

Trauma and the Unconscious State of the Human Psyche: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* & *Little Drops*

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Abstract

Traumatic experiences are often embedded in the hidden recesses of the human psyche. The unconscious mind acts as a vault, storing painful memories that consciously elude us but subtly shape our thoughts and actions. This paper provides a psychoanalytic exploration of trauma within the context of two plays by Nigerian playwright Ahmed Yerima, namely, *Pari* and *Little Drops*. It offers a quick overview of the relationship between trauma and the unconscious mind in the human psyche, emphasizing the impact of traumatic experiences on individual and collective consciousness. While there is a wealth of scholarly works on the role of trauma and the unconscious mind, little attention has been given to these elements in the context of the plays under investigation. The study employs close textual analysis of Yerima's plays, employing Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to analyze the portrayal of trauma in the selected plays. These plays offer evidence of trauma endured by citizens amidst the turmoil of insurgency and societal crises. Through the analysis of the character's behaviours, dreams, interactions, and symbolic representations, this study seeks to uncover the hidden layers of trauma beneath the mere surface of the plot. Therefore, the paper aims to provide a better understanding of how trauma operates within the unconscious, as depicted in the literary texts and illuminate the complexities of human experience and the impact of unresolved trauma on individuals, families and society at large. The study reached the conclusion that Ahmed Yerima's portrayal of *Pari* and *Little Drops* not only portrays the impact of trauma and the resultant role of the unconscious on the human mind but also serves as a vivid reflection of the Nigerian society.

Keywords: Trauma, Psychoanalysis, Unconscious Mind, Psyche, Insurgency

Introduction

Trauma significantly impacts the human psyche, and it often manifests in unconscious ways that shape people's thoughts, emotions, feelings, and behaviours. According to Adimula Abiola and Ijere Ignatius, trauma is "an extremely challenging or unpleasant event that typically leaves a person with long-term emotional or mental health issues" (17). The psychological effects of traumatic experiences can linger, which, in turn, influence relationships, worldviews, emotions, patterns of behaviour and sense of self. Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher, acknowledged that suffering is a necessary part of being human (Tuncel Yunus 157). When something unexpected happens, the victim feels vulnerable and powerless because they start to

doubt everything. Traumatic experiences can shatter one's sense of security, identity, and meaning, leading to feelings of disorientation, confusion, and disconnection. In this sense, trauma can be seen as a manifestation of Nietzsche's idea of suffering as a necessary part of being human. The unexpected and often brutal nature of traumatic events can leave individuals feeling like they are staring into nothingness, with no clear sense of how to move forward or rebuild their lives.

On the other hand, the unconscious mind is an aspect of human mental processes that operates without conscious awareness. In the words of Gugane, "The unconscious is a part of the human mind, which is beyond the consciousness" (1454). It is an aspect of human thoughts, feelings or memories that is not accessible through intentional reflection, i.e it cannot be controlled. Gardner Sabastian observed that the concept of the unconscious was "introduced from scratch" by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th century (107). Freud's idea was that the unconscious mind consists of repressed thoughts, desires and conflicts that were too painful or socially unacceptable to be acknowledged consciously. Khoiriyah and Dewi's perspective aligns with this notion as they state that the unconscious mind "involves everything that is not readily accessible to awareness, including a great deal of things, such as our instincts and urges, traumatic memories, and feelings. Most of the contents of the unconscious are unacceptable or unpleasant, such as feelings of pain, anxiety, or conflict" (241). The unconscious also has the ability to influence human thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in subtle yet profound ways. The unconscious mind contains repressed thoughts and feelings, trauma, and hidden desires and motivations. It can manifest through emotional responses, intuition, habits, and dreams or hallucinations.

Drama has been an effective medium of projecting these various psychological issues textually and performatively beyond numerical specific mention. Ahmed Yerima's plays, *Pari* and *Little Drops*, offer a poignant exploration of the effect of trauma on the human psyche, particularly in the context of Nigerian culture and society. This study reveals the role of the unconscious state of the human mind and how such mind responds to trauma, shedding light on the intricacies of psychological and emotional processes that bind humans to their past, their very selves, as well as shape their experiences of suffering, memory, and healing.

