p. 305), speaking only with glances, as they are rarely left alone together and never mention Papa's abuse aloud. This is contrary to the situation in Aunt Ifeoma's house, which is always filled with laughter, joy and singing, and family members there speaking their mind. Like Tambu's grandmother, she is an exemplary female figure in the life of the protagonists, demonstrating that the *status quo* of gender power relations is not the only way that things can be. With Ifeoma's and Father Amadi's encouragement, Kambili and Jaja slowly start to speak more comfortably and confidently. Jaja then turns his silence which is no longer a fearful one into a weapon against Papa Eugene by refusing to speak to him:

> Papa was staring pointedly at Jaja. "Jaja, have you not shared a drink with us, *gbo*? Have you no words in your mouth?" he asked, entirely in Igbo…' *Mba*, there are no words in my mouth,' Jaja replied. 'What?' There was a shadow clouding Papa's eyes, a shadow that had been in Jaja's eyes. Fear. It had left Jaja's eyes and entered Papa's. 'I have nothing to say,' Jaja said. (Adichie, 2003, p. 13)

Adichie shows that Aunty Ifeoma is also silenced by losing her job, but all these moments of silence depicted in the novel are also powerful messages on the importance of freedom of speech. Eugene's wife and children live under a harsh and severe patriarchal domination, and they have a lot deposited in their hearts, but the situation does not allow them to speak out. That is why Lois Tyson, expanding on this point, points out that 'human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware' (Tyson, 2006, pp. 14-15).

It is also very significant that the patriarchal figures on these books are given the title 'Papa', which means that their structural role in the family and in society is now intrinsically connected with their own sense of identity. In a very literal sense, these men embody the Lacanian notion of the 'Name-of-the-Father', which in patriarchal society has 'identified his person with the figure of the law' (Lacan, 2006, p. 230). This is an example of how grounded issues of patriarchy have become in the world of the novel and by extension, the real society that is being represented in the book. A 'Eugene' without the 'Papa' before his name is very much less than he would like. His role and is identity are indistinguishable and this will in part explain the violence through which he enforces his will over his family in issues of religion and morality, as well as the fear he has of a different symbolic order (the traditional one) wherein his role as a strong Christian may not be as valued. Of course on of the core prayer in the Christian tradition, the *Pater Noster* (*Lord's Prayer*) or *Our Father*, reinforces patriarchy, as Lacan noted when one of this 'lamented uncompleted projects was a project engaged in relating the function of the Name-of-the-Father to the study of the Bible' (Lacan, 2006, p. 742).

What Tyson says is that such kinds of desires, fears, needs, and conflicts in a human being are often ignored or indeed repressed, but also that many people are simply unaware of them; yet they can strongly influence people's behaviour. However, when people know themselves and their mistakes, they stand a better chance of understanding their entire culture; this is also the claim of autoethnography because such kind of awareness are: 'not only complex and constitutive but also meaningful phenomena that taught morals and ethics, introduced unique ways of thinking and feeling, and helped people make sense of themselves and others' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 274). That is why Adichie suggests that a positive change in women who are mostly frightened into silence and are facing censorship can be achieved by allowing them to exercise freedom of speech and expression. By so doing, Adichie proves that psychoanalysis principally is a therapeutic exercise and not mainly a literary theory like other literary theories, as attested by Keith Green in the second chapter:

> However, it has a long and complex relationship to practices of reading and writing and to the assumptions that we make about why people write and how texts affect their readers. (Green, 2001, p. 143)

Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus*, therefore, is using the therapeutic project of healing society as she demonstrates that literature, and the criticism of literature, employs psychoanalysis in scrutinising the motives of both authors and characters through the Freudian lens in order to draw a deeper meaning from the text, and thus create a society which is better than before where the freedom and dignity of every individual is respected.

Freud himself wrote a paper entitled, ‘Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming’ (1907), which viewed works of art as the Imaginary satisfactions of unconscious wishes:

> The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously—that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion—while separating it sharply from reality. Language has preserved this relationship between children’s play and poetic creation. It gives [in German] the name of ‘Spiel’[‘play’] to those forms of imaginative writing which require to be linked to tangible objects and which are capable of representation. (Freud, 1908, p. 421)

Adichie here writes with a purpose. The tone of the book aims at communicating a message in a performative art: a message of women’s freedom from the patriarchy. She allows her readers to create meaning as they interact with the text, because meaning and value are transactional and dialogic.

Her writing is sophisticated but not pretentious, and it carries an undertone of cordiality and respect for her own society and her own people. That is the reason, Selden says, that Freud sees the works of art as the Imaginary satisfactions of the unconscious wishes and the work; he speaks of how Freud sees the literary work ‘as a symptom of the artist, where the relationship between author and text is analogous to dreamers and their “text”’ (Selden, et al., 2005, p. 153). So, if what is seen is only a symptom, then to get the Real or the truth one must dig down to be able to reach that truth, because truth resides below the surface. Therefore, events and texts are to be interpreted. As Lacan notes, language has the ability to allow ‘a glimmer of signification [to] spring forth at the surface of the Real, and then causes the Real to become illuminated with a flash projected from below’ (Lacan, 2006, p. 468).

Adichie writes to fight against the corruption of the Nigerian government as part of her contribution to the fight for freedom. She portrays Papa’s and Ade Coker’s struggles to represent freedom of the press and to protest the censorship and corruption of the Head of the State:

> Of course, Papa told us, the politicians were corrupt, and the Standard had written many stories about the cabinet ministers who stashed money in foreign bank accounts, money meant for paying teachers’ salaries and building roads. But what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was a renewed democracy. Renewed Democracy. It sounded important, the way he said it, but then most of what Papa said sounded important. (Adichie, 2003, pp. 24-25)

On the other hand, Aunty Ifeoma, who is a university lecturer, also speaks her mind and criticises those in power. All these criticisms against the government receive a response from the government. Papa’s factories and *The Standard* are shut down; Ifeoma is sacked from the university; and Ade Coker is assassinated. These supressed struggles also signify the struggles of all who are fighting against unjust systems like the patriarchal system, and Adichie thus suggests to all women that their fight is not going to be easy. The response of those in power is going to be brutal, but there is always hope. In the novel, the hope for political freedom only comes when the Head of State dies in the final section of the book, and democracy is tentatively restored. This is a message of hope that Adichie gives to all women, namely that patriarchal power will eventually collapse and peace, harmony, equality and justice will prevail.

Freud’s ideas of unconscious forces have become immensely helpful in shedding light on the puzzling connection between authors and readers in terms of psychoanalytic concepts like sexuality, fear, and death as instances of the operations of id, ego and super-ego. *Purple*

Hibiscus is written in such a way that repression and resistance are among the prominent themes in the novel. Due to the cruelty of Papa Eugene, all family members live in extreme fear that make them repress their feelings and desires, and this repression influences how they behave. That is why each person in Eugene's house shows resistance in his or her own way. While Jaja refuses to speak to Eugene, Kambili takes the painting of Papa-Nnukwu, who is considered a heathen by Eugene, and subsequently she is beaten half to death by him, ending up hospitalised. Mama Beatrice and Sisi show their resistance by collaborating on poisoning Eugene, as Mama Beatrice admits herself: 'I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor' (Adichie, 2003, p. 290). In terms of the importance of sexuality in the lives of women, *Purple Hibiscus* tells of Kambili who falls more deeply in love with Father Amadi. Looking at *Purple Hibiscus* through a Freudian lens allows a reader to gain a fuller and more complete understanding of the silence and speck of the characters and to also see the importance of what is unsaid as much as what is said.

Freud developed an interpretive strategy in his dream analysis, claiming that, since human beings learn through the same symbols used in our dreams like jokes, fairy tales, poems, myths and folklore, so the recurring dreams and traumatic experiences in his patients could be interpreted in terms of what they were trying to say about the life of the person involved. This is why he coined the notion that dreams were the royal road to the unconscious. Therefore, there is a need for interpretation as each symbol is heavily disguised. Freud defines a dream as the 'disguised fulfilment of a repressed wish' (Freud, 2017, p. 136).

Adichie presents the prohibitions that Eugene placed on the lives of Jaja and Kambili, and the effects on them as he attempts to rule their lives. His comments to them are direct: 'I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but God will protect you' (Adichie, 2003, p. 62). Even when he allows them to go to the house, he gives them strict orders: 'Kambili and

Jaja, you will go this afternoon to your grandfather's house and greet him. Kevin will take you. Remember, don't touch any food, don't drink anything. And, as usual, you will stay not longer than fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes' (Adichie, 2003, p. 61). That is when they are given an opportunity of being their true selves. While Kambili and Jaja were not allowed to go to their grandfather, my parents were happy to take me to our homestead so that I might know and value our culture. Kambili and Jaja become more confident, more outspoken and more willing to speak their minds: they stop using that 'language of the eyes' (Adichie, 2003, p. 305). Adichie considers this as a liberation, a freedom, and a healing from that moment when 'Jaja and Mama and I spoke more with our spirits than our lips' (Adichie, 2003, p. 16).

Adichie is engaged in a therapeutic exercise to help her own society heal from behaviours that undermine women. As a matter of fact, psychoanalysis has a long and complex relationship to practices of reading and writing, and to 'the assumptions that we make about why people write and how texts affect their readers' (Green, et al., 2001, p. 143). Green continues to attest that the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature can be looked at in different ways, though we can summarise it as the question of what is being subjected to the analytic process, and what repressed meaning we thereby hope to uncover (Green, et al., 2001). *Purple Hibiscus* has a complex combination of themes such as religion; politics; gender; oppression; colonialism and Nigerian politics; religion and belief; family; traditions; violence; and freedom versus tyranny. To be able to deal with all these themes, one needs a vast critical category, which employs many approaches like psychoanalysis. Shoshana Felman, speaking about this, explains that we normally tend to see psychoanalysis as the active practice performed upon the passive text:

> While literature is considered as a body of language – to be interpreted – psychoanalysis is considered as a body of knowledge, whose competence is called upon to interpret. Psychoanalysis, in other words, occupies the place of a subject, literature that of an object. (Felman, 1982, p. 5)

This is how psychoanalytic theory came to be used in the study of literature, and how it has proven to be an especially important tool in helping to provide a meaningful literary interpretation in the field of literature.

Adichie portrays Papa Eugene in the novel as someone who demands what he wants and demands that it be done instantly. When Eugene's father, Papa Nnukwu, does not want to convert to Christianity, Eugene punishes his father by refusing to allow his children to visit him: 'I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but God will protect you' (Adichie, 2003, p. 62). The id is primitive and needy; it cannot deny itself. According to Freud, the id is the only component of personality that is present from birth. It is the aspect of personality that is entirely unconscious and includes the instinctive and primitive behaviours. For Freud, the id is instinctual and incapable of self-denial: the ego 'develops out of the id and it pacifies the drives, by offering itself as a substitute for what must be denied the id' (Green, et al., 1996, p. 148). Adichie shows that Papa Eugene has inherited this behaviour from his father since both are rigid in terms of getting what they want. Papa Nnukwu as well does not like to change to Christianity, he is ready to die rather than being overtaken by his own son.

Freud claims that, the id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality, because as new-borns, it allows us to get our basic needs met. As already noted in chapter two, 'the id exists at birth and is the source of psychic energy and the instincts, the most important of which are sex and aggression' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 5). Adichie shows this element of the id as being present at birth to reinforce the view that Eugene's behaviour is inherited from his father: as the old proverb has it: 'like the father like the son'. To support the idea of the id and what has been shown by Adichie in the novel, Aniket Jaaware says:

> the id… contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, which is fixed in the constitution – above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate in the somatic

> organization and which finds their first mental expression in id in forms unknown to us. (Jaaware, 2001, p. 176)

Freud believed that the id is based on the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants, and needs. If these needs are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state of anxiety or tension between the contrary impulses that co-exist in the id, 'without cancelling each other out or diminishing each other' (Freud, 1933a, pp. 73-74). One of the successes of Adichie's writing is the way in which she portrays her characters in a very human manner, for example in the case of Kambili who falls in love with Fr. Amadi. Her love is so deep so true, and she cannot resist telling Fr. Amadi:

> 'I love you.' He turned to me with an expression that I had never seen, his eyes almost sad. … I wanted our lips to meet and hold, but he moved his face away. 'You are almost sixteen, Kambili. You are beautiful. You will find more love than you will need in a lifetime,' he said. And I did not know whether to laugh or cry. He was wrong. He was so wrong. (Adichie, 2003, pp. 275-276)

Adichie here shows in the novel that the id wants whatever feels good at the time, with no consideration for the reality of the situation. When a child is hungry, the id wants food, and therefore the child cries, and we recall Hansen's claim that: 'when the infant is hungry, the id seeks immediate gratification to restore the infant to a state of comfort' (Hansen, et al., 1982)..

While Kambili as a girl and teenager is overwhelmed by love under the influence of the id, Fr. Amadi, acts in a different way under the influence of the ego which is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality and is in contact with the outside world. Freud holds that the ego develops from the id and ensures that the impulses of the id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world, and the demands of the super-ego, and so it functions in the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind. Freud claims that normally:

> there is nothing of which we are more certain than the feeling of our own self, of our own ego. This ego appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else. (Freud, 1933a, p. 724)

Psychoanalysis has shown this feeling of certainty to be 'deceptive', and suggests that in fact 'the ego is continued inwards, without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious mental entity which we designate as the id.' However, Freud acknowledges that:

> Towards the outside . . . the ego seems to maintain clear and sharp lines of demarcation.' In other words, the conscious ego is continuous with the unconscious mind; but it is still fairly clearly distinguished from the external world. (Freud, 1933a, p. 724)

Adichie depicts Fr. Amadi as a grown-up who is guided by that part of the id that has been modified by the direct influence of the external world and considers the implications of everything, in other words, the ego which 'decides which needs will be satisfied and in which order' (Thompson, 2003, p. 383).

So, what Adichie says here is that the ego is the decision-making component of personality and that operating under the reality principle, the role of ego is to mediate the conflict between the id and the super-ego. It finds some outlet for the instincts of the id and at the same time, it must restrict them within the demands of super-ego. It always strives to satisfy the id's desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways in time and place. Freud says that the ego is often caught between the id and the super-ego and it must compensate for the demands of the external world, and that it serves three masters: 'the external world, the super-ego, and the id' (Freud, 1933a, p. 110). The reality principle considers the consequences of an action by weighing the costs and benefits of the action before deciding whether to act upon or abandon impulses, and it deals with the demands of the id and super-ego: 'the ego operates by the reality principle' (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6).

Purple Hibiscus educates, liberates, and corrects how people should behave. It is a novel that allows people to understand that other people have needs and desires, and that sometimes being impulsive or selfish can hurt us in the long term. This reminds me of the times of my boyhood when I pretended to dislike house works because I was a boy, I ended up getting strokes from my mother who never entertained that kind of behaviour. It is the ego's job to meet the needs of the id, while taking into consideration the reality of the situation. Freud makes the analogy of the id being a horse while the ego is the rider. The ego is like ‘a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse’ (Freud, 1923, p. 15). What Adichie shows here is that the ego works by reason, whereas the id is chaotic and unreasonable. Moreover, the ego discharges tension created by unmet impulses through the secondary process, in which the ego tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the id’s primary process: hence Kambili is acting according to her desire and the needs of her id; whereas Fr. Amadi is being ruled by his ego as he is aware of the inappropriateness of any romantic liaison with the young woman.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie presents to the readers different characters whose behaviour can easily be compared. On one side we have Eugene, whose moral standards and sense of right and wrong are remarkably fixed and rigid. Eugene’s personality encompasses all his internalised moral standards and ideals. Eugene’s standards and expectations are extremely high. He needs his children always to be first in the class: ‘the girl has one head, too, she does not have two. So why did you let her come first?’ (Adichie, 2003, p. 47). He wants his children to be highly disciplined, to pray and go to confession frequently. They should never waste time by talking to people after school, so he sends the car to pick them up just on time:

> Kevin always had the Peugeot 505 parked at the school gates right after the bells rang. Kevin had many other chores to do for Papa and I was not allowed to keep him waiting, …. Once, Kevin told Papa I took a few minutes longer, and Papa slapped my left and right cheeks at the same time, so his huge palms left parallel marks on my face and ringing in my ears for days. (Adichie, 2003, p. 51)

Due to his demands, he puts Kambili under pressure so that she behaves in an abnormal way towards her fellow girls. Her fellow girls laugh at her and call her names. Kambili is disturbed and tells lies which will have to take her to a confession box:

> ‘Chinwe just wants you to talk to her first,’ Ezinne whispered. ‘You know, she started calling you backyard snob because you don’t talk to anybody. She said just because

> your father owns a newspaper and all those factories does not mean you have to feel too big, because her father is rich, too.' 'I don't feel too big.' … 'I'm not saying you feel too big, I am saying that is what Chinwe and most of the girls think. Maybe you should try and talk to her. Maybe after school you should stop running off like that and walk with us to the gate. Why do you always run, anyway?' 'I just like running,' I said, and wondered if I would count that as a lie when I made confession next Saturday. (Adichie, 2003, p. 51)

Here, Eugene, as a representation of patriarchy, is ruling Kambili's life and literally choosing where she can be and where she cannot be; it is a classic example of control. His is a combination of patriarchal ego and super-ego with Kambili as the unit of control. His control over her is central to his own sense of identity as he is 'Papa', and he has to be a 'Papa' to someone in order to validate his own sense of patriarchal worth. His restrictive control over Kambili's movements is as much about his own sense of the present as opposed to his sense of her future. The Symbolic is made possible because of the acceptance of the 'Name-of-the-Father', those laws and restrictions that control both desire and the rules of communication: 'It is in the *Name-of-the-Father* that we must recognize the basis of the Symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law *[italics original]* (Lacan, 2006, p. 230). To retain this sense of selfhood, he is willing to do anything as losing that will mean a loss of something essential to the self.

