



PSYCHONARRATION STRATEGIES IN PRESENTING CHARACTERS

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ABSTRACT

This study employs a psychoanalytic approach and Bartolussi and Dixon's psychonarratology theory. A psychoanalytic criticism attempts to understand the intricate relationship among characters in works of art while psychonarratology focuses on authors' narration strategies that depict the characters' psyche. Therefore, the two theories illuminate on characters' psychological insights and authors' narrative strategies.

The underlying principle in psychoanalytic criticism is to reveal unconscious motives of characters in works of art. Therefore, it assists to explore characters' actions, thoughts, desires, behavior and motivation as reflected in authorial intrusion, stream of consciousness and focalization. .

Besides, since psychoanalytic criticism is centered in the study of unconscious processes, the study majorly looks at how characters' tone of voice, dreams, conversations, internal monologue, conscious activities, desires, behavior and any other manifestation of repressed ideas determine and shape their character.

On top of that, Bartolussi and Dixon (2003) assert that psychonarratology aims to analyze textual features of characterization and textual information that help readers to identify character traits. Its major aim is to study narrative structures that include "the narrator, levels of narration and points of focalization" (147). Therefore, they seem to suggest that the theory helps to scrutinize textual information such as actions of characters, what they say, narrators' comments and signals of character change that attribute their traits.

Another important aspect of psychonarratology is psychological focalization. Bartolussi and Dixon (2003) note that when the narrator is in a position to access a character's thoughts and informs the reader, such information determines inferences that critics can rely on to make valuable judgments on what the text is all about. Therefore, they seem to suggest that psychonarratology plays a vital role in interpretation of characters and thematic concerns of the authors.

In conclusion, psychoanalytic and psychonarratology are intersecting theories that advocates for the analysis of psychological factors that influence and motivate characters. Therefore, this study examines various

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psychological factors that influence characters actions such as alienation, anxiety, nostalgia and fantasy among others and how they shed light on thematic concerns of authors.

Keywords: Psychonarratology, Interior monologue, symbolism, Non verbal cues, Focalization.

1.0. INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

Dujardin (2004), defines interior monologue as “the uninterrupted flow of thoughts going through the character's being, as they are born, and in the order they are born, without any explanation of logical sequence and giving the impression of 'raw' experience”(Jahn 89).Therefore, both techniques capture what the characters think or say. As Bakhtin (1973) argues, when “an inner thought of a particular character is transformed into an utterance, dialogical relations spontaneously occur between this utterance and the utterance of imagined others” (Waysl 46). Thus, there is a close relationship of what characters say and what goes on in their mind. This study looks at the exposed thoughts which reflect on the repressed ideas.

Bakhtin (1973) adds that “the notion of dialogue opens up the possibility of differentiating the inner world of one and the same individual in the form of an interpersonal relationship” (Waysl 46). He seems to assert that interior monologue reports the hidden desires that may give us a different clue on characters personality. Therefore, characters cannot be judged on only what they say but it's also important to examine their repressed ideas in the unconscious. Humphrey (1962) adds:

Interior monologue is then a technique used in fiction for representing the psychic content and processes in a character, partly or entirely unuttered, just as these processes exist at various levels of conscious control before they are formulated for ordinary speech...It should be noted that it is partly or entirely unuttered, for it represents the content of conscious in its inchoate stage before it is formulated for deliberate speech (24-25).

He seems to suggest that interior monologue plays a significant role in depicting the character's psyche. Therefore, interior monologue, direct thought and indirect thought are beneficial to writers in presenting characters in several ways.

According to Waysl (2007), stream of consciousness performs four key functions namely: support, substitution, exploration, self improvement, insight and self guidance. The study discusses these metafunctions of the stream of consciousness citing examples as evident in five selected short stories.

To start with, characters search for the meaning of their lives through dialogue. These dialogues are “a source of hope and feelings of safety, a way to give sense to life” (Waysl 49). Tormented by anxiety and unable to rescue themselves from fixed positions such as perpetual poverty and alienation or delusions characters try to find a solution to them both in their mind and interaction with other characters. They attempt to answer: What should I do now? What will happen? What are the ways out of these problems?

