PATRIARCHY AND SOCIALIZATION IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S PURPLE HIBISCUS AND JAMAICA KINCAID'S *LUCY*

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Abstract

Patriarchal culture is institutionalized through rigorous socialization processes in which every member of the community is aware of what "appropriate" duties, responsibilities and roles are expected from them for the sustenance of family and communal harmony (Wamue-Nagare et. al, 2011).The term "socialization", as used in this paper, is understood as "the process by which society's values and norms, including those pertaining to gender, are taught and learned" (Renzetti & Curran, 1989, p.61). This paper sets out to examine the process of socialization and its implications for identity formation in the two novels. It further considers socialization as a critical means by which societies formulate and preserve their cultures and identities. Finally, the paper looks at the manifestation of negative socialization through the passing on of societal values which disempower the agents as well as the recipients. I argue that Chimamanda Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* (2005) and Jamaica Kincaid in *Lucy* (1990) portray patriarchy as having an influence on the way mothers socialize their daughters. The authors further portray this type of socialization as not only disempowering to the women as mothers but also to their daughters' social development. However, the daughters eventually exercise agency by resisting and subverting the constraints of such type of socialization.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Socialization, Identity, Gender.

Introduction

Family members, mothers in particular, are the primary agents in the socialization of children. It is through mothers that children learn particular values and morals of society. School and peers are also agents of socialization as it is also from them that human beings of any age learn values and certain codes of conduct (Giddens, 2009, p. 288). The term "socialization", as used in this paper, is understood as "the process by which society's values and norms, including those pertaining to gender, are taught and learned" (Renzetti & Curran, 1989, p. 61). According to Anthony Giddens (2009, p. 288), it is through socialization that the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture in which he or she was born. After a close reading of the socialization processes effected in mother-daughter relationships in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2005), set in Nigeria, and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990), set in the United States of America and the Caribbean, the paper acknowledges the geographical and cultural divide between African women and their counterparts in the African diaspora as well as the diverse socio-economic and political factors which influence the various ways of socialization. I chose to work with these texts despite their difference in location because of the similar depictions of the intersections of gender and socialization in the

formation of female identity. I am thus interested in exploring the similarities between the authors' representations of women's strategies of socializing their daughters in a context characterized by strict patriarchal edicts.

The objectives of the paper are as follows; (a) to examine the process of socialization and its implications for identity formation in the two novels. (b) To consider socialization as a means by which societies formulate and preserve their cultures and identities. Finally, (c) To examine the manifestation of negative socialization through the passing on of societal values which disempower the agents as well as the recipients. The analysis of the two novels therefore attempts to answer the following questions: To what extent does patriarchy influence the socialization of daughters by their mothers? In what ways do the women in the novels exercise their agency by resisting and/or conforming to patriarchy? Overall, I argue that Adichie and Kincaid portray patriarchy as having an influence on the way mothers socialize their daughters. The authors further represent this type of socialization as being not only disempowering to them as mothers but also to their daughters' social development. However, the daughters eventually exercise agency by resisting and subverting the constraints of such type of socialization.

Literature Review

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*[1]is a powerful narration of fifteen-year-old Kambili Achike who, together with her mother and brother, is a victim of domestic abuse at the hands of Eugene, her religious fundamentalist father. The three of them—Kambili, her mother Beatrice and her brother Jaja—live in fear of Eugene's wrath as he controls almost every aspect of their lives. Eugene's extreme beliefs in how the family should behave leave the members of the household with only one option of speaking "with their spirits than with their lips" (2005, p.16). By this, the narrator means that the members of the family cannot voice out their feelings. Most studies on the novel *have* focused on the political instability of post-independent Nigeria, arguing that the chaos and the despotism portrayed by the character Eugene Achike, through his religious fanaticism, is a microcosm of the political situation of contemporary Nigeria.[2] For example, Anthony C. Oha argues that the protagonist Kambili is a new voice crying out to be heard because of the torture and anguish in the impediments of governance and civilization around her, that "one needs to observe… how this naïve character reveals in somewhat innocent 'silence', the painful realities in her society… she exposes several military oddities with the eyes of an innocent observer" (Oha, 2007, p. 200). Along similar lines, Susan Andrade in her paper "Adichie's Genealogies: National and Feminine Novels" also argues that while *Purple Hibiscus* represents politics of the family, at the same time it clearly tells stories of the nation. Therefore, "by illustrating a cross continental set of inspirations and intertexts" in the novel she "reveals Adichie's exploration of the contemporary Nigerian political crisis" (Andrade, 2011, p. 91). Charlotte Larson however offers a different reading from the other two scholars cited above. Her research "links the restrictions and abuse suffered by Kambili and her family" (Larson, n.d, p. 2) to Michel Foucault's theories on surveillance and torture by focusing on the

[1]Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, (2005) *Purple Hibiscus*, London: Harper Perennial. All page references are from this edition.

