The Interplay of Literature and Psychology in Literary Productions: *Lonely Days* and *Madame Bovary*

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**ABSTRACT**

The interrelatedness of the study of literature and other disciplines such as Psychology is one of the basic tenets of Comparative Literature. Psychoanalysts maintain that the unconscious is the storehouse of our childhood painful experiences and emotions expunged from our consciousness because we do not want to know and be overwhelmed by them. Thus, they organize our current experience: we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to “play out”; without acquiescing it to ourselves, our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress. With psychoanalytic criticism as the theoretical framework and textual analysis as our methodology, the objective of this study is to establish how Literature and Psychology, the two different disciplines, interplay through the archetypes: Yaremi and Emma Bovary in *Lonely Days* (2006) and *Madame Bovary* (1857). This study analyzes the personalities of these heroines and how they react to their instinctual impulses as their id remains in search of their lost object petit a in the face of the psychological events of their daily lives. We discover the creators’ societal criticism through these archetypes; while one is narcissistic and the other pessimistic as a result of their ego’s excessive deployment of defense mechanisms.

**KEYWORDS**

Comparative literature; psychology; literature; psychoanalysis; archetypes; defense mechanisms

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1. Introduction

One of the basic tenets of Comparative Literature is the discipline’s interest in the inter-disciplinary nature of the study of literature. The study of the relationships between
literature on the one hand, and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts, the social sciences, the sciences, religion, etc., on the other hand, simply foregrounds the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression (Remak 1). In collaboration with this opinion, Zepetnek postulates that the discipline of Comparative Literature is, in its totality, a method in the study of literature in at least two ways. First, Comparative Literature means the knowledge of more than one national language and literature, and it means the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature, and second, Comparative Literature has an ideology of inclusion of the “Other,” be that a marginal literature in its several meanings of marginality, a genre, various text types, etc. (Zepetnek, "About the Situation"178). Comparative Literature has intrinsically a content and form, which facilitate the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature and it has a history that substantiated this content and form.

The above definitions of the discipline of Comparative Literature are in collaboration with the position of Wellek et Warren positing that “le terme de littérature comparée s’applique exclusivement à l’étude des relations entre deux ou plusieurs littératures” (66), which implies that “the term comparative literature applies exclusively to the study of the relationships between two or more literatures.”¹ They further give the definition of Comparative Literature as “celle qui l’identifie à l’étude de la littérature dans sa totalité, à la littérature mondiale, à la littérature générale ou universelle,” (that which is identified with the study of literature in its totality, with World Literature, with General or Universal Literature).

In view of the above, the discipline of Comparative Literature is distinct and unique. However, the literary theories have only made the task of interdisciplinarity; the borrowing of theories from other disciplines and the application of the appropriated method that Henry Remak, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and René Wellek and Austin Warren are advocating, a bit easier to fulfill. This is contrary to the opinion of Susan Basnett in her Introduction to Comparative Literature that the discipline is dead and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s similar suggestion with the title of her book Death of a Discipline (that is to say, Comparative Literature), it has only rendered the task of the interrelatedness of a discipline such as psychology with literature slightly straightforward and simple.

In one of his definitions of the basic factors that determine the relationship between psychology and literature which concerns this study, Edel opines that literary psychology is the study of the structure and content of a literary work, the imagination that has given it form and pattern, the fantasy that it embodies, the modes of human behavior it describes – a study of all this in the light of what we know of the unconscious and the integrative functions of the personality (142). It is worthy of note that the interrelatedness of a discipline and literature can be established through several other methodologies of Comparative Literature. But for the purpose of establishing the interrelatedness and interplay, and not the superiority of one over the other, a theory in the discipline of psychology will in no small measure facilitate the analysis of the literary archetypes; Yaremi and Emma Bovary, as this will foreground the interrelatedness and complementarities of these two disciplines. The psychoanalytic criticism propounded by Freud is adopted for the deconstruction of the personalities of the archetypes in this study.

