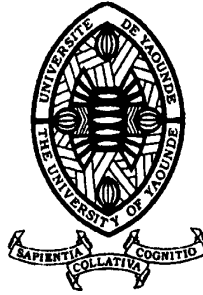


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PSYCHOANALYSING THE INDIVIDUAL: TOWARDS ELICITING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMPATHY IN CHIKA UNIGWE'S ON BLACK SISTERS STREET

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Award of a Postgraduate Teacher's Diploma(DIPES II) in Bilingual Studies

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ABSTRACT

This work, entitled “Psychoanalyzing the Individual: Towards Eliciting Different Levels of Empathy in Chika Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters Street*”, discusses some inner conciliations that occur in an individual’s essence as far as the quest for survival is concerned. The study further explores the different defenses necessary in a situation which seems to topple the individual’s potency. It goes ahead to look at the empathic levels that the author evokes in the readers of *on Black Sisters Street*. The work further exposes the pluses of hope vis-à-vis an exultant life. In view of this, the work proves that worldly desires rob man of his or her uprightness, exposing him or her to nothing other than pain, and valorizes hope as a catalyst for continuity. It equally exposes the thought that knowledge is an important tool which guarantees a better personality in an individual and also secures a better place in the society for that individual. Written against the backdrop of the psychoanalytic theory, this work sums up that without mental adjustments, life will be a nightmare to the individual in his or her endeavour to overcome throbbing psychosomatic developments which arise in the course of strategizing on how to survive with the hurdles of life.

RESUME

Ce travail, intitulé "Psycholoanalysing the Individual: Towards Eliciting Different Levels of Empathy in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street* ", analyse quelques résolutions intérieures qui se produisent dans l'essence d'un individu en ce qui concerne la lutte pour la survie. L'étude cherche aussi à explorer les différentes défenses nécessaires dans une situation qui semble renverser le pouvoir de l'individu. Elle avance pour regarder les niveaux empathiques que l'auteur évoque en ses lecteurs. Le travail expose également les convenients d'espoir vis-à-vis d'une vie exultante. En raison de ceci, le travail montre que les désirs terrestres renvoient l'homme à se comporter autrement. Dans ce cas, il n'expose rien d'autre que la douleur, et le travaille aussi valorise l'espoir comme catalyseur pour la continuité. En outre, il expose l'idée selon laquelle la connaissance est un outil important qui garantit une meilleure personnalité dans un individu et prépare également un meilleur endroit dans la société pour cet individu. Guidé par la théorie psychoanalytique, ce travail conclut que c'est sans les ajustements mentaux que la vie sera un cauchemar à l'individu dans son effort de surmonter les développements psychosomatiques de palpitation qui surgissent au cours de sa réflexion sur la façon dont il va vivre malgré les obstacles de la vie.

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DEDICATION

TO THE MULAAS

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this dissertation, entitled “ Psychoanalysing the Individual: Towards Eliciting Different Levels of Empathy in Chika Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters Street*”, was written by Charlotte Ngwengang Mulaa, in View of obtaining a Postgraduate Teacher’s Diploma (DIPES II) in English.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

People have different desires that they strive to satisfy in life. In order to reach the apex of happiness, man is guided by a variety of wishes. These desires (the need for food, water, clothing, comfort, education, power and popularity) serve as catalysts to the different behaviours and attitudes of humans. It is however very challenging to survive in a world which seems more or less a battle due to its unpredictability and harshness. This makes it inevitable for man's worldly pleasures to topple his reasoning. Stuck in the chains of activities that surround the individual, and coupled with the nature and norms in the society, individuals' dreams are deferred. This leaves them with no option but to cling onto whatever can put a smile on their faces. Unfortunately, in desperation, people do all they can to change situations in their favour regardless of the fact that sometimes there is no iota of honour in what they do. This explains why after attempting to make it through the right way, people give up either because of the slow pace it takes to reach that particular end or because of the corrupt nature of the society in which they find themselves. As a result, they break the rules and look for other ways that can ensure their happiness. These measures, generally, are not always the best, and this leads to frustration and disillusionment. Yet, they need to look for other ways of pushing through since life is a never-ending process.

Trapped in such a dilemma, one is obliged to ask the following questions: what role do man's goals have on the kind of life he or she lives? Considering the fact that hard work determines success (which is characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability, and challenges), why does man still fail despite his or her personal efforts to leap forward? In such a situation, how is the human psychology affected? Finally, what are some psycho-pedagogic implications of introducing sex literature in the English Language and English Literature classrooms in Cameroonian High schools? These questions are answered in the course of our analysis.

This research examines how man's excessive zeal to meet up with certain objectives in life precipitates his or her mental instability, thereby exposing him or her to neurotic traumas. It further looks at how individuals' efforts parallel their destiny, and venerates hope as a promoter of happiness. Finally, it scrutinizes the psycho-pedagogic implications of introducing sex literature in Language and Literature classrooms. This study focuses on Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*. Nonetheless, references are made to other fictional and critical material related to the topic under study.

This work is relevant in that it emphasizes a critical examination of the inner psyche of the individual in relation to his or her actions. It also makes it categorical that in spite of the fact that the individual has a role to play in mapping out a prosperous life, it can only be acquired if the individual is not dominated by the id. Hence, it gives room for the ego and superego to govern their thoughts and actions rationally. It is also significant in that it re-awakens man from the slumbers of believing that one can make it in life solely through personal efforts. The work is equally important in that it suggests some psycho-pedagogic implications of exposing learners to sex discourses.

This work operates on the contention that worldly desires rob man of his or her uprightness, exposing him or her to nothing other than pain, and valorizes hope as a catalyst for continuity. It equally exposes the thinking that knowledge is a vital tool which guarantees a better personality in an individual and also secures a better place in the society for that individual.

Before we proceed, it is necessary to define some key words such as “psychoanalyzing”, “individual”, and “empathy”, which are corner stones to this study. The term “psychoanalyzing” according to this research ties with psychology which gained grounds from its Latin counterpart “psycho logia”. Psychology as a science is the study of the human mind in relation to man’s behaviours. According to *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology*, psychology is the science which studies behavior and mental processes. *Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia*, suggests that psychology is the study of behavior and mind, embracing all aspects of conscious and unconscious experience as well as thought. The *Concise Dictionary of the Psychology* views psychology as the scientific study of the mind and behaviour which accurately describes the route to increasing one’s understanding of what behaviour is all about, and how to make sense out of it. Psychoanalyzing in this work therefore entails scanning the minds of the main characters in order to unravel the psychological experiences that are going on in their minds, and how these experiences impact different attitudes and character traits in Unigwe’s novel.

The second word “individual”, according to the *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, refers to “a single person or thing, when compared to the group or set to which they belong”. The *Merriam Webster Learner’s Dictionary* identifies the word ‘individual’ as a noun and defines it as a distinct, indivisible entity, often one among many others of a similar kind. In a similar manner, *Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia* suggests that Individuality (or selfhood) is the state or quality of being an individual; particularly of being a person separate from other persons and possessing his or her own needs or goals different from others. In a nutshell, in

psychoanalyzing the individual, this study emphasizes comprehending the distinctive mental traits of an individual as an indivisible whole within a series of actions around him or her.

The last word “empathy originated from Greek “*empathia*”. The term gained its grounds between 1900- 1905 and was coined by Tichener in 1909. It was later on translated into German as “*einfuhlung*”. According to the *Dictionary of Literary Theory and Terms*, “Empathy” is the identification of oneself up to a certain point with an animate or inanimate object, which is usually involuntary. An ancient work in German aesthetics by Lipps considers “empathy” as the tendency of perceivers to project themselves into the object of perception which can be considered a kind of animism. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* views “empathy” as a word which “signifies an identification of oneself with an observed person or object which is so close that one seems to participate in the posture, motion and sensations that one observes” (94). In this case, man projects himself or herself into the object position which can either be human, nonhuman or that he had earlier provided a definition of empathy in an earlier work in 1959. He quotes this earlier definition of his as follows:

The state of empathy, or being empathic, is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition. Thus it means to sense the hurt or the pleasure of another as he senses it and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them, but without ever losing the recognition that it is as if I were hurt or pleased and so forth. If this 'as if' quality is lost, then the state is one of identification. (3)

As time went on, Carl R. Rogers eventually saw empathy as a process than a state of being. This pricked him to come up with a current description of empathy that

The way of being with another person which is termed empathic has several facets. It means entering the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive ,moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever, that he/she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments, sensing meanings of which he/she is scarcely aware, but not trying to uncover feelings of which the person is totally unaware, since this would be too

threatening. It includes communicating your sensing of his/her world as you look with fresh and unfrighten eyes at elements of which the individual is fearful. It means frequently checking with him/her as to the accuracy of your sensing, and being guided by the responses you receive. You are a confident companion to the person in his/her inner world. By pointing to the possible meanings in the flow of his/her experiencing you help the person to focus on this useful type of referent, to experience the meanings more fully, and to move forward in the experiencing. To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another's world without prejudice. (3)

Although this definition is quite lengthy, it provides us with a complete description of empathy, especially as it is apt within the context of this work.

This work consists of field and textual analysis. The field work is done through questionnaires to verify both teachers' and students' attitudes towards sex literature and the role it plays on their inner minds. The target populations are English Language and English Literature students as well as English and Literature teachers. The Lower Sixth class of GBHS Etoug-Ebe was selected as target area for investigation. The questionnaires were designed to 10 teachers and 75 students. These students were chosen from given that they are already exposed to other aspects of literature and to find out their reactions to other aspects of life like sex discourses. English and Literature teachers were also sampled to share their opinions so far as the employment of sex literature was concerned.

The theory which serves as the basis for this work is the psychoanalytic theory. Nonetheless, the movement; existentialism is equally adopted in this work to make it more comprehensible. The psychoanalytic theory became widely known in the later part of the 19th century. Sigmund Freud (an Austrian psychiatrist) is considered the founding father of psychoanalysis, after studying (1885-1886) with the French neurologist J M Charcot in Paris. Psychoanalysis was considered a system of interpretation and therapeutic treatment of psychological disorder. It later expanded beyond the psyche to other domains like civilization, methodology, warfare, literature and arts as a whole. Although Freud is considered the founding father of psychoanalysis, other critics have challenged his theory. In the 1920s, Otto Rank, Sandor Ferenczi, and William Reich challenged the Freudian psyche and eventually, critics like

Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and Harry Stack Sullivan came up with criticisms of the Freudian psyche and focused more on the processes of the ego. However, due to the lapses and lack of control in their research, Freudian psychoanalysis remains the most widely used theory. *McGraw-Hill encyclopedia of Science and Technology* posits that

Psychoanalysis is concerned with the causal role of wishes and beliefs in human life. More specifically, it attempts to explain mental or behavioural phenomena that do not appear to make sense as the unconscious wishes and beliefs. Such phenomena include dreams, disturbances in functioning such as the slip of the tongue or pen and transient forgetting and neurotic symptoms. (555)

Micheal Brearley in his article “A Science Suited to its Subjects” explains that everybody is responsible for the distortion and changes that occur so far as their emotions are concerned. This is due to the fact that each individual has a mind which is unique and a person’s needs vary from those of others, making them to have a different account of emotional transactions.

According to Sigmund Freud’s theory, the mind is made up of three components: the conscious, which embodies one’s awareness such as thoughts, feelings and perceptions, the sub conscious, which represents things man is unaware of, but which affects one’s existence, and finally, the unconscious mind which includes both forces that originate; that is, our basic instincts and drives as well as unacceptable thoughts and memories that may have been pushed back because of their threatening nature. Lois Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* explicate what unconsciousness is about and to him, he believes that “the unconscious is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we will be overwhelmed by them” (241). In line with Lois Tyson’s idea, *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology* stresses that

the term unconscious does not mean simply that mental contents are out of awareness. It’s psychodynamic, meaning that the person does not want to be aware of these contents, and takes active steps to avoid being aware of them.

(556)

The unconscious has three different functional parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id is the deepest level of the unconscious, dominated by the pleasure principle, with its objective being the immediate gratification of instinctual drives, without cognizance of the consequences. The superego originates in the child through the identification with parents, and in response to social

pleasures functioning as an internal censor to repress the urges of the id. The ego, on its part, is seen as part of the id which is modified by contact with the external world. It is a mental agent mediating among the three contending forces: the id, the ego, and the superego.

Freud develops his theory from childhood experiences and the unconscious comes into play when the child experiences repression. When the male child develops the urge to win his mother's love, he ends up scrambling with his father for his mother's affection. Freud calls this "Oedipus complex". That of the female child fighting over her father is the "Electra complex". As the child grows into an adult, he or she suffers a lot of repression as there is a rejection of what has been identified by the conscious mind, and the only way he or she escapes these bitter realities is by sticking to the defense mechanisms. The defense mechanisms become very helpful at this stage, as they enable us to keep what we find difficult to handle consciously in our unconscious mind. The defense mechanisms include: selective memory, selective perception, denial, projection, rationalization, regression, and repression which induces 'forgetfulness' of our bitter and unacceptable experiences. However, it does not eradicate these painful experiences. It is important to note that when an individual embraces the defenses a lot, they go a long way to impart negatively on his or her behaviour, leading to certain abnormalities. These defenses facilitate a proper understanding of our actions and reactions as they simply represent some of the processes that are going on in our psyche.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory served as a spring board to the psychoanalytic discourse as other critics gained their inspiration from it, and modified it, coming up with other discourses. In this light, Carl Gustav Jung's stance on psychoanalysis so far as the unconscious is concerned deviates from Freud's. It depends not only on sex as the sole determiner of human behaviour but also considers elements like dreams, race and literature, which serve as media through which some unconscious memories can be spotted out. Jacques Lacan (a French psychoanalyst) on his part insists on the ambiguous interpretation of the unconscious, since the unconscious itself is difficult to understand.

The Lacanian psychoanalysis is written in a very complicated and logical form with the use of difficult and strange words perhaps to emphasize the ambiguity and difficulty in interpreting the unconscious. The unconscious originates from infancy when a child is unable to differentiate between itself and the environment. All the activities this child performs at this stage, in relation to the environment, are random. When the child learns to identify himself or herself, he or she is said to be in the 'mirror stage'. There are also the imaginary and symbolic

stages. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* states that “the unconscious for Lacan is not a reservoir of repressed desires but rather a form of rhetorical energy designed both to disguise and to express those desires, which exist for psychoanalysis only in their effects” (376). The unconscious manifests itself through dreams, mistakes, and symptoms. Lacan demonstrates this as he decodes Freud’s thought of dreams. Thus, Abrams and Harpham in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* say:

...Lacan, translates Freud’s views of the mental workings of dream formation into textual terms of the play of the signifier, converting Freud’s distorting mechanisms into linguistic figures of speech. And according to Lacan, all processes of interpretation, driven by ‘desire’ for a lost and unachievable object, move incessantly along a chain of unstable signifiers, without any possibility of coming to rest on a fixed signified or presence. (214)

Looking at the assertion above, one is pushed to say that although the Freudian psyche is given a touch, it still remains the core of the psychoanalytic theory considering the fact that every other discourse of psychoanalysis stems from it. In this light therefore, Lacan’s ideology of “the signified” has a link with Freud’s notions of actions and reactions or behaviours.