[2] Related studies include Kehinde (2013), Ouma (2013).

surveillance and torture techniques used by Papa Eugene Achike to maintain control over his family. My analysis of the novel takes a different angle from the studies mentioned above by focusing on the mother-daughter dyad and how socialization according to gender is effected in such relationships.

Lucy[3]is a novel about a young black West Indian woman of the same name who migrates to the United States of America to work as an *au pair* for a white family. Feeling constrained by controlling parents for whom "…even to think such words (bad words) in their presence (she) would have been scolded severely" (1990, p. 13) and colonial educational legacies which limit her capabilities, Lucy refuses to entertain any feelings of nostalgia for her homeland. At the center of the novel is Lucy's quest for independence and an identity which is separate from that of her mother. Several studies have focused on the text as an example of a migration narrative. Commenting on this trend, Katherine Suggs and Rey Chow (2002, p. 157) argue that Kincaid's *Lucy*, like its protagonist, "refuses to participate in now-familiar postcolonial plots of cultural reconnection and return". The two argue that *Lucy* reads like "a pitched battle against the assumptions that shape many of the oppositional narratives of exile and displacement that have become central to both postcolonial and Caribbean literary canons" (Suggs & Chow, 2002, p. 157). The assumption is that the alienating experience of "exile" leads to the celebrations of "return." However, this assumption is not true in Lucy's case because even though she is nostalgic about home, she makes up her mind never to return to the stifling island that was once her home. Within the same framework of migration narratives, Janelle Martin (n.d) analyzes the novel by focusing on Lucy's quest/ struggle as not only a foreigner and immigrant but also as a woman of color in the multicultural context of the United States. She argues that "as immigrants undergo a physical change in environment, they also experience a significant change in their identities. Their identities as immigrants are reconstructed as they assimilate to the political, social, and cultural norms of a group of people they identify with" (Martin, n.d, p. 35).

Unlike the other studies on *Lucy* which focus on her experience as an immigrant in the US, this paper critically investigates the influence of the mother-daughter dyad in shaping a female identity in a male-dominated society. Furthermore, in its exploration of the phenomenon of female bonding, the paper further examines how Lucy moves past the confines of her culture by revising and rejecting the values inculcated into her by her mother. Unlike other women in the novel, Lucy asserts her independence by being in charge of her sexuality and her destiny in a journey of self discovery.

Adrienne Rich (1986, p. 225), at one point, asserted that "the cathexis between mother and daughter-essential, distorted, misused—is the great unwritten story". Of course, since then, literature on mother-daughter dyads, both critical and imaginative has filled up the gap once noted by Rich. As a point of departure from the brief literature review and engagement with scholarship in the field, this paper joins the conversation on mother-daughter relationships by critically examining the possibilities and limitations of the influence of patriarchy in the shaping of a female identity in a male-dominated society and offering a comparison in the representation by the two authors under study.

[3] Jamaica Kincaid, (1990). *Lucy,* New York: Farrar Straus Giroux. All page references are from this edition.

Theoretical Framework

My understanding of motherhood is framed within Adrienne Rich's definition which views motherhood as "the *potential* relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the *institution*, which aims at ensuring that that potential—and all women—shall remain under male control" (Rich, 1986, p. 13; emphasis in original). Unsettling the notions of motherhood as an essentialist category, Andrea O'Reilly (2010, p. 2) posits that motherhood studies may be "divided into three interrelated themes or categories of inquiry: motherhood as institution, motherhood as experience, and motherhood as identity or subjectivity". Of interest to this paper is how "the term motherhood is used to signify the patriarchal institution of motherhood, while mothering refers to women's lived experiences of childrearing as they both conform to and/or resist the patriarchal institution of motherhood and its oppressive ideology" (O'Reilly, 2010, p. 2). Mothering therefore refers to the agency of women in their role as mothers and is therefore regarded as having the potential for empowerment.

Patriarchy can be defined as "the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, law, language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male" (Rich, 1986, p. 57). It further includes titles being traced through the male line. Under patriarchy, male authority and power is "located in and exercised through the extended family, a pre-capitalist unit of production which continues into the present time" (Gordon, 1996, p. 7). Olabisi Aina (1998, p. 6) further argues that patriarchy is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females; with various taboos to ensure conformity with specified gender roles. Wamue-Nagare et al. (2011, p. 14) further explain that "patriarchal culture is institutionalized through a rigorous socialization process in which every member of the community is aware of what duties, responsibilities and roles are expected from them which is perceived as the correct order crucial for family and communal harmony" and it is within this understanding of patriarchy that my paper locates itself.