Authors exploit these styles to give readers a vivid social background of the characters, their motivation and to shed light on their anxieties. For instance, Buluwayo's characters in her short story “Hitting Budapest”, constantly attempt to search the meaning of their lives as they

visit Budapest in their dialogues. The meaning of their existence can only be realized once they leave their country and go to London or America.

Dreams of moving from their slums are evident in their conversations, a clear indication of their hidden feelings and desires. For instance, Sbho says that she is going to marry a man from Budapest who will take her away from the shacks and introduce her in the Heaven way. This is a clear indication that she considers marriage to a rich man from Budapest will not only give her a chance to uplift herself from poverty but she will also be on her way to Heaven, America or London where all her desires and wishes will be fulfilled. Thus her marriage could introduce and give her a new sense of life and forever say goodbye to poverty that has characterized her life.

A desire to live in a magnificent house is all they want. Their aim is to move to 'God's own country'. They are ready to face the challenges that might arise in the new world. The narrator asserts that she does not care what might crop up. Even if they will engage in odd jobs such as working in nursing homes, they are ready for that. To add to that, EC Osondu's short story, "Waiting", depicts characters that are completely detached from the events taking place in their home countries and attempt to find meaning of their lives through dialogue. They feel betrayed by the political leaders that have continuously waged war against their innocent citizens. Their hope for survival lies in moving to a new land where they could live peacefully and in harmony. Their survival is pegged on the aid they receive from donor countries. The camps that have been set up by the volunteer groups have helped them to keep their hopes alive. The t-shirts with names Acapulco, London and Orlando are the cities they fantasize to be in as the war rages on.

Through dialogue, Orlando and Acapulco attempt to find meaning of their lives. They inquire if the photographer was likely to turn up and take their images to display them in Europe. They wonder if European families were likely to admire and adopt them as their sons yet their lives are marred with inadequacies. They hope that their parents may be in a position to hear from them unlike their current state of staying in the camps where there is a communication breakdown with their families. They are optimistic that the Diaspora will be the only place where they were likely to be linked with their families after the war. Even if the Diaspora is far from their home, they were unlikely to be killed in the wars that are going in their country and forceful recruitment of youths by the war lords.

From a distance the Diaspora seemed to offer a promising life and generally to them, living in cities like London, Los Angeles could indeed be quite admirable. Therefore, they practice how to speak as Americans, a clear reflection on how they were tormented to leave their home countries. Through their dialogues, they have tried to find solutions of the problems that have dogged their lives to the present state of misery and hopelessness.

Secondly, characters have different opinions and motivations as they interact with one another. These different perceptions sometimes lead other characters to impose their feelings and dictate other characters to view the world through their own ways. Sometimes when their voices are repressed and not heard, characters resort into interior monologue and freely articulate their feelings without interference of the other character. Waysl (2007) says that that is the only method of expressing one's real thoughts and it can provide a chance to convince somebody.

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Adagha's "The Plantation" presents a cautious wife who internally resists her husband's call to join a collection of spilled petrol. Even if she is coerced to follow him, her internal thoughts reflect a different position. For instance, the narrator notes:

In her mind, appeared a flash of blurred images writhing in a great flame: of grotesque-looking figures being planted in the ground; and of grey-clothed people standing around the flesh mounds of soul, with a charged, funeral quality (79).

This was perhaps an indication that she was not motivated like her husband to be rich quickly but her sound judgment at that time could have saved them. She feared perishing in the inferno and foresaw a dead end in their mission.

The narrator notes as they left the plantation: 'she asked no further questions, but she thought within herself: "this thing is ghoulish and will come to no good" (80). Molested by her husband, she resorts into self searching for an event she thought will mark the end of their lives. Thoughts within her reflected a strong desire not to be part of a group of those collating the spill. Dibia's short story, "A Life in Full" depicts a case of a young man who has persistently refused to get married fearing to experience what his parents went through when he was young and the family has to engage in discussions to find out the underlying problem.

