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**LEVELS OF CONFLICT AND OEDIPUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN
ELECHI AMADI'S THE CONCUBINE AND JOHN
MUNONYE'S THE ONLY SON.**

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DEDICATION

To my beloved parents,

For their loving and caring heart;

To my dearest husband Dieudonné Niyonizigiye,

To my cherished son Don Dief Niyonizigiye,

To my cherished daughters,

Don Lucrette Impundu and Grâce Destinée Ineza ;

To my brothers and sisters,

To my best friends and relatives,

I warmly dedicate this work.

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My special thanks are also directed to Dr. Athanasius Ayuk Ako, for his resourceful contribution at the beginning of my research

I also owe much gratitude to all my teachers from primary school to the University, for the knowledge they imparted to me.

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the fact that possessive love of mothers towards their sons creates a certain state of immaturity (in the sons) in the later part of their lives. Thus, a son who has an overbearing or domineering mother grows up upsetted, as he is caught in the web of fulfilling his mother's wishes, his own aspirations or societal expectations. This work operates on the premise that conflict results in the contrastive emotions, which prevail within a person. Written against the background of the psychoanalytic approach, this work finally reveals that the resolution of Oedipus complex is possible if both parents fulfil their roles at the same level, and the maturity of a child also depends on his mastery of his immediate environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Harmony in family depends on a clear comprehension of the concept of complementarity and partnership between husband and wife. Women and men need each other. Both husband and wife are called upon to perform their designated roles for the well-being of the family: plan for the future, give birth to children and raise them. Though many patriarchs do not believe in these shared roles, they have equal importance. In this light, the husband needs to recognise his wife as a partner in this process of development and vice-versa. Complementarity lead to understanding, which implies love for each other. Thus, a husband should consider his wife's opinion, and consult her in all important decisions. Even though they might disagree on certain key issues, they should always seek to strike a compromise. In African families, being a father or a mother is an honourable act. The success or failure of parents is sometimes seen in their children.

However, the harmony which characterises the couple may be hampered by one of the parents. The love he/she owes to the other may be directed somewhere else, and this may endanger harmony at home. For many African mothers, children mean a lot. But male children are more important in Africa because a woman who has a male child is considered to have won a stable place in her home. She is easily integrated in her husband's family than a woman who gives birth only to girls.

Psychoanalysts believe that mothers shape their children's future. Children who conform to the norm of their gender at an early age grow up feeling different from the opposite sex. They consequently attract the opposite sex in adulthood. On the contrary, children who grow up feeling different from their own sex in childhood grow with a disturbing personality. Child rearing is complex. The reason of spoiling sons during child rearing, especially in African societies, takes root from the importance given to male children. Christie C. Achebe, in Continuities, Changes and Challenges of Women's Role in Nigerian Society notes that

Having a male child becomes the signal of achievement through which she can raise her head high and feel a real sense of success and fulfilment... This comes from the view that a woman is responsible for the sex of the offspring. She is therefore honoured when she gives birth to male children and condemned if the children turn out to be girls. (14)

Since African society is mostly patriarchal, many Africans need sons as their progeny, in order to perpetuate their family lineage. These sons sometimes become sources of conflict at home, as the father is robbed of his monopoly over the wife. The resulting effect is quarrel and frustration. From this perspective, one is tempted to pose the following questions: do both parents fulfil their roles equitably? If a parent accomplishes his moral duty of child rearing, and the

child's behaviour turns out unsatisfying, should he be blamed? These questions will find responses in the course of this work.

Before one proceeds with the analysis, it is necessary to define certain key terms which will contribute to the understanding of our theme. These terms include "conflict" and "Oedipus Complex". In Webster's New World Dictionary, Elementary Edition "conflict" is defined as a sharp disagreement of interests or ideas, a fight or battle. By this definition, a person is unable to fulfil his will because he is always opposed to his audience, which does not understand his way of thinking or behaving.

The Encyclopaedia Americana views "conflict" as theories of personality, as a state of discomfort or stress characterizing an individual's experiencing two or more desires or needs which are incompatible.

According to Sigmund Freud, conflict is basically between sexual motivation, and the prohibition against the sexual wishes, thoughts and actions imposed by the society. By definition, a character experiencing opposing beliefs, those beliefs turn into discomfort, which leads to the disturbance of personality.

Concerning the terms "Oedipus consciousness", the concept is defined separately in the same Encyclopaedia Americana. Oedipus is a legendary king of Thebes, descendant of Cadmus (founder of the city), son of King Laius and Jocasta. The Delphic oracle prophesied to Laius and Jocasta that their son would slay his father and wed his mother. As far as consciousness is concerned, it has been used with a variety of meanings, the two more technical applications are as

follows : (1) A person is conscious as long as his mental processes are going on, and he is unconscious when these feelings, ideas, thoughts, desires and the like are suspended . In this sense, consciousness has the same meaning as experience and awareness. (2) It is important to note that consciousness refers to something that is going on a person not to something that exists in itself. “Oedipus consciousness” is the combination of these words to mean a psychological condition in which, through abnormal circumstances experienced in infancy or early childhood, a male develops an excessive love for his mother, usually accompanied by a corresponding hatred for his father. That makes the son feel a sexual desire for his mother. This Oedipus consciousness makes the character’s behaviour to be different from other normal children in his later life.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English views “Oedipus consciousness” as a closely connected group of unconscious images, wishes, fears, feelings, etc. which influence a person’s behaviour without knowing it.

In Freudian psychology, Oedipus consciousness is seen as an unconscious sexual desire for one’s mother, combined with the hatred of one’s father. Nowhere in his early education is a child told to hate his father, but with his social, economical and personal experience, he develops complexes which affect him in adulthood. It is important to note that Oedipus myths are rare in African as well as in Greek mythologies. Though rare, instances of sexual urges between son and mother are evident in daily life in most African homes. The son, many a time, is always very close to the mother and the father is always seen as a

stranger, or even an enemy at home. Because of these evident traces, our examination of conflict in this work will not leave out the Oedipus strain, as both authors write on it, though not in the purely classical sense.

This work therefore examines the fact that possessive love of mothers towards their sons creates a certain state of immaturity (in sons) in their later life. It further aims at showing immaturity in marriage in the context of The Concubine and The Only Son. This is because mothers are sometimes very complex. And thus a man with an overbearing or domineering mother becomes so preoccupied with what his mother thinks, with what she values and wishes. It equally shows that apart from viewing the mother as the principal architect, destiny has a role to play as expectations are not always reality. This work also shows that a character of a greater degree of unanimity of opinion and sentiment, a greater harmony and meeting of mind is gradually changing towards the acceptance of new ways of life, made necessary by new circumstances.

The theory that will preoccupy us in this work is the psychoanalytic theory. Primarily identified with Sigmund Freud, the psychoanalytical theory is used to understand behavioural thought of human beings in imaginative literature and art in general in order to study their manifest and latent content in the same way as Freud studied dreams. Literature clearly lends itself to such a study, since, like dreams, the most significant meaning often lies below the conscious surface narrative of the text. In this view, Freud himself applied his theories to the

interpretation of religious mythology and literature. As for the significance of sexuality, Freud recognises that infancy and childhood are periods of intense experience. In order to become healthy and functioning adults, some phases of development become evident. One of them recognises the pleasure of genital stimulation connected to reproduction. Freud believes that if these stages are successfully negotiated, the adult personality emerges intact. If however, these childhood needs are not met, the adult is likely to suffer arrested development. Around the time the child is about five years old, she/he is ready to develop a sense of maleness or femaleness. To explain the process of growth, Freud turned to literature, referring to the plot of the experience of Sophocles, in The Interpretation of Dreams: The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud announces his theory of Oedipus complex when he says of Oedipus in Oedipus Tyrannus

His fate moves us only because it might have been our own,
because the oracle laid upon us because our birth the very curse
which rested upon him. It may be that we were all destined to direct
our first sexual impulse towards our mothers, and our first impulse
of hatred and vidence towards our fathers; our dreams convince us
that we were King Oedipus who slew his father and wedded his
mother Jocasta, is nothing more or less than a wish fulfilment of the
wish of our childhood. (308)

He points out that the experience of Oedipus is that of all male children. Just as Oedipus kills his father unwillingly and marries his mother, a young boy forms

an erotic attachment to his mother, and grows to desire her, unconsciously. Fearing castration by the father, the male child represses his sexual desires, identifies with his father and anticipates his own sexual union. Freud believes that such a step is a necessary one in a boy's growth towards manhood. And a boy who fails to make that step will suffer from Oedipus complex, with ongoing fear of castration evident in his hostility to authority in general.