Therefore, this paper draws on psychoanalytic theories, particularly the works of Sigmund Freud, to reflect the dimensions of trauma and the unconscious mind and its representation in Yerima's plays. Through this analysis, a deeper understanding of the interplay between trauma, the unconscious, and the human psyche will be gained. Ways in which literature can serve as a powerful tool for reflecting these elements and providing means of processing and coping with traumatic experiences will also be brought to the limelight.

Methodology

This study employs a textual analysis method to analyze the selected plays based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Textual analysis is a research technique that systematically analyses and interprets a text's content, in this case, Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* and *Little Drops*. The analysis will focus on identifying and interpreting the psychological themes and motifs present in the plays, such as characters' traumatic experiences and their unconscious desires, fears, and conflicts manifesting in the form of dreams. Freud's psychoanalytic theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding the psychological dimensions of the play, particularly the effect of trauma and the role of the unconscious mind in shaping human behaviour and emotions.

Theoretical Framework: Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalysis seeks to bring unconscious elements into consciousness, allowing individuals to confront and resolve their psychological struggles. Dianna Kenny asserts that psychoanalysis emphasizes the importance of "unconscious mental processes, conflicts, defenses and hidden meanings" (1). Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was born in Austria and spent most of his life in Vienna, where he pursued his education and professional career. After earning a medical degree in 1881, Freud established a private practice and began treating patients with psychological disorders. According to Schultz Duane, "One of the greatest psychologists and thinkers in history was Sigmund Freud" (46). His thoughts covered a wide range of topics, such as dreams, emotions, personality, and psychoanalysis.

It was through his colleague, Dr. Josef Breuer's treatment of a patient known as Anna O that Freud became intrigued by the concept of the unconscious mind. Anna O suffered from physical symptoms with no apparent physical cause. However, her symptoms abated when Dr. Breuer helped her recover memories of traumatic experiences that she had repressed or hidden from her conscious mind. This case caught Freud's attention and inspired him to explore the concept of unconscious and repressed memories, which led to the development of some of his most renowned theories (Sibi 76). This case study also informed the publication of Freud and Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria* in 1893 (Kenny 2). Through this study, the notion of the unconscious gained its initial application within the context of psychology.

The most notable contribution of Freud was his conceptualization of the human mind as a tripartite structure comprising the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious (Tauber 255). In Boag Simon's perspective, the conscious mind is responsible for our immediate thoughts, feelings and perceptions. The preconscious, also called the subconscious, contains memories and information that can be easily brought to consciousness. Conversely, the unconscious mind is the repository of repressed and hidden thoughts, emotions, and desires that shape our behaviour (1). According to Freud, the conscious mind "rests on the perception of the most immediate and certain," while the preconscious and unconscious "should be described as two species or stages of the psychoid, and harmony would be established" (Freud 15). Recognizing and understanding these two species or stages of the psychoid could create a sense of balance or integration within the psyche. It suggests that acknowledging and reconciling these aspects could lead to a greater sense of psychological wholeness or well-being.

Later in his career, Freud developed a more structured model of the mind, known as the structural theory, which posits the mind as being composed of three distinct parts: the id, ego, and superego. Zhang opined, "It is the most innate quality of humans which represents their physiological desire" (229). The id represents the primitive and instinctual desires that reside in the unconscious mind. In contrast to the id, the super-ego is the storehouse of all external experiences, including guilt, feelings and socially formed notions (Vyas 206).

The ego, the conscious aspect of the mind, mediates between the id's demands and the superego, representing our moral and social values. McLoed posits that the role of the ego is to act as a mediator between the irrational id and the outside real world. It is the part of the personality that makes decisions. In an ideal world, the id is chaotic and irrational, whereas the ego functions rationally (2). This means that the ego is not simply a mental construct but is intimately connected with the physical body and its experiences.