All said and done, psychoanalysts extrapolate that our behaviors are triggered largely by powerful forces within our unconscious mind, which we are not aware of. Our childhood as well as adulthood experiences that are already repressed shape these forces and play some important roles in determining, energizing, and even giving directions to our behaviors.
Hence, the objective of this study is to establish the relationship and complementarities between psychology and literature by using the critical tool of Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory to analyze how the unconscious mind of the literary archetypes; Yaremi and Emma Bovary, determines, energizes, and even directs their behaviors, thereby establishing the relatedness of Psychology and Literature. Also, we wish to bring it to the foreground how the intra-psychical conflicts in their psychic apparatus; the id, the ego, and the superego, influence their personalities. Nevertheless, it will be very important to briefly consider our theoretical framework as well as the methodology of textual analysis adopted which precedes the analysis of the interplay of Psychology in Literature in these literary pieces under study before the conclusion and recommendations.

1.1. Theoretical framework and methodology: Freudian psychoanalytic criticism

Abrams and Geoffrey maintain that psychological criticism deals with a work of literature primarily as an expression, in an indirect and fictional form, of the state of mind and the structure of personality of the individual author. This approach emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century, as part of the romantic replacement of earlier mimetic and pragmatic views by an expressive view of the nature of literature (289). Before we consider the psychoanalytic criticism, it is paramount to take a cursory look at psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a discipline that studies the human mind and maintains that it contains a dimension that is only partially accessible to consciousness and then only through indirect means such as dreams or neurotic symptoms; whereas the “unconscious” according to Freud, is a repository of repressed desires, feelings, memories and instinctual drives, many of which have to do with sexuality and violence. In the French language, the discipline of Psychoanalysis is known as “la psychanalyse.” According to Hamadn,”la psychanalyse est l’étude de l’inconscient dans le comportement humain”(84), which implies (psychoanalysis is the study of the unconscious in human behavior). This opinion corroborates Robert (465) who opines;

According to psychoanalysts, our behavior is triggered largely by powerful forces within our personality of which we are not aware. These forces, shaped by childhood [as well as adulthood] experiences, play an important role in energizing and directing our behavior, in a subverted form.

This implies that every one of the repressed infantile demands comes back to dictate our behaviors in new subverted forms.

Now, psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism, which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature (Barry 96). This consists of Freudian theories relating to the mind, instincts, and sexuality, and is based on the premise that human behavior is driven by an unconscious process. Freud maintains that to fully understand personality, the illumination and exposition of what is contained in the unconscious is de rigueur. According to Freud, the structural model of the unconscious contains the psychic apparatus of the id, ego, and superego. But in this study, our attention is focused on the id and the unconscious which houses the repressed childhood as well as adulthood experiences where they remain inaccessible to the consciousness and the manners in which the ego and superego conflict intra-psychically.
1.2. The unconscious and the psychic apparatus

Freud, reasoning that everything forgotten by a patient must have been somehow distressing; alarming, painful, shameful, concludes that this was precisely why it had been expunged from the conscious memory. Tyson describes the unconscious as the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about, because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them. The unconscious comes into being when we are very young and its growth continues in adulthood through the repression – the expunging from consciousness, of these unhappy psychological events (12–13). However, the repression does not eliminate those painful experiences and emotions. Rather, it gives them force by making them the organizers of our current experience: we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to “play out,” without acquiescing it to ourselves, our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress.

Freud maintains that by definition, the id is unconscious. The id comprises the unorganized part of the personality structure that contains the basic drives. It acts according to the “pleasure principle,” seeking to avoid pain or displeasure impulse by increases in instinctual tensions. It is the dark inaccessible part of our personality that contrasts the ego. It is a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations. It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts without organization, produces no collective will, but only striving to bring about the gratification of the infantile demands subject to the observance of the pleasure principle, even to the detriment of the host. Developmentally anterior to the ego, it contains our biological drives, everything that is inherited, that is present at birth. The desires of the id are almost always in conflict with the norms of the superego – representing the societal norms, laws and values -, as well as the intervention of the ego. Anna Freud, the daughter of Sigmund Freud, is of the opinion that the ego deploys some defense mechanisms to protect itself from the pressure that follows the conflict between the id and the superego.