The psychoanalytic theory is important in this in that it facilitates our understanding of humans’ actions, and the reasons behind these actions. Thus, it plays a vital role in enhancing the understanding of people’s behaviours, regardless of the milieu where they find themselves. Freud’s idea on the id, ego, and superego, and his concept of the defense mechanism best suit our analysis.

Existentialism is a philosophical and cultural movement which is primarily concerned with the human condition. Although this movement became popularized only in 1945 after the Second World War by figures like Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus, it had existed long ago and had as its founding fathers: Søren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche. This Great War had a degrading role on humanity since it led to the loss of human dignity. In this light, the existentialists aimed at reasserting human importance, individualism, and freedom. It is important to mention that there are two types of existentialists: the theists and the atheists. Jean Paul Sartre in “The Existential Man” identifies two types of existentialists: the Christian and the atheist existentialists. While the theist believe that “essence precedes existence”, the atheists contradict on their part and hold that “existence precedes essence”. That is, the atheists believe that at birth man is nothing, and it is only afterwards the he

turns out and defines himself through his character and actions. In other words, atheists stipulate that for one to successfully achieve a true identity of himself or herself, there is need to reject systems which claim to have definitive answers to the questions of meaning and purpose of life like Science and Reason. Unlike the atheists, the theists believe that before man is born into this world, his or her destiny has already been shaped by a supreme being, and all he or she needs to do is put in little efforts to realize them.

Like Sartre, Jacob Neddleman in “The Spiritual Revolution” is of the opinion that man’s greatest problem is the availability of unrestricted psychological freedom embodied in a mysterious and ironic limited body (610). This implies that each individual has the freedom to choose the most favourable things he or she wants to do and those he or she deems unnecessary. Based on this, Sartre pushes this argument further by saying that

Each man is what he chooses to be or make himself, he cannot escape responsibility for his character or his deeds by claiming that they are the pre-determined consequences of factors beyond his power to control or resist, nor can he justify what he does in terms of external or ‘objective’ standards imposed on him from within. (604)

From this, it is evident that by emphasizing on the importance of individuality, the existentialists place man at the focal point of the world affairs. In other words, the atheists reiterate the fact that each person’s life is what he or she decides on and should be ready to assume responsibility of their decisions and choices. On this note therefore, our focus will be to interpret the novel from both theist’s and atheist’s standpoint in order to present the different aspects that these two sub types of existentialists cling unto.

The prior discussion highlights the fact that existentialists’ views are relevant to this work as they expose human helplessness and concern so far as the need for a better life is concerned. The existentialists’ ideologies and the psychoanalytic theory compliment rather than contradict each other. This is due to the fact that they both centre on humanity and the plight for the betterment of human condition.

On Black sisters’ street is a new novel which has not received a lot of attention from the world of criticism. Nonetheless, a number of commentaries have been made on the novel by some critics. These have propelled the understanding of the novel in relation to this work. Daria Tunca in "*Redressing the Narrative Balance: Subjection and Subjectivity*" looks at Unigwe's novel as a narrative tool through which the voiceless unravel their grievances. Unigwe's works in

general and her first novel (*De Feniks*) in particular debunks Caryl Phillips' idea that African-Belgians are a "silenced minority" in his essay on racism. Although Unigwe's first novel was looked upon negatively by most Flemish writers, it sets the ground for "narrative balance" in the Belgian society. The publication of Unigwe's *De Feniks* inspired most North African writers to embrace the art of writing. Tunca in "*Redressing the Narrative Balance: Subjection and Subjectivity*" arguably says:

Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* can be said to redress the "narrative balance" in at least two different ways. First of all, the novel gives voices to the "silenced minority" mentioned in the title of Caryl Phillips's essay and, secondly, it presents a sensitive and nuanced picture of its heroines' personalities and fates. (15)

Looking at the above avowal, it is quite evident that Tunca is emphasizing the importance of writing as it gives an insight to its readers. Tunca does not limit his argument that Unigwe's work bridges the gap that exists between European writers and Africans but adds that it is through writing that the author is able to bring into the limelight some of the horrors of the Nigerian society, which push the heroines to go in search of greener pasture.

Chris Abani, author of *Becoming Abigail* and *Song for Night*, from another perspective describes Unigwe's novel as that which is different from others in relation to its style, meaning and tone. He points to the fact that

Chika Unigwe writes with moral urgency nourished by nuanced understanding of human condition and prose that is elegantly calibrated. And for all the dark turns her works take, *On Black Sisters' Street* is suffused with warmth, hard-won wisdom, and deep compassion.(1)

This implies that inasmuch as one becomes glued to what happens to the various individuals in the novel, Unigwe portrays them as a representation of man as a whole.

Sarah De Mul shares a similar stance to Tunca's concerning Unigwe's novel. In "*Becoming Black in Belgium: The Social Construction*", De Mul stresses on the idea that Unigwe's novel centres on the happenings of women through the voices of the four women. Based on her opinion, this novel serves as a strategic narrative in which the protagonists choose to narrate about themselves. This is achieved through the individual biographies of the women. This work espouses Andrew Bennet and Nicholas Royle's idea about narratives in *An*

Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory that narratives are very essential in literature as they give the characters or author the opportunity to show the world at large their experiences, no matter the domain they are writing on, and the time they are writing in (56-58). Hence, Unigwe's novel involves a series of actions which occurred at different incidents and to different individuals. Sarah De Mul goes ahead to give an in depth description of Unigwe's writings as a whole and *On Black Sister's Street* in particular when she opines:

Chika Unigwe's writing- its production, circulation, and reception- transcends far beyond the exotic category of Flemish fiction of African origin, while circulating in multiple transnational contexts. Similarly, *On Black Sisters' Street* exposes how black womanhood is not merely taking up the role of exotic sexualized black women in popular European perception, but also and perhaps more importantly so, about how women across the limits of culture and social forces of power and domination, improvise and find spaces to re-describe themselves, while creating their transnational world anew. (41)

Nonetheless, Lade Tawak does not really find this style of writing enticing in "Parameters of Happiness Change". He criticizes the constant shift from past to present which he thinks was not accurately done. He equally points out the fact that the blend of Pidgin English and English Language could have been more enjoyable if the author concentrated a bit on perfecting such use. Conversely, he venerates the apropos used images to depict a clear picture of the experiences of the characters. He specifies that

the story is very engaging and enthralling. Once the women start to speak about themselves, it gets better. The use of imagery is amazing. I could visualise the scenes very easily and it felt like I was propped right in the middle of the story.

(Par 3)

Like De Mul, Umezurike Uchechuku Peter in *Resistance in Amma Darko's Beyond the Horizon and Chika Unigwe's on Black Sisters' Street*, valorizes the woman as she struggles to reassert herself in a patriarchal society, to the extent of prostituting in order to provide materially for the family. Umezurike posits that Unigwe "emphasizes the necessity for reconstituting female agency, in order to survive the physical and psychological oppression engendered by male power". (154) Hence, Umezurike's priority is applauding the woman for breaking away from all the stereotypes that limit the woman's efforts and appreciating them for their endeavours. He also

takes into consideration some of the psychological instability the woman undergoes as a result of her limitations (societal constraints).

This work differs from the aforementioned in that, apart from discussing the fact that people have certain heights they dream of attaining in life, it also discusses the ferocious way in which Unigwe's main characters use in an attempt to free themselves from the society which seems to repress them and deny them the opportunity of satisfying their desires. It further presents the different situations these women find themselves in as a result of the paths they choose in life and the aftermath of their decisions on the readers. This study is also an examination of the different levels of empathy the author ushers the readers into in the course of reading either from the natural realm and the supernatural. Again, it advocates hope as a tool for progress in every situation. Finally, this work delves into the psycho pedagogical repercussions of sex literature on the learners with the institution of sex literature as part of their school curriculum.

This dissertation is divided into an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction highlights the research problems and questions, sets the objectives of the study, delineates the scope, reviews related literature, states the relevance of the work and hypothesis, and presents the structure of the work.

The first chapter, entitled "Disillusionment and Obsessive Neurosis", examines the individual's actions as the manifestation of their id. It equally emphasizes on how man's endless desires leave him mentally defeated. That is, it brings into the limelight some of the means man uses to escape trauma, as well as those he or she clings on to when they cannot hold on any longer to defenses.

Chapter two, captioned "Existence, Essence and Empathy", parallels destiny and human efforts as trails through which people escape the harshness of life. This same chapter reveals the different levels of empathy the readers of *On Black Sisters Street* find themselves in in the course of reading.

Chapter Three is labeled "The Conscious and Hope". Here, the individuals' determinations to go beyond their defenses and face painful and hidden realities are brought into the limelight. It equally shows how continuity comes in when the conscious mind of an individual is activated.

Chapter Four captioned "The Psycho Pedagogic Implications of Introducing Sex Literature as a subject to Language and Literature Classrooms in Cameroonian Schools",

examines how the institution of sex Literature in both Language and Literature classes can influence the learners' perception of life as well as their behaviours and actions.

Finally, the general conclusion highlights the major issues raised in the work, brings out findings of the research, critically assessing the arguments raised, and brings out recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER ONE

DISILLUSIONMENT AND MENTAL OBSTRUCTIONS

Despondency is one unavoidable feeling an individual faces when his or her passion dwindles. For disenchantment to emanate in a person's life there is always an iota of enchantment which could be sparked by the zeal to obtain basic needs like food, shelter, family, education, popularity, self-satisfaction, good health, and a good job. With such motivation, man is bound to look for a way of utilizing all available possibilities that could enable him or her to meet up with these demands. The Id, being the most bestial component of the human mind that generates our instinctive drives, is always insatiable. It is so violent and aggressive at times that it pushes the individual to engage in anything that could enable him or her to get what he or she wants without reflecting on the effects. This therefore means that a complete reliance on the id at this stage entails a complete rejection of any form of constraint. However, the unpredictability of life limits our sureness of self-gratification. Hence, when quenching these needs become far-fetched, the individual becomes so dismayed and frustrated. Man, being unable to subdue this huge appetite for worldly pleasures, is bound to undergo certain neurotic effects. This chapter sets the stage and provides the argument that every individual has distinctive desires that he or she intends to attain in life. It goes further to elucidate the conviction that one can have a destructive life when an upper hand is given to instinctive drives. In effect, it x-rays the mental obstructions that emerge in a person's life as a result of the lack of fulfillment of these desires.

For any action to be carried out in life there must be a stimulus precipitating that action. With the exigencies of self-fulfillment and satisfaction, individuals always consider their present situations as exiguous. With this at the back of an individual's mind, there is always a clarion call for man to devise a means of satisfying these demands. The ultimate desire is to achieve an extravagant life, which to most people culminates in fame, popularity, respect, and authority. The thought of this overwhelms the individual and encourages him or her to hustle with life. Man's demands therefore serve as a springboard to the individual as they encourage them to pursue their goals and work towards achieving them. Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*, being a replica of life unravels some realities of life especially humans' thirst and hunger for a better life. According to Jean Paul Sartre, in a collection of essays titled *The Critical Tradition*, any piece of art is valuable taking into consideration that it relates to the world. He acknowledges the fact that the author reflects on his or her readers before writing. To him,

If the author existed alone he would be able to write as much as he liked; the work as *object* would never see the light of day and he would either have to put down his pen or despair. But the operation of writing implies that of reading as its dialectical correlative and these two connected acts necessitate two distinct agents. It is the conjoint effort of author and reader which brings upon the scene that concrete and imaginary object which is the work of the mind. (663)

Based on this therefore, he goes further to suggest different reasons why a writer might decide to write in an article “What is Literature?” He proposes that the purpose of writing might be because “the writer has chosen to reveal the world and particularly to reveal man to other men so that the latter may assume full responsibility before the object which has been thus laid bare” (24). Revealing man to other men (the readers) is a way of relating to the world at large. In other words, the reader steps into the experiences of the subject and assumes responsibility of their actions. It is therefore not surprising that the author exposes the realities of Africa in general and those of Nigerian society in particular in her novel. She reiterates the fact that human beings are always longing for an improvement of their living conditions. To prove this, Unigwe shows how Chisom’s father is willing to sacrifice all he has in order to send Chisom to school so that she can eventually vindicate them from the dumfounded life they live. Hence, he constantly tells her; “the only way to a better life is education. Akwukwo. Face your books, and the sky will be your limit. It’s in your hands” (17).

According to Esther K Papies and Lawrence W Barsalou in *Grounding Desire and Motivated Desire*, human desire is “a psychological state of motivation for a specific stimulus or experience that is anticipated to be rewarding. This state may or may not be consciously experienced” (1). When we anticipate a blissful future, we become immersed in actions and behaviours that will quicken the advent of this bright future. Papies and Barsalou go ahead to highlight the fact that “Experiencing and dealing with human desire is a central part of human existence. Whether it is for food, drink, sex, fame, social connectedness, or world peace, our desires shape and energize much of our daily life” (1). Papies and Barsalou are therefore insinuating that it is practically impossible for man to live without any needs.

Desires are vital components in every individual’s life which are part of human existence. Every necessity is always very relevant to an individual since it makes a person’s life interesting and motivational. Consequently, man establishes his or her life on such requirements. Chisom’s confidence on education is ignited by an irresistible wish to have a better life so far as their

finances, security, better living conditions and better healthcare are concerned. To accomplish this, Chisom concentrates on her studies since nothing has relevance to her like making her family proud of her. For this reason,

Chisom studied hard at school, mindful of her father's hopes for her; a good job once she graduated from the University of Lagos. She had envisioned her four years of studying finance and business administration culminating, quite logically, in a job at a bank, one of those new banks dotting Lagos like a colony of palm trees. She might even be given a company car, with a company driver to boot.... (19)

This citation authenticates the fact that our assorted requirements in life create a sense of responsibility in us and sustain our actions.