The story opens when Mabel, a mother of four children is worried that her eldest son, victor aged thirty eight years is relentlessly wishing to be a bachelor. As she tenders tomato seedlings behind her son's house, thoughts of grandchildren invade or haunt him. She wondered when the tomato fruits would flourish and bear fruits just as when her eldest son would marry and sire children.

However, Victor aimed at securing a job and setting a firm financial foundation before getting married. Therefore he could accept discussions that could belittle him: "What business is it of yours Mama...Must I marry?"(99) These questions infers to his repressed memory. For instance, he was determined to achieve the goals he has set in his life despite the pressure he was receiving from his mother.

Disturbed and dejected, Victor reminded her "how poor and miserable she felt in the early years of her marriage to his father" (102).At that time they could not make ends meet and she had argued to be foolish "to have jumped into marriage without first planning properly" (103).Thus her experiences seemed to have influenced Victor to consider his position first before engaging himself in marriage. Thus his decision not to engage in marriage rests in his repressed ideas, in his unconsciousness. He wishes not to go through what his parents underwent without a firm financial position. He is able to recall their family's abject poverty and helplessness that characterized their parents' early life and if was to consider their parents as a model, no one could ever marry.

To conclude, Victor is overtaken by narcissism thoughts of serving his ego needs at the expense of his societal and family expectations. Narcissism is whereby individuals are interested to fulfill their own desires at the expense of societal expectations. They are over ambitious and their demands are unrealistic. Freud notes that narcissism is when the ego has become totally absorbed and can longer relate to the outside world (Snowden 115).Therefore, they are egocentric and pursue their own desires.

Freud borrows the concept of narcissism from a Greek myth, Narcissus, a young man who did not admire women until he fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water and

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turned into a flower sitting beside the pool. He argues that the origin of this disorder can be traced to infancy and an individual is unable to shed off bitter experiences learned at this stage. Poverty has dictated his lifestyle and thus he only thinks about himself. He is not ready to make the same mistake his parents made by starting a family too early and live depending on foster parents. He has set targets that may be impossible to achieve.

Thirdly, horrified of what may happen to their lives, characters seek a change for their experiences and demand for a life that is not full of difficulties and regrets. In engaging in direct dialogue characters search for “an escape from ordinary life” (Wayle 49). Therefore, they are able to understand the position they have taken in the society.

Petinah Gappah’s short story, “Before Tonde, After Tonde” employs dialogue and non verbal skills to depict the characters’ psyche. For instance, Dheldhi, Mhamhi’s son, opts to abandon his family after a bitter disagreement with his parents on how to make ends meet far from home. His frustrations are evident in his physical actions as he leaves the room:

Dheldhi slammed the door behind him so hard that my new red coat that Mhamhi bought at Matalan fell on the floor on top of Shingi’s parka. Against the back of Shingi’s jacket and the dark color of the carpet, my coat looked like bright blood on a very dark road. Shingi didn’t take the jacket with him when he left and Dhedhi didn’t see it. He would have thrown it out with all of Shingi’s other things if he had seen it. But like Dot on *Eastenders* always says, sometimes you don’t see things that are right in front of you (115).

In closing the door violently especially after disagreeing with his parents, the author seems to point at Dheldhi’s repressed ideas. He seems to question the role they have played in shaping their current state and why they are not determined to design a way out of the situation that has engulfed them instead of being deeply engrossed in other unrelated issues that could not alleviate their suffering. Therefore, he opted to abandon them and try to find meaning to his life somewhere else. They were shocked by his decision. The narrator notes:

Dhedhi’s anger remained in the house even after he had left. It formed a cloud that settled in the spaces in the cracks and seeped up past the staircase and Mhalmi’s falling face to the bedrooms and the bathroom (115).

The narrator seems to suggest that the family was shocked by his decision and were likely to take a few days to heal from that decision to leave them and his arguments could not easily be forgotten.