Patriarchy in Africa has been attributed to several factors with various theorists occupying different positions with regard to the notion of gender as patriarchy's organizing hierarchical principle, thereby foregrounding the debate of whether patriarchy is a western construct imposed on African subjects during colonialism.[4] Scholars such as Patricia McFadden (1997) argue that gender asymmetry existed in pre-colonial Africa and was enforced by indigenous forms of patriarchy through cultural traditions that view women as inferior despite being given positions of authority in pre-colonial Africa. These inequalities only became accentuated with the advent of colonial forms of patriarchy which favoured men and put them in positions of power, as well as certain religious teachings which relegated women to the periphery. On the other hand, Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) and Nkiru Nzegwu (2001) argue that in pre-colonial Africa, there existed what they call the

[4] See, for example, the debates raised by Nkiru Nzegwu, Oyeronke Oyewumi, S. Afonja and Patricia McFadden in Bibi Bakare Yusuf's "Beyond Determinism: The Phenomenology of African Female Existence" cited *agi.ac.za/sites/agi.ac.za/files/fa_2_feature_article_1.pdf* . Retrieved on 10/-3/11.

dual-sex system which mainly constituted the organizing principle of social life. While acknowledging sex difference, the dual-sex system however rejected "the paradigm of female subordination and inferiorization" (Nzegwu, 2006, p. 220). This system is associated with complementary forms of power in the activities and roles of men and women for example the Onitsha, Aboh and Obamkpa political systems in the late eighteenth to nineteenth century which had their autonomous governing councils for males and females in order to address community needs and social obligations (Nzegwu, 2006, p. 221). According to Oyewumi (1997, p. 123), one tradition that was exported to Africa during the colonial period was the exclusion of women from the newly created colonial public sphere. In Britain, access to power was gender-based and the same was transferred to their colonies. Although both African men and women as conquered people were excluded from the colonial state structures, men were represented at the lower levels of government thus leading to a legacy of women's marginalization (Oyewumi, 1997, p. 123).

Theorists who have critiqued patriarchy emphasize the centrality of women in their role of reproduction as well as food production which facilitates patriarchal economic and political dominance. As a changing and unstable system of power, patriarchy usually privileges men and male children while the position of the female members of society is reduced to that of an appendage to men and as child bearers for their husbands. In African patriarchal societies, male children are important because they immortalize the family name. Female children are subordinate to males because they do not continue their own family line but immortalize another man's bloodline when they get married. A female child's primary worth is her ability to produce a male child for her husband, for this child is the one who will continue the family name. According to Mary Wentworth (1995), a male's privilege begins during his mother's pregnancy when his family expresses the age-old preference for a boy, especially if the baby is to be the first. In many African cultures, a man's virility is questioned if he does not father a son. In contrast, patriarchy makes a daughter "a liability since it requires that she be married, a status that normally affords her little possibility of economically benefiting from her family of origin" (Wentworth, 1995, n.p).

Patriarchy and its Impact on Socialization in *Purple Hibiscus*

The privileging of sons over daughters as a tenet of patriarchy is made evident in the novel in the way women are given less value in the family on the basis of their gender. Such sentiments are portrayed for example, when the Achike family travels to Abba, the town where Eugene was born and raised, to spend Christmas with their extended family. When the female relatives gather to cook at the Achike house in Abba, one of the women says:

> *Nekene*, see the boy that will inherit his father's riches!" one woman said, hooting even more loudly, her mouth shaped like a narrow tunnel.
> "If we did not have the same blood in our veins, I would *sell* you my daughter," another said to Jaja…
> "The girl is a ripe *agbogho*! Very soon a strong young man will bring us palm wine!" another said. (2005, p. 91-2)

The village women fuss over Jaja because as a male he will inherit his father's wealth. His being male ensures that the money is kept in the family, unlike Kambili who will get married elsewhere. Jaja will also continue the family name and hence the lineage while Kambili will leave the Achike name and adopt that of her husband. One should notice how the woman in the passage above says she would sell her daughter to Jaja. This represents how, in this society, women are commodified and hence can be subjected to any kind of material exchange by marrying them off without asking for their permission. The people who are responsible for the exchange of the bride are the male members of that society. Extrapolating from Molara Ogundipe-Leslie (1985) on her critique of Yoruba society, Adichie seems to suggest in the novel that it is through the institution of marriage that women—who become properties in their husbands' lineages, lose all personal rights and self-identity. Ogundipe-Leslie argues that while women may lose a lot through the institution, men have a lot to gain, as the institutions of marriage and motherhood further invest men's existing powerful positions in the kinship system and interpersonal relationships with wider political and economic meaning. As evident in the quotation above, Jaja's gender alone wields him more power than Kambili because even though they were born in the same family, the prevalent thought is that Jaja is the rightful inheritor of his father's wealth since he is male.