Aunty Ifeoma on the other hand is very balanced in the way she deals with her children, so that they are not behaving under the influence of fear or any pressure. They become their real selves and speak their mind. Ifeoma's ego is strong. In these characters, Adichie shows the interplay in people's behaviour in order to demonstrate that the super-ego's function is to control the id's impulses, especially those which society forbids, such as sex and aggression. It also has the function of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply realistic ones, and to strive for perfection 'rather than pleasure or reality. It develops because of the need to control the aggression that results when needs are not immediately satisfied' (James & Gilliland, 2003). By depicting her characters in that way, Adichie shows the readers that in a healthy person, the ego is the strongest force, as that it can satisfy some of the needs of the id, and not upset the super-ego, while still taking into consideration the reality of every situation.

Adichie prepares characters that confirm that the mind is the most powerful influence on an individual's actions: 'the mental processes are essentially unconscious, and those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and part of the whole psychic entity' (Freud, 1969, p. 22). That is why Freud introduced the threefold division of mind into conscious mind, pre-conscious mind and unconscious mind, with the conscious mind being the one of which we are most aware. *Purple Hibiscus* presents Papa Nnukwu as a person with a strong conscious mind. Despite his poverty and lack of education he is conscious and self-aware. The conscious mind is also known to be the gate-keeper of the psyche. If someone tries to present us with a belief that does not match our belief system, then our conscious mind will filter that belief. The same will happen when someone criticises us or calls us names; our conscious mind will filter this statement to suggest that it is not true or applicable to us. When Eugene wants Papa Nnukwu to convert to Christianity, he refuses despite all the promises. Again, Aunty Ifeoma is very conscious when Eugene uses material things to make her do what he wants her to do. Ifeoma attests:

> Have you forgotten that Eugene offered to buy me a car, even before Ifediora died? But first, he wanted us to join the Knights of St. John. He wanted us to send Amaka to convent school. He even wanted me to stop wearing makeup! I want a new car…But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things. (Adichie, 2003, p. 95)

That is how successful Adichie has been in showing in the above two examples the conscious mind in operation in *Purple Hibiscus*. The conscious mind filters that which does not match our belief system, and that is why it is called the gatekeeper of the psyche. Adichie speaks extensively about the treatment of children and how it can affect their behaviour because, like Freud, she believes that our childhood events, especially the traumatic and unpleasant ones, are the ones that influence the unconscious. The unconscious is that part of the mind that stores all our experiences, especially those experiences of a traumatic or unpleasant nature.

Adichie then portrays how Eugene mistreats his own family and punishes them in a very brutal way:

> He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm…I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back. (Adichie, 2003, p. 102)

What Adichie shows here is that such treatment of children affects their life so much that the experiences remain in the unconscious mind, because the unconscious mind is a reservoir of repressed feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that are outside of our conscious awareness. The fact that we repress them does not mean that they disappear because energy is never lost; it is simply transformed. He believed that our greatest destructive and creative achievements originate from forces denied their natural release (Burns, 2006, p. 70). Hence, blocked instinctual drives or repressed memories appear at the surface as non-existent but in reality, they are there. In this case, Adichie sees a danger in such treatment of others because they will end up repressing things which will eventually escape in unusual or displaced ways as 'we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to "play out" . . . our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress' (Tyson, 2006, pp. 12-13).

That is why Adichie agrees with Freud in arguing that in order to keep all of this conflict buried in our unconscious, we develop defences: selective perception, selective memory, denial, displacement, projection, regression, fear of intimacy, and fear of death, among others. Adichie shows how the children react by developing such defences, living in fear, and regression. It is this unconscious aspect that exerts the most influence upon our behaviour, and all the answers to our behaviour and actions lie in this hidden, inaccessible area that makes up four-fifths of the mind. From the depiction of her characters in *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie's methods attempt to demonstrate the powerful influence the unconscious part of the mind has on an individual's behaviour.

Purple Hibiscus provides some hints of the Oedipus complex when a boy expresses feelings of desire for his mother, while feeling a sense of jealousy and anger towards his father. We see in the novel Jaja showing anger towards his father because of his mother. He defends his mother who advises Kambili who is sick to eat ten minutes before mass. The narrator tells:

> 'Eat a little corn flakes, quickly,' Mama said, almost in a whisper. 'You need something in your stomach to hold the Panadol.' … I was almost done eating it when the door opened and Papa came in. 'What are you doing, Kambili?' I swallowed hard. 'I…I… 'You are eating ten minutes before Mass? Ten minutes before Mass?' 'Her period started and she has cramps—' Mama said. Jaja cut her short. 'I told her to eat corn flakes before she took Panadol, Papa. I made it for her.' (Adichie, 2003, pp. 101-102)

Jaja decides to take the whole burden to defend his mother from the anger of his father. Without any sign of showing any desire for his mother in both circumstances, this element of defending his mother is also clear when his father is poisoned. Though the mother admits that she is the one who poisoned her husband, again, Jaja stands on the side of his mother and not of his father by saying that he did it, and was taken to prison:

> The policeman came a few hours later. They said they wanted to ask some questions. Somebody at St. Agnes Hospital had contacted them, and they had a copy of the autopsy report with them. Jaja did not wait for their questions; he told them he had used rat poison, that he put it in Papa's tea. They allowed him to change his shirt before they took him away. (Adichie, 2003, p. 291)

Adichie shows an associated sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex in order to defend a parent of the opposite sex. According to Freud, on the occasions when the child experiences a loving, healthy, non-traumatic relationship, and if parental attitudes are neither excessively prohibitive nor excessively stimulating, then the stage is passed through harmoniously. Adichie thus warns that parents must be careful because according to Freud, contrary to that, in the presence of trauma, infantile neurosis is likely to occur which is also an important forerunner of similar reactions during the child's adult life. In this case, an over-identification with the mother causes the young man to sacrifice his own liberty in order to be validated by her.

In her efforts to heal this society, Adichie employs Carl Jung's idea that sees modern man as being as sick and in constant search of the soul. Clarifying this idea, Victor Daniels says that when Jung was reacting to the mass psychology of fascism and communism, he said that: 'mankind is in great danger, and the only solution is to become more conscious. The only real danger that exists is man himself. He is the real danger' (Daniels, 2003). Adichie presents Eugene as a modern man who sees Papa Nnukwu's ways as old fashioned. He looks down on village people and their traditional ways, which is why he screams 'at a wrinkled old man in a torn white singlet and a wrapper wound round his waist "What is Anikwenwa doing in my house? What is a worshiper of idols doing in my house? Leave my house!"' (Adichie, 2003, p. 70). The old man asks some particularly important questions of Eugene:

> 'Do you know that I am in your father's age group, gbo?' the old man asked. …. 'Do you know that I sucked my mother's breast when your father sucked his mother's?' 'Leave my house!' Papa pointed at the gate. Two men slowly ushered Anikwenwa out of the compound. He did not resist; he was too old to, anyway. But he kept looking back and throwing words at Papa. 'Ifukwa gi! You are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave!' (Adichie, 2003, p. 70)

In Lacanian terms, Eugene's Symbolic order is that of Christianity: this is the system which gives him sense of identity and he will enforce the rules of this system over anything else as by so doing, he is validating his own position and sense of identity. The natural connections spoken of above, mentioning the mother's breast are supervened by those of culture, though it is interesting, again in this patriarchal argument, that the role of women is not to be part of the discussion, but rather to give nourishment and succour to the men involved. The woman's breast here is a signifier of natural connection between Papa Nnukwu and Eugene's father – the two women involved are not named as individuals at all. Here Adichie makes her pint by implication very cleverly.

Adichie, like Jung, is in support of the idea of integration. He makes it clear as he says: ‘by the psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconsciousness’ (Jung, 1921, p. 797). Jung believed that it is important to integrate opposites such as masculine and feminine; thinking and feeling; science and spirituality. These are the things that Adichie fights for by depicting the character of Ifeoma as a balanced person. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Aunty Ifeoma’s habits combine the two extremes, as she is a Catholic who incorporates Igbo songs in her prayers and does not judge her father for his traditional beliefs. Ifeoma’s priest is the open-minded, light-hearted Nigerian Father Amadi, who embraces both the old ways and the new and is a very positive figure in the positive changes that occur in Jaja and Kambili as they are exposed to beliefs other than Papa’s. It is interesting that he is a symbol of a more enlightened form of patriarchy, a different kind of ‘Papa’ (Father) figure who can be a role model for a new kind of symbolic order.

Purple Hibiscus speaks of the things that are down to earth which are experienced by real human beings. This concurs with Jung’s idea of collective unconscious; about which he says ‘is common to all men, since its contents can be found everywhere’ (Jung, 1972, p. 103). Despite the hard time they get from their father, Adichie portrays Eugene’s children as still being in search of wholeness within their human psyche. This is also true of myself because when I now look at the way I was being defiant to my mother, I was in fact searching for wholeness within myself and desiring to be recognised as a distinctive person. It was frustrating to see that I was not understood so I was ready to undergo pain as a price for the change I wanted:

> Autoethnographers also write about epiphanies, those remarkable and out of the ordinary life-changing experiences that transform us or call us to question our lives. In the process, epiphanies can motivate trauma, confusing us and moving us to sadness and discomfort, and sometimes resulting in a more satisfying life. (Adam, et al., 2015, pp. 26-27)

For Jung, to become more conscious, one must be able to bear conflict because conflict is inherent in human psychology and is necessary for growth; to quote Jung 'we could therefore translate individuation as "coming to selfhood" or "self-realization"' (Jung, 1972, p. 266). Adichie draws the character of Jaja as someone who becomes defiant towards his father and can be seen as an example of the Oedipus Complex in action. He feels that he can do what he feels and wants, and not what his father feels. He wants to be himself. He wants to be free and so he has always been fighting for freedom. That is why his reaction upon the news of his father's death, is interesting. His sister Kambili reacted by saying: 'God knows best,' … 'God works in mysterious ways', but Jaja's response was different:

> Jaja laughed. It sounded like a series of snorts strung together. 'Of course, God does. Look what He did to his faithful servant Job, even to His own son. But have you ever wondered why? Why did He have to murder his own son so we would be saved? Why didn't He just go ahead and save us?'. (Adichie, 2003, p. 289)

This is very far removed from the accepting attitude of Eugene: it is hard to imagine him asking those questions about his own religion, and here Adichie is demonstrating the gradual evolution of patriarchal positions.

There are many internal opposites as well as those in the outside world. If the opposites clash, then out of this conflict something new and creative can grow. And this 'something' will contribute to a new direction which does not only justice to both sides of the conflict, but also which is a product of the unconscious rather than of rational thought. Again, Adichie shows how Jaja refuses to comment on the new product which comes from Eugene's industry. Eugene asks him:

> 'Jaja, have you not shared a drink with us, gbo? Have you no words in your mouth?' he asked, entirely in Igbo. … 'Have you nothing to say, gbo, Jaja?' Papa asked again. 'Mba, there are no words in my mouth,' Jaja replied. 'What?' There was a shadow clouding Papa's eyes, a shadow that had been in Jaja's eyes. Fear. It had left Jaja's eyes and entered Papa's. 'I have nothing to say,' Jaja said. (Adichie, 2003, p. 13)

In these examples, Adichie shows that Jaja wants to be himself, and if he is to express an opinion then let it be his own, and not that which is pushed by others. Jaja aims at becoming conscious of himself as a unique human being, while at the same time, no more, nor less than any other human being. The process of individuation was used in pioneering the psychotherapy of the middle-aged and elderly, particularly those whose lives had lost meaning. Jung thought that such people would become more complete personalities if they could rediscover their own meaning as expressed in dream and imagination. Adichie concurs with Jung that individuation is a natural process of maturation, inherent in human beings, and is not only an analytic process. When the process of individuation is complete, that is when the conscious and unconscious have learned to live at peace and to complement one another, then they become whole, integrated, calm and happy. That is why in this research I critique at my biography, and I combine this personal introspection with what is happening in my society in order to fully understand why we act and feel the way we do. Autoethnography is an appropriate approach in this research since it is 'a combination of autobiography and ethnography whereby what is being retroactively written is about the past experiences that are carefully selected' (Freeman, 2004).

Jung realised that we could gain insights into why we act and feel the way we do by understanding the processes. *Purple Hibiscus* also looks at the effects people's behaviour has on themselves and on a society. There are some people who are extrovert, who prefer the external world of things, people, and activities, and with the extrovert's orientation find meaning outside the self. A good example of such a person is Aunty Ifeoma. She is active and charming:

> Aunty Ifeoma and her children arrived while I was still changing out of my church clothes. I heard her loud laughter, and it echoed and went on for a while. I did not realize it was my cousins' laughter, the sound reflecting their mother's, until I went out to the living room. (Adichie, 2003, p. 92)

On the side of those called the introverts, Adichie depicts Mama Beatrice as an example. These are those who find meaning within, preferring their internal world of thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and dreams. They are introspective, what Jung terms as 'a hesitant, reflective, retiring nature that keeps itself to itself' (Jung, 1953/1972, p. 44). Jung clarified that the psychological types are not constructed socially through interaction with one's family, parents, culture, and other external influences, but rather they are inborn. Adichie thus presents them here to insist that the quality and strength of the development of an individual has great impact on his or her preferences. So, a supportive environment will facilitate an inborn sense of preference development; similarly, a contrary environment will impede or retard their natural development.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie shows women's responses to the traumatic experiences they undergo in their daily lives due to domestic violence, sexual assault, impoverishment, wounded emotions, oppression of tyrannical leaders and that of social forces. *Purple Hibiscus* underscores strategies employed by silenced African women to manage oppression from patriarchy or societal inflicted suffering. Such kinds of anguish allow trauma to coexist among women's psyche and exposes its victims to endure a longer duration of suffering.

Feminist Interpretations of *Purple Hibiscus*

When one looks at the position and image of women in *Purple Hibiscus* as a man, one will end up with the shallow assumption that this novel presents women as a sadly oppressed group with no power; however, a feminist reading would give one different result. But what is reading as a woman, or what is sometimes called, a feminist reading? Can a person read as a woman after being conditioned, generally, to read as a man? In answer to that, Jonathan Culler, in his *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, addresses these issues and forms several interesting opinions. Culler's answer is brief: 'to read as a woman is to avoid reading as a man, to identify the specific defences and distortions of male readings and provide correctives' (Culler, 1982, p. 54). Culler's opinion is clear: to read as a woman requires that one should approach a work from a feminist vantage point, and therefore, not regard the work from the purview of patriarchy.

It is this mode reading that will be the focus, as we explore different aspects of Chimamanda's *Purple Hibiscus*, from the feminist point of view. This reading will interrogate received ideas which suggest that men are always superior to women, and that with the power they have given themselves, they can do whatever they want to women without consequence.

This reading will analyse the motivations of principal female characters that are thoroughly developed within the novel. On top of that my personal experiences will be compared to what other people have experienced in a wider family of African society. This is to conform to what autoethnography claims that we often write about moments remembered to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life. These would not only the lived experiences but also, they would be about times of existential crisis 'that forced a person to attend to and events after which life does not seem quite the same' (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 275)

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* evokes a text and story by Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, in the opening sentence of the novel as she begins the novel by saying that: 'Things began to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the *étagère*' (Adichie, 2003, p. 3). In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe explores the cultural conflict in the encounter of Igbo traditions and Christian Doctrine. Like *Things Fall Apart*, *Purple Hibiscus* is set in postcolonial Nigeria, and it also explores the cultural conflict between Christian Catholic traditions and Igbo traditions. While Papa Eugene venerates and represents Christian traditions, his father, Papa Nnukwu, believes otherwise, and insists on following the path of African Indigenous Religions' ways of worship.

