

Solastalgia and Nostalgia as the Dual-Task Paradigm of Analysis in Abubakar Adam

Ibrahim's Season of Crimson Blossoms

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an analytical study that discusses solastalgia and nostalgia as the dual-task paradigm in Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* (2016). The study intends to use psychoanalytic theory in analysing the text under review. The psychoanalytic theory is employed in this study to serve as a guide and to put it into better perspective in analysing the text from the concepts of solastalgia and nostalgia. The research has explored the themes of solastalgia and nostalgia in the major characters, Hajiya Binta and Reza, and, to some extent, the author himself. The study has taken into cognizance the bond Ibrahim has with his birthplace, Jos, which shows how nostalgic he becomes as he tries to express it in the text. Solastalgia, on the other hand, is a neologism that further emphasises how deeply connected the author is to his beloved Jos. When the two concepts, solastalgia and nostalgia, are juxtaposed, they show how psychologically attached the above-mentioned characters and the author are to a place they regard as home, and now, for some reason, they no longer live there. The novelty of this study is that it provides a new perspective on the analysis of the text under review by looking at it through the concepts of nostalgia and solastalgia using psychoanalytic theory.

KEYWORDS: Solastalgia, Nostalgia, Psychoanalytic Theory, Abubakar Adam Ibrahim

INTRODUCTION

This research is set to investigate the concepts of solastalgia and nostalgia in Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* by looking at it from a psychological point of view. The application of psychoanalytic theory to the novel unravels the psychological condition of the protagonists as

well as the author. The novelty of this study is the application of the above-mentioned concepts in studying the text under review.

The concept of "solastalgia" refers to the emotional anxiety that is caused by environmental changes. The Australian philosopher and environmentalist Glenn Albrecht coined the term "Solastalgia" in 2005, forming it from a combination of the Latin word for solace and the Greek root for the word pain (algia). In "Solastalgia: A new concept in health and identity," Albrecht defines solastalgia as "the homesickness you have when you are still at home" (42). Albrecht maintains that solastalgia is an effect of global climate change, affecting the psychological wellbeing of an individual or a community (45). Furthermore, the concept of solastalgia has been used to demonstrate the anxious, abnormal feelings of the protagonists as well as the author in the text under review.

Nostalgia may be seen as a longing for the past. It is a reminiscence of what one used to do in the past. It could be a childhood memory, and now the person has outgrown it and wishes they could still do it in the present. Tim Wildschut (2006) sees nostalgia as a neurological condition that refers to the adverse psychological and physiological symptoms displayed by individuals that include symptoms such as persistent thoughts of home. He goes on to describe how nostalgia has long been equated with homesickness. Niklas Salmose (2018) postulates that nostalgia evokes the experience of childhood that is the closest thing to actually reliving the past childhood as we can get, and it stems from our adulthood, which is implicitly present through the experience. He goes on to explain how the oscillation between past and present, which is an essential aspect of nostalgia and differentiates it from ordinary remembrance, is thus not inherent in the text but in the relationship between the text and the reading situation. Although this aesthetic practise is not

very frequent, there are other occasions. The study uses the above-mentioned concept to provide a new perspective on the analysis of the text under review. Looking at the text from the angle of nostalgia and solastalgia gives a fresh perspective and contributes to knowledge. The perspective we took is considered the novelty of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a lot of literature published about the novel, *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. This article attempts to look at other literary works in order to fill in any gaps that may still exist by adding something new to the debate. This study is unique in that it looks at the concepts of solastalgia and nostalgia in the novel and seeks to come up with a new perspective. The study also looks at Ibrahim's and other characters in the novel's memories of their past.

James and Dauda (2016) look at the novel from the feminist viewpoint. They take into consideration some traditional cultural practices that place men above women. They go on to describe such practices as harmful because they deny widowhood rites, wife inheritance, women's disinheritance, and early and forced marriage. Others include female genital mutilation, discrimination against children or preference for male children, and food taboos. Although these practices differ from one community or ethnic group to another, they are most prevalent in rural areas and are usually enforced by relatives, community members, or religious leaders under the pretext of culture or religion. The study concentrates on how some characters, like Hajiya Binta, were denied their right to marry a man of their choice. Because of tradition, they must spend almost their entire lives with a man they never love. The present study is different because it looks at the concepts of solastalgia and nostalgia in some selected characters such as Hajiya

Binta. Unlike this study, the present study is not a feminist study that concentrates on the female characters, but some major characters on how they are nostalgic about the past and their former environment.

Okpala (2020) also considers the work from a feminist standpoint. She claims that the work exposes the suffering of women in Hausa society, which she claims is exacerbated by institutionalised patriarchy and excessive religiosity. Ibrahim specifically excoriates the absurdity of discriminating against cultural strictures like the practise of shyness or feeling of decorum, which acts largely to repress libido and hinder a woman's display of love and devotion towards her first son or children, according to her. She goes on to say that the work is about feminist issues, including forced and underage marriages, polygamy, ageism, and patriarchy's desexualization of older women. This study differs from the current study in that it examines the text from a feminist perspective and does not address other topics such as solastalgia and nostalgia, as the current study does.

