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Homestead Dictators and Daughters' Revolt in Four African Novels

ABSTRACT. Father and daughter relationship has aroused some research interest especially within the social sciences and psychology in recent times. Researchers argue that fathers have tremendous influence over the cognitive, social and psychological well-being of their daughters. This study contributes to this area of scholarship by extending it to the literary world as it explores father/daughter relationship in Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan*, Ngugi wa Thiong'O's *The River Between*, TsiTsi Dangaremgba's *Nervous Conditions* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The theory that lends itself to the thrust of this study is masculinity. The aim is to create more awareness of the effect of dictatorial behavior of fathers on the well-being of their daughters. The paper demonstrates that the authoritarianism of fathers in their dealings with their daughters leads to dangerous outcomes such as elopement, mental illness, physical violence and death. The paper submits that paternal masculinity be deconstructed because of its serious implications on the identity construction of both fathers and daughters. This, the paper posits, will facilitate integrated human development.

KEYWORDS: homestead dictator, father, daughter, daughter's revolt, masculinity

Introduction

A considerable body of research argues that fathers have tremendous influence over the cognitive, social and psychological development of their daughters. Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly (2007, p. 1) for instance posit that "father involvement has enormous implications… for their children in terms of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development". Teresa M. Scott, Lynne M. Webb and Patricia Amason (2012, p. 82) on their part examine how communication functions in father-daughter relationships among a sample of middle-aged, professionally accomplished daughters and conclude that daughters' perception of their fathers' conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation were "positively associated with daughters' perception of relational closeness" while "daughters' perception of competing with fathers during

conflicts was negatively associated with reported communication apprehension" (Scott, Webb & Amason, 2012, p. 82). Asbah Zia, Anila Amber Malik and Saima Masoon Ali (2015, p. 315) explore father/daughter relationship and its impact on daughter's self-esteem and academic performance and submit that a father's sensitivity and alertness towards his daughter's feelings, "having time to listen to her, showing interest in her hobbies and verbal approval or praise are very crucial factors for building her positive self-esteem and self-image". Naina Jain (2015, p. 75) investigates the influence of father/daughter attachment pattern on daughter's development from the Indian perspective and concludes that "the presence of secure attachment between daughter and father has positive influence on daughter's development" and that "insecure attachment can negatively influence the development of daughter". Elizabeth L. Barrett and Mark T. Morman (2013, p. 225) examine the transitional moment of change in perceptions of closeness within the father/ daughter relationship and "offers an attempt at expanding our understanding of the specific mechanisms through which father/daughter closeness is created, maintained, or dissolved". Amanda La Guardia, Judith A. Nelson, and Ian M. Lertora (2014, p. 344) carry out a research on the impact of father's absence on daughter sexual behavior and submit that "women from father-absent homes experienced earlier onset of menarche than those from father-present homes…". Qiong Xu (2009, p. 13) examines the outcome of father/daughter relationships during girls' adolescence in Urban China and asserts that "fathers are significantly less involved in care-giving tasks with their daughters than sons". Xu argues further that "we cannot conclude that fathers' effects on their daughters' lives are negative, especially in different social and family contexts" (2009, p. 13). This argument provides a compelling gap which this research intends to fill. It will put to test Xu's position. Further, Barrett and Morman (2013, p. 254–255) assert that "…father/daughter relationship has been historically under-studied in relation to other family dyads". Accordingly, this study attempts to make a contribution to this relatively limited area of scholarship because of its social and psychological impact on both fathers and daughters for Barrett and Morman (2013, p. 255) observe that "the relationship between father/daughter is one that spans a lifetime and plays a significant role in shaping both individual's identity".

It is evident from the foregoing brief review of literature that much of the work done in father/daughter relationship comes from a range of

disciplines in the social sciences and psychology. This paper wishes to extend this area of scholarship to the literary world where not much has been done by exploring father/daughter relationship in Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan* (1964), Ngugi wa Thiong'O's *The River Between* (1974), TsiTsi Dangaremgba's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006). The scope of this study is informed by the need to underscore father/daughter conflict and its outcome as a common trend within the African cultures. The aim is to create more awareness of the effect of dictatorial behavior of fathers on the well-being of their daughters.