Human desire equally generates fortitude and loyalty in individuals. These are some essential dynamics that solidify man to push through with existence. It is therefore not surprising that Chisom's persistent struggles in life do not fade away despite the impediments she encounters. After her first encounter at work (in Belgium), she becomes so determined and devoted in order to succeed in her job. She learns very fast and this makes her to have an edge over the other women. Her search of customers in restaurants eventually comes to an end, and she is given a window at Schipperskwartier, on the Vingerlinstraat by her madam:

Working the windows was a better job. The window girls were by far classier than the café girls. Mannequins in lingerie and high boots, they exuded a confidence, arrogance that Sisi was sure she could master. It would be easier to do her job from the security and the privacy of a window booth. She could see her life before her: money. And more money. A return to Nigeria with a poise and a wallet that Chisom never could have had. (202)

Chisom discloses in the above quotation that willpower and steadfastness are virtues which help her to remain focused on her job. This is all because she has a purpose (amassing wealth) for being in the streets of Belgium, where she puts in all her best to ensure that it becomes a reality.

It is valuable to mention that illusions are the aftermath of desires. That is, when an individual wishes something in life, he or she ultimately becomes delusional about everything they do. Man therefore imagines how life will be when these wishes are finally gotten. Illusions inspire and maintain certain actions or conducts in individuals. Illusions too are necessities

which give valour to the individual and sustain his or her life. Teitelbaum Stanley in *Illusion and Disillusion: Core Issues in Psychotherapy* espouses this fact by saying:

Throughout the lives individuals maintain illusions about themselves and their world that sustain them and serve an organizing principle and the loss of these illusions in the harsh light of reality requires a psychological negotiation with the impact of disillusionment. (3)

This assertion explicates the fact that living without any goal makes life meaningless given that there is no pushing factor to guide one. Chisom's trajectory mounts pressure on her as her wishes to exert control over life and satisfy her eventual aspiration.

It is however awkward that life does not usually take a smooth route all the times especially when we rely on our instinctive drives. Failure to transform these human fantasies into reality results in a plethora of effects, which are tantamount to neurotic traumas. James Leonard Park shares his opinion on disillusionment in "Being Depressed in Spirit: Deeper Psychological Depression" by stipulating that "Whenever our hopes are dashed, whenever our love collapses, whenever someone we trusted turns against us, whenever we fail to achieve our goal, we get depressed. A black cloud settles over our lives because something went wrong" (4). What culminates in such a situation is nothing than stagnation, since man becomes stuck in the middle of no way just because things took the wrong direction. Lack of fulfillment in life leaves the individual overwhelmed and disheartened. According to Jacques Lacan in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book II*, when one talks of the fulfillment of desires, one is simply saying that you "grasp the fact that the fulfillment (realization) includes reality (realite) and consequently, here it could only be a question of a metaphorical fulfillment" (212). This implies that for a person to be satisfactory in life he or she needs to face and accept the realities of life. It is rather unfortunate that man hardly accepts harsh truths.

Disillusionment brings about Frustration and trauma in man's life. Bruce D Perry article "Stress, Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders in Children" makes us to understand that

An event is traumatic if it overwhelms the organism dramatically and negatively, disrupting homeostasis. In a very real sense, trauma throws the organism 'off balance' and creates a persisting set of compensatory responses which create a new, but less functionally flexible state of equilibrium. This new trauma-induced

homeostasis is more energy consuming and maladaptive than the previous state.

(2)

Here, we gather that it is derogatory being in a traumatic state. This is because there is so much distortion that occurs in the life of somebody who passes through hurtful experiences; he or she needs to negotiate with other mental processes to balance their destabilized state.

Frustration and trauma in man's life serve as a spring board to certain decisions and actions. In Unigwe's novel, it quickens the characters' choice to relocate. Relocation is one of the strategies one uses to flee from hardship. Migration seems to be the last resort to Chisom, Ama, Joyce, and Efe when all their dreams are shattered in their societies. To support this, Sinha B. R. K in *Human Migration: Concepts and Approaches* makes us to understand that

Migration is ubiquitous process of movement of individual or a group of people from one spatial unit or place of residence (known as origin place) to another commonly agreed geographical or political or administrative boundary in space and time. (407)

It is worthy to indicate here that this movement can be voluntary or involuntary. What we come across in the novel is an impelled migration; triggered by unfavourable conditions in Nigeria in particular and Africa as a whole.

Apart from the fact that we could regulate pressure physically as seen above, we can also do it psychologically. When baffled and disgruntled by impossibility of satisfying man's aspirations, they often develop other means of overcoming such adversities. As earlier mentioned in Teitelbaum's except above, when we lose our illusions in a harsh light of reality, all we need is a psychological negotiation to overcome the effect of disillusionment. Hence, the human mind is therefore designed in such a way that it can support all of the mental processes. To give a clear understanding of the human mind, Bruce D. Perry says in *The Child Trauma Academy* that

Our brain is designed to sense, process, store, perceive and act on information from the external and internal world to keep us alive. In order to do this, our brain has hundreds of neural systems, all working in a continuous, dynamic process of modulating, regulating, compensating- increasing, or decreasing activity to control the body's physiology. Each of our many complex physiological systems has a rhythm of activity that regulates key functions. (2)

In this excerpt, we realize that the human mind is multifaceted in that anything that is happening in the external world has a mental process to handle such happenings in the psychological world. Drawing inspiration from Cramer and Freud Roy Baumeister, Karen Dale, and Kristin L. Sommer reveal in *Defense Mechanisms in social Psychology* that

a particular crisis in self-perception may arise when an internal or external event occurs that clearly violates the preferred view of self. In such cases, it is necessary for the self to have some mechanism or process to defend itself against the threatening implications of this event. Such processes are commonly called *defense mechanisms* (1082).

Various types of defenses exist in Freud's ego defense mechanism. For a proper understanding of this work, we will limit the analysis of this work to repression, denial, and rationalization. George Boeree in "Personality Theories" comments that repression is "not being able to recall a threatening situation, person, or event (7). In like manner, Chris R. Brewin and Bernice Andrews give an in depth explanation of repression. According to them, Sigmund Freud distinguishes two types of repression: "primary repression" and "repression proper". The first type is a "process whereby unwanted material is stored away before it reaches awareness (615)". The second kind of repression concedes the fact that a "person becomes aware of these unwanted derivatives of the original repressed material and then deliberately attempts to exclude them from consciousness (615). Based on the stance of "repression proper", it is obvious that the underside of repression is that individuals deliberately reject a particular problematic identity and cling on to a soothing one. Hence, a new self emanates in such a situation. With the different experiences that human beings undergo in life, it becomes impossible for one to evade defenses.

Sehyeon Baek puts forth certain justifications as to why defense mechanisms are indispensable in human life. In "Defense Mechanism", he pronounces that

Since people are supposed to act according to social norms, it requires them to regulate themselves. Besides, without defense mechanism, the whole world could be a mess. If people just followed their own instinctual drives without any brake, literally chaos will emerge. In order to live together with others, people should utilize defense mechanism. Defense mechanism helps to protect our whole society as well as ego from some displeasure. (8)

Unigwe fully accentuates this in her work as portrayed by her characters. The main characters that is, Ama, Efe, Joyce and Sisi all move out of their societies in a bid to boycott some of those displeasing feelings they suffer in their countries of origin. Chisom for instance dumps her self-esteem into a trench and gives room for id to dominate her and to shape her behaviours and actions. She purges anything or anybody that stands as an obstacle to her advancement. Even her boy friend whom she loves very much is incapable of stopping her at this stage. The refutation of Peter's proposal of staying with him and hoping to get marry to him someday intimates that there is a call for change. She intends to change to somebody else.

Repression can also be considered as a form of escapism. We can flee from something or somebody both in our mind and the substantial. According to Riley, in "Escapism"

escapism is exactly what it sounds like: escape. It is anything one does to distract, forget, or take a breather from real life. This sort of removal is often found in physical, emotional, or mental transportation to another realm of state of being. (1)

He goes further to distinguish two types of escapism; healthy and unhealthy escapism. Healthy escapism deals with some of those activities that get people going like working, daydreaming, travelling, reading, mediating, and exercising. That is, anything that distracts oneself from life or lets the mind expands into a new realm. Unhealthy escapism on its part includes behaviors like excessive drug use, sex, self-harm, isolation, suicidal isolation, and the concealing of the lines between fantasy and reality. One thing we also realize is that when one indulges in either type of escapism, he or she is likely going to undergo either a psychological or physical escape. Unigwe in her novel presents characters that undergo both forms of escape. Chisom is confronted with a situation that thrusts her to escape both physically and psychologically. Physically, her chagrined past generates a mandatory relocation to Belgium, while psychologically, she readjusts her mind frame by remaining glued only to those mental processes that seem favourable to her (like the mechanisms).

The denial of inauspicious realities is another ego mechanism the individual adheres to in order to defend themselves from esteems threats and the ordeals of life. Sehyeon Baek in his article "Defense Mechanism" believes that the adoption of denial occurs when "a person does not take in, acknowledge, or believe some aspect of reality. Suppose you felt very vulnerable. In order to ward off feelings of helplessness, you start fantasizing or acting as if you were strong and powerful" (5). This epouses Chang-Ghone Kim's idea in "Defense Mechanism of Freud".

According to him, “denial is the refusal to acknowledge a source of anxiety” (1). That is, when one is entangled in a situation which turn out to be beyond him or her, that individual simply renounces that circumstance and behaves as if nothing ever happened. The power of denial cannot be underrated in the novel. As soon as Chisom arrives Brussel:

THE REMNANTS OF HER old life folded away in her carry-on luggage, and saw her new life stretching out like a multicolored vista before her eyes, full of colors and promises, she knew she would make it there. She left the pumpkin her mother had insisted she carry at the airport in Lagos. Dumped it, together with any misgivings she had about her trip, in one of the huge dustbins outside the washrooms. Lagos was a city of death, and she was escaping it. She should not carry a pumpkin the size of the moon along with her. Or doubts that could make her back down.... She would shed her skin like a snake and emerge completely new. It will all be worth it. (85)

It is evident here that Chisom is tired of her old self, and thinks a change of environment automatically means a rejection of her past. She intends to emerge as a new person. As a result of this, she thinks accepting and espousing a new identity will be of great help to her. It is as a result of this that she changes her name from Chisom to Sisi. She conveniently supports this by declaring that “Chisom was dead. Snuffed out. A nobody swallowed up by the night” (88). The cultured Chisom who was fascinated by the initiative of getting a white-collar job now becomes Sisi; a sloppy lady who is ready to offer herself to men in exchange for money. As a new person, (Sisi), Chisom metamorphoses and become so materialistic, devoted and determined.

Denial has very degrading repercussions at times. This is because one can hardly ignore the veracity of life for a very long time. In Chisom’s case, she does not just become a different person but an awful one. There is a depletion of her morale and decorum. In Belgium for instance her covetousness cannot be hidden. Upon her arrival in Antwerp, one of the first things that smack her imagination is her boss’ appearance. All her fingers have glittering rings on them. She imagines how life can be blissful owning such rings. This gives her the inkling that “Antwerp was a place to be when your dreams died, the place of miracles: a place where dead dreams resurrected and soared and allowed you to catch them and live them” (91). In order for her to have this life she has always longed for, Sisi prepares her mind to do her job properly so that she can one day wear rings on all her fingers. At this point in time, she fends off an awareness of an

unpleasant truth or of a reality that is a threat to the ego. We realize that denial could have both negative and positive inclinations. The result of denial in this case leads to the emergence of a new individual and also it fosters moral decadence.

Rationalization is another tactic developed by the ego to cope with the sub conscious and superego. In “Examining Defense Mechanisms”:

Rationalization occurs when the individual deals with emotional conflict or internal or external stressors by concealing the true motivations for his or her own thoughts, actions, or feelings through the elaboration of reassuring or self-serving but incorrect explanations. (3)

When we put forth certain justifications as to why we carry out particular actions, it is not because those actions are right all the times but because we are finding ways of freeing ourselves from the guilt of doing the wrong thing. Thus, rationalization is simply evading accusation. This is one defense that individuals turn to in order to lessen the gravity of their problems. In this light therefore, when Dele gives Chisom the proposition of travelling abroad, she tries to give reasons as to why she abides by it since she intends to prove her actions justifiable. When Dele tells her she will be going to Antwerp to use her body to make money:

Rather than rant and rave, she took in his words with a calm that assured her she would do as he said. Staying on in Ogba was biding time until when? Until she married Peter and moved in with him and the rest of his family? That was worst than Dele’s proposition. (40)

For her to be able to accept Dele’s offer, she minimizes the soreness by comparing her present situation (abject poverty) to sex trafficking, which she has the conviction that it is better. In this light, she finds the courage to forge ahead with her plans of sex trafficking. A similar situation is encountered in Belgium. She also advances a critique to say prostitution is better than other jobs. When she finds herself in Kebab takeaway Restaurant, in the midst of beer, (which serves as an opium), she brings forth an excuse for consuming it; that it will help her forget her past. We need to bear in mind here that this is something she never used to do. Before now:

She had often wondered why people drank bottle after bottle of the stuff. Now she wondered if she would start drinking bottle after bottle to forget. But forget what? There were worst things to become, she reminded herself. She was not a robber, not a cheat, not a 419er sending deceitful e-mail to gullible Westerners. She would

make her money honestly. Every cent of it would be earned by her sweat. She did not need to enjoy her job but she will do it well. (180)

We realize here that Sisi goes for alcohol because she has it at the back of her mind that there are things which are worse than what she does. When she looks at what others do, she feels better. This greatly influences the decision of accepting her job and devoting all in it. Upholding to her point that prostitution is not the worst thing, she rationalizes her behaviour.

A continuous repression of desires, emotions, and feelings lead to mental breakdown. According to Freud, when a trauma is continuously repeated, it acquires a traumatic impact. It is quite unfortunate that discomposed realities cannot be suppressed forever. When an individual piles up unsatisfied desires up to a certain level, the mind becomes saturated, leading to a failure. Since the three components of the unconscious mind, that is the id, ego, and superego, are always at variance with one another, the individual is bound to switch from one mental facet to another. Trauma therefore has a great bearing on an individual's psyche. Paul Verhaeghe and Stijn Vanheule in *Actual Neurosis and PTSD* say: "a trauma is the confrontation with an identity-threatening incident that cannot be elaborated by the victim in a normal, associative and meaningful way" (502). Chris R. Brewin, in supporting this view in *Behaviour Research and Therapy* says that "accessible memories of the traumatic event are likely to show some degree of disorganization, degradation, and incompleteness (379)." This implies that when one has an encounter with trauma and is unable to decipher a suitable way of dealing with threatening identity issues, his or her psyche is bound to be in a feeble state. Freud calls this stage of mental degradation as neurosis. Freudian psychoanalytic studies emphasizes on the fact that childhood occurrences go a long way to trigger neurosis in the individual.