The three parts of the mind the id, ego, and superego are in constant tension and conflict, each driven by its primary goal. When this tension becomes too overwhelming for an individual

to handle, the ego may engage in defense mechanisms to protect the self. Anna Freud provides a list of these defense mechanisms: "repression, regression, reaction formulation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against self, reversal, and sublimation or displacement" (44). These mechanisms allow individuals to temporarily avoid confronting painful experiences, providing a buffer against overwhelming emotions associated with trauma.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory posits that trauma is a result of unconscious conflicts and repressed memories, which are stored in the unconscious mind. According to Freud, traumatic experiences are too overwhelming for the conscious mind to process, so they are pushed into the unconscious, where they continue to exert an influence on behavior and emotions. Sefa Belut observes that:

Freud's original theoretical concepts regarding psychological trauma proved valuable and enduring. These ideas were influenced by observations of both individual reactions and collective responses to the devastations of World War I. Freud defined "trauma" as any external stimuli powerful enough to penetrate the mind's defences, leading to an overwhelming influx of stimuli. He later expanded on this by emphasizing the core aspect of traumatic experiences as the feeling of helplessness, where the ego is abruptly overwhelmed (1).

As aforementioned, traumatic experiences, such as childhood abuse, loss of a loved one, rape or neglect, can lead to the development of defence mechanisms to prevent the traumatic memories from entering conscious awareness. In certain instances, individuals who do not seek support from professionals, such as therapists, and instead choose to repress their traumatic memories may encounter triggers that reignite repressed emotions. For example, viewing a movie or witnessing a scene depicting a similar traumatic experience of that individual can evoke these suppressed feelings, leading to the manifestation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Sigmund Freud also proposed the concept of the significance of dreams in understanding the unconscious mind. He believed that analyzing one's dreams could reveal repressed thoughts, feelings, and desires. In his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1900, he outlined his theory that the primary purpose of dreams was to provide individuals with wish fulfilment, allowing them to work through repressed issues in a situation free from consciousness and the constraints of reality. Sibi posits that "Dreams are the dynamic mechanism that gives the ego its strength back. As a result, a big part of the psychoanalytic process is dream interpretation. In psychoanalytic theory, dream analysis is an essential tool for uncovering the unconscious" (77). The manifest content of a dream (what people remember) is not the dream's true meaning but rather a disguise for the latent content (the hidden meaning).

Overall, Psychoanalysis extends beyond the confines of medicine or psychology; it serves as a lens through which people can understand human nature and different psychological issues as reflected in literature. As Hossain avers, "In formulating his psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud frequently connected it with art broadly and with literature specifically" (43). He further asserts that Freud believed that a literary piece resembles a daydream in that it encapsulates the fulfilment of an unmet desire, thereby offering an escape from an unsatisfactory reality.

Textual Analysis of Ahmed Yerimas *Pari* and *Little Drops*

Ahmed Yerima's gripping play, *Pari*, is set against the backdrop of the Northern Nigerian crises and the mass kidnapping of Chibok girls by Boko Haram insurgents in April 2014. His close connection to one of the abducted girls heightened his emotions and sensitivity to the gravity of the situation. In his note, he reflects:

I saw it all on television in my distanced safe haven, and cushioned smugness, I thought I could distance myself from the fear and pain of their helplessness. I was too far from their story; I kept reassuring myself until I found out that one of them was Awa Yerima. I sighed and felt a deep compulsion to write this one (6).

This revelation shattered his sense of distance and brought the tragedy uncomfortably close to home as he was compelled to confront the harsh reality of the situation and give voice to the untold stories of those affected by the tragedy.

Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* reflects on the ordeal of Ama and Tada in the aftermath of their daughter Hyelapari's abduction. The family's anguish and despair in the face of such a traumatic loss is palpable as they struggle with the uncertainty of her fate. Throughout the agonizing wait, Pari's mother, Ama, finds her faith and sanity tested to the brink. In a desperate bid to secure her daughter's safe return, she forsakes her Christian faith. She holds onto Islam, hoping that the God worshipped by her daughter's abductors will intervene and deliver Pari from their clutches, bringing her back home unharmed. Eventually, Pari returns home and reunites with her parents, but just as they thought the nightmare was finally over, Pari's return brings a harsh reality. She is no longer the same girl they took from them. Ohenhen Stanley attests to the fact that *Pari* is an emotionally charged depiction that realistically portrays the anguish and trauma endured by parents and relatives awaiting the release of kidnapped girls. It also sheds light on the psychological and physical degradation suffered by the abducted girls themselves (38).

The opening of the play introduces us to Ama, whose maternal instincts render her vulnerable and emotionally devastated as the prolonged absence of news about Pari, her daughter, weighs her down. This is a reaction typical of most mothers faced with the imminent danger or uncertainty surrounding their children's safety. She describes herself as "desolate" and likens herself to the "cursed arid desert" (8), which is a metaphorical representation of severe emotional emptiness and despair. This is a manifestation of repressed emotions stemming from the trauma of her daughter's abduction. The comparison to a desert suggests a barren land devoid of life and hope, reflecting the inner turmoil and sense of hopelessness that Ama experienced. Ama also holds on to the belief that the God worshipped by the kidnappers holds the key to her daughter's safe return. This is evident when she gives a response to Tada's words of encouragement to have faith

My faith? (Chuckles). It melted... like the morning dew... Gone. There is just a God out there. Their God. He must be alive... He must have been when he guided them to where they took those girls. So, I figured it out. I just need to find a way to talk to Him. Reach Him; speak His language as they do. Wear His hijab like their women do. Beg Him... kneel before Him, grovel if I have to... All I am saying is that I will do anything to have my daughter back (14-15).

This echoes Freud's idea of displacement, where intense emotions are redirected onto a substitute target. Her desperate plea to "reach" and "speak" to their God, even willing to adopt the practices of their religion, is Ama's defence mechanism in response to her traumatic

experience. She attempts to cope with the trauma by redirecting her faith and beliefs away from her original Christian beliefs, which can be associated with feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. Uwadinma-Idemudia describes Ama's spontaneous religious switch as born out of a desperation. According to her:

A woman desperately looking for her daughter cannot be wrong. Especially when she is not getting results from efforts that are within her immediate reach. She must, now as a backsliding Christian, also return to her traditional belief system, and she consults a diviner whom she got through her sister, Kwacheche. (82)

The traumatic experience Ama faced at this time of her crisis affected her spiritual upbringing to the extent that she continuously switched from one faith to another to protect her sanity and psychological being. By adopting Islam, which was her third religious switch, Ama attempts to regain a sense of control in a situation that feels overwhelming. This displacement of her faith allows her to temporarily escape the emotional pain and distress associated with the traumatic event. However, as Freud would argue, this displacement may not necessarily resolve the underlying unconscious conflicts and repressed emotions, which can continue to manifest in other ways, such as anxiety and depression. Meanwhile, Tada uses alcohol to numb himself and escape the painful reality of their daughter's abduction. This behaviour reflects an unconscious attempt to distance himself from the overwhelming truth of their situation, seeking temporary relief from his emotional distress.

Yerima also employs dreams as an aspect of the unconscious mind. For instance, Ama has been haunted by relentless nightmares since her daughter's abduction, and she confides in her husband during one such instance:

AMA: I was pulled out of my grimy cell, stark naked. Beaten bleeding hell was close by. Men and women jeered. I smelt my entrails. There was blood in my mouth. My feet bled. I felt nothing but weakness.

TADA: Where was I in the dream?