However, many scholars reject Freud's theory because it reduces man to a bundle of drives or instincts. It traces everything to the hero's infantile fantasies and has nothing to say of his imagination.

The psychoanalytic approach is relevant to this work in the sense that it exposes the psyche of characters. Talking about Ekwueme's psychological state, his attitudes towards his father and the patriarchal institution is characterized by a certain conflict between three agencies of the mind. This is motivated by the fact that Ekwueme experiences a possessive loving mother in his childhood. He is opposed to his father. Because his possessive love for his mother involves many trials, he grows up to persistently quarrel with his wife, and ends up growing mad. His parents have to accept a certain proposition of displeasure, not in order to comply with social demands as Sigmund Freud states, but to be able to withstand the tribulations along his way in life. We assume that this acceptance of displeasure is likely to cause conflict between the 'id' (a term

used to refer to the drives that spring from the constitutional need of the body) and the 'ego' (The agency developed out of the 'id' to regulate and oppose the drives). As the human body always avoids pain, Ekwueme is not able to regulate and dominate the negative feeling that can hinder him from marrying Ihuoma amidst so many terrors.

Apart from the conflict between the 'id' and 'ego', there is another between his 'ego' and 'superego'. The latter is a representative of parental and social influences upon the drives. It is also a transformation of those drives rather than an external agency. This conflict is brought about by the fact that Ekwueme is driven by an innermost desire which motivates him to remarry, while the dibias and the Sea-King is totally against it. Despite these oppositions Ekwueme continues to prepare the marriage. Ekwueme who has probably seriously loved his mother and get consciousness of his miserable life without Ihuoma: endeavours to struggle to the furtherside. Through this representation, the psychoanalytic approach aims at revealing how people react when they encounter some common questions of life, and sufferings make a noticeable distinction in their psychological agencies or parts of their minds. Ekwueme's obsessional behaviour leads us to what Angus Fletcher in Allegory: The Theory of Symbolic Mode says about allegorical characters states:" If we are to meet an allegorical character in life, we would say of him that he has obsessed with one idea, or that his life was patterned according to rigid habits from which he never allowed himself to vary" (36).

However, there is a nuance between what Fletcher Angus puts forward and Ekweume's reality. The latter though determined to keep going with a high stubbornness until he reaches his destination; he experiences some shortcomings on his path. It is true that Ekweume endures sufferings, especially in his duel to marry the village belle Ihuoma, but he is defeated. His mind is directed by the 'id'. The 'ego' which is the regulation of instinctual demands of the 'id' is conscious.

In The only son, Nnanna's id on its part comes over the superego, since Nnanna decides to transgress his mother's faith.

Many a critic and researcher have been interested in the writings of Elechi Amadi and John Munonye. These writers include Margaret Laurence, Mwidogo Adrien, Niyonizigiye Rose, Eldred Jones, Joel Ninganza and Désiré Ndikuryayo.

Margaret Laurence, in Long Drums and Cannons examines Amadi's theme of man's struggle with fate, his perpetual attempt to placate and control his gods. He concludes that the gods are good only, there are not complex. They are neither good nor evil, they are merely powerful.

Adrien Mwidogo, in "Spiritual Experiences in Elechi Amadi" the Concubine aims at showing that spirits are related to the woman. And relates the evil to the woman. He notes that Ihuoma is a demi-god, who has human attributes. The complexity of her character is proved by her spiritual embodiment. He

concludes that gods are actually ordinary human beings. The real world and the world of illusion are an itinerary that governs people through their cultural bond.

Desiré Ndikuryayo, in “Understanding Traditional Women in Distress: A Study of Elechi Amadi’s” the Concubine, aims at showing how the traditional African woman is seen under the dictates of tradition, beauty, love and marriage. The traditional African woman is seen as a victim of circumstances, who manages to crawl out of the pressure imposed on her. Ihuoma, who suffers because of her beauty, ends up so rejected as everything seems to be against her.

Moreover, Rose Niyonizigiye in “The Descriptive Role of Christianity in John Munonye” Obi focuses on the descriptive impact of westernisation on indigenous cultures and attests the beauty of African culture. She argues that tradition has the strength and beauty of life, but Christianity has come to disable these structures.

Eldred Jones in a Journal of Explanatory Criticism expresses the complex relationship which exists between Chiaku and Nnanna in the Only Son. He proves that the relationship has its reality, regardless of the context of tribe and village. He concludes by showing that in later adolescence, the son does not prissily lead the way, though he succumbs to school and church.

Furthermore, Joël Ninganza in “The Clash of Culture in John Munonye’s The Only Son” analyses the clash between civilisations, which occurred in the times of colonialism. He shows how Africans were attracted, on the one hand by western civilisation and on the other hand by their traditional

ways of life. Consequently, misunderstanding and conflicts arose, not only between the colonised and the colonisers, but between the colonised themselves.

This work differs from the above mentioned in that, it analyses the works of Elechi Amadi and John Munonye. It tackles the issues of conflict and Oedipus complex in the cited works, showing the effect of physical and psychological conflicts resulting from the mother-son relationship.

This work operates on the premise that conflict results in the contrastive emotions which prevail within a person. Hence, one can possess love and hatred at the same time, intelligence and stupidity. This shows the complexity of a person. Both parents must participate in child rearing, if not, the child might be influenced by one and the result is conflict.

Including the general introduction, the work is divided into three chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter, entitled “Conflict and Oedipal Consciousness in The Concubine” examines the theme of Oedipus complex and the different types of conflicts. It stresses that oedipal consciousness develops from childhood because of excessive mother’s love towards the male child, and consequently that destabilises the child in the later part of his life. This chapter also discusses different conflicts embodied in the work and their resolution.

The second chapter entitled “Divided Loyalty in John Munonye’s The Only Son” shows a complex relationship between a widowed mother and her only son and how this complexity affects both personalities. The various loyalties contribute in their separation.

The third chapter, titled “Comparative Perspective” brings out the differences and similarities with regard to mother-son relationship, and states consequences of the Oedipus complex in the marital life of the sons. It further shows the resolution of the oedipal conflict and the universal element that runs through both texts.

Finally, the general conclusion summarises the major arguments raised in the work, brings out findings and suggests possible areas for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

CONFLICT AND OEDIPAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE CONCUBINE

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the various levels of conflicts in Elechi Amadi's the Concubine, and how they consequently help in structuring events in the novel. In view of this, two basic levels of conflicts are visible in the text: psychological and physical conflicts. Both conflicts stem from the desire of men to satisfy their egos. Most men in the Concubine, including supernatural forces, want to own the village belle, Ihuoma. In addition to this, we shall equally examine the oedipal relationship between Ekweume and his mother, as another source of conflict.

Nature contains too many things. Some are beautifully and naturally shaped that one cannot resist admiring them unless blind. One cannot be completely indifferent. When individuals' tastes converge towards a particular object, the result is more often than not conflicting. From time immemorial, love and beauty have often risen as terrains for such conflicts. Ralph Emerson asserts that

A Nobler of man is served by nature namely the love of beautyTo the body and the mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, (nature is medical and restores their tone). The tradesman, the attorney comes

out of the din and craft of street and sees the sky and woods,
and is a man again. In their eternal calm, he finds himself
the health of the eye seems to demand the horizon; we are
never tired so long as we can see far enough.

(Qtd Concise Anthology of American Literature, 450)

The main idea imbedded in this quotation is that natural beauty is admirable, and nobody is tired to gaze at it. Both the eye and the soul are satisfied and delighted by simple perception of beauty. The contemplation over physical beauty (shape, complexion) is therapeutic. Because of the egoistic nature of man, the temptation has always been to own or preserve some of these things that the eye values.

For instance, the Concubine is a depiction of love grounded on the lust for the village belle Ihuoma. Her physiognomic qualities charm visible and invisible men of her village. Her beauty is the source of conflict among suitors. These different fights are brought to limelight partly because of the husband's death.