The postcolonial feminist framework as used here, refers to the spiral of cultural histories, economic structures and political systems that continue to overlap in time and space of continents and countries ever since modern colonial contact zones were initiated. Adichie, as a postcolonial feminist, does not only seek to analyse how the history of colonial contact zones continues to be lived out in the narrative of *Purple Hibiscus*, but also, she pays attention to voices of resistance, collaboration and mimicry, to the forces of colonialism and its legacies on the one hand and assessing its intersectionality of race, gender and class on the other hand.

Dominance, or to be much more precise, colonialism as used here, does not only refer to the domination of the land, or the occupying of the physical or geographical space of the other by dominating superpowers and their allies; it also refers to the occupation of the spiritual, cultural and psychological space of the Other, which outlives the historical event. That is why postcolonial feminists wage a war of liberation by using the same strategies that colonised countries used. When a culture is established, it is not easy to change it, but it is possible. This is what is happening with the patriarchal culture.

In his book, *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngugi speaks of a cultural bomb. He holds that:

> The effect of a bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. (Ngugi, 1986, p. 3)

He describes the effect of colonialism as a cultural bomb, which teaches its survivors to hate themselves and their cultures, admiring rather that of their colonisers. A good example of this is Eugene, who adores everything associated with the white man and hates everything that is African. The fact that he desires the language of worship and liturgy to be English, suggests that in his judgment, God must be white, and English must be a superior language. Eugene declares openly to his children: 'I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but God will protect you' (Adichie, 2003, p. 62), and when the children are to go to his father, he tells them: 'Kambili and Jaja you will go to your grandfather's house and greet him…Remember, don't touch any food, don't drink anything.' (Adichie, 2003, p. 61). Eugene hates anything African and cherishes everything European. Reinforcing the same idea of a cultural bomb, an equivalent term was coined which is epistemic violence 'a term coined by postcolonial feminist Gayatri Spivak Chakravorty to refer to the destruction of indigenous languages, culture and thought that accompanies colonial conquest' (Buchanan, 2000, pp. 446-5). In *Purple Hibiscus*, the character of Papa Eugene is seen as a person who has swallowed the cultural bomb and has been shattered into a thousand pieces. He is the product of colonial violence, thereby unable to know himself. His ego-ideal is that of a white colonial subject and the ideal image of himself that he sees in the Lacanian mirror is essentially himself as white in terms of power, and social and symbolic capital.

Adichie presents the antagonist to Papa Eugene's values, Aunty Ifeoma, who resists both patriarchy and colonialism. She is a female, middle-class intellectual. The novel's feminist stance is also articulated by other, supposedly submissive, female characters like Mama Beatrice, Kambili and Sisi, who in a subtle and often silent way, resist Papa Eugene's violent behaviour. Aunty Ifeoma's daughter Amaka, seems to have internalised a higher level of postcolonial feminist liberation than that of her mother. This is seen by her refusal to undergo baptism, if the requirement to take a confirmation name, that is either Western or biblical still applies. She tells father Amadi: '"I told you I am not taking an English name, Father," she said' (Adichie, 2003, p. 271). She gives her reasons to Father Amadi: 'When the missionaries first came, they didn't think Igbo names were good enough. They insisted that people take English names to be baptized. Shouldn't we be moving ahead?' (Adichie, 2003, p. 272). Father Amadi and her mother are of the opinion that she should take the name and then ignore it thereafter, but Amaka is firm, and she wants the whole of unreasonable tradition scrapped. By so doing, Adichie seeks to analyse the intersection of gender, class, postcoloniality and the imagination of liberation theology. She strongly makes the case that Papa Eugene is the representation of patriarchal and colonial legacies and that Aunty Ifeoma and other female characters together with Jaja stand firm across different modes and strategies of resistance. Amaka is an example of someone who is looking at different role models: she would not have the level of resistance she has were it not for Ifeoma; in many ways, Ifeoma is the Lacanian ideal-ego through which Amaka comes into being.

Adichie presents a complex reality story of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* that takes place in Enugu, a city in post-colonial Nigerian society. The main character is Kambili Achike who is the narrator of the story which is centred on an Igbo family living in the south eastern part of Nigeria in the late twentieth century. *Purple Hibiscus* details a woman's ordeal, and how she struggles to break free from her husband's abusive grip. In public, the husband, who is also known as Papa, is highly respected as a fighter for human rights and truth while in private, he oppresses and bullies his wife, Beatrice, who is also known as Mama, and children Kambili and Jaja at home.

Purple Hibiscus is a coming-of-age novel that speaks of a girl called Kambili, a painfully shy girl who develops into a self-assured woman able to manipulate social, economic and political structures to her own advantage, and who is capable of escaping from the hues of domestic violence perpetuated by patriarchy represented by her own father, Eugene. Mr Eugene Achike is a staunch Catholic, who beats his wife regularly. He brutally imposes his extremist religious views on his wife and children in the name of religion, tradition, and culture. The children, Kambili and her brother Jaja, excel at school but are not happy at home.

Eugene Achike is a strict authoritarian whose strict adherence to Catholicism overshadows his paternal love. He punishes his wife, Mama (Beatrice Achike), and his children when they fail to live up to his impossibly high standards. Eugene's religious fanaticism and overbearing hand results in imprisoning and weakening those whom he professes to love the most. One example of his violence seen when he punished his daughter for sleeping in the same house with a heathen who is his father and his children's grandfather:

> He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. … I saw the moist steam before I saw the water. I watched the water leave the kettle, flowing almost in slow motion in an arc to my feet. The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding, I felt nothing for a second. And then I screamed. 'That is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin. You burn your feet,' he said. (Adichie, 2003, p. 194).

Eugene was really determined to do such a cruel thing to his daughter because he did that while holding the girl with one wide hand, pouring the water carefully with the other while the girl sobbing 'I'm sorry! I'm sorry!' until the water stopped. This regime of prolonged abuse goes unchallenged until at the very end of the novel, when Mama takes agency of her destiny and that of her children, a turning point that must be situated within the traditional conception of womanhood and the multiplicity of identities that she embodies. In the end, the most decisive actions come from the least expected sources and his life ends up in his wife's hands. It is classic abuse in that while he is enacting a cruel and evil punishment on his daughter, she is saying that she is sorry: the level of control is very pervasive here.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie carefully constructs her female characters to reflect the dappled personalities, forced or self-willed, that define an African woman in post-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa. While Beatrice is depicted as a dependent stay-at home mother of two children, a 'typical' African woman, her widowed sister-in-law, Aunty Ifeoma, is presented as a university lecturer, unconventional', 'free-spirited', self-dependent woman, an ideal the African woman of the 21st century. Janet Ndula, discussing this topic, claims that: 'all these qualities speak to the way [Ifeoma] parts with the social constructs of her society for her gender' (Ndula, 2017, p. 38). In this we see that while traditional and Western ideologies coexist in Africa to the extent that the latter has considerable influence over the former, the features displayed by Aunty Ifeoma's character are normally credited to co-existence, to the disadvantage of the basic African traditions. While I am quite aware of the valuable contribution of Western education, I also understand the anger caused by looking at it as a liberating force, as it has always robbed the African cultural canon of entitlement to its own rights as a sanctioned system of beliefs with its own flaws, truth and beauty.

Therefore, Adichie argues that the qualities seen in Aunty Ifeoma's character are representative of an African woman, and the education she got from the West is only complementary to her African values. For example, Ifeoma is daring enough to question Eugene's aloofness towards his father. Ifeoma is assertive; she challenges even her father, Papa Nnukwu, when he is regretting sending his son to the mission school. Ifeoma challenges him by asking:

> 'Did I not go to the mission school, too?'
> 'But you are a woman. You don't count'
> 'Eh? So I don't count? Has Eugene ever asked about your aching leg? If I do not count then I will stop asking if you rose well in the morning' (Adichie, 2003, p. 83).

This is Aunty Ifeoma, a very assertive and straightforward woman who never spares any one when they are wrong. Ifeoma also shows an 'unconventional' stance on marriage. She says: 'when a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head' (Adichie, 2003, p. 213). Ifeoma does not believe that a woman should endure an abusive marriage. So, for her if things don't work in a marriage, it is better to accept the fact because: 'sometimes life begins when marriage ends' (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). This is also true to my mother when she found that things were not working, she decided to fight the issues in her life without fear.

Purple Hibiscus demonstrates the position of women according to the societal duties and activities assigned to them. This also signifies the power structure in that society. Adichie embodies women in this novel as being excluded from certain crucial economic and political activities, as their roles as wives and mothers place them in the position of being poor, and they are always working for a very minimal profit. All this is associated with power-deficit they experience in contrast to the males in the society. We see this when the family goes to their home village of Abba for Christmas, when Eugene wanted to please everyone in the village by offering them food during the holiday. Women of the clan are gathered there, and their office is the kitchen:

> Mama and Sisi hardly did any of that cooking; they simply stayed around and provided more salt, more Maggi cubes, more utensils, because the wives of the members of our *umunna* came over to do the cooking. They wanted Mama to rest, they said, after the stress of the city. And every year they took the leftovers—the fat pieces of meat, the rice and beans, the bottles of soft drink and maltina and beer—home with them afterward. We were always prepared to feed the whole village at Christmas, always prepared so that none of the people who came in would leave without eating and drinking to what Papa called a reasonable level of satisfaction. (Adichie, 2003, p. 56)

Adichie shows that the basic pillar of patriarchal power within the African context is always giving women the minimum amount of agency and makes them concentrate on that; in this way the main project continues, namely that of silencing, suppressing, and controlling women by making them focus on an exceedingly small world and on issues which will never trouble patriarchal power. This is what Ngugi says about those who dominate others:

> The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against the collective defiance [of the colonized] is the cultural bomb. The effect of a bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. (Ngugi, 1986, p. 3)

Therefore, patriarchy, like all other oppressors, uses the same ideological strategies to dominate women. Adichie crafts her story showing female subjects pursuing female interests in her effort to, not only empower her fellow African woman, but also to structure her story in order to contest male power with its violent manifestations.

Adichie aims at inspiring the female struggle against male domination in the gender-power discourse. This is what Mary Kolawole, in her work ‘Womanism and African Consciousness’ says that: ‘patriarchy, tradition, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and gender imperialism, all combine to act against the African woman’s self-assertion’ (Kolawole, 1997, p. 25). What Kolawole addresses here is that women in Africa are behaving the way they do because of the numerous forms of suppressions imposed on them.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie challenges the *status quo* and to a great extent has been not only been able to subvert the male order but also, she has largely been a voice highlighting women's oppression and interrogating unjust societal structures. Since women's voices have been greatly marginalised, Adichie figures female characters in *Purple Hibiscus* as speaking subjects with the strong purpose of redefining the woman's exercise of authority and seeking entry into the public sphere. In this way she fits very well to be the 'voice of the voiceless'.

Adichie shows that oppression towards women is not supported by all male characters. There are some good men who do not act as oppressors; they contribute in supporting women in their struggle and they protect women with their efforts. These are good men of good reputation who cannot bear to see such oppression towards women happening in front of their eyes without intervening. A good example of such characters is Jaja. When Eugene sees his children, Jaja and Kambili, looking at the painting of their grandfather, Papa Nnukwu, who is Eugene's own biological father, he becomes furious because his father according to him is a pagan or a heathen. The painting belongs to Kambili (the daughter), but Jaja (the son) in order to protect his sister from the anger of their cruel father, claims that the painting belongs to him:

> 'What is that? Have you all converted to heathen ways? What are you doing with that painting? Where did you get it?' Papa asked. 'O nkem. It's mine,' Jaja said. He wrapped the painting around his chest with his arms. 'It's mine,' I said… 'Who brought that painting into this house?' 'Me,' I said. 'Me,' Jaja said. If only Jaja would look at me, I would ask him not to blame himself. Papa snatched the painting from Jaja (Adichie, 2003, pp. 209-210)

Adichie shows that Jaja, Eugene's biological son, begins to talk back to his father as a sign of disagreement and not accepting his father's violent behaviour towards women (his daughter and wife). So Jaja decides to stand up to him for the purpose of being protective towards his sister and mother. After the death of Eugene, the post-mortem shows that he was poisoned.

Beatrice, Eugene's wife, admits that she, with the help of Sisi, is the one who poisoned her own husband:

> The phone started to ring. It rang for a long time…Mama finally answered it. … 'They did an autopsy,' she said. 'They have found the poison in your father's body.' She sounded as though the poison in Papa's body was something we all had known about… 'Poison?' I said. Mama tightened her wrapper…when she spoke, her voice was just as calm and slow. 'I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witchdoctor.' For a long, silent moment I could think of nothing. My mind was blank, I was blank (Adichie, 2003, p. 290)

Again, as already noted, Jaja, knowing that it is his mother who poisoned his father, decides to cover up for his mother by saying that he is the one who poisoned his father:

> Jaja did not wait for their questions; he told them he had used rat poison, that he put it in Papa's tea. They allowed him to change his shirt before they took him away. (Adichie, 2003, p. 291)

Adichie does not want to fall into the trap of making the generalisation of condemning all men because of their gender as evil people who desire to oppress women. She makes a distinction by showing that there are some idealistic men who can contribute to the fight against such oppressive behaviours of patriarchy.

The confrontation between Jaja and his father can also be seen in Jaja's refusal to give any comment on the newly produced drink from Eugene's factory, as Kambili says:

> 'Jaja, have you not shared a drink with us, Igbo? Have you no words in your mouth?' he asked, entirely in Igbo. A bad sign. He hardly spoke Igbo, and although Jaja and I spoke it with Mama at home, he did not like us to speak it in public. We had to sound civilized in public, he told us; we had to speak English. Papa's sister, Aunty Ifeoma, said once that Papa was too much of a colonial product. She had said this about Papa in a mild, forgiving way, as if it were not Papa's fault, as one would talk about a person who was shouting gibberish from a severe case of malaria. (Adichie, 2003, p. 13)

When one is bitten by an infected mosquito that releases parasites that multiply, spread and colonise the body; one gets malaria. Kambili describes her father as a person shouting nonsense from a severe case of malaria. Eugene is bitten by a patriarchal mosquito, whose parasites continue to multiply, spread and colonise the system of the African society; this can as well be regarded as a cultural bomb, because it is not only threatening but also destroys the society in a manner similar to that of malaria. Patriarchal domination suffocates women's potential and as a result of that it does not only slow down the development of Africa but rather it makes the entire society stagnant.

Adichie shares the experiences and sufferings of an African woman in day-to-day life. She shows what living as a single mother is like in an African setting. She does this by portraying Auntie Ifeoma, a widowed single mother with four growing children, who is a struggling university lecturer. Aunty Ifeoma uses a faded dining table with mismatched chairs and dining plates, drives a cracked van and lives in an old, congested apartment that does not have enough bedrooms for her children:

> Aunty Ifeoma asked Obiora to set the table. 'Today we'll treat Kambili and Jaja as guests, but from tomorrow they will be family and join in the work,' she said. The dining table was made of wood that cracked in dry weather. The outermost layer was shedding, like a molting cricket, brown slices curling up from the surface. The dining chairs were mismatched. Four were made of plain wood, the kind of chairs in my classroom, and the other two were black and padded. Jaja and I sat side by side. Aunty Ifeoma said the grace, and after my cousins said 'Amen,' I still had my eyes closed. (Adichie, 2003, p. 119)

The description above shows that Ifeoma lives a simple life with her growing children, but she tries on her own to struggle to make her children happy; she does not pretend to be westernised. My mother on the other hand also got consolation in her children. She worked hard so that her children might have a better future. Ifeoma epitomises indigenised Christianity by singing Igbo hymns, and she holds to her cultural values as she attends masquerade festivals and does not hesitate to visit their father's supposedly pagan compound and brings her own children to spend time with their grandfather. Adichie creatively shows that, although Ifeoma is struggling, her intellectual class-position allows her to resist her brother's use of material power to force his version of Catholicism upon his dependents, as well as resisting public pressure to remarry. In

Ifeoma, Adichie presents an ideal African independent educated middle-class woman who is able to fight and stand for what she believes to be right.