The ego, representing the self, is according to Freud, the only part of the mind in touch with reality. Evolving from the id, the ego, functions as a communicative tool with the external world. As the only part of the psyche in touch with reality, the ego, which is governed by the “reality principle,” and this ego should dominate a person’s personality. Despite its ability to govern the strong urges of the pleasure principle of the id, the ego can lose control and succumb to the id’s most basic sexual and aggressive impulses. Susceptible to anxious torment, the ego must, in full view of the external world, inhibit the infantile demands of the unconscious, the preconscious and the conscious self. Predictably, the ego represses any socially inappropriate emotions, relying on defense mechanisms to protect it from angst (Feist et al. 29).

The superego, according to Freud, represents the moral and ideal aspects of one’s personality. Evolving from the ego, the superego, contrary to the ego, is not in touch with the external world. Subsequently, the superego is indifferent to the bien-être of the ego, and exerts unrealistic demands on the ego in its quest for perfection. As earlier noted, inappropriate emotions, and, aggressive impulses are repressed by the ego. Nevertheless, failure of the ego to timely regulate or repress these impulses in accordance with the superego’s moral ideals may result in a feeling of guilt and anxiety. Furthermore, should the ego fail to meet the superego’s high moral demands, feelings of weakness and inferiority set in and prevails (Feist et al. 30).
This analysis of the interrelationships of psychology and literature will focus on Freudian theory relating the interaction between the psychic apparatus; the id, the ego, the superego and the unconscious. Furthermore, this article will also utilize Anna Freud’s theory relating to human behavior and defense mechanisms in order to better interpret some of the protagonists’ actions and behaviors. The principal defense mechanisms identified by Freud and later refined by his daughter Anna include repression, displacement, regression, projection, introjections, and sublimation. The methodology adopted in this paper is that of textual analysis.

2. The interplay of literature and psychology in the literary productions

While Adebowale’s *Lonely Days* meticulously presents the despicable conditions of widowhood, the loneliness and socio-cultural *dewomanization* that also accompany the tribulations and ordeals in which the African widows are subjected to live in the African patriarchal societies as the male folk betray, *objectify* and relegate the womenfolk into the background in the tussle for supremacy. *Flaubert Madame Bovary* tells the bleak story of a marriage that ends in tragedy. Charles Bovary, a good-hearted but dull and unambitious doctor with a meager practice, marries Emma, a beautiful farm girl raised in a convent. Although she anticipates marriage as a life of adventure, she soon finds that her only excitement derives from the flights of fancy she takes while reading sentimental romantic novels. In these chosen literary chef-d’œuvres, Yaremi and Emma Bovary are the archetypal heroines whose behaviors and actions are largely triggered by the forces of their unconscious minds as well as the intra-psychical conflicts of their psychic apparatuses. With the interplay of psychology and literature, and from the psychoanalytic point of view, the modes of human behavior these works describe in the light of what we know of the unconscious and the integrative functions of the personality of the archetypes, how their unconscious minds and the id determine, energize, and also direct their behaviors and actions in the cause of handling the unabated instinctual demands of the id in search of a lost cherished object as well as their daily socio-cultural and psychological demands shall be brought to the foreground.

The two archetypes are female that cut across continental, linguistic, and cultural frontiers. They are confronted with the psychological search for their lost cherished object swathed in the patriarchal and hegemonic societal-related challenges; ranging from the *inh(wo)man* treatment of the women, mainly the widows and the infidelity in marriage. These challenges resulted from their repositories of repressed desires, feelings, memories, and instinctual drives, many of which have to do with sexuality and violence. While Yaremi experiences hers in the contemporary African milieu particularly at Kufi village, Emma Bovary experiences hers in the 19th-century European ambiance with the particularity of the provincial northern French society. And judging from the psychoanalytic kaleidoscope, the source of these archetypal characters’ ordeals is the loss and search for their most cherished object of desire which Jacques Lacan refers to as *objet petit a*, or “object small a,” with the letter *a* standing for *autre*, the French word for *other*; and to sustain a feeling of complete fulfillment, respectively. This implies that while Yaremi’s loss of her husband, Ajumobi; the night Ajumobi died, nine full moons ago . . . Yaremi’s eyes twinkled . . . because her husband had left her alone to the wicked world, “just like that,” and “without
a word of farewell” … (Adebowale 1), Emma Bovary searches for an impeccable and flawless love in marriage as an escape from the banalities and emptiness of provincial life