Theoretical Framework

The conflict in the father/daughter relationship largely centers around masculine pride, male violence and the culture of conformity. Frederika Cronje (1997, p. 1) argues that "a meta-analysis of the trends in the fatherhood literature indicated a close relation between the construct of 'masculinity' and 'fatherhood". Toeing this line of argument, Petteri Eerola and Johanna Mykkänen (2013, p. 2) aver that "as parenthood is a highly gendered area, male parental roles and men's role in their families are bound up with the practices and cultural conceptions of masculinity". Therefore, the theory that lends itself to the thrust of this study is masculinity. There are many strands of masculinity such as hegemonic masculinity, Black masculinity, traditional masculinity and paternal masculinity. However, this study anchors its research on an integrated framework of traditional masculinity and paternal masculinity. Traditional masculinity according to Ander Bergara, Josetxu Riviere and Ritxar Bacete (2010, p. 27) "is a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, myths, stereotypes and behaviours that legitimizes and endows men with power to exercise it". They add that traditional masculinity is "an androcentric vision of the world within a patriarchal social and cultural system based on the idea of male authority and leadership. A system in which there is a predominance of men over women, where the structures of production and reproduction of power is largely grounded in inequality between men and women" (Bergara et al. 2010, p. 27). To Eerola and Mykkänen (2013, p. 3) paternal masculinity is "the social and cultural constructions and practices of male parenting that inform men's descriptions of their roles as male parents and that the men themselves

adopt and follow". They argue further that "paternal masculinity is "a subfield of masculinity that appears in men's family relations" (Eerola & Mykkänen, 2013, p. 4).

The system that maintains and sustains the social and cultural constructions of traditional masculinity and paternal masculinity is patriarchy. Bell Hooks (2010, p. 1) defines patriarchy as "a political-social system that insists males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females and with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence". Bergara et al. (2010, p. 27) define patriarchy as "a form of political, religious and socio- economic organization based on the idea of male authority and leadership, which grants the dominance of men over women. A definition of dictatorship is also pertinent to facilitate the study. *Vocabulary.com Dictionary* defines dictatorship as "government or a social situation where one person makes all the rules and decisions without input from anyone else. It implies absolute power—one person who takes control of a political situation, a family, a classroom…that in dictatorship one person keeps repeating the same command". In other words, dictatorship is synonymous to the absence of individual rights or liberty. It demands maximum and sometimes blind obedience to the rules/laws by members of a given group or community or family. Stiff penalties await any member who rebels against the rules/laws of the system. This study deals with family dyads, that of father and daughter. The homestead dictator therefore is the father whose headship of the family is synonymous with dictatorship.

Analysis of Texts

Nndozie F. Inyama (1996, p. 217) argues that in "patriarchal environments… relationships are male-focused and the father is the most significant member of the family, the source of authority and protector of family interests and well-being". Onyemaechi Udumukwu (2011, p. 194) adds that the father also emphasizes on "ownership, domination and submission". However, fathers' demand for unalloyed submission from their children oftentimes generates conflict. This is evident in the relationship between Babamukuru and his daughter, Nyasha; Jeremiah and his daughter, Tambudzai, in TsiTsi Dangarembgba's *Nervous Condi-*

tions (1988), Joseph Koégbogi and his daughter, Tioumbé, in Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan* (1964) and Eugene and his daughter, Kambili, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006). Others include Joshua and his two daughters, Muthoni and Nyambura in Ngugi wa Thiong'O's *The River Between* (1974).