Adichie shows that Papa Eugene has neither consideration nor respect for women's issues. When his daughter has her period, she is in severe stomach pain as Kambili herself explains:

> Cramps racked my belly. I imagined someone with buckteeth rhythmically biting deep into my stomach walls and letting go. 'Do you have Panadol, Mama?' 'Cramps abia?' 'Yes. My stomach is so empty, too.' … 'Eat a little corn flakes, quickly,' Mama said, almost in a whisper. 'You need something in your stomach to hold the Panadol.' (Adichie, 2003, p. 100)

This becomes a grave mistake in the eyes of Eugene. He is not happy for Mama to allow Kambili to eat a bowl of cereal, and we have already recalled his over-reaction to this:

> "You are eating ten minutes before Mass?" "Her period started and she has cramps—" Mama said. Jaja cut her short. "I told her to eat corn flakes before she took Panadol, Papa. I made it for her." (Adichie, 2003, pp. 101-102)

Despite all these explanations and defences, Eugene does not care. He asks them in Igbo, 'Has the devil asked you all to go on errands for him? . . . Has the devil built a tent in my house'? (Adichie, 2003, p. 102). Taking off his belt he starts hitting the three of them:

> Mama took the belt from him and laid it on the table. Papa crushed Jaja and me to his body. "Did the belt hurt you? Did it break your skin?" he asked, examining our faces. I felt a throbbing on my back, but I said no, that I was not hurt. It was the way Papa shook his head when he talked about liking sin, as if something weighed him down, something he could not throw off. (Adichie, 2003, p. 102)

Eugene has no idea of what it means when a girl has a stomach-ache during her period, yet he never cares for his daughter's sufferings, the same daughter he kisses on her forehead as a sign of love. Eugene is bitten by the mosquito of patriarchy, religion, and colonialism in such a way that their parasites have multiplied in his blood system so that he follows their ideologies blindly. It is interesting that in Western narrative culture, writing about menstruation is not common, even in feminist texts and it is only quite recently that the topic is becoming more openly discussed. Here, Adichie is showing that African feminism can take a lead in this issue by writing frankly and openly about the issue. It is a resistance to the normative narratives of patriarchy and a strongly voiced point, even if both women suffer because of it at the hands and belt of Eugene.

In emphasising this point, Adichie depicts the old man in the novel, Anikwenwa, who after hearing that Papa Eugene has come home, decides to go and greet him. But when he sees him, Papa Eugene starts shouting at him in a high-pitched voice: 'What is Anikwenwa doing in my house? What is a worshiper of idols doing in my house? Leave my house' (Adichie, 2003, p. 70). As two men are dragging him out of the compound, Anikwenwa throws words at Papa Eugene saying, '*Ifukwa gi.* You are like a fly, blindly following a corpse into the grave' (Adichie, 2003, p. 70). By using this simile, Adichie here makes the point that most men are more tragic colonised figures than they think. They are colonised by pride, cruelty, arrogance, and power. They are to be pitied for their insistence on venerating colonial ideologies blindly. Adichie uses this old man, Anikwenwa, to express that patriarchy is without sight and its choices for life are ironic, for they do not lead to the healthy life of a society, but to death, to the colonial grave.

Adichie presents two contesting characters: a man versus a woman. Just as it is represented by my father against my mother in my life experiences, so the conflict between Aunty Ifeoma and her brother Papa Eugene over their father Papa Nnukwu causes the two blood relatives not to talk to each other, or visit each other, for many years; the reason being Eugene's view of their father's faith as he considers him to be a heathen, and tells his children openly that: 'I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but God will protect you' (Adichie, 2003, p. 62). When his children are supposed to go to his biological father, they are only allowed to see him for fifteen minutes under strict rules not to eat or drink anything at his household. Eugene's attitude towards his father is strange. Kambili and Jaja once exceed the allotted time in his house by five minutes, and they are taken to confession. His biological father is not allowed even to come to his house. At some point he denies his father the right to see Jaja and Kambili, until elders are called to intervene. This habit of elders sitting and discussing important matters reminds me of my homestead, when such meetings were quite common in the evenings around an open fireplace, we called it '*kubwalu*' when elders of the clan discussed several issues.

Adichie complicates the situation by drawing Papa Nnukwu in the novel as a person who lives in a poor house and eats food without meat and wears worn clothes; however, Eugene will not support his own father because of his pagan philosophy. Eugene does not attend his father's funeral, when Papa Nnukwu passes on. While Eugene behaves in that way, his sister Ifeoma behaves in a completely different way. She is friendly to Eugene's children and they like her, as attested by Kambili when she welcomes Ifeoma: '"Welcome, Aunty, nno," I said, rising to hug her. She did not give me the usual brief side hug. She clasped me in her arms and held me tightly against the softness of her body' (Adichie, 2003, p. 71). Ifeoma allows her children to go to their grandfather and they socialise well with him; while Eugene's children say: 'we are not allowed to come here after we've greeted him' (Adichie, 2003, p. 81). Ifeoma's child, Amaka: 'helped Papa-Nnukwu get into the front seat, and then she got in the middle with us' (Adichie, 2003, p. 82). Adichie shows the value of an African woman in this contrast. While Eugene is cruel to the wife and children, Ifeoma gives them love. While Eugene separates his family from their society, Ifeoma connects them:

> 'Eugene, let the children come out with us!' Aunty Ifeoma sounded irritated; her voice was slightly raised. 'Is it not Christmas that we are celebrating, eh? The children have never really spent time with one another. Imakwa, my little one, Chima, does not even know Kambili's name.' (Adichie, 2003, p. 77)

While Eugene hates his father to the extent of not attending his funeral, Ifeoma loves her father and asks Eugene at least to sponsor the funeral of his own biological father. His Christian practice is an anxious exercise in making a complete break with the past, as he defines himself as much by what he rejects of his own cultural identity, as by what he accepts from the colonial signifiers of identity.

While Eugene cherishes Christianity at the expense of his tradition, Ifeoma sees value in the traditional ways of life without looking down on Christianity. That is why while Eugene calls his father a pagan, Aunty Ifeoma calls him a traditionalist, who happens to worship God in a different way. She says:

> Papa-Nnukwu was not a heathen but a traditionalist, that sometimes what was different was just as good as what was familiar, that when Papa-Nnukwu did his itu-nzu, his declaration of innocence, in the morning, it was the same as our saying the rosary. (Adichie, 2003, p. 166)

Adichie poses a challenge through a woman, Ifeoma, on how men and women behave and look at things. She is completely against hating themselves as Africans while respecting others at the same time. For Adichie, language, if it is not used well, can be a tool for perpetuating oppression in a society. That is why when Papa Nnukwu is complaining about what his son is doing to him, he ends up using a language familiar to men that discriminates against women and Ifeoma reacts:

> ‘Nekenem, look at me. My son owns that house that can fit in every man in Abba, and yet many times I have nothing to put on my plate. I should not have let him follow those missionaries.’ ‘Nna anyi,’ Aunty Ifeoma said. ‘It was not the missionaries. Did I not go to the missionary school, too?’ ‘But you are a woman. You do not count.’ ‘Eh? So, I don’t count? Has Eugene ever asked about your aching leg? If I do not count, then I will stop asking if you rose well in the morning.’ (Adichie, 2003, p. 82)

Adichie challenges this kind of language which is commonly use against women but perpetuates the main agenda of undermining women. But viewed from a different perspective, Adichie problematises the use of language by depicting Papa Eugene as a person who hates his own Igbo language and prefers a foreign language, English. The fact that he desires the language of worship and liturgy to be English, suggests that in his opinion, God must be white, and English might be the language of heaven. Adichie disputes this marginalisation of the Igbo language which suggests the dismissal of the entire Igbo culture and traditions, because language is not only a medium of communication, but an articulation of the whole culture as well as a construction of the same. Therefore, what Adichie argues is that the view of language as seen by Papa Nnukwu above is dangerous, since it constructs a culture of undermining women in their society.

Purple Hibiscus shows that Papa Eugene's religious piousness seems completely unable to prevent him from violence. Jaja and Kambili are severely punished with boiling hot water poured over their feet for having slept and stayed in the same house as their grandfather. This is an extremely colonised mind that condemns the African belief-system to the realm of evil. Due to his violence his wife miscarriages twice, but these are the publicly acknowledged ones as Mama says: 'God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper' (Adichie, 2003, p. 20). Due to all this, Papa Nnukwu insists that Eugene was destroyed mentally by missionary teachings on the Trinity that suggest that Jesus is equal to the Father. Due such a teaching, he insists, Eugene could only disrespect his own biological father.

Purple Hibiscus is narrated within a religious timeframe of three settings that divide the novel into three parts: 'Palm Sunday', 'Before Palm Sunday' and 'After Palm Sunday'. Biblically, Palm Sunday is Christian holiday that occurs a Sunday before the Easter Holiday which they consider to be the Holy week. It commemorates the triumphal arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem as King to save the people from oppression and the slavery (Matthew 21:1-11):

> The triumphant entry of Jesus to Jerusalem as king was a subversive political entry that challenged the Roman Empire, who dwelt in Jerusalem. Having experienced a long line of colonial domination, beginning with the Babylonian exile to the Roman Empire of Jesus' time, the Jews had developed a narrative of hope and resistance that held that God would send them a messiah, who would liberate them from colonial powers (Grau, 2004, pp. 78-98)

Through the lens of postcolonial feminism, Adichie develops, in *Purple Hibiscus*, a narrative of hope and resistance to all women that the messianic time has come. Just as The Messiah was to come from the house of David for the Jews, so for women liberation should come from their own efforts. So, Adichie poses a direct challenge to the patriarchal empire and the collaborating traditions that oppress women by exposing them. Just as Governor Pontius Pilate deployed a battalion of soldiers to ensure that the colonised Jews in Palestine remained faithful to the Empire, so patriarchy in the same way uses violence in homes to make sure that all the family members remain faithful to the patriarchal empire. A good example of this is when Eugene punishes the whole family because his daughter when she is sick eats ten minutes before mass: ‘Then the belt stopped, and Papa stared at the leather in his hand. His face crumpled; his eyelids sagged. “Why do you walk into sin?” he asked. “Why do you like sin?” (Adichie, 2003, p. 102).

Adichie does not only evoke the messianic hope of liberation from patriarchal powers, but also espouses the act of setting the women free from their enslavement of men. The tradition of Palm Sunday, according to Adichie, suggests liberation with undertones hinting at freedom from enslavement of men and colonising structural powers of patriarchy, while at the same time expressing the demand of liberation. Similarly, Jesus’ subversive entry did not escape the powers of the oppressors, as He was arrested and tried and found guilty of challenging the powers of Caesar, the Roman Emperor, He was accordingly sentenced to death by hanging on the cross, which was the Roman imperial method of eliminating those who challenged their power. Women’s journey towards true freedom will not be an easy one. It will always get worse before it gets better. The key principle is continual resistance against such oppressive powers which will lead to the resurrection.

Therefore, Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* uses Palm Sunday’s triumphant entry to underline the arrival of a new era, another king, who will challenge patriarchy and oppressive powers of men. This new king is a daring king of liberation, who will turn things upside down. Just as the novel's opening line states: 'Things began to fall apart at home when my brother, Jaja, did not go to communion and Papa flung his heavy missal across the room and broke the figurines on the *étagère'* (Adichie, 2003, p. 3), so the narrator, Kambili, continues to tell us that:

> When Papa did not see Jaja go to the altar that Palm Sunday that's when everything changed, he banged his leather-bound missal, with the red and green ribbons peeking out, down on the dining table when we got home . . . 'Jaja you did not go to communion,' . . . 'The wafer gives me bad breath. And the priest keeps touching my mouth and nauseates me, Jaja said.' (Adichie, 2003, p. 6)

It is a revolt. Adichie rejects patriarchy and all that it stands for. By referring to Kambili: 'eating ten minutes before Mass' (Adichie, 2003, p. 101), she makes is a major statement of resistance. This is advice from Mama to: '"Eat a little corn flakes, quickly," … "You need something in your stomach to hold the Panadol"' (Adichie, 2003, p. 100). Both Kambili and Mama collaborate as women in this rejection of patriarchal violence, and that is why Adichie speaks of Kambili's period when Papa questions: '"You are eating?" "Her period started, and she has cramps" Mama said' (Adichie, 2003, pp. 101-102). This kind of somatic response is the highest level of expressing a rejection: the body's needs are prioritised over the needs of the patriarchal and religious system. It is a pivotal moment and made all the more so through the understated style of narration.

Adichie again depicts Jaja who has resolved to challenge his violent father by rejecting the eucharist which his father holds most sacred. He tells his father that if he continues to force him then his response will be: '"Then I will die" … "Then I will die Papa" (Adichie, 2003, pp. 6-7). Adichie reinforces this theme even more by telling us in the novel that during lunch, Jaja leaves the dining table as others are still eating, while refusing to give his compliments to a newly produced drink from his father's factory. He does not come for dinner that evening, thereby, breaking the stringent rules of his father. The narrator underlines this by saying:

> This had never happened before in my entire life, never. The compound walls would crumble, I was sure, and squash the frangipani trees. The sky would cave in. The Persian rugs on the stretches of gleaming marble floor would shrink. Something would happen. But the only thing that happened was my choking. My body shook from the coughing. (Adichie, 2003, p. 14)

By depicting Jaja as a boy working hand in hand with Mama and Kambili in the fight against the oppressive powers of Eugene, Adichie calls upon all men and women to work together in the fight against patriarchy. This is what my own mother was fighting to do when I was younger; she was attempting to get me involved in working together with her and my sisters in the fight against patriarchy, though it was not noticeably clear to me. I now realise the value of her fight because in the end, patriarchy does not only oppress women, but rather, it corrupts the entire society. This is the reason this research takes an autoethnographic perspective, in order to be able to use my personal experiences to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, to make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders alike.

Adichie breaks the silence by portraying a rebellious Jaja, who has the courage to speak back to Papa Eugene. In shock, Kambili lies down with a high temperature, stating that:

> I let my mind rake through the past, through the years when Jaja and Mama and I spoke more with our spirits than our lips…Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus; fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom. . .. A freedom to be, to do. (Adichie, 2003, pp. 15-16)

Adichie thus challenges all men to be like Jaja, who makes a triumphant entry as a subject that confronts oppression as represented by Papa Eugene and all the normative customs that lay the foundation of patriarchal dominance. The narrative tells us that Jaja was the name of a stubborn and defiant king, who ruled during colonial times. This is attested by Aunty Ifeoma who says:

> I told your mother that it was an appropriate nickname that you would take after Jaja of Opobo. He was the king of the Opobo . . . and when the British came, he refused to let them control trade. (Adichie, 2003, p. 144)

Jaja wages a war of freedom. His resistance to patriarchy is active: there is no more speaking with our spirits. He speaks with his lips and defies and eschews silence. This is what Adichie is doing in *Purple Hibiscus* when she unveils all the shortcomings that oppress women in postcolonial African societies.

Adichie artistically depicts that it is in Aunty Ifeoma's place that the purple hibiscus, which is associated with freedom, grows. It is in her home place that Jaja and Kambili pluck its stocks as precious things and take them to Enugu to be planted in their garden. Unaware of all these Symbolic goods of freedom, Papa Eugene, stores them in his fridge, waiting for the summer so they can be planted. The winds of change have come upon his house unknowingly, blowing from Aunty Ifeoma's place. The narrator tells us: 'Nssuka started it all; Aunty Ifeoma's little garden next to the veranda of her flat in Nssuka began to lift the silence' (Adichie, 2003, p. 16) That is why this research is entitled *A Literary Theoretical Exploration of Silenced African Women from the Psychoanalytic and Feminist Perspectives*; the subjugated are habitually denied the right to speak, and to be heard, and after a while, they oven internalise this and their sense of the super-ego tells them to remain silent and not to offer any challenges to patriarchal power. Therefore, silence is more often than not a sign of oppression, and the three novels that form the core of this study all, in their different ways, find fictive ways of defeating this silence by allowing strong characters to find their voice and through their utterance, offer a genuine path of emancipation to the readers as well.

Adichie portrays Kambili, Jaja and Mama Beatrice as being silenced by Papa Eugene, by his imposed religious and patriarchal practice and by his wounded self, thus releasing violence upon them all. Eugene uses material power to silence even potential voices of the unvoiced in the same way as priests and the church do. Religious leaders certainly know about the terror that Eugene imposes upon his family, because he runs out weeping as he takes them to the Catholic hospital, claiming that an accident has happened each time he beats and injures his children and wife. Kambili, who is severely kicked for her grandfather's painting for example, is notably tended by a white sister back to health. This indicates that the church complies in the covenant of violence of Papa Eugene.