In their dialogue, they discuss how they have been fighting on how to control their anger and who was in charge of their actions in a foreign land. They seem to be unable to come into terms of the hostile realities of living far from home for parents supremacy to determine the destiny of their families seem to be usurped by the new environment. Therefore, parents deny the existence of their children since they are to provide for them and openly express their rejection. Shingi’s father laments:

“I have no son,” Dheldhi said.

We must submit to God’s will,” said Mhalmi, “If we put our faith in God and trust him to find a way, he will bring Shingi...

“I don’t know anybody called Shingirai” (115).

At the same time, since parents are unable to provide for the families, children do not subject themselves to their authority. They openly show their defiance and prefer a different order of life that their parents cannot afford due to the prevailing circumstances. Patience, Dheldhi's daughter, despises her parents' authority:

"Did you hear your father?"

"Uh huh", I said.

"What manner is that of talking to your mother?"

"I mean, yes Mhamhi, I heard him."

"You see the way he talks to me, like I don't exist. I pray to God that when you get married, your husband will treat you in this way" (116).

Parents are seen by their siblings as if they have failed in their responsibilities and therefore, looked down upon them. They just shout at one another and they are not in a position to find the really problem affecting them. It is through dialogue that they are able to express their internal wrangles.

To add to that, fearing her daughter's engagement and her plan to take him to court if he does not confess and apologize of the evils he committed when she was young, Retief explains to his wife the new life they are likely to live after the murder of their daughter in Keegan's "What Molly Knew". Retief notes: "At least now you can sleep at night without worrying about her, without putting up with her lies and deceit. You are free of all that now. There's that to think about, once you get over the shock and all" (28). He expresses his happiness at the time when he is supposed to be mourning for her daughter.

Through dialogue, Retief reveals that he is emotionally relieved at her passing on. His wife is shocked at that revelation and because she wishes to stay longer with her husband, she represses her feelings and does not alert the inspector of who the murderer is. Since the police had suspected the killer to be her immediate boyfriend, Retief is satisfied with that resolution. He says: "That husband of hers can rot in prison for all I care" (29). Thus he wished somebody who is innocent to be responsible of his ill deeds. He wanted his wife to accept his decision despite how painful it was. He says there are some things he expected from his wife and crying and complaining and carrying on weren't amongst them....Not a good time for tears (29).

It is through their conversation that Molly is able to understand why her husband decided to take the life of her only daughter and she should accept the situation as it is. She has to accept the new ways that her husband has devised for them to live, not to mourn but accept it positively.

Fourthly, characters seek another chance to rejuvenate their images after their reputation has been put into question. Waysl (2007) sees it as a chance to scold past mistakes and not to repeat the same (47). Chikoti's "A Child of a Hyena", represents the I narrator's wish not to be at home again after learning that the village drunkard and polygamist is his father and not the man he had known for thirty two years of his life. His image is firmly fixed in his mind:

Saidi's face comes to my mind and at once episodes of his life flash through my mind. I see his tattered clothes, his stench, the numerous times he has been summoned to answer charges at the chief's court. I see him walking around the village drunk, obscene songs carried proudly on his back (102).

The narrator is tormented by his fathers' deeds and cannot imagine such a figure could be his father. He is reproachable and a social menace, thus, he could not correlate with the ideal image of his biological father. He was a successful son and he could not associate himself with a father who had failed in almost all his responsibilities. Thus, he had immediately run away from Malawi to Denmark to find out where he had gone wrong. While in the streets of Copenhagen he could only see the image of his father, mother and Saidi and not the beautiful city or the crowd of people, a clear indication on how he was tormented by their actions of accepting that cultural act of infidelity that led to his birth and concealing it for such a long time in his life. Indeed, there was a reason for him to quietly seek to find out his mistake that has resulted into a double identity.

Namidi, a hardworking peasant and a protagonist in Adagha's short story, "The Plantation", plunges his family into a death trap despite his wife's warning. It starts when he is in his routine job in his rubber plantation sniffs petrol. Anxiously, he recalls a group of men who had visited his farm with pipes a number of years ago.

