

Archetypal Construction of Major Female Characters in the Works of Three Nigerian Novelists

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Abstract. The purpose of this essay is to examine the archetypal construction of female characters in the works of three Nigerian novelists. It explores Adimora-Ezeigbo's, Emecheta's and Adichie's portrayal of women in their maternal, spiritual, educative, domestic and productive capacities (or locations), in an exclusive patriarchal society, using Jungian model. The study argues that through the protagonists display of archetypal Mothers' perfections and innocent youth, the novelists use womanhood to project definitely positive images of healthy nations and humanity. It posits that Jung's position that universal images had existed since the remotest times, are more or less hidden somewhere in our biological, psychological and social natures. It concludes that the views of archetypes as collective unconscious are capable of being applied in all human endeavours in the real world.

Key words: Archetypes, universal images, Jungian collective, unconscious, archetypal Mother, maternal, spiritual locations.

1. Introduction

Literature everywhere is replete with negative or obnoxious characterization of women/female. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1966) for example present women as inferior beings, good only at telling unreal stories. Again, Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana's Daughter* (2006) sees women as nicest prostitutes that keep men pleasurably. For centuries, western culture had operated on the assumption that women were inferior creatures. Dobie {2009:105} captures this notion that leading thinkers, from Aristotle to Charles

Darwin reiterated that women / females were lesser beings. Comments from writers, theologians, and other public figures that disparage and degrade women abound. Dobie (2009) reveals that the Greek ecclesiast John Chrysostom (ca. AD 347-407) called women "a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil." (105) Ecclesiasticus, a book of the Biblical apocrypha states, "All wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman". Moreover, the book of Genesis 3:16-20 blames Eve for the loss of paradise.

Revered writers of later ages have been equally ungenerous in their descriptions of the nature of women. Dobie (2009:105) while quoting Alexander Pope (1688-1744), asserts that: "most women have no character at all". If Pope had claimed that most women had no character yet his mother was able to bring him up so that he was acceptable by the people as a great man. Now could he ascertain in his myopic opinion that women do not have character?

It is not surprising, given widespread acknowledgment of the inferiority of the female, that women too accepted their lesser status, Dobie {2009: 105} posits that even the French writer Madame de Stael (1766-1817) is said to have commented, "I am glad that I am not a man, as I should be obliged to marry a woman". It is not also understatement to state that when women did recognize their talents they sometimes worked to conceal them. Jane Austen (1775-1817), for example, advised, "A woman, especially, if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can". No matter how much she claimed a

woman should conceal what she knows, it is not possible. Why? This is because a woman's contribution is like pregnancy which cannot be hidden.

Feminists Reaction to Character Presentation

Feminists have often reacted negatively (even angrily) to some of Sigmund Freud's ideas about women – for example, that women suffer from an inevitable penis envy that makes them see themselves as *hommes manques* (Dobie 2009:106). How can people ever be given to the human nature of insulting women at will even in the process of developing or forming their characterization? The term “characterization” according to Harrison (1998:51-2), is the concept of creating characters for a narrative. It is a literary element employs in fictional works of art or in everyday conversation. These characters so created or structured may be presented by means of description through their actions, speech, or thoughts. Characterization attempts to disclose the individual personality which also reveals the mind and character of a people – female / women. And just as dreams reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of the individual, characterization is a literary symbolic projection of women's hopes values, fears and aspirations. The need for the society, culture, and literature to present available and acceptable female figure and experience worthy of commendation is the essence of characterization.

Speaking on the interest of some feminists, in probing the nature of the female personality and characterization, critics and writers try to identify a specifically female tradition of literature. Such explorations as Dobie (2009:119) asserts, have been particularly interesting to French feminists, who have found in Lacan's extensions of Freudian theory a basis for resisting the idea of a stable “masculine” authority or truth. Rejecting the idea of a male norm; against which women are seen as secondary and derivative, they call for recognition of women's abilities that go beyond the traditional binary oppositions, such as male / female and the parallel oppositions of active / passive and intellectual / emotional. Searching for the essence of feminine style in literature,

they examine female images in works of female writers and the elements thought to be typical of what Dobie (2009:119) calls *L'écriture Feminine*, such as blanks, unfinished sentences silences and exclamations. Early female images and goddesses become important as symbols of the power of women to resist and overcome male oppression.