Papa Eugene is ostensibly very generous, as he supports St. Agnes, its hospital the Daughters of Immaculate Heart Secondary school (Adichie, 2003, pp. 4-6). Due to this Fr. Benedict is happy about:

> Papa making the biggest donations to Peter's pence and St. Vincent de Paul. Or about Papa paying for the cartons of communion wine, for the new ovens at the convent where the Reverend Sisters baked the host, for the new wing to St. Agnes Hospital where Father Benedict gave extreme unction. And I would sit with my knees pressed together, next to Jaja, trying hard to keep my face blank, to keep the pride from showing, because Papa said modesty was very important. (Adichie, 2003, p. 7)

About his violence as an evil-founded practice, it is amazing that nowhere do we ever find a priest counselling him. Aunty Ifeoma nails the function of his giving, pointing out that:

> You know that the members of Umunna, in fact everybody in Abba, will tell Eugene only what he wants to hear. Do our people not have any sense? Will you pinch the finger that feeds you? (Adichie, 2003, p. 96)

Despite all this Aunty Ifeoma refuses, like her own father, Papa Nnukwu, to be bought out by her rich relative. As she reminds Mama Beatrice:

> Have you forgotten that Eugene offered to buy me a car, even before Ifediora, my husband, died? But first he wanted us to join the Knights of St John. He wanted us to send Amaka to a convent school. He even wanted me to stop wearing make-up! I want a new car, *mwunye m,* and I want to use my gas cooker again and I want a new freezer and I want money so that I will not have to unravel the seams of Chima's trousers when he outgrows them. But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things. (Adichie, 2003, p. 95)

Eugene also makes an offer to his father, Papa Nnukwu, that he will give him all good things, as long as he converts to Christianity, but the old man declines the offer and prefers to remain with his freedom rather than being bought out. This reminds me of some women in my tribe who prefer to get married to someone, not because they love that person, but because of the material wealth they think that person has. The wife of my uncle wanted to get married to my father with the view that her life could be better economically if she married him. When one is poor, one can easily be bought by the stronger economically. Ifeoma and Papa Nnukwu are able to escape that trap and preserve their dignity, contrary to Fr. Benedict and The Daughters of Immaculate Heart, who fail to tell Eugene the truth due to the support that he has been giving to them. That is why Ifeoma questions: ‘Will you pinch the finger that feeds you?’ (Adichie, 2003, p. 96).

Aunty Ifeoma does not talk to her brother for years, for refusing to let their father come into his house due to his indigenous religious beliefs, but Ifeoma comes to realise that this too is Eugene’s way of silencing her and marginalising Jaja, Kambili and Mama Beatrice from any other differing voices. She changes the strategy and returns to talking to Papa Eugene, and to visiting his house, bringing her own children with her, and she insists on Jaja and Kambili visiting her and spending time with their cousins:

> ‘Eugene, let the children come out with us!’ Aunty Ifeoma sounded irritated; her voice was slightly raised. ‘Is it not Christmas that we are celebrating, eh? The children have never really spent time with one another. Imakwa, my little one, Chima, does not even know Kambili’s name.’ (Adichie, 2003, p. 77)

By so doing, Ifeoma exposes Kambili and Jaja to another view of parenting; another view of Catholicism; another view of an African Indigenous belief system; and another view of life. It is Ifeoma who not only takes them out to see the masquerade, but also, who teaches them that Papa Nnukwu is not a pagan, as Eugene has taught them, but rather that he is a traditionalist, who worships the same God, but in a different manner. It is to Nsukka at Ifeoma’s house that their grandfather comes for medical attention, and they subsequently get to live under the same roof with him for days, instead of the fifteen-minutes visit imposed on them by Eugene.

In Nsukka, Jaja and Kambili discover that there is another way of parenting, where children are not silenced, but are allowed to think and speak freely, while their parents act more like a coach. It is to Nsukka that the violated Mama Beatrice runs, and where she is informed that: ‘When a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head’ (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). For Jaja and Kambili, their stay with Nsukka is a golden moment because there, they have an opportunity to listen to their grandfather praying in his African way of worshipping, and they discover that the Catholic order of prayers can be said in Igbo, and they can be punctuated with many Igbo songs.

So, from all this, we come to learn that Adichie uses Nsukka as Aunty Ifeoma’s house and beliefs to represents a decolonising feminist space of liberation. Kambili and Jaja returning to their home, carrying stocks of purple hibiscus to plant in their garden, signifies bringing back with them the seeds of liberation from Aunty Ifeoma. Papa Eugene not only punishes them by pouring boiling water on their feet for sleeping under the same roof as their pagan grandfather without telling him, but also, he kicks Kambili almost to death for bringing a painting of their heathen grandfather into his house. However, it is too late. Purple hibiscus is growing in his garden, planted by Jaja from Aunty Ifeoma’s garden, and metaphorically, the seeds of liberation are growing in the hearts of his children.

Aunty Ifeoma, therefore, is both a decolonising figure and a depatriarchalizing figure, since for Adichie, woman need not see their lives as non-existent outside marriage because: ‘sometimes life begins when marriage ends’ (Adichie, 2003, p. 75). Beatrice is presented as a woman whose attempt to leave is aborted, and she chooses to return to her home. But what Adichie warns is never to consider such people as losers because Mama Beatrice, with assistance from Sisi, their housekeeper, begins to slowly poison Papa Eugene to death after a violent incident which leads to the death of her unborn child. Adichie warns that there are different forms of resistance, and that by repression anger and a sense of being oppressed, then these feelings can often find their way into the world thorough other actions.

Therefore, Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* presents women of different status showing various forms of resistance to patriarchy. With Aunty Ifeoma being an openly articulate and fearless intellectual, one begins to realise that women such as Mama Beatrice, Kambili and Sisi also have their own different ways of resisting: they have different ways of finding their voices. Adichie, in the person of Kambili the narrator of the story, is no longer silenced. She has found her voice and names the oppression that has occurred in her family and society and how they find their way to freedom. In so doing, *Purple Hibiscus* models various forms of feminist agency.

Chapter Five: Psychoanalytic and Feminist Interpretations of *Parched Earth*

Psychoanalytic Interpretation of *Parched Earth*

During his stay at the Vienna General Hospital, Freud carried out significant research into the functioning of the human mind. Based on his research, Freud argued that people's behaviour is significantly influenced by the unconscious part of their brain. He says:

> We have learnt from psychoanalysis that the essence of the process of repression lies, not in putting an end to, in annihilating, the idea which represents an instinct, but in preventing it from becoming conscious. When this happens, we say of the idea that it is in a state of being 'unconscious', and we can produce good evidence to show that even when it is unconscious it can produce effects. (Freud, 1915, p. 166)

Expanding on this idea, Tyson notes that people are driven 'by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware' (Tyson, 2006, pp. 14-15). That is why in investigating these narratives, I use autoethnography which 'displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Green attests that the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature can be looked at in different ways, though we can summarise it in the question of what is being subjected to the analytic process, and what repressed meaning we thereby hope to uncover (Green, et al., 2001). Shoshana Felman, as has been noted, speaking about this, explains that we normally tend to see psychoanalysis as the active practice performed upon the passive text:

> While literature is considered as a body of language – to be interpreted– psychoanalysis is considered as a body of knowledge, whose competence is called upon to interpret. Psychoanalysis, in other words, occupies the place of a subject, literature that of an object. (Felman, 1982, p. 5)

Literature then, and the criticism of literature, employs psychoanalysis in scrutinising the motives of both authors and characters through the Freudian lens, in order to draw a deeper meaning from the text.

In collaboration with autoethnography, the enquiry places the self of the researcher and/or narrator within a social circumstance and refers to situations that provoke questions about the nature of ethnographic knowledge by troubling the constant dichotomies of insider versus outsider, individual versus culture, the distant versus the familiar and the objective observer versus the participant. As Freud has noted: 'language has preserved this relationship between children's play and poetic creation' (Freud, 1908, p. 421), so, through the combination of one's autobiography and ethnography, an autoethnography is constituted. This autoethnography helps people understand how the kinds of people we claim, or are perceived, to be influence interpretations of what we study, how we study it, and what we say about our topic and so expands and opens a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research.

Parched Earth is Elieshi Lema's novel which she calls 'a love story' told in the first person, narrated by the main character Doreen who is born into a family in which the father is rarely seen. This means that Doreen and her brother, Godbless, grow to maturity under Foibe Seko, their beloved mother, who works hard to help them survive and grow. Doreen willingly falls in love with Martin: 'Martin came into my life' (Lema, 2001, p. 24). Martin is an official accountant who works in the Government. He chooses to marry Doreen but encounters a lot of problems due to patriarchal ideological influences which lead to difficulties in the relationship.

Doreen marries Martin without the knowledge of any member of the family in the hope that their true love will sustain their union: 'our wedding was a simple affair conducted at the District Commissioner's office and witnessed by two friends of Martin's' (Lema, 2001, p. 63). Therefore, only herself and Martin matter, and she sees no need to consult anybody else, not even their parents. Due to this, Doreen's family is extremely disappointed in her, to the extent of making her mother shed tears and her brother to say: 'you just decided to go to a husband.

You just decided to go! Yaani we don't matter!' (Lema, 2001, p. 87). This expresses the family members' deep feeling of sadness at being ignored by the daughter of the family.

A possible pathway towards understanding her motivation could be found in Freud's idea of the Oedipus complex, which is a term used to describe a boy's feelings of desire for his mother, while creating jealousy and anger towards his father. According to Freud, the complex occurs to children of about ages three to five up to the time when the child identifies with the parent of the same sex and represses its sexual instincts. On the occasions when the child experiences a loving, healthy, non-traumatic relationship, the stage is passed through harmoniously. Contrary to that, in the presence of trauma, infantile neurosis is likely to occur which is also an important forerunner of similar reactions during the child's adult life. Lema describes Godbless and Doreen growing up without a father, and so they lack a father figure in their growth into a successful adulthood.

Freud says that in order to develop into a successful adult with a health identity, the child must identify with the same-sex parent in order to resolve the conflict. The boy then experiences castration anxiety – a fear that his father will castrate him as a punishment for desiring his mother. Keith Green and Jill LeBihan commenting on this point say: 'it is Freud's assertion that sexual identity is constructed on a basis of guilt and repressed incestuous desires' (Green, et al., 2001, p. 155). In a discussion on how children become socially adjusted, Freud asserts that sexual identity is constructed on a basis of guilt and repressed incestuous desires and adds that the gender of a child is not solely dependent on her or his genitalia, but on the development of her or his psyche (Green, et al., 1996, p. 154).

He claims that 'what constitutes masculinity or femininity is an unknown characteristic which anatomy cannot lay hold of' (Freud, 1973, p. 147). To resolve the conflict, the boy then identifies with his father. It is at this point that the super-ego is formed, a sort of inner moral authority, an internalisation of the father figure that strives to suppress the urges of the id and make the ego act upon these idealistic standards. He says that the unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex is responsible for neurotic symptoms. Freud considered the reactions against the Oedipus complex the most important social achievements of the human mind and felt that the Oedipus complex plays an important role in the phallic stage of psychosexual development. The completion of this stage involves identifying with the same-sex parent which ultimately leads to the development of a mature sexual identity. In this context, Lema tries to encourage parents to cooperate in caring for their children, rather than leaving the burden to single parents who are mostly women, as was the case with Foibe, because single parenting has tremendous effects on children's growth to adulthood.

Doreen's mother falls in love with a married man, Sebastian Shose, whose Church wedding makes their relationship impossible in the eyes of their society, regardless of their claim that they are deeply in love. She is summoned by two women brought by her mother to stop her from sleeping with people's husbands and live a chaste life:

> 'Have you been sleeping with any man?' Foibe's heart skipped a beat . . . Foibe resented it but remained silent. 'Do you know a man called Sebastian Shose?' … 'I love him' That is when the women got angry and spanked her thoroughly. They used the blunt and curved end of *kyindo,* the banana peeling knife, under hot ash… it burned and scraped her skin. (Lema, 2001, p. 112)

Foibe's act is influenced by her id; Foibe cannot deny herself the husband of someone else because her appetite is so strong that it blinds her from seeing that he is the husband of someone else. What she does has no logic; it is only influenced by what she wants, and by her instinctual desires. In Lacanian terms desire is natural to humanity. In one of his most famous comments, he notes '*Desidero* is the Freudian *Cogito*' *[italics original]* (Lacan, 1977, p. 155). Rene Descartes's formula for finding a point of certainty in the thinking self, expressed in the formula "“I think therefore I am” (in Latin, *Cogito ergo sum*) was to be replaced by Lacan's psychoanalytic axiom of the uncertainty of human desire, *Desidero ergo sum*, “I desire therefore I am"' (Levine, 2008, p. 70). For Lacan, desire, the id, is central to being human and cannot ever be switched off.

Being a love story, *Parched Earth* tells of a growing woman being set against the structures of patriarchy, and it is psychologically convincing, told in a style full of evocative imagery, which underlies the themes:

> *Parched Earth* is marked by the Female protagonist's questioning of the culture of Patriarchy, a strategy that enhances the narrative's high dramatic impact and invites the reader actively to engage with the fact of patriarchy and complete the possibility of alternatives. (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 161)

The environment of the narrative provides room for a study that sets out to do an in-depth examination of love yearned for, gained, lost, unfulfilled or compensatory, and occurring in many contexts, such as in parent-child relationships as well as in friendships and sexual relationships.

Lema demonstrates that her novel is really a love story as she explains how love affairs affect women in African societies by depicting Sebastian who decides to end the relationship, leaving Foibe with two children, Godbless and Doreen, for whom he never provides any support. Lema deals with the issues of how one is supposed to behave and live in such a society. Such behaviours are controlled by what psychoanalysis calls the 'ideal self' or the 'ego-ideal', which is a component that deals with how one ought to be, and represents career aspirations, ideas on how to treat other people, and suggestions as to how to behave as a member of society:

> The ego ideal is composed of the child's conceptions of what the parents consider to be perfection, or the perfect person. These conceptions are established through experiencing parental acceptance. (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 6)

Lema fights against bad behaviour; people having affairs with those married already to other people is not only unacceptable but deserves punishment because its social impacts on society are very strong: 'Foibe cried like a baby. They told her how this treatment will teach her to close her thighs, how it will be good medicine for her shameless, wanton love for sex' (Lema, 2001, p. 112). So, the ideal self includes the rules and standards for good behaviours. Such behaviours include those which are approved of by parental and other authority figures in the society.

Doreen and Martin enjoy their happy marriage, and they are blessed to have a baby girl, Milika. The problems start when Martin demands that Doreen bear him a baby boy, and Doreen fails to do so: 'We started talking like our friends, like my in-laws, that a boy child would really bless our marriage. I started believing that it would make Martin so happy' (Lema, 2001, p. 148). This issue of not having a baby boy frustrates the marriage and each of the two decides to look for advice, a possible solution and consolation from other people outside of their marriage. In this instance Lema presents a classic patriarchal trope in that producing a boy means perpetuating patriarchy as the boy will then become the most important child in the family and will carry on the family name. This had a very negative effect on the marriage. Lema here challenges this attitude of men claiming baby boys from their wives and interrogates the underlying mentality that if a man does not have a son, then it must be the fault of the woman. It is an idea based on ignorance of the functioning of the human body, and it is also a selfish idea of one's id which is always primitive and desiring: it cannot deny itself. The novel therefore challenges the patriarchal structures, traditions, and government systems regarding marriage and education, whether they are really for the benefit of the people or lead to a life of drudgery and misery. The patriarchal mirror image, in a Lacanian sense, is what constructs this idea, and Lema is suggesting that this can be changed over time.

Elias Mwaifuge, in his book *Politics and Ideology in Tanzanian Prose Fiction in English*, says: '*Parched Earth* suggests that at the societal level no woman is regarded as complete or real until she gives birth to a male child' (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 167). Due to that, Doreen begins a relationship with Joseph, while Martin had an extra-marital affair with another woman. But what is even more interesting here is that: 'Martin takes another wife to bear him a son' (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 167). Both seem to do that to avoid separation or divorce in a situation where culturally, separation is not entertained. Lema challenges our structures that deal with the issues in an unhappy marriage, and questions whether they can really sustain faithfulness or not.