Taken by his discovery of his fortune, he fills his rubber guard and hurries home to inform his wife. On the way, he meets some women going to their farms, he dodges hoping that they had not seen him. This attempt to hide shows his intention of hiding the secret from them.

However, when they greet him, they are puzzled the way in which he responds. One woman remarks:

"What is wrong with him?" one of them asked as they appraised the retreating figure. Namidi was moving briskly the narrow path, his head thrust forward, like it was going to fall away from his neck. "He looks like he has seen a ghost," another said clapping her hands excitedly (78).

These remarks indicate that they also noted that he was mentally disturbed. He wanted to be alone and his discovery of the petrol to remain a secret to him alone. Thus whenever he saw people he felt uneasy and he thought they could demand a share from what was going to save his family from poverty.

Driven by his selfish desires to get rich quickly, he saw it as the only opportunity to "redeem himself from poverty that had beset his adult life" (78). He fantasized how he could pay school fees for his children without difficult especially his elder son who had been out of the missionary school he was unable to pay. Thus, he purposed in his heat not to share his secret fortune with somebody else.

Immediately after arriving at home, he orders his wife to follow him with enough containers. He refutes his wife's warning that a fire might start in such kind of a dangerous place where there's petrol spillage. The narrator notes:

In her mind, appeared a flash of blurred images writhing in a great flame: of grotesque-looking figures being planted in the ground; and of grey-clothed people standing around the flesh mounds of soul, with a charged, funeral quality (79).

While her husband saw that spillage as an opportunity to get rich, for her she foresighted dangerous deaths trap. Since he was motivated to be rich, he rejected her wife's life saving warning. For him, it was a direct opportunity that would forever change his destiny of his life. Hurriedly they collected the first and the second trips without being noticed by their fellow clansmen.

However, Jackson, a village idler wondered where they were collecting the petrol from. He inquired from Namidi: “Why, are you working in the shell now?”(79). This question annoyed Namidi and he thought he had been insulted and opted to fight him but his wife restrained him. For him, he was being driven by his ego to get rich and therefore he could not rationally focus on issues as his wife who was led by her superego.

Jackson’s discovery spilled his coveted secret to the whole village and the villages ended up thronging into the scene. They were also driven by their ego and could not visualize that they could perish in a deadly inferno that erupted later.

To sum up, Namidi attempts to justify why he must collect the spilt petrol despite a warning from his wife. His aims to pay school fees and shedding off the poverty that has dogged his life cannot be rationalized at the expense of the life of his family the villager.

2. SYMBOLISM

Webster (1960) defines symbolism as a “sign by which one knows or infers a thing. It is that which suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, or convention. It can be a visible sign of something invisible, such as an idea, quality” (Kaplan 632). He seems to suggest that symbols represent writers attempt to describe the reality indirectly by paying a special attention to certain objects that shed light on their intended meanings. In terms of a psychoanalytic perspective, De Vos (1961) writes that “a symbol is an object, act or thought representing a repressed desire of which the individual is unconscious” (Kaplan 632). He seems to suggest that a symbol unravels an individuals’ perception of reality that they are not given a chance to express. Therefore, we can argue that a symbol gives us the summary of a narrator’s or character’s attitude and feelings towards a subject they wish to talk about.

To start with, a narrator’s naming of characters and places are carefully selected to give specific meanings repressed in their thoughts. For instance, characters in “Hitting Budapest” suggest that they are alienated, desperate or dejected. Bastard, her name can imply irresponsibility or unscrupulous attitude towards life while Godknows hint hopelessness or queer survival tactics. The characters despite their young age look for their own meals and are faced with a society that does not care about child molestation. Fraction, a protagonist sister rarely finds something to eat for she is left alone as the others go to the streets to try their luck.

The narrator notes that they go through IMF and SADC streets. These imply that despite the enormous resources these financial institutions have send to their countries they are still living in abject poverty and AU street is where they spur their guava remains, a clear indication that the African Union is doing little to alleviate their poverty or its leaders have embezzled the funds they have received from the international organizations.