The love for beauty becomes distressful in so far as one can not possess what he desires. The lack of what one desires breeds jealousy, hence conflict. In the Encyclopedia Americana , "...conflict is usually considered as a state of discomfort or stress caused by an individual's experiencing two or more desires or needs that are incompatible"(537).From the above quotation, it is evident that every human being has aspirations in life, and if these aspirations are not fulfilled, he might likely resort to underground methods. For instance, Ihuoma is

admired by human beings and supernatural forces. Caught in this web (of the sea King and her worldly husband), Ihuoma is bound to suffer psychologically and her body becomes a battle field for natural and supernatural forces. Emenike's marriage with beautiful Ihuoma is probably the root cause of all these hatred, as the sea king strikes him, and later exposes her to hybrid of conflicts in the village. Placed in this fix, her worldly suitors sometimes devise methods to eliminate their adversaries. With the case of Madume and Emenike, Amadi notes that

Madume's hatred for Emenike might not have been so great if only the later had not snatched Ihuoma from him. Madume had hopes of marrying Ihuoma, the most desirable girl in Omigwe village. (Concubine, 5)

As seen above, it is evident that behind the land dispute, there is a hidden idea of love in Madume's heart. This idea makes Madume to device all means of eliminating his opponent in order to marry Ihuoma, but all his efforts are fruitless. From this unaccomplished desire, Madume suffers physically and psychologically. The narrator notes that "Madume turned to go and caught his right foot against the protruding corner of an old hoe half buried and his big toe nail come off and he cried out in pain" (57). From the above excerpt, we see the continuation of conflict between the powerful and supernatural loves of Ihuoma. The sea king punishes Madume by wounding him. But Madume's love for Ihuoma is like the one that King Solomon describes in the Good News Bible:

Today's English Version. Solomon notes that love is perceived as powerful as death, passion, as strong as death itself. He goes on asserting that passion bursts into flames and burns like raging fire. Neither mere water nor flood can extinguish it. King Solomon draws this from his personal experience.

By nature, man is egoistic. His quest for earthly things, including beauty, demands an exclusive possession of it. This hunger for beauty often generates psychological troubles, which might eventually give birth to conflict. For instance, as Madume can no more resist Ihuoma's beauty, he takes advantage of the land dispute, and sees it as a point of contact between them. In The Concubine, Madume tactically draws closer to Ihuoma as follows: "Ihuoma it is no need for us to quarrel over a plantain, if you will be reasonable lets be friends and forget all our disputes. I am tired of them myself" (68). In Madume's words, it is evident that this soft language and cunning ideas are means of ensnaring Ihuoma into his love web. But unfortunately Ihuoma refuses, thereby widening the gap between them.

Furthermore, in The Concubine, some characters reveal their psychological conflict through language. For instance, the way in which Ekwueme vents his anger on his sister Nkechi, after his fury at Ihuoma's house expresses the psychological state of his mind. Similarly, Madume's ill tempered bullying of his wife when he is faced with the hopeless state of his sight is a plausible and convincing state of his psychology.

In contemporary Africa, most authors are occupied with the treatment of marriage beauty and love as themes. The source of conflict in most marriages stem from the lack of mutual consent.

Basden notes that marriage was and is still one of the most important social institutions amid all the oughts. He further adds: “The man endures because he can neither recover his money. For both of them live with each other becomes dull and dreary, unpleasant and boring” (Qtd Wand of Noble, 63). The above quotation shows that most marriages fail because of the absence of love between couples. Since the husband and wife are sometimes forced to live together, they become a burden on one another’s shoulder. This is the case with Ekwueme and Ahurole. Such unidentical pairing breeds internal conflicts.

Ekwueme is another victim doomed to suffer. Although he was engaged to Ahurole at an early stage, he does not want her again. His father notes that, no one has ever turned down a childhood engagement (117). Despite Ekwueme’s resistance, he is finally married to Ahurole as planned. His household becomes a scene of constant quarrels. The source of this conflict, of course, is Ekwueme’s dislike for Ahurole and preference for Ihuoma, a more elderly and beautiful woman. There is much physical violence and psychological anguish involved in their household, as the following excerpt indicates:

Suddenly, Ekwe got up and ordered her to get off in awful voice. Before she could move on. He gave her several slaps

on the face and pushed her back violently, Ahurole felt flat on her back but sprang up with youthful and charged blindly at her husband. (Concubine, 142)

We learn from the above quotation that it is hard for this couple to withstand each other; they are involved in external and open conflict. It should be noted that, although the source of disagreement between Ekwueme and Ahurole is food, yet understandably, the real problem is Ekwueme dislike for her, and preference for Ihuoma. He agrees that staying with her is pleasant and restful.

André Maurois in the Art of Living postulates that

There are people who both enchant our senses with their beauty and seduce our minds with the grace and charm of their conversation. We love them effortlessly and unreservedly. Every moment spent near them makes us more certain of their perfection. (14)

The quotation matches with Ihuoma's qualities that attract men, including married men. Whenever he goes to inspect his traps, he passes near Ihuoma's home, and occasionally talks to her. For a long time. His constant visits annoy Ihuoma because she no longer wishes to marry Ekwueme. This is because she could be ridiculed, since Ahurole comes from her native village. We see that Elechi Amadi's prose portrays Ihuoma's psychological insight and the conflict that characterises her. With regard to these instances, Ihuoma confides herself

to Nnenda, asking her to speak to Ekwueme on her behalf, so that he could be ashamed of that. She says:

He (Ekwueme) is still pestering me. It will lead to no good.

Ahurole is my village girl, why should I come between her and Ekwueme? Besides, I can't bear to be the subject of any unpleasant gossip in this village. I have told him, I can't marry him. I can't be his mistress either. The matter should end there. (Concubine, 152)

Ekwueme does not give up in spite of that remark. The only woman he ever likes apart from his mother is Ihuoma because as he says, she is so understanding and beautiful. Ahurole, seeing the relationship between Ekwueme and Ihuoma is worried and jealous of her husband's visits to Ihuoma. She confides to her mother who advises her to see a dibia. Ahurole hurries to Anyika, but the latter declines such a perilous thing: a love potion which makes people passive, stupid and dependent. Despite all, Ahurole administers the love potion to her husband. Unfortunately for Ahurole, the love potion works negatively, contrary to her expectations. Instead of devoting himself to her, he deserts her and grows mad. Even when he is under the love potion, his greatest desire is the pains of the presence of Ihuoma. Psychologically speaking, Ekwueme is suffering from neurosis. It has been caused by his everlasting desire to possess Ihuoma, the union which he is being denied. This failure has affected his ego, and therefore places him in an unhealthy mental state. In

Introduction à la psychanalyse. Sigmund Freud states that “hysteria is the ultimate step of one’s background revival “(20). In other words, it often occurs that one’s unfulfilled mental needs are manifested by a psychological disturbance at a certain period until the patient gets those needs. In the Concubine, it is stated that while Ekwueme is refusing Anyika’s demand to drink the medicine, he says:

Drink your medicine, you crazy fellow, I won’t. Get me Ihuoma, I say. I want to marry her. If I don’t. I shall not listen to anybody, not even Mwokekoro medicine? I need no medicine I am not sick. Ihuoma, Ihuoma, get me Ihuoma.

(183)

As cited above, it is evident that Ekwueme is in the state of hysteria. In fact, it has awarded him outbursts of uncontrollable emotion and sexual attraction towards Ihuoma. Chertok and De Saussure add that hysteria is not a hazardous disease if a hysterical subject knowingly tries to forget an experience via psychological acts. (Qtd Naissance de la Psychanalyse). It is obvious that Ekwueme has encountered such psychological state. It is evident that he married Ahurole to satisfy his parents. Many a time, he would often say, the only woman he ever loves apart from his mother is Ihuoma. After all, Ekwueme is half cured. It is said that when Ihuoma arrives, Ekwueme changes completely. From what it is observed, Ekwueme’s mental disturbance paves way for a closer tie with Ihuoma. This dream is shortlived because he dies in

the process of arranging the different marriage items. Speaking about dreams, A. Green in Theories and Application says:

The dreams are the reaction to our conscious attitude in the same way as our body reacts when we over eat or do not eat enough. They are the natural reactions of self regulating psychic systems. (302)

Ihuoma is the centre of all the admiration in the novel. She is equally the focal point of hatred and gossip. In the heart of this, Ihuoma cannot be indifferent. She is tormented by the same beauty which is supposed to be her pride. Her relationship with one man awakens bitterness and jealousy in the others, which sometimes leads to ultimate violence.