Parched Earth is a serious meditation on the way particularly (but not only), women survive in a world where the love-need is so central and so urgent, yet is so frequently thwarted and so seldom lasts:

> *Parched Earth* also interrogates the limits imposed on a woman who is expected to live passively and behave in the traditional ways prescribed by a patriarchal society. (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 161)

Doreen expresses the feeling of a woman in a patriarchal society being different and being 'other'. As she explains:

> I saw myself as a captive without a saviour. Sometimes, the raw feeling comes when I had hurt myself and I would run to my mother, crying, wanting her to hold and comfort me and she would not be there. (Lema, 2001, p. 19)

The matriarchal nature of the household holds a mirror up to stereotypical feminist readings of developing countries as being always patriarchal, and where women are always doubly repressed. In this book, this is not quite the case, and that is the real value of literature. Like psychoanalysis, the focus is very much on the individual case or character and that is the way change happens – person by person, reader by reader, thinker by thinker.

What are the feelings of a daughter and a single-parent mother living in an extremely poor small village? How hard life can be to a toiling, unmarried mother, and daughter with no father in evidence, while other companions live with husbands and fathers: 'a woman becomes a social orphan just by being a woman' (Lema, 2001, p. 120). What could be the factors that lead to a mother trying hard to mask their deprived circumstances from her children: 'we never knew we were poor because she shielded us from feeling poor' (Lema, 2001, p. 117). How painful is it for a single mother when children begin to ask questions about the whereabouts of their father?

> ‘Where is my father?’ Godbless blurted out again… ‘what is eating you child?’ she asked sharply. ‘Eat your food and go to sleep. I have told you many times to let that liquor be drunk by men who can hold it.’ (Lema, 2001, p. 96)

Parched Earth allows us also to analyse the feelings of daughters (children) when they come to realise that their single mother was wooed, and later impregnated, by a man ten years her elder, who was himself married and with a child:

> That was my mother’s story gathered from people’s words and gestures, from the silent language of her eyes…is that why it hurts so much? Is that why nothing has soothed her mother’s pain of that lost love? (Lema, 2001, p. 116)

Lema provides the narrative perspective which gives voice to the dilemma of a young girl who is so innocent that she does not even know what is happening to her when her body begins to change with pregnancy: ‘my mother was too young to fathom the puzzle’ (Lema, 2001, p. 116).

Lema also discusses the situation of the increased social pressure on the girl in her situation. While pregnant, she is ruthlessly ejected from the family by her (Christian) father. ‘When she went to live with Aunt Mai, the trysting ceased. She was too weighed with sadness to walk to the river’ (Lema, 2001, p. 115), while her lover fails to stand by her. Only her kind and worldly-wise aunt will take her in: ‘I realized, as I talked to her more, that Great Aunt Mai was a shrewd but very loving woman. She became our pillar of strength for mother and especially for me’ (Lema, 2001, p. 6).

What Lema wants to show here is that all these experiences do not just leave Foibe as she originally was; her mind stores all those experiences, especially those experiences of a traumatic or unpleasant nature ‘into an area of the mind called the unconscious’ (James & Gilliland, 2003, p. 3). Those experiences influence her behaviour and change Foibe’s life completely: ‘She resolved then, in her mind, to be both father and mother to her child, and to all her children’ (Lema, 2001, p. 117). She became a strong and independent woman.

As in *Purple Hibiscus* with Aunty Ifeoma, in *Parched Earth*, Aunt Mai plays the same role. Aunts seem to be very benevolent figures in defending women. But how does such a wounded mother handle melancholy or a sense of abandonment and rejection in a family and in a society? Yet such a mother expresses her determination: ‘My children will find laughter in my house’ (Lema, 2001, p. 134). Lema gives a voice to the victims of such social pressures, and her novel can be studied as an example of the ‘return of the repressed’ in terms of the female voice. Issues of social class, snobbery, sexual politics, and religion are all part of the weave of this fascinating tale. Annie Gagiano, in her review of *Parched Earth*, says that:

> This novel, so low-key and initially unremarkable, gathers great persuasive power as it moves along and as its intimate, female voice probes more and more deeply into the painful life-lessons that are its territory. The effect of the writing is like the slow-motion explosion of a bomb; the way it centralises the experiences of women results not from a second-hand, theoretical feminism, but grows from a deep conviction. (Gagiano, 2005)

Lema is quite aware of Freud’s claim that our childhood experiences, especially the traumatic, and unpleasant events, are the ones that influence the unconscious, so as a woman, she affirms the above point by saying that:

> ‘The stories of motherhood are what marks women and shape their lives. And when these stories are traced within the matrix’, says Doreen, ‘they are found to loop the lives of all women’s children, female and male’. (Lema, 2001, p. 93)

Therefore, *Parched Earth* in all its particularity and singularity offers a strong localised critique to the more general Eurocentric ideas of feminism. Doreen is voicing an African Symbolic order here and is enculturating her daughter into it as the novel progresses.

In this book, Lema has not focused on the description of locations or of the detailed social setting in the book; instead, she concentrates more on the relationships and the feelings of the characters, and the unconscious aspects of the characters are discussed in terms of how they develop. The work is woven nicely to make it not only paradoxical and memorable, but also sweet and harsh; lyrical, and cynical. Gagiano rightly commented it by saying that *Parched Earth* is:

> An examination of love yearned for, gained, lost, unfulfilled or compensatory, and occurring in many contexts, such as parent-child relationships, friendships, as well as more conventional heterosexual bonding. In many ways this text is a serious meditation on the way particularly (but not only) women survive in a world where the love-need is so central and so urgent yet is so frequently thwarted – and so seldom lasts. (Gagiano, 2005)

On the face of it, one might see it as superficial text, but on a deeper reading, it plunges its reader into unexpected depths where one is made to confront uncomfortable feelings and difficult truths about the silenced African women; there is a strong sense in Lema's message that 'enough is enough', and that change is needed in this area, and this book charts the tentative directions of those changes.

Parched Earth allows critics to make use of psychoanalytic feminism, and its principles that refer to a theory of oppression, which claims that men have an inherent psychological need to subjugate women. This desire of men and women's minimal resistance to subjugation lies deep within the human psyche. Lema shows this well when she represents the boy in the family, Godbless, and Doreen, the girl of the family, as two children with completely different ambitions in life. The boy dreams of being an important person and of being successful in life and that he would be a saviour of the family: 'I will buy mother good cloths and build her a big house and give her lots of money' (Lema, 2001, pp. 7-8). On the contrary the girl feels always inferior to the boy as Doreen admits 'I did not have a dream' (Lema, 2001, p. 8). While Godbless thinks of being someone important, Doreen sees her future as being in the kitchen, or as being a helper to Godbless, and she was satisfied with that. As she attests: 'he saw far, I was happy that it was so' (Lema, 2001, p. 9). But as time went by, the dream of becoming important person was lost in the fog of poverty, as opportunities denied this desire vanished.

What Lema tries to address here is that political and social factors affect the development of female subjects so much that they always end up being treated unequally. This idea can be intricately linked with Freud's oedipal complex, especially the notion of castration anxiety for boys, and of the absence of a penis for girls, so, males and female are differently affected. While boys renounce their oedipal wish for the mother; girls on the other hand recognise their lack of a penis and struggle to identify with the father while rejecting their mother. When girls recognise that this is impossible, they attempt to fulfil their 'lack' with a baby. In response to these ideas, women began to write theory out of their own experience and gradually, different perspectives emerged about the nature of feminine subjectivity. They focus primarily on the relationship between gender-differentiated subjectivity and the structures of the external world (Mciver, 2009, p. 35).

Lema confronts the patterns of oppression integrated into societies and which sustain patriarchy by addressing political and social factors affecting the development of male and female subjects. She shows this by describing how Sebastian takes advantage of his knowledge and age and spoils Foibe's life: 'Sebastian being older and more experienced already knew she was pregnant. He did not tell her' (Lema, 2001, p. 109). Therefore, through the application of psychoanalytic techniques in exploring differences between women and men, as well as the ways in which gender is constructed, it is possible to see and reorganise socialisation patterns at the early stages of human life: alternative ideal-egos can be created for the societal mirror stage and different Lacanian reflections can be initiated and inaugurated through the fictive mirror of this book, and the other studied in this thesis. For Lacan, social transformation is led by changes in the Symbolic order, and that is achieved, in part, through the aesthetic and through fiction.

Lema critiques the notions of women as being biologically, morally, and psychically inferior to men, because these play a major role in sexual differences and women's otherness in relation to men. To change this situation, a discovery of sources of domination in men's psyche and subordination in women's must be identified. These largely reside unrecognised in the individual's unconscious mind. As a solution to that, Lema portrays Foibe as a strong and hard-working woman who trains her daughter to recognise the value of hard work. She says to her: 'Girls should learn to work hard, always. Hard work will be their salvation' (Lema, 2001, p. 49). But also, she depicts Doreen as a girl who passes her exams, goes to a secondary school, and gets a job; as Doreen says: 'I grew up, left home and went to a boarding secondary school and later became a teacher' (Lema, 2001, p. 9). Looking at all these experiences through a psychoanalytical lens aims at bringing change into the lives of those who are victims of situations Juliet Mitchell develops this idea by saying: 'psychoanalysis is not a recommendation for a patriarchal society, but an analysis of one' (Mitchell, 1973, p. xiii). Psychoanalytical feminism is therefore a branch of feminism that seeks to investigate closely how our psychic lives develop, with the aim of, not only understanding, but also changing the subjugation of women.

Parched Earth shows that women are merely the triangulated object of desire, and that subjects become bound by love to oppressive social relations in the formation of identity. This is seen in how Sebastian uses Foibe: when she becomes pregnant, he abandons her. This is seen in the warning of Sebastian's father to his son that: 'My son, you are lusting for her, and that is a shame, a great sin. The demon has you by the throat' (Lema, 2001, p. 110). On this point, Jessica Benjamin says: 'domination is anchored in the hearts of the dominated' (Benjamin, 1988, p. 5), meaning that women are erotically attached to patriarchal power in such a way that it is not easy to detach themselves from that trap.

Lema demonstrates in the novel that life is a great mystery of which we understand extraordinarily little. Sebastian manages to make Doreen believe that he cannot live without her:

> 'Don't leave me please. Don't leave me ever, 'he pleaded. 'I will never leave you; I will always love you,' she affirmed. She saw fear in his eyes, but he camouflaged it saying it was the concern for the safety of their love. (Lema, 2001, p. 110)

If only she had known that he would be the one who will leave her and leave her while pregnant and would never care for her and the baby! Lema here coincides with Jung's thinking, in believing that the psyche is the great world within and this interior world, embodies much of the world and is as great as the world without: 'He never hesitated to say, "I don't know," and readily admitted when he came to the end of his understanding' (Daniels, 2011, p. 2).

Parched Earth was written in an attempt to heal society. Lema believes that every person is in search of wholeness within the human psyche. The person aims to become conscious of oneself as a unique human being, while at the same time, as being no more, nor less than any other human being. This idea corresponds with Jung's notion of individuation: 'we could therefore translate individuation as "coming to selfhood" or "self-realization"' (Jung, 1972, p. 266). There are many internal opposites as well as those in the outside world. If the opposites clash, then out of this conflict something new and creative can grow. And this 'something' will contribute to a new direction which does not only justice to both sides of the conflict, but also which is a product of the unconscious rather than just of rational thought. So Lema sees that, to become more conscious, one must be able to bear conflict because conflict is inherent in human psychology and is necessary for growth. She depicts Foibe who experiences many conflicts in her life, but she learns from those difficult experiences. But that is not all, as the manner in which Foibe is chased away is done in a very cruel way. Her father, who is a good Christian, chases her like he is chasing a dog. She expects her mother will defend her, but to her surprise she just stands there saying nothing. So, for Lema, like Jung, the process of individuation is good in pioneering the psychotherapy of the middle-aged and the elderly, particularly those whose lives have lost meaning. That is the process that Foibe undergoes, and she eventually becomes conscious of herself as a unique human being while at the same time, no more, nor less than any other human being. That is the beginning of a new life for her.

Jung thought that such people would become more complete personalities if they could rediscover their own meaning as expressed in dream and imagination. For Jung, individuation is a natural process of maturation inherent in human beings and it is not just an analytic process. When the process of individuation is complete, that is when the conscious and unconscious have learned to live at peace and to complement one another and become whole, integrated, calm and happy.

Lema gives a particularly good example of this when she speaks of Sebastian's decision to have a sexual relationship with Foibe, who is a young girl. He is very conscious of what he is doing and even when the girl gets pregnant, as we have seen, he is aware, though she is not. So what Lema is saying is that it is the conscious mind of which we are generally aware, but that this is and this is constituted by events, memories, fantasies and the sensations from sense organs, along with the feelings and emotions which may have been repressed and which can only be accessed in certain ways.

The conscious mind is also known to be the gatekeeper of the mind. If someone tries to present us with a belief that does not match our belief system, then our conscious mind will filter that belief. The same will happen when someone criticises us or calls us names; our conscious mind will filter this statement to suggest that it is not true or applicable to us. When Foibe is giving more food to Godbless and other boys while starving herself and the girl, Doreen is conscious of that and shows that it was unfair: 'one day I said, "Let me" and took away the serving spoon from her hand and served food to everybody' (Lema, 2001, p. 86) That is the conscious mind at work. It is the gatekeeper of the mind.

In *Parched Earth*, Lema agrees with Freud that: 'the mental processes are essentially unconscious, and those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and part of the whole psychic entity' (Freud, 1969, p. 22). As we have seen, Freud introduced the threefold division of mind as the conscious mind, the pre-conscious mind, and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind is the part of the mind that is responsible for logic and reasoning. The conscious mind also controls all one's actions with intention while being conscious:

> The conscious mind is constituted by events, memories, fantasies, and the sensations from sense organs along with the feelings of emotions and the like, of which one is aware at the moment. (Pangestu & Sunardi, 2016, p. 21)

The novel tells of the incident of Foibe being dragged out of her parent's house because she is found to be pregnant. Her father, who is extremely strict, could not stand the shame brought into his house by his misbehaving daughter. It is too hard for Foibe to accept the terrible truth as she trudges along the path leading to great Aunt Mai's house, as Doreen explains:

> When grandfather ran mother out of the house like a mangy dog and grandmother stood aside and let him do it, she could not imagine that such a thing could happen! She had not found words, in that state of confusion and shock, to appeal to her mother's protection. Her mother had closed herself inside the house and let the father chase his daughter away. (Lema, 2001, p. 94)

The novel shows that the subconscious mind controls our emotions, and sometimes we feel afraid, anxious, or down without wanting to experience such a feeling, like Foibe's father. In the subconscious mind, our beliefs and memories are stored, and our affirmations make no sense and can never improve our beliefs. Affirmations are done on a conscious level and are always filtered by the unconscious mind, because they usually do not match our belief system. The right way to change a limiting belief is to convince the conscious mind logically to accept it so that it can pass to the subconscious mind, a part of consciousness of which we are not actively aware of in the moment, but that can influence us nonetheless, such as through things that are seen and heard or remembered.

Parched Earth presents Doreen as a girl who tries to live a different life. She is not very interested in boys. She tries to live according to the standards of her society though she suffers a lot with the daemon. She admits that: ‘love has its own forces that may hit one as in a storm, forces that are intricately linked but are not necessarily tied to the powerful secret between a girl’s legs’ (Lema, 2001, p. 81). Though the sexual urge is so powerful, Doreen tries to resist the temptation: ‘Doreen considers sex an integral part of a man-woman marital relationship. She seems to argue that one should only have sex with someone one loves’ (Mwaifuge, 2019, p. 165). Zima shows that he loves Doreen, but things are different on her part. She loves Martin instead, and she says: ‘I proceeded to vehemently deny duplicity’ (Lema, 2001, p. 37). Even the words she uses here – ‘vehemently’ and ‘duplicity’ – are redolent of her education and of the changes that this educative process has made to her character and to her sense of agency. Unlike her mother, she has knowledge and language and an awareness of the realities of life, and she is hence better able to look for equal treatment.

Freud claimed that our childhood events, especially the traumatic and all unpleasant events, are the ones that influence the unconscious. Martin’s childhood experience is very unpleasant: ‘I spent my youth with my mother and sister. My father left us when I was fifteen’ (Lema, 2001, p. 27). That experience of living without a father probably influenced him to work hard in school to help his mother and other siblings: ‘it was a pure miracle that I got an education. Pure miracle!’ (Lema, 2001, p. 27). These are exceedingly difficult and sad times, especially for children, and while as grownups they tend to forget, nevertheless the repressed memories are there and will return in different ways. So Lema would agree with Freud, who reasoned that everything forgotten by a patient must have been somehow distressing, alarming, painful, or shameful; however, they remained active in the unconscious: ‘any powerful impulse or instinct that was embarrassing continued to operate in the realm of the unconscious where it retained its full “cathexis” or investment of energy’ (Habib, 2005, p. 574). So, while those powerful impulses are repressed, they do not disappear but rather they just exist in another form because of the fact that energy is never lost but simply transformed to another form.

