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Psychological Undercurrents in Parent-Child Relationship in African Literature

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Abstract

Psychoanalysis is said to be one of the most controversial but fascinating and rewarding approaches in appreciating literature. This approach has become one of the mechanisms to find out the hidden meaning of a literary text. The focus is usually on the unconscious or subconscious rather than on the conscious mind. It is hinged on the foundational perspective that a person's behaviour is determined by experiences from the past that are placed in the unconscious mind as propounded by Freud. This study examines how three selected African texts portray the relationship that exists between parents and their children, which is usually conflictual as a result of their different ideologies to life. The study further looks at forms in which these conflicts occur and the psychological implications it has on both parties. The research will be descriptive and qualitative, exploring, analyzing and explaining certain behavioural traits and outbursts in characters in the purposefully selected literary texts, using the psychoanalytical theory.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, parenting, laxity, conflict and ideology

Introduction

Psychoanalysis helps us to understand culture, philosophy, religion and most importantly literature; it is not simply a branch of medicine. Freud started his psychoanalytic work in the 1800s while trying to treat behavioural disorders in patients. He organized these events into developmental stages involving relationships with parents and drives of desire and pleasure. These stages deal with base levels of desire, but they also involve fear of loss, loss of affection from parents and repression.

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To keep conflict buried in the unconscious, Freud argues that defenses are developed: selective memory, selective perception, denial, displacement, projection, regression, fear of intimacy and fear of death. He maintained that our desires and unconscious conflicts give rise to three areas of the mind; the Id; the location of drives also known as libido, Ego, which is one of the major defenses against the power of the drives and Superego, which is the area of the unconscious that houses judgement which wrestle for dominance as we grow from infancy, childhood to adulthood.

That the family crucially affects the self is a commonplace social scientific assumption not limited to psychoanalysis. Baumrind's (1966, 1975, 1991 & 2013) research into authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles illustrates how developmental psychologists have sought to clarify the tie between parenting and the traits of children. During the first years of life parents assume special importance in the lives of their children. They guide their young children from complete infantile dependence into the beginning stages of autonomy. This process is called parental socialization and socialization refers to the process of inheriting norms, customs, values, and ideologies. Parents' styles of care giving can have both immediate and lasting effects on children's social functioning in areas of moral development, to peer play, to academic achievement (Bornstein 2007: 16). Interpersonal relationship has exceptional developmental implications for humans everywhere, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status and geographic boundaries (Duck 1994: 90). For children, parent-child relation is important. Parenting represents both a universal, if not taken for granted, feature of everyday family life and individual autobiographical experience; it also varies markedly across different cultural, social, and historical contexts. Implicated in process of psychological development and intergenerational influence, parenting is fundamental to human survival as well as to processes of cultural transmission and change. This research deals with the quality of parent-child interactions that relates to parental acceptance-rejection theory. Parental acceptance theory is a theory of socialization that attempts to predict and explain world-wide causes and other correlates of parental acceptance-rejection. Additionally, the theory attempts to predict and explain the consequences of acceptance and rejection in other primary interpersonal relationships, including intimate adult relationship. In particular, personality postulates that rejected children are likely to feel anxious and insecure which can also lead to hostility, aggression, passive aggression or problems with the management of hostility and aggression, dependence or defensive independence, impaired self-esteem, impaired self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness emotional instability and negative world view.

Parent-Child Relationship

The structure and quality of relationships between family members are fundamental elements of family functioning and a major influence on the well-being of parents and children. The introduction of the world comes through a primary group: the family; it is the institution wherein one has most contact and the one from which one traditionally receives the most emotional support. We depend on family for our early nurturance and socialization. Societies depend on families to carry out certain vital functions, such as socialization of the young and regulation of sexual activities. Family relationships between wife and husband, parents and children, brothers and sisters or more distant relatives can be warm and fulfilling but they equally can be full of the most extreme tension, driving its members to despair and imbuing them with a deep sense of anxiety and guilt. Individuals need relationships in which their identity can continue to develop; they need privacy, flexible roles, especially that which incorporate individual change.