In a more critical way, we are trying to look at Ihuoma as a victim of inevitable circumstances, and the conflict she suffers as fortuitous. In this respect, some people believe that it is only by good luck or ill luck that one may experience good or bad events. Others agree that there must be a providential power which establishes and governs occurrences in life. From The World Book Encyclopaedia, this fatal power which handles and utters events is known as god in Greek and Roman mythology. God equals the “fate” and that “fate” was three goddesses who ruled people’s life and success or failure depends upon them. Ihuoma’s supernatural husband, the sea-King is still ready to destroy his adversary. Love becomes a source of distress in so far as people

cannot get what they are looking for: marriage, because the all powerful sea-god continues to love Ihuoma.

From the oedipal perspective, Ekwueme's early attachment to his mother influences the failure in their marriage. Adrienne Rich examining the effects of maternal dominance notes that

All consequences with dominant mothers and retiring fathers followed maternal dominance. This is more specifically to lead to conflicts in conjugal role expectation and uncertainties about the conjugal division of labour which may be attributed to life in changing society. (Of woman Born, Motherhood as Experience and Institutions, 10)

As aforementioned, child rearing is not exclusively a woman's duty. Men should know that they have a great role to play in it for the emotional, intellectual and even social development of children. Otherwise, the weight and responsibility falls on the woman's shoulders, and this gives her more power. His lack of character and manhood makes his son succeeds in taking his place. In The Concubine, during his early life, Ekwueme's admiration for the mother is so strong. It is evident that his mother is dominant in his upbringing. He takes interest in any masculine activities purely to please her mother. Amadi notices that

All his efforts were directed towards pleasing his mother to justify her confidence in him. He values her praise than any

thing else his relationship with his father was cordial but he prefers his mother's company to his father. (Concubine, 72)

This quotation confirms Freud's view on the psychological development in psychoanalytic theory. It states that the first love object of a male child other than his own body is his mother, and the development of this love is considered the first step in the socialisation of the infant. The second step is made when the child extends his world to include the father. This step is termed by psychoanalyst the mastery of Oedipus complex. If the complex is not mastered, or if it is mastered only partially, the child will be less socialized. Ekwueme, instead of exercising authority at home as a husband, continues to be the "mother's boy", and expects to get food at the bottom of this mother's pot everyday. Many consequences are observed as Freud points them out, and he acknowledges that the unresolved or non-mastered of Oedipus complex results in the interlocking in the marriage of the dynamic elements of past relationships. The transference of expectations and responses has a powerful influence on the individual's later attitudes towards adult sexuality and on his behaviour in this marriage and feeling toward his own children.

Ahurole and Ekwueme are adolescents. Ahurole continues her crying fits and nages her husband into uncontrollable fury. The fact that she wrestles energetically in the bedroom with her husband tumbling chairs shows that this marriage is a marriage of immature people.

As far as Ekwueme is concerned, in constructing the ideal image of his wife, he compares it with her mother. The only woman, who arouses sexual feelings is Ihuoma, who, although is only about twenty three, behaves like a much older woman. Ihuoma is in fact, rather motherly, and it is obvious that Ekwueme's ideal is a mother figure: "A mature woman who is soothing and loving. A woman who could act for him.... A woman well something like his mother" (81). As far as Ekwueme sees Ihuoma, the image of his mother is imbedded in her. He does not have any intention to resolve the misunderstanding between him and Ahurole. Consequently, Ahurole's jealousy rises, and on the advice of her mother, she gives Ekwueme a love potion which makes him insane, and heightens the conflict between them.

Engagement in a love affair may be successful or not. Novelists like Thomas Hardy and indirectly George Eliot with their persistent concern with the role of fate in the lives of men have join the ranks of best known classic tragedies such as Shakespeare's Macbeth, Sophocles's Oedipus to celebrate this issue. These tragedies are concerned with great personalities engaged in the struggle that end disastrously. Therefore, if they are tragedies in classical context, there are also others in a modern sense.

Elechi Amadi identifies Ihuoma as belonging to two hostile worlds: the spiritual and the earthly. It is in relation to her belonging to the spiritual world that makes her beauty which is supposed to be a source of pride to her to become an

instrument of shame and humiliation, and the road to disaster. She is exploited by men because of her beauty. And in all of this, she remains helpless.

Very often, Amadi's characters are described with passion, always struggling for the best in life; marrying in order to get joy and have a sense of security, yet the tragic fate inevitably pursues them. Throughout the novel, the reader realises that Ihuoma is trying to forget one problem when another occurs, and nothing seems to bring her the happiness she desires. This state draws the reader's sympathy in connection with what Aristotle notes:

The kind of pain we feel at the sight of a fatal or painful evil which happens to one who does not deserve it, an evil which we might expect to befall ourselves or one of those close to us and when it seems near. Clearly to feel pity, a person must think he himself or someone belonging to him is liable to suffer. (Qtd Poetry and Style, 6)

From the above quotation, it is evident and every reader may feel pity or sympathise with Ihuoma who is experiencing this unknown fate. She is caught in a web that she cannot effectively manage. The perspective of marriage is understood as a destiny that everyone has to face. Failure to marry in traditional Africa is conceived as misfortune, which should not occur to any. This is why Ihuoma, in her village Omokachi is desperate. She witnesses in her husbands' deaths without guessing the mystery surrounding their deaths. It is only Ekwueme's death that does not come as a surprise, because the dibia has

informed them, though they wanted to battle with the gods, showing another level of conflict. However, it is important to note that her tragic end is also registered in her open nature to all men. Though she might resist at the beginning, we end up seeing her engaging fully each new relation.

In conclusion, Amadi's The Concubine shows instances of physical and psychological conflicts in the characters. This psychological conflict leads to physical conflicts. Through Ekwueme's, Emenike's and Madume's deaths, the work analyses the relationships which help to heighten the different levels of conflict. The centre of conflict in the novel under study is the love relationship between Ihuoma and her suitors. We also realized that the conflict between Ahurole and Ekwueme stems from his strong attachment to the mother from early age, and this strong attachment hampers his relationship Ahurole, because she lacks the qualities of her mother.

CHAPTER TWO

DIVIDED LOYALTY IN JOHN MUNONYE'S THE ONLY SON

This chapter aims at highlighting the theme of Mother-Son relationship in the context of The Only Son. It further expresses the interaction that occurs after the child finally recognises his manhood at later age. The chapter also intends to show how the son is released from the mother's bondage in adulthood. In this light, the original loyalty to the mother is defeated by the son's strong and new desire.

Childhood is the matrix within which the sense of self and the shaping of consciousness and convictions are formed. Ernest R. Hilgard in Introduction to psychology states that

The learning takes place through social contact is particularly important in man because he must learn to live in complex culture. For a child parents are of course the most important agents of social environment, that is, they are the people who influence him and teach him the ways of the society in which he is to live. (64)

From Hilgard's observation, it is evident that the role of the parent is very important in child rearing. The person closer to him or her, plays a greater role in

shaping the child. But as the child grows up, and is becoming more and more independent, his thinking starts reassuring his/her former influence.

In fact, in John Munonye's The Only Son, Akafo's home symbolises love: "Okafo loved me and I loved him" (3) says Chiaku her wife. Two years after their marriage, Okafo dies, leaving his wife in marriage teenage age and Nnanna, his son six moons old. From this moment, Chiaku becomes solely responsible for the boy's upbringing.

Even though she is young, she is determined to bring up her son according to the dictates of her tradition. In order to set the pace for the oedipal theme, the author successfully kills Akafo in the place of the son to strengthen the mother son relationship. According to Munonye,

those who had known the father would often remark that the boy was a perfect image of him that this edition fully developed was, going to be more handsome than the first....The oval face was there; so also the straight nose, the long legs, the elegance and the athletic build.

Those features which were hallmarks of male beauty. (15)

The author lets Nnanna feel fit in the new position. Answers and reactions prove superiority as done by husbands whose answers are "you worry too much, he said, let me rest, I will go in the evening" (15). These reactions take root into the play of Sophocles's Oedipus, where the hero, Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother.