One such critic who has been influenced by Lacan is Helene Cixous, who in “The laugh of the Medusa” (1976) explores the nature of the female unconscious and issues a call for women to put their bodies into their writing. Cixous sees women's writing as coming from a primeval space that is free of the elements of Lacan's symbolic order, such as the law of father. Cixous is not a lone voice on the “call to put women bodies into writing”; Elaine Showalter's Third Phase – the ‘female phase’ (1920- present) also concentrates on exploring the female experience in art and literature. For female writers, Showalter admonishes them to turn to their own lives for subjects. It also meant that the delicacy of expression that had typified women's writing began to crumble as a new frankness regarding sexuality emerged. Of course, Showalter (1985) refers to these latest efforts as ‘gynocriticism’ a movement that examines the distinctive characteristics of the female experience, in contrast to earlier methods that explained the female by using male models. (Dobie 2009:107) Cixous adds that the Voice of the Mother becomes the source of feminine power and writing. Her visionary perspective, further more enforces upon women to invent their own language, possibly heads toward the terminal marginalization of women's writing, despite the passion with which it is put forth. According to Sargent (2009:166) feminist have often been both criticized and laughed at, for proposing changes in language use to remove male bias. But taking the argument seriously and looking at the history of language (some feminist advocates that the word *history* itself can be read as “history” and prefer to use “her story”

2. Theoretical Framework: Archetypes

Having established the significance of female misrepresentation, characterization and a clue on

the accurate portrayal of women and their writings, there is need to examine its relationship to archetypes and archetypal patterns. Different writers and scholars have come up with various forms of definitions and explanations as underlying process towards approaching the term archetypes. According to an online internet source – “Archetypal Criticism”, the term “archetype” comes from a Latin word. “Arch” is an adjective meaning literary “chief” or “principal”. As a prefix, “typus” means an image” or “impression”. It refers to a general character, trait, or structure, commonly held in a certain group or class; it is an embodiment or example, a model with ideal features. A type may also be a figure, representation, or symbol of something to come.

By narrow definition, an archetype is an original model or type which similar things are patterned; a prototype; an ideal example. The foregoing could be linked to the general definition of archetype cited in *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1970) as

On original pattern from which copies are made or an idea of class of things representing the most essentially characteristic elements shared by the members of that class. (45).

In the two cases shown above, the concept of archetypes could be regarded as a universal phenomenon. Although the collective unconscious is not directly approachable, it can be found in archetypes, which Carl Jung (1980) defines as “universal images that have existed since the remotest times”. More specifically he describes an archetype as “a figure that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested”. It is recognizable by the appearance of nearly identical images and patterns found in rituals, characters, or entire narratives – that predisposes individuals from wholly different cultures, and backgrounds to respond in a particular way, regardless of when or where they live.

Goring, Hawthorn and Michell (2013:181) examine that the theory of archetypes is indeed multidisciplinary in orientation because it embraces a wide range of fields. It is capable of being applied in barely all human endeavours

ranging from literature, history, myth legend, folklore and ideology. Myths according to “In Search of Cupid and Psyche: Myth and Legend in Children’s Literature” take their specific shapes from the cultural environment which they grow. “Myth is ... universal”

3. Archetype Examples In Literature (Fiction)

In literature, an archetype is a typical character, an action or a situation that seems to represent such universal patterns of human race. An archetype also known as universal symbol may be a character, a theme, a symbol or even a setting. Many literary critics are of the opinion that archetypes, which have a common recurring representation in a particular human culture or entire human race, shape the structure and function of a literacy work. Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist, argues that the root of an archetype is in the “collective unconscious of mankind. The phrase “collective unconscious” refers to experiences shared by a race or culture. This includes love, religion, death, birth, life, struggles survival etc. As earlier posited, these experiences exist in the subconscious of every individual and are always often recreated in literary works or in other forms of art.

As a literature – related concept, the theory of archetypes stamps its identity hold on the three literary genres. In fiction (which is the main preoccupation of this paper) as well as in any of two remaining genres, archetypal images that recur in the myths of people widely separated in time and place, tend to have a common meaning or, more accurately tend to elicit comparable psychological responses and to serve similar cultural functions. Such motifs and images are called archetypes. State simply, archetypes are universal symbols. According to Wheel Wright (1962:111) such symbols (or images) are:

Those which carry the same or very similar meanings for a large portion if not all, of mankind. It is discoverable fact that certain symbols (images), such as the sky father and earth mother, light blood, up-down, the axis of a wheel, and others, recur again and again in cultures so remote from one another in space and time that there is no likelihood of any

historical influence and causal connection among them.

Moreover, archetypal images or symbols could be seen the light of another description called from *The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1975:48) as

...any idea, character, action and object, institution, event or setting containing essential characteristics which are primitive, general and universal rather than sophisticated unique and particular

4. Archetypal Criticism – Definitions and Misconceptions

We shall now see few of the definitions and misconceptions of which have been put forward by scholars to under pin the concept of archetypes. Of particular interest to literary critics is Carl Jung, who provides the concepts of the “collective unconscious” myths and “archetypes” which have helped readers see literature as an expression of the experience of the entire human species.