TsiTsi Dangarembgba's *Nervous Conditions*

Nyasha's father, Babamukuru does not approve of anything she does. He loathes the words she speaks, the books she reads, the clothes she wears, the way she eats and forces her to conform to his notions of how she should live her life. At the slightest shift, he flares up and demands unquestioned obedience from her. He warns: "You must respect me. I am your father. And in that capacity I am telling you, I am-telling-you…" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 113). He reiterates that "not even her brother dares to challenge my authority…We cannot have two men in this house" (p. 115). Babamukuru's egocentric streak gives credence to Carol Ijeoma Njoku's argument that "the traditional avenues for men to gain honor include "exercising control over their wives and children" (2012, p. 350). Babamukuru relates with his daughter with such strictness that a big communication gap sets in between father and daughter. His despotic stance exacerbates Nyasha's adamance in negotiating her identity. She refuses to transform "you are" utterances *from her father* into "I am" utterances in constructing a self-narrative" (Godrej, 2013, p. 113 *addition mine*). Chinyelu Ojukwu (1999, p. 118) observes that "Babamukuru asserts his authority and power over his daughter while Nyasha asserts her individuality…" .

On one occasion, she returns home late from school and Babamukuru demands an explanation from her. She apologizes saying "I'm sorry, Daddy…I was talking to friends" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 112). He refuses to take her word for it because he has already drawn his conclusion: "You are lying… You were talking to that Baker boy… What were you doing?" (p. 113). She reiterates: "I was only talking. And dancing… He was teaching me a new dance… I wasn't doing anything wrong" (p. 113). Babamukuru as a harsh judge of his daughter's ways, retorts "…but you did it. I saw you. Do you think I am lying, that these eyes of mine lie?" (p. 113). Irritated, Nyasha rails at him: "What do you want me to say? You want me to admit I'm guilty, don't you? All right then. I was doing it,

whatever you're talking about. There I've confessed" (p. 113). Babamukuru queries his son, Chido, for letting his "sister behave like a whore without saying anything" (p. 114). At the mention of 'whore', Nyasha looks at her father "with murder in her eyes" (p. 114). She says: "should I worry about what people say when my father calls me a whore?" (p. 114). This war of words between father and daughter unfortunately culminates into a fight. "Both father/daughter went down on the floor, Babamukuru alternately punching Nyasha's head and banging it against the floor screaming "How can you go about disgracing me? Me! Like that! No, you cannot do it. I am respected at this mission. I cannot have a daughter who behaves like a whore" (p. 114-15). Nyasha too was "screaming and wriggling and doing what damage she could…" (p. 115).

Evidently, Babamukuru aims at Nyasha's femaleness by branding her a 'whore'. This recalls Christopher Babatunde Ogunyemi's argument that "crude words like 'prostitute' 'harlot' are freely used by male chauvinists to denote the image of the women folks in polarized African societies" (2014, p. 51). Tambu, her cousin's remark about the incidence is to the point: "…what I didn't like was the way all the conflicts came back to this question of femaleness. Femaleness as opposed and inferior to maleness" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 116). Filled with disdain, Nyasha from this point forward detests anything Babamukuru does. "Nyasha had a way of looking at things that made it difficult for her to be impressed by Babamukuru" (p. 158). For instance, she criticizes the Christian wedding he organizes for his brother, Jeremiah and his wife. She gets quite upset with it. Again, when Maiguru, Lucia and Ma'Shingayi pour crescendos of praise on Babamukuru for offering Lucia a job, Tambu longs to join the adoring women "to extol Babamukuru's magnanimity" (p. 159) but Nyasha, hissing, warns her: "Don't you dare" (p. 159). She tells Tambu that she "misjudged the situation. It was the obligation of decent people in positions like Babamukuru's to do so" (p. 159).