Avant qu’elle se mariât, elle avait cru avoir de l’amour; mais le bonheur qui aurait dû résulter de cet amour n’étant pas venu, il fallait qu’elle se fût trompée, songeait-elle. Et Emma cherchait à savoir ce que l’on entendait au juste dans la vie par les mots de félicité, de passion et d’ivresse, qui lui avaient paru si beaux dans les livres. (Flaubert 61)

Before she got married, she had believed in the love; but the sweetness which this love should have produced was not forthcoming, she must have deceived herself, she thought. And Emma was in search of the reality of words of amusement, passion and compassion, which had seemed to her perfect in books.

The opening page of Lonely Days shows an avalanche of psychological implications in its entirety. For many years, Yaremi has been living peacefully with her husband, Ajumobi, in spite of the occasional misunderstandings between them. With him, she has raised her three children; Alani, Wura and Segi, who now live happily married, except for Alani, in the city of Ibadan. They visit their parents occasionally during the festivities of the village, Kufi. However, having lost Ajumobi, her beloved husband, to the cold hand of death – what is in this psychological research considered as the loss of her desired objet petit a for 9 months; life has been so miserable and lonely for her. Similarly in the première partie of Madame Bovary, Flaubert’s Emma Bovary has pictured a luxurious life in an ideal atmosphere of perfect love to be enjoyed with her husband; her quest to sustain a feeling of her psychological complete fulfillment, yet truncated by the reality of life, which spells her doom.

In view of the above established fact, for Yaremi to cope with her socio-cultural demands as well as those induced by the instinctual activities of her unconscious; her id, her ego recourses to the psychotherapeutic tool of regression. This enables her to relive her memories of the good times she has had with her lost desired objet petit a after 9 months. Regression is the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but relived. The psychological outcome of this regression does not go down well with her as she relives the painful and unpleasant experience and emotions of the loss of Ajumobi, her husband. This, in turn, makes her look away helplessly with sorrow etched on her physiognomy. The distrustful eyes of “sympathizers” that glare at her from helms of garments secretly castigating her, which in psychoanalytic parlance conceived as the superego, can be interpreted as having an intra-psychical conflict with the id and thereby inducing pressure from her id on her ego. The infantile impulses of sobbing, regret, and even crying emanating from the id in her unconscious mind induces more pressure on her ego which would have resulted in her sorrow, while the ego protects itself from such pressure by deploying a defense mechanism of regression.

Contrarily for Emma Bovary in Madame Bovary, her ego finds it difficult to censure the incessant instinctual demands of the id for gratification in its search for the desired object petit a which she would not find; a flawless love, the perfect marriage which will serve as her escape from the banalities and emptiness of her provincial life because “mais, à mesure que se serrait davantage l’intimité de leur vie, un détachement intérieur se faisait qui la déliait de lui” (Flaubert 70). This implies; but, as the benefits of the intimacy of their lives would be, an internal detachment was loosening her from him. So as to gratify her id demanding feeling of complete fulfillment, she gets married to Charles while her id rejects the demands of the superego as this makes her rejects anything that does not
gladden her heart “... et elle rejetait comme inutile tout ce qui ne contribuait pas à la consommation immédiate de son cœur...” (64), “... and she would consider as useless whatsoever that would not contribute to her instantaneous feeling of satisfaction in her heart...” But then, following the failure of her id to find the perfect object petit a in the perfect marriage with Charles as imagined earlier, and the inability of the ego to censure the infantile demands of the id, Emma expresses her disillusionment and frustration thus “pourquoi, mon Dieu! me suis-je mariée?” (74). This translates to “my God, why have I even got married?” Unarguably, it is her unconscious desperation in her search for her desired object petit a and the feeling of complete fulfillment that triggers in her unconscious, making her fall cheaply for her husband’s friend, Léon Dupuis and Roldolphe Boulanger, even after having a daughter, Berthe, for her husband, Charles Bovary.