Oliver P. John in "Character and Neurosis" presents a supportive argument about the origin of individuals' identity squabbles. Generally, personality inconsistency is not only instigated by our instincts but also by our neurotic needs. This is echoed in the following words; "It is not only instinct that is the object of inhibition within us-as a result of ingrained self-rejection and the wish to be something other than what we are: it is also our neurotic needs" (6). It is palpable that the individual is not just driven by the pleasure principle but other alarming issues that plunge him into deviant behaviours. Neurosis is believed by the psychoanalysts to have emanated from our childhood. Earlier experiences as well as later happenings influence our future development thereby steering us into traumatic neurosis. Delving into Unigwe's novel, such heartache occurrences are quite glaring. All through her life, Sisi constantly experiences

unhappiness, anxiety, depression, and distress. Consequently, her impermeable defense mechanisms are broken by other drives (desire for freedom, happiness, and family). There are different ways through which the individual manifests neurotic signs. Nonetheless, our focus is limited to post traumatic stress disorder, depersonalization, and depression.

Depression is characterized by a profound feeling of hopelessness, pessimism, and sadness. In such a situation, the person in question lacks interest in those things that used to be satiating. The novel discloses people who are depressed as a result of their shocking *status quos*. It is quite sore that in an attempt to improve on her rank, Sisi plunges into a dungeon of unsolicited emotions and feelings (sadness, dismay, and consternation). At first she thinks travelling abroad is an opportunity for the soothsayer's revelation to be realized. Unfortunately for her,

The revelation displaced her enthusiasm to make money. In its place came a stoicism she could never have imagined she possessed.... When they said she was not like lots of black prostitutes who tried to wrangle more money than was originally agreed upon. The smile stayed on. But an unhappiness permeated her skin and wound itself around her neck and forced her head down so that she walked as if something shamed her. While she had never been comfortable in her job, there was now a certain aversion added to the discomfort. She could no longer bear to look at herself, not even when she was alone. When she took a bath, she sponged her body once without looking at it. Regrets assailed her day in, day out. She smiled, but behind that smile her regret grew bigger and bigger, its shadow casting a pall over her. She began to wish she had never left home, ruing the day she met Dele. Why, oh why had she gone to his office? Why had she been taken by his promises of wealth and glamour and happiness that knew no bound? (212)

Chisom's regrets, frustration, disillusionment, distress, dismay, and mental breakdown are unraveled in the above excerpt. The defenses that usher her into a new life only exist temporary. This greatly impedes the smooth functioning of affairs in Chisom's life. Her relationship with her housemates maintains a certain distance as she prefers to go on walks into Antwerp, than stay with the women. Even her job drastically goes down the drain. "She needed lots of customers if she was going to build the house she wanted for her parents. And give her dreams substance. But

the customers were not always there” (218). We realize at this point in time that Sisi’s cravings for a wealthy life has lost its glow. She no longer finds interest in her new way of life. Even the prophecy that got her going has become trivial to her.

Unpleasant circumstances topple Sisi’s life and make her to suffer from depersonalization. At this point in time, nothing about Sisi’s life seems to entice her. She goes to the Keyserlia more often. This is the only place she seems to find solace. But we realize that even the comfort she thinks she gets from her frequent walks is not real. She constantly frames up stories about herself to the people she meets. This is probably because what she tells people she is is exactly what has always wished to be. She could be anybody at any time. The fact that she alters her personality is an indication that she is not contented being who she is. Hence, the only way for her to be who she wants to be is by identifying herself the way she wants to.

Post-traumatic stress is another form of mental disorder Sisi undergoes as a result of the highly traumatic episodes of her life. Paul Verhaeghe, and Stijn Vanheule in *Actual Neurosis and PTSD* examine the causes of post-traumatic stress disorder and according to them, although trauma has a role to play in the development of post-traumatic stress in individual, other factors (*mediating factors*) equally trigger the development of this neurotic disorder. These factors could be unfavourable environmental factors brought about by society. It is worth nothing that this type of neurosis usually has certain indicators. According to the *National Institute for Mental Health*, an individual who suffers from this type of neurotic trauma has a strong feeling of guilt, depression, or worry (1). Most at times, the victim decides to stay away from things, events, or places that keep reminding them of the past. This is exactly what happens to Sisi after she has offered herself to different men in exchange for money. She is so guilty that she finds it difficult to even look at herself. She even finds it a very heavy task calling home; especially, when it comes to talking with Peter:

She had not spoken to Peter since she left. She could not bear to. Where duty demanded that she keep in touch with her family, she had no such duty for him.

She did not want to test the limits of her sadness. And what would be the use of keeping in touch with him? Best to make a permanent break. He would never have her back, not after what she had done. Besides, she was a different person, and Peter would not recognize her. she was not Chisom. She was somebody else.

Rougher. Harder. Infinitely more demanding. (224-225)

Sisi cannot help it, but feel bad about the step she takes. It is quite comprehensible that she feels terrible about the whole situation. Had it been she did not become a prostitute she would have felt comfortable to call him whenever she feels like. All she can do now is regret and nothing else. She is haunted by her decisions and actions.

This chapter set out to examine the fact that each individual has goals which help to make life blissful. It further looked at the different mental processes that the individual undergoes with the variation of life experiences. In the course of our analysis, we discovered that illusions are inevitable in an individual's life. We also found out that disillusionment is one factor which shatters the smooth functioning of the human psychology. As an aftermath of failures in life, the victim becomes neurotic. Nonetheless, we cannot deny the fact that one needs to forge ahead with life no matter the inflexible times that we find ourselves in. Hence, it is a cause for concern for man to devise other ways through which life can be made valuable. But the question we ask ourselves is with all the unpredictability that surrounds life and the deterministic factors that decide on an individual's progress, is it easy for one to escape falling into the webs that entangle humans as they struggle to give themselves an identity? Answers to this question are provided in the proceeding chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

EXISTENCE, ESSENCE, AND EMPATHY

Man's determination to make the best out of life has raised a lot of eye brows. Different schools of thought and ideologies have emerged as a result of this endless search of a reasonable life. Consequently, different scholars have advanced unlike arguments as far as human existence is concerned. This is because man seems to be caged in the blows and pangs of life which push individuals to look for ways of making their lives interesting and meaningful. In effect, the existentialists in defining human life juxtapose human essence to human existence. It is quite intriguing as these words (essence and existence) are played upon by philosophers in a bid to give grounds to their opinions on life. Whatever the point of views of these schools of thought, the bottom line is that whether man gives preference to the idea that man's "essence precedes existence", or that their "existence precedes essence", their struggles to shape their destiny or define themselves end up making the readers of *On Black Sisters` Street* to experience the hurdles the characters go through. This chapter therefore dwells on human essence on the one hand and existence on the other hand as some philosophical terminologies calved to shed more light to life. It equally shows how readers of Unigwe's novel get entangled in the labyrinth of events that the characters in the novel go through in order to survive, both at the level of their natural efforts and the level of the supernatural.

As earlier mentioned, the words "essence" and "existence" have been juxtaposed by a philosophical movement called existentialism. According to this movement, essence is an attribute or set of attributes that make an entity what it is fundamentally, and which becomes a necessity of that entity, and without which it loses its uniqueness. This implies that essence serves as a medium through which doctrines tend to individuate different forms of existence as well as different identities. Jean Paul Sartre distinguishes two types of existentialists in his work "Man Makes Himself". He intimates that

there are two kinds of existentialists. There are, on the one hand, the Christians, amongst whom I shall name Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both professed Catholics; and on the other the existential atheists, amongst whom we must place Heidegger as well as the French existentialists and myself. What they have in

common is simply the fact that they believe that existence comes before essence.

(3)

It is based on the fact that there are two types of existentialists that we come about the conflicting idea of whether to place essence first or existence. However, Jean Paul Sartre goes ahead in his article "Atheist Existentialism" to give an explanation to the statement "existence precedes essence". To him, the expression purports that

the human being first exists, encounters himself, thrusts himself into the world, and then defines himself. If a man, as conceived by atheistic existentialism, cannot be defined, it is because at first, he is nothing. He will be only later. And he will be what he has made himself. Thus, there is no such thing as human nature, because there is no such thing as God to conceive it. Man just is: not only as he conceives himself, but as he wants to be. And as he conceives himself after this leap toward existence -- as he wants to be -- man is nothing other than what he makes himself. (2)

What the atheists stand out for is the fact that what becomes of a man, and his essence for existing is determined by his or her mode of being and the actions he or she takes in life. They reject the idea that man is answerable to any deity (God). The theists on their part strongly contradict this by saying that before an individual is born, his or her destiny has been predetermined by God. In this light, they are saying that all an individual needs is little or no efforts to bring that destiny to realization. These conflicting ideas that exist between these two philosophical movements bring about questions on human life, which leave man wrapped in a web of confusion.

Looking at the novel from an atheist existentialist point of view, there is a validation of the statement that "existence precedes essence". The individual sees himself or herself at the centre of affairs and the sole reason why things are the way they are. This therefore insinuates that man relies on his or her individual efforts to become what kind of person they turn out to be. From this perspective therefore, Chisom does not see her success in school to have any forms of supernatural attachments to it, but rather that it is based on her individual choices and efforts. Hence, upon graduation from the university she says: "she did not need a clairvoyant to predict her own future; not when she had a degree from a good university" (17). Chisom believes that as an individual, she has taken the best choice; studying hard. She sees no reason why she needs to

cling onto some stories told by a normal human being like herself about her future. This completely eradicates the concept of God or any governing deity. This goes in line with Nietzsche's idea that "God is dead". If God is dead, then one cannot blame the author's characters for being what they are (prostitutes, corrupters, and exploiters). Sisi is certain that her efforts and strength are useful tools worthy enough to ensure her survival. We realize that the rejection of external influence to human life reiterates the atheists' standpoint on individualism.

It is rather unfortunate that even the efforts Chisom thinks are worthy enough to guarantee her success eventually become insignificant and futile. When she sees an opportunity of breaking away from the deterministic bosses she has, she does not let it pass by. At this juncture, we fathom Sisi's urge for an autonomous life bearing in mind the fact that her latitude has always been restricted. However, her enjoyment of freedom is only temporary. This is because her freedom is snatched away by the cold hands of death. Being empathic for Chisom therefore, the readers become disillusioned. This is as a result of the fact that in the course of reading the novel, the readers share Chisom's pains, happiness, fears anxiety and above all, her courage. Her death therefore aborts the readers' aspiration of encountering a meaningful life since she dies without achieving success.

Atheist existentialists also lay emphases on individualism. They look at an individual as a unique whole. In other words, a person's actions are determined by that person alone. To the atheists, an individual is an entity of its own in the sense that he or she has a unique and different world of his own feelings, emotions, interests, likes, dislikes, attitudes, ability, capability, physical structure, cognitive and psychological pattern. When we look at Unigwe's characters, we realize that all the women one comes across with share no commonness in their character traits. The way Sisi interprets life for instance is different from the way Joyce, Efe, and Ama do. This is similar to Albert Camus' character Meursault, in his text *L'Etranger*. The way Meursault perceives life is completely different from the way Raymond Sintes, Marie Cardona, and the Chaplain understand life. Meursault is psychologically detached from the world around him. Events that people give so much significance to like: marriage proposals or a parent's death, seem to be absurd to him. At the verge of his execution, he refuses to acknowledge the existence of God. He does not put any sentimental attachments to any of the things the other characters do. When he wants to avoid answering certain questions from the world at large, he simply cuts off from them and stays alone.

The author's use of Gerard Genette's homodiegetic (first person narrative) and heterodiegetic (third person narrative) concept on narrative point of view in *Narrative Discourse* emphasizes individualism. Genette makes us to understand that while the heterodiegetic narrator has a general notion of all the characters and things which unfold in a work of art, (authorial point of view) the homodiegetic narrator gives detailed evidence about himself or herself (first person narrative point of view). In like manner, Richard Walsh identifies the narrator from two stances. In "Who is a Narrator?" Walsh says: "the narrator is always either a character who narrates, or the author. There is no intermediate position. The author of a fiction can adopt one of two strategies: to narrate a representation or to represent a narration". (12)

It is true that Unigwe's novel is dominated by the third person narrative point of view. However, at some particular instances, the author gives individual characters opportunities to recount their stories by themselves. This is done when the characters use the pronouns 'I' and 'We'. With this, the readers are able to move to and fro the characters past and present. Probing into the characters' greatly facilitates the readers' understanding of the characters. According to Suzan Keen in *Narrative Empathy*:

Narrative theorists, novel critics, and reading specialists have already singled out a small set of narrative techniques—such as the use of first person narration and the interior representation of characters' consciousness and emotional states—as devices supporting character identification, contributing to empathetic experiences, opening readers' minds to others, changing attitudes, and even predisposing readers to altruism.(213)

Keen in the above extract suggests that the first person point of view plays an important role in writing. This is because it involves the readers in the events of the characters as it activates their mirror neurons; letting them to picture the inner minds of the characters. In this light, the readers become empathic since they know exactly what the characters are going through.

In the course of reading the novel, we come across two levels of empathy: empathic accuracy and empathic inaccuracy. Ickes in *Empathic Accuracy* describes empathic accuracy as the aptitude for an individual to correctly deduce the content of another person's thoughts and feelings. In this case, there are no misleading emotions which derail the reader to have a contrary feeling to that of the character at hand. We need to bear in mind at this level that a person's experiences can best be exposed by the person in question. Hence, empathic accuracy can be associated to what Genette refers to as homodiegetic narrator, which is equally linked to the

atheist concept of individualism. By employing this narrative point of view, Unigwe's characters each give accounts of their lives from their view points. In the novel, Ama for instance, leaks her desires when she laments:

Sometimes, when I stand behind my window, I imagine I am standing on a podium, posing for my fans. I imagine them screaming out my name, shouting out for autographs. I imagine that my real father hears about me and reveals himself to me, so I can tell him to fuck off. (209)

This quotation gives the reader an insight of what Ama longs for. The reader actually finds himself or herself yearning that these dreams be fulfilled someday. This is because the readers have clues of the bitter experiences that Ama goes through as a child. In a nutshell, the fact that each individual recounts his or her story gives the readers the opportunity to comprehend the characters' thoughts and feelings exactly the way the characters are facing them.