Babamukuru's image as a homestead dictator is accentuated through the food battle he engages with his daughter. He forces Nyasha to eat all her food whether she is hungry or not, full or not. She stands up to this battle by quietly gobbling up the food and thereafter going straight to the bathroom to force a vomit. Tambu disturbed, asks her if she is ill. She answers: "no… I did it myself. With my toothbrush" (p. 190). She intimates Tambu: "Imagine all the fuss over a plateful of food. But it's more than that really, more than just food. That's how it comes out, but really it's all the things about boys and men and being decent and indecent and

good and bad. He goes on and on with the accusations and threats, and I'm just not coping very well" (p. 190). Rosemary Moyana (1994, p. 32) confirms that "Nyasha's problem is compounded by the fact that she is a girl whom her parents expect miraculously and automatically to conform to their traditional ways". Nyasha feels so entrapped in the home with her father's severe presence that she wastes away gradually and finally comes down with a psychiatric problem. This is reminiscent of Scott, et al.'s argument that "when a father feels and displays mixed emotions toward an adult child, the adult child's health may worsen" (2012, p. 71). Babamukuru's brash egotism makes it difficult for him to notice his daughter's physical and mental depreciation. To Odoi et al. (2014, p. 157), Nyasha's mental illness "…is also a state where the individual is free from influences outside herself". Odoi et al's argument corroborates Charles Sugnet's submission that Nyasha's bulimia/anorexia is a form of resistance (1997, p. 45).

Tambudzai is denied the opportunity of continuing with her education because she is a girl. Her father, Jeremiah's preference to train his son, Nhamo, is influenced by a cultural assumption which considers education as a male preserve. Tambudzai bemoans her situation: "Yes, I did understand why I could not go back to school, but I loved going to school and I was good at it. Therefore, my circumstances affected me badly" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 15). Her strong desire to go back to school is received with Jeremiah's sarcastic remark: "can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables" (p. 15). This recalls Taiwo Ajala's argument that "the education of a girl is traditionally believed to be a waste of resources or a loss to the family of origin of a girl child" (2016, p. 7). Jeremiah tries to socialize his daughter into the expected gender roles of a girl-child with relish but Tambu refuses to be compartmentalized into the gender politics. She wonders if Maiguru, holder of a Masters' degree serves her husband, "Babamukuru books for dinner. I discovered to my unhappy relief that my father was not sensible" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 16). She resists the patriarchal definition of her identity as a girl-child and resolves to reap the full benefits of education. She announces to her father: "I shall go to school again" (p. 16). The battle line is drawn between father and daughter. She struggles to get money at a tender age of eight by growing and selling maize in order to pay her tuition fees: "I worked on the homestead in the family fields and on my plot" (p. 17). Onyeamaechi Udumukwu (2007, p. 105) posits that by sending herself

back to school "Tambu breaks the glass of tradition by demythicizing and therefore illuminating her father's construction of her". She is not ready to please her father because "there was no way of pleasing my father, nor was there any reason to. Relieved I set about pleasing myself which antagonized him even further" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 33). Tambu also complains that her father "…did not like to see me over-absorbed in intellectual pursuits. He became very agitated after he had found me several times reading the sheets of newspaper... He taught I was emulating my brother. …he threatened to take me out of school again" (p. 34). She confesses that her "father's idea of what was natural had begun to irritate me a long time ago, at the time that I had to leave school" (p. 33). So, both father and daughter "co-existed in peaceful detachment" (p. 34).

Despite the discouragement from her father who continually drums into her ear that "her sharpness with her books is no use because in the end it would only benefit strangers" (p. 56), Tambu relentlessly continues with her primary education. Through the help of her uncle, Babamukuru, she furthers her education to the secondary level. Tambu's success in disengaging herself from her father's dictatorial web is facilitated by her conscious emulation of Maiguru, an educated married woman with a Masters' degree. This gives credence to Farah Godrej's assertion that "the ability to scrutinize and reject dominant narratives while refashioning one's understanding may not simply arise ex nihilo: it may require hearing the voices of others to consciously emulate them in constructing certain kinds of voices within myself" (2011, p. 123).

Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan*

In Tioumbé's patriarchal milieu, man is granted absolute authority over wives and daughters. Her father, Joseph Koéboghi, affirms this when he declares: "lci, c'est chez moi, on me obéit" (This is my house. I must be obeyed) (Sembène, 1964, p. 239). Again, in this milieu, women are not allowed to exercise their franchise "…dans beaucoup de familles, seules les hommes voteront" (…in many families, only the men would vote) (p. 284). Intoxicated by this, Joseph Koéboghi, seizes the voters' card of his wife, Ouhigoué and his daughter, Tioumbé. While the mother succumbs, Tioumbé's revolutionist consciousness rises to fight against this oppression. She boldly asks for her voter's card from her father saying: "Père, tu n'as pas le droit de me traiter ainsi" (Father, you have

no right to treat me like this) (p. 245). The father seeing this as a challenge to his authority, resorts to violence by hitting her and Tioumbé retaliates by giving him "un coupe de tête" (a knock on the head) (p. 285). Joseph Koéboghi's assault on his daughter gives credence to Cronje's assertion that "violence provides a relatively easily accessible means of asserting and maintaining a masculine identity" (Ajala, 2016, p. 6). Joseph Koégbogi's exercise of dictatorship creates resentment in his daughter. Consequently, she packs out of her father's house informing her mother: "Je quitte la maison. Je n'ai rien ici. J'ai besoin d'être libre" (I am leaving this house. I don't have anything here. I desire to be free) (Sembène, 1964, p. 250).

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

At the beginning of the novel, Kambili is seen as a daughter that has great admiration for her father, Papa Eugene, in spite of his assault on her and the rest of the family. Her love for him sometimes makes her to defend his brutality. For instance, when Papa Eugene threw the figurines at her mother and they got broken, what she intended to say to her mother was "I am sorry papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, "I'm sorry your figurines broke, Mama" (Adichie, 2006, p. 18). In short, Papa Eugene occupies her world. She judges things from his point of view to earn his praise. For instance, she sees her grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu, through the eyes of Papa Eugene who labels the old man a pagan. She says to Aunty Ifeoma, "Papa-Nnukwu is a pagan. Papa would be proud that I had said that" (p. 89).

However, with Kambili's first visit to Aunty Ifeoma's house in Nsukka, her perception and admiration of her father begins to wane. Introduced to a life of freedom, she begins to see her father's attitude towards his family in a different light and questions his extremism. She sees her home as a prison and the occupants, prisoners. She compares the joy and freedom in Aunty Ifeoma's home, her cordial relationship with her children in spite of their poverty to the suffocation in her home of plenty where Eugene, the benevolent provider, is a dictator. Kambili begins to assert her individuality by the end of her second visit to Nsukka. Her contact with Papa-Nnukwu during this visit makes her question her father's judgment against Papa-Nnukwu. The offshoot is her defiance and

rejection of all that her father stands for including labeling Papa-Nnukwu a pagan. She "begins to discover her father's deficiencies in what she had previously deified as heroism and sacrosanct" (Njoku, 2012, p. 345). Again, while in Nsukka, she falls in love with Father Amadi, a Catholic priest, and expresses her sexuality openly. This is also a form of defiance against her father and his religious extremism. From this point forward, her attention shifts from Papa Eugene to Father Amadi who now occupies her world. She confesses: "Father Amadi's musical voice echoed in my ears until I fell asleep" (Adichie, 2006, p. 147). While Papa Eugene's voice elicits fear in her, Father Amadi's voice pulls her because it is melodious. She confesses: "…hearing my name in his voice, in that melody, made me feel taut inside" (p. 156). Father Amadi represents a symbol of care and love which is missing in her relationship with her father. She eventually proclaims her love for Father Amadi saying "I love you" (p. 280). Such an open declaration of love coming from a girl with a strict family background is ironic. It dramatizes the extent of Kambili's rebellion against her father. Her declaration of love to Father Amadi as Udumukwu (2011, p. 200) avers is also "in contrast to the traditional patriarchal constructs that subtly prohibit female expression for male attraction and desire for sex". Udumukwu (2011, p. 201) argues further that Kambili's meeting with Father Amadi "…is like partings of the eyelids to enable Kambili see herself as she truly is". Indeed, Kambili has changed. She becomes more and more aware of her father's dictatorship and consciously rebels against it.