Now, in the case of Yaremi, as a widow who is being admired by a good number of the village women for her acquired liberty and freedom, (Adebawale 88–89), and should have profited from such disappointment of life; even when such an opportunity of remarriage to her three suitors – Lanwa, Olonade, and Ayanwale – avails itself in the event of the capping that is culturally binding on widows in the village, “she rejects the owners of the cars before, using angry epithets to rebuff Ayanwale, Olonade and Lanwa” (115), as she transfers the aggression the concomitant pains of the loss of her cherished object to death. This is conceived psychoanalytically as displacement. Here, two psychological facts dovetail. The exhibition of the strength of her ego to regulate the destructive instinctual impulses mounted on the ego by the id, and her displacement on the culture as well as her suitors perfectly critiques Emma Bovary’s action of seeking extra-marital affairs with her husband’s friend; Léon Dupuis and Roldolphe Boulanger, the rich landowner. She condemns such an action that, “those women of the village whom you say are crowding round you, forsaking their husbands, should be ashamed of themselves. They are disgrace to Kufi” (100). This foregrounds the strength of Yaremi’s ego to censure the materialistic infantile demands of the id which is evidently and unarguably lacking in Emma Bovary. Unlike Emma Bovary whose weak ego fails to regulate the infantile materialistic instincts of the id after her elaborate wedding with Charles Bovary, “il y eut donc une noce, où vinrent quarante-trois personnes, où l’on resta seize heures à table, qui recommence le lendemain et quelque peu les jours suivants” (Flaubert 49); “therefore there was a marriage attended by 43 persons where people ate for 16 hours, starting again the following day and some few days later”; Emma Bovary fails to keep to her promise of marital fidelity as long as her husband lives; Yaremi’s strong ego censures the infantile materialistic demand of her id as such a demand is against the promise of marital fidelity and faithfulness even when Ajumobi is dead. She stands her ground on keeping her promise she made in the presence of nature where there was no man to bear witness, “all for you, Ajumobi... Ever true, ever steady, keeping the old promise I made to you that day in the forest, when you shot your first antelope” (Adebawale 104).

Besides, another important thing to be brought to the foreground is the strength and nature of Yaremi’s and Emma’s egos in the regulation of the unconscious impulses of the id as it continues to search in vain for its lost cherished object petit a. Emma Bovary is the sharp contrast of Yaremi in this regard. For Emma Bovary, “quand on partit de Tostes, au mois de mars, Mme Bovary était enceinte” (Flaubert 102). This is translated as; when they departed Tostes, in the month of March, Madam Bovary was pregnant. This pregnancy results in her daughter, Berthe, for Charles. But then, motherhood should, contrarily as it helps Yaremi’s ego to censure the excessive pressure of the id’s search for the much
desired-but-lost feeling of complete fulfillment subverted in the form of infidelity in her marriage despite her husband’s death. Yaremi tells one of her suitors, Olonade, “I have since retired and left the excitement of motherhood to my two daughters, Segi and Wura. They can be mother of twins and be mother of triplets. Not me anymore” (Adebowale 102). But in a vivid contrast as earlier remarked, motherhood that used to excite Yaremi proves to be a great disappointment to Emma. She becomes infatuated with an intelligent young man, a young law student, whom she meets in Yonville, Léon Dupuis, and who shares her appreciation for literature and music and returns her esteem. Concerned with maintaining her self-image as a devoted wife and mother, Emma does not acknowledge her passion for Léon and conceals her contempt for Charles, drawing comfort from the thought of her virtue.