Individualism and alienation are some thematic concerns of existentialism which are embedded in each other. In the course of trying to be an entity, the individual ends up alienating themselves from the world at large. Sisi has the habit of estranging herself whenever she wants to run away from the endless questions of the other women she lives with. She always goes on walks when the other women are home. Unigwe tells us that

Sisi went out alone at least twice a week, refusing company when it was offered. Nobody knew where she went except that she sometimes came back with boxes of chocolate and bags of Japanese.... Gifts she murmured angrily when Joyce asked her once who they were for. (5-6)

One of the major reasons an individual distances himself or herself from their environment, nature, or those around them is despair. When a person finds it difficult to understand another person, he or she might chose to breakaway and create a new world. When this happens, that individual is bound to go through isolation. Sisi is always alone along the streets in Keyserlei. She gets very annoyed when anybody tries to intrude into her privacy. It is worthy to mention that even when she gets the privacy, she still does not attain happiness. This leaves the readers with no choice than living her experience. Thus, in the course of journeying through loneliness, the readers turn to suffer this same seclusion as they incorporate Sisi's involvements in the diverse events she encounters.

Atheists are so concerned with the nothingness of life. They emphasize the fact that man is haunted by the emptiness of life. This concept of nothingness springs from Albert Camus. Most of his works centre on the vanity of life. Thus, realizing that man is nothing by nature, they continuously look for ways through which their lives can become meaningful. Atheism in general and Camus in particular advocates that no matter how much an individual toils, it will all end to nothing since life itself is nothing. This is depicted in Camus' *A Happy Death* through the character Patrice Mersault who tries to flee away from the emptiness of life to no avail. First of all, he tries travelling, but that fails. Then, he tries hedonism; living with three young women but that also fails. He finally retreats within himself, living a solitary life devoted to the will to happiness. Mersault achieves a degree of happiness but this is short lived since he becomes ill and dies a "happy death." In the same light, Sisi attempts to boycott the reality (nothingness of life) which boils down to null. Her degree for instance, is equivalent to nothing in the Nigerian society. The rejection given her by the society pushes her to wonder about seeking for other favourable outlets. Nevertheless, her resistance to accept this emptiness ends up in futility. All her attempts seem insignificant. Whenever she thinks to be at the end of things, there is an automatic change in affairs which eventually drags her to another new beginning. Probably, the reason why Sisi accepts to travel out and become a sex worker is because she has realized that there is really no relevance trying to do virtuous things when they yield no fruits.

One other way the atheists aim at refining human nature is by looking at how the individual explores freewill. Freewill entails the individual's ability to choose the kind of actions he or she wants regardless of external forces. Choices in an individual's life are a necessity since they determine that person's stage of evolution and show how each person can be better placed in a well-ordered state. When one talks of freedom, it means that person is isolating his or her decisions from any determination by a deity, or by previously existent values or knowledge. Plato makes us to understand that the ultimate objective of every human being is to have freewill. With freewill, man can easily influence his or her destiny since they are given opportunities to decide for themselves. If this is the case, humans will be able to take the consequences of their choices.

It is quite necessary to mention that there is really nothing like freewill. Jean Jacques Rousseau's expression in *The Social Contract* says it all; "man is born free and everywhere he is in chains" (1). By this, Rousseau is insinuating that we are slaves to the society. The society sets all sorts of rules which limit the individual's freedom. There are always deterministic factors that put humans in chains thereby limiting their chances to be free. This makes human beings to be

victims of external forces throughout their lives. When we take Franz Kafka's character Joseph K in *The Trial*, for instance, we realize that he is convicted for a crime he knows nothing about. Just the fact that he has been traduced by someone is enough reason for him to be arrested in the society in which he finds himself. In a similar way, Kafka's Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis* gets stuck in his room one morning upon realizing that he has been transformed into a giant beetle. Based on such influences therefore it becomes very difficult for one to make choices without them being distorted. In other words, society stands as a hindrance to one's freedom since it spells out the modalities under which an individual needs to function. In Chisom's case, she finds herself in chains throughout the novel. The economy she belongs to is in a mess, and she feels like she is being stuck. Unigwe presents the Nigerian society as corrupt; a place in which the brilliants are relegated to the background while the rich but dull and less qualified people, are at the fore-front of affairs due to their connections and willingness to buy their way through. With a degree, Sisi's knows she has climbed the ladder of success. Under normal circumstances, she thinks she has done all the virtuous things that warrant her to become a wealthy person. Unfortunately, she is victimized by the Nigerian society. Her rejection of her country to another country in search of auspicious conditions elsewhere is quite logical.

Resistance seems to be the only thing one thinks of in the midst of a triumphant circumstance. The willpower to stop the excesses of Lagos makes her to fight hard with the hurdles she encounters. First of all, she resists the Soothsayer's prophecy as mentioned above; she sees no reason why someone has to anticipate her future for her. Then, she goes ahead to deny any human being who wants to determine her life for her. When Peter tells her: "I'll marry you one day, and I shall take you away from here" (27), she sees this as a way of selling her freedom. To avoid this, she decides to part ways with Peter and she tells him: "Peter you have to save yourself from drowning before you start promising to save others" (27). Finally, when she eventually leaves Lagos and goes to Belgium, it eventually dawns on her that Madam and Dele are restricting her freedom. She is unable to use the money she makes to have the kind of life she desires but rather, she works and swells the accounts of Madam and Dele. She then decides to secede from them.

It is important to point out that Sisi's assumption to free herself from Dele and Madam is plausible. Nonetheless, it is a fatal step. The decision goes a long way to cause her death. Kurt Salamun tells us that *An International Journal of Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts that* "one of the most boundary situations in human life is the inevitability of death" (4). This implies

that we can escape other things in life and not death. With such miserable situation, one is bound to feel as lonely as Sisi. It is of importance to highlight that she has her worries and also she does not enjoy her new life (prostitution). Hence, we feel Sisi's soreness especially when she distances herself from others. Even at work she finds it very hard to mingle with others.

SISI DID THEE POTJE A FEW MORE NIGHTS. IN ITS DIMNESS, IT WAS hard to fake the cheerful insouciance needed to attract a men. Its gloominess was a greedy sort that sucked her decision to pretend. To accept. So she sat in a corner and watched the other girls__ flirting and chatting, laughing a laughter that spilled out the side__ and had a desperate wish to be more like them. (202)

From the on-going discussion, it is quite a daunting task to cancel the fact that we find ourselves in the pits of the disenchantments Sisi suffers. She languishes in both her home land and in the foreign land she eventually takes refuge in. When we ride together with Chisom through her life experiences, we find ourselves partakers of the diverse phases of her life. This ties to what Elizabeth Ann Baxter presents to us when she juxtaposes the relationship that exists between regression and empathy. According to her, for us to have a proper understanding of an individual, we need to go into that person's past; from their childhood to adulthood in order to understand actions and the *raison d'être* for such actions. Unigwe provides the readers with enough information about the characters which explain the fact that most of the things the characters do originate of their past.

This brings us to the conclusion that even if one depends on the natural, that is, accepting the atheist's concept that an individual becomes what he or she is based on the his decisions and choices, it is very unavoidable for one to be empathic. We still get to be part and parcel of the happenings; both mental and physical, since man is always in the midst of such challenges.

The novel can equally be construed from a theistic background. In bidding to demarcate the exigencies of human happiness from the man's worthlessness, the theists coin the philosophical expression "essence precedes existence". This implies that everything that happens in a person's) life (both negative and positive is controlled by God. To back up this ideology, K. E. M Baier in *Meaning of Life: Christianity Versus Science* declares that according to the Christian existentialists:

The world must be regarded as the creation of a kind of superman, a person possessing all the human excellences to an infinite degree and none of the human weaknesses, who has made man in his image, a feeble mortal, foolish copy of

himself.... God acts as a sort of playwright-cum-legislator-cum-judge-cum-executioner.... While on stage, the actors are free to extemporize, but if they infringe the divine commandments, they are later dealt with by their creator in his capacity as judge and executioner. (675)

Baier in the above statement unravels the fact that the theists acknowledge a supreme being in every step that they take in their lives. This connects to Genette's idea that the heterodiegetic narrator knows everything about the other characters since the author reads the minds of all the other characters. Nonetheless, Jean Paul Sartre comes in to question this dominant characteristic of the omniscient narrator. He believes that writing is a two sided thing since the author depends on his readers to accomplish his mission. In "Why Write?" Sartre opines that

If the author existed alone he would be able to write as much as he liked; the work as *object* would never see the light of day and he would either have to put down his pen or despair. But the operation of writing implies that of reading as its dialectical correlative and these two connected acts necessitate two distinct agents. It is the conjoint effort of author and reader which brings upon the scene that concrete and imaginary object which is the work of the mind. (663)

The presence of the authorial voice brings about another level of empathy (empathic inaccuracy). When the author evokes an empathic feeling unintentionally in the readers, it generates empathic inaccuracy. Suzanne Keen admits this when she says in *Narrative Empathy* when she says: "narrative empathy is amoral" (214). In most cases the author emboldens the readers to indulge in "pornographic sensations" acquired at the expense of the sufferers. Basically, *On Black Sisters Street* is plagued with such instances that arouse sensations which oppose to what pertains to the characters'. The way Unigwe presents Joyce during her first encounter as a prostitute mislead the author's empathy. Joyce appears to work in a "blue bra sprinkled with glitter and a matching G-string, boots up to her thighs". As if this does not suffice, Unigwe paints a vivid picture of what unfolds between Joyce and her first customer: "He gushed. *Oh I like. I like it. Very much. Just like being with a virgin. Tight. Tight. Tight! Many women. Many. Numerous. But nobody do it like you. His gush became orgasmic. I like! I like! I like! I like! Ahhhhhhhhhh!*" (200).

The author in this scene suggests that the sexual encounter is pleasurable which is not what the characters portray. Hence, there is a sort of misplaced empathy on the part of the readers in this case.

This notwithstanding, the omniscient narrator has clues about each individual's life which can be compared to the all-knowing power of God. It is based on this therefore that the theists advocate the inculcation of Christian dogmas in their daily lives. Observing Chisom's father's stance on spirituality, it is obvious that he is a staunch believer who is governed by the idea that there is a supernatural force in their lives who brings about prosperity. Sisi's success in school for instance is attributed to God. Upon completing studies in the University, Chisom's father sees it as a fulfillment of the gods' prophecy. Papa Chisom says: "he wished the woman who had spoken for the gods when Chisom was born were around... the prophecy haloed their heads with luminescence that shimmered the glass" (16-17). This is an indication that Chisom's parent live by the dogmas of Christianity because they believe in the existence of God. When Chisom reveals her intentions to travel abroad:

That night her mother thanked God in a voice that brought in neighbours from both sides. And the white-wearing churchgoing young couple did a dance around the room, clapping and calling on God by twenty-nine different names to let the blessings that had fallen on Chisom fall on the, too. (41)

We realize here that most of the people in Chisom's neighbourhood look up to God for their heart desires. They probably think that they cannot make it on their own, and so depend on God. It becomes very intriguing in the course of reading when one comes across this prophecy. One begins to think at one moment when Luc comes into Sisi's life that things are going to take a different dimension. But this is so short lived. Sisi moments of unrest outweigh her few hours of happiness. One is left with no option than to be skeptical of these characters' believe. At another moment, we begin to wonder if the imperfections of man do not have an impact on man. Sisi finally gives her own interpretation of the prophecy on a Wednesday night when her first epiphany visits her:

What she saw dipped her in such black gloom that her first client, a man with a toupee that he insisted on hanging on to, told her that he felt cheated. Her performance had been so poor, he said....this was it. The prediction meant nothing. Just the ramblings of a bungling, overindulged guest at a naming ceremony. She swore never to forgive the woman responsible. *Stupid, stupid woman who had me in search of brightness. Stupid woman who had me to this.* To this! (210)

When Sisi has the knowledge that a woman prophesizes about her future (on her naming ceremony), her life becomes determined by that same awareness. It is evident in the above extract that Sisi has become who she is based on what is said to her and not because she chooses to. One major issue about determinism is that it contradicts the notion of freewill. When there is any deterministic force, be it society, people or God, the individual is bound to be void of choices. Inasmuch as these characters are aware of a creator, they still trespass God's directives. As we earlier saw above, failure to submit to divine orders is tantamount to retribution. Sisi oversteps her freewill and tramples on the principles of Christianity (the body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body). Her failure to obtain her requirements could be as a result of the fact that she has summoned God's wrath on her.

This chapter looked at how *On Black Sisters Street* can be construed from an existential perspective. It equally examined the various levels under which one becomes empathic (accurate and inaccurate). In the course of the work, we realized that it is unavoidable to step out of the characters experiences. At the level where man has to determine his or her identity from his efforts and decisions, the characters succeed in capturing the readers attention into their moments of pain, anxiety, happiness, excitement, and loneliness. Similarly, the readers get to comprehend all the mental instabilities of Sisi, as well as the happenings around her even when she has laws which govern her life. We are therefore saying that whether an individual confirms the idea that existence precedes essence, or that essence precedes existence, they are all looking for ways of making life worth living. This notwithstanding, readers become a part of all the happenings of the characters based on the fact that these characters share a common characteristic (a strong wish to make the best out of life). Aware of the obstacles and volatility of life, do we really need to be hopeful at all?. Our focus on the next chapter will be to attempt an answer to this question.

CHAPTER THREE

CONSCIOUSNESS AND HOPE

Human life is an embodiment of both the conscious and the unconscious. It is a perplexing task to say that man's actions originate solely from the unconscious. At one moment or the other, the conscious self comes in to check some of the excesses of the Id. To do this, the author probes into the characters' past to re-instate hope in the present and probably the future. This chapter as such, valorizes the conscious and encourages the individual not to allow failure topple his or her existence. However, he or she looks for other means of pushing through since life is a continuous process.

The term "consciousness" has no clear cut definition since it means different things to different people. The classics viewed it different from what pertains today. The psychological perspective of consciousness also varies a lot from the everyday phenomenology of consciousness. According to Max Velmans in "How to Define Consciousness- and How not to Define Consciousness", "this uncertainty about how to define consciousness is partly brought about by the way global theories about consciousness (or even about the nature of the universe) have intruded into definitions" (1). Nonetheless Velmans goes further to highlights an everyday description of what it is for an organism to be in a conscious state:

The term "consciousness" however refers to experience itself. Rather than being exemplified by a particular thing that we observe or experience, it is exemplified by *all* the things that we observe or experience. Something *happens* when we are conscious that does not happen when we are not conscious—and something happens when we are conscious *of something* that does not happen when we are not conscious of that thing. We know what it is like to be conscious when we are awake as opposed to not being conscious when in dreamless sleep. We also know what it is like to be conscious *of something* (when awake or dreaming) as opposed to not being conscious of that thing. (3)

From Velmans' perspective, we realize that for one to be conscious he or she needs certain experiences in which he or she is able to identify something. He says it is by identifying this thing that the individual becomes aware of that thing. He goes further to say that this awareness can

only be real if the person in question is awake and not sleeping. In like manner, David J. Chalmers notes:

Consciousness is so intangible that even the limited attempt at a definition given here could be disputed: there can arguably be perception and thought that is not conscious, as witnessed by the notions of subliminal perception and unconscious thought. What is central to consciousness, at least in the most interesting sense, is *experience*. But this is not definition. At best, it is clarification. (3)

Although Chalmers concedes that there is actually no undeviating meaning of consciousness, he equally sustains that one very peculiar aspect of consciousness is the fact that it takes experience into consideration. That is, what an individual eventually conceives as being conscious originate from his or her familiarities.

