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PATRIARCHAL MENTALITY AND THE FEMALE SPACE: A REPRESSIVE NEGOTIATION IN SELECTED NIGERIAN MALE-AUTHORED NOVELS

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Abstract
The female space is one phenomenon that has been largely debated in literary sensibility despite decades of rethinking hurtful patriarchal mores within African social settings. It has been observed that the ideological perspectives of complementarity, negotiation and collaboration in African feminism have encouraged the stance of females negotiating space with male oppressors. This is visible in the subtle depiction of experiences that isolate female pain after severe traumatic events in literary texts written by male authors. For that purpose, this research examines oppressive patriarchal mentality that inhibits the female space in the selected novels of two Nigerian male novelists of Igbo descent. Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* (1966) and Ikechukwu Asika's *Tamara* (2013) have displayed a patriarchal mentality that spurs female dependence on males and the negotiation of spaces under oppression with less psychological stress in traumatic situations. Psychoanalytical perspectives are also adopted in interpreting female experiences in the selected novels.
Keywords: Patriarchy, Feminist Ideology, Repression, Trauma

Introduction
Literary texts provide an imaginative link between indigenous experiences and author's psyche. One of the basic analogies on psychoanalytical literary criticism reinforces the view that "literary texts can be understood as the human mind is understood" (Gardiner 1985, 113-114). The above view is hinged on social relations and hierarchies that spurred Freud's psychological perspectives and "implications for psychical life" (Eagleton 2008, 132). A study of the novels of Nigerian writers of Igbo descent reveals various aspects of cultural heritage and patriarchal psyche that are infused into literature. To the discerning mind, it has been observed "that most Nigerian fiction hinge on male assertion of superiority to counter female stridency in asserting their newly realized equality/superiority" (Oku 1987, 225).

Characteristically, the Igbo society is a model of male-centered cultural milieu passionately internalized and externalized. This manifestation makes portrayals of female identity, a daring cultural ethic of silence that has earned her little respect—an oppressive-oriented psychic immobility. To exploit the framework of female journey in the chronicle of male writers of Igbo descent as seen in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *A Man of the People* (1978), Onuora Nzekwu's *Wand of Noble Wood* (1961), John Munonye's *The Only Son* (1966), Elechi Amadi's *The Great Pond* (1969), Cyprain Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana's Daughter* (1986) and others, one will categorically see a model of self-sacrifice that inhibits female freedom, choice and construction of consciousness—in fact, there is no ideal female autonomy. Such depiction tends to predominantly institute the culture of male hegemony and domination—an insensitivity to female predicaments, self-definition and self-realization. Such manipulative male consciousness can easily magnify the problems of females, thus challenging their

thoughtful audience's resourcefulness targeted toward female consciousness and mobility, both psychic and physical.

The approach of this paper is very unique because is justifies that cultural groups, marriage and family circles serve as the bedrock for the manifestation of patriarchal mentality which is very oppressive to females. The ponderous nature of restricted physical, emotional and psychological spaces of females creates a propaganda that prejudices males as the oppressors.