Parched Earth speaks of a daemon living in Doreen which disturbs her so much: ‘there was a living daemon inside me constantly pushing for action, for preoccupation of the mind. This daemon found residence in me when l left home to study teaching’ (Lema, 2001, p. 17). Doreen says that this daemon takes the form of a lingering loneliness that accompanies her everywhere she goes: ‘it was a quiet presence that seemed to threaten my sanity and sense of peace’ (Lema, 2001, p. 17). Doreen fights against this force in her as much as she can. In depicting this, Lema parallels what Freud’s idea that: ‘our greatest destructive and creative achievements originate from forces denied their natural release’ (Burns, 2006, p. 70). Doreen struggles a lot with this, she says: ‘I wilted, because of an unsatisfied urge that hurt like a scald. I never could fill that void with anything all the way into adulthood’ (Lema, 2001, p. 19).

Hence, blocked instinctual drives or repressed memories appear on the surface as non-existent, but they are there. In this case ‘repression does not eliminate our painful experiences and emotions . . . we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to “play out” our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress’ (Tyson, 2006, pp. 12-13). Lema has tried to express this from the point of view of the girl, Doreen, who has been struggling with this daemon:

> The sharp want for love became a small bubble in the deep inside where the daemon lived. So, when I was alone, as in the night, I felt the vacuum, the restlessness and the lack of the inner agitation that lent energy and intensity to the things I did. Such were the times when the living presence stirred in me. It seemed to rise from the inside place, floating in the body, arousing the urge to be held in loving arms and be touched and talked to. (Lema, 2001, p. 20)

Lema continues to show Doreen as being disturbed by sexual desires and her husband Martin goes to another woman. Doreen is overwhelmed by fear of losing her husband. That is why she says:

> Withdrawal started like a thick crack on the wall of our life. I watched it grow and widen. I was helpless, unable to mend something that I did not determine alone. He started coming late, armed with excuses – the workload in the office, the friends with a

> problem that only he could solve; the tiredness, first generally, then in bed; and finally, outright indifference. (Lema, 2001, p. 150)

In principle, psychoanalysis holds that the desires in a person are reflected on a considerably basic level while at the same time they involve fear of loss (loss of genitals, loss of affection from parents, loss of life) and repression: ‘the expunging from consciousness of these unhappy psychological events’ (Tyson, 2006, p. 15). It is this part that exerts the most influence upon our behaviour, and all the answers to our behaviour and actions lie in this hidden, inaccessible area that makes up four fifths of the mind. That is why this novel, *Parched Earth*, evidences that, as has already been suggested, ‘all art forms are largely products of unconscious forces at work in the author, in the reader, or, for some contemporary psychoanalytic critics, in our society as a whole’ (Tyson, 2006, p. 37). Lema’s methods attempt to use various psychoanalytic techniques to examine the powerful influence of the unconscious part of the mind on an individual’s behaviour.

Life teaches Doreen that her mother is poor. When she is grown and going to school, she learns that her mother used to go and work in other people’s farms for money:

> A girl in my class revealed this to me after l had badly defeated her in a game. She took defeat badly and in her moment of shame and Doreen’s one of pride, she remembered something that brightened her mood. She said: ‘My mother said your mother is poor and you are also poor. Therefore, she gave her the sugar and rice yesterday.’ (Lema, 2001, p. 13)

Doreen had nothing to say. The abuse she had inflicted in her was so heavy: ‘The pride of winning the game went down my throat with pain. Why did she call me poor? What crime had I committed? I became very careful afterwards’ (Lema, 2001, p. 13). That experience did not disappear like that. It was so traumatic that it helped Doreen change her life. Freud says that all such experiences are stored in the unconscious part of the mind, especially those experiences of a traumatic or unpleasant nature like the one Doreen experienced above.

Feminist Interpretations of *Parched Earth*

Africa has been a home for feminism for many years as so many of the African women who are now seen a significant figures were/are feminists: ‘women’s activism began to surface in the middle of the 20th century, facilitated by the increasing independence of many African nations’ (Ozoya M. I., 2017, p. 308). Although the term ‘feminism’ is basically an import to Africa, just like all other English words are, the concept of opposing patriarchy is not foreign because Africa had already some of the oldest civilizations in the world. Though they did not always call it ‘feminism’ as a noun, as far back as we can trace, we know that some women were feminist already in practice and found ways of opposing patriarchy. Feminism is an important part of African women’s story.

The African feminist movement today has to do with grassroots activism as well as forms of intellectual activism. Such pragmatic feminism involves engaging with daily issues such as violence prevention in homes, the lifestyle they want to live, reproductive rights, poverty reduction, as well as expressing their concerns about issues regarding popular culture, media, art, and culture. ‘African feminists…and politicians such as Leymah Gbowee, Joyce Banda and Simphiwe Dana’ (Salami, 2013), are working hard to improve the situation. The movement has indeed developed in policy, legislation, scholarship and in the cultural realm.

In recent years however there is an increase of awareness of the rights of women to the extent that today, African feminist writers such as Elieshi Lema:

> as well as feminist organisations such as the African Feminist Forum and the African Gender Institute are at the forefront of using activism, knowledge and creativity to change situations that affect women negatively. (Salami, 2013)

The truth is that the current situation disadvantages women enormously. Women are still being systemically marginalised within both local and global societies. That is why Elieshi Lema has written her novel *Parched Earth* in order to attempt to reshape the narrative of African womanhood.

Parched Earth is a novel that tells of women coming of age, while being set against the structures of patriarchy, and it is told in a style full of suggestive imagery, which underlies different feminist themes. The novel is psychologically convincing, and is centred on the life of a girl, the main character Doreen, who is born into a matriarchal household in a rural area in Tanzania. It tells of Doreen's rise from a village girl to a primary school teacher: 'I grew up, left home and went to a boarding school and later became a Primary school teacher' (Lema, 2001, p. 9). As a young teacher, Doreen's mind is wondering here and there: 'and all the time my head is telling itself stories. My stories, your stories, our stories' (Lema, 2001, p. 3). Her inner life and development mirror her life's passage in education, career, the town she comes from, her married life and motherhood, full of strife and hardships:

> We live in a world, my mind says, which is very strange. Always new, always surprising. In this world we are all trying to draw a circle of comfort around ourselves, rarely, every one of themselves, rarely, very rarely for the other. The struggle to remain in this circle creates a matrix in which we travel, sometimes blindly, because our consciousness is often colored by the primacy of our own desires. Sometimes finding the road, pushed by a fleeting conscience. (Lema, 2001, p. 3)

The book is the first Tanzanian English novel written by a woman that expresses female experiences under patriarchy from a woman's perspective. Lema takes this opportunity to clarify what is patriarchy:

> It is a social system which has defined how men and women will relate in all spheres of life, including private life, right down to the way we love and have sex. It has determined how a father, brother, husband, uncle will treat the woman-wife, sister, mother, and daughter related to them. It is an ideology that has given the man the authority to decide, to act to give or withhold, to access or retain anything, really, almost everything. It is complex. It is a web in which, ultimately, even those privileged can become victims. (Lema, 2001, p. 182)

Feminist theory covers a range of different ideas, all of which stem from the belief that society is basically patriarchal, structured by men and is there to favour men. In addition to that, our traditional ways of thinking in many ways support the subordination of women and the neglect or undermining of issues particularly affecting women, and these are taken for granted by many in societies. So, this patriarchal order needs be destabilised and replaced with a system that stresses equality for both sexes.

Parched Earth expresses what culture is like for women as women, as compared to what the world is like for men as men. Lema describes a culture where women are treated differently to men, to their structural disadvantage. She depicts Foibe Seko, a single mother left on her own by the men who gave her children, and who then never cared for the children they left with her, and she struggles alone as Doreen her daughter explains:

> I worked hard as a young girl. Hard work was a practical lesson I internalised just by watching my mother. She was always up by five in the morning and would drag us both out of bed at six. We were hardly able to see anything at such an early hour, we would still be sleepy. (Lema, 2001, p. 9)

Lema claims that such treatment is cultural and thus possible to change and not simply 'the way the world is and must be'; Lema, in her feminist struggles, looks to a different culture as possible, and values moving towards that culture, and she shares that with her readers as she invites all in the struggle. This is because for Lema, feminism consists of activism, individually and in groups, to make personal and social change towards that more desirable culture; a culture which advocates or supports the rights and equality of women and men.

Lema questions the idea of gender roles and wonders how early our societies start to invent such roles. In support of this idea, she speaks of Godbless a boy in the family and his dreams of being an important person who is successful in life:

> I will buy mother good cloths and build her a big house and give her lots of money. I will be a big person then.' Mother was a part of his dreams. He would say those words to me, as if appealing for my understanding and complicity, like a promise to which I had to stand witness. (Lema, 2001, pp. 7-8)

That is how boys are raised up, to think that they are important, and they always aim high, while the girls are not raised up with such dreams:

> I did not have a dream. I could not fashion one from my mind and build it up and act it out like Godbless did. My mind had not started telling itself stories yet, had not started weaving dreams like one knits a nicely patterned sweater from wool. All I could imagine was cooking, washing, and taking care of my brothers. (Lema, 2001, p. 8)

While Godbless thinks of being a minister, Doreen sees her future is just being in the kitchen or to be a helper of Godbless:

> When he acted as a minister, I wanted to be someone going along with the minister. It was Godbless who spoke and knew just what to do. He knew how to be authoritative, and in the believe, he made me obey him. (Lema, 2001, p. 9)

Lema challenges this idea of bringing up boys as seeming to be more special children than girls: boys have big dreams, girls have none. While boys dream that way, all girls could imagine was cooking, washing, and taking care of children at home. This reminds me of when as a boy as when I was playing football with my friends, my sisters were busy with house chores. What Lema claims here is that in a patriarchal society, this idea of gender roles is instilled in people’s hearts from an exceedingly early stage of life and in various ways. While boys play with toy helicopters, girls play with dolls; how would girls turn out to be revolutionary engineers if they are not given the chance to explore helicopters? Similarly in terms of colours, traditionally pink is for girls, while blue is for boys. This is how society starts to invent what a boy should be and what a girl should be from very early in the lives of children. This in most cases leads to parents telling girls ‘don’t do this’ or ‘stop and be nice’, whereas boys are encouraged to explore more and are not told to ‘be nice’. Girls are given less room and more rules whereas boys are given more room and fewer rules.

Such kinds of injustices are the ones that provoked Mary Wollstonecraft after the French Revolution, to claim that the ideals of the Revolution and Enlightenment should be extended to women. She wanted to revolutionise society because to her mind, the time had come for women to receive all the same social privileges as men, and to become equal members of society. This will only make things better because women would be prepared and also be able to contribute more productively to modern society. Lema, like Wollstonecraft, believes that there is a need for changing things because it is not fair to punish a woman for events like not having a baby boy in a family and treating a man as if he has no share in the care of a child. That is what destroyed the marriage of Doreen and Martin. Martin wants a baby boy, and he demands that Doreen should give him one: ‘But why can’t you get pregnant, Doreen? What is wrong with you?’ (Lema, 2001, p. 148). This is a very unfair question to Doreen. Martin seems to exempt himself from that blame and he pushes all of the responsibility on Doreen. But both have: ‘to walk that bridge into each other, where a mystical touch between human seeds would take form and breath and spirit’ (Lema, 2001, p. 149).

Like Wollstonecraft, Lema again considers that: ‘women should enjoy social, legal, and intellectual equality with men and drew support from the work of progressive social philosophers’ (Castle, 2007, p. 94). Such were the efforts made by women in making sure that they should be given due respect and be treated well, just like men in society. That is why Lema is seen to be very much in favour of Wollstonecraft’s idea of revolutionising society for women arguing that they should have all the privileges that men have. That is why she purposely describes Doreen as choosing her husband without telling anyone from her family:

> I think the announcement that I had branched off, without notice, to start a new life with a man, a total stranger to them, opened a new chapter in our lives. Suddenly the cluster that we were had come loose and the security of the entity came under threat. We were never to be the same people again. (Lema, 2001, pp. 91-92)

This was such a slap on the face for her family and society, that her mother shed tears and Godbless was speechless: ‘you just decided to go to a husband’ (Lema, 2001, p. 87). Autoethnography fits in well here since it is one of the research methods that accommodates and acknowledges emotionalism, subjectivity and the researcher’s influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they do not exist. While Doreen’s family and society feel suffocated due to her decision to make the choice of her lover independently, Doreen feels that doing what the family and society want is suffocating, because she says:

> Our life was characterised by cluster instinct, for survival. It was sharpened, lived, like one must breathe in oxygen for the lungs and the brain to work and life regenerated within the body as a continuum. (Lema, 2001, p. 92)

That is the reason why Lema echoes Wollstonecraft when she says: ‘It is time to effect a revolution in female manners – time to restore to them their lost dignity’ (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 47). Enough is enough, things must be done in a different way that will give women peace, happiness, dignity, and justice.

In *Parched Earth*, Lema argues that for too long women have been victims of a patriarchal system and have suffered much. They are deprived of their basic rights such as education and financial independence. Lema in a way disputes the situation by depicting Doreen, who had no big dreams, to be the one who passes exams and goes for further studies and gets a job:

> I grew up, left home and went to a boarding secondary school and later became a teacher. It was initially exhilarating, being on my own, with my own room, doing a job with a salary! It felt so new, for a time. My letters to Godbless, talking about the good life of teacher education, must have crushed his hurt to a stone. That life was supposed to be his! He was the man of the house, the male child of the family, the name carrier. But he did not write any of those things in his replies. (Lema, 2001, p. 9)

In this way, Lema successfully enters a struggle against a male ideology which condemns women to virtual silence and obedience, and a male literary establishment that poured scorn on their literary endeavours. Through her fiction, she creates a character who, though a woman, achieves all that was traditionally expected of a man. In this sense she is gradually changing that Lacanian mirror image through which the individual sees herself: Doreen is now part of a process where she will become an ideal ego for other young African women who read about her and then desire to emulate her. And thus, change is gradually seeded and developed.

The depiction of women in male literature as angels, goddesses, whores, obedient wives, and mother figures was not genuine, but rather a means of perpetuating these ideologies of gender. With that knowledge, Lema provides in *Parched Earth*, a contrast to that viewpoint: what if we look at the same women from a different point of view? Lema presents to her readers the same women with what is thought to be their short comings in a positive way. For example, there is Foibe Seko who is not married and gets pregnant and is forced to seek refuge, or her Aunty Mai who is also depicted as a strong, hardworking woman who raises four children on her own. She teaches them the value of work:

> Mother initiated me into the world of work. As soon as our hands were big enough to hold it, mother gave Godbless and me a hoe and we cultivated the food we ate. We would work behind her, digging holes for seeds or shaking the earth from the grass so that the farm was clean of weeds and ready for planting. (Lema, 2001, p. 10)

On the other hand, Doreen, who marries without informing or seeking the permission of her parents, is an intelligent girl who achieves a lot more than her brother: ‘I grew up, left home and went to a boarding secondary school and later became a teacher’ (Lema, 2001, p. 9). She is educated and has a job; at work, the headmaster, speaking of Doreen says: ‘Doreen is the best and the most hard-working teacher this school has ever had’ (Lema, 2001, p. 15). In this way Lema addresses the issue that mistakes are part and parcel of life. Everyone makes them and we should always learn from them, but they should never be taken as a reason for undermining others, because those we undermine have other qualities that are equally important in life. Lema here fights against the cultural and economic disabilities in a patriarchal society that have hindered or prevented women from realising their creative possibilities and also against women’s cultural identification as a merely negative object, or ‘Other,’ to man as the defining and dominating subject.