Consciousness spawns from awareness. Conferring Robert Arp in “Consciousness and Awareness”, it is obvious that consciousness comes about due to awareness. For an individual to be conscious, he or she first of all needs to be aware of something. Thus, Arp in an attempt to clarify this concept of awareness says:

Awareness refers to the processing that occurs as a result of the interaction of an animal’s nervous system (including sensory apparatuses) and its environment, whereby this processing results in a basic ability of the animal to react to stimuli from the environment. (102)

Arp explains that when an organism responds to a particular stimulus, it means it has awareness that there is something present somewhere which has control over him or her. In so doing, that person eventually becomes conscious of that thing. Chalmers in a similar vein adds:

Our conscious experience does not reside in an isolated phenomenal void. We are aware of our experience and its contents, we form judgments about it, and we are led to make claims about it... At a more concrete level, we frequently form judgments about the *objects* of our conscious experience (in the environment, for example). (162)

The characters in the novel are greatly influenced by their environment. As earlier mentioned, Sisi country of origin contributes in tickling her mind. She finds herself in a society in which the rich keep progressing at the expense of the poor. Hence, she believes that for her to change her poor living condition and that of her family, she needs to do all she can to get money. As a result,

although she initially has a lot of difficulties accepting sex trafficking as a means to survive, she eventually realizes that the money she obtains can enable her to flee the crunching wrecked by her society. In this light,

She learned to stand in her window and pose on heels that made her two inches taller. She learned to smile, to pout, to think of nothing but the money she would be making. She learned to rap on her window, hitting her ring hard against the glass on slow days to attract stragglers. She learned to twirl to help them make up their minds, a swirling mass of chocolate mesmerizing them, making them gasp and yearn for a release from the ache between their legs, a coffee colored dream luring them in with the promise of heaven. (203)

The above excerpt leaks the fact that Sisi's awareness of her mission to Belgium urges her to master all the skill of prostitution. She is ready to do whatever she believes can make her wealthy in future.

In exposing some of the realities of consciousness, Sigmund Freud in *The Ego and the Id* posits that "a state of consciousness is characteristically very transitory; an idea that is conscious now is no longer so a moment later, although it can become so again under certain conditions that are easily brought about" (3). Freud in other words is saying that even consciousness is temporary. An individual's consciousness is greatly affected by some of the happenings in that person's life. Traumatic instances can destabilize a person's consciousness and transform the person's mind to operate unconsciously. This explains why as a young girl, Chisom grows up with ambitions. These ambitions serve as a guide to her since some of her desires spur most of her actions in life. Having been denied the opportunity to work in her country, she decides to adopt a carefree attitude which she believes will enable her make her way out. At this juncture, she becomes so blatant to the extent that when arrives Belgium, she says:

There was no room for shame. Or for embarrassment. Or for pride. She would toss them away with the same careless ease she had dumped the pumpkin and the nagging misgivings. She could not afford to lug them around in her new world; they would either slow her down or shackle and kill her. She would work for a few years, keep her eyes on the prize, earn enough to pay back what she owed Dele, and then open up her own business. She would resurrect as Chisom, buy a

house in Victoria Garden City. Marry a man who will give her beautiful children.

(89)

Sisi has completely lost some of the original values that gave her honour. In this case, she shifts from the conscious thought of making money as a scholar to making money as a prostitute. This makes her to neglect the demeaning consequences of becoming a prostitute.

Consciousness in a person's life brings about hope. As earlier mentioned, the fact that everybody tries to make the best out of life is an indication that man is conscious of the things he or she wants in life. In essence, people exert a lot of energy to ensure success. By so doing, man becomes hopeful in life. K. Cotton Bronk et al suggest in *The Journal of Positive Psychology* that

Hope represents a belief that one knows how to and has the will to make progress toward that highest aim. Further, at least theoretically, hope seems to play a critical role in keeping purposeful individuals committed to their aims over time. Remaining committed to one's purpose over time, despite setbacks and challenges would likely be facilitated by a sense of hope (502).

Bronk in other words confirms the idea that an individual who is guided by hope has a focus in his or her life. This is because their decisions or actions will be guided by the belief that they will eventually get what they anticipate in future. In like manner, Selvam and Poulson in "Now and Hereafter: The Psychology of Hope from the Perspective of Religion" say: "Hope flows from the human ability to imagine, that is, to see what is not present in the here and now. From this ability emerges an outlook that all is going to be well, even when an individual is in the midst of the harsh realities of life at the present" (397). Chisom does not give up on life despite the disappointment and frustration she faces at some points in life. All through her life, she is so ambitious to become an important personality in future. Hope alone gives her the courage to overcome the moments of turbulence she encounters in her life. After graduating from school, she is so expectant to have an outstanding job and a blossom life. Unfortunately for her, this dream perishes gradually as she seems to be nobody in her society. This makes her to think that "her education had just been a waste of resources. A total waste of time and funds. And a step in the wrong direction. It had brought her nothing but misery, smoky dreams that rose and disappeared, thoughts of what might have been" (211-212). Nevertheless, determination remains her watch word. She does not give up on life but looks for other means of becoming rich, building a formidable house for her parents; in order to have her space and independence. In this

light, she is conscious of the fact that her life has a purpose which ought to be achieved. A purposeful person usually has something to rely on which gets him or her going in spite of the various challenges of life. Although she denies education as the only way through which man can make it in life, her consciousness is not completely eradicated. She simply responds to the mental process at this particular stage (repression) and sticks to her objectives in life (amassing wealth). She does not give room for anything which might obstruct her plans to come any close to her. It can therefore be said here that the kind of consciousness she has here is what Freud refers to as latent consciousness; a situation in which consciousness exists in the unconscious. In other words, such consciousness comes about when an individual remains glued to a particular goal s/he sets in their lives.

Sisi's anticipation for a better life out of Lagos makes her consider the rain on the day she leaves Lagos as a form of purgative ritual:

She stood at a window and watched the rain tripping the light fantastic, glistening on the tarmac with a phosphorescence that seemed to be for her alone: a glowlike halo that reminded her of the vision that had been seen for her. Assuring her that she was doing the right thing. The only thing that she could do. It was to her prophecy that she was headed. A prophecy she now believed in, not with the wounded faith of her father but with a faith that was so total it left no room for doubt, not even a hairline crack. If she stayed back, if she let this chance slip, she would only be giving life the go-ahead to treat her dreams with derision, the same as it had done with her parents. (77)

Hope alone makes Sisi to have a different bearing of life. She strongly sees the opportunity offered her to travel abroad as a turning point in her life. She completely believes the prediction which she used to have doubts in is actually coming to actualization.

Duty consciousness is another way through which Sisi exposes her mental awareness. Consciousness is the surface of the mental apparatus; During Efe's grandmother's party, Sisi parties with her eyes open. She is aware of the fact that she has to go to work on time. She even does not see the importance of sleep in her conversation with Joyce. She tells her; "...my eyes are on the money, baby! I've got no time for sleep, and neither do you" (15). She doesn't permit anything to jeopardize her job. On the contrary, she remains focused, knowing that she can only make it through hard work.

Considering the fact that consciousness has the tendency of alternating as earlier mentioned, what is considered conscious in Sisi's life at one moment, changes at another moment. Becoming fade up with her new life; a life void of freedom, happiness, and satisfaction, defeatist emotions consume her and shatter her stronghold. She does not really care much about working hard and becoming rich. Instead, she thinks all the decisions she takes in life are wrong. One comes across her during her first encounter with her first customer; she finds it very difficult throwing away her dignity just because of money. When she goes into the restaurant where she meets the man,

Sisi sat down and tried to regain her smile. She stretched her lips and parted them. Like a weak flame, the smile came, faltered, and died out. She was a woman sinking. How could she smile when she sank? What on earth was she doing here? Smiling at this stranger for whom she felt nothing but who would probably have her tonight....tears found their way to her eyes. (178)

The fact that Sisi has a lukewarm attitude towards accepting sleeping with men is an indication that her life is not solely crowned by consciousness. This means that even though she claims she really does not care about any embarrassments if she becomes a prostitute, it is really not true. Her mental processes are simply responding to the changes in the environment in which she finds herself. She gets weak too at times. Sisi eventually regrets her going to Antwerp because she thinks her life there is a failure since she does not achieve what she thinks she will achieve if she travels to Belgium.

In spite of all these things, (her regrets, frustration and disappointment) Sisi remains steadfast. She always looks for ways of coming out of challenges. The reason why she easily gets over anything that tries to weigh her down is because she remains purposeful. She believes she can make it in life and become influential. Selvam and Poulson present Paul Tillich's opinion of hope in *NOW AND HEREAFTER; The Psychology of Hope from the Perspective of Religion*, opines that "Without hope, the tension of our life toward the future would vanish, and with it, life itself" (396). In line with this, Sisi keeps reminding herself of how things can turn out when she eventually becomes wealthy. How her life will completely be different from that of her parents; rising from grass to grace. She imagines how "she would have three house girls, a gardener, a driver, a cook. Her life would be nothing compared to her parents" (89). With this in mind, she works towards achieving a better future.

Hope serves as a motivational factor in an individual's life. Sahaya G. Selvam and Martin Poulosom go ahead to say "Hope, optimism, future-mindedness, and future orientation represent a cognitive, emotional, and motivational stance towards the future" (396). An individual who bases his or her life on hope has an awareness of the fact that there is a future which he or she needs to put efforts to make it blossom. Sisi in particular and other African women in general, aim at securing a brighter future. This is the main reason behind their going to Belgium. What they will be doing there does not really matter to them but what matters is what they will become thereafter. Ama for instance plans on making it in life and building a mansion for Mama Eko; the only person she believes loves her genuinely. Efe on her part finds hope in her son. All she toils for in life is for her son. Whenever she thinks like giving up on life, the only thing that gets her going is her son. She confesses her love for her son when she says "Everything I do is for him" (82). Hence, having the responsibility of taking care of her son and ensuring a brighter future for him makes her future-minded. She therefore works and sends money to her sister to take care of her son. The foregoing discussion already unravels Sisi's aspirations which make her conscious of her future. Sisi works very hard and devotedly:

Up until she had never defaulted on her payment. And she always paid more than minimum because she wanted to be done with it in the shortest possible time.... In winter she tried to forget the cold and displayed her body in front of her window, push-up bras and tiny thongs, wrapping her gold-plated-ringed middle finger on the window to attract men.... She was a model worker, the perfect employee, with a bit of sunshine for every client. (236)

Since man's nature is such that they will always ask for more, especially things which seem more preferable, she eventually finds her job cumbersome. As a result, she accepts Luc's proposal of breaking away from the agreement she has with Dele and Madam believing that this brings her freedom, and sees signs of becoming a great personality. Selvam and Poulosom make us to understand that

Hope flows from the human ability to imagine, that is, to see what is not present in the here and now. From this ability emerges an outlook that all is going to be well, even when an individual is in the midst of the harsh realities of life at the present. (397)

After her discussion with Luc, she cannot help it but imagine how beautiful things will be being a boss to herself. Seeing the pleasantries that the future holds, she becomes undefeatable. After thinking about the possibilities of breaking away from madam and Dele diligently, Sisi comes to a conclusion: “Tomorrow, Sisi told herself, she would go back to Luc and tell him she is ready to quit. They would go to the police together, and she would be a free woman.... Yes! Yes! Yes! She whispered in triumph” (234). Her readiness is not because she has the power to subdue Dele and madam, but because she expects that something meaningful will eventually pop up. Grabbing the opportunity, Sisi says:

she could move in with Luc. She would move in with Luc. He will marry me. In five years, I'll be a citizen. She would not have to work hard only to send money to Dele There was no reason why she should work to line the pockets of a man whose pockets were already bulging. (236)

It is quite evident that partaking to this kind of deal with Dele in the first place is simply because she had no other option. It might have seemed to be the best choice to her when the offer came up but she later realizes with Luc's help that she was just being exploited. This rekindles her morality and self-esteem. She actually finds it very difficult to believe that she actually goes as far as offering herself to various men. This is what Freud talks of when he says consciousness is transitory. Sisi's consciousness goes back to the way it was when she was still a young primitive girl. At this stage, all she wants is to right all her wrongs. She wants to have just one man in her life, a decent job, and a settled life. The thought of this gives her life a different rhythm. She feels so excited as she moves from one street to another:

These same streets she had walked before seemed to have acquired a certain newness. Humming, relishing the notion of new beginnings, she thought of how much her life was changing: Luc. Money. A house. She was already becoming someone else. Metamorphosing, she told herself, recalling the word from a biology class. Sloughing off a life that no longer suited her.... Sisi navigated the Keyserlei and imagined everything she could buy with her brand-new wealth. It would buy her forgetfulness, even from those memories that did not permit silence, making her yell in her sleep so that she woke up restless, wanting to cry.

(3)

It is obvious that these streets were different in Sisi's eyes before because she was a different person before now. She was simply a victim of exploitation entangled in the traps of Madam and Dele. Having a sense of freedom in the nearest future is enough to stabilize her psyche. She reasons differently and is more optimistic than before and restores her ego. Being hopeful has a significant influence over her life. She becomes very happy. Life seems to be beginning to her once more since things are taking the direction she has always wished for.

It is important to mention that hope induces motivation to an individual. Motivation entails having a reason for doing something. When such objectives are not set, the individual's actions are not directed. Hope therefore makes an individual to have focus in life. This is exactly how the lives of the African women, that is, Efe, Ama, Joyce, and above all Sisi in Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street* have a common characteristic (hope). They all hope for the best in future. Their travelling out of their countries in the first place is because they believe if they leave their home land a brighter future will be guaranteed. With this at the back of their minds, they devote so much to ensure that their dreams are achieved.