Theoretical Approach

This research adopts an eclectic approach in the interpretation of the selected novels. Obviously, African variants of feminism and psychoanalytical perspectives are adopted to unfold certain familiar and cultural contexts that promote female pain, fear or anxiety through accommodation, complementarity, dialogue and negotiation. Commenting on what constitutes "feminism", it is observed that "the central concern of feminism is women—their lives, their lot, their experiences, their rights, their past, present and future" (Okereke 2018, 162). Though western feminism emerged as a movement in seeking equality of the sexes in the 18th century, new variants have assumed new forms as "a result of discontentment with the western definition of feminism represented by scholars such as Clenora Hudson-Weems, Alice Walker…. (Chiluwa 2014, 103). It is also clear that "there are many feminisms as there are conscious women. Thus, the African woman's feminism is different from the Western woman's feminism; the Christian woman's feminism is different from the Muslim woman's feminism; the Igbo woman's feminism is different from the Efik woman's feminism and so on" (Okereke 2018, 162). In fact, the specificities and peculiarities of African women's experiences have necessitated a search for physical, emotional and psychic liberation. The Afrocentric reaction to western feminism has projected African variants such as Motherism, Snail-Sense Feminism, Nego-feminism, Stiwanism, Femalism, Womanism, Gnecologocentrism etc. "Motherism" projects a subtle view towards motherhood—a desire for female liberation through respect of self and nature. (Acholonu 1995, 110). "Snail-Sense Feminism", is a proposal for women to emulate the resilient, accommodating and tolerant pattern of a snail to outwit patriarchal oppressive mores (Ezeigbo 2012, 25). "Nego-feminism" accepts that collaboration, complementarity and negotiation are structured by cultural imperatives and modulated by local or global experiences (Nnaemeka 2003, 378). "Stiwanism" advocates for social transformation including women within African cultural settings (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994, 229-230). "Womanism" seeks the enhancement of women's freedom, self esteem and qualities within a given African cultural milieu (Ogunyemi's 1988, 60-67). "Femalism" as "a praxis foregrounds the body while applying psychoanalytical criticism in its negation of the gendered subjectivity deemed as culturally and socially constructed ideology—the female body as a site of the contrasting sensibility of pain and nurture, manipulated by the patriarchal hand and revised by the female foot" (Opara 2004, 18). "Gnecologocentrism" adopts a "dialogic approach which encourages *gyn*: the female self in her varied essence; *eco (logy):* the female self in relation to other selves—human and non-human; *logo*" the word on which discourse and power are constructed; centrism: centering, locating at the centre" (Okereke 2004, 72-73). The above variants of African feminism encourage female empathy and consciousness-raising which consider reality through different authors' thoughts. The impression some of the above variants give partially suppresses the myth of male superiority and represses female sense of boldness in securing physical and emotional spaces within familial and cultural settings.

Notably, Freud's ideas on the conscious and unconscious repression are important in uncovering the restraints placed by the selected male writers in repressing the female characters' pain and anxiety in situations that are capable of causing neuroses and nervous disorders (Valentine 1960, 124; Eagleton 2008, 136). This is done through the interpretation of female characters' conduct.

Patriarchal Psyche and the Female Space in Amadi's *The Concubine* and Asika's *Tamara*

"Space" is fundamental in the construction of female consciousness. However, between a female's dream of space and its realization falls the suicidal influence of males through disillusionism—a technique that magnifies the problems that pose a great challenge. For familiar intellectual endeavour, we need to establish a sense of reality that the "space" referred to in this paper expands within the domain of physical and psychological. It is not easy to find a more vitriolic yet subtle attack on *The Concubine*, Elechi Amadi's debut novel of 1966. No doubt, Amadi's primal depiction was born out of the enthusiasm to articulate his cultural and social background—a history that has informed his consciousness. Thus his mind-challenging ideological idea of patriarchy has imposed an intellectual dependence that is oppressive on females. Although he defended his lopsided depiction with the fanatical zeal of the Igbo worldview, the facts of his patriarchal ideological fanaticism is not completely ignored. This is seen as the "introjection of patriarchal laws which forms what Freud calls 'superego', the awesome, punitive voice of conscience" (Eagleton 2008, 136). To begrudge Amadi for encouraging engrossing trivialities that gained a stereotypical view of an Igbo woman is a bloodless criticism. It is a pity that many scholars have drawn his ideological purview—a presumptuous depiction of an attractive woman who brings doom to men that desire her beauty and love. Ideally weighed, many lack direct immersion of the legacy of neglect that forms obstacles to the female's sense of insecurity.

The discovery of tangible knowledge opposing female liberation and space lies in the volcanic strength of male heroism and male child syndrome. This unfolds in *The Concubine* exposing male as the predator and female as the prey. Amadi's depiction of the patriarchal value of male superiority becomes a pragmatic instrument for societal urgent salvation of the females. Madume's frustration in the novel stems from his wife's inability to bear him sons. According to the omniscient narrator, "Wolu, Madume's only wife, bore him four daughters—a most annoying thing, despite the dowries he knew he would collect when they get married. But who would bear his name when he had died? The thought of his elder brother's son inheriting his houses and lands filled him with dismay" (Amadi 2021, 4).