It is very important to note that as these archetypes’ psychic apparatus of the unconscious, precisely the id, continues to seek the accomplishment and the gratification of the infantile demand for the feeling of complete fulfillment; their egos begin to deploy a series of defense mechanisms in the face of the id’s destructive demands. Thus, Lois Tyson sees defenses as, “the processes by which the contents of our unconscious are kept unconscious,” that is to say “they are the processes by which we keep the repressed in order to avoid knowing what we feel we can’t (sic) handle knowing” (15). At some point, these two archetypes unconsciously deploy varying defense mechanisms in the processes of their psychological exigencies. They are polarized between the polemics of the defense mechanisms, which could be positive; sublimation or negative which is mainly displacement.

In avoidance of the threats posed to the ego from the id; as for Yaremi’s, her ego employs the defense mechanism of sublimation that Henri says, “la sublimation permet aussi de transformer le déplaisir lié à l’impossibilité de décharger la pulsion en plaisir” (34). This implies that sublimation also allows the transformation of the displeasure related to the impossibility of discharging the impulse into pleasure. To a very large extent among very many other defense mechanism, Yaremi’s ego protects itself from the slings of the id’s search for the lost-cherished object petit a. In Shekhar’s categorization of the defense mechanisms, he affirms that sublimation is a mature type of defense mechanism where socially unacceptable impulses or idealizations are consciously transformed into socially acceptable actions or behavior, possibly converting the initial impulses in the long term. Sublimation is when displacement “serves a higher cultural or socially useful purpose, in a creation of arts or inventions” (59). It was a term originally coined by Freud, which was used to describe the spirit as a reflection of the libido, and has roots in his psychoanalytic theory. Sublimation benefits both the individual and the society.

In Lonely Days, solitude and the extended family’s mockeries are already taking their tolls on the life of our protagonist, Yaremi, and as a result of this, the intra-psychical conflict of the psychic apparatus is having its consequences on her mood. Her workaholism can be interpreted as the defense mechanism the ego employs to defend itself from the pressure of gratifying the instinctual demands of the id to be destructive, indolent, and sad and moody. With the societal norms of mockeries that are lurking to explode on her conceived here as the superego, the destructive instincts that might probably be emerging from the infantile impulses of the id in her unconscious mind toward whosoever that is responsible for the death of her husband is sublimated into a strong will to survive and putting determination into her bones and vigor into her nerves in these words, “For Yaremi, it is now work, work and work – a workaholic! The
will to survive was there, putting determination into her bones and vigour into her nerves . . . And gradually she began to accustom herself to the hard fact that she really was a widow” (Adebowale 11).

Her sublimation of the negative and destructive instinctual impulses of her unconscious mind into that of a workaholic; from doing one work to the other both in her private and public apartment is further described thus, “Yaremi had learnt to cushion the effects of her situation in life with hard work on the farm and with strenuous work in private apartment she had reserved for the business of cooking – her kitchen” (Adebowale 12).

The rate of the latent anger that underlies the force by which the id triggers the infantile destructive impulses in the unconscious determines the level, time, quality, and quantity of creations and innovations achieved through sublimation. Thus, in furtherance of her displacement of the infantile destructive instincts in things that are socially acceptable, Yaremi becomes compulsive, repetitive, and occasionally narcissistic in her ego’s excessive deployment of defense, sublimation. Yaremi is always busy working all through the day doing different works concurrently as a cushion for all pressures of her daily psychological demands (Adebowale 31).

Sublimation as a defense mechanism for the ego against the pressure from the intra-psychical conflict between the psychic apparatus; the id and the superego, unlike displacement and other defense mechanisms, is beneficial not only to the individual but also to society. Yaremi’s displacement of her destructive instinctual impulses in conformity with the societal norms; dying of her taffeta into several pleats, has not only been beneficial to her and her grandson through the monetary returns they make from them, but also to the entirety of society as such goods as their lovely taffeta of fine pleats are made available to the villagers and the market women at Oyedeji market for maximum consumption.