In his article *A Wetness in Dry Places: Sex and Taboo in Abubakar Ibrahim's Season of Crimson Blossoms*, Chukwuemeka (2019) examines the existential tragedy of sexual freedom by examining the extent to which a sexual relationship that is taboo in a given social milieu is a recipe for self-realization. Making use of a feminist perspective on existentialism. According to him, the study illustrates how George Lukács and Arthur Miller's notions of contemporary tragedy are formed by an individual's desire to transcend beyond the ordinary by escaping from being a sexually deprived human to becoming one who reacts to the body's demand for unfettered sexual pleasure. Unlike the current study, which focuses on women's sexuality in

northern Nigeria and how they are denied the freedom to express their sexual impulses, the current study uses solastalgia and nostalgia as its analytical paradigm.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Meyer Howard Abrams (1999), psychological criticism views literature as a fictitious manifestation of the author's state of mind and personality structure. He shades light on how Freud describes literary artists as having unique skills that set them apart from the neurotic type. Therefore, a work of literature should be analysed bearing in mind the psychological state of mind of the writer and the character, which, according to Howard, has a great influence on the way they think and behave.

Dobie (2012) noted that the interpretation of dreams, according to Freud, addresses the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis, a treatment in which a patient talks to an analyst about dreams, childhood, and relationships with parents and authority figures. She takes into cognizance phenomena such as free association slips of language and dreams, which are significant in how an individual thinks and acts, which invariably affect their creativity. Freud devised a method for an analyst to help a patient uncover the painful or threatening events that have been repressed in the unconscious and thus made inaccessible to the conscious mind. She added that, in psychoanalytic criticism, the same topics and techniques form the basis for analysing literary texts.

For the purpose of this study, this paper has adopted psychoanalytic literary theory. The use of psychoanalytic theory in this study provides insight into the idea and, as a result, adds uniqueness to the study, as prior studies have not applied the concepts of solastalgia and

nostalgia and aligned them with psychoanalysis. Thus, the study is going to provide a fresh perspective on studying the text. By critically examining the above-mentioned concepts in reference to the text, the psychology of the affected characters will be looked at, and to come out with a conclusion on why they are attached to certain places they call home and the bond they have.

In this regard, the study focuses on the conceptualization of psychoanalysis and the explanation it provides in using the concepts adopted for the study.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Ibrahim has a deep emotional attachment to Jos, his birthplace, shown by his actions in the novel. Ibrahim, who was born and raised in Jos, has a strong attachment to the coal city, despite the fact that he has now relocated to Abuja to pursue a career as a journalist.

The narrative focuses around Hajiya Binta, a major character who lived in Jos with her husband until he was murdered by a mob of religious fanatics during the city's incessant crises. Yaro, her son, was subsequently murdered in the city by police. These incidents have stuck with her for a long time. That is why she aches for the area where she lost two of her most significant men. Despite the fact that she married Malam Zubairu against her will when she was a teenager, the moment they had together remains etched in her mind years after her son, Munkaila, relocated her to Abuja. Even though she is not allowed to love her first son, Yaro, according to custom, she misses the time they had together before he was killed. She laments the fact that she was unable to offer him love when he was with her. Despite the fact that she had no romantic moments with her late husband, she faithfully carried out her duties as required by tradition.

Hajiya Binta and her family had relocated to Abuja years before the story begins, yet she still recalls with nostalgia her past in Jos. That's why, when she has a sexual escapade with Hassan Babale, Reza, a twenty-nine-year-younger boy, he reminds her of Yaro, her first son, and their life in Jos. These incidents demonstrate that Hajiya Binta is psychologically attached to Jos and her previous life there. Hajiya Binta finds it difficult to forget her previous life and the people she lived with, which is where psychoanalysis comes into play. Her emotional commitment to the past has most likely prevented her from remarrying years after her husband, Malam Zubairu, died. Despite the fact that she has received marriage proposals from people such as Malam Haruna, her suitor, who has expressed his desire to marry her. And it is possible that her former life with her late son, Yaro, is the reason she sees him in Reza, a drug dealer and the top thug at the San Siro, a neighbourhood hangout for minor crooks involved in mugging and drug trafficking. Her previous romance in Jos has had a psychological impact on her current life. She yearns for the days gone by.

Before moving to Abuja and becoming a gangster in Sansiro, Reza is very attached to his childhood and his old home. His interaction with Hajiya Binta brings back memories of his mother. That is why despite having numerous girlfriends at the hideaway, he continues to see her. Every time he looks at her, he sees the mother he misses so much that James and Dauda (2016) argue that their antics were incestuous because she reminded him of his mother, and he reminded her of her son:

She had not meant for it to happen, the heady events of that afternoon. At least not exactly the way they had. It all seemed like a blur now. She remembered him looking at the fading scar on her neck and saying how sorry he was. The

little spark of concupiscence deep within her had burst into a flame... she knew then that her search for Yaro in the eyes of a stranger had unshackled her long-suppressed desires and left the objectionable stench of fornication clinging to her (57-58).

Faiza has been scared by her past, having witnessed the horrific killings of her father and brothers during one of Jos' crises. Because of the relationship she enjoyed with her late father, she finds it difficult to forget the horrific incident fifteen years later. Another regret is that she has no recollection of her brother's looks due to the passage of time and changes in the environment. Her father and siblings were brutally murdered by so-called religious extremists, leaving her with a void that she would nearly have to fill for the rest of her life. The anguish of losing these men in her life resurfaces every time she recalls the traumatic event. She is constantly nostalgic for the wonderful life she had with her father and siblings when she was younger and in a different environment. Solastalgia develops as a result of this.

CONCLUSION

In light of the preceding, this research investigated the link between literature and society, employing the dual-task paradigm in psychoanalysis using solastalgia and nostalgia to investigate the concepts in the characters of Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. Thus, the study has established that the two concepts, solastalgia and nostalgia, are experienced by some characters in the text, Hajiya Binta, Reza, and Faiza, and, to some extent, the author himself, in influencing their behaviour. The current study is unique in that it examines

the text from the psychological postulations utilizing the two concepts under consideration as the core of character creation and personality construction. It also considers current sociopolitical events in Nigeria, which influenced the writer to portray his characters in that light.

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