The phenomenon of male child syndrome or privilege is culturally-oriented, soothing the ego of males while challenging female spaces. This goes with the passionately internalized sacrificing of the female hope of enjoying her familial space cum emotional space that alienates her as an inferior human—a lower version of her male counterpart. Female confinement to marriage signifies her circumscribed space already set-up by the Oedipus figurehead in a traditional patriarchal world. The image of primitivity is illustrated in Madume's inherent thought that "his daughters' marriages would provide him with the money for another wife" (Amadi 2021, 4). The myth Amadi is seeking to reveal here is the myth that the "bride price" is a capitalist oriented Igbo traditional custom that permeates female psyche as an object of auction. The consciousness of family alienation threatens her space at home as a partial member of a lineage exclusively condemned to fate. This is also connected to the ubiquitous cultural alienation that bestows a sense of powerlessness on females. The result is that females have consciously marginalized existence that curtails their choice of partners (suitors) and space.

They are most likely to be chosen or married to men that are not their choice. It is worthy to note that the ponderous nature of early marriage and men's covetous quest for love prejudice Ihuoma's psychic well-being and physical space—finally branding her a spiritual object of interest—a wife to a sea King. The basic intention here needs clear scrutiny of the patriarchal structure that encroached into her space after the first husband, Emenike who married her at an early age died leaving her with three little children. The encroachment of the female space has significant trends— family and societal trends. Ihuoma's last day of mourning her dead husband justifies whichever position Okachi, her mother has occupied in limiting her emotional space—" Look my daughter, you need a man to look after you…Ihuoma stared at her mother in perplexity" (Amadi 2021, 38). No doubt, "Ihuoma is taken aback by the suddenness with which her mother broached the subject. All she could do was to look away and say nothing" (Amadi 2021, 38).

Furthermore, in Okachi's desire to annihilate the supposed loneliness that characterizes the life of her daughter as a widow, she leaps into Ihuoma's emotional space; "…But surely you need another man. You will ruin your health fretting over your dead husband. I am worried about you, my daughter" (Amadi 2021, 40). Okachi's inexorable suffocation of her daughter's space made Ihuoma do "a rare thing with her mother—she lost her temper. 'Ekwueme, Ekwueme, what type of Ekwueme is this? Please let me alone, mother', and she burst into tears" (Amadi 2021, 41). Okachi's words give way to a euphoria of psychological dependence on men—a perpetual exploitation of the female space.

Amadi's title, "The Concubine" also informs a sensibility that enables an individual to understand his ideological perspective that a woman must have a male companion— spirit or human at every stage of her life. This explains why Ihuoma is drained of her enduring resolution to remain in her late husband's house and nurture her children. This is a patriarchal revolutionary conscience directed at invading female spaces. Illustionistically, Ihuoma becomes a "human subject who emerges from the oedipal process as a split subject, torn precariously between conscious and unconscious; but the unconscious has consistently plague her" (Eagleton 2008, 136).

Interpreting the sensibility which spurred Okachi's well-advertised idea of a male lover—is a cultural outlook mingled with mother's inherent pity that "she –an old woman—should still be enjoying the protection and joys of a husband while her daughter, a mere child was playing the widow" (Amadi 2021,41). Respect for the female space is deeply lacking in Amadi's narration. This seems to make Ihuoma a sacrificial victim unable to escape from the fate that is to come—an encroachment into her psychological space: " Ekwueme felt that somehow the woman sitting in front of him had suddenly grown a little detached…she just sat there quiet and contemplative" (Amadi 2021, 47). Ihuoma's attitude reveals her awareness of the male-dominated Oedipus complex which originated a binary division—a form of gender asymmetries within "familial and social networks that split off her guilty desires, repressing them into the unconscious" (Eagleton 2008, 136).