The Oedipus complex is the theory of Sigmund Freud which contributes to the understanding of human mind and how it is shaped. According to Freud, the Oedipus complex is to be found from the age of 3 to 5, at the time of phallic stage. This phenomenon is visible in the child because of an attitude of seduction towards the parent of the opposite sex at the time the child expresses an attitude of jealousy of the same sex (his rival). Like Oedipus, Nnanna has lost his father when he was six months old. He grew up ignorant of the father's authority and affection. For Nnanna there is no immediate rival. Consequently, he grows more and more attached to his mother, with an increasing feeling and resentment as a dutiful husband. Looking back into Freud's philosophy, Nnanna is in the phallic period of his development, when a boy develops strong feelings towards his mother. Hence the cultural taboos warn the son that such a relationship is unproductive. The fundamental view is that, according to Freud the two-person mother-child relationship is by nature regressive, unproductive, and that culture depends on the son-father relationship.

All that the mother can do for the son is perpetuate a dependency, which prevent further development. Through resolution of the Oedipus complex, the boy makes his way into the male world, the world of patriarchal law and order. Here the role of both parents in child rearing is of paramount importance. In normal cases, it can be dissolved or destroyed, and if it is merely repressed, this can lead to abnormal development. Oji highly spoken of in the novel under study is Nnanna's uncle, a male figure who represents cultural authority. Oji is in

perpetual conflict with his daughter Chiaku because of Chiaku's excessive worry and love towards her son. Through Oji's character, the author wants to show that the mother-son relationship is abnormal as she refuses to give up on the one hand and on the other hand, it exposes a masculine jealousy as we read it in the piece of advice he gives Chiaku: "you carry that boy too much to heart. Do you think it's who guards him? What is it our father used to say: anything that breathes is, by and large, an uncertain possession and mustn't put one's heart too much in it" (27). As Nnanna grows older he passes a night with his friend. His absence reveals the link between them: "Chiaku was as good as dead until she heard her son is here" (28). This shows strong feeling of mother-son intimacy. Munonye uses a situation similar to death, which testifies the mother's attachment to the son. Consequently Chiaku is unable to live without him.

Whenever there is a conflict between his mother and other women, Nnanna intervenes to protect the mother. According to Freud, through the oedipal complex, the mother is a supreme being, the head of the family. She is the center of attraction.

Here Oji thinks and believes in the exactness of Freud's idea. He contends that "you know Chiaku, you often show a sense of man, especially when it comes to the boy" (50). Chiaku's closeness to her son attains its climax when she enters in Nnanna's room unannounced. At this age, the son is approaching adolescence, the stage of child-identification. As she enters the room, she pauses. Pausing here reveals something to the audience and the narrator comments:

Chiaku went into the sleeping room the candle was burning in her left hand. She saw Nnanna stretched out indecorously. His limbs were thrown apart, his jaws were open and a small stream was flowing from the corner of his mouth. She was irritated. She began to arrange him when she shifted his legs he stirred and resisted. (77)

Munonye describes the scene in details. Here, it is evident that Chiaku's emotional feelings and needs are expressed. She has repressed the image of her husband and now the image of her husband is transferred to the son. The gestures are similar to those existing between husbands and wives. She is searching to satisfy her sexual emotional need through her son, but she is disturbed by serial and cultural constraints. Chiaku's reaction takes root from oedipal theory. Freud argues that the human moral sense of unconsciousness is the reflection of the superego, which is conscious and unconscious. Chiaku increases the ego's strength because the feelings which had been repressed in the unconscious come to the conscious world.

Falling in love is another important aspect of Oedipus complex, because for a boy to love a lady, she must have some common features with his mother. Traditionally, most marriages are arranged by parents, as such Chiaku like any other mothers is occupied with her son's future. She struggles to shape it, but here, she is under oedipal control. She fears to lose her son, and prefers to accept a fiancée which matches her whims and caprices. She knows that her welfare and

future depends exclusively on her son. She has the idea that he will continue to be everything to her as we read it in the following lines:

Wasn't a gift to her? And many in one! And then Chiaku proceeded to build a mental picture of her son Nnanna in ten years time. Tall, well proportioned handsome ... in short, that any mother could expect in a son... but should she not start to think about should begin to look for a good girl who would produce his images, sweet restless things whom she could carry in her arms and lap or hug to her breast and who would grow up to call her big mother. (48)

Referring to the above quotation, Munonye's message through Chiaku's mind is to show to the audience that the Oedipus complex does not remain in childhood, it has consequences on the mother and the son, even to the daughter-in-law. In the Oedipus complex, the mother feels that the lady will come to occupy her place in the son's heart, and this arouses conflict between the mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law. As a solution, most mothers search for daughters-in-law whose qualities and preferences match with theirs' for the sons. This takes origin into oedipal complex and its affect on psychological impotence.

The extent of mother-son relationship established between them is vividly dramatised by the childhood where Chiaku is anxious of losing his son "I am not wise. She paused. You want me to go to sleep when the child is missing (27). Seemingly, Nnanna's reactions are hidden by the author, to shape his

independence from the mother's bondage. We can explain this situation by maturation of the son. During adolescence, Nnanna changes his behaviour. This change is relatively independent of the exercise and experience of his early childhood.

William R. Bascon and Melville J. Herskovits in Continuity and Change in African Cultures note that

Individual's behaviour is shaped by culture in time and space the ways of thinking and acting are patterned so that thinking in any society is not haphazard or random. This does not mean that behaviour thereby becomes a fixed and inflexible; it varies from time to time, with a range which is considered acceptable. (30)

From the above quotation, we can say that the child is reared in well accepted norms of his society. Chiaku is governed by his feelings towards her son and by the norms of her society. She teaches Nnanna everything related to African tradition and religion. However, she is ignorant of the innovation introduced by colonialism and Christianity. The conflict in cultural ideology, as a result of cultural innovations and the fact that the son is moving towards the stage of recognition creates an imbalance in their relation. Nnanna must make a choice, since he is confronted with this dilemma of either dancing to her mother's traditional tune or asserting himself as a man in the new Christian faith. His

mother has no vision of the Christian Church and faith and this pushes further Nnanna's curiosity: Chiaku says

the church was bad enough; it taught what the ear should not hear.

The school was bad enough even worse. It took away children from their parents. Every morning and taught them not to work in homes.

In addition to everything! Yet these young ones who would grow up one day to be fathers and mothers ...

Sooner or later, they would destroy all the sacred and time honoured things by which the community was sustained and thread on the graveyards of such things. (58)

From the above-mentioned, Chiaku is afraid that the new cultures will consequently destroy more than build the child.

The moral weaknesses of a child begin at childhood. Nnanna is guided by his free will dictates, that is, in his native village, he commits an abomination, and instead of being afraid, he praises himself. His mother is obliged to flee to her native village expecting changes in her son. This liberal attitude continues to manifest in Nnanna and makes the mother worried about his future and behaviour as she contends:

I've laboured and laboured to obtain our living. What did I not suffer from Amanze and his wife? That was the day they said that my son was possessed. On that day I taught them what not to do to a window's only child. That's the son who

has gone mad. Now I fled to Nade, here to start life afresh and live in peace suitors have come and I've turned them out. I tell them that I have a son who is my husband. Just that I don't want to live away from him and already I've found him a wife. She is a good girl and the family is obi. What will they say? When they hear about this? Why do I live and not die at once? (88)

As seen above, Chiaku displays regret. She is disturbed by the new doctrine of Christianity in which her son is abiding by. Chiaku sees things traditionally. However she sees her expectations dashed against a rock. Nnanna is attracted by different ways of thinking. In the light of what happens to Nnanna, Neil Bolton in Psychology of Thinking writes:

In adulthood the process of thinking copes with behaviour of men and with their environment. Whether a situation is a problem or not depends upon our motivation and if we did not care where we went, the situation must form an obstacle in the way of goal directed activity. (30)

Feelings and goals change in time and space. Nnanna is confronted with another system of thinking; he lives with young adolescent children who attend the new school. These children learn principles, different from the traditional ways of life. According to Bock, this situation is likely to happen when the

particular learning is settled. He emphasizes this in Cultural Anthropology: A Christian perspective that

each child must learn a particular set of cultural rules in the context of specific family and local community. This means that his primary social and emotional allegiance is necessarily directed to small group and its provincial traditions. These allegiance can, to some extent be weakened and superseded by wider loyalties late in life. But they are never completely dissolved and consciously or unconsciously they continue to shape our behaviour.