Explaining the concept further, Jung posits that when the universal images that have existed since the remotest times are subjected to further scrutiny, they would be found to be the resultant effect of cumulative experiences (which may have either been inherited or remote from the incidents that call them up in the mind) traceable to antiquity. Myths, he says, generated from these connections.

Although archetypes may have originated in the unchanging situations of human beings, such as the rotating seasons or the mysteries of death, they are not intentionally created or culturally acquired. Instead, they come to us instinctually as impulses and knowledge, hidden somewhere in our biological, psychological, and social natures. As John Sunford cited in Ann Dobie (2009:59), explains it, “archetypes”, form the basis for instinctive unlearned behaviour patterns common to all mankind and assert themselves in certain typical ways.” She (Dobie) announces that in literature we recognize them and respond to them again and again in new characters or situations that have the same essential forms we have met before and have

always known. For example when we meet Auntie Uju, or the Professor (Obinze’s mother), in Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013), we are connecting with archetypes, re-creations of basic patterns or types that are already in our unconscious making us respond just as someone halfway around the world from us might.

Archetypes appear in our dreams and religious rituals, as well as in our art and literature. They are media for the telling of our myths, which according to Jung are the “natural and indispensable intermediate stage between unconscious and conscious cognitions” (Dobie 2009:59).

By becoming conscious of what is generally unconscious, we integrate our lives and formulate answers for things that are unfamiliar, such as why we exist, why we suffer, and how we are to live. By uniting the conscious and unconscious archetypes make us whole and complete.

Living fully, Jung believes, means living harmoniously with the fundamental elements of human nature. In particular, we must deal with three powerful archetypes that compose the self. They are the “shadows”, the anima’ and the ‘persona’. All three are represented in literature.

The “shadow” is our darker side the part of ourselves we would prefer not to confront, those aspects that we dislike. It is seen in films as the villain, in medieval mystery plays as the devil, and in powerful literary figures like Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Chief Ayodele Olabisi in Chukwuemeka Ike’s *Our Children Are Coming* (1990) clearly confronts (and rejects) his shadow in the figure of his son, Ayo junior who is known to be living a nocturnal sexual oriented and indecent behaviour with the state governor’s wife in a hotel in Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro, a replica lifestyle of what Chief Olabisi had lived in his youthful days (7-16).

The “anima” according to Jung, is the “soul-image” the life force that causes one to act. It is given a Feminine designation in men for example (like The General and Bartholomew) in *Americanah* (2013), and a masculine one (animus) in women, indicating that the psyche

has both male and female characteristics, though we may be made aware of them only in our own dreams or when we recognize them in someone else (a process Jung referred to as projection).

The persona is the image that we show to others. It is the mask that we put on for the external world; it may be at all what we think, ourselves to be inside. The persona and anima can be thought of as two contrasting parts of the ego, our conscious personality. The former mediates between the ego and the outside world, the latter between the ego and the inner one.

In her own conception, Maud bodkin in Hakeem Kazeem (1997:13) sees archetypes as:

... narrative designs, character types or images which can be identified with varieties of literature, myth, dream and ritualized modes of social behaviour.

In an attempt to reconcile the past experiences which have ingrained themselves in the subconscious of man in the forms of beliefs and prejudices with the present, Maud Bodkin (1934) adopts the term “archetypal patterns” to that within us which in Gilbert Murray’s expression “leaps in response to the effective presentation in poetry of ancient theme”.

Northrop Frye also in *The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1970) defines archetype as:

.... an element in a work of literature whether a character, an image, or a narrative formula or an idea which can be assimilated into a large unifying category. (49)

Northrop Frye also helps to keep an archetypal light burning during the decades after the Second World War. All the definitions cited above depend to a large extent on the metamorphosis of images, symbols and ideas. They also demonstrate that it is possible for literary criticism to trace archetypal patterns in modern literature in a manner that is both creative and culture specific.

With the resurgence of feminist criticism, however, a new approach to the study of archetypes emerged. If the oppression of women was universal, then this would explain why myths reflecting this repression appeared at all

times and all places – without the need for any mystical or even biological explanation. Annis Pratt’s (1982:4) work is representative of the feminist appropriation of archetypal criticism. Pratt argues that Jung defined archetypes as primordial forms springing from the preverbal realm of the unconscious. That he did not intend his archetypal categories to be taken as fixed absolutes, but more as “images, symbols, and narrative patterns that differ from, stereotypes. She concludes that, it is possible to trace a relationship between the rise of women’s fiction and three interrelated repositories of archetypal materials..., the grail legends’ of the Middle Ages, and the cluster of archetypal and ritual materials constituting of the *Craft of the wise, or witchcraft*’ (1982, 167)

5. Archetypes in Character - Textual Analysis

5.1 The Mother Figure

In considering the strong female characters identified in the three books by the three eminent Nigerian novelists - Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo’s *Trafficked* (2008); Adichie Chimanda’s *Americanah* (2013) and Buchi Emecheta’s. *The New Tribe* (2000), the most striking commonality among the female characters is that they each represent the archetypal Mother. As mother, the characters represented in the works exhibit these character traits: nurturing, bossy or directive, helpful, patient, willing to make sacrifice organizing and facilitating maturity. Beside, the archetypal Mother also display practical vices or planners unselfish and persistent and hardworking helpful in times of crisis, confident and nurturing. These characteristics are not priori, but emerge separately to illuminate the archetype of Mother.