Further, Kambili dramatizes her defiance against her father by carrying Amaka's painting of Papa-Nnukwu to her home, the consequences notwithstanding. Incidentally, Papa Eugene stumbles over this painting and Kambili is ready for war. She puts to test her resolution that "things were destined to not be the same, to not be in their original order" (Adichie, 2006, p. 215) any more. To Papa Eugene's question: "Who brought this painting into this house?" (p. 216), she answers crossly "Me…" (p. 216). As Papa Eugene tears the drawing into pieces, she "dashed to the pieces on the floor as if to save them, as if saving them would mean saving Papa-Nnukwu" (p. 216). He commanded her to get up but she "still did not move" (p. 216) to his amazement. He kicks her mercilessly while she lies on the floor, "curled tight like the picture of a child in the uterus…" (p. 216). This paper identifies with Daria Tunca's submission that "Kambili's retreat to the maternal womb may be perceived as a break away from patriarchal authority, (…) her willingness

to escape not only patriarchal violence, but trauma at large." (2009, p. 12–14). Tunca adds that "this act of resistance is probably her most overt challenge to her father in the entire novel" (Adichie, 2006, p. 12). After the beating, she closes her eyes "and slipped away into quiet" (p. 217). This could be interpreted as Kambili's withdrawal from Papa Eugene into a new life, a life of freedom. A new Kambili is born; free from paternal dictatorship. Akunwumi Olutola Olafisayo (2011, p. 127) affirms that "Papa's repressive rule has left her with a mind of her own". While in Nsukka after the last brutal beating, she refuses to pick up her father's calls. She does not want to see him anymore. She says "I did not want to talk to Papa, to hear his voice… I did not want to talk to him; I wanted to leave with Father Amadi, or with Aunty Ifeoma, and never come back" (Adichie, 2006, p. 272).

Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *The River Between*

Joshua forbids his daughter, Muthoni, from participating in the circumcision rite because of his faith in the Christian religion. But Muthoni does not want to function in her father's image. She resolves to participate in the circumcision rites. When her sister, Nyambura, pleads with her to drop the idea, she says: "I want to be a woman; I want to be a real girl, a real woman, knowing all the ways of the hills and ridges… Are we fools?... father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood" (Wa Thiong'O, 1974, p. 26). Muthoni is resolved to assert her personhood. So she runs to her Aunt in Kamene in order to participate in the circumcision rite. When Waiyaki questions her intrepidity, she explains "I want to be a woman… How could I be outside the tribe, when all the girls born with me at the same time have left me? I want to be a woman made beautiful in the tribe…" (p. 44). However, the desire of Muthoni is completely defeated at the resolution of the conflict because she does not survive the circumcision. Be that as it may, she dies a fulfilled woman. She says to Waiyaki before she gives up the ghost: "Tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman beautiful in the tribe" (p. 53). Sophia O. Ogwude (2011, p. 112) posits that Muthoni, "not even on her sickbed did she ever doubt her vision of a truly fulfilling synthesis of the African ideology of initiation into the ways of the tribe and, the Christian religion". Waiyaki's remark is signifi-

cant: "Muthoni has tried. Hers was a search for salvation for herself. She had the courage to attempt a reconciliation of the many forces that wanted to control her. She had realized her need" (Wa Thiong'O, 1974, p. 142).

Nyambura, Muthoni's sister is portrayed at the beginning of the novel as a victim of paternal dictatorship. "She was content to follow whatever her father said was right" (p. 26). Thus, when Waiyaki proposes marriage to her, she rejects the offer even though she loves him in order to sidestep inevitable conflict with her father, Joshua, "…for it was difficult for her to rebel against her father" (p. 114). However, her patience runs out when on a fateful day Joshua treats Waiyaki with disrespect by commanding him to leave his house. Her "inner forces" to use Maduka's words propel her into action. She bolts out of her father's house and holding Waiyaki's hands, declares her love to him: "You are brave and I love you" (p. 136). Her father is shocked. "He would never have thought this meek, quiet and obedient daughter could be capable of such an action" (p. 136). Meanwhile, her sister Muthoni, had earlier told her that she "too will make a choice one day" (p. 50). Nyambura does make a choice and elopes with Waiyaki. By so doing, Nyambura successfully debunks the myth that father's authority is supreme.