AMA: (In a whisper.) Nowhere. Even in my dream, when I needed you to hold on to, you are nowhere to be found (16)

In this dream recounted by Ama in *Pari* several elements emerge as significant components of the unconscious mind, as analyzed through Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Firstly, the dream reflects Ama's fears and anxieties due to her daughter's abduction. The grimy cell, stark nakedness, and brutal violence symbolize her feelings of vulnerability, powerlessness, and exposure in the face of the traumatic events unfolding in her life. The imagery also reflects her unconscious thoughts regarding her daughter's current situation or condition. The presence of blood and physical pain reflects the intensity of her emotional distress and the impact of the trauma on her psyche, as well as the torture and torment her daughter undergoes in the camp of the Boko Haram insurgents.

Furthermore, Ama's revelation to Tada that he was nowhere to be found in the dream reflects Freud's concept of the latent content of dreams, where hidden desires, anxieties, and conflicts manifest symbolically. Tada's absence symbolizes Ama's feelings of abandonment and isolation in coping with the trauma, as well as her subconscious longing for his support and presence during her ordeal, especially because of Jiga, her husband's mistress, who she believes is taking all his time.

Another instance of dream concept is evident in Ama's lines when she reveals to Shaagu the content of her recent dreams, "My nightmares affect my dark aerial fancies, which show me frightening images, all pointing towards the direction of death" (26). The frightening images in the dream, all pointing towards death, symbolize Ama's deepest fears and existential concerns. Death in dreams often symbolizes not only physical mortality but also the fear of loss, change, or the unknown. Thus, Ama's recurring nightmares reflect her sense of dread and helplessness and the uncertain fate that awaits her.

Fortunately, Pari escaped from Boko Haram's camp, fulfilling Shaagu's prophecy of her safe return. Upon Pari's safe return home, she recounts her traumatic experiences in the Boko Haram's camp:

PARI: hell broke loose. We were really scared and the hooded men melted our very resistance. Then, one day, they said we all had to get married. We resisted it. One girl who screamed her refusal was blindfolded and before our very eyes, she was killed. Petrified, we gave up everything. Then they started to rape us. Some of us died from the pain. Some died from the air raids, and some just died of heartache and pains. Those who lived or survived like me were living carcasses from the world beyond

AMA: You, my child, when were you touched?

PARI: I was saved by the cross for a long while until God got tired of looking after me. He must have walked away to tend the souls of our dead friends when it happened. I was like the lobe cactus in the desert of death (38)

This captures the depths of suffering and trauma endured by the Chibok girls. The accounts of torture and abuse recounted by Pari paint a grim picture of the unimaginable horrors they faced. When Pari returns, her mother's heartbreaking observation to her father that Pari is now a mere "shadow of our little princess" highlights the impact of trauma on identity and the human psyche, suggesting that no one emerges unscathed from such horrific experiences. The height of Pari's traumatic experience is depicted through her decision to end the life of her baby girl, as she reveals in her narration:

when my eyes fell upon her naked body, I cried. Then, I became afraid for her. How was she going to survive this wicked world which uses girls for sacrifice? What if she grew and was raped? What if? Slowly, I tore off a long piece from my hijab, and with my hands, I strangled my own child. (41)

Pari's decision to end her baby's life is a tragic manifestation of her desperate attempt to spare her child from the anticipated horrors of the world. Her actions reveal the depths of her psychological and traumatic ordeal. Strangling her child to death can also be viewed as a defence mechanism to protect herself from being in her mother's shoes someday and to protect her child against stepping into her shoes in the future. This paints a grim picture of the pain and torment trapped in her mind. How can society reasonably expect her to remain unchanged after such a horrid experience? She is just a girl thrust into womanhood prematurely. The revelation of her marriage to Ibrahim becomes yet another bitter pill for her parents to swallow, especially when they realize her genuine affection for him. Her traumatic experience reshapes her beliefs and forces her to adapt to a life she once would have recoiled from.