In Adimora – Ezeigbo’s *Trafficked* (2008), series of women are short listed as possessing all the above traits of archetypal Mother, except Lebechi who is a villain archetype. Firstly, Adaeze, Ogukwe Eke’s wife and Nneoma’s Mother is a good example of archetypal Mother. She is a living mother and respectful wife, and both her husband and children are always proud of her and her cooking skills (9) as a way of

acknowledging her immense wife and motherly contributions, Ogukwe, her husband calls her “Mrs (10). Adaeze insists always that their children are taught or exposed to positive and good habits, She points out to her husband Ogukwe that he spoils a six year old Nneoma, when he allows her to sit on his laps and plays with his moustache all day claiming monopoly of him to the detriment of her four-year-old-sibling, Mma (10-11).

Adaeze, gathers her strength and work hard to cater for the economic, social and moral needs of the four children and her husband. When Ogukwe loses his job as a clerk in the Internal Revenue Department in the Ministry of Finance in Enugu, he could not contribute to the up-keep of the home front. It is Adaeze that carries the burden alone. (8)(17) 6,9,84-5, 109-119). Ogukwe appreciates his wife thus: Mrs... I had lost hope but you continued to pray. Thank you, my wife. What can I do without you who have practically become the bread winner in this house (109)

Adaeze shows a sympathetic hearts and forgives Hannah, her first daughter, when she returns home to them (180). She initially disobeyed her parents and moved in with a fake prophet Elias as his tenth concubine even when he refuses to pay her bride price (44), because he calls it a barbaric custom which he claims should be banished (170; 45). Elias rather subjects her to severe beatings “as a punch bag when the prophet needs to unburden his pent-up emotions” (171). The novelist equally presents all the women in Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development OYCSD- Mrs. Ije Ejekan, the chairperson of the NGO Mrs. Ebiere Hart, matron in charge of the day-to-day running of the centre; Mrs. Vicky Lar, a director (51) Mrs. Nike Oderinde, managing director as unique mother archetypes, who take interest in reforming and transforming the lives of the young women, who have once been trafficked into prostitution industry in Italy and London.

The aims of these mother archetypes are to relate with the young women as if they were their own children. They put values in the young trafficked returnees to encourage them to gather

their lives and live again. The matron – Mrs Ebiere Hart willingly offers to help and encourage Nneoma by bringing her children’s JAMB past questions to her to enable her to prepare effectively for the examinations. Though she has made known to her (Nneoma) that:

...sending girls to the university is not part of the package we offer at Oasis... perhaps I can help you but this is personal and has nothing to do with Oasis. Three of my children are already at the university... I can give you some past JAMB papers. You might find them useful.... (161 -2)

It could have taken a real mother with amiable heart to seek for progress for other people who are not truly her own biological children. Furthermore, Efe, though still young, possesses archetypal Mother character. She discovers that socializing the female (girl) child by leading her to be conversant with the problems other females / women going through in a secluded patriarchal society; will be a healing to one another. Efe seems to carry the novelist’s notion of the campaign for self-healing. Thus:

... look, why don’t we just tell each other what happened to us perhaps finding our voices will help us heal (97)

She sees the issue of women bonding together by revealing or telling themselves of the experiences as being capable of relieving them of their burdens and ease them of their wounds. This is, because by the time one woman gets to know that what she is going through is not peculiar to her alone, she will lend to apply her heart for wisdom and love. She states:

Efe, your story is so like mind. Thank you for telling it, I feel as if a load has been lifted off my own shoulders.... What did I tell you? I said that telling our stories will heal us” Yes, I think I’ve actually been healed; Nneoma agreed. (100,136)

Who is this Mother archetype in Buch Emecheta’s *The New Tribe* (2000) that possesses that trait of female rescuer? Virginia, popularly known as Ginny assumes the role of archetypal Mother. She provides the care and love by looking after her aging parents, Mr. and Mrs. Perkins, retired colonial administrators living in Devon. Arthur Arlington, the newly qualified

curate also finds perfection and satisfaction in Ginny his newly wedded wife, because he observes that... *"Ginny's presence was soothing to him, in spite of her habit of nodding unnecessarily"* (1) Ginny amiable characteristics also qualify her as being simply God's gift to a local vicar. She soon realizes after her marriage to Arthur, who, though a good man, listener, who knows how to behave with his wife in public, is not a very sexual man. Again, she also realizes late that her blood group and Arthur, her husband, is Rh negative, and so have been advised not to have children (3) Yet she nurses the hope that one day she would be a mother.