Nyasha, Tambudzai, Tioumbé, Kambili, Muthoni and Nyambura in their various encounter with homestead dictatorship evokes Chukwuma's observation that "the struggle for self-realization is carved out within the oppressive situation, be it marriage, the home or in the work place" (1994, p. xvii).

Conclusion

The paper delineates the causes of conflict in the father/daughter relationship and their effect on the psychological and social well-being of the daughters through the analysis of the texts under study. The paper demonstrates that the dictatorial behavior of fathers towards their daughters especially in matters relating to choice is the cause of daughters' revolt and the outcomes are devastating. Muthoni's struggle against paternal dictatorship leads to death while that of Nyasha leads to mental illness. Nyambura elopes with her lover while Nyasha and Tioumbé go the extreme by engaging in a physical combat with their fathers. These dangerous outcomes call to question Xu's assertion that "we cannot con-

clude that fathers' effects on their daughters' lives are negative, especially in different social and family contexts" (2009, p. 13). Daughters delineated in this study cut across different social and family contexts and the negative outcomes of their relationship with their fathers are graphically dramatized. The extremist stance of Nyasha and Tioumbé in their fight against paternal dictatorship is a sad reflection on the society. It does not serve a role-model function**.** It calls for flexibility and tolerance on fathers who maximize their paternal authority in their dealings with their daughters especially in matters relating to choice. Absence of this is the root cause of the father/daughter conflict as articulated by Nyasha:

> Sometimes I look at things from his point of view, you know what I mean, traditions and expectations and authority… and I try to be considerate and patient and obedient, really I do. But then I start thinking that he ought to look at things from my point of view and be considerate and patient with me, so I start fighting back and off we go again (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 190).

There should be room for negotiation and mutual understanding between fathers and daughters especially in matters relating to identity construction. Babamukuru, Jeremiah, Joseph Koégbogi, Papa Eugene and Joshua therefore serve as cautionary models whose authoritarianism should be avoided by fathers in their relationship with their daughters. Another dangerous outcome of the father/daughter conflict is that in the face of this drama, fathers are seen helpless, gradually losing their filial tie with their daughters. There is therefore the need for the deconstruction of paternal masculinity because of its dangerous outcomes as highlighted in this study. There is the need for fathers who have been caged by power and masculine pride to snap the chains and begin to see the need to respect their daughters' right to personhood. This invariably will advance an integrated human development.

Finally, there are remarkable similarities in the handling of the father/daughter conflict by the novelists under study in spite of the differences in their linguistic and geographical locations. Sembène, a Francophone, Ngugi and Adichie, Anglohones, employ the going-away motif to intensify the self-definition of the daughters. Sembène's Tioumbé in *L'Harmattan*, and Ngugi's Muthoni and Nyambura in *The River Between* flee the restricted space of their fathers' houses in search of self-fulfillment. Adichie's Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus* literally jumps out of her father's life and never wishes to see him again. Also, there are parallels between the

male-authored texts and the female-authored texts. Tioumbé, the protagonist of a male-authored text, *L'Harmattan* and Nyasha, one of the main characters of a female-authored text, *Nervous Conditions*, engage in a physical combat with their fathers to assert their personhood. Not only that, death is the outcome of the conflict between Muthoni and her father in *The River Between,* a male-authored text, and Nyasha and her father in *Nervous Conditions*, a female-authored text: Muthoni's is physical while that of Nyasha is psychological. Both male and female novelists' fascination with the nature of father's authority over daughters shows the extent of its significance. What Nyasha, Tambudzai, Tioumbé, Kambili, Muthoni and Nyambura have in common is the construction of an identity that is not based on the dictates of patriarchy but informed by the need to struggle against silence and passivity which are conceived as ornaments of the African woman.

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