

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

The relationship between societal influences and mental health has attracted considerable attention across multiple fields, including literature. Literary works frequently reflect societal realities, capturing the intricacies of human life and the elements that influence it.

In this study, social factors refer to the external, community-based influences that shape individuals' experiences, beliefs, and behaviors within a society. These factors encompass a wide array of societal constructs, including but not limited to socioeconomic status, cultural traditions, family dynamics, gender roles, and communal expectations. In Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, social factors are woven deeply into the characters' lives, shaping their self-identity, aspirations, and responses to adversity.

In *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, social factors are pivotal in influencing the mental well-being of characters. For instance, financial hardship, societal pressures, and community relationships become forces that either support or undermine their mental stability. The character interactions with these social influences, whether through compliance, resistance, or adaptation, demonstrate the critical role of social factors in mental health outcomes. By examining these elements, the study aims to understand how a society's norms, values, and structures contribute to mental conditions, revealing a complex interplay between the individual and their environment.

Mental conditions in this study pertain to the psychological and emotional states that reflect a character's mental health. These conditions may manifest as stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues, influenced by both personal circumstances and the social

environment. Mental conditions, as presented in Adebowale's novels, often emerge as responses to unresolved trauma, societal rejection, or the oppressive weight of communal expectations.

In *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, mental conditions serve as narrative vehicles through which Adebowale explores the internal struggles of his characters, portraying how external social pressures exacerbate or trigger psychological distress. This study seeks to investigate these mental conditions, highlighting the symptoms, coping mechanisms, and behavioral changes the characters undergo as they navigate social constraints. By interpreting these portrayals through psychoanalytic and sociological perspectives, the study uncovers the societal implications of stigmatization and inadequate support systems, contributing to a deeper understanding of how literature reflects real-life mental condition challenges.

Social Factors and Mental Conditions in Literature

Social factors refer to the attributes of individuals or groups that influence thinking and behavior in social settings, thereby affecting outcomes. A common example is attitudes¹. These factors involve both interpersonal relationships and the collective way in which people coexist. The entirety of human activity is shaped by the interaction between a society's organized social framework known as social structure and an individual's freedom to make choices or hold beliefs, referred to as agency¹. These social factors span various levels, from the micro level of interpersonal relationships to the macro level of social structures and institutions, including environmental and cultural influences. Social factors play a crucial role in shaping the availability of commercial gambling in different societies and in determining how individuals with gambling difficulties are perceived and treated by others. Additionally, these factors

influence societal attitudes and beliefs about different forms of gambling, as well as the best approaches to prevent or reduce gambling-related harm².

The interpersonal aspects of social factors involve the relatively stable relationships that individuals form within social contexts, such as families, peer groups, workplaces, or neighborhoods. In these settings, people are aware of and influenced by each other's actions³. Over time, patterns of interaction evolve, becoming guided by explicit norms and values recognized by those involved. These social and interpersonal relationships have a lasting impact on individuals across all ages, but they are especially significant in the socialization process of children and youth. Certain characteristics of these relationships can become risk factors for harmful gambling. For example, close associations with others who gamble regularly can lead to an increase in one's gambling activities and can hinder efforts to reduce or quit gambling. On the other hand, relationships with those who gamble infrequently can positively influence individuals, offering protection against developing gambling-related issues. However, for individuals who enjoy gambling, close ties with non-gamblers can be a source of conflict and stress^{4, 5}.

An essential aspect of social interactions is their occurrence within specific historical moments, which accumulate over time. The buildup of stressful life events can drive individuals to gamble more, potentially leading to gambling-related harm. It is important to note that people of different ages may experience and be affected by historical events differently, which can have varying impacts on their gambling behaviors. This concept is explored further in longitudinal cohort studies. While humans are inherently social beings, maintaining interpersonal relationships demands significant mental and emotional energy. Although gambling often occurs in social settings, the interactions in these environments may be limited and formalized. For instance, slot machine and bingo players seated next to each other might engage in minimal

interaction, often restricted to discussions about the game rather than broader social conversations^{6, 7}.

Literature has long been revered as a cornerstone of human culture, serving not only as a repository of knowledge and wisdom but also as a powerful medium for exploring the complexities of the human condition. From ancient epics to contemporary novels, poetry, and drama, literary works have captivated the imagination of readers across generations, offering insights into the intricacies of human emotions, relationships, and society. However, beyond mere entertainment or intellectual stimulation, literature possesses a profound therapeutic potential, capable of nurturing empathy, fostering psychological resilience, and promoting mental well-being. Literature serves as a form of human expression. However, not all written works, even if they are well-organized and documented, are considered literature. Most critics, though not all, exclude writings that are primarily informational, technical, scholarly, or journalistic from the category of literature⁸. The term "literature" originates from the Latin word *litera*, meaning writing. According to this perspective, anything that is written is regarded as literature¹. Supporters of this view argue that all written works, including mathematical formulas, qualify as literature. Nonetheless, this definition has faced significant criticism, as some scholars contend that a work of art does not need to be written to be considered literature. These critics argue that the definition is too narrow, as it excludes oral traditions, or orature, which is also a form of literature. They assert that literature exists in multiple forms, both oral and written, and thus the belief that literature is solely written material is overly restrictive, ignoring important aspects of its broader nature^{9, 10}.

The idea that engaging with literature can positively affect mental health has been recognized for quite some time. Known as 'creative bibliotherapy'. This perspective suggests that

the cognitive benefits derived from poetry, fiction, and drama can play a role in addressing mental condition issues¹¹. According to this view, deeply engaging with impactful literature has the potential to soothe, heal, and rejuvenate a troubled mind, helping to alleviate stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges. In a world where the demand for affordable mental condition care exceeds its availability, this concept is particularly appealing. It's no surprise, then, that many well-known authors have supported the idea of using literature as a form of therapeutic intervention^{8, 12}.

Strong evidence now shows that the likelihood of developing mental condition issues is closely tied to our life¹³. This means that those who are marginalized in society are more likely to experience a greater burden of psychiatric disorders. Poor mental conditions can act as an unseen force that limits life opportunities, affecting both longevity and the quality of life. Therefore, improving mental conditions across populations through the creation of effective prevention strategies that target modifiable social risk factors should be considered a critical social justice issue^{14, 15}.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Mental conditions remain a pressing but sensitive issue in Nigerian society, yet their representation in literature, particularly through the lenses of societal stigma and cultural norms, has not received sustained critical attention. While African fiction increasingly engages themes of trauma and psychological distress, there are comparatively few studies that bridge literature and medicine to examine how cultural expectations shape mental health narratives. Scholars such as Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi in *Mental Health and Psychological Distress in Contemporary African Fiction* and T. Olaniyan in *Understanding Mental Illness through African Literature*

highlight the social contexts of mental struggles but give limited focus to Nigerian texts that dramatize how stigma and cultural traditions influence the lived experience of mental conditions. This is a significant gap because literature in Nigeria not only mirrors social realities but also challenges harmful cultural practices and prejudices that intensify psychological suffering. Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* are particularly relevant as they depict protagonists whose mental challenges are compounded by societal neglect and unfavorable cultural expectations, however, despite their psychological depth and social relevance, these works have received minimal scholarly engagement, especially in relation to mental health discourse and psychoanalytic interpretations. This study therefore investigates how societal stigma and cultural norms shape the mental conditions in the novels, enriching both literary discourse of societal stigma, cultural norms and mental health awareness.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine how societal stigma and cultural norms influence the representation of mental conditions in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

- i) identify the societal stigma and cultural norms in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*.
- ii) discuss the mental conditions of the protagonists in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*.
- iii) explore the societal implications of the representation of mental conditions in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) What are the societal stigma and cultural norms depicted in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*?
- 2) How are the mental conditions of the protagonists portrayed in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*?
- 3) What are the societal implications of mental conditions of the protagonists in Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*?

1.5 Significance of this study

This study is significant as it examines how societal stigma and cultural norms influence the representation of mental conditions in Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. By identifying the socio-cultural triggers and appreciating the narrative strategies and the effective portrayal of mental struggles in Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, the research facilitates a deeper understanding of how Nigerian literature reflects and critiques societal attitudes toward mental health. The application of psychoanalytic principles provides insight into the internal and external struggles of the protagonists, offering a nuanced perspective on the psychological dimensions of mental conditions within unfavorable cultural contexts. This contributes an important literary perspective to ongoing conversations on mental health, particularly in relation to stigma and traditional beliefs that continue to define community responses in Nigeria.

The findings are valuable not only to literary scholars but also to mental health advocates, educators, and policymakers. By challenging the silence and prejudice surrounding mental suffering in traditional societies, the study underscores the potential of literature to serve as a tool

for advocacy and social change. Ultimately, it enriches African literary criticism while advancing interdisciplinary conversations on mental wellness, cultural identity, and social justice.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the representation of mental conditions in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, with particular attention paid to the roles of societal stigma and cultural norms in how the protagonists emerged as bearer of mental burden. The research examines how Nigerian socio-cultural factors such as community attitudes, traditional beliefs, gender expectations, and social isolation influence the depiction of mental health struggles in the two novels.

The scope is limited to Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, chosen because they provide a strong basis for appreciating how literature engages with mental conditions within a Nigerian setting. Other works by Adebawale or by different Nigerian authors are excluded, in order to maintain a focused exploration.