Ibrahim is depicted as another traumatized character in the play. Despite being portrayed as the antagonist, Yerima offers insight into Ibrahim's backstory, revealing the wounds that fuel

his behaviour. Traumatized by the death of his mother, Ibrahim is driven to drastic measures, which involve joining the group responsible for unspeakable violence. The number of souls he has claimed torments him in his sleep, and only Pari's lullaby brings him solace. He states, "Her voice calms my spirits. Then I sleep...but when I awaken... the nightmare begins all over again" (53). This reflects the intensity of his emotional turmoil.

Yerima, through his characters, captures the trauma endured by those caught in the throes of the Nigerian insurgency. Through their stories, he sheds light on the agonizing realities faced by victims of conflict, portraying the psychological scars and challenges they are confronted with.

Little Drops provides a reflection of the turmoil of the Niger Delta's unrest, centering on the horrifying experiences of women and children. The narrative revolves around four resilient female characters (Memekize, Mukume, Bonuwo, and Azue) who have all endured the trauma of loss amidst the conflict-ridden region.

Women and children often bear the brunt of the devastation wrought by war. Yerima's play shines a spotlight on the anguish and trauma endured by these marginalized groups, particularly women, who represent the broader population in the Niger Delta region. Through his work, Yerima sensitively portrays the experiences faced by women in conflict zones, highlighting their resilience in the face of unimaginable adversity and the urgent need for societal awareness and empathy toward their plight. In the opening scene, Mekume pours out her lamentations to a disguised Memekize, mistakenly believing Meme intends to abuse her sexually. She states, "I have been raped three times today already. Kill me instead. Shoot me and let me die!" (10)

This reveals the deep psychological trauma and distress endured by Mekume in a single day. The character's plea to be killed instead reflects a desperate desire to escape the overwhelming pain and suffering, indicative of Freud's notion of the death instinct, which is a primal urge to return to a state of non-existence in the face of unbearable psychic pain. Mekume further recounts how she fell victim to her traumatic ordeal with Meme, evident in these lines:

We were in bed celebrating our honeymoon at the Life is Sweet Hotel when, all of a sudden, a loud gunshot noise came into the compound. It was deafening at first. We grabbed all we could. My husband was stronger and quicker. He picked his singlet and jumped through the window. I was caught by the door by the hefty, ugly men in black hoods and guns. My loose wrapper fell at the sight of death. That was when (17).

The Impact of rape often results in trauma, evident in the Mekume's persistent distress during sleep, "Run, or the men will catch you! Run, or they will hurt you again! Run!" (26). The poor girl murmurs in her sleep, and it reflects the fear and anxiety that emanates from her traumatic experience. Yerima also adopts the use of dreams to explore the unconscious state of the human psyche in *Little Drops*. Meme admits that she dreams of her late husband:

I was told it was because he died before his time. He was always here. Sometimes, pulling at my wrapper in my dreams. Heaven knows what he was looking for. I still hope he comes here, asking me to come along with him or move to my side of the mat so that he would wrap his hands around me and tell me all will be well. In my dreams though, always in my dreams (19).

Meme's dream of her late husband pulling at her wrapper and appearing beside her on the mat suggests a longing for connection and comfort, even in the face of death. Freud posited that

dreams are a manifestation of unconscious desires, fears, and unresolved conflicts, and this dream exemplifies how the unconscious mind struggles with the trauma of loss. Dreams often serve as a space where unmet needs and desires are expressed, and Meme's longing for her to provide solace and affection mirrors her unconscious desire for emotional support and closure.