(Qtd Stephen et als, 190-191)

Each culture or new way introduced in a foreign society seeks do strengthen itself. To attain the goal, it transforms the consciousness of adepts of the first culture into action against it, and suddenly causes a crisis. Andrew, a former ardent traditionalist is used as the catalyst for this crisis. Andrew is a master and preacher in the Christian church. He has first been a member of the traditional faith. Missionaries pass by him. Young children are fond of his teachings, which are mainly scorn of his former faith: “all those who refuse to come to church do badly. They will be left into the fire to burn for countless years” (77). He goes on saying “you are young and should learn to read and write as others do” (82). The new convert in many ways militates against the traditional faith. Psychologists and researchers relate the attitudes of Nnanna to his period of adolescence.

Strecker and Appel in Discovering Ourselves: A View of Human Mind and how it Works emphasize that

The adolescent attempts to establish his individuality emancipate himself from his parents and family; break the chains of dependence and integrate his personality in preparation for adult world and its many responsibilities. (82)

We learn from the above that a child in adolescence subjectively perceives a need to be independent of his actions. He begins to seek the company away from the immediate family into others. He may attempt to break ties which have hitherto bound him to the home, and may transfer his loyalties and affections outside his family. The child attempts to adjust himself to his impulses, and bring them into reality with the outside world. They add that the manner in which a child resolves problems posed by his needs and desires throughout the various stages determines greatly his future adjustment as an adult. They write:

Successful resolutions of childhood conflicts make an emotionally and psychologically stable adult. However, this is impossible without an early secure and correct emotional relationship as embodied in mature parental attitude during formative years. (84)

In fact, Nnanna is in his period of emancipation, he does not hide his feelings and what he does. He sees the importance of his own education in the new church and school.

At home, he practises Christian principles as dictated by his authorities to show his new faith. From puberty, he has been into contact with his fiancée. As the girl is ready he disregards her for a new plan in life. At puberty stage, he breaks up with the milieu in which he is brought up and challenges his former complex. Nnanna refuses ideals and realities of tradition, which are represented by his mother. Chiaku has commitment of being loyal to his clan, tribe and to her husband Okafo. It appears that Nnanna's later behaviour has been formed in early childhood. At this period, he is good for nothing as Munonye further states:

I have a son of your age and yet I have to do everything myself. "I've told you, I must go to hunt." he reaffirmed. 'Villain! She thundered. I suffer because of you and yet you refuse to do anything in the house. The mother who brought you into this world does not get anything from you in return! Let me tell you Nnanna, you are not behaving at all well! Did I ask anybody to bring me into the world? He said light-heartedly.'" (2)

Chiaku therefore questions the hope she has toward her son. From his ways of answering which are impolite, and his laziness, Chiaku develops a feeling that Nnanna would bring shame on her. She finds out that Nnanna's behaviour is becoming worse and reminds him of the necessity of regaining his original place. Chiaku finds her less and less able to side with her son on the issue of her

old faith and values because Nnanna sees his mother's home as valueless and wish to escape. He acquires conflicting values with the introduction of Christianity. Because of this new process, he is unable to cope with requirements of tradition. However, Munonye despises Nnanna as being influenced by the new faith. Nnanna realises that spirits are masks of human beings. He says: "You people do all sorts of things in the name of medicine. Let me be that's why you mask human beings and call them spirits: He grinned" (129).

Throughout the whole book, instances showing Nnanna's bad behaviour are exposed. Strecker and Appel, speaking about a child who adopts different behaviour and faith different from that of his parents say: "The latter behaviour pattern is commonly seen as a reaction to strict parental training which fasters exercise rebellion against all authority, both external and internal" (107). There are influences, tendencies that are guiding our modes of thought and behaviour of which we are not always conscious, which we cannot recognize later in life. Nnanna sees no reason for her mother's laments about his behaviour.

Chiaku discovers Nnanna's behaviour after examining clearly his past days, and understands the situation. Again, she acknowledges that human nature is the same everywhere. Priesthood is an institution in which Nnanna has joined in order that he may get self-fulfilment and happiness in the new adult life. However, his early behaviour continues to shape him. We find Nnanna unable

to change the bad part of his character as he grows up only with a single parent.

The priest posits that

Nnanna's one great fault was that he was self-willed and pugnacious, prone to use his gift of strength to tyrannize over others. He would rather settle any serious disagreement with his fists. Just the week before, he had beaten Smart until Smart cried like an animal. For Smart has cursedly called him homeless wild one. (147-148)

From the above, he continues to multiply wrong deeds as the case in his early childhood. In fact "Nnanna expatiates a flight from parentalhood" (148) for he was still a bachelor, "that he was out to seek vicirous status from his successful products (148). Nnanna has beaten Smart because he revealed the reality about Nnanna's life. This is a means of escaping the fault in his life. Strecker and Appel, speaking in the light of such attitudes says

We escape recognition of our own faults and defects by blaming others. We soften disappointment and failure by attributing it to others or to the conditions of life. It is a mental habit which feeds on itself. (223)

Here, Strecker and Appel criticize individuals who take refuge in more general known institutions. Nnanna's friends criticise him constantly.

Normally, in African culture, love is primarily taught at home, especially by mothers. L.S. Senghor in his work Prose and Poetry supports this idea as

follows: “Woman has been made the source of the life span and the guardian of the house. That is to say the depository of clan’s past and the guarantor of its failure” (44). Mothers do so, to maintain harmony at home and in the society. Chiaku has done her best. She has taught Nnanna what she believes in, how interesting and important it is for the African society. She sometimes, like most mothers, protects Nnanna even in his wrong deeds. This, to an extent, helps to destroy the child, and that is why they all face a tragic end.

Nnanna’s behaviour is absolutely rebellions as he does not attempt to hide to his mother’s course. The mother-son relationship ends on a tragic note as unhappiness settles between Nnanna and Chiaku.

In Tragedy and Developments in Criticism, Draper, Ronald Philip explains what a tragic situation is:

The particular thing called tragedy that happens to the tragic hero does not depend on his moral status. If it is causally related to something he has done, as it generally is, the tragedy is in the inevitability of the consequences of the act, not its moral significance as an act. Hence the paradox that in tragedy fear and pity are raised and cast out. (160)

A person experiencing the fate of a tragic hero is said to be unlucky according to the above quotation. In many cases, as Aristotle acknowledges, the hero is isolated from his society as he drops out its faith and norms. Aristotle explains the roots of tragedy into the invisible God or any related idea. The other

characteristics of a tragic situation are that the reader feels pity and fear for the victim of tragedy. Though we might pity the tragic hero, the bulk of his tragic end lies in his own character. What Aristotle calls the tragic flaw.

From childhood, Chiaku is linked to her son; she cannot pretend to assist to such a situation. This separation is seen by relatives as the rejection by the god of tradition for befriending with another God, the God of Christianity and with his own self. Nnanna is not conscious and aware of the forces at work upon him. As his uncle Oji feels, “the journey which has a beginning must have an end, for him who’s Chi is awake. One day we shall hear his story” (152).

The Chi in tradition is the guardian of each person. The Chi which is supposed to guard him, isolates him in priesthood. The combination of Chiaku’s determination to remain faithful to her society, and her son becoming unbearable gives the greatest possible heightening of motions of pity and horror to the reader: Chiaku notes that

You my son, she began. The tone was calm, and the mood was friendly. ‘I carried you inside my wombs for ten months not less a day. In addition, you are my husband father come to life... She organised her mind. There is nothing at all; I should hide from you that are why I decided to tell you. It doesn’t matter whether you like it or not for, who would allow herself to live as I do if I had a chance.... I’ve decided to remarry. (130)

The ultimate decision she makes to remarry Okere and fulfil her obligations as mother and wife is the expression of an essentially tragic acceptance that although her attempt to affront her destiny has been defeated, she will abide by the melancholic wisdom that her disillusionment has brought. The author shows to what extent the separation affects her by writing that

Chiaku's mind went back to her son who now lived with a stranger. Each time her conscience stung her reminding her that a child was a child no matter what his offence. She found it impossible to remove Nnanna's image from her mind or regard him as lost when he was not only alive but within reach. (139)

Here we notice a psychological mutation with some adjustment, when she realises that she has been deceived. The reader feels that the change affects her mental world, which constitutes the tragic portrait. Now she needs freedom and companionship.