Of course, her expectation soon materializes, when Julian, the local paperboy hands over a bundle of paper wedged in the large basket – a one-day-old-baby in a Tesco bag – a girl to them (3) immediately Ginny settles down to take care of her miracle baby so perfectly well as if she has been a mother before. Thus, Ginny's expert is in caring and bringing up Julia well, miraculously earns her a willingly and arranged adoption of Chester from a black mother (7), Ginny's charming mother attributes make Julia and Chester to cling to her in confident and trust She soon forgets that those children are not her biological children, but she loves and treats them as her own. Ginny's creative reasoning as a mother archetype, makes her feels so sad on those occasions when Arthur her husband, dispassionately punishes Chester for laughing desirously at Julia because she mistakenly falls and smashes her teacup on the tiled floor and her tea spreading around her feet (18).

Ginny expresses her motherly concerns so much when Chester leaves the house for Ray's house. She Ginny, and Julia could not rest until they have brought him home (21-22) She becomes extremely worried when, Chester refuses to act the king of the orients during the children's Christmas Party at this school (21-22). She nurses the wounds in her heart up to the point of displaying the costumes; she makes all night, for Arthur and Julia to see with love, just as it can happen in real life (21). A mother archetype expresses heartfelt love and pains mingle with concerns as it occurs in life over issues that are displeasing to her.

An archetypal Mother carries the burdens, challenges and pains affecting her children, husband and others at heart always. In *Trafficked* (2008) for instance, Adaeze bears the pains of their homelessness (since, a family of four live in a small mud hut that cannot even accommodate them) simply because her husband's late brother Ezeozo monopolized the concrete-corrugated-iron-house; which her husband equally contributed money for them to build together when the latter was still in service. The irony is that, even after the former's demise, his wife, the wicked Lebechi, continues in the acrimony and hatred just to shut her brother-in-law out of the property forever. Adaeze and her two daughters Hannah and Mama carry the family burden as much as they can without complaining, so that Ojukwe reflects:

He roused himself from drowsiness brought about by the heavy oily breakfast of "akara" and "pap" Adaeze had given him before leaving for Eke Obodo morning market with Hannah and Mama. Ojukwe felt proud of his women. They were the ones feeding and clothing the family... (210-211).

In *The New Tribe* (2000), Mrs. Miller is another mother archetype, She brings up her children responsibly, so that every one of them. Ray and his siblings are always well behaved" "... the teachers congratulated her on how her little boy was settling down at school..." (11). She goes to the extent of accommodating Chester and showing him love on the day that he (Chester) leaves his parents because he turns down the offer to take part in the school drama (21-22). She displays much smile and pleasantness, to others ..."

... when Mrs. Miller opened the door, the first thing you saw was her smile... but the welcoming smile never lecture face..." Hello love'. Everybody was 'love' Chester smiled to himself, remembered Ray saying crossly to his mother. One day burglars will come and all you'll say is 'hello love' (38).

Again, the novelist presents the elderly woman (Mrs. Babara Fisher) at Clinton chalets house as an archetypal Mother. The first time she sees Chester coming to seek for a job. She offers him

a cup of tea (29). She also gives as much food to Chester as he wants to eat. Mrs. Fisher is fond of teasing him that his appetite equals that of her nephew (32). Mrs. Miller, (i.e. Ray's mother) possesses enormous strength to work hard to take over the responsibility of being the bread winner for the family since her husband got sick and stop work at the mill. Ray comments "... I wonder where we'd be if not for Ma's job as a dinner lady!" (37). The novelist shows Julia in the positive light of a mother archetype, despite the fact that she is a little girl, she plays the role of a caring mother to Chester to protect him from the harsh hostility of Miss Slattery and the headmaster. She assures them that "... Mummy had told her to look after him (her brother). No one was going to pick on him" (11).