The ethos of patriarchal society's preference of the male child is also echoed by Papa-Nnukwu, Kambili's grandfather, during the same Christmas period that Eugene and his family visits his home village. Kambili's widowed aunt, Ifeoma and her children also visit Abba at the same time in order to spend time with Papa-Nnukwu. However, because Papa Nnukwu is a traditionalist, Eugene forbids his family to have any close interactions with his own father. Eugene, a member of the educated elite created through missionary education, is a strict Catholic whose distorted perception of the faith has made Catholicism intolerant and Manichean[5]. He lives by the dictates of the white Catholic priest, Father Benedict, whom he does not question and tries very hard to please. Through his own contentious interpretations of Catholicism, Father Benedict encourages Eugene to use his church-sanctioned power as the head of the family to control his family. Eugene is an extremist in all his endeavours, and he is feared like a god by his family. Like Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* who despised his hedonistic "effeminate" father, Eugene would go to any length to avoid being like his father whom he has branded as pagan. He is an angry man who has "constructed his self-identity around his rejection of his own father and all that he stands for…one sees how his father's traditional Igbo beliefs threaten the entire structure upon which he bases his identity and his power" (Hewett, 2005, p. 76). Eugene is however a bundle of contradictions. He is a successful and important man in society, hence the wealth amassed from his factories and newspaper has earned him the title of *Omelora* - "The One Who Does for the Community"—because he provides for the underprivileged in his village community. His title earns him respect and the villagers view him as a good leader and yet at the same time he abusively lords over his family by constantly beating them whenever they exhibit any kind of behavior which he perceives as ungodly or subversive. Through the character of Eugene, one notes how patriarchy, sanctioned by religion and culture, silences and oppresses women as well as men with

[5] Manichaeism is a system of beliefs that perceives the world from a dualistic point of view and divides everything between good and evil.

lesser power in the novel. Eugene's behaviour is a good example of male domination reinforced by patriarchy. Eugene's unfair treatment of his father is a source of misery for Papa Nnukwu and he blames the missionaries for leading his son astray. However, when Ifeoma asks him why she does not behave the way Eugene does despite the fact that she also went to a missionary school, Papa Nnukwu responds, "But you are a woman. *You do not count*" (2005, p. 83; emphasis added). He replies confirming patriarchal society's view that males are more valuable than women.

> "Eh? So I don't count? Has Eugene ever asked about your aching leg?..."
> …
> "I joke with you, *nwa m*. Where would I be today if my *chi* had not given me a daughter?" Papa Nnukwu paused. "My spirit will intercede for you, so that *Chukwu* will send a good man to take care of you and the children."
> "Let your spirit ask *Chukwu* to hasten my promotion to senior lecturer, that is all I ask," Aunty Ifeoma said. (2005, p. 83)

From this dialogue, Papa Nnukwu, reveals his society's perception of a woman's personhood as unimportant and non-existent unless they have a man to complete them and to take care of them. This perception is applicable even in the case of Ifeoma who has already established herself as a university lecturer and contributes to the development of her country and her family members. However, Ifeoma's achievements and independence are not given enough value because she does not have a man in her life, a point she seeks to negate.

Adichie also portrays Beatrice as conforming to the patriarchal dictates of their society that place value on male children. Despite the violence he inflicts on her body and psyche, she praises Eugene for not listening to the members of his *umunna* (extended family) who wanted him to have more male children. Portraying him as a good man to Kambili when she begins to interrogate the infallible image that she had of him as a righteous man, Beatrice tells Kambili that, "So many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out…But your father stayed with me, with us" (2005, p. 20). The members of the *umuuna* who are agents of patriarchy undermine Beatrice's worth and position as a wife and woman, thus causing her to feel insecure and to overlook her husband's numerous faults when he decides against his relatives' advice to take a second wife. Like the members of the *umuuna*, Beatrice internalizes patriarchal values which put more value on sons by implying an inadequacy on her part for failing to bear more sons for her husband and feeling privileged for not being chased out. She observes that other women, who were university graduates (and therefore superior to her since she is not educated), might have performed the role of bearing sons for Eugene even better than her since she only produced one son. She, therefore, feels inferior to these women. This is a negative societal value which she unconsciously imparts on Kambili. Adichie further portrays Beatrice as conforming to the dictates of a patriarchal society that affords a woman respect only when she is married. Beatrice internalizes the patriarchal dictates of her society, which views women without husbands as inadequate or incomplete. "[Y]ou say a woman with children and no husband, what is that?" (2005, p. 75), Beatrice asks her sister-in-law, Ifeoma, who knows about the abuse and whom she accuses of being unrealistic with her "university talk". "You have come again, Ifeoma…How can a woman live like that?"

Mama's eyes had grown, taking up more space on her face" (2005, p. 75). Bewildered and failing to understand the idea of a woman achieving personhood without a man, Beatrice is obviously appalled by the idea that a woman can even think of existing without a husband because culturally that is unacceptable and unheard of. In other words, what Beatrice means is that it does not matter even if a woman is being abused in her marriage. As long as she has a "husband to crown her life" (2005, p. 75), she has to endure all the pains and confines of that marriage. It is from this premise that Beatrice refuses to leave Eugene after he breaks a stool on her belly causing her to miscarry again.