This study is strictly literary in nature, concentrating on textual analysis and interpretation. It does not extend to empirical studies of mental health in Nigeria or to medical examinations of mental illness. By narrowing its boundaries in this way, the research underscores how Adebawale's works chosen for the study illustrate the intersection of cultural norms, social stigma, and the lived realities of people experiencing mental conditions.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The primary limitations of the study is that it exclusively focuses on two literary texts. Although these novels are rich in thematic content and provide a fertile ground for exploring

mental health through the lens of Nigerian culture and social structures, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other African literary works or even to broader Nigerian society. The restriction to a single author's perspective inherently narrows the scope of interpretative diversity and may omit contrasting cultural or psychological viewpoints that might emerge from examining works by other writers.

Another significant limitation is the socio-cultural context in which the texts were read and analyzed. The interpretation is shaped by contemporary understanding and awareness of mental health issues, which may differ from the temporal and cultural contexts in which the texts were originally written. This gap may affect how certain themes such as madness, trauma, societal alienation, or traditional healing practices are understood or valued. The cultural assumptions embedded in both the literary texts and the researcher's analysis could therefore limit the objectivity of the findings.

Moreover, the study did not incorporate empirical data such as interviews, surveys, or direct testimonies from mental health professionals or individuals within the community where the texts are set. This limits the research to a literary and theoretical engagement with the subject matter, without drawing on real-life experiences or statistical data that could have deepened the socio-psychological relevance of the analysis. An interdisciplinary approach involving psychological or sociological fieldwork could have enriched the study, offering a more robust understanding of the mental conditions portrayed in the narratives.

Lastly, the study is constrained by time and academic requirements. The demands of meeting submission deadlines and word count restrictions meant that only select aspects of the socio-cultural influences and their psychological impacts could be explored in depth. Some

thematic areas such as gender-based trauma, intergenerational stigma, or indigenous healing systems, while relevant, had to be briefly treated or excluded to maintain focus and coherence.

These limitations highlight the need for further research that can build on the current study by expanding its scope, diversifying its methodological tools, and including a wider array of literary and cultural sources.

1.8. Operational Definition of Terms

Societal Stigma: In this study, societal stigma refers to the negative labels, stereotypes, and discriminatory attitudes that communities attach to individuals experiencing mental conditions. It is examined as a factor that worsens the psychological state of the protagonists in Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* by subjecting them to ridicule, isolation, or rejection.

Cultural Norms: Cultural norms are the traditional practices, values, and expectations within Nigerian society that dictate acceptable behavior. In the context of this study, they represent the cultural beliefs and communal standards that influence how mental conditions are perceived and how individuals experiencing them are treated.

Mental Conditions: This term is used to describe the states of psychological or emotional distress experienced by the protagonists in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. It covers manifestations such as depression, trauma, aggression, isolation, or instability as represented in the narratives, rather than medical diagnoses.

Representation: Representation refers to how mental conditions are portrayed in the selected novels through character development, themes, and narrative strategies. It highlights the ways Adebowale depicts the struggles, perceptions, and social responses surrounding mental conditions in Nigerian cultural contexts.

Narrative Techniques are the methods and approaches employed by an author to convey a story and its themes. In this study, narrative techniques refer to the storytelling devices, character development strategies, and thematic explorations used by Bayo Adebawale to portray mental condition issues and social factors.

Psychoanalytic principles are theoretical concepts from psychoanalysis that aim to understand the psychological dimensions of human behavior. This research utilizes these principles to analyze the psychological states and behaviors of characters, drawing on theories developed by Sigmund Freud and other psychoanalysts.

Societal Implications refer to the broader effects of literary representations of mental conditions on public perception and societal attitudes. This includes how portrayals in literature might influence or reflect societal views on mental health and contribute to discussions on mental conditions awareness and policy.

Textual Analysis is a method of analyzing written or visual texts to understand their meaning, structure, and the techniques used by the author. In this study, textual analysis involves close reading and interpretation of Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* to identify and explore themes related to empathy and healing. By examining the texts in detail, the study aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which the novels address these themes, offering a thorough and insightful analysis of their literary and psychological dimensions.

Endnotes

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

The chapter examined the relevant literature for the study, organized under the following subheadings.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Societal Stigma and Mental Conditions

2.1.2 Social Factors and Mental Conditions

2.1.3 The Concept of Mental Conditions in Literature

2.1.4 Socio-Cultural Factors in Literature

2.1.5 The Representation of Mental Conditions in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Psychoanalytic Theory

2.2.3 Social Cultural Theory

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1 Social Determinant of Mental Conditions

2.3.2 Mental Conditions Stigma and Cultural Perceptions

2.4 Conceptual Model

2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

Endnotes

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Societal Stigma and Mental Conditions

Stigma has long been recognized as a pervasive social phenomenon that affects individuals across cultures, but its impact is particularly severe when attached to mental conditions. In psychology, stigma is often defined as a negative attribute or mark that discredits an individual and reduces them from a whole person to a tainted or discounted one¹. Erving Goffman, one of the pioneering theorists of stigma, describes it as a deeply discrediting attribute that transforms an individual's identity from one that is normal to one that is deeply flawed in the eyes of society². In the field of sociology, stigma is not simply an individual perception but a social construct that emerges from interactions, labeling, and cultural meanings³. Mental conditions are thus not experienced in isolation but are mediated by the social and cultural environment that interprets, defines, and often condemns them. In literature, stigma frequently appears as a thematic device used by authors to expose the prejudices of society and to explore the psychological consequences of exclusion, ridicule, and marginalization⁴. By representing stigma, literature creates both a mirror and a critique of social attitudes, illustrating the ways in which individuals burdened by mental conditions navigate worlds that often refuse them dignity. In African and specifically Nigerian contexts, stigma attached to mental conditions is intensified by cultural worldviews that equate mental instability with spiritual possession, curses, or moral weakness⁵. Such associations reinforce discriminatory practices that isolate the afflicted, making their suffering both psychological and social. For instance, in many Nigerian communities, families with members experiencing mental illness are stigmatized collectively, often leading to concealment of the condition rather than seeking treatment⁶. Studies show that individuals with

mental disorders are frequently labeled as “mad,” a term that strips them of complexity and humanity, reducing them to objects of fear and derision⁷. This labeling is not neutral; it perpetuates marginalization, exclusion from communal life, and sometimes outright violence against the stigmatized⁸. The psychological toll of such stigma manifests as secondary trauma, as individuals not only cope with their mental distress but also with rejection and ridicule from their communities⁹. Thus, in Nigerian society, stigma operates both as a cultural discourse and as a social practice that intensifies mental suffering.

The role of stigma in shaping mental distress is inseparable from the broader socio-cultural frameworks in Africa, where communal identity and reputation carry great weight¹⁰. The family, as the basic unit of society, is deeply concerned with public perception, and the presence of mental illness in one member is often perceived as a collective shame¹¹. This results in concealment, silence, or resort to non-medical interventions such as spiritual deliverance or traditional healing, which may sometimes aggravate the sufferer’s condition¹². The cultural emphasis on conformity means that individuals who deviate from expected behaviors are quickly stigmatized as being “other,” a threat to harmony and tradition¹³. Consequently, stigma in African contexts is not merely about labeling individuals but also about reinforcing social norms and punishing deviations that might destabilize the community¹⁴. This dynamic is especially visible in gendered contexts, where women experiencing mental distress, particularly widows or single mothers, are stigmatized more harshly than men¹⁵. Their suffering becomes a site of social control, as cultural expectations dictate their worth and prescribe narrow paths of acceptable behavior¹⁶.

In Nigerian literary traditions, stigma is often represented through characters who bear the weight of social rejection and whose psychological states are shaped by the gaze of others¹⁷.

Authors use stigma as both a narrative conflict and a social commentary, highlighting the cruelty of communities that fail to show compassion. In Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist Àlámú experiences psychological deterioration that is made worse by the stigmatizing attitudes of his community, who interpret his struggles as weakness or even madness rather than acknowledging them as mental distress¹⁸. The gossip, neglect, and ridicule he endures create an environment where healing is almost impossible, showing how stigma transforms personal suffering into collective condemnation. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's widowhood places her under the weight of cultural stigmatization, as the community regards her not as a complete individual but as a woman defined by loss and cursed by misfortune¹⁹. The persistent rejection she faces because of traditional widowhood practices intensifies her psychological pain, turning grief into prolonged distress. These examples from Adebawale's novels demonstrate how stigma, whether directed at mental instability or widowhood, functions as a mechanism of control that exacerbates distress rather than alleviating it²⁰.

The depiction of stigma in Bayo Adebawale's works is deeply woven into the social and psychological struggles of his characters, where communal attitudes become central to the unfolding of mental conditions²¹. In *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's psychological decline is not treated as an illness requiring care but is rather interpreted as a sign of weakness or even a spiritual failing²². The community surrounds him with suspicion and ridicule, denying him the compassion and medical attention that might alleviate his suffering²³. This stigmatization intensifies his alienation and accelerates his descent into despair, showing how mental illness becomes inseparable from the cruelty of collective judgment²⁴. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Adebawale explores how widowhood itself is transformed into a stigmatized state²⁵. The protagonist, Yaremi, is not only burdened with grief over the death of her husband but also with

the scornful labels her society attaches to widows²⁶. She is portrayed as an outcast, a bearer of misfortune, and is constantly portrayed that her status makes her undesirable and incomplete²⁷. These labels function as a form of psychological violence, wounding her sense of self and prolonging her suffering²⁸. By portraying these experiences, Adebowale demonstrates that stigma is not a passive cultural background but an active force that deepens mental distress²⁹. In both novels, the characters' conditions are shaped less by their initial circumstances of loss or breakdown and more by the unrelenting communal gaze that marks them as deficient.