In cognizance with the examination of archetypal and feminist criticism in regards to mothers as sources of life and rescuers, each female character in the three novels is investigated as Mother. By analyzing the female characters as Mothers, Jungian theory (Jung, 1959; Knapp, 1984, Rowland, 1999), highlights archetypes as a kind of template or pattern in terms of literary criticism. Jung first linked the idea of archetypes found within primitive myths and rites (in much the same way) dreams hold symbolic meaning to offer an explanation of how symbols give meaning to our lives (Jung, 1964). Archetypes are "primordial images formed by repeated experiences in our ancestors lives, and inherited through the collective unconscious of the human race. (Riccio 1980)

Ginny explicitly shows the archetypal Mother because in spite of her cries, loneliness and sorrow of heart, following Julia's departure, and taking two thousand naira, the church's money (66); and Chester's rash decision to also leave, Ginny (68) without considering the fact that, the woman (Ginny) gave them life at one-day-old and eighteen-month-old adoption respectively. She still exhibits love and kindness towards them in absentia (71-72). Besides Ginny, the novelist portrays Esther Willoughby as an archetypal Mother. She introduces Chester to the secretary of the Education department where he intends to apply as a day student to be able to finish his college studies. (95)

Certainly as young adults read these influential and highly educative books by Admora Ezeigbo *Trafficked* (2008); Emecheta's *The New Tribe* (2000) Adichie's *Americanah* (2013); the archetypes of mother to the motherless are readily seen especially in Ginny, to Julia and Chester (the adopted children); Ifemelu's mother stands in the gap for Aunt Uju and of course, the Oasis women the matron Mrs. Ebieri Hurt, Mrs. Ejekam, Mrs. Vicky Lar and others, stand out elegantly with their unique motherly qualities love and care to the young deported trafficked girls. The archetypes of Mother to the motherless are readily seen in each of the three books.

In addition to archetypal criticism, feminist theory might be another means of empowering readers to interpret the characteristics of these mothers / female rescuers. By examining archetype Mother in *Americanah*, the novelist depicts Ifemelu's mother as a caring and loving woman who offers to bring Aunt Uju up, when her parents demised. She does not stop on the stage of physical care alone, she proceeds to encapsulate Aunt Uju and her men friend into a spiritual atmosphere that ushers her (Uju) to the quick break through she has with The General, as well as her medical profession in Nigeria (59-61)

The University of Nsukka woman Professor – Obinze's mother, is a real archetypal Mother. The first time she gets to know that Ifemelu is her son Obinze's girl friend, she accepts her warmly by inculcating in her (Ifemelu) the spirit of oneness with Maduegesi's family: Ifemelu observes;

She did not just let any one help in her kitchen. She was pleasant and direct, even warm, but there was a privacy about her, a reluctance to bare herself completely to the world, the same quality as Obinze. She had taught her son the ability to be, even in the middle of a crowd, some how comfortably inside himself. (87)

Obinze's mother (the professor) is discrete, realistic and wise, as a good mother would always be. She understands young people more and their uncontrollable urge for display of sexual emotion. On one occasion she leaves

Obinze and Ifemelu watching films to quickly purchase drugs from the pharmacy. They quickly cease that opportunity to relieve themselves of the youthful sexual lust with little thought that their mother might not know. But they are surprised as she comments.

Obinze's mother walked in and glanced at the TV. "You were watching this scene when I left". She said quickly "... Ifemelunamma, please come" his mother said, turning to go inside.. His mother asked her to come inside her bedroom, and asked her to sit on the bed.

"If anything happens between you and Obinze, you are both responsible. But nature is unfair to women. An act is done by two people but if there are any consequences, one person carries it alone. Do you understand me... "Have you done anything serious with Obinze? (89-90)

This act portrays the real character trait of a conscientious mother who does not want the girl-Ifemelu to make any mistake by taking everything for granted. She advocates the truth of her feminist stands that, women are always more sensible than men; and that Ifemelu should be the sensible one in the relationship with her son. That she should talk and convince him that both of them should agree, to at least wait until she is at the university to enable her to own herself a little more. She inculcates in Ifemelu the high sense of awareness of 'self discovery' which postcolonial feminists are positing to allow the girl (female – woman) to be empowered for the future. The essence is to prevent Ifemelu from regrets about tomorrow. Ifemelu adds:

Ifemelu nodded. She was sitting on Obinze's mother's bed, in the woman's bedroom, nodding and agreeing to tell her when she started having sex with her son. Yet she felt the absence of shame. (90)

Adichie carefully compares and contrast the feminists' ideals of Obinze's mother to Ifemelu's mother. To Ifemelu, Obinze's mother gives the mentoring advice that will prevent sorrows, pains and regrets in her (Ifemelu) at the end of the day. She clearly highlights to her what is expected of her, if she must be a total and self healed / asserted woman . She educates

her (Ifemelu) to be an ambassador of the women's vanguard, to assume the identity of a new woman who will break free from all the dominations and oppressions of patriarchal institution. She is very frank about the woman / man relationship, as an entity that can either mar or make Ifemelu into a real or unique woman. Little wonder, Ifemelu raises her emancipated self high although the story. That singular knowledge she acquires from the Professor keeps her focus to the end.