> Where would I go if I leave Eugene's house? Tell me where would I go?" She did not wait for Aunty Ifeoma to respond. "Do you know how many mothers pushed their daughters at him? Do you know how many asked him to impregnate them, even, and not to bother paying a bride price? (2005, p. 250)

Beatrice, whose social and economic existence is tied to her abusive husband, is trapped in a patriarchal order which does not give her economic and social empowerment to break away from her oppressed status in life. She sees futility in breaking away from Eugene because of over depending on her husband in everything, whether economic or social. She is also afraid of losing respect as a married woman and also for leaving her prominent husband. Beatrice's fear of starting afresh on her own reminds us of Ramatoulaye in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter,* who refuses to leave the husband who neglects her after taking a second wife. Ramatoulaye says, "I am one of those who can realize themselves fully and bloom only when they form part of a couple…I have never conceived of happiness outside marriage" (Ba 1989, p. 55-6). Beatrice also finds security in the concept of marriage despite the confines that come with the kind of marriage she is in. In her mind, she is fortunate to be the one officially carrying Eugene's last name and to be the mother of his children. In his analysis of the character of Beatrice, Ogaga Okuyade (2009, p. 255) postulates that she is "an embodiment of the traditional African woman, who is unsophisticated and content with the economic security her husband guarantees" despite the abuse that she suffers at his hand. Despite the fact that Eugene causes her to have several miscarriages by beating her, she refuses to leave him and begins to normalize the abuse by keeping silent and justifying his violent behaviour. In this kind of violent patriarchal setup:

> Silencing comprises all imposed restrictions on women's social being, thinking and expressions and these are religiously or culturally sanctioned. As a patriarchal weapon of control, it is used by the dominant male structure on the subordinate or muted female structure (Uwakweh cited in Okuyade, 2009, p. 248).

The patriarchal aspect of silencing is seen at play in Beatrice who lacks self-confidence and only speaks in low monosyllabic tones as a result of years of abuse and subjugation. Similarly, her daughter Kambili only speaks when she is spoken to and stammers. Presenting a picture of family bliss to the world, their physical and emotional scars remain a family secret. However, her inability to leave further endangers the lives of her children. Jaja and Kambili's visits to the liberal Ifeoma's house offer them with possibilities of seeing the world differently including beginning to question religious dogma that their father had inculcated in them. Instead of viewing their grandfather as a pariah, the time they spend with him before his death at Ifeoma's place draws them closer to him. His death

makes them realize how much they had been missing from a close relationship with their grandfather. When Eugene discovers Kambili's painting of Papa Nnukwu which her cousin Amaka had given her to remember their grandfather by, he nearly beats Kambili to death when she defiantly clings to the painting instead of giving it up. Kambili is left unconscious in hospital for days, leaving the people around her in suspense, not knowing whether she will live or not. Again when Ifeoma tells her sister-in-law to leave, Beatrice, in a zombie like state, keeps on chanting "It has never happened like this before. He has never *punished* her like this before" (2005, p. 214; emphasis added). Typical of somebody who has internalized abuse, Beatrice sees the beating up of her daughter as punishment for her wrong doing. She absolves Eugene from any wrong doing, instead relexicalizes and sanitizes his atrocities as 'punishment,' something any parent can do, out of love, to keep the child in the straight and narrow. For example, when Kambili gains consciousness, Beatrice again refuses to acknowledge that her husband is an abuser. She instead says, "Your father has been by your bedside every night these past three days. He has not slept a wink" (2005, p. 214). Despite the pain he has inflicted on their daughter, Beatrice portrays Eugene as a loving and caring father thus absolving him from taking responsibility for the abuse, and teaching Kambili that it is normal and justified for a father and husband to beat his wife and children as a way of instructing them on proper values. However, at this point, Kambili has become disillusioned with her father and with great effort she turns her painful head away from her mother and ignores her comment. Conflicted in her emotions, she resents her mother for failing to protect her from the abuse and for making excuses for him. She "wished (she) could get up and hug her, and yet [she] wanted to push her away, to shove her so hard that she would topple over the chair" (2005, p. 213). Finality and her refusal to justify her father's abuse are reflected in Kambili's action of turning her head away from her mother. This illustrates her agency in challenging the abuse that constrains her from realizing her potential as a fully-fledged independent human being. It is at this moment that Kambili seems to emotionally sever ties with her mother's physical and emotional baggage and her complicity with patriarchy, to work towards her own empowerment (Shalin, 2010, p. 10). This process can be related to Chikwenye Ogunyemi's definition of a young girl's growth into a womanist through experiencing a traumatic event. It is in learning to cope within this traumatic experience that "the female character develops a sense of agency and personhood" (Shalin, 2010, p. 6). Kambili's decision to not listen to her mother's excuses anymore represents a turning point in her perception of the self. From a womanist theoretical point of view this experience with her father is a trigger point in the young female character's life and it acts as defining moment leading her towards empowerment. This process of empowerment may not involve "drastic actions or reactions" but rather a "psychology of wilfulness and conscious decision-making" (Shalin, 2010, p. 6) like that demonstrated by Kambili in the novel.