On the other hand, Emma Bovary’s ego uses the negative defense mechanism of displacement in the form of suicide. Psychoanalysis makes us understand that Emma’s aggression that she tailors on a less threatening object is psychologically motivated. This displacement foregrounds the interrelatedness of psychology and literature. Lois, T (op.cit), maintains that displacement is “taking it out” on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger. In line with this, Chabriol’s opinion is that, “le déplacement transfère un sentiment ou une réaction d’un objet à un autre objet substitutif (habituellement moins menaçant)” (DSM-IV)” (36). This implies, “displacement transfers an emotion of aggression or a reaction of an object to another substitutive object (which is usually less threatening) (DSM-IV).” This happens as a result of the pressure from the intra-psychical conflict between the psychic apparatus of the id and the superego. It is worthy of note that a displacement can be triggered as a result of another displacement somebody has suffered. This happens when the ego is threatened by the destructive infantile impulses of the id triggered by a regression that could be caused by envy, hunger, anger, or even derogatory compliments and condemnation. Once this happens, the ego gratifies the already piled up destructive instinctual impulses to defend itself against the threat. The host plays it out by destroying objects or anybody within his/her reach that are less threatening.

Although Emma has carefully constructed a romantic fantasy world for herself throughout the novel, financial reality wrenches her, fully and finally, out of her dreams. There is no more hiding from her debt; there is no more eluding the facts of the world
around her by seeking refuge in fantasy. Every attempt Emma makes in this section to circumvent or overcome her problems separates her from her dreams and demands that she face up to the ruin she has made of her life. Leon is unable to help. She has no recourse. She is desperate to hide her affairs and her financial indiscretions from Charles. Forced to face the actual consequences of her actions, she decides that she would rather die. Thus, from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, Olugunle postulates that, “le suicide peut être défini comme la conséquence des anomalies psychotiques dans les comportements des victimes suicidaires comme une défense de l’appareil psychique – le Moi – contre les menaces et dangers psychologiques à travers le mécanisme de défense, le déplacement, contre le soi. Autrement dit, c’est la domination de l’instinct d’autodestruction – le Thanatos – sur l’auto préservation – l’Eros sous forme de déplacement contre le soi” (“Le Suicide”9–10). This simply translates as, “suicide can be defined as the consequence of the psychotic anomalies in the behavior of the suicide victims as a defense of the psychic apparatus – the Ego – against the psychological threats and dangers through the defense mechanism, displacement, against the self. In other words, it is the domination of the auto destruction’s instinct – the Thanatos – over the auto preservation – the Eros – in the form of displacement against the self.”

Psychoanalysis is not only a theory of the human mind, but also a practice for curing those who are considered mentally ill or disturbed. This is what the psychoanalysts refer to as psychotherapy. For Freud, such cures are not achieved just by explaining to the patient what is wrong with him/her, revealing to him/her the unconscious motivations, but it is a step to a psychological balance. This act of talking or explanation of the patient’s unconscious motivations is what the psychoanalysts called Free Association. Olayinka defines Free Association as,

A method by which psychoanalysts allow patients suffering from anxiety disorders to talk freely about threatening, unresolved and unpleasant conflicts they experience in life, be it in their childhood or adulthood. If for any reason an individual is unable to express repressed unpleasant negative experience or ungratified libido, Freud claims that this results in anxiety disorders and by reliving these repressed feelings during psychotherapy sessions, the patient is able to gradually lead a normal life again (55).