To conclude, Chiaku has from all indications invested all her efforts and hope in her only son. The excessive love she has towards her son makes her to refuse suitors, and to affirm herself by rearing Nnanna according to the dictates of the tradition. As time goes, the child's recognition of his manhood and his strong desire of a new faith separate them. Chiaku is caught in a tragic mood like her son. As she sees herself not guilty about what happens, she remarries, and let her son go his way in priesthood.

CHAPTER THREE

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Many writers acknowledge that the mother is the source of life for both the husband and children. The mother-son relationship is a natural predisposition, where mother, more often than not, love their sons more than their daughters. However, it sometimes has a negative effect on the son's life in future. Among African writers who have been able to tackle this theme are Amadi and Munonye in their works titled Concubine and The Only Son respectively. Here similarities and differences on the mother-son concept will be drawn out, helping us to understand how the oedipal concept operates in Africa, and how the authors try, in their own way, to treat this theme. Besides, both novels deal with the conflict between man and his god.

In fact, Concubine and The Only Son study the psychological relationship between children and their parents. In both novels the sons are pampered by their mothers and the father's authority is underestimated or absent. As the novel opens, Amadi describes the relationship between Adaku and her son Ekwueme. The first: "Baby boy was thus much pampered" (40). He goes further by justifying this fact: Nkechi, Ekwueme's sister followed over ten years after" (40). It is normal that "Adaku invest all her love and attachment into Ekwueme" (48). Even after having other children, Adaku continues to pay much attention to her son. This is due to the maternal bondage between mother

and son as Simone de Beauvoir puts it in The Second Sex: “It is in maternity that a woman fulfils her psychological destiny. It is her natural calling. Since her whole organic structure is adapted for the perpetual of the special” (425). This view shows us that the love between any child comes from the mother’s passionate experience of its conception. Ekwueme’s best companion is her mother. This shows that the baby grows up ignorant of the father’s affection. Given that the mother is biologically and psychologically doomed to rear her children, she stays attached to them while the father is the other in the family. This helps strengthen the bond between mother and son, especially as the son is the first child.

The effect of this relation begins when Wigwe starts realizing that Adaku is transferring all her feelings to Ekwueme. Here, the baby grows up more and more attached to her, with an increasing feeling of jealousy on the father’s part. Ekwueme tries to create a distance with the father; Wigwe Ekwueme’s father seeing how Ekwueme is attached to his mother is “annoyed but what could he do when the child was more often in his mother’s company” (131). Consequently, Wigwe accuses his wife “of trying to make a woman out of a man” (132).

Speaking on gender identity disorder and psychological problems in children and adolescents, an anonymous critic reveals that ‘the roots of rather feminine characteristics and indifference to women which appear moreover openly in later life comes from constant keeping a son in her mother’s

company.” Wigwe is foreseeing the future of his son. For Ekwueme, “all efforts were directed towards pleasing his mother to justify confidence in him” (132). The love and confidence between Adaku and Ekwueme is reciprocal. We come across the transfer of feelings of wife, from her husband Wigwe to her son Ekwueme. We see in Ekwueme and Adaku’s relationship something like erotic element. Ekwueme occupies Wigwe’s place: “He would chat with her mother for hours in the evening, while his father dozed off by his lonely fire in the reception hall” (132). This relation between Adaku and Ekwueme at this stage is not mere maternal attachment but something more than that – it is oedipal. Wigwe is seen as inexistent; consequently, she transfers her feelings to the son. At this stage, Ekwueme is not only her son but her lover. In him, he sees the image of her husband. This phenomenon is quite natural in oedipal situations, because a mother always sees in her son his beloved husband.

John Munonye’s The only son pictures a similar situation. It can be a bit difficult to interpret it purely in the classical oedipal sense. When reading this novel one would gather enough elements that show how complicated the relationship between Nnanna and his mother is. Nnanna is the only son of Chiaku. She considers her son as her defender and protector after the death of her husband. As earlier mentioned, the author intentionally kills Okafo to draw Nnanna and Chiaku more closely: “Even in the heat and confusion of the fight, they all recognised my son’s voice, leave her or I’ll shoot” (9). From six moons, Chiaku is the only parent of Nnanna. Nnanna depends on her for food and

compassion. Looking back into Freud's psychology, Nnanna is in the phallic stage of his development.. She sees in Nnanna the image of her husband. "Chiaku walked out of the house free and safe. The heart of the mother sang she in a frenzy joy, her hands raised skywards, in prayer, my many in one! His mother's love!" (10). Here, even though it sounds purely as excessive love for her son, her love and attachment indicate different patterns of maternal loyalties that exist within the parental household: love of children and child rearing and something beyond that. Some differences are clearly stated through the consequences of Oedipal Complex. Normally, both mothers in both novels show great love and devotion. It is such feelings, which make them more determined to help their sons settle in life. Such a wish is expressed by their search for a better fiancée for their sons at early age. Indeed, they wish to guide them till they get someone else who could take care of them. Unfortunately, Nnanna refuses to get married. Also, Ekwueme's marriage is dissolved.

According to Freud, the Oedipus complex plays a fundamental role in the structured personality and in the orientation of human desire. According to the definition given by the Encyclopaedia Americana, a child who suffers from the Oedipus complex must have lived abnormal circumstances. Normally, during the development of individual, every child experiences it, but the way it manifests can differ according to the circumstances through which the child lives.

Ekwueme's personality is hampered by his mother's attachment. He never really strikes one as a forceful young man, although he is twenty five. He is immature, and this is later confirmed by information about his early life. Ekwueme's character and attitudes are readily understood, if one realises that he is a "mother's boy", who measures other women against the standard set by his mother: 'Ekwueme was not keen on women'. Yes, he could not dash around them in the arena but he never felt excited by them' (132). Ekwueme's love towards her mother prevents every relationship from being successful. He wishes subconsciously to marry a woman like his mother. He disagrees with his wife only because she does not have his mother's quality. He has been the only child for twelve years, pampered and spoilt by his mother. Ekwueme's situation matches with Freud explanation on personality because his mother occupies his heart.

Even though the early childhood relationship between Nnanna and Chiaku in The Only Son is not clearly exposed as is the case with Ekwueme and the mother, Nnanna is also unable to meet up with the requirements of his society as is expected of him. In both novels there is a lack of strong patriarchal upbringing. However, in The Only Son, there are no consequences of early relationship between Nnanna and Chiaku like in The Concubine. Nnanna is attracted by the new faith and education, and he realizes his manhood immediately. There is no transfer of feeling from mother to son. Only "from time to time Chiaku's mind went back to her son, who now lived with a

stranger” he goes on saying, “Each time her conscience stung her reminding that a child no matter what he is, she found it impossible to remove Nnanna’s image from her mind or to regard him as lost when he was not only alive but also within reach” (73). This quotation asserts and specifies the mother’s role and love. It marries the idea of John Bowlby when he reports in Second Sex and Gender that “there is not normal thing than that love of a mother to her children” (Qtd Second Sex and Gender, 159). Nnanna escapes from the mother bondage by joining Christianity. In the Concubine, Ekwueme is an unfulfilled person because of the mother’s dominance and possessiveness. In The Only Son we observe the absence of the father, and this absence contributes in the child elopement to Christianity, as the child does not fear patriarchal authority. Apart from what happened to Ekwueme in adolescence, where he remains tied to his mother, Nnanna in adolescence stage recognises his manhood and proves it by revolting against his mother’s ties to tradition.

Apart from the mother-son relationship which generates into the Oedipus complex in both novels, the chapter also focuses on man’s complex relationship with the gods and supernatural, as religion is a universal phenomenon. Most people in the world spend a lot of time and wealth on religion. Balendier in Ambiguous Africa: Cultures in Collision acknowledges that “religion serves a sort of cultural conservatory and tries to provide answers to several questions” (218). Traditional Africans as well as Christians find answers and solutions to most of their problems through religions. In order to obtain a satisfactory

answer, a person needs to be in good and harmonious relation with his god, and with men as well. A religious person of this conviction hopes that the god he believes in is a guardian of his life. It is in that sense of desire to have a better destiny that a religious man humbles himself in the sight of his god.