Although Kambili eventually gains a critical voice because of the influence of her aunt and her cousins during her stay at Nsukka, which challenges her father's ideologies, one notes throughout the course of the novel how Kambili inherits powerlessness from her mother whom she has seen helpless countless times at the hands of her father. Like her mother, she also internalizes the abuse to the point that she sees it as normal.

> Every time Aunty Ifeoma spoke to Papa, my heart stopped, then started again in a hurry. It was the flippant tone; she did not seem to recognize that it was Papa, that he was different,

> special. I wanted to reach out and press her lips shut and get some of that shiny bronze lipstick on my fingers. (2005, p. 77)

Despite the pain he inflicts on her and other family members, Kambili still sees her father as godlike, as "special" and somebody who is incapable of doing wrong. Brainwashed into believing the superiority of her father, Kambili detests it when anybody speaks to him in a way that removes him from the pedestal that she and the entire society has placed him. She tries to please him in whatever she says and does, and constantly seeks his approval, perhaps in an attempt to escape the ruthless beatings that she usually suffered at the hands of her father. For instance, when Jaja says something pleasing to her father, she wishes she had said it first. For example, when Eugene talks about a newspaper calling the military dictator a president, something which his newspaper the *Standard* would not do, Jaja comments to his father's pleasure: "'President assumes he was elected,' Jaja said. 'Head of State is the right term'. Papa smiled and I wished I had said that before Jaja had" (2005, p. 25).

Kambili, like her mother, also refrains from implicating her father in any wrong doing and does not hold him responsible for his abusive actions. For instance, during a chat with Father Amadi, a young Catholic priest who is friends with Ifeoma's family and whom Kambili falls in love with, she suddenly blurts out that she had sinned (a result of her father's brainwashing) because she had slept in the same room as her "heathen" grandfather. Father Amadi, who obviously disagrees with her, asks her why it is a sin and she is puzzled at his response: "I stared at him. I felt that he had missed a line in his script. 'I don't know.' 'Your father told you that.' I looked away, out of the window. I would not implicate Papa, since Father Amadi obviously disagreed" (2005, p. 175).

Kambili also refuses to implicate Eugene when he violently flings his missal at Jaja for not receiving Eucharist. The missal misses Jaja and instead breaks Beatrice's figurines into pieces. The wiping of these beige, finger-size, ceramic figurines of dancers had served a therapeutic role for Beatrice for a long time. Kambili says:

> Years ago, before I understood, I used to wonder why she polished them each time I heard the sounds from their room, like something being banged against the door…She spent at least a quarter of an hour on each ballet dancing figurine. There were never tears on her face. (2005, p. 10)

Beatrice finds comfort and lets out her pain by polishing the figurines every time her husband beats her. The breaking of these figurines, therefore, serves as a symbol for the disintegration of the whole family, including her passivity; for it is Beatrice who eventually frees the family from Eugene by poisoning him to death. However, Kambili's refusal to implicate her father in the family's terror leads her to say the opposite of what she had intended to say. "I meant to say I am sorry Papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, 'I am sorry your figurines broke, Mama'" (2005, p. 10) as if they had broken on their own. Kambili understands the importance of the figurines to her mother and what their loss means to her. However, her father is too great a man to be indicted for breaking the figurines. By refusing to implicate him in the breaking of the figurines, she excuses him for the pain that he has inflicted on the family. She does not hold him responsible for hurting them but rather sees it as his God sanctioned and cultural duty to

lead them towards the right path. The abuse however becomes intolerable. Unable to cope with Eugene's continued violence any longer, Beatrice, like her daughter Kambili, comes to a point where she challenges her husband's control over the entire family by refusing to be the subject of abuse anymore. Her measures are drastic. In a bid to protect herself and her children from Eugene's tyranny, she poisons him to death towards the end of the novel thus freeing herself and the children and "fractur[ing] the patriarchal social structure" (Okuyade, 2009, p. 255) which sanctions the subordination of women. Through this radical act, Adichie demonstrates the agency exercised by women in the face of patriarchal power hence illustrating that "resistance is not an external struggle *against* power, but an internal and dyadic *exercise* of power relations, over others as much as over ourselves . . . In power as in war, action and reaction are always relational" (Deacon, 2003, p. 180).