Azue, the Queen, narrowly escaped an invasion of the palace, an event that cost the life of her husband, the king. Unaware of the peril that befell her son, whom she had carried on her back, she is blindsided by the devastating discovery that he has been shot. By the time she realizes the extent of the tragedy, it is already too late to save his life. She laments, "I killed this one it was I who killed this one He took a bullet meant for me" (31). The pain of loss and feeling of guilt is evident here. This can be likened to Memes' experience of loss and grief due to war. Meme states, "All my blood. My husband and two sons. They all perished the same day. During the Biafran War" (34). Meme had to suffer the great loss of her loved ones. What could be more traumatic than that? Meme also embodies the spirit of selflessness. She met her demise while caring for her family's graves, yet her compassionate nature compelled her to linger and assist helpless women in the trying times of war

Bonuwo, another character Yerima utilized to portray the adverse effect of war, tragically witnesses the death of her students, all forty-one of whom perished in a devastating explosion. Consumed by guilt, she questions why she was spared while innocent children met such a cruel fate. "Not one soul, not one child was spared. All we saw were cut-off heads, with the hair still burning" (39). She laments. The gruesome images she witnessed of once-breathing bodies lying decapitated have left a scar on Bonuwo's psyche. The innocent lives lost to a war they have no hands in weigh heavily on her conscience, tormenting her even in sleep,

(In her sleep as if in a trance.) Please don't kill them again. They are my children. I beg you, don't kill them. They have done nothing wrong, and please don't harm them. Leave them alone, I beg you. Spare our lives (37).

These pleas, emerging from her unconscious, are likely due to unresolved emotional conflicts or past traumas, manifesting as a desperate cry for safety and security. Her desires are laid bare in her unconscious state. Her heart aches for the forty-one children who will never get to fulfil their potential and for the shattered hopes of parents who awaited their return only to be confronted with charred and dismembered remains.

Yerima incorporates the element of hallucination, which aligns with Sigmund Freud's proposition that it is a facet of the unconscious mind, akin to dreams. This is exemplified when Bonuwo's involvement in the trance-like dance alongside other women triggers hallucinations of her students who perished in the explosion. She vividly recounts her visions to the other women, describing what she saw:

I saw them by the gods. I saw them dance and cheer us on. My children, all joined by the cord of death, pulled and made me go round and round until my feet were lifted, and I was one with the heavens. We swirled and floated with the clouds until my stomach spun, and my eyes went giddy with joy. I saw them; by the gods, I saw them. In one second of joy, I was allowed to cross to the world of the spirits, and what looked blurred for once just once looked real (43)

Bonuwo's hallucination serves as a subconscious attempt to come to terms with the trauma of losing her students, offering a momentary respite from the pain and a glimpse of hope. The ideology that the unconscious mind can produce these kinds of experiences supports the

psychoanalytic idea that our thoughts and desires shape our perceptions and experiences. In a fleeting moment, her subconscious desires and fantasies briefly surface into conscious awareness. Through these characters and their plights, Yerima portrays the devastating impact of war on the human psyche. Yerima's characters serve as conduits for conveying the resilience and anguish of those whose lives have been irrevocably altered by the ravages of war.

Conclusion

This study contextualizes the impact of trauma and the significant role of the unconscious mind in shaping individuals' consciousness. Through the analysis, it becomes clear that both plays *Pari* and *Little Drops*, by Ahmed Yerima, vividly portray how deeply rooted psychological wounds and trauma manifest in the behaviours and experiences of the characters he created in the play. The exploration of trauma in *Pari* highlights the lingering scars of abuse, loss and insurgency, while *Little Drops* examines the collective anguish of societal violence and its impact on the psyche. The events depicted in these plays resonate with real-life experiences, offering readers a glimpse into the lives of those affected by distressing and traumatic circumstances. This study reveals how trauma is not only a surface-level experience but one that resides in the unconscious, influencing actions and emotions in ways the characters themselves may not fully comprehend. By reflecting on these plays, readers can empathetically engage with the struggles of individuals who have endured such hardships, thereby understanding their plight better and perhaps are able to establish a better relationship with them for the purpose of determining ways to help them resolve their inner battles. This can be through a conscious intervention by professional psychologists who can diagnose, treat and perform follow-up psychoanalysis from time to time. Yerima also exposed, in the plays, the deep-rooted conflict of religious plurality that is deeply practised by people who have been forced through traumatic experiences to cast doubt on their hetero religious practices. The question the playwright is asking is, how firmly can we hold onto our faith in times of adversity?

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