Stigma in literature does not only serve to depict suffering but also to critique societal failure. By showing how communities ostracize the vulnerable, writers expose the destructive consequences of stigma and call for empathy and reform²⁷. The narrative strategies employed include symbolism, irony, and characterization that foreground the humanity of the stigmatized while indicting the cruelty of society²⁸. In many cases, stigma becomes a metaphor for broader social injustices, reflecting how societies treat those who fall outside normative expectations²⁹. For instance, stigma in African novels often overlaps with issues of poverty, gender inequality, and cultural rigidity, illustrating the interconnectedness of different forms of marginalization³⁰. Literature thereby functions as both documentation and resistance, amplifying the voices of the silenced and urging readers to reconsider their attitudes toward mental distress³¹. From a psychoanalytic perspective, stigma internalized by characters often manifests as self-loathing, withdrawal, or aggression³². Characters who are constantly reminded of their inadequacy by external voices may begin to hear those voices within themselves, resulting in internalized stigma that perpetuates their suffering³³. This phenomenon is evident in Adebowale's works, where protagonists struggle not only against external condemnation but also against the internal collapse triggered by constant stigmatization³⁴. The trauma of being rejected by one's community

often results in a fractured identity, where characters vacillate between resistance and resignation³⁵. In *Lonely Days*, for example, Yaremi's resilience is tested by repeated stigmatization from her community, which insists on defining her identity solely through her widowhood³⁶. The psychological effect is not merely sadness but a profound destabilization of self-worth, a literary demonstration of how stigma can corrode identity itself³⁷.

In summary, societal stigma operates as a critical force that shapes the experience and representation of mental conditions in Nigerian contexts. Psychologically, it compounds distress; sociologically, it reinforces exclusion and normativity; literarily, it becomes a lens through which authors critique society and depict the complexities of human suffering³⁸. The exploration of stigma in Nigerian literature, and particularly in Bayo Adebowale's novels, underscores the necessity of viewing mental conditions not only as individual pathologies but as phenomena deeply embedded in cultural and social structures³⁹. By tracing the ways stigma is defined, enacted, and represented, one can see that literature does more than mirror reality, it actively interrogates the prejudices and practices that perpetuate suffering⁴⁰. This intersection of stigma, culture, and psychological distress forms a crucial backdrop for understanding the representation of mental conditions in African literary discourse.

2.1.2 Social Factors and Mental Conditions

Social factors refer to the attributes of individuals or groups that influence thinking and behavior in social contexts, thereby affecting outcomes. A common example is attitudes¹. These factors encompass both interpersonal relationships and the collective manner in which people coexist. Human activity in all spheres is shaped by the interaction between a society's structured social system referred to as social structure and the individual's capacity to make independent

choices or hold beliefs, known as agency¹. These social factors span various levels, from the micro level of interpersonal relationships to the macro level of social structures and institutions, including environmental and cultural influences. Social factors play a crucial role in shaping the availability of commercial gambling in different societies and in determining how individuals with gambling difficulties are perceived and treated by others. Additionally, these factors influence societal attitudes and beliefs about different forms of gambling, as well as the best approaches to prevent or reduce gambling-related harm².

The interpersonal aspects of social factors involve the relatively stable relationships that individuals form within social contexts, such as families, peer groups, workplaces, or neighborhoods. In these settings, people are aware of and influenced by each other's actions. Over time, patterns of interaction evolve, becoming guided by explicit norms and values recognized by those involved. These social and interpersonal relationships have a lasting impact on individuals across all ages, but they are especially significant in the socialization process of children and youth. Certain characteristics of these relationships can become risk factors for harmful gambling. For example, close associations with others who gamble regularly can lead to an increase in one's own gambling activities and can hinder efforts to reduce or quit gambling. On the other hand, relationships with those who gamble infrequently can positively influence individuals, offering protection against developing gambling-related issues. However, for individuals who enjoy gambling, close ties with non-gamblers can be a source of conflict and stress^{3, 4}.

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of different ages may experience and be affected by historical events differently, which can have varying impacts on their gambling behaviors. This concept is explored further in longitudinal cohort studies. While humans are inherently social beings, maintaining interpersonal relationships demands significant mental and emotional energy. Although gambling often occurs in social settings, the interactions in these environments may be limited and formalized. For instance, slot machine and bingo players seated next to each other might engage in minimal interaction, often restricted to discussions about the game rather than broader social conversations^{1,3}.

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overlooks oral traditions, or orature. In this view, literature exists in various forms both oral and written, and reducing it solely to written works is an overly narrow perspective⁵.

Social determinants of health are currently the most modifiable targets for intervention available to prevent the onset of mental conditions and promote better mental conditions in the population. These social determinants cover the structural conditions individuals encounter throughout their lives, from birth to death, which influence mental health outcomes and contribute to disparities in mental conditions within and between populations. Factors such as income, employment, socioeconomic status, education, food security, housing, social support, discrimination, childhood adversity, and the social and physical environment in which individuals live, as well as access to affordable and adequate healthcare, are all part of these conditions. Significantly, our exposure to protective or harmful social determinants of mental conditions is shaped by the distribution of resources, money, and power globally, nationally, and locally, which is influenced by policy decisions¹³. Therefore, social determinants are not evenly or benignly distributed among populations; instead, they are driven by systems and institutions of power that often create and perpetuate generational inequities in people's opportunities for secure, prosperous, and healthy lives¹⁴.

There is now substantial evidence linking the risk of developing mental conditions to one's life circumstances¹⁵. This means that individuals closer to the margins of society are disproportionately affected by higher levels of psychiatric morbidity. As poor mental conditions can act as an invisible force limiting life opportunities including the length and quality of life designing effective strategies that address modifiable social risk factors to improve the mental conditions of populations should be regarded as a crucial social justice issue¹⁶.

Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to a combined economic and sociological measure that reflects a person's work history, along with their or their family's access to financial resources and their social standing relative to others^{16, 17}. When evaluating a family's SES, factors such as household income, education, and employment of its members are considered, whereas an individual's SES focuses solely on their personal characteristics. Recent studies have highlighted an often-overlooked aspect of SES: perceived financial stress, which refers to the "balance between income and necessary expenses"¹⁸. This stress can be assessed by determining whether a person has sufficient, barely enough, or insufficient resources at the end of each month¹⁹. Nonetheless, SES is primarily utilized to illustrate the economic disparities present within society as a whole⁶. Socioeconomic status is generally divided into three categories: high, middle, and low, to represent the different positions a family or individual can occupy. When categorizing someone, factors such as income, education, and occupation are often evaluated. In families with higher socioeconomic status, education is usually emphasized as highly important, both within the family and in the broader community. In contrast, in lower-income areas where basic needs like food, shelter, and safety take priority, education tends to be seen as less critical. Young people from disadvantaged households are especially vulnerable to various health and social issues in the United States, including unintended pregnancies, addiction, drug abuse, diabetes, and obesity⁷.

Low income and limited education have been identified as significant predictors of various physical and mental health issues, such as meningitis, respiratory infections, arthritis, coronary diseases, and mental conditions like psychosis and schizophrenia. These health challenges could stem from environmental factors at home or work, or be explained through the

social causation model, which suggests that mental illness or disability could lead to a decline in an individual's social status, including their rights and freedoms^{20, 21}.

The social determinants of mental conditions refer to societal issues that negatively affect mental conditions, increase the risk of mental illness for certain groups, and exacerbate the outcomes for individuals already experiencing mental health challenges²². Similar to the social determinants of health (SDOH), the social determinants of mental health (SDOMH) involve nonmedical factors that influence the likelihood and severity of health outcomes, such as income, education, access to housing, and social inclusion²³. Mental health disparities arise from a variety of factors, including individual characteristics like age, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation, as well as environmental factors driven by social and economic inequalities, such as limited access to proper food, housing, and transportation, as well as exposure to pollution²⁴. A large body of research has highlighted the significant impact of discrimination on mental health, with some studies even suggesting that its effect on mental well-being may surpass that on physical health outcomes²⁷. Regarding physical health, research has shown that discrimination in healthcare delivery leads to disparities in the quality of care for ethnic minority groups. For instance, African Americans and Latinos are less likely than white individuals to receive adequate pain relief for conditions such as long bone fractures or kidney stones⁵⁸. Research on mental conditions has shown that discrimination, such as racial or ethnic discrimination, is linked to poorer mental health outcomes, including higher levels of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress^{55, 59}. Studies on occupational discrimination in workplace settings reveal a similar pattern, where individuals who report being discriminated against, regardless of their race, tend to experience worse mental conditions outcomes⁶⁰. The overall literature suggests that any form of discrimination negatively impacts mental health.

In addition, researchers have explored the influence of various types of discrimination on the risk of mental conditions, proposing two main models: the risk model, which indicates that those who face discrimination are at a greater risk of developing mental health issues, and the resilience model, which suggests that these groups may develop greater resilience to additional forms of discrimination⁶¹. A comprehensive review of existing studies generally supported the risk model over the resilience model, finding that groups experiencing different forms of discrimination, including racism and heterosexism, had a higher risk of developing depression. The effects of multiple types of discrimination on other mental health issues, such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance use, were less clear, with mixed results^{60, 61}.