From the forgoing discussion, it is evident that consciousness and hope are interwoven. This is to say that the existence of one affects the other. Consciousness depends on the day to day happenings in an individual's life. What is conscious at a particular time in a person's life counts on the realities of life at that particular moment. If these realities are bitter and traumatic, what will be conscious to that individual's life will be different from what is conscious when that same individual has a happy and peaceful life. Placing consciousness and hope side by side therefore, one can say that a hopeful individual will definitely be conscious of most of the things he or she does in life. Hope on its part is a vital need in the life of human beings vis-à-vis consciousness. Hopefulness helps in eradicating the absurdity of life, making the individual's life future-oriented, purposeful, and a general sense of happiness.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PSYCO-PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INTRODUCING SEX LITERATURE IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

With the evolution of time, most people have acknowledged the need of educating their children through the western form of education. In this light, a majority of young people spend years in school struggling to improve on their literacy since the world has become more interconnected than before. In *Educational Psychology* makes us to understand that this is as a result of the fact that

The relationship and interaction among students, teachers, and the school environment have direct effects on learning and behavior. School climate and policy significantly impact on the academic and social activities of students and teachers in and out of the classroom. (17)

However, it is important to mention that the importance of literature as a subject in school was popularized only after the 1980s with the emergence of literary researchers. To provide credible and accessible information to readers (in this case young adults) authors' works embody issue from all spheres of life. This chapter examines how the implementation of sex literature in the ESL/EFL classroom in Cameroon. This can be done by using excerpts from Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street* as ready comprehensible material.

The teaching of literature encompasses many disciplines of life. This implies that the teaching of any literary work means the exposure of either one aspect of life or the other. According to "The Use of Literature in the Language Classroom: Methods and Aims", there are three basic criteria that justifies why literature should be used in the language classroom:

It provides the learner with genuine, authentic samples of language, and also with real samples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers. It is extremely important for foreign language learners to be trained in a variety of registers, styles and genres and to be able to differentiate the purpose of each of them... The second criterion is methodological and refers to the fact that a literary text has multiple interpretations, these generate different opinions among the learners and this leads to real, motivated interaction with the text, with the fellow students and with the teacher... Lastly, the motivational criterion is of great relevance because

the literary text shows the real feelings of the writer and this generates a powerful motivation in the learner. With the literary text the student accesses this personal experience, if she is touched by the theme and provoked, she will be able to relate what she is reading to her world, to what she knows and feels. (75)

This means any literary text has certain standard that it instills in learners. The author presents the genuineness of life through writing and gives an opportunity for each reader to give his or her understanding of it. Nevertheless, the content of this literary work plays a vital role to the life of the readers or learners as they turn to link some of the experiences of the author to their own experiences. Still in “The Use of Literature in the Language Classroom: Methods and Aims”, Koutsompou Violetta-Irene goes further to accentuate the point that literature is quite relevant to Language classes. She does this by unfolding three models: the cultural, the language, and the personal growth models. The cultural model suggests that Literature should be taught because “Through literature students get to know the background not only of the particular novel but also they learn about history, society, and politics of the country described in the novel or story”. The language model on its part puts forward the idea that “literature teaching is to help students find ways into a text in a methodical way and for themselves”. The personal growth model is for the statement that “Helping students to read literature more effectively is helping them to grow and mature as individuals as well as their relationships with the people around them”. In like manner, H.L. Moody uncovers the complexity of Literature in *The Teaching of Literature* when he insist on the conception that

Literature we can say with some reason, is concerned with all aspects of man and the universe in their entirety. Certainly, every work of literature is about something, often many things; and the more a person reads, the better will his mind be stocked with knowledge. (7)

This notwithstanding, some people argue that some of these universal realities should not be introduced to learners at a particular age. This is because what the students learn from these books in one way or the other sways their opinion on life. So they think involving the students in certain topics becomes detrimental to the students.

There are numerous thoughts that have been advanced so far as the institution of sex literature as a primer to students in high school (early adulthood) is concerned. Some people argue that topics like this are detrimental to students. Some of them claim that it is perilous for

students to explore such issues because it puts dangerous ideas into their minds. On the contrary, others suggest that the learners or young adults should not be distanced from information related to sex. Tanya Lee Stone in *Now and Forever* strongly supports that books should be a medium through which young adults get the truths on sexuality and romance. She stresses that

Books are possibly the safest place for them to learn about sex—not just the physical part but also the complex web of emotions that accompanies it. Through fictional characters, readers can ponder multiple perspectives and gain insight into this new world that they are beginning to encounter. They can consider how they might feel or act in a given situation and can empathize with a character.

(462)

This quotation reiterates that these young adults, mostly high school students, are at very crucial periods of their life and they need to know about the ins and outs of sex so as to facilitate their understanding of a novel which focuses on sexuality. Eleanor Wood in like manner advocates the introduction of sex literature to students. In her case, she acknowledges the fact that the main sources for information about sex and sexuality for these young adults include the Internet, friends, television and films, music (videos and lyrics), video games, and magazines. It is rather unfortunate that what these youths gather from these media at times is misleading. This is because such media generally capture sex and sexuality for business purposes. As a result, they do not fully exploit this aspect of life. Based on this therefore, she gives preference to novels. Wood believes that these young adults in the course of reading will know about the negative consequences of sex. Hence, she says the more learners read novels on sexuality, the more cautious they will become. In “Pushing the Envelope: Exploring Sexuality in Teen Literature” therefore, Wood espouses:

the majority of books further the abstinence-only sex education that many teens receive in school. Many contemporary novels offer negative consequences for the girls who partake in sex, in the form of unpleasant or unwanted sex, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, or emotional turmoil: “Their stories tell us that sex is not something a girl should want to do.”¹⁴ Many storylines serve to terrify teenage girls who are already scared of getting a

sexually transmitted disease or becoming pregnant and repeat the idea “that the only things that result from sex are negative.” (Par 8)

We realize from the extract that most novels show the vulnerability of the female child and therefore warn her of the risks involved in indulging in sex. Nonetheless, the male child equally benefits from reading novels which centre on sex in one way or the other.

On Black Sisters Street is suitable to be introduced to ESL/EFL learners. Its universality cannot be underestimated. It handles many ideas (such as themes, language, cultural and historical background) at a time. This is in line with Moody’s idea that literature does not limit itself to a particular area of knowledge. Although the novel adheres to the qualities of a good piece of literature, we will not handle all the aspects Unigwe raises in her novel. Our focus is limited to sex and sexuality; how Unigwe does not just fully exploits the physical and emotional sensations of sex but also puts forth the penalties of sex.

Sex in Unigwe’s *On Black Sisters Street* is presented from two angles. Firstly, as a marginalizing instrument, and secondly as a tool which enhances women empowerment. That is most of the women we come across in the novel are either harassed sexually or decide to be sex workers. As a marginalizing factor, Unigwe presents a situation in which Brother Cyril finds fancy in between the legs of an eight year old Ama. The heights of male suppression is highlighted when unfolds Ama’s inability to express herself:

Over the next days the walls heard how he ignored her when she said he was hurting her inside. They heard of how she tried to push him away when he lay on top of her, but he was a mountain and she did not have the strength in her to move a mountain. She told of the grunting and the sticky whiteness like pap that gushed out of him. *It’s warm and yucky*, she complained to her walls. I’ll never eat pap again. (113)

Sex in this case is therefore used as a weapon to overpower the female sex. We equally realize that here that the woman basically is taken as a sex object who has no opinion so far as her volition on sex is concerned.

Sex is also viewed as a means of financial empowerment. There are many reasons why people, especially the women folk, end up as accomplices of sex work. The *UCL Institute of*

Health Equity outlines many drivers which often push people into sex work. It could be the desire for money, debt, low welfare benefits, housing and addiction, violence and power, family breakdown and cut off care, mental health, low education, or discrimination. Reuben Balfour and Jessica Allen in “A Review of Literature on Sex Workers and Social Exclusion” go further to explain that migrant sex workers are pushed by the inability to get employments in their home countries. This aspect sends them in search of greener pastures which always push them prostitution. So far as violence is concerned, Balfour and Allen stress that,

Physical, sexual and verbal violence are common experiences for many sex workers. The large majority of studies looked at in this report indicate that violence is a prominent feature in the lives of sex workers in almost all sex work settings. (8)

This implies that when one carries a research on victims of violence (either physical, sexual, or verbal) in any scenery where prostitution is practiced, one will hardly go back without having testimonies from victims. Unigwe proves this fact right by exposing sufferers of violence in her novel. Ama for instance undergoes sexual violence, while Joyce passes through physical and verbal violence.

Introducing this novel to high school students is valuable in many ways. It creates awareness in the students about both the fleshly and complex web of emotion that accompanies sex. Considering the fact that children nowadays develop faster than children in the past, there is that urgent need for these young adults to have basic knowledge on sex. Chika Unigwe’s novel therefore is apt for high school students. This novel does not only unravel what happens during sexual encounters but it equally depicts the upshot of such practices. When Efe for example has her first sexual encounter with Titus, the repercussion of it is so uncomfortable. During the encounter, Unigwe tells us that

Titus kissed her on the mouth and wriggled against her. He brought out his tongue and licked the side of her face. His saliva on her face was stale, but she tried not to mind, even thought she ought to enjoy it. Her back, bare on the brick wall, itched. His stomach pressed on hers, and she wished she could push it out of the way.... There was nothing at all in this whole exercise that made her want a repeat performance. Why did women do it over and over? Why did the girls at school

giggle and glow when they talked about meeting boys behind the school's pit latrines to do *it*? (47)

From every indication, having sex is physically painful. With the help of the teacher, students turn to understand better how risky it is partaking in sexual intercourse at their ages. In his discussion on young adults literature, Robyn E. Howell adopts Pattee Amy's knowledge in his work "Young Adult(YA) Literature: Details and Trendsetting". According to him:

teen fiction may have been used as a deterrent to "scare" teens about sex or to curb teens' sexual desires. The authors who support sexual content in the genre argue that novels with teen sexuality should provide details of not only the act itself, but also the emotional and psychological elements of sex as well. By doing so, authors provide a more rounded image of sex, one that can be a learning experience for teens. (17)

Based on this, we realize that Robyn E. Howell is strongly in support of the fact that sex literature has positive effects on learners.

Unigwe through Efe satirizes young girls who practice sex before marriage. Efe engages in sexual dealings at a very tender age because she thinks of the material benefits she will get. In the same vein, Ama, Joyce, and Sisi end up to be sex workers in Belgium since the wish to accumulate wealth.

When learners are aware of these factors that push people into immoral activities just because of money, they will probably perceive, understand, and behave differently in life. As earlier mentioned, questionnaires were designed to verify the reception of such literature in the ESL/EFL classroom.

DATA ANALYSIS

Two sets of questionnaires were established; one for the teachers and the other for the students. The questionnaire for students was given to Lower Sixth Art students in GBHS Etoug- Ebe. The questionnaire given to students contained ten (10) items. Most of the questions are structured; limiting the respondents to specific sets of answers which they had the volition to choose the best option. The first three questions were to find out their personalities. It was obvious that their ages ranged between 16 and 19 (an indication that they were all at the early age of adulthood). These students equally do both English Language and Literature as some of their main subjects.

The next questions originated from an extract chosen from our novel under study. The excerpt basically concentrated on sex. The first question related to the text was for the respondents (students) to identify the main idea of the text. 85.33% of the students of the students said it was a carnal encounter while 14.67% of the students were indifferent to the question. This shows that although some of the students seem to shy away from the question, it does not cancel the fact that a majority of them are versed with what transpires during such meetings. This proves the idea that “almost fifty percent of high school females and males, ages fifteen to nineteen, have participated in sexual intercourse, according to the Center for Disease and Control and Prevention” (Howell 16).

In an attempt to find out the teachers’ perspective about the selected text, some teachers (3 of them) did not see this extract appropriate for neither English Language nor English Literature classes. These teachers expressed the view that treating such topics with high school students has negative effects on learners’ mindset. They argue that these students are not yet ready to be fed with such knowledge. The main reason raised was that these young adults will go around practicing what they have learned from such excerpts or discussions. One of the teachers (10%) showed preference to neither of the options given. However, 6 teachers (60%) stood for the fact that the content of the extract is suitable for high school students. They advanced their reasons that some of these students are already practicing sex and the best way to keep them alert is for them to read literary works which paint a vivid picture of what sex is all about. By so doing, they will become aware of the consequences and so will control their actions so that they do not get trapped in some of the disheartening effects brought about by sex.

Questions now shifted from generalities to specificities. The intention was to find out if students have ever been victims of rape or if they have had anybody related to them who has

experienced sexual violence. At this level, 78.67% of them confirmed to have been witnesses of a rape case through the media while 9.33% of the students confirmed to have been live witnesses. The other 12% claimed they have not had such experiences. This statistics shows that these students have interest on sex and so look for ways of having clues about it. Hence they go to the media where some talks or programs on sex are displayed. Those students who have understandings of erotic persecutions confirmed that it affected them negatively.

Considering how often they are exposed to novels, texts, or discussions related to sexuality in their English and Literature classes, 84% of the students said such topics are sometimes discussed in class while 16% kept their opinions to themselves since they did not provide any answer to the question. Nonetheless, the number (63) who indicated that their teachers bring materials or dialogues on sex prevail over those who remain neutral (12). In like manner, most teachers confirmed that they sometimes read documents based on sexuality together with their students in both their literature classes. Out of ten (10) English and literature teachers, 6 (60%) of them attested that they engage their students on such topics while the remaining 4 (40%) saw the idea uncomfortable. Hence, they never bring it up in class.

Regarding the students' opinions on how they feel whenever there are discourses on sex and sexuality, the analysis showed that such moments in class are always overwhelming. This is because as much as 92% of the students found such discussions interesting. The remaining 8% confessed to be shy with such discussions.

From the analysis, it was also noticeable that most students believed partaking in such discussions help to change their notions about life. 89.33% confirmed that having cognizance of sex will go a long way to affect them. To expatiate this, the teachers lay side by side students who are conscious of sex to those who are not to draw a conclusion. 60% of the teachers were for the fact that learners with knowledge on sex will hardly fall preys to premarital sex while those who are ignorant will easily be victims. In contrast, the other 40% opposed this idea by saying that learners cannot practice what they don't know.