Writers like Munonye in The Only Son and Elechi Amadi in The Concubine examine this complex relationship between man and gods. The God of Christianity plays a great role in the separation of mother from son. Likewise in The Concubine the traditional god is responsible for the marital tragedy of Ihuoma and Ekwueme. Thus, the central conflict in both novels operates around religious issues. For instance Amadi exposes Ihuoma's relationship with her last lover Ekwueme in a tragic mood, before Ekwueme entertaining only love affairs with Ihuoma needs to clear the first relation with Ahurole, and he sets the pace for a new marriage against the will of the gods.

Ihuoma plays a major role in Ekwueme's cure, and marriage negotiation commences. While preparing their marriage, his father consults a dibia who warns Ekwueme about the dangers of marrying Ihuoma: "Listen the dibia began. Ihuoma belongs to the Sea-King, and he was to die untouched by men" (196). Through Anyika's mouth, Amadi warns Ekwueme about the impossibility of marrying a spirit. Ekwueme's desire and faith in god's goodness does not stop him. He goes on hunting other dibias. Speaking about human being conception of God's nature Mbiti in Introduction to the African Religion says: "In many parts of the world, God is described as being good. He

is not only the maker of all human beings and things but he is good towards them” (21). Convinced that God is good, items of sacrifices are called to appease the Sea- King in so far as Ihuoma’s ownership is concerned, armed with Ogwoturumbe’s assurance that he tackles the Sea-king bondage but Ekwueme dies before the performance of the sacrifices. He does not reach his aim of marrying Ihuoma. Apart from Ekwueme being a victim of the conflict between man and his god, the former husbands of Ihuoma: Emenike and Madume are killed in a similar perspective.

Likewise, in The Only Son, Munonye centres on the period of introduction of new religions in Africa. The context is of great importance to the understanding of Christian faith, its doctrines and God himself, as Munonye is writing about a society with strong traditional African values. In many ways, Munonye produces instances of separation: members of traditional society believing in African religion of sacrifices offered by loyal traditional persons; Christianity participates in the separation of Chiaku and Nnanna. This situation can be paralleled with the marital tragedy in The Concubine because; death and separation are caused by the justice of venerated gods. In The Only Son, separation of mother and son, and the disintegration of family relationship is the outcome of the new acknowledged Christian God.

Chiaku, a widow with Nnanna his only son, for sometime have entertained a close relationship. Nnanna and Ekwueme respectively for many years are the only sons of their aging parents. “Children prolong the life of their

parents and through them the name of the family is perpetuated” (108) as Mbiti puts it. Here, parents acknowledge the continuity of faith from generation to generation through their progeny: “They place their faithfulness in their sons. Chiaku built a mental picture of her son Nnanna in ten years that the son would grow and continue the lineage” (11). To strengthen her hope, Chiaku invokes the god by offering sacrifices, continuing her reverie during her supper, “she threw out a sizeable lump of food”. It rendered perfectly. “Igwe! Please accept, she prayed silently” (48). Munonye specifies the sacrifices by letting the audiences know that “it was an offering to the god that ruled the universe for the welfare of her one and only son because of whom he suffered and struggled with undiminishing strength” (48). However, the god he is addressing seems to be absent. The traditional god seems to be replaced by another supernatural force, which is invisible, the Christian God. For Nnanna any attempt to bind the God or Christ in order to protect Nnanna and his mother close relationship fails.

Examining Balendier’s comment on the impact of Christianity on African people in the Ambiguous Africa: Cultures in Collision it becomes more evident that

Christianity is emerging as a rival faith adapted to the needs of young Negroes in their relations with the sacred; Christ appears and the idea of salvation is adopted. It offers not only the hope of reward after death but also the certainty of

acquiring the knowledge that assures control of material riches. (218)

Unlike Ekwueme who remains faithful to his traditional religion, Nnanna divorces from he's, and embraces Christianity as an alternate religion.

To sum up, we have been able to analyse the complicated and unusual bond between sons and mothers. This early strong attachment between mother and son results in the development of the Oedipus complex. Ekwueme is the best companion of his mother, and Wigwe, Ekwueme's father is regarded as being absent. Similarly in The Only Son, Nnanna has lost his father in early stage of influence and he faces his mother's excessive love. The adolescence period brings recognition of manhood to Nnanna while Ekwueme succumbs to the consequences of the Oedipus complex in later life. Both sons are in conflict with their gods as we see that they are looked up on as victims of God will. That is, Ekwueme's sacrifices to the god to marry Ihuoma are not accepted as a solution. Nnanna instead of heading into African faith joins priesthood as a means of liberating himself from his mother's strings.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work set out to prove that conflict results in the contrastive emotions which prevail within a person. Our discussion was carried against the backdrop of the psychoanalytic approach. In an attempt to channel our argument, it was important to examine the different levels of conflicts and Oedipus consciousness in both texts. At the end, we realised that Amadi and Munonye handle conflicts of different levels and treat the question of oedipal complex from a purely classical sense. In the discussion of Oedipus complex, we realise though that Elechi Amadi and Munonye tackle a similar issue (that is, the oedipal consciousness), their approach is different. Ekwueme grows with the image of the mother buried in him while Nnanna realizes his masculinity and separate with the mother.

Analysing the sons' later in life, it becomes more evident that both sons during adolescence have contrasting emotions within themselves, as their mothers continue to be agents of either their frustration or happiness.

Inquiring the cause of Oedipus complex in The Concubine, we realised that the conflict that arises in the family stems from different treatment given by parents to the child. The mother tends to educate and transfer her feelings to the son, and the husband is considered as inexistent. This patriarchal abandonment weighs on the son, thereby creating gap in his life. We also realized that at the end, Ekwueme is unable to take over his role as husband in the family, as his

wife fails to meet up with qualities of his mother. He finally divorces Ahurole. Ekwueme is also disappointed by his own god, as he fails to placate him in order to marry his motherly wife.

As far as Nnanna is concerned, he makes a balance of experiences between his early childhood and the new dispensation of western education and Christianity. This last stage happens during adolescence, when he seeks to work individually and prove his adulthood. This stage is that of recognition in the Freudian sense. Unlike Ekwueme who fails in adulthood responsibilities and anchors on his mother's image of a woman, Nnanna breaks away from the mother and assumes his responsibilities as a man.

Both novels deal with the relationship between mothers and sons, with common features of oedipal consciousness caused by possessive mothers. Both writers highlight the passive behaviour of fathers. In both novels, the lack of patriarchal assistance in child rearing causes an abnormal attachment between mothers and sons. However, adulthood is viewed differently. In The Concubine, the oedipal complex continues to handicap Ekwueme's marriage; it creates destruction of his household. While Munonye in The Only Son views adulthood as a recognition of manhood by Nnanna. This recognition is seen as a victory upon his mother's will. It is important to note that Nnanna's Oedipus complex is well resolved. Both novels deal with complicated relationships that end miserably/unhappily for both mothers and sons. We realised that a child's

maturity depends upon the Oedipus complex resolution and the environment. That is maturity of the self.

By the way of contribution to literature, this study is a continuation of the debate on the levels of conflicts and the Oedipus complex with emphasis on Elechi Amadi and John Munonye. It also brings to limelight the way African authors handle the theme of oedipal constraint. Instead of killing the father and marrying the mother as Sophocles puts it, which is of course a taboo in Africa, the African author attributes either a passive role to the father or kills him to give room for the mother-son relationship to mature. It is important to indicate that all taboos are cleared from the African scenario. It is on this note that this work affirms that the theme of Oedipal Complex is a common theme in Africa, though the theme is not handled in the classical sense or the Sophoclean manner.

Future researchers should research much more deeply on the themes of determination, hardship and self-discovery in both texts.

Finally, parents should be aware that child rearing is a complimentary task, not only that of the mother nor that of the father. In reading this work, parents should beware of the disaster that awaits them, if the task is handed to a single parent. Let it happen, when the cause is natural.

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