Socialization in *Lucy*

Regardless of the physical and cultural separation of the Middle Passage, women in Africa and in the African diaspora seem to share a common fate of male domination as represented in Kincaid's *Lucy*. Lucy breaks ties with her mother and her homeland and refuses to answer any of her letters when she moves away from her unnamed island home in the Caribbean to live in the Unites States of America. Kincaid depicts Lucy's mother as internalizing the patriarchal dictates of her society and this instigates the tension between Lucy and her mother, with Lucy refusing to turn out like her. For example, when a resemblance between Lucy and her mother is observed by Maude Quick, Lucy's childhood babysitter who visits her in the United States, an outraged Lucy reveals:

> I am not my mother. She and I are not alike. She should not have married my father. She should not have had children. She should not have thrown away her intelligence. She should not have paid so little attention to mine. (1990, p. 123)

Lucy's refusal to be likened to her mother reveals her disgust and resistance towards patriarchy which manifests itself in her mother's behaviour. Lucy's mother deliberately limits and shelves her ambitions and her daughter's because of their gender. To her, a woman's aspiration is to become somebody's wife and bear his children, who should preferably be male. In "Women in Caribbean Literature," Leota Lawrence makes the following observation about black women in the West Indies:

> It is a fact that many a young woman in the Caribbean has deliberately stifled any pretensions to a career, lest in so doing she outshines her male counterpart and in so doing end up an "old maid"…they are not considered complete unless there is a man in their lives (1983, p. 4).

Lawrence further argues that despite the fact that black women in the Caribbean have proved to be innovative in making a livelihood for themselves and their families, and regardless of social and economic constraints, they have never been encouraged to take pride in any function other than that of being a wife and mother. Indeed, this observation also holds true for many African women where the society dictates that "a woman without a child for her husband is a failure" as powerfully portrayed in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*.

Kincaid portrays Lucy's father as a black West Indian man "whose function as a father is limited to fertilizing the female" (Hodge cited in Lawrence, 1983, p. 3) and Lucy's mother as the dominant voice in the raising of the children. This aspect can be attributed to the legacy of slavery whereby

> [T]he Negro male was systematically used as a stud and the Negro female used primarily for purposes of breeding or for the gratification of the white male, the only source of family continuity was through the female, the dependence of the child on its mother. This pattern… has made the female the dominant person in the Negro family (Clark 1972, p. 81-2).

Lucy's father had fathered numerous children (close to thirty) without getting married to any of their mothers before finally settling down with Lucy's mother. Lucy's father is much older than his wife. "I long ago thought he married her for her youth and strength, the way someone else would marry for money. He was such a clever man" (1990, p. 126), Lucy observes. Lucy's father marries a younger woman for his own benefit: so that he can be looked after in his old age. This is reminiscent of polygamous African men who acquire younger women to take care of them when they as well as their other wives are well advanced in age but also to continue their lineage by giving them more children. For example, Nnaife in *The Joys of Motherhood* marries a sixteen-year-old girl to take care of him and to give him more children when his wives grow old. Upon getting married to Lucy's father, the narration reveals that Lucy's mother abandons any personal dreams she ever had, discards any ambitions of a career and devotes herself to her marriage and the accompanying domestic duties. Lucy discloses: "My mother was devoted to him. She was devoted to her duties: a clean house, delicious food for us, a clean yard, a small garden of herbs and vegetables, the washing and ironing of our clothes" (1990, p. 127). She neither has the energy nor the time to develop her own intelligence as her life is dedicated to developing and nurturing this old man and her family. Shelving one's ambitions and being an appendage to a man is a negative value that Lucy's mother tries to instill in Lucy as she is growing up. She does this by not paying attention to Lucy's intelligence as well. By wanting to make Lucy "an echo of her" (1990, p. 36), Lucy's mother does not see the potential that women have in being anything other than a man's wife and ensuring the continuation of his lineage.

Lucy's mother also believes that a woman is incomplete without a man, thus echoing Beatrice Achike's views that a husband "crowns" a woman's life. Lucy recalls what her mother used to say about a certain nurse back home who delivered Lucy when she was born.

> She was a woman my mother respected to her face but had many bad things to say about behind her back. They were: she would never find a man; no man would have her; she carried herself like a strong box, and from the look on her face a man couldn't find reason to break in; she had lived alone for so long it was too late to start with a man now. (1990, p. 93)

The quotation above depicts the centrality of the presence of a man in Lucy's mother's worldview. By negating the accomplishments of the nurse because of the absence of a man in her life, she puts more value on having a man in one's life, thus implying that a woman is

invisible and incomplete without a man. Despite the nurse's independent achievements, Lucy's mother does not respect her because she does not have a man in her life. According to Lucy's mother, a woman who was very independent and never showed any emotion on her face would never find a man. These qualities made her inaccessible and no man would want such a woman because men want women who are soft and who depend on them. According to Merle Hodge (1977, p. 42), "the unmarried…or childless woman (in the Caribbean), say, in her forties, is projected as a stock joke; frustrated, nagging, disagreeable, withering away for the want of a man to rule her, or offspring to prove her fecundity". Womanhood is thus considered complete if it is constructed in relation to male presence.