Communication has been discovered as an essential tool in relationships. In a society, for instance Africa, relationships are not taken for granted. As human beings, we have individual differences and usually like it to be respected. In this respect, anyone involved in a particular relationship who tries to impose his ideas or opinions on the other may not be helping their relationship. The ability of one to satisfy the other's needs goes a long way in strengthening their relationship, but in a situation whereby these needs cannot be met, it is seen as maltreatment of the person directly involved. The neglect of needs in a relationship does a lot of harm to that relationship. Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), and Khaled Hosseni's *The Kite Runner* (2003) present a unique spin on parent-child relationship. In *Beloved*, the novel's protagonist, Sethe, exceptionally complicates parent-child relationship: she never knew her mother well because she was separated from her early in life because of slavery which marred their relationship, in *The Kite Runner*, Amir has a very complex relationship with Baba, as much as Amir loves Baba, he rarely feels Baba loves him back. His desire to win Baba's love motivates him not to stop Hassan's rape.

Parental demands provoke rebelliousness especially due to parent's pressure, rather than being cowed. There is a conflict between the old as constituted by James in Graft's *Sons & Daughters* (1964) and the young as represented by Aaron and Maanan. The children deal on choosing career for a living and choosing career for its passion. With the erroneous assumption that his children were not yet capable of making wise decisions about their future careers, James insists in doing it for them as he successfully did for his first two sons. "... he actually believes that he

chose their professions for them…we the two youngest of his children, who must just fit in with his plans and obey his every command- we dare to find fault with his choice, we disobey him (9). Aaron sees himself as unlucky for being part of the Ofosu's family, but concludes that the best way to survive is to fight back, similarly Maanan's love for dancing is rejected by her father which makes her constantly unhappy and "…fed up of life" (Habila 10). She is not only tired of life but loses her morals and respect when she unguardedly speaks to her eldest brother George about being the cause of making their father feel so swell and important because he is a medical doctor which is a respectable profession.

Laxity has also been proven to be instrumental to a slack in parent-child relationship, and it typically involves a failure on the requisite party to provide the basic needs of food, care, shelter, protection, supervision and love; laxity could be physical, verbal or emotional. Parenting is an important obligation not only for parents but the entire society at large. With the high rate of crime, delinquency, poverty and all sorts of oddities in the society, occasioned by Western influences like ICT, films, television, internet viewing and other socialization agencies, there is dire need for parents to contribute meaningfully to the physical, health, academic, moral, spiritual as well as psychological development of children. Children need proper guidance and counseling from their parents. In Habila's *Measuring Time* (2007) Lamang, the father of the twin Mamo and LaMamo exemplifies neglectful parenting. Lamang's wife had died as the twin came into the world. Lamang, busy with business and philandering, gives the boy first to his brother's wife's aunty Marina who parented them until they were three years old. One day, he unceremoniously takes the twins dumping them on his sister's aunty Marina, who becomes their surrogate mother. Lamang is a distant father who is more interested in chasing women and a political career than being a father.

The boys grow to love and respect aunty Marina because of the physical, emotional and health care she gives them, especially to Mamo, who suffers from sickle-cell, the distance between them and their father grows wider, hence their desire to run always from home. Lamang spends about a week at home every month and whenever he comes back he looks at his children in astonishment. As if remembering suddenly that he had two sons. He struggles to remember their names and when he does remember, he always mixes them up, even though they are not identical. Although Lamang has limited time for his children, he has a soft spot for LaMamo thus he always has friction with Mamo. When Mamo tells his father that he wants to travel with his brother to Timbuktu, Lamang attempts a small, carefree laugh then

he says angrily and sarcastically thus, "you are lucky you didn't go far with your weak and useless body" … (Habila 57). He angrily recounts the consequences of his leaving the house and goes ahead to ask "Is there anything I haven't provided for you and your brother?" Mamo on the other hand felt like saying "we have everything...except your love" (Habila 58). With the knowledge of his favorite son LaMamo being in a distant land alone, he blames Mamo for his disappearance, insisting that nothing happens to him, because on the rare occasions when Lamang has decided to notice his children, it is LaMamo, he notices and has sometimes bragged to his friends about the striking resemblance between them. In the only family picture in the house which was taken when the twins were five years old, Lamang holds LaMamo on his lap while Mamo's face is a speck over his mother's shoulder.