In Terry’s short story, “Dark Triad”, characters are named after established British firms such as Samia and Ebanks, perhaps a revelation of the narrator’s desire to be rich as the companies. Mrs. KO acronym of her NGO, Know Africa wishes to emancipate the masses to change their attitude towards the African continent.

Also, there’s use of referential terms to refer to one’s whole life experience. For example, Elizabeth, a young adolescent girl born in Africa but raised in America describes herself as a fish in water in Kwachou’s story, “Afritude” and actually her forceful removal from America leads to her destruction, confirming the reference to herself as a fish that was taken out of water and her

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mother did not even place her in an aquarium. In Africa she engaged in several vices including immorality and drug abuse, what could have not happened if she was set free to settle in America.

A ring in Tagwira's, "The Journey" refers to her marriage to her husband who died after he was hit by a drunk driver, just two years in marriage. An attempt to sell her ring to get some money and pay her rent proved futile. The shopkeeper gave an insignificant offer that she left the shop dejected. Her desire to sell the ring is a clear signal to break the promises she made in her marriage. She had to find another method of raising the money and pay rent. At the end she joined a group of prostitutes and set her life on a different dimension.

3. NON-VERBAL CUES

Mead (2005), states that language is grounded in "a natural repertoire of signs and gestures" (Harre 229). Therefore, characters' use of non-verbal cues such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, appearance and paralinguistic features such as tone of voice and pitch reveal the underlying thoughts and repressed ideas. Therefore, characters unconsciously employ them and in the process expose their hidden wishes, desires and anxieties.

To start with, the body language reveals what an individual is thinking and emotional disturbances can be noted in the position a character is described to be. For instance, in "Hitting Budapest", the thirty three year old visitor from London is noted to be standing looking at Bastard as if she had never seen somebody pregnant. Her standing posture and firm eye contact fixed on her shows that she was shocked to see a girl aged ten years old in that state and that is why she immediately requests them to take a photograph. Her T- shirt inscribed 'save Darfur' indicating her intentions of emancipating such kind of molested children in her father's country. Other characters in "Dark Triad" are wearing T- shirts inscribed the map of Africa. This reveals their attitude to be associated with African countries and a chance to exercise that their identity rests in Africa.

Namidi's desire to physically fight in Adagha's story, "The Plantation", reveals his repressed ideas of not revealing the petrol spillage to the whole village. Even the way he runs away from the women who are also going to their firms paints on his repressed thoughts. To add on that, facial expressions are also a clear reflection of hidden thoughts. In "What Molly Knew", Molly is described as "looking embarrassed" (34). She was the only one who knew who had murdered her daughter yet she decided to hide that from the public and live with the secret. Thus she was not happy that the one who killed her daughter was roaming freely. In The Mistress's Dog, Nola is described as sullen and resentful when the dog falls sick in the supermarket. The dog was her only companion and she feared that it was going to die because it was sick. She wondered how she could live without its company. Therefore, non verbal clues also reveal characters' hidden wishes and motives.

4. FOCALIZATION

Jahn defines focalization as a "means of selecting and restricting narrative information, of seeing events and states of affairs from somebody's point of view, of foregrounding the focalizing agent..." (32). Therefore, we can argue that focalization involves a point of view of the narrator namely: first, second and third person point of view and how their views are reflected in the work.

The first narrator appears to be telling his own experiences and expresses his opinions and interpretations as the story progresses. Mead states that the “I gives one a sense of freedom” to articulate his own views in the story and he adds that “any novel reply to the community constitute the ‘I’. These personal reactions and replies in their turn change the community ...” (Harre 234). We can therefore argue that the intention of employing a first person narrator is to narrate one’s own experiences to the community so that they can respond to the issues raised. Thus, as Dewey (2002) notes, the explicit first person is used to accept responsibility for an action declaring that “the self” is its author (Harre 234). These seem to suggest that first person is authoritative and can be taken as a true account of one’s personal life.