In Lonely Days, there are instances where our literary personality, Yaremi, seeks to express her repressed unpleasant and negative emotions. Even though her Free Associations are not carried out with a specialist in the field of psychoanalysis, we conceive, in this study the manner in which the three senior ex-widows; Radeke, Fafoyin and Dedewe, speak to Yaremi about her tendency in exhibiting some traits of anxiety and personality disorders. They speak to her on why she needs to forgive and forget the past unpleasant and negative experiences and to be happy with herself rather than being self-conceited, self-opiniated, and unyielding (Adebowale 111, 117). Moreover, the relationship between Yaremi and Segi has always been one of love, mutual trust, and friendship. In another instance of Free Association, when Segi, Yaremi’s daughter, breeze into Kufi village a few days after the event of cap-picking, Yaremi is able to express her negative and unpleasant experiences to her daughter in the manner of a patient to a psychoanalyst (125–126). Perhaps, if Flaubert had given Emma Bovary an opportunity to pour out her mind to a psychoanalyst, such a specialist would have remedied the situation before she committed suicide.
Unfortunately, the two archetypes are not allowed to go for the psychotherapeutic method of Free Association to be carried out by a specialist with positive results envisaged.

3. Conclusion, findings, and recommendations

The interplay of psychology and literature with the aid of psychoanalytic theory has enhanced our methodological critical study of the literature across national, linguistic, geographical, as well as periods. This has actually helped us to establish some points of convergence and divergence between these literatures and the authors studied as well. While Bayo Adebowale’s optimism for the improvement in form of solidarity among the African women and the widow to better their lots in the face of the African patriarchal and hegemonic societies and some *dewomanizing* socio-cultural dictates in nearest future by giving her heroine the chance of standing on her own in the face of ostracism and victimization, Gustave Flaubert is pessimistic of the bourgeoisie and the passion for luxury that characterized the 19th-century European societies, and by extension the contemporary period. The apogee of Flaubert’s pessimism is unraveled as he does create an archetypal character who would be subjected to a psychotherapeutic section or that which would resort to some positive defense mechanisms such as sublimation, musica-therapy, among others, but rather an archetypal character who commits an escapist form of suicide in accordance with Jean Bachler’s typologies of suicide.

Again, from our study, we see that Yaremi possesses a very strong ego that impartially intermediates in the intra-psychical conflict of the psychic apparatus; the id and the superego, by its deployment of the right defense mechanism(s) at the right time of any surfaced psychological demand, although her excessive deployment of different defense mechanisms makes her compulsive, repetitive and narcissistic, as she suffers from one psychological disorder to another, which is beyond her consciousness, while Emma Bovary on the other hands is id-ridden. She is a product of a very strong id that dominates, energizes, organizes as well dictates her entire life. And from our definition of suicide, this foregrounds the power and strength of her id.

The common ground that unifies these two authors in their divergence is the fact that they are both male literary creators who are so passionate about the plight of women in their various societies. They are pensive, painstaking, and passionate about the plights of women in the face of the male-dominated multiculturalism and incessant competition of materialistic ostentation and profligation that is in vogue. Besides, the two works from different linguistic, political, cultural background, as well as centuries are realistic. With their proficient use of language, they describe with much clarity and concreteness the images they paint.

In the course of this study, we discovered that human personality is indeed being governed by the unconscious forces that determine our behavior. Also, at every point in time every individual, either consciously or unconsciously, makes use of several defense mechanisms that overlap. Moreover, the technological advancement of this present age is a result of the displacement of the negative and instinctual destructive impulses in a manner that conforms to the societal norms and moral standards not only for the benefit of the individual but also for the entirety of the society.

Conclusively, the two disciplines, Psychology and Comparative Literature, are distinct and unique on their own. The borrowing of methods from other disciplines and on the application of the appropriated method to areas of study as well as the invention of literary
theories by theorists should not be taken as an announcement of the death of a discipline; be it Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Arts, Social Sciences, among others, most especially Comparative Literature. Rather, it should be seen as a means of ensuring the interrelatedness in harnessing the synergies of these disciplines for the maximum benefit to human endeavors. Along with overlapping and complementary aspects and perspectives, there are differences between the discipline of Comparative Literature and Psychology. While Comparative Literature remains “a [seamless] discipline with a global history, intellectual relevance, and institutional presence” (Zepetnek, “About the Situation” 190), Psychology will remain the science that studies the behavior of organisms, and the scientific study of behavior and mental processes (Frank 2; Robert 5).

Notes

1. The author has undertaken all translations unless stated otherwise.
2. DMS-IV is an acronym of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association and offers a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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