Research has shown that the stigma surrounding mental health issues can significantly affect individuals' willingness to seek care and engage in treatment. Factors that reduce the likelihood of seeking help include prejudice toward those with mental conditions, as well as the anticipation of discrimination for individuals who attempt to access treatment⁶⁵. Additionally, a lack of awareness about mental condition disorders and available treatment options can also hinder care-seeking behaviors, with the stigma around mental health contributing to this knowledge gap. There are three types of stigma: public stigma, which results from avoiding labels; self-stigma, which arises from self-shame; and structural stigma⁶⁶. These different forms of stigma, combined with a person's unique experiences with them, can lead to varying levels of avoidance in seeking care. A global review on mental health stigma and discrimination concluded that there is no society, country, or culture where individuals with mental health conditions (whether formally diagnosed or recognized by the community) are viewed as equally valuable or acceptable as those without such conditions⁶⁷.

2.1.3 The Concept of Mental Conditions in Literature

Literature, whether through novels, poetry, or other forms of written expression, serves as a potent means of exploring emotions, experiences, and perspectives. It can act as a therapeutic tool for many, fostering mental health and well-being. Reading allows individuals to feel connected and understood, offering valuable insights into the human condition and helping readers to feel less isolated in their struggles. Literature also facilitates the development of empathy, enhancing interpersonal relationships and overall well-being⁶.

Moreover, literature can provide an escape from the pressures and complexities of daily life, offering comfort and solace. Beyond simple reading, literature can also function as a form of therapy. Known as bibliotherapy, this therapeutic approach involves using literature as a tool to help individuals navigate their emotions and life experiences. Bibliotherapy may take place in either private or group settings and may include discussions about specific works, writing about personal experiences, or even creating one's own literary pieces. Participants in bibliotherapy often experience reductions in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues¹². Bibliotherapy also proves beneficial for individuals facing major life transitions, such as trauma, loss, or other challenging events. For example, literature therapy has been used in treating PostTraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in veterans, with group therapy sessions involving reading and discussing works related to war and trauma. This form of therapy has shown to alleviate PTSD symptoms and improve general well-being. Another example is poetry therapy in palliative care, where patients engage in writing, sharing poems, and discussing works of poetry. This therapy helps patients cope with issues related to death and loss, providing a sense of connection and emotional support^{12, 13}. It is important to note that literature is not a replacement for professional mental health care, though it can serve as a valuable supplementary tool to

improve mental condition and well-being. The insights and perspectives gained through literature assist readers in better understanding and managing their emotions and life experiences. Furthermore, the benefits of literature in improving mental health extend beyond those facing specific mental health challenges.

Literature has long been used to “teach about difficult issues by encouraging students to make personal connections with characters in the book, thus allowing readers to evaluate their own behavior and emotions through the experiences of the characters in the story”³⁴. There is limited empirical research on bibliotherapy, especially in relation to children. Although bibliotherapy is mentioned in several recreational therapy resources, there is a lack of research articles specifically examining its use by recreational therapists. The available research, mostly from psychology and social work, suggests that bibliotherapy can have several positive effects on children who have experienced trauma³⁴. Bibliotherapy began in the early 1800s in the United States as a therapeutic technique for individuals in behavioral health institutions. One of the early advocates for using reading in these settings believed that it helped patients divert their attention from personal issues³⁵. The term "bibliotherapy" became commonly used in the early 20th century to describe the practice of using books to help individuals understand health-related issues. During this time, the concept gained further support, and librarians began creating reading lists to assist people with personal concerns. Bibliotherapy has also been referred to by various other names, such as book therapy, guided reading, library therapeutics, literatherapy, and reading therapy³⁸.

2.1.4 Socio-Cultural Factors in Literature

The concept of a "sociocultural system" encompasses three key elements: society, culture, and system. Society refers to a group of interdependent individuals of the same species. Culture

includes the learned behaviors shared by members of a society, along with the tangible products resulting from these behaviors. The terms "society" and "culture" are combined to form the term "sociocultural." A system is defined as "a collection of parts that interact with each other to function as a whole"⁶². The term sociocultural system is commonly used in the field of ecological anthropology. A universal structure for sociocultural systems identifies three components: infrastructure (which involves production and population), structure (which includes behaviors like corporations, political organizations, and hierarchies), and superstructure (which involves mental aspects such as beliefs, values, and norms)^{63, 64}.

The sociocultural perspective is a theory commonly applied in disciplines like psychology and education. It emphasizes understanding how individuals' behaviors are influenced by the social and cultural contexts surrounding them.⁶¹ This perspective highlights that human behavior and mental processes are shaped by social and cultural factors, including aspects such as race, gender, and nationality. The sociocultural perspective theory plays a significant role in our daily lives, impacting how we communicate, understand, relate to, and cope with others. It influences all aspects of our being, spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, and physiological⁶³.

The sociocultural perspective is also used here in order to assess use of mental health services for ⁶⁸. "From a sociocultural perspective, this article reviews causes of mental health service under use among Chinese immigrants and discusses practice implications. Factors explaining service under use among Chinese immigrants are multifaceted, extending across individual, family, cultural and system domains. The first of these is cultural explanation of mental illness. Cultural beliefs, regarding the cause of mental disorders greatly affect service use. The perceived causes of mental illness include moral, religious, or cosmological, physiological,

psychological, social and genetic factors”. “A Sociocultural Perspective of Mental Health Services Use by Chinese Immigrants”⁷².

Societies are identified and distinguished by their unique sociocultural attributes. These defining elements function as social and cultural influences that shape individuals’ emotions, opinions, principles, reasoning, convictions, social interactions, and general conduct. Sociocultural influences are crucial in directing the patterns of social progress and organization. They reflect the customs, traditions, and belief systems that are specific to a particular community or population cluster¹. A clear comprehension of these sociocultural dynamics is essential for fostering economic growth and implementing efficient governance. Such influences significantly shape decision-making within societies¹. For organizations, particularly those engaged in marketing, recognizing how these factors operate is vital. Companies aiming to promote their products must possess a solid understanding of the foundational sociocultural context of their intended audience². Individual reactions and conduct in response to specific events, policies, brands, or environments are often shaped by their sociocultural background². These elements influence a person’s worldview and their interpretation of people and events. In marketing and commerce, a society's inclination to accept or reject a product or service is largely impacted by its sociocultural environment².

Sociocultural pertains to the broad range of social and cultural elements that influence individuals' thinking patterns, emotional responses, behavioral tendencies, and health-related outcomes. These sociocultural determinants of health and disease include socioeconomic indicators such as income level, educational attainment, and occupational status, alongside cultural components. The term also spans multiple aspects like racial background, ethnic origin, gender, level of cultural assimilation, language use, belief systems, core values, personal

attitudes, and religious affiliation⁷⁶.

The social environment also known as the social or sociocultural context refers to the immediate surroundings, both physical and interpersonal, within which individuals exist or events unfold. It encompasses the cultural background in which a person is raised or currently resides, along with their interactions with various people and institutions⁷¹. These interactions may occur face-to-face or via communication platforms, including indirect or one-sided exchanges, and they do not necessarily reflect equal social standing⁷². This concept is broader than social class or personal networks. Moreover, the physical and social surroundings are key elements in promoting active and healthy aging within familiar environments, making them a significant focus in environmental gerontology⁷³.

In addition, the social environment refers to the surroundings in which individuals live and engage with one another. It consists of the infrastructure such as roads and buildings, employment opportunities, and patterns of economic exchange. It also involves human relationships, including the distribution of power and the dynamics among social groups, as well as cultural expressions like religion, customs, and the arts. Essentially, it encompasses both the physical setting and the ways people interact within their societies and communities⁷⁴.

2.1.5 The Representation of Mental Conditions in Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*

Mental conditions in African literature are not merely psychological states confined to individual characters but often serve as powerful mirrors of social environments, cultural expectations, and communal attitudes. Bayo Adebowale, in his novels *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, demonstrates a deep preoccupation with how mental distress arises and is sustained

in Nigerian societies where stigma and cultural norms carry great weight. Adebowale's representation of mental conditions reflects a literary sensitivity to the complex interplay between personal suffering and social judgment, highlighting the ways in which characters' psychological experiences are constructed, narrated, and symbolically expressed⁵⁰. His works reveal that the conditions of the mind cannot be studied in isolation from societal forces that either alleviate or intensify them.

In *Out of His Mind*, Adebowale explores the gradual descent of his protagonist into mental instability, a decline narrated with striking attention to both inner monologue and community reaction. The protagonist reflects,

*They say I am no longer myself, that my laughter frightens children and my silence burdens the
air⁵¹.*

Here, Adebowale combines the protagonist's self-awareness with the social echo of stigma, creating a dual narrative that represents mental illness as both self-perception and externally imposed identity. The symbolic weight of "frightening laughter" and "burdensome silence" indicates how ordinary behaviors are reinterpreted as signs of madness when filtered through the stigmatizing gaze of society⁵².

Adebowale also situates the protagonist's psychological struggle within cultural metaphors. At one point, the character laments:

My mind is like a house with broken rafters, leaking in every season⁵³.

The metaphor of a collapsing house does more than convey fragility, it frames the protagonist's condition as a communal tragedy, since in Yoruba symbolism the house represents

lineage, heritage, and communal continuity. Thus, his breakdown resonates beyond the personal, threatening to dishonor family and community alike. In this way, mental illness is represented not simply as an ailment of the self but as a disruption of social harmony, which explains why communities stigmatize rather than sympathize⁵⁴.