Unlike own her mother, who fails to make Aunt Uju to differentiate between appearance and reality. She could not inculcate in Aunt Uju the truth about men and their exploitative tendencies. Aunt Uju grows up only on the unrealistic aspect without understanding human nature. The General only keeps Aunt Uju for constant release of his emotional, illegitimate-sexual-desires each time he assembles one thing or the other—accommodation, money, job opportunity -- medical official at the island Clinic etc, for Aunt Uju. This blind decision to specify what she actually wants, in a relationship pushes her to get attached to a married- old- man. The General puts Aunt Uju in a family way, even when he has no lasting plan of getting married to her. To really show his oppressive tendencies, everything he has done for Aunt Uju, is on his name (106). Following his demise shortly after Dike's first birthday (105), the baby Aunt Uju delivers for him - the General's relations come around to attack her to collect all his property with Aunt Uju. Ifemelu smartly suggests to her to call Uche and Adesuwa for counsel. And they respond by advising Uju; *you have to leave immediately. Make sure you clear the house, take everything. Uche said, be fast before his people come back arrange to van and take the generator. Make sure you take the generator. (107)*

What Ifemelu's mother impacted upon Aunt Uju is what Roberts (*Online Internet Research*). Retrieved on 24/11/2014, refers to as "cooperative efforts or compromise".

In focusing on archetypal Mother throughout the three books Adaeze, Nneoma's mother, the Oasis women, and Dr. Chinelo Oke (the woman

Nneoma met at the University of London who rescued her and gave her to Ogimba to accommodate) take over the mothering of Nneoma throughout the book *Trafficked*. Ginny in *The New Tribe* establishes herself as a maternal figure to Julia and Chester, who does not only feed, and cares physically for them in the story, but she gives them essence of survival in all sense of the word. Chester observes, frantically about Ginny's (their foster mother's) positive character when Julia unreasonably condemns her as not knowing nothing 'about the real world' (64)

She adopted two children. Isn't that something? And one of them was black, too. She may be a vicar's wife, but she doesn't always toe the line. I think she's ready to be our friend now, and you need a friend... mum may not be a brilliant scholar, but you shouldn't underestimate her.... (64)

With words as fodder, Ginny's words of caring, admonishment, orders, advice, chastisements, compliments, lullabies, stories and finally the very messages woven in the web that project to Julia and

Chester that she loves them much more than Arthur Arlington (19)

Indeed, *Americanah* (2013), references the University of Nsukka Professor, Obinze's mother as mothering both Obinze and Ifemelu. She is no less a mother object, she also aids her son's girl friend, Ifemelu in her journey to maturity as a new self-discovery young woman ... *I want to advise you. I am aware that, in the end, you will do what you want. My advice is that you wait. You can love without making love... It is a beautiful way of showing your feelings, but it brings responsibility, great responsibility, and there is no rush. I will advise you to wait until you are at least in the university, wait until you own yourself a little more.* (90)

As well as showing motherly affection, Obinze's mother assertively stands up for Ifemelu and helps her to go for surgery, pays, accommodates, and cares for her throughout the ordeal (*Americanah* 2013:117). Even when Obinze's mother has educated Ifemelu before on vital

things to note about involving in a male-female relationship, she still prepares Ifemelu to grow into the unselfish awareness that, if she allows Obinze to lure her into early pregnancy, that she is the one that will suffer more since she is a girl (woman).

if you make the choice to be sexually active, then you must protect yourself. Obinze, you should take your pocket money and buy condoms. Ifemelu, you too.. you should never ever let the boy be in charge of your own protection. If he does not want to use it, then he does not care enough about you and you should not be there. Obinze, you may not be the person who will get pregnant, but if it happens it will change your entire life... And please, both of you, keep it between you. Diseases are everywhere. AIDS is real (*Americanah* 2013:118)

Obinze's mother ingenuity, assertiveness, and skill in creating the web certainly saves Ifemelu's life when she moves to America, to a more sophisticated life where everybody's life style beginning from Auntie Uju and Bartholomew, Laura, Kimberly Dori and others (197) seem to be morally decayed.

5.2 The Innocent Youth.

The second archetypal construction of female character is The Innocent Youth. The female innocent is inexperience with many weaknesses and seeks safety with others. People her because of the trust she shows in them. Usually, the experience of coming of age comes in the later parts of the narratives such as Nneoma in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* (2008), whose childhood has been characterized as a happy one, because her father and mother believe the sun resides in her smile. As a happy child, she explores the world around her and finds fun in all she does. She teases her teachers, annoys classmates and irritates her sisters and brother. The neighbours and strangers are not exempted from Nneoma's embarrassing questions. She asks them embarrassing questions like 'you have come to finish our food? You always come here when we are eating. Go and eat in your own house' (7). She is a joy to many, most especially her father Ogukwe Eke, whom she openly

confesses to someone one day, even when the person never asked her: “I like my father”... He is a good man’. (8) She grows up loved and cherished in a peaceful home in which she is the third of four children. She prefers always to sit on papa’s knee and pulls his moustache to the jealousy of Mma her last sister and her mother Adaeze. (10-11)