Very early in life, Mamo has learned to keep his sick and awkward body in the background. He has learned to observe from the sidelines. He often thinks of himself as the real silent listener to every conversation. The relationship between Lamang and Mamo is very distressing. Mamo, while in the University, has studied for two years and in those years he returns home only when he needs money for his routine drugs. Even during the breaks when other students eagerly leave for their homes with their parents who come from all parts of the country to pick them up, he hangs out with idlers who have turned the school hostels into their homes. His new environment is acting like some kind of therapy and he does not fall ill. Mamo fantasizes in his moments of dejection that Iliya is his real father and Lamang is his uncle, because for the first three years of his life, it is Iliya that he and his brother have called father. Mamo, in his depression and loneliness, makes the sun, moon and stars his companion, thereby making him reflect on the friction and the extent of hatred his father has for him as a result of his health. His father's voice comes clearly to him "…his brother is my spitting image, taller, strong. "He is right now in the army, abroad, a fine young man, not like his brother too weak…" (Habila 7). In the real sense, Mamo is actually taller when he tells his father thus "he is five-nine, and I am five-eleven" (78). Lamang, willing and eager to pull him down in the presence of his friends, says "but you walk your shoulder bowed, you must learn to walk straight and think positive" (78). Lamang is not concerned about the health or safety of Mamo. Lamang, therefore, fails "to act or affirm and tighten by cultural invention his unsatisfactory loose mammalian connection with his children" (Dinnerstein 1990: 80).

Mamo makes an impact when Pastor Mela helps in show-casing his essay, yet Lamang is uninterested. He merely flips through the pages and drops the book "I'll look at it later- I am in a hurry right now" (Habila 160). There is no word of encouragement for his son. Uncle Iliya, Lamang's brother encourages Mamo's writing career, while the editor steers Mamo from straight history to biography, encouraging him to model his writing on Plutarch's parallel lives.

Mamo's writing elevates not only his family but the entire Keti community. He is given an office in the Mai's palace as well as in a guest house where all sorts of immorality reign. He soon learns about the corruption including sexual immorality, deceit and betrayal of Keti leaders. The novel, among other things, examines the age-old theme of generational conflict, in this instance, between parents and their children. For instance, there is no love lost between Asabar and Uncle Iliya, his father. Asabar, who briefly departs the village to seek fame and fortune, returns disillusioned, becoming a miscreant, a plaything in the hand of politicians, especially his uncle Lamang. Asabar indulges in smoking weed, and we are told that he finds very early in life "the pleasures of alcohol" (50). And, because of this, he cannot get along with his Spartan-like father, an ex-soldier and proprietor of a school.

For her part, Zara seems to have come to grief in the novel on account of the frosty relationship with her mother. She gets into a loveless, rancorous marriage in order to please her mother who seems to blindly support custom and tradition even in the face of injustice and abuse meted out to her daughter by her irresponsible husband. What is worse, as Zara battles the ensuing emotional and legal crises caused by her failed marriage, her mother does not appear to be terribly bothered, so long as her other daughter, Rhoda, is doing well in her own marriage. It is this absence of maternal support and understanding which plays a major role in the emergence of Zara's mental breakdown. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Zara will not talk to her mother when her crises come to a head, preferring instead of thinking of writing and eventually send her diary to Mamo. The breakdown of the family or the disappearance of family values of parental love, support, care and warmth seem to be the root of the myriad of social pathologies afflicting contemporary society. It is interesting to note that Helon Habila uses the Lamang family as a template to mirror the unsavory state of the family as a social unit in the contemporary world. It is also ace worthy that there is no ideal family being depicted as a model when these other anomalies are judged. Apart from the issues of laxity, generational gap also brings about friction in parent-child relationship. In *Our Children are Coming* (1990) by Chukwuemeka Ike (1990) parents and their children are not in agreement on the