The novel also employs repetition as a narrative device to illustrate how stigma becomes internalized. The protagonist recalls,

*Madman, madman, madman, they call me thrice before I can speak once*⁵⁵.

The rhythm of mockery overtakes his voice, suggesting that communal judgment drowns out self-expression. This literary strategy dramatizes the process by which labels reduce complex human experiences to single words, stripping characters of individuality and subjecting them to the tyranny of stigma⁵⁶. Adebowale's representation here anticipates contemporary psychological theories of labeling, where repeated stigmatization erodes self-concept and worsens distress.

In *Lonely Days*, Adebowale turns his attention to widowhood and the psychological suffering that arises from cultural stigma. The protagonist Yaremi is depicted as a woman struggling not only with the grief of bereavement but also with the crushing weight of cultural rejection. The narrator observes,

*She walked alone, speaking to herself, for no one would listen to the words of a widow*⁵⁷.

This excerpt illustrates how silence and exclusion mark the widow as socially invisible. Adebowale here employs the motif of solitary speech to symbolize the isolation of widows, turning grief into a psychological condition that borders on despair⁵⁸.

Symbolism is central to Adebowale's portrayal of Yaremi's mental condition. At one point, the narrator describes her state: "Her heart was a cracked pot, spilling sorrow no one cared to gather"⁵⁹. This image presents grief as something simultaneously fragile and wasteful, fragile because the heart is "cracked," and wasteful because the sorrow spills unacknowledged. The community's refusal to gather her sorrow indicates that her pain is culturally normalized rather than socially shared. The symbolic pot resonates with traditional Yoruba imagery of domesticity and sustenance, meaning that her mental condition is not only an individual tragedy but also a rupture in communal life⁶⁰.

Like the protagonist of *Out of His Mind*, Yaremi also faces labeling. The community refers to her repeatedly as "widow," stripping her identity down to a single category: "Widow, widow, widow, that is all they see, not Yaremi, not a woman with a heart"⁶¹. Adebowale uses repetition again as a narrative strategy to demonstrate how cultural stigmatization denies individuality and deepens psychological suffering. The reduction of Yaremi to "widow" echoes the reduction of the protagonist in *Out of His Mind* to "madman," suggesting that different forms of stigma produce similar outcomes, loss of identity, isolation, and worsening mental distress⁶².

Across both novels, Adebowale employs symbolism and imagery to represent mental conditions as states of fragmentation. The "broken rafters" in *Out of His Mind* and the "cracked pot" in *Lonely Days* are parallel symbols of instability and fragility⁶³. Both suggest structures that once sustained life but now fail under pressure, reflecting how social rejection transforms ordinary human conditions (illness, grief) into unbearable psychological burdens. Adebowale's symbolic strategy universalizes mental suffering while grounding it in culturally resonant imagery.

Imagery of isolation also dominates both texts. In *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist laments, “They whisper when I pass; even my shadow has no friends”⁶⁴. The metaphor of a friendless shadow conveys the depth of social abandonment. In *Lonely Days*, Yaremi’s solitude is expressed through similar imagery: “She sat at the edge of the compound, staring into the bush, where only silence answered her thoughts”⁶⁵. In both cases, imagery of silence and emptiness constructs mental conditions as experiences of alienation that are socially created rather than biologically inevitable⁶⁶.

A recurring theme in Adebowale’s novels is the destructive power of stigma. In *Out of His Mind*, communal judgment transforms a man’s illness into an irreversible social identity, while in *Lonely Days*, cultural norms turn widowhood into a life sentence of suffering. Both protagonists are silenced, reduced to categories, and denied compassion⁶⁷. Adebowale represents mental conditions not as private misfortunes but as outcomes of hostile social processes. Yet, beneath the suffering, Adebowale also hints at resilience. Yaremi, despite her isolation, maintains her voice by speaking to herself, asserting agency even when the community ignores her. Similarly, the protagonist of *Out of His Mind* “Alamu” clings to metaphors of collapse not only as a sign of despair but as a language of self-expression. Adebowale suggests that even in the face of overwhelming stigma, the human spirit searches for ways to narrate itself⁶⁸.

Taken together, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* reveal Adebowale’s thematic preoccupation with the destructive intersection of societal stigma, cultural norms, and mental conditions. His novels critique cultural practices that transform grief and illness into sources of exclusion. His characters are not merely victims of personal misfortune; they are casualties of communal attitudes that devalue empathy. Adebowale’s representation suggests that literature

has a critical role in exposing the human cost of stigma and urging societies to re-examine harmful cultural practices⁶⁹.

Comparatively, *Out of His Mind* focuses on the stigma surrounding mental illness, while *Lonely Days* explores the cultural stigma of widowhood. Yet both converge on the idea that psychological suffering is socially constructed. The repeated use of metaphors of brokenness, imagery of silence, and repetition of stigmatizing labels demonstrates Adebowale's consistent strategy across different contexts. Both novels present mental conditions as conditions of rejection, socially imposed, culturally sanctioned, and psychologically devastating⁷⁰.

Ultimately, Adebowale's representation of mental conditions in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* demonstrates the inseparability of psychological states from societal stigma and cultural norms. Through symbolism, repetition, imagery, and thematic focus, he portrays characters whose suffering is intensified by communal judgment. His works remind readers that the greatest burden of mental illness or widowhood is not the condition itself but the rejection it provokes. By foregrounding these dynamics, Adebowale contributes to a Nigerian literary tradition that challenges cultural silence around mental health and insists on the need for empathy and social reform⁷¹.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1. Psychoanalytic Theory in Literature

Psychoanalytic literary criticism, originally grounded in the theories of Sigmund Freud²¹, interprets literature as a site where unconscious desires, repressed emotions, and psychological conflicts are dramatized. Freud's successors, including Carl Jung²³ and Jacques Lacan²⁴, expanded the framework, while later critics adapted these ideas to examine broader literary and

cultural phenomena. Although it has developed into a broad and varied field, it generally maintains that literature is intrinsically linked to psychological processes. It often interprets writers as individuals who may experience internal conflicts or psychological disturbances.

However, this critical approach suggests that the act of artistic creation provides an outlet through which the artist can navigate such inner turmoil, thus restoring psychological harmony and coherence⁷⁵.

The core focus of psychoanalytic literary criticism, in its most basic form, involves applying psychoanalytic concepts to analyze either the author or a particular character in a literary text. This approach mirrors the method of psychoanalysis itself, especially as outlined in foundational psychoanalytic theories, using interpretive tools similar to those employed in dream analysis. Critics often treat fictional characters as subjects for psychological case studies, identifying elements like the Oedipus complex, unconscious slips, and the dynamics of the id, ego, and superego to explain characters' actions and motivations⁷⁷.

More advanced versions of psychoanalytic criticism do not rely solely on examining characters or the author's psyche. Instead, they may focus on the literary structure itself, interpreting it through psychoanalytic frameworks such as the notion that the unconscious mind mirrors the structure of language. Some critics also analyze psychoanalytic texts as literary works in their own right, uncovering how their narrative elements contribute to and reflect their theoretical ideas⁷⁷. While psychoanalytic criticism can offer insightful interpretations of symbols, settings, and behaviors within literature, it has its limitations. A major criticism is that some scholars apply psychoanalysis as a universal method, even when it may not be the best fit for every literary piece. Moreover, early applications of psychoanalysis in literature often emphasized uncovering the psychological states of authors or characters more than interpreting

the literary text itself⁷⁸.

Thus 'many psychoanalysts among Freud's earliest adherents did not resist the temptation to psychoanalyze poets and painters (sometimes to Freud's chagrin')⁷⁹. Later analysts would conclude that 'clearly one cannot psychoanalyse a writer from his text; one can only appropriate him'⁸⁰.

In the early stages of psychoanalytic literary criticism, texts were often treated as if they were dreams, with the idea that the true or hidden meaning (latent content) of the text was masked by its more obvious surface elements (manifest content). The transition from latent to manifest content, referred to as the "dream work," involves processes like concentration and displacement. Critics would examine the language and symbols in the text to reverse the dream work and uncover the deeper, hidden meanings. However, the drawback of this approach is that it tends to oversimplify literature, reducing its complexities by explaining them through established psychoanalytic theories, a practice that has lost much of its influence today⁸⁰.

This model of Freudian literary criticism appeared to reach its height within academic circles with analysis that contended all of a particular author's serious fictional works reflect a singular, recurring psychological struggle. According to this interpretation, none of the characters escapes a relentless and ultimately oppressive internal conflict concerning the fulfillment of prohibited desires. The conclusion drawn was that while the artistic quality is commendable, the personal life behind it evokes sympathy, as the author was believed to be afflicted by the very desires troubling his characters⁵⁵. Although such analyses later declined in popularity especially after the original scholar distanced himself from the psychoanalytic viewpoint, modern critics within this school of thought still approach literary texts as if characters think and act like real people. They assume that these fictional figures exhibit

subconscious psychological issues, which attentive readers can detect and interpret, and that both the author and their characters grapple with similar unconscious challenges ⁶⁹.