Madume's limited understanding of the female space has stripped him of his moral conscience that he is symbolically protesting against his lack of male children. Within his familial space, his wife and four daughters are the sacrificial victims of his gradual psychic build-up on their "uselessness"—an interpretation stemming from cultural perspective. In fact Madume allies himself with patriarchal radical spirit calling his female children derogatory names despite his wife's objection:

> 'The rascals are back,' Madume said. 'All children are rascals,' she replied. 'But I think your children are unusually troublesome.' 'My children. Are they not yours, my lord?' They are your children….she went behind the house and wept. As her sobbing grew louder, her husband came to her. 'Just what can you say is wrong with you?'….An old woman like you ought to be ashmed of crying for no cause. 'Was it because I talked of getting another wife? (Amadi 2021, 56)

It is certain that this new awareness brings the realization that determines his wife's status in his family structure. Significantly, what we hear from his wife's utterance is a strident voice of frustration: "It is the way you keep talking of my children as if they are not yours. If they were boys you would regard them more as your children, I am sure. Well, I am not Chineke: I do not create children" (Amadi 2021, 56).

Men's penetrating lust for Ihuoma becomes the problem that has betrayed her emotional and physical spaces. Madume joins the league of men that seek the procurement of a young widow who bore three sons for her late husband. So in the novel, we see Madume's confrontation on the land in dispute (between him and Emenike) which has become the pragmatic instrument for Ihuoma's oppression:

> 'Ihuoma, there really is no need for us to quarrel over a head of plantain, if you will be reasonable. Let's be friends and forget all our disputes. I am tired of them myself. With an effort which surprised Madume the women wrestled her arm from his grip and tried to move away. But Madume was quick. He gripped her two shoulders and forced her to face him. Too full for words she looked down and her tears flowed fast. 'Abah! Abah! Death, I have you to blame for this!' She wept bitterly, quietly at first then with a loud wail. Madume let her go and she went home crying. (Amadi 2021, 68)

Ihuoma's self-assertiveness lacks strength—she generally releases a feeling of lethargy that ends in tears. Basically, encroachment in the female space is characterized by a vision of doom. A young girl, Ahurole, the wife of Ekwueme has a fatalistic destiny because she is married to a man that loves another woman, Ihuoma. Ekwueme's love for Ihuoma is a blatant exploitation of Ahurole's emotional space resorting to domestic violence:

> Ekwe got up and ordered her to get off in an awful voice. Before she could move he gave her several slaps on the face and pushed her back violently. Ahurole fell flat on her back but sprang up with youthful elasticity and charged blindly at her husband. 'You will kill me today. You must kill me today', she cried,' You must kill me today and carry my body to my parents. Ekwueme shook her off and went in search of a cane. He came back brandishing a thick one…. (Amadi 2021, 142)

Ahurole remains in her marriage with the visionary outlook of controlling her husband's mind with love portion. This of course is a fetish cum substance abuse leading to emotional man-handling that culminated in a lunatic behaviour. Ihuoma is blamed for Ekwueme's lack of maturity in handling his wife's jealousy (Amadi 2021, 152). Note that Ahurole's psyche completely rejects barriers that militate against happiness in her marriage space—this results to taking caution. Unfortunately, the love portion makes Ekwueme a caricature of a man; an internalized tension that erupts out of physical and emotional strains. Ahurole's action dramatizes that her role as a wife is not fulfilling. Uncertain at this point, she absconds leaving her husband in a bad state. Ahurole is a conformist to the womanist and snail-sense perspectives

of accommodation and complementarity— Afrocentric values that urge her to maintain a stable home through subtlety and wit. In fact, her subtle strategy as an agent of positive change to conquer her husband's oppressive attitude further asserts her inferiority and voicelessness.
A superimposed technique is used to curry Ihuoma into a relationship with Ekwueme whose lunatic symptoms become very unbearable (Amadi 2021, 181-184). Ekwueme's request for Ihuoma's presence as a therapeutic cure of his madness no doubt creates a substantive prejudice that the patriarchal world has for the female space. One thing is certain; they always want to occupy this space. Surprisingly, what has started like a technique of cure grows into a relation borne out of the need for companionship. Sadly enough, Anyika's divination as a renowned dibia (priest) seems to be a deliberate attempt to obstruct the psychological space that yields happiness to Ihuoma. Apparently, his constant emphasis that Ihuoma's "marriage will not work well" since strong spirits are against the marriage (Amadi 2021, 194) is a consequent wonder which is fleshed out with ulterior motive. In Anyika's words:

> …have you seen anyone quite so right in everything, almost perfect? I tell you only a sea goddess—for that is precisely what she is—can be all that.' …she was to be untouched by men? Well, she could be someone's concubine. Her Sea-King husband can be persuaded to put up with that after highly involved rites. But as a wife she is completely ruled out. There are few women like that in the world. It is death to marry them and leave behind a harrowing string of dead husbands. They are usually beautiful, very beautiful, but dogged by their invisible husbands of the spirit world. (Amadi 2021, 196)

Combining human wits and spoken evidence from Anyika, one would suspect that he is behind the deaths of those who made advances to Ihuoma. This consequent wonder is expressed in an emotional exclamation which ultimately becomes the likely reality that has occupied Ihuoma's space. Adaku, Ekwueme's mother has conceived a thought which is a product of emotion and reason. She laments: "I wish Anyika had not interfered in this matter. It is strange how he volunteered a divination without fees. He often said that if people did not pay, his spirits would not let him see clearly into the future… So his divination was wrong" (Amadi 2021, 198). The implication is that Anyika's deeply expressed concern betrays his interest in Ihuoma. Unable to confront Ihuoma for his deep love for her, Anyikwa predominantly suppresses any relationship leading to happiness with diabolic powers and psychic manipulative tales. His first postulation is that Emenike, Ihuoma's husband died of lock chest. Secondly, Madume, Ihuoma's admirer lost his eyes through a spitting cobra and dies after his wife left him. Thirdly, Ekwueme is killed by an arrow assumedly shot by Ihuoma's son, Nwonna. The point being made here is that the supposedly Sea-King husband is responsible for the death of these men. Still, it is worthwhile to review Anyika's postulations about Ihuoma's connection with the Sea-King. Is it possible to be married to a spirit without any knowledge of such sensitive relationship? Ihuoma is deeply concerned and perplexed. She confesses: "These things are strange and almost funny. I certainly don't feel like a daughter of the sea. It's frightening in a way" (Amadi 2021, 201). Anyika's ideas indeed have damaging consequences to Ihuoma's psyche and they are capable of keeping her entrapped in a traumatic reality.

Unhappiness for the female character mostly reflects in the various myths which have occupied their emotional and physical spaces. Ihuoma's concept of fate is shrouded in unhappiness. According to her, "I have not been a happy woman" (Amadi 2021, 214). Certainly, Amadi did not clearly depict Ihuoma's state of mind when Ekwueme, the last of the victims died. According to the narrator, Ihuoma lay on the ground raving. She clawed and rolled from one corner of the compound to the other….She slapped her thighs, beat her chest, raised her hands.

She hopped wildly…" (Amadi 2021, 216). In fact, the voice of Ihuoma becomes the voice that is meant to express pain and emotion—an essence of cultural values expected of the female gender. Amadi's display of the patriarchal psyche holds true in the above quotation because Ihuoma has been forced to undergo repression—an alteration of the pleasure principle by the reality principle. She is totally overwhelmed by the sudden death of her new suitor, thus she is bound to become neurotic. Indeed, neurosis is a form of sickness that should have emanated from Amadi's depiction of his female character's psyche but this has been grossly repressed in the narration (Eagleton 2008, 132).

Asika in his fiction, *Tamara* (2013) presents a metaphoric and symbolic interpretation of the female space within the familial and public settings. Tamara's space as the heroine of the novel is grossly repressed in her father's house. Sexism is the beacon of Asika's story. Tamara's familial space is suffocated by gender discrimination. Tamara, the female protagonist of the novel complains bitterly about gender asymmetry inherent in her familial space: "My brother was towing a different line of training and upbringing as a man and I was strictly raised as a girl" (Asika 2013, 8). What is central in the novel is lack of female freedom which manifests itself in the form of domestic violence.