issue of leadership at the home front as well as in the societal level. There is unrest in the society as students organize demonstrations and riots against the government policies that are detrimental to their welfare. This is why the government in power sets up the presidential commission for juveniles below twenty years. This commission probes that the youth have no adolescent representation and this sparks off a bloodless revolution in the country championed by the youth. The legitimate demands of the youth under the umbrella of National Association of Students for representation in the five-man commission serve as a valve that opens their bottled feeling on the adult leadership of the country. The youths expose the moral and economic bankruptcy which the economy has been suffering under both civilian and military leadership. The subject of bad leadership has been one of the focal point in post-independent Africa and this is the issue also raised in *Our Children are Coming*. The implication is that people who are grossly incompetent in certain spheres of government life are appointed to make recommendations on them. Hence, such people as Alhaji Adamu and the promiscuous Chief Mrs. Edo as members of the presidential commission of inquiry, instead of brainstorming on how best to improve the lot of the nation's youth, these committee members are occupied with the thought of the commission's all-expense paid for overseas tour. The challenges of unnecessary national waste are also highlighted. The chauffeur-driven air conditioned cars allocated to every member of the commission for the duration of enquiry, the commission's all expense of global tour and the commission's members' numerous allowances cause the nation a staggering amount of money which could be channelled to other venture that will add value to the lives of the teeming population of needy citizens in the nation: "…in which thousands of graduates roam the streets jobless in which teachers are irregularly paid when paid at all and lack of funds has led to the postponement of crucial and overdue reforms" (Ike 1990: 287).

For a lasting solution to these challenges in both the family institution and the nation at large, parents should look more honestly and critically at their own lives before passing judgement on their children. It is the failure to do so that estranges them from their children. The case of the first witness before the students' commission is a typical example. She is a Mullato and she suffers because of her father's moral misconduct. When she was barely one-year-old, her father made away with her to London, leaving her poor American mother who had earlier assisted him financially.

Family relationships in African Post-Colonial societies manifest a growing level of tension, conflict and stress as a result of new opportunities, new interest and new

dilemma created by increasing gender and class stratification across Africa but especially across generations of Africans. This tension between generations and between opposing systems is played out in the conflict between mothers and daughters. The relationship between Madam Agnes and her daughter in Nwoye's *Fetters and Choices* (2003) is lop-sided, while Madam Agnes adores her youngest daughter Itohan for being a tool in her hand and detests her daughter Blessing, who she sees as a weakling like her father for refusing to accept her offer of going to Italy like her peers to fend for the family. In the struggle for survival and success, Madam Agnes complicity is shown in neo-colonial forms of exploitation, hence Blessing sees her mother as being complicit with inherent and neo-colonial system, thus the quest for money is shown to deeply affect the relationship between mother and daughter.

The analysis of Habila's *Measuring Time*, Ike's *Our Children are Coming*, and Nwoye's *Fetters and Choices* reveal that conflict between parents and their children is a natural phenomenon since most conflicts are based on real differences and occur in different forms. The conflict that ensued between parents and their adolescent children in *Our Children are coming* is political in nature; while these parents accuse their children of delinquent acts, they are also found wanting in the political positions they occupy in the society, hence the purposeful exclusion of these adolescents in the presidential commission set to probe children below twenty one years. 002, the second witness in the commission for parents over twenty one says that his father whom he believes to be a man of integrity shatters his perception of him, when he uses government funds to pay the 'protocol officers' who are part of his entourage each time he travels within and outside the country. The youths watch helplessly as the country is being ruled as if it were a personal ranch. Methods of election into offices are marked with rigging and corrupt practices with dubious, bogus manifestoes. The last adolescent witness, 013 in the commission was more critical about the educational system, in his opinion, leaders of the country are hypocritical and selfish in their presumption that angels will come out of the poultry-ruins they have erected under the dignified names of secondary schools and universities. Another reason parents and their children are at logger heads is on the bases of parental ideology, parents have set of beliefs, values and opinions which they expect their children to act upon. One of the testifiers 005 testifies that her parents who wanted to be medical doctors in their youth but failed, had to manipulate her choice of course, and university, similarly in *Fetters and Choices*, Madam Agnes's opinion that girls, the age of her daughter Blessing were becoming bread