Lucy resents her mother for trying to socialize her according to these confines of patriarchy. She reveals to Mariah, her boss, that she had been an only child for nine years before her parents, in a space of five years, had three male children. It is this particular moment, the birth of Lucy's brothers, which starts the breakdown of Lucy's relationship with her mother- her alienation from her mother whom she had loved deeply. Thus, Lucy's mother totally ignores her intellectual capabilities because of her gender, and "each time a new child was born, my mother and father would announce to each other with great seriousness that the new child would go to university in England and study to become a doctor or lawyer or someone who would occupy an important and influential position in society" (1990, p. 130). Lucy says:

> I did not mind my father saying those things about his sons, his own kind, and leaving me out. My father did not know me at all; I did not expect him to imagine a life for me filled with excitement and triumph. But my mother knew me well as she knew herself: I, at the time, even thought of us as identical; and whenever I saw her eyes fill up with tears at the thought of how proud she would be at some deed her sons had accomplished, I felt a sword go through my heart, for there was no accompanying scenario in which she saw me, her only identical offspring, in a remotely similar situation. To myself I then began to call her Mrs. Judas... (1990, p. 131)

Lucy's sense of betrayal by her mother and the ensuing tensions can be understood within the framework of how mother-daughter relationships are constituted. Rich (1986, p. 225) posits that "probably there is nothing in human nature more resonant with charges than the flow of energy between two biologically alike bodies, one of which has lain in amniotic bliss inside the other, one of which has labored to give birth to the other". Lucy's situation reminds one of Tambudzai in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, whose parents prefer to educate her brother, Nhamo, because he was male. Patriarchy, triumphs in Lucy's family. The fact that Lucy's mother is complicit in her daughter's marginalization and tries to socialize Lucy into accepting the injustice is an act of betrayal to her kind according to Lucy. Lucy's mother betrays the female bond that she had with her daughter. She believes in the inferiority of women and that their dreams of a career should take a subsidiary role to the ambitions of men. Conforming to patriarchy and therefore ignoring Lucy's capabilities, her ambitions and Lucy's are completely replaced with those for her sons.

Lucy however resists and escapes the norms of such socialization by making a decision to cut off all emotional and physical ties with her mother and immigrate to the United States. "I had come to feel that my mother's love for me was designed solely to make me into an echo of her; and I didn't know why, but I felt that I would rather be dead

than become just an echo of someone" (1990, p. 36). As a young woman growing up in the Caribbean Islands and trying to make sense of her identity, Lucy feels smothered by her mother. Lucy realizes that, although there is a need for her to align herself with her mother to learn from her, at the same time she needs to separate herself from her if she wants to be her own person, capable of making her own decisions and living her own life. Katherine Suggs observes of the tension between mother and daughter: "Lucy's descriptions of her mother's aggressive image and discourse, and how she threatens to overwhelm Lucy's sense of self show how the mother fulfils the role of identificatory other, the double who takes over the subject's place and generates feelings of an uncanny and horrifying invasion" (Suggs & Chow, 2002, p. 161). Lucy perceives her mother's overwhelming attempt to make her into a carbon copy of herself as imprisoning. She criticizes her mother for wanting to mould her into a particular definition of womanhood, one whose sexuality is subordinate to that of men. "I said that she had acted like a saint, but that since I was living in this real world I had really wanted just a mother. I reminded her that my whole upbringing had been devoted to preventing me from becoming a slut; I then gave a brief description of my personal life, offering each detail as evidence that my upbringing had been a failure and that, in fact, life as a slut was quite enjoyable, thank you very much…" (1990, p. 128). Thus Lucy resists this socialization by breaking away from the confines of patriarchy. She defines the trajectory of her life and constructs her own sense of empowering black womanhood by exercising agency over her body and her sexuality when she migrates to the States.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the process of socialization and its implications for identity formation in the two novels. Adichie and Kincaid demonstrate the centrality of patriarchy in the socialization of daughters by their mothers and how disempowering that kind of socialization is to the characters' social growth. Exercising complicity with a patriarchal order which puts preference on males and relegates women to the peripheral, Beatrice Achike and Lucy's mother conform to patriarchal edicts which are detrimental to their development as women. They also unconsciously try to socialize their daughters into occupying the same subordinate positions as them simply because they are female. However, their daughters discover that this kind of socialization is harmful to their growth as women and as a way of resisting patriarchal power they sever emotional ties with their mothers and work towards their own empowerment, thus illustrating their agency in fighting against female oppression.

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