The aforesaid investigation demonstrates that most of the high school students who are in contact with sex literature have an upper edge over those whose knowledge is void of the physical and emotional attachments related to sex. Firstly, this can be seen in the way their minds will determine the kind of actions they should carry out. Two questions were advanced (one for the students and the other for the teachers) to bring out the insinuations of establishing sex literature to high school students. The first one which was posed to students was expected to find

out how beneficial sex education was to the students' day to day activities. In a similar way, the second question, which was an item on the teachers' questionnaire, focused on the disparities that occur between learners with sex education and those unaware of it. The responses given show that sex literature as a subject to high school students is quite advantageous since it enables the students to show some maturity in the way they react both mentally and behaviourally. Here, 89.33% of the students (67 students) confirmed the point that sex education has constructive effects on their development while 10.67% (8 students) stood on the grounds that such knowledge rather mal than make them better figures. In like manner, the responses given by the teachers showed that when learners are well-informed on sex, they tend to benefit from such knowledge. 60% of the teachers (6 teachers) supported this claim while 40% (4 teachers) had a lukewarm attitude toward the idea; they stressed that exposing such information to students rather pushes them to practice what they have been exposed to. Nonetheless, the analysis revealed that sex discourses are quite advantageous to students. This is because when the learners know very well that appealing to sexual activities has agonizing effects, they will be reluctant to involve in situations that will cause them pain.

Being abreast of sex too helps students to be empathic. That is, in the course of reading a novel which presents characters that suffer from sexual pressure, or when these learners come across a victim of sexual harassment in real life, they will easily understand such people considering the fact that they know all the authenticities that surrounds sex.

The above analysis suggests that sex literature has a pedagogical relevance on the lives of students. Apart from activating consciousness in the minds of the students, it equally shape (positively) the kind of activities they should carry out so far as sex is concerned. Thus, introducing sex literature in the ESL/EFL classroom will be expedient to young Cameroonian since it will improve on their perception of life and eradicate certain ills like early pregnancies and STDs which mare the lives of youths. With this, Stone goes further to reiterate the need for young adults to know the truths surrounding sexuality when she says:

Sexuality is part of growing up and our readers are not children—they are adults—young adults. They must be able to seek out the characters and situations that reflect the world in which they live, and resonate with them. Those are the characters and books that will live on in the minds of our readers . . . Forever.

(465)

This is an indication that sexuality is not supposed to be regarded as a taboo subject to high school students but should be brought before them in the form of books. This is because what since life is represented through writing, what they read from these books will be a part of them and will prepare them to face the world. Introducing Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street* therefore will not just broaden the students' mind on sex but will also make them come in contact with varieties of culture, amplify their language power, and enhance their knowledge on thematic development. Below is a lesson plan on reading comprehension of a passage chosen from *On Black Sisters Street*.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Teacher: Ngwengang Mulaa Charlotte

School: GBHS Etoug-Ebe

Class: Lower Sixth

Sex: Mixed

Average Age: 16

Subject: Literature in English

Lesson: Reading of extract from *On Black Sisters' Street*

Topic: Themes and Vocabulary in extract

Time: 08h50- 09h40

Duration: 50minutes

Date: Monday, April 11 2016

Previous Knowledge: students have read and mastered the plot of the novel.

Lesson Objectives: by the end of the lesson students should be able to:

- Show their understanding of new words.
- Identify the major themes in the extract and apply them to their day to day activities.

Teaching Aids: handouts, charts

References: Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary

- *On Black Sisters' Street*

STAGES	SUBJECT MATTER	TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES	STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES	RATIONALE	TIME
introduction	<p>Q: Lead in activity: What are some deadly diseases you know? A: malaria Typhoid HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Q: how do people get affected by HIV/AIDS? A: by sharing needles Using the same blade and scissors. Through blood transfusion Through sex</p> <p>Q: Now, when you are affected with the AIDS virus how does it affect your life? A: negatively; the patient's life becomes complicated as he or she lives on strict medication and diet, the victim's health becomes threatened, and negligence leads to death.</p>	Teacher asks some questions orally.	Students answer questions by a show of hand.	To captivate the learner's interest and get them focused.	5mins
Presentation	<p><u>Themes and Vocabulary in Selected Extract.</u> Carefully read the text and underline all the words that you find difficult to understand.</p> <p><u>Vocabulary</u> A B</p>	<p>Teacher writes the topic on the board. After that, she distributes copies of text to students. Then, moves around while students are reading.</p> <p>Teacher writes the</p>	<p>Students collect copies and read the extract.</p> <p>Students put up their</p>	<p>To get the students learn new words.</p> <p>To enhance their</p>	20mins

	Lackluster(dull)	Uninteresting or unexciting Example: Her lackluster hair made her inferior among her friends.	words and their synonyms given by the students in column A and their meanings in column B.	hands and answer questions. Then, the copy notes in their exercise books.	understanding of the words.
	Moan (Groan)	A long deep sound which expresses unhappiness, suffering, or sexual pleasure. Example: The injured man moaned all night.			
	Sway	To move slowly from side to side. Example: The leaves were swaying with the breeze.			
	Compensated(make up for)	To provide something good to reduce or balance a loss or balance. Example: She was compensated when she lost her car.			
Now, carefully read the passage again and			Teacher gives	Students perform the	For a proper

	<p>this time, replace the original words with their synonyms. Then, tell us what is happening in the text.</p> <p>The text focuses on a sexual encounter between a teenager and a mature man of 45. That is, it exposes the pains brought about by sex.</p>	<p>instructions orally. -Monitors the student</p> <p>-Calls students up to answer questions.</p>	<p>given task. Students stand and share their opinions.</p>	<p>understanding of text.</p> <p>To ensure that students understand the content of the text.</p>	
Practice	<p><u>Oral Exercise</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some of the effects of sex mentioned in the extract? 2. What are some other disadvantages of sex not mentioned in the extract? 3. Identify and explain three main themes highlighted in the text. <p>Oral correction</p>	<p>Teacher pins chart on the board containing questions. Picks out students to answer questions.</p>	<p>Students provide answers to questions.</p>	<p>To get the students interactive and exposed to the realities of sex. Also, for them to bring out the themes in the extract.</p>	10mins
Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In not more than a paragraph write down some dangers of premarital sex to discourage a friend who indulges in sexual relationships. 2. Construct two sentences each with the following words: 	<p>Teacher pins chart on the board containing exercise. Goes around the class to ensure that everybody is</p>	<p>Students copy exercise in their books and perform the text.</p>	<p>To verify if the lesson objectives have been realized.</p>	15mins

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lackluster - Sway - Moan <p>Correction of Exercise: oral</p>	<p>working.</p> <p>Teacher calls on students to read their work. Corrects them when need arises.</p>	<p>Students read their works.</p>		
	<p><u>Homework</u> In not more than 20lines identify the characters involved in the given extract and comment on their character traits.</p>	<p>Teacher writes homework on the board.</p>	<p>Students copy in their exercise books.</p>	<p>To get the students revise the lesson at home.</p>	

This chapter aimed at bringing out the psycho-pedagogical importance of introducing sex literature as a subject to English and literature students. To achieve this, data were collected through questionnaires to ease the smooth development of the chapter. This chapter presented the importance of sex literature to high school students of the Cameroonian society. That is, it attempted to emphasize the fact that sex education does not just improve on the learners' mentality on life but also enable them to comprehend easily, other texts or situations they come across which concentrate on this aspect of life. Finally, this chapter equally suggested that *On Black Sisters Street* is an appropriate text to be introduced to high school students since it does not limit itself just to one aspect about life (sex) but it represents the realities of our contemporary African societies.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This research endeavour set out to underscore the relationship that exists between man's mental processes on the one hand, and their emotions, actions, and behaviours on the other hand in Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street*. The human psyche is highly deterministic regarding that our actions are a response to what has been preconceived in our minds. As a result, this work looked at how human beings constantly switch from one psychological phase to another in the course of concocting ways of dealing with both internal and external circumstances surrounding them. It went further to study the influential menacing frame of mind which arises with the inability to reach our expectations in life. The study tried to show how man's exertions to secure a blissful life makes them persistently sway from believing that they have the utmost power over their success, to accepting the influence of a supreme being. This notwithstanding, the work equally examined the different levels of empathy that Unigwe's novel throws its readers into in the course of reading. Finally, the work brought out the psycho-pedagogical implications of introducing sex literature in the ESL/EFL classroom. The work enunciated the hypotheses that worldly desires rob man of his or her uprightness, exposing him or her to nothing other than pain, and valorizes hope as a catalyst for continuity. It equally exposes the thinking that knowledge is a vital tool which guarantees a better personality in an individual and also secures a better place in the society for that individual.

In an attempt to set the base for this analysis, the psychoanalytic theory was applied alongside existentialist ideologies. The psychoanalytic theory helped us to probe into the minds of the characters and have a better view of characters at each stage in time, taking into mind the fact that every external happening in one way or the other has an impact on the individual's psyche. The existentialist view paved the way for us to understand the enigmatic nature of human life and the individual's inability to float above his or her fate.

Firstly, we examined how the lack of satisfaction of our desires brings about disillusionment and obsessive neurosis. At this stage, the different dynamics that lead to subsequent disappointment and neurotic instabilities were analyzed. In the course of the analysis, we realized that one of Unigwe's main concerns in most of her works is the characters' enthusiasm to meet up with both instinctive and motivational drives. This perhaps explains why she decided to associate herself to writing after being motivated by the British Caribbean Caryl Phillips, and also the "cultural shock" she felt in Belgium after seeing young women on display in windows—a highly unfamiliar sight in Nigeria. We also discovered that the undying passion

to blossom in life only pushes man to adopt different types of mechanisms which they think are appropriate at each given situation. Unigwe's characters are those who keep regulating their defenses to tie with the environmental atmospheres they find themselves.

We equally found out that as a major preoccupation, Unigwe in most of her works handles issues of resistance. In this case, she shows how characters breakaway from certain societal constraints (both psychological and physical) that limit them from achieving the fulfillment they long for. Hence, faced with such a situation, man keeps alternating from one problem to the other because of the fact that they do not want to accept the truths of life. Unigwe brings Sisi to the limelight to satirize man, who at some points in time allows the bestial instinct in them to direct them, thereby clouding their rationality.

Secondly, we sought to dissect how the novel can be construed from the existentialist philosophical stance. At this juncture, we recognized that whether we decide to stick to the theists' concept on existence or that of the atheists, being part of the happenings in the novel is inevitable. We also found out that all these movements aim at seeking ways of achieving desires so as to make their lives interesting and worth living. Unigwe stresses on the fact that although man's efforts are very vital in promoting success in life, it is rather unfortunate that man has no control over his or her destiny and so ends up as a victim of circumstances at times. This finding also permitted us to see that the readers' emotion, feelings, or understanding of the events in the novel at times could be misleading, (empathic inaccuracy) while at other times they tie with those of the characters (empathic accuracy).

The study also concentrated on an examination of the state of being conscious on the one hand and that of being hopeful on the other hand. In the analysis, it was revealed that consciousness serves as a catalyst to hope. We equally realized that consciousness, being a mental apparatus reacts quickly to the happenings of the world. In other words, there is always something which stimulates a reaction in an individual. We went further to notice that setting certain standards in life and actually recognizing these standards has a positive affiliation to our lives since it makes us purposeful, deterministic, and optimistic. This shows that Unigwe advocates a sense of consciousness and hope in every human being since they play a positive role in enhancing continuation in life in spite of the quite challenging circumstances one faces.

Finally, we set out to examine the repercussions of sex literature on young adults in Cameroonian High Schools. It was discovered that literature is one of the best ways of exposing sexuality to young adults. This is because literature does not limit itself to a particular aspect of

life but goes as far as exposing the historical and cultural values of people all around the world. This shows that through sex literature, learners will have a wider scope on sexuality in particular (which will have a drastic influence on their perception of sex) and other aspects of life in general. Hence, we saw that Sex literature will foster a proper development of the students since it will improve on their acuity thereby breeding a better society.

By way of contribution to scholarship, this work is a continuation of the argument on the works of human mind with emphasis on Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street*. It refreshes the ideas raised on the mental happenings of human beings in relation to their struggles to give preference to their essence or existence. This work wields the idea that the vent through which man escapes the countless predicament of life is by remaining conscious and hopeful.

This work, we believe, will prick researchers' minds on the importance of sex education to high school students. This will in turn lay the grounds for educating learners on sexuality. It might also be of interest to other researchers fascinated by this domain to attempt a critical examination of the ills brought about by ignorance on sex and those brought about by knowledge of sexuality.

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APPENDIX A: EXTRACT FOR QUESTIONNAIRES (from Unigwe's *On Black Sisters Street*)

EFE DISCOVERED SEX AT SIXTEEN BEHIND HER FATHER'S HOUSE. THAT first experience was so painful in its ordinariness that she had spent days wanting to cry. She'd had no notion of what to expect, yet she had not thought it would be this lackluster, this painful nothing.

She felt somewhat cheated, *like pikin wey dem give coin wey no dey shine at all at all*. She remembered nothing but a wish that it will not last too long and that the pain between her legs would be very much compensated. The man who held her buttocks tight and swayed and moaned and was responsible for all that pain was forty-five. He was old. Experienced. But, most important, he had money that was rumored to be endless. *Money wey full everywhere like san' san'*. He had promised Efe new clothes. New shoes. Heaven. Earth. And everything else she fancied between the two as long as she let him have his way.

APPENDIX B: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is aimed at collecting data on the introduction of sex literature to high school students. Kindly provide answers to all the questions either by filling in the blanks or marking an 'X' on the answer you deem correct. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used strictly for this work.

1. Class
2. Age
3. Do Literature and English make a part of your main subjects?

a) Yes

b) b) No

Carefully read the extract above and before you continue answering the questions.

4. What is the main action expressed in the text? _____

5. What are some means through which you have had knowledge of the realities of rape? a)

The media b) I have been a victim c) Never seen any case

6. How did you feel after the rape case?

a) Happy

b) Pity for the victim

c) Pain

7. How often do your teachers talk about sex or bring materials which focus on sex to class?

a) Always

b) b) Sometimes

c) c) Never

8. What is your reaction to such topics?

a) Excited

b) b) Ashamed

c) c) Interested

9. What impact does your familiarity with sex has on your personality?

a) Positive

b) b) Negative

c) c) Both

10. How is sex education beneficial to your day to day life?

THANK YOU

APPENDIX C: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is aimed at collecting data on the introduction of sex literature to high school students. Kindly provide answers to all the questions by either filling in the blanks or marking an 'X' on the answer you deem correct. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used strictly for this work.

Carefully read the extract above and before you continue answering the questions.

1) Do you find the extract above appropriate to be thought in your class?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Somehow

2) How often do you treat texts with such content in your class?

- a) Always
- b) Never
- c) Rarely

3) In your opinion, how do you think such topics are beneficiary to the students?

4) What could be the possible disadvantage of sex literature to the learners?

5) Do you think students who are exposed to sex education in class behave differently from those who are not exposed to sex education in class?

THANK YOU