Nneoma’s innocence causes her to move away from home without breathing a word of her intention to any one in her family.(20) She allows herself to be taken to Italy in 1998, (25), and Britain,(20) in search of a better life because she has come to discover that the conditions in her home is deteriorating, since her father lost his job as a Clerk in the Internal Revenue Department in the Ministry of Finance, Enugu (70-71). She believes that the mother is suffering too much to raise them. Nneoma’s quest for a better living brings her to the stark reality of prostitution in which Madam Dollar (15) and Baron (16) use her to make money from the pimps that patronize them. When Nneoma is deported and taken to Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development OYSCD, she has tasted a bit of maturity, that is why she is ashamed (55, 59) to face the reporter and journalist who try to extort information from her at the airport. The novelist is more or less depicting that Nneoma at innocence is not ashamed or afraid of nobody, since she does not imagine evil (sins) in her heart. But as she journeys into maturity, she discovers that certain wrongs attract societal wrath and condemnation.

By considering Emecheta’s *The New Tribe* (2000), one notices that the innocent Julia, Arthur Airlington’s foster daughter, is not afraid to cuddle round her mother Ginny (13). She lives an-open-plain-life-style which she could relates with her foster mother on all levels, even to the extent of reporting events that happen at school. (22). No sooner has she grown up, than she begins to fiddle with adults lifestyle. She is pregnant by Ray without knowing how to manage the situation in the Parish villa. She hides the truth from her mother and Chester. Again having a baby when she is still not married, will truncate her ambition which is to study at the university (58). And above all,

Chester sympathizes with her that she is too young to handle the situation of having a baby outside wedlock (62). How can a vicar have an illegitimate grandchild (63) which will amount to shame and reproach. Julia takes the decision and walks out on the parents without considering how they will feel about the whole event. Emecheta shows that Julia as a little innocent girl has beautiful many plans about life than just “... setting up home in a terrace house in the village”. She does not want to end up like mum, running Mothers’ Union Meeting (63).

The novelist by developing the Innocent Youth archetypes in the book, points out sarcastically the weaknesses of religion and the vicar’s family (44; 61). How could a religious family not being able to instill the right moral principles in their children? How could they have been able to look outside alone and concentrate only on spiritual growth and well being of members the church at the detriment of their own children? All through the story, Emecheta points out Arthur and Ginny Airlington weak points. They have never for once gathered for prayers or bible studies, unlike in the case of Ifemelu, the innocent youth in Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013), whose mother grooms her under a very saturated religious influence (55-62). She (Ifemelu’s mother) prays, studies the bible, and changes churches when she receives spiritual directives, revelation, or vision concerning a particular church. She decrees at all point the positive things she wants for her children (Ifemelu and Auntie Uju), husband, even for The General-Auntie Uju’s man’s friend. The point we are making here is not that, Ifemelu grows up as a saint who does not harbour evil through, or keep wrong association of friends or what. There is a time her mother pulls her ear when Ifemelu says something wrong to sister Ibinabo (66-67).

But one way or the other, she keeps her moral uprightness to a certain extent. She is seen from time to time adjusting Auntie’s Uju’s attitudes, though younger than her. She (Ifemelu) is able to keep sanctify a bit in America because she never becomes obsessed with the middle class American friends and room-mates who are drunk with partying spirit (69, 97, 99, 137, 147-149, 170-173 etc). A close look at the female

character archetypes from a Jungian perspective in the three novels depicts that, they are not only driven by their own personal experiences, but what Sorensen (2013) asserts to be deeper and more universal forces of the “collective unconscious”. It has been earlier pointed out in this study that the collective unconscious is, at least from a Jungian perspective, an integral part of archetypal criticism.

6. Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that the major characters exhibit clear archetypal Mother functions of kindness, love, care, spiritual and psychological upbringing of children as it occurs in real life situation. Chester in *The New Tribe* (2000) encourages Julia to rely more on Ginny by getting her involved in her early – pregnancy condition because “... There’s more to her (Ginny) than it appears, you know, Jules, (64). Besides, a mother archetype is always the children’s friend, good listener and problem carrier – Adaeze, the Professor, Ginny, Oasis women, Dr. Chinelo, Efe, Ifemelu, Julia etc all carry the problems of other people at heart and proffer solutions to them.

The novelists state emphatically that children are at their best, when they remain at their innocent stages. But that as soon as they move away from innocence, they make grievous mistakes that can cost their lives. The novelists posit that the problems associated with innocent youth are more or less a rob off on the adults’ culture.

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