winners in their homes, with their travelling abroad which Blessing negates and insists on completing her education brought about conflict in their home. She craved to be as affluent as her neighbours whose daughters were in Italy and are taking good care of their families. Lamang's opinion of Mamo being a weakling as a result of his ill health results in antisocial activities perpetuated by the twins on their father. They would drop scorpions into his shoes or misplace his car keys; they also contemplated poison. Although Mamo felt a nagging sense of guilt whenever his father inquires the where about of LaMamo, he didn't want to put his father's mind at rest, he wanted to be the torturer for once and his father tortured so he refused to show him the letters LaMamo had sent.

Individuation as Psychotherapy

In Jungian psychology, individuation describes a process of self-realization- the discovery of one's purpose of life or what one believes to be the meaning of life. When individuals lose touch with certain aspects of their selves, they may be able to reintegrate these aspects of their nature through individuation. It contributes to the differentiation and form of the individual psyche. Those who do not experience difficulty with the ongoing process of individuation may find it easier to maintain mental and emotional well-being.

Mamo and LaMamo are full of mischief. They embody the youthful spirit of rebellion, restlessness, revenge and rage, driven as they are by some vague notion of knight-errantly and chivalry. Admirably, though, the twins tend to complement each other: LaMamo is strong, bold, courageous and extroverted while Mamo is anemic, shy, intelligent and introverted. And as they both follow the path nature has marked out for them, they confront petty rivalries and jealousies:

> I guess I was. I was so jealous I never talked to him about you again. I felt so betrayed that day … But I guess I've always been jealous of him he as everything I don't have. He is always the strong and healthy one, and when we were kids, adults would always pat him on the head and say, what a healthy strong boy; and when they turned to me the look on their faces would change. My fantasy is to have his body, with mind, and then I'll be the perfect person (Habila 2007:102).

This statement was made by Mamo to Zara, as her coming into their lives almost ruins the delicate relationship between the twins. Mamo's subsequent attempt to acquire University education, which eventually fails; thus his endeavours are all geared towards fulfilling his dream of measuring to his more physically equipped

twin brother. Even his conquest of Zara can in this light be interpreted as a form of victory over his brother. Thus Zara becomes a war trophy signifying Mamo's capabilities. Mamo also feels a tinge of jealousy when Asabar assumes the youth wing leader of Lamang's party the New Victory party. Mamo thinks "if things had been different between him and his father, he would have been the one standing there, with his father confiding in him" (153). The conflict that ensures between Mamo and his father Lamang makes him jealous but he assumes psychological maturation, thus overcomes it.

Similarly, in *Our Children are Coming*, the witness 001 in the National Association of Student Commission, is a Mullato, brought up with the deceit that her mother is dead. This childhood devoid of maternal love, makes her plan an early marriage in order to make a family of her own. Unfortunately, she falls in love with the son of her father's colleague and rival over a girlfriend. What follows is that these fathers use their children as mere "scapegoats for settling old, dishonourable scores which they all will not admit publicly" (Ike 20). Consequently, their fathers' immorality and selfishness drive these two young people into each other's arms which results in an unwanted pregnancy which culminates in the poor girl's estrangement from her father. It is evident that the psychological torture which they suffer is as a result of their fathers' moral misconduct. Through this witness, Ike draws our attention to the need to avoid bringing up children with lies and deceit. Another instance of deceit is expressed in the life of 002's father who is seen by the world and his children as a rigid, moralist and a disciplinarian; nothing in his actions suggests any illicit relationship with any woman but 002 is shocked to his bones when a student disappears and it is traced to his father. He does not get enough shock from a father who he previously adored and revered until he sees a charm like object in his room. This is devastating for 002 especially as he is about to take his final exams but "the pressure of my unhappy ancestry was so great that, without seeking advice from any quarter, I had to quit." (Ike 216). He does not only quit, he begins to hate his father and anything connected with him. He also begins to hate greatness if one would have to descend low to achieve it.