An active tension, the type that inhibits the female space, is noticeable as the motif of slavery. The rationale for the tension is linked to gender inequality. Tamara is always confined in the house, while her brother, Kizito has the freedom of movement (Asika 2013, 33). In Tamara's voice, "We were not allowed to visit anyone and no one visited us, alone you confined us in a big house, fending for us, lavishing all sorts of wealth" (Asika 2013, 21). A variation of Tamara's story is quite distinct from parental control and protection. Obviously, her familial space has become so abusive thus affecting her psychological space. The meeting point between the overbearing attitude of Tamara's father and his assertion of male ego is what we could describe as domestic violence. Perhaps the one of the remarkable features or qualities as a father is verbal abuse—a technique of maintaining a "superior status as the head of the family" (Kashani and Allan 1998, 33). The use of oppressive and derogatory language indeed has a destabilizing effect on the familial space that harboured his daughter and wife. Tamara's father lacks family commitment. His existentialist predicament does not border on how to relate well with others. He often talks with disdain to his wife: "Woman, what's the meaning of this? Speak now or forever speak no more" (Asika 2013, 25). Abusive language becomes an unconscious process gradually internalized—a greater influence on his wife's conscious life. In fact, the "repressed ideas of such an experience and its associated feelings and impulses would be called a complex" (Valentine 1960, 125). No doubt, the process of this repression leads to the death of his wife.

The legitimate places of security are the home and the heart which create emotion. These two places have affinity in shaping the mentality of an individual. The affinity between these two places has been overstretched with abusive language. Tamara's joy of having an excellent performance as a young girl at school at the end of the term is welcomed with her father's abusive antecedent. He queries: "what the hell are you doing at this time of the night?...What about your report card? Speak before I skin you alive" (Asika 2013, 15). The real outcome of this abusive nature seems to propel a self-destructive superego, the inward degenerative pressure that is conceptual to her adult attitude. Tamara's self-assertive instinct is an enigma for *eros*—the life sustaining instinct. Her father's abusive nature becomes so suffocating to the extent that Tamara makes a bitter confession: "Father …you guided us so hard until it began

to pain and we all missed direction and lost direction. We were following your light, unknown to us that you were leading us to the wrong direction. It is so painful father" (Asika 2013, 11).

The familial space in the context of this novel lacks fatherly "love, tender care, motivation and encouragement to the female child" (Asika 2013, 10). The non-existence of the above mentioned qualities in the normal sense has incubated an unconscious aggression. By the nature of this feeling, internal conflict has erupted between a father and his daughter. In situations like this, the extreme poles of approaches need be mentioned as Tamara confessed: "I hardly knew you as child. I doubt that you are the same man whose smiling pictures hung everywhere around the house" (Asika 2013, 11).

A number of reasons make a consideration of Tamara's abusive space relevant for discussion. Indeed, the psychological implication rightly assessed through the lens of human conscience is evidently heartbreaking. Tamara has evoked pity in the confession as she "stood before her father but fumbled for lack words because the looks of a tiger on his face could not allow her speak. She had locked herself in the room and wished all the bad things of life to come upon him" (Asika 2013, 5). Championing the humanistic emphasis on familial space, one would realize that Tamara has been emotionally oppressed by oedipal figureheads. The first is her father, the second is the family driver, Dunga who exploited her sexually and the third is Obed, a friend who got her pregnant with her consent (Asika 2013, 83). So tormenting were her days in her father's house that she embarks on an unknown journey for freedom unsuspectingly.

Significantly, Tamara's space changes from the familial space to the public space when she is lured into trafficking by Senorita, a pimp. In a controversial manner, she is "an illegal immigrant, through an illegal boat" (Asika 2013, 115). What is quite beyond her sphere of understanding is that a fellow female has subjected her to the visible exploitative nature of the patriarchal world. This negates the feminist mentality of female bonding or sisterhood in bizarre experiences. Specifically, sexual exploitation and rape become men's constructive efforts for obstructing female freedom and space. A disturbing aspect of this obstruction is that females are the invisible and visible helpers to those who oppress other females. There is a manifestation of female deceit; Princess lured Senorita into prostitution, in return she lured Tamara and other girls in the same illicit act. According to Senorita, "Princess brought me. I prostituted on the streets of Italy. I worked for her for five years. She did not really agree to free me, she employed me and it is now my duty to recruit young girls from Nigeria for her" (Asika 2013, 114).