In addition to traditional Freudian interpretations that explore the psychological dimensions of authors and their fictional characters, a range of related psychoanalytic theories also developed, offering fresh perspectives on how psychoanalysis can inform literary study. One major shift redirected attention toward how readers engage with texts, emphasizing their role in shaping meaning, a development rooted in the broader movement of reader-response theory. From a Freudian standpoint, this approach views the reader's interpretive process as central to understanding literature. For example, one psychoanalytic theorist analyzed a well-known poem not as a projection of the writer's inner world but as a psychological stimulus directed at the reader. This reading suggested that the poem activates hidden desires and unconscious fantasies within the audience, such as the deep-seated longing to dissolve barriers between self and nurturing maternal presence. Other theorists brought psychoanalytic concepts to the analysis of narrative form itself, while some linked the tension between influence and creative anxiety to foundational Freudian themes like the Oedipus Complex. Responding to such theories, feminist scholars later proposed their own psychoanalytic framework, contending that female authors experience a unique anxiety tied to authorship, a result of their historically marginalized and conflicted position within literary culture⁵⁵.

The post-World War II era witnessed a rising interest in psychoanalytic theory within literary studies. This shift is primarily linked to two key developments. Firstly, literary researchers began moving away from the historically dominant biographical and historical methods of analyzing authors approaches rooted in positivist traditions and started focusing more on textual analysis guided by interpretive, hermeneutic frameworks. Secondly, psychoanalysis

itself expanded in theoretical breadth, making it more adaptable and appealing to literary inquiry⁵⁰.

One interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw* has been seen as a turning point in the psychoanalytic reading of literature. This interpretation shifts the emphasis from focusing on the author's psychology to a more interactive model in which the reader is shaped by the language and structure of the text itself. The work suggests that the novel's strong emotional and intellectual pull stems from the way it invites readers into a particular interpretive stance. In essence, the reader becomes complicit in the protagonist's viewpoint: the only way to deconstruct the governess is by unconsciously repeating her actions and mindset⁵⁵. In doing so, readers participate in her illusion of complete understanding. As some scholars have noted, contributions from object relations theory stress the need for literary critics, much like psychoanalysts, to broaden their approach to interpretation. Critics are encouraged to attend not only to concealed meanings but also to moments of emptiness or ambiguity, instances where a lack of meaning arises from the absence of deliberate self-expression. This evolution in psychoanalytic thought has influenced how texts like *Hamlet* are read. While Freud understood *Hamlet's* struggle in terms of repressed desires to eliminate the father and win the mother's affection, newer readings suggest his conflict may also stem from a deep, submissive attachment to an idealized father⁵⁸.

The unconscious operates with the same structure as language. In this view, language forms the very basis not only of psychoanalysis but of human experience as a whole. Consequently, meaning in literature can be uncovered through the text's structural organization, how it constructs itself, rather than through a strict division between surface and hidden content. A Lacanian approach to textual analysis, as argued by some scholars, should pay attention to the

dynamics of transference between the reader and the text, particularly as it relates to the interpreter's own desires. This involves recognizing the tension between knowing and not knowing, or between the roles of the analyst and the patient⁵⁹. Any interpretation that sacrifices the literal movement or internal logic of the text for the sake of pursuing hidden meanings alone would stray from a truly Lacanian reading⁶⁰.

Kittang suggests that readers often feel the need to establish a fixed perspective when interpreting literature, which can intensify the reliance on familiar theories that one feels comfortable with⁶⁵. This idea also connects to Lacan's concept of transference and the interpreter's desire. Gallop argues that we must challenge the illusions that underpin the authority of psychoanalytic critics, specifically the dichotomy between those who know and those who do not⁵⁷. Similarly, Felman, whose detailed analyses have been referenced earlier, considers how psychoanalysis might be inclined to dominate the discourse, sidelining literary knowledge in favor of psychoanalytic theory's desire for recognition. This often results in psychoanalysis exerting its authority over the literary field, presenting itself as the supreme authority with unrivaled expertise⁶⁵.

As psychoanalysts recognize, transference and countertransference are no longer merely viewed as obstacles in clinical work but are also seen as opportunities to enhance clinical understanding. By being aware of our own emotions, we can gain insights into what the other person might be feeling. However, when studying literature, it becomes more challenging to use transference as a means of understanding the unconscious aspects of the text since, unlike in therapy, the text does not respond. How can we evaluate the validity of interpretations when we cannot compare them to the reactions and transference of a patient, as we would in therapy? A broader epistemological perspective may be helpful. Gadamer highlights that the human sciences

should be grounded in an understanding of the unique characteristics of the subject being studied. He argues that a subject holds meaning, reflects intention, and is shaped by the historical and social context it belongs to. In the humanities, knowledge is more reliant on the researcher's awareness of their role in constructing meaning than in the natural sciences. A person seeking to understand a text must be attuned to its otherness, ready for it to reveal something new. As Gadamer suggests, it is crucial to recognize one's own biases to allow the text to present itself fully in its difference and to assert its truth against preconceived notions⁷⁰.

Psychoanalytic theory is a framework for understanding personality organization and development, linked to the practice of psychoanalysis, a clinical approach for treating psychological disorders⁸¹. The Interpretation of Dreams, the theory has evolved over time. It gained significant recognition in the final decades of the 20th century, as discussions surrounding psychological treatments expanded long after Freud's death⁸². Freud shifted his focus from brain analysis and physiological studies to the exploration of the psyche, emphasizing treatment through free association and transference. His work underscored the importance of childhood experiences in shaping adult mental functioning. By examining genetic and developmental factors, Freud's research contributed essential features to psychoanalytic theory⁸².

Both "psychoanalytic" and "psychoanalytical" are used in English, with the latter being the older term. Initially, it simply referred to anything related to the analysis of the human psyche. However, as psychoanalysis became recognized as a distinct clinical practice, both terms began to describe this field. While both are still in use, "psychoanalytic" is now the more commonly used adjective⁸³. Psychoanalysis, a therapeutic method developed by Sigmund Freud, treats mental disorders by examining the interaction between conscious and unconscious elements in the patient's mind. It involves techniques such as dream interpretation and free association to

bring repressed fears and conflicts into consciousness. It is also associated with a system of psychological theory⁸⁴.

Freud's work on psychoanalysis began in collaboration with other scholars⁸⁵. He suffered from various psychosomatic issues, including an inability to drink due to fear, and found that hypnosis was instrumental in uncovering more about her condition and treatment⁸⁶.

In psychoanalytic theory, the unconscious mind is composed of ideas and drives that have been repressed specifically, anxiety-inducing impulses from childhood that are blocked from entering consciousness. While these impulses do not disappear, they continue to exert pressure toward becoming conscious. However, the content of the unconscious can only be accessed by consciousness through distorted or disguised representations, such as dreams, neurotic symptoms, and even slips of the tongue or jokes.⁸⁷ Psychoanalysts interpret these manifestations to gain insight into the nature of the repressed material. In psychoanalytic terms, the unconscious does not include everything that is not conscious, but rather the specific material that has been actively repressed. The unconscious as a storage place for socially unacceptable thoughts, anxiety provoking wishes or desires, traumatic memories, and painful emotions that have been blocked by repression. These unconscious processes can only be recognized through their impact on conscious thought. Unconscious thoughts are not accessible through ordinary introspection, but can evade repression's censorship by manifesting in disguised forms, such as in dreams or neurotic symptoms. These elements can be "interpreted" in psychoanalysis using techniques like free association, dream analysis, and analysis of verbal slips⁸⁸.

The model of the psyche includes three components: the id, ego, and superego. The id is the part of the personality driven by fundamental, internal needs and desires, such as hunger, thirst, and the libido. It operates according to the pleasure principle, acting impulsively and without

consideration for the consequences. The superego, governed by the morality principle, upholds social moral standards and judges actions as right or wrong, using guilt to prevent socially unacceptable behavior^{89, 90}. The ego, guided by the reality principle, tries to reconcile the conflicting demands of the id and the superego, finding ways to satisfy the id's desires in ways that are acceptable in reality. The ego represents the "self" or "I" ⁹¹.

The ego works to balance the influences of the id, superego, and external reality to maintain a stable state of consciousness, minimizing intrapsychic conflict. It reacts to protect the individual from stress and anxiety by distorting reality to some degree, thereby preventing threatening unconscious thoughts from reaching conscious awareness. Anna Freud initially identified ten defense mechanisms: repression, regression, reaction formation, isolation of affect, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal into the opposite, and sublimation⁹². She also described other defense mechanisms, such as identification with the aggressor and intellectualization, which were later recognized as distinct defense mechanisms. Additionally, other psychoanalysts have greatly expanded on this list, with some authors claiming to have identified over one hundred defense mechanisms⁹³.

Psychoanalytic literary criticism, defined initially by Sigmund Freud and later expanded by scholars such as Jung, Lacan, and Kristeva, is not merely a theory of the mind but also a method of interpreting literature as a symbolic articulation of unconscious processes⁷⁵. Literature, in this view, functions as a space where repressed desires, anxieties, and conflicts find expression through imagery, metaphor, and narrative structures. The unconscious, as Lacan argues, is structured like a language, meaning that texts are not simply containers of hidden messages but dynamic fields where unconscious meaning unfolds in the very play of words, metaphors, and silences⁷⁶. Thus, psychoanalytic theory provides readers with tools to analyze literature not only

for overt themes but also for the symbolic mechanisms, dream imagery, slips, projections, and displacements, that mirror psychic operations. This connection is especially important in African literature, where writers like Bayo Adebawale embed psychological distress within cultural, social, and historical frameworks.