Today, people like Elieshi Lema and other feminist literary critics have successfully challenged these perceptions, and many more women now than ever before teach, interpret, evaluate, and theorise about literature. People look at things in a different way:

> For that reason, canonical ways of doing and writing research advocate for a white, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper-classed, Christian, able-bodied perspective, disregarding other ways of knowing, and rendering them as unsatisfactory and invalid. (Ellis, et al., 2011)

Moreover, a new movement, 'gender studies,' has evolved out of feminist studies to address broader issues; notably, the nature of femininity and masculinity, the differences within each gender, and the literary treatment of men and homosexuals. This theoretical position has the aim of making change by denouncing and refusing to accept the cult of masculine superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex and a submissive other. Lema exposes such unfair treatment of women by rejecting stereotypes and thoroughly examining the lives of women in homes and presents the issues that disturb them as themes in *Parched Earth*. We can see this when Doreen complains about her mother: 'why should she love the boys more and not care enough for me?' (Lema, 2001, p. 89) This was seen in the apportioning of the food which was her mother's duty:

> Godbless always got the most pieces of meat, larger amounts of sour milk and the largest portion of stew. And of all the children, I got the least. Of all of us, mother got the smallest portion, always making sure that there was some food left in the pot. This, she later gave to Alfred who never refused food, or to Samson, but rarely to me. (Lema, 2001, pp. 83-84)

Doreen feels bad and wants to correct this injustice. So: 'one day I said, "Let me" and took away the serving spoon from her hand and served food to everybody' (Lema, 2001, p. 86). Doreen also admits that sometimes she has been supporting such things without knowing, but what is important is that she corrects:

> I realised that I had supported my mother in upholding a system of favouritism I had been unaware of. I was her accomplice in this process of shaping life building attitudes and manners even without my knowledge. (Lema, 2001, p. 85)

Elieshi Lema in this is political in that she argues for the fair representation and treatment of women. The breaking of silence with regard to unfair treatment comes in a small way here, but it is the accretive power of small gestures that will bring about lasting change. She wishes that men and women should live together equitably and harmoniously.

Lema is not waging a war in support of women's concerns from nowhere. She is following in the tradition of other feminist critics, such as Simone de Beauvoir with her work *The Second Sex* (1949) and Kate Millet's work *Sexual Politics* (1970). Like them, Lema shows how what is done by women is ignored and degraded in contrast with what is supposed to be done by men. Doreen's father runs away from his responsibilities, and leaves everything to their mother, who suffers alone to raise those children as Doreen attests when she is responding to her children who are laughing at her mother working in people's fields to get food: 'I did not want to declare that I had no father, particularly because he was not dead, because like being poor, it was an embarrassment' (Lema, 2001, p. 84). A similar situation happens between Godbless and his sister Doreen at home, when, despite the fact that Godbless is the eldest in the family, all the chores are entrusted to Doreen, yet Godbless is given the lion's share when it comes to eating and Doreen says: 'I never questioned why mother left the house to me to manage and care for others even when I was not the eldest' (Lema, 2001, p. 85).

By exposing such kinds of maltreatment, Lema spotlights and criticises the unjustly distorted and limited representation of women in various spheres of life, and even in some works of literature by well-known male authors, and how their works laid the foundation for the 'images of women' approach. This was challenged by some feminist theorists:

> In the immediate post war period, Simone de Beauvoir stood alone in her fierce opposition to an image of woman in the home and in relation to men. De Beauvoir provided an existentialist dimension to feminism with the publication of *Le Deuxieme*

> *Sexe* (*The Second Sex*) in 1949. As the title implies, the starting point is the implicit inferiority of women, and the first question de Beauvoir asks is 'what is a woman?' (Tandon, 2008, p. 10)

In *Parched Earth*, Lema offers a good example of how best we can celebrate realistic representations of women and bring to light neglected works by and about women. She seeks to expose the politics of self-interest that always lead people to create stereotypical and false images of women.

The novel expresses that women have similar experiences because of the equivalent treatment they receive from men. So Lema argues that, when a woman writes or speaks about the experiences of women, she stands a better chance of representing women in a genuine and fairer manner. In this way Lema concurs with the approach which Elaine Showalter called 'gynocriticism.' In her own words, Showalter says:

> No English term exists for such a specialized critical discourse, and so I have invented the term 'gynocritics.' Unlike the feminist critique, gynocritics offers many theoretical opportunities. To see women's writing as our primary subject forces us to make the leap to a new conceptual vantage point and to redefine the nature of the theoretical problem before us. (Showalter, 1981, p. 185)

Showalter urges women to become familiar with female authors, to listen to what they say and to discover in it their own female language, a language that supposedly enters the subconscious before the 'patriarchal' language of the dominant culture. Lema shows this in the novel when she depicts a scene of Doreen and her friend in school:

> close to the end of term, one shy and thin girl said, 'sometimes I hate home.' 'Why?' several girls chanted. 'Agh, I just hate it,' she said again. And the girls started… 'It's my father. He demands all the meat in the food and only gives some to my brothers and never to us girls. Mother does everything he says. It is not really the food as such, but I just hate it'. …then the echo of that declaration opened a flood. The dormitory came awake: 'Men have such big stomachs! They are gluttons. They are unkind. So selfish!' (Lema, 2001, p. 84)

Lema here shows that the girl who is complaining speaks in an experiential language which can be understood well by other women, much more so than by men, because these girls have all experienced similar situations from men in their different homes; one takes her own experience at home to understand the entire culture and this is what autoethnography allows us to study, namely where author's own experience is used as an exemplary text through which to understand aspects of the entire culture. So, what is said appeals more to these girls in a way that would be totally inadmissible to men. Therefore, gynocritics urges women to become familiar with female author's works and language. In *Parched Earth*, we see women speaking in their own female language, and not the 'patriarchal' language of the dominant culture. That is why a feminist approach is used to dig deep down and draw much more meaning from texts.

As a feminist, Lema poses the challenge in a very artistic way to her audience, and at the same time, invites them softly to employ feminist principles to critique the male-dominated society and politics of feminism, with the aim of making them look at women from a new perspective, and so recognise women's contributions to their societies. In feminist criticism:

> Theorists examine the language and symbols that are used and how that language and use of symbols is 'gendered.' Others remind us that men and women write differently and analyze how the gender of the author affects how literature is written. (Appleman, 2007)

In *Parched Earth*, Lema aims at reinterpreting the old texts for the purpose of establishing the importance of women's writing in order to save it from being ignored or from being swallowed up in the male-dominated world. By so doing, she strikes a balance between female perspectives and male perspectives.

Parched Earth's content maintains that in patriarchal cultures, women's oppression has gone on for ages in such a way that it is tied directly to the traditional system of male dominance at the head of the family, while leaving women with grave social, economic, political and psychological effects. Feminist theorists invite us: 'to pay particular attention to the patterns of thought, behaviour, values, and power in those relationships' (Appleman, 2007). Most of these would focus on biological differences and physical strength, and as a result, women are often granted few decision-making powers and are considered as secondary and sometimes are regarded as evil. Doreen explains this when she speaks of her mother:

> Mother found out that she was different from her brothers. That when they both engage in sex, nothing would happen to them, because their bodies did not hold and nature babies, and in so being, nature exempts them from shame! And then, mother further leant, that by just being pregnant, her own parents could be ashamed of her and because they could not relate to shame, they could chase her away without remorse. (Lema, 2001, p. 94)

So, what Lema wants us to realise is that this view is seen in many books and genres of literature across cultures and societies. Even some religious books position women as the cause of sin and death, and a classic example of this trope is the story of Adam and Eve, in which Eve causes the first man and woman's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. This to a certain extent depends very much on who writes the story and who reads the story. Therefore, Deborah Appleman claims that:

> Feminist literary theory also suggests that the gender of the reader often affects our response to a text. For example, feminist critics may claim that certain male writers address their readers as if they were all men and exclude the female reader. (Appleman, 2007)

So, stereotypical representations of genders are at the core of feminist critical concerns. Though many ideas can be considered through a feminist lens, basically feminist criticism not only strives to examine and understand gender politics in works but also traces the subtle construction of masculinity and femininity within literary works. That is why:

> Many feminist critics look at how the characters, especially the female characters, are portrayed and ask us to consider how the portrayal of female characters 'reinforces or undermines' sexual stereotypes. (Appleman, 2007)

The main claim of feminist critics is that in every domain where patriarchy reigns, a woman is the 'other'*:* she is objectified and marginalised, defined only by her difference from male norms and values, and by what she (allegedly) lacks, but which men (allegedly) possess. They also embrace the idea that women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically, and argue that patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept in forms and modes of inequality.

In *Parched Earth*, Lema examines the various forms of systematic inequalities that lead to the oppression of marginalised individuals in her society. She not only looks at class inequalities as the axis of oppression, but she also explores gender inequalities as the basis of oppression in patriarchal society. In this way, she incorporates ideas of Marxist feminism in her work:

> Marxist feminism must 'explore the relations between the organization of sexuality, domestic production . . . and historical changes in the mode of production and systems of appropriation and exploitation.' Such an approach will stress the 'relations between capitalism and the oppression of women'. (Habib, 2005, p. 693)

Lema, like other Marxist feminists, holds that gender inequality is not only a distinct feature of capitalist society, but also is a product of the tendency of capitalism to shift costs for social care onto the private family, wherein men shift things like childcare services or other forms of care to women. Doreen attests this as she says: 'I did not want to declare that I had no father, particularly because he was not dead, because like being poor, it was an embarrassment' (Lema, 2001, p. 84). Doreen's father never took responsibility to helping the mother to take care of the children. This is what made me question the contribution of my father in working in the farm which was our major means of production in the family. This situation made the children and the mother suffer even for considerably basic things, as Doreen says:

> My mother often starved herself so that we could eat! When there was too little food, it was she who did without and I with extraordinarily little. Then I would eat *ukoko*, the hard burnt food at the bottom of the pot This, mother would put on top of a little good food. (Lema, 2001, p. 84)

That is how Doreen's father ran away from his responsibilities and made the children and the mother suffer. Lema shows that such responsibilities are shifted to women to perform unpaid labour in the home. This relieves men (the capitalist) of having to pay for services and that helps them generate more capital over time.

Women for years had no control over their fertility, so they were bearing children and nursing them at home. This automatically ruled them out of the paid labour force, leaving men only to win favour in the labour market while women remained the only disadvantaged:

> Much Marxist feminism works on an analogy with use-value, exchange-value, and surplus-value relationships. Marx's own writings on women and children seek to alleviate their condition in terms of a desexualized labour force. (Spivak, 1998, p. 106)

Lema focuses on this point even more, as she shows that women experience different effects from the same act they do together with men:

> Mother found out that she was different from her brothers. That when they both engage in sex, nothing would happen to them, because their bodies did not hold and nature babies, and in so being, nature exempts them from shame! (Lema, 2001, p. 94)

What Spivak and Lema attempt to demonstrate here is that, for the work force to be able to continue working in a patriarchal society, it must be fed, have clean clothes and children must be raised to produce a new generation of workers. All these jobs are done by disadvantaged women at home, because men must earn wages for them to live. This is exactly what happened in my family where what my father was earning didn't really help the family, whereas my mother worked hard in the fields, where about ninety percent of what we depended on came from. My personal experiences have influenced this research process in various ways. In this paradigm, what women are doing at home is not counted as work by either society or the economy, and most of the time is taken for granted.

Lema looks at the solution of the problem for women, which is not only for women to be accepted in the working-class population, because even after being accepted, they are still in the 'double day': that is women simply finish the paid work to begin the home care work. Doreen attests to this as her neighbouring women come to see her as a housewife and a teacher, with the aim of orienting her into what it takes to be a housewife. She says: ‘They gave me tips on how to balance the needs of being both a teacher and a woman who was settling into housewifery’ (Lema, 2001, p. 156). Lema sees that this must change, and Marxist feminism is a tool that can bring change in the lives of women socially and economically:

> It sought to extend Marxism’s analysis of class into a women’s history of their material and economic oppression, and especially of how the family and women’s domestic labour are constructed by and reproduce the sexual division of labour. (Selden & Widdowson, 1985, p. 125)

Therefore, Lema creates *Parched Earth* as a platform whereby we can apply a Marxist feminist framework, not only to transform the conditions of women, but also to release them from exploitation, oppression and more importantly, to liberate them from all unjust treatment. This is dismantling the capitalist system in which they contend much of women’s labour.

Parched Earth focuses on inequalities between the sexes for the purpose of elevating women’s status in society and giving them equal rights like that of education and so do away with the mentality that boys only are the ones entitled to education while the girls stay at home. Ann Sofia-Rothschild note the originary status of Mary Wollstonecraft in this mode of critique:

> Mary Wollstonecraft’s book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was written as a response to the proposed state-supported system of public education that would, according to Mary Wollstonecraft, allow women ‘to remain in ignorance, and slavish dependence’. (Sofia-Rothschild, 2009, p. 9)

Like Wollstonecraft, Lema disputes, not only the stereotyping of women in domestic roles, and the failure to regard women as individuals, but also, the failure to educate girls and women to use their intellect. Lema depicts Doreen going to the secondary and getting a job, whereas Godbless does not pass exams and stays at home: ‘he was the man of the house, the male child of the family, the name carrier’ (Lema, 2001, p. 9). Lema changes things upside down just to show that it is also possible for a girl child to achieve high in a family.

Parched Earth is also campaigning for women's sexual and reproductive rights, and to succeed in this campaign, there is a need for solidarity and a sense of working together, so Lema sees that there is a need for seeking sisterhood and team spirit among women. That is how Lema depicts Aunt Mai as Doreen says: 'when my curiosity to understand in depth something she said was raised to an aching point, I went to Great Aunt Mai. She was an oasis' (Lema, 2001, p. 50). Aunt Mai was always there to help. Again, the female neighbours are ready to help Doreen to be a good wife: 'they quite rightly wanted to orient me in what it takes to be a housewife, a good one' (Lema, 2001, p. 159). In this way, Lema corresponds with Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and so she shows sisterhood in practice because she believes that: 'the practice of solidarity foregrounds communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together (Mohanty, 2003, p. 7). It is easier to win when efforts are joined in a struggle. That is why Mohanty clarifies this even more by saying that: 'reflective solidarity is crafted by an interaction involving three persons: "I ask you to stand by me over and against a third"' (Mohanty, 2003, p. 7). Like Mohanty, Lema instigates a concentrated effort to rid society top-to-bottom of sexism because:

> History has shown that when the oppressed organise to fight back they can inspire mass movements of opposition, but if they remain focused on a single issue they come up against the limits of existing society. We must be part of every fight against the manifestations of women's oppression but all the time with a vision of how we can win a society free from oppression altogether. (Orr, 2010, p. 28)

Lema rejects the mentality that because she is a woman, she cannot pass exams: Doreen passes exams; she rejects the mentality that because she is a woman her only employment is to be a housewife: Doreen becomes a teacher: 'I grew up, left home and went to a boarding secondary school and later became a teacher' (Lema, 2001, p. 9). Lema rejects sexuality and reproduction as reasons of oppression. This idea is substantiated by Simone de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter who established the philosophical groundwork for feminist theories and helped them spread more broadly. Studies which built upon Simone de Beauvoir's work pioneered the claim that: 'sexuality and reproduction were the reasons for women's oppression and treated women's fertility both as a symbolic and a material corner stone in a male dominated society' (Norris & Knellwolf, 2008, p. 202). Therefore, *Parched Earth* and a good number of other feminist works highlight that the idea of women's inferiority is embedded at the very structural levels of syntax and semantics; it is expressed both as a part of what is said and of how it is said. Language enforces gender difference, while autoethnography in this research helps people understand how the kinds of people we claim, or are perceived to be, influence interpretations of what we study, how we study it, and what we say about our topic and so expands and opens a wider lens on the world, avoiding rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research. This ethnographic study, therefore, involves highly personalized accounts where my own experiences are used to extend understanding of the relationship between men and women or the entire African culture.

Conclusion

This research conducted a detailed study to investigate the hidden sufferings of African women in everyday life that take place in homes and in society. The main base of this qualitative research is the idea that reality and truth are constructed and shaped by the way in which people interact with their surroundings. The chosen texts, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga; *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; and Parched *Earth* by Elieshi Lema, were seen as exemplary ones, wherein broader issues were exemplified in the actions of specific characters and in the manner in which these stories were narrated.

Feminism and psychoanalyses were used in order to offer a deeper understanding of the themes and scope of the books, and to show how silence as a trope is sustained across all three books. These theoretical lenses also allowed for a sharper focus on societal constructions, and on the value of fiction to portray truths that perhaps are not available in normative political discourses.

The study has examined things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The work has taken a humanistic stance, whereby the chosen texts have been theoretically to allow personal narratives, experiences and opinions to be important signifiers of the role of African women.

The conclusion reached is that these books, while fiction, reveal a truth, namely that that most of African women's miseries are usually covered, suppressed, silenced, and taken for granted, not only by men but also by some women and by societies in general. Such experiences are largely unvoiced, and any efforts to voice them are technically silenced by the patriarchal system thus causing trauma within women. This study means shows that fiction is a very strong way of voicing the unvoiced, and of offering a different set of experiences to increasingly educated generations of young African women, and indeed men, as a way of achieving change in society in the future.

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