On the other hand, first narrator is limited in judgments and may not fully give us wholesome experiences of characters because they are limited to one position. For instance, Buluwayo’s “Hitting Budapest” is narrated in the first person plural. The narrators focus on the issues that affects them as they play and adventure. The experiences of these narrators are the same, as both admire to go abroad and lack parental guidance. They are hungry and are ready to accept suggestions from their peers on how they can get food. They have the same dreams and act as if they are a family and the focus is centered on them and not their families. Because they are limited, they even forget to mention their families and what happened to the grandfather who molested Bastard.

Chikoti’s short story, “Child of a Hyena” has first person singular. The protagonist gives his personal experience as he left Denmark with his wife to Malawi and his ordeal discovery of a different man being his father and not the one he had known for many years in his life. Therefore, through the first narrative voice, he gives us his personal experiences of his mental picture especially how he felt and why he had to run away from Malawi.

Kwachou’s “Afritude” also employs a first person singular where Elizabeth narrates her attitudes towards Africa and why she abuses drugs. She notes the gloomy first days in the US school where the students ridiculed her for shaving her hair. She is also shocked to see those wearing black clothes in class that in Africa are meant for funeral services. The children are busy engaged playing with computers and rarely socialize as it could have easily happened in Africa. After adjusting to this lifestyle, her mother who is unable to adopt decides to uproot her to Africa.

To add to that, Terry’s “Stickfighting Days” also employs a first person singular. Through a first narrative voice, Raul and Markham’s actions are depicted as inhuman. They are murderers who do not fear shedding blood or facing death. The narrator notes: “Markham’s much one for warm-ups, he pounces from one toe to another like a boxer, rolls his head, then gestures to me that he is ready...stiff as hell and with a good weight..”(60).Therefore, they are set to kill and as noted in one day they killed two people emotionlessly. Even if it appears that they are fighting with sticks they are after human lives. This shows states that were unstable and lawlessness

On the other hand, third person narrator is in all places and able to note finer details of each character. That ability enables the narrator not only to capture details of characters but also is in position to dig deeper into their historical background and easily construct their psychobiography. For instance, “What Molly Knew” employs the omniscient narrator who is in a position to judge the characters reactions and give us their stream of consciousness. Unlike the first person, he is in all places and gives finer details and readers can easily be influenced by his

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comments and judgments. For instance, he describes Molly as a man who was after her daughter's life and because of his crime he is not in a position to keep his office tidy and customers cannot trust such a character. Therefore, readers are persuaded to take the narrator's position as he narrates the story. Therefore, focalization is a very important aspect in revealing characters repressed thoughts and that sheds light on the content of the short stories.

Also, Serpell's "Mzungu", employs a third person narrator and apart from the cynical tone that the narrator employs in her narration, there are other several indications in the story that indicate that the narrator does not approve of the events that happen to Isabella. Isabella's parents' negative attitude towards the blacks and not revealing her white identity to her until she was mocked by villagers that she was white just like newly born babies. This was the time when Isabella came to understand that she was white and therefore, she was not supposed to play with the blacks. The narrator ridicules such prohibitions as impossible because when her father falls sick and rushed to the hospital she almost spends a night at the servants' quarters until she is picked by her mother at midnight.

Isabella's inability to join other children who are playing is demonstrated when she teaches the children the power of love and pleasure. She also portrays loneliness of black children such as Chanda who had to spend their free time also climbing the guava tree seeking solace. Ridicules Isabella's parents compensating strategies of excessively drinking alcohol to an extent they could not recognize that she also needed company or even the dogs needed food because most of the time they were starved until they killed their puppies. Her loneliness of being at the crossroads whether she was white or black seems to torment her earlier life and she depicts Isabella as a character alienated from the rest of the community ever playing alone and left in the world of dolls.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, African short story writers have employed stream of consciousness, symbolism, non verbal cues of communication and focalization to depict the characters psyche. These four strategies play a very important role in expounding on writers thematic concerns as they depict both the actions characters plan to undertake and what they have done as they respond to the challenges they experience in the Diaspora and in Africa. Indeed, it's through these four strategies that writers outline characters' search for solutions of their problems, new avenues that they may venture to flourish, their attitudes and repressed feelings and thoughts that they are unable to express as they live far from home.

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