In *Out of His Mind*, for instance, the protagonist's mental breakdown is not presented merely as an illness but as a symbolic rupture of suppressed tensions, personal, communal, and cultural, that demand interpretation beyond the literal⁷⁷. Similarly, *Lonely Days* dramatizes the widow's grief in ways that reveal both her conscious suffering and the unconscious weight of cultural prohibitions and social rejection that fracture her sense of self⁷⁸. By applying psychoanalytic criticism, therefore, the novels can be read not only as social commentaries but also as psychological texts in which unconscious fears and cultural taboos are projected onto characters, shaping their mental conditions in symbolic and narrative terms. This makes psychoanalytic theory an indispensable conceptual framework for exploring how Adebawale represents the interplay between the psyche, culture, and literature⁷⁹.

2.2.2. Social Cultural Theory

Sociocultural theory, created by Lev Vygotsky as a response to behaviorism, suggests that mental abilities are shaped by interactions with others and the cultural environment. Vygotsky highlighted the importance of parents, peers, relatives, and society in a child's development. Sociocultural theory holds that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level"⁷¹. This means that children first learn skills through social interactions and then internalize them for personal use. Vygotsky aimed to offer a new perspective on and solutions for the educational and social issues of his time. He

believed that factors beyond biological instincts influenced human⁷³. He was the first modern psychologist to suggest that culture plays a role in shaping each person's nature. He argued that the inclusion of cultural sign systems in a child's development changes behavior and connects early and later stages of individual⁷². He emphasized that children learn from others in their culture, which is central to their development. He viewed human thought processes as stemming from social interactions and language. Key aspects of sociocultural theory include the zone of proximal development, private speech, and make-believe play.

He also proposed that humans master their behavior from the outside in, using psychological tools. These tools include language, writing systems, counting methods, and conventional signs. They also encompass learning strategies and techniques for attention and memory taught in school. These tools help shape thoughts and behaviors. The tools, social interactions, and skills learned depend on the cultural context, as different cultures value different things. For example, Western societies place emphasis on education and technology, while other cultures might focus on hunting and gathering. Children use these psychological tools to transform their social experiences cognitively⁷⁴.

Sociocultural theory provides an insightful framework for understanding how human development is shaped by social and cultural factors. Unlike traditional theories that focus on individualistic or biologically driven development, Vygotsky's theory highlights the crucial role that culture and social interactions play in the formation of cognitive abilities. According to this theory, individuals do not develop in isolation; rather, their cognitive processes are deeply embedded in and influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they live⁷⁵. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the interplay between social interactions and individual learning,

suggesting that cognitive development is a collaborative process, with individuals constructing knowledge through engagement with others in their environment⁷⁶.

One of the key concepts of sociocultural theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with the help of a more knowledgeable individual, such as a teacher, peer, or mentor⁶⁷. In Adebowale's *Out of His Mind*, for instance, the protagonist's fragile psychological state is intensified because his social environment fails to provide the supportive scaffolding necessary for recovery. Instead of receiving empathy, he faces stigmatization, which widens the gap between his struggles and the community's willingness to assist him. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's grief as a widow is exacerbated by cultural expectations that isolate rather than support her, leaving her without a "more knowledgeable other" to scaffold her psychological healing. In both cases, the absence of communal scaffolding underscores how cultural contexts can fail to mediate distress constructively, thereby amplifying mental suffering.

Another vital component of sociocultural theory is the role of language in development. Vygotsky posited that thought and language are initially separate systems that eventually converge, enabling higher-order thinking⁹⁷. This perspective has significant implications for literature, which uses language not only to depict reality but to shape it. Through narrative and dialogue, literature reflects the cultural scripts that govern how societies perceive phenomena such as mental illness, grief, or social deviance. In *Out of His Mind*, language becomes a vehicle of stigma: neighbors describe the protagonist's breakdown with pejorative labels, treating his condition as weakness rather than illness. The repeated use of derogatory expressions creates a discursive environment that reinforces alienation and prevents understanding. Conversely, in *Lonely Days*, the widow's suffering is narrated through cultural idioms that link her identity to

communal norms, underscoring how language encodes and transmits cultural expectations. In both novels, Adebowale demonstrates how language mediates psychological experience, shaping not only how characters are perceived by others but also how they perceive themselves.

Vygotsky also emphasized the role of cultural practices and symbolic tools in shaping cognition. These include not only language but also rituals, norms, and traditions that regulate social life⁹⁸. In Nigerian societies, cultural rituals surrounding widowhood, marriage, and mental health form part of the symbolic tools that shape behavior and thought. Adebowale captures these dynamics vividly in *Lonely Days*, where Yaremi is compelled to undergo widowhood rituals that deepen her psychological distress. Instead of serving as therapeutic communal practices, these rituals become instruments of stigma and alienation, illustrating how cultural tools can reinforce suffering when they fail to adapt to individual needs. Similarly, in *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's attempt to seek relief is thwarted by traditional beliefs that equate mental breakdown with shame and weakness, leaving him trapped within cultural tools that mediate his experience negatively. In both texts, Adebowale underscores the double-edged nature of cultural practices: they can sustain communities but also perpetuate suffering when rigidly applied without compassion.

The concept of private speech, another key element of sociocultural theory, further illuminates Adebowale's representation of mental conditions. Vygotsky argued that children initially use external speech to guide their actions but eventually internalize this as "inner speech," which continues to regulate thought and behavior⁹⁹. In literature, inner speech often takes the form of soliloquy, stream of consciousness, or interior monologue, offering insights into characters' psychological states. In *Out of His Mind*, Adebowale employs moments of fragmented inner dialogue to reveal the protagonist's descent into mental distress. These

passages highlight how internalized voices, shaped by societal judgment, contribute to his sense of inadequacy and despair. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's private reflections expose the crushing weight of communal expectations, showing how inner speech becomes a battleground where cultural stigma is internalized and resisted. By foregrounding these interior voices, Adebowale dramatizes the psychological impact of sociocultural pressures, demonstrating the profound interplay between external social norms and internal mental conditions.

Sociocultural theory's insistence on the centrality of community offers a powerful lens for analyzing how Adebowale's novels critique Nigerian society. Vygotsky maintained that learning and development are inherently social, with individuals constructing knowledge through participation in cultural practices¹⁰⁰. Applied to literature, this suggests that characters' psychological conditions cannot be understood in isolation but must be analyzed within their social milieu. In *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's breakdown is inseparable from the community's failure to provide support; his mental distress becomes a mirror of collective dysfunction. In *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's suffering reveals the broader cultural scripts that define widowhood, exposing how communal norms regulate individual identity at the cost of psychological wellbeing. These narratives exemplify Vygotsky's claim that human development and by extension, mental conditions are shaped less by innate biology and more by the cultural and social contexts in which individuals live.

Critically, sociocultural theory also highlights the variability of cultural contexts, acknowledging that different societies prioritize different tools, practices, and values. This perspective aligns with Adebowale's portrayal of Nigerian communities, where cultural norms around widowhood, masculinity, and mental health reflect local traditions that differ significantly from Western psychiatric models. For instance, while Western societies might pathologize

depression in clinical terms, Adebowale's characters confront their distress within frameworks defined by communal expectations and cultural rituals. This divergence underscores the importance of analyzing mental conditions through culturally specific lenses, as sociocultural theory advocates. It also reveals literature's role in bridging these perspectives by dramatizing the lived experience of individuals caught between personal suffering and cultural scripts. In connecting sociocultural theory to Adebowale's novels, it becomes evident that the representation of mental conditions is not merely a psychological issue but a cultural one. The novels illustrate how stigma, cultural norms, and communal practices coalesce to shape mental distress, echoing Vygotsky's assertion that cognition and emotion are culturally mediated. Adebowale's use of narrative strategies such as symbolism, dialogue, and interior monologue reinforces this mediation, presenting mental conditions not as isolated pathologies but as socially constructed experiences. By situating his characters within richly drawn cultural contexts, Adebowale provides a literary exploration of Vygotsky's claim that human development is inseparable from the cultural tools and social interactions that shape it.

Thus, sociocultural theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* represent the intersection of mental health and culture. It highlights the role of language, rituals, and community in shaping psychological experience, providing insights into how stigma and cultural norms perpetuate suffering. At the same time, Adebowale's novels expand the theory's implications by showing the tragic consequences of cultural tools that fail to adapt to individual needs, offering a poignant critique of Nigerian society's handling of mental conditions. In doing so, the texts affirm the relevance of sociocultural theory not only as a psychological model but also as a literary lens for analyzing the cultural construction of mental distress.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1. Social Determinant of Mental Conditions

The social circumstances in which individuals live play a crucial role in shaping their mental health outcomes, and these circumstances present some of the most adaptable points for intervention to prevent mental health challenges and foster psychological well-being in society⁴⁵. The term social determinants of mental conditions refers to the structural environments people are exposed to throughout their lives from conception to death which significantly influence personal mental health conditions and account for differences in mental well-being both within and across populations⁶⁶. These environments include factors like income level, access to education, stable employment, adequate housing, reliable food sources, social and emotional support, and fair treatment, as well as the physical and social environments in which people reside⁶⁷. Access to quality, affordable, and culturally appropriate healthcare is also a critical component. The distribution of these social factors is largely governed by how money, power, and resources are shared globally, nationally, and locally⁶⁸. These distributions are not arbitrary but are shaped by political and policy decisions that influence the environments people live in. As a result, many individuals are either systematically advantaged or disadvantaged by the conditions created through institutional power structures, leading to deep-seated and often inherited inequalities⁶⁹. Such systemic arrangements determine who gets access to protective resources and who remains vulnerable to harmful experiences, thus reproducing mental health disparities across generations⁷⁰.