Unquestionably, the staging of Tamara for rape in a brothel is an attempt to articulate the disillusionment that has characterized her public space as well as that of other females. One of the male oppressors has placed premium on violent sexual exploitation rather than on mutual agreement. Bruce's propaganda for sex is very rude and humiliating to Tamara. In Bruce's word, "I am here to fuck you; you of course. You are Tamara, the youngest of the girls from Nigeria. It is you I want. You must know I paid heavily for you, so you must give me a good treat, a worth for my money. I am going to fuck you real hard" (Asika 2013, 11). Observably, Bruce's action has become a definite source of female anguish and anxieties. From feminists' perspective, his capitalist oriented mentality is tantamount to colonial slavery—an action that lacks human empathy. His psychic obsession dares Tamara's self-worth. In fact, he is susceptible to the crime of sexual exploitation. Repudiating Tamara, "he descended on her breast and pushed her violently" (Asika 2013, 109). The thrust of Tamara's experiences is that she has been subjected to the territorial sexual powers of men by her fellow females. The

summary of the whole story is that Tamara is encouraged to "hawk her vagina in Europe for money and pleasure" (Owan 2018, 270). This of course is not without consequences; the unparalleled behaviour forced her into drug addiction leading to liver cancer after birthing her child conceived in a marital negotiation with one of her European sexual partners. The gradual realization is that the foredoomed condition of Tamara is a thorough reassessment of patriarchal parameters of control—familial and public. Tamara's self-realization is indeed a tragic destiny and acceptance of patriarchal influence as she seeks to reconnect with her father for reconciliation.

Conclusion

This research has explicated different aspects of patriarchal mentality and gender-based oppression that suffocate and repress female spaces from the perspectives of the selected novels of two Nigerian male authors of Igbo descent. In this research, it has been ascertained that the narratives of Amadi and Asika as male authors did not show any passionate detailing or deep sensitivity towards the plight of their female protagonists. This could be ascribed to their patriarchal worldview and their gender. Despite presenting traumatic situations that oppress and repress the female characters' spaces (physical and emotional), the male writers are unable to depict their neurotic state of mind during bizarre oppressive conditions. In essence, cultural moral instincts built on familial and collective connections as agents of patriarchal representatives have influenced the selected authors' sense of depiction leading to an inadequate redress. The reason is that the selected male authors do not belong to the gender that is oppressed and thus cannot interpret patriarchal actions and mentality as very oppressive. In Amadi's novel, Ihuoma's traumatic experiences are merely captured as a mere outpouring of emotion with wailings and tears as the climax despite obstructing her mental and emotional spaces (Amadi 2021, 215). Indeed, "a hair-raising cry rent the air…" (Amadi 2021, 216). Asika's Tamara has also exhibited the same emotional outburst without being mentally distorted. Tamara's emotional turmoil is captured in written lamentation—a letter writing format that reveals all her oppressive experiences. At the end of the novel, Asika has adopted the womanist ideals of negotiation and complementarity in settling the bitter issues between Tamara and her father. This negotiation is a basic tenet of patriarchal controls—the type that spurs a daughter to connect to her familial root replete with honour and respect for her elders. The need for filial connection has also spurred the reconciliatory letter. Tamara has something in mind— she wants a familial connection. Her sudden proposal for negotiation prompts a close scrutiny of the feminine psyche within Nigerian cultural settings. Tamara in her letter attempts to reconnect her child with her father and at the same time tried to reveal the sentiments that forced her into unpleasant experiences which might lead to her eventual death (Asika 2013 149). Basically, all the post-traumatic stress syndromes that should have manifested in the female protagonists as a result of psychologically or emotionally overwhelming experiences are repressed by the male authors in the selected novels.

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