Unrestricted Unconscious Psyche

Id is the unconscious part of the psyche that operates solely to find pleasure through gratification of its instinctive needs to be restricted by the ego and balanced by the super ego; however, when the Id is unrestricted in an individual, the individual concerned has a personality that goes after his desire or need at whatever cost. It is

suggestive of a weak ego and an overwhelmed superego. This is Lamang's personality trait which causes conflict between him and his children. Lamang's quest for women of all shapes and sizes was a reputable personality he had in Keti; the song, a balled that grew in detail and complexity with each rendition in the moonlight village square, called Lamang the "King of women". The refrain described how women stood longingly on their doorsteps as he passed and how mothers locked up their daughters at night to save them from "the handsome ravisher which ended with the lines: "Mother sighing with longing, Daughter sighing with longing, Ah, king of women show some mercy" (Habila 2007: 1).

It is this story and song Mamo and LaMamo hear that they decide long time ago to make life hard for their father. Lamang is a distant part-time father, who is more interested in pursuing women and a political career than being a real father. Because the Id only gratifies instinctive needs, Lamang does not weigh the consequences of his action, both his superego which is his conscience which should keep him always from philandering and his ego which tries to find realistic ways to placate the passions of the Id and still within the moral boundaries set by the superego was absent in Lamang. First, when he takes the decision to get married to Tabitha, the boys' mother, yet he was in love and in a relationship with Saraya, his first love and secondly abandoning Mamo and LaMamo in the care of his brother and suddenly 'withdrawing them from their parents', hence the boys are bent on making him pay.

This is also the personality trait of Madam Agnes that makes her vulnerable to wealth. She is said to betray the institutionalized notion of maternal love and devotion as she allows her Id take over her desires to become rich like her neighbours. In her quest for affluence, she sells her last daughter to sex trafficking, putting the fifteen years old girl's life at risk of getting sexually transmitted disease like HIV/AIDS. She had gone ahead against all odds to contact a professional skilled in the art of foreign trips by selling off all her valuables including her wrappers to make sure the trip was a reality. Madam Agnes could not support her husband in providing food, shelter and his medical bills. She was more concerned about enriching herself and being affluent. We also see her Id in play in the novel, when she tenaciously held on to the gold jewelry which was given to her by Itohan at the detriment of her health: When she got home that evening, she spent a lot of time in thinking. She was determined to save those jewelries. So she decided to consult a native doctor first (Nwoye 2003: 87). Madam Agnes would not take the sale of the gold jewelries as an option to raise money for her 'favourite' daughter's ill health. Her greed to own it strongly overpowered her desire for adequate treatment for her daughter.

Emotional and Psychological Disintegration

Mamo and LaMamo are thrust upon an inhospitable and hostile world, like standard leastways at the mercy of surrogate parents. The severance of the ties between mother and children and, by extension, between father and sons symbolizes a form of alienation from nature and essence. The impression of the world gained by the twin brothers is that of existential xenophobia, comic ennui, despair, and meaningless misery. Theirs is a life apart, as sensitive driftwood afloat on the turbulent sea of life. As a consequence, an adversarial oppositionality builds up between the boys and society, embodied as it were by an authority figure, their father. Small wonder, then, that Mamo and LaMamo, young teenagers, are taken up with the idea of harming their father. Their career in kill-the-father neurosis spawns all that follows: "an unresolved Oedipal complex, resulting in mercenary soldiery for LaMamo, on one hand, and scholarship for Mamo, on the other (Anyokwu 2008: 7). The boredom, emotional weakness, the sense of shattering, alienation, loss and exile all we find in the characters of Mamo, LaMamo and Zara. On an occasion, Mamo, like other characters, is overwhelmed by a feeling of loneliness thus:

> He waited for something, anything, to happen, and as he waited He measured time in the shadows cast by trees and walls, in the silence the next, in the seconds, and minutes and hours and days and weeks and months add up to form seasons (Habila 2007: 118).

Mamo's emotional disintegration was further highlighted by his love for the news thus:

> The radio and books sustained him at night. He'd lie in the dark and listen to the voices from faraway Lagos or London or America or Germany…There were also the late request programmes when insomniacs like him would phone in with their marital woes, their sexual angst, their clinical depressions, and their congenital diseases. As he listened to the people on the radio were seated beside him, together forming a community of misfits, freaks, and solitaries, desperately reaching out to touch flea, to form a cycle of empathy (Habila 2007: 119).

Time's cruel action continues to dig Mamo's heels as he frantically seeks ways and means of easing his loneliness: "he felt powerless, and trapped and almost desperate" (150). He is held hostage by time as he takes to desultory walks, a driftwood killing time. And, sometime, all he does is wait: "I am just waiting" (Habila 119). The question is, what is he waiting for? The answer comes in the next page: Nothing" (120)

Zara on the other hand comes to grief in the novel on account of the frosty relationship between her and her mother. She gets into a loveless, rancorous marriage in order to please her mother who seems to blindly support custom and tradition even in the face of injustice and abuse meted out to her daughter by her irresponsible husband. Zara battles the ensuing emotional and legal crises caused by her failed marriage, her mother does not appear to be terribly bothered, so long as her other daughter, Rhoda, is doing well in her own marriage. It is this absence of maternal support and understanding that plays a major role in the emergence of Zara's mental breakdown.

While Mamo and LaMamo, twin brothers yet different in their abilities and capabilities suffer emotional trauma as a result of loneliness brought by their father's negligence, Zara, a gifted and intelligent beautiful woman, starry-eyed and ambitious, and potentially revolutionary, is separated from her only son, later ends up an embodiment of loss as a result of the sour relationship with her mother.

In Nwoye's *Fetters and Choices*, Blessing battles with her inner man as she suffers rejection that leads to emotional trauma which forces her to get married to a fake and never do well, thereby forgetting her quest for education. She is rejected by her mother, who should provide her with maternal love, care and guidance. Blessing battles emotional trauma from her mother's rejection which leads to depression in her marriage to Ezekiel. She, in her husband's house, spends more time thinking about her travails in life. She thinks deeply about the strained relationship between her and her mother. She wishes she had listened to her mother by going to Italy. She is furious with herself and her naivety in dealing with Ezekiel. All she wishes for Ezekiel is death by her hand. Her emotional breakdown and bottled up pressure lead to her dysfunctional behaviour and thought of killing Ezekiel, her husband.

Conclusion

The research has explored various forms and bases for psychological outburst which have been identified to be jealousy, individuation, laxity, unrestricted desires and father's wound which play out in the lives of different characters from Mamo, LaMamo, Zara, Blessing and lots more who are victims of parental laxity. It has examined the human mind, emotional feelings, actions and behavioural patterns of these characters who in the midst of their depression sought ways to break loose from their different experiences. In the study I discussed the tripartite model of the psyche especially the Id which is the most insecure and obscure part of human personality. Its function is to fulfill the primordial life principle, which is the pleasure

principle as seen in the life of Lamang and Madam Agnes who are more concerned about personal interest than being responsible parents, thus, succeeding in bringing out the worst character in their children. The research recommends compromise, flexibility and effective communication as some internal mechanisms for improving parent-child relationship.

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