Good mental condition is fundamental to overall human well-being. A person's mental state as well as their likelihood of developing mental disorders is closely tied to the social, economic, and physical environments they encounter at different stages of life⁷¹. Research consistently

shows that mental health risks are strongly connected to social inequality: the greater the inequality, the higher the incidence of mental health problems⁷². Therefore, it becomes essential to implement timely actions to improve living conditions starting from before birth and continuing through childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and into old age. Proactive and consistent interventions across these life phases can significantly enhance mental health in the population and help reduce the prevalence of mental disorders linked to social injustice⁷³.

Certain personal characteristics are statistically linked to poorer mental health outcomes. These include having a low income, lacking a partner or meaningful relationships, limited social support, being female, experiencing financial strain, being unemployed, having a lower level of education, and feeling discriminated against⁷⁴. Beyond the individual level, community and environmental factors also contribute significantly. Over sixty studies highlight the influence of neighborhood dynamics, including socioeconomic status, collective trust and cooperation (social capital), the physical infrastructure, ethnic composition, and common challenges like insecurity or pollution⁷⁵. These broader conditions frame individuals' daily experiences and can either buffer or intensify mental health vulnerabilities.

A comprehensive review of about 150 studies found that most reported clear associations between at least one social or economic factor and mental health outcomes⁷⁶. Although the studies varied widely in their methods, sample sizes, and definitions of mental health, one consistent theme was the strong role that social and economic settings play in both the onset and continuation of mental illness. This reinforces the urgency for governmental and institutional action focused on correcting these systemic issues. Improving the conditions of daily life remains a powerful strategy for enhancing population-wide mental health and ensuring more equitable mental health outcomes for all⁷⁷.

Growing evidence suggests that our life situations are deeply connected to the likelihood of experiencing mental conditions, with individuals who exist on the social and economic fringes bearing a disproportionately higher burden of psychiatric disorders⁷⁸. Poor mental condition, often an unseen force, can hinder people's ability to thrive by reducing both life expectancy and the quality of life they experience⁷⁹. Therefore, improving public mental conditions through targeted prevention strategies that address modifiable social risk factors should be recognized as a matter of social justice⁸⁰. Society currently stands at a critical juncture, not only in understanding how social conditions might trigger or worsen mental health issues but also in crafting effective interventions to reduce the unequal mental health outcomes experienced across and within communities⁸¹.

In recent decades, while biomedical research has made strides in uncovering the genetic and neurobiological underpinnings of psychiatric disorders, there has been relatively less focus on investigating how psychosocial environments contribute to mental illness⁸². Scientific advances have uncovered that mental disorders often have overlapping genetic causes and complex biological bases, as seen in conditions like depression, psychosis, and bipolar disorder⁸³. However, translating these discoveries into clinical solutions that can prevent or treat mental distress has proven challenging. The gap between biomedical insight and practical treatment remains substantial, particularly when it comes to social determinants that are easier to modify⁸⁴. The World Health Organization, mental conditions is not merely the absence of illness but a holistic state in which individuals can realize their potential, manage everyday stresses, work effectively, and contribute meaningfully to society⁸⁵. This implies that someone living with mental illness can still achieve emotional well-being and lead a fulfilling life, despite experiencing symptoms that may be distressing or debilitating⁸⁶. Research also shows that stigma

plays a major role in discouraging individuals from seeking mental health care. Negative societal attitudes toward mental illness as well as the mere expectation of prejudice often deter people from accessing support⁸⁷. Additionally, a lack of public understanding about mental health conditions and the available treatment options exacerbates this problem. The stigma surrounding mental illness perpetuates a knowledge gap, thereby reducing help-seeking behavior⁸⁸.

A recent rapid review highlighted the extensive influence that social determinants exert on mental conditions, though it also acknowledged certain limitations. Many of the reviewed studies did not focus on how specific social factors affect individual mental disorders. Instead, they analyzed their broader effects on general health outcomes, making it difficult to draw precise conclusions about particular diagnoses⁸⁹. Furthermore, the level of detail varied significantly across the studies, some reviews examined how social determinants affect different demographic groups, while others did not, resulting in inconsistencies⁹⁰.

This broad variability complicated efforts to establish strong links between specific social determinants and distinct mental illnesses. Moreover, many of the included studies were descriptive and cross-sectional in nature, limiting their ability to demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships. Another significant concern was the unclear methodological quality of several studies included in the reviews⁹¹. While the rapid review provided valuable insights into the role of social determinants in mental conditions, these methodological shortcomings must be taken into account when interpreting its findings⁹².

To begin with, although one of the strengths of conducting a review of systematic reviews lies in its ability to present a broad synthesis of existing literature, there remains the possibility that some critical studies may have been omitted from the final report⁹³.

Furthermore, the inter-rater reliability for the full-text screening phase showed only moderate agreement between reviewers, with a kappa value of 0.45. This might be attributed to ambiguity in how some of the review questions were presented in the original studies. Interestingly, while the kappa statistic indicated moderate reliability, the overall agreement between reviewers was high at 73%. This discrepancy is likely explained by the “kappa paradox” which arises when the number of agreed exclusions significantly outweighs inclusions, thus creating an asymmetry that lowers kappa values even when actual agreement is strong⁹⁵. The results of this review underscore the necessity for additional rigorous research in the field. In particular, there is a pressing need for studies employing longitudinal and experimental methodologies to better understand causality⁹⁶. Future investigations should aim to assess the relative influence of various social determinants and include analyses segmented by demographic categories. Additionally, distinguishing the distinct effects of specific social factors on particular mental illnesses will be vital for developing more targeted and effective interventions⁹⁷.

It is worth noting that most of the reviews analyzed primarily examined the social determinants of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, while neglecting conditions like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, which are often associated with stronger biological components. Future research must therefore strive to explore how social and biological factors interact dynamically in the onset and progression of such conditions⁹⁸. Broadly, the findings from the review suggest that individuals exposed to violence, economic adversity, discrimination, migration, significant life changes, or social isolation may face an elevated risk of developing mental health challenges. These populations should receive focused attention and support. Mental health professionals especially nurses must be educated about the influence of these social factors on psychological well-being⁹⁹. Moreover, proactive intervention strategies

should be introduced early to reduce the negative mental health outcomes associated with these identified risks¹⁰⁰.

2.3.2 Mental Conditions Stigma and Cultural Perceptions

Mental conditions are a significant issue in Nigerian society, yet they remain largely underexplored, especially when it comes to how cultural, social, and economic factors contribute to the stigma and neglect of affected individuals. The complex dynamics surrounding mental conditions, often misrepresented or stigmatized, are a major cause of social exclusion for those experiencing these conditions. In many Nigerian communities, mental conditions are perceived not as a health issue, but as a manifestation of spiritual punishment, witchcraft, or moral failure. These perceptions are deeply ingrained in cultural and societal norms, and as such, individuals with mental conditions often face not only internal struggles but also significant external barriers such as social ostracization. The stigma surrounding mental conditions is so pervasive that it frequently prevents those affected from seeking the necessary help or support. Rather than seeking professional psychological or medical care, many individuals resort to traditional or religious healing practices, which may not address the root causes of their mental distress, thus prolonging their suffering. This stigma, rooted in cultural misunderstandings, creates an additional layer of hardship for those affected, complicating their ability to reintegrate into society¹⁰⁵.

Mental conditions in Nigerian culture are frequently linked to supernatural forces. It is common in some Nigerian communities for individuals with mental conditions to be perceived as suffering from the consequences of sin, possession by evil spirits, or curses. This view, while rooted in tradition, contributes to the marginalization of those with mental conditions. The belief that mental distress is caused by spiritual forces leads to the ostracization of affected individuals,

who are often treated as outcasts and subjected to harmful stereotypes. Consequently, their plight is not only psychological but also deeply social, as they become the targets of exclusion, misunderstanding, and fear. The cultural interpretation of mental conditions as the result of supernatural intervention or personal moral failing exacerbates the challenges that individuals face, as they are forced to confront both internal struggles and societal rejection. This societal rejection perpetuates the notion that mental conditions are something to be ashamed of, further intensifying the stigma surrounding the ¹⁰⁶.

The stigma is not merely a theoretical concept but is deeply embedded in the social fabric of Nigerian society. Their study highlights that individuals suffering from mental conditions are often hidden away by their families to protect them from the shame of public knowledge. The study suggests that fear of social rejection leads many Nigerians to deny or conceal their struggles with mental health. This denial exacerbates the sense of isolation, as affected individuals are cut off from necessary emotional support. Instead of seeking medical or psychological help, many turn to religious or traditional healers, whose methods may provide temporary relief but often fail to address the root causes of mental distress. The failure to address the underlying causes of mental conditions through conventional medical or psychological interventions only serves to prolong and deepen the suffering of individuals, as they are left without the tools needed to confront their conditions in a meaningful way. In some cases, the reliance on traditional healing methods further marginalizes the profession of psychiatry and the expertise of mental health professionals, making it even more difficult for individuals to access the care they need¹⁰⁸.

In his works, particularly *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, Bayo Adebawale addresses these issues with profound sensitivity and insight. Both novels depict characters who are

struggling with mental conditions but are also subjected to the societal stigma and rejection associated with those conditions. In *Out of His Mind*, for example, the protagonist's mental breakdown is exacerbated by the belief that his condition is the result of spiritual punishment or a moral failing. His mental distress is seen through the cultural lens of supernatural intervention, which further isolates him from society. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, the protagonist's mental distress is portrayed as a consequence of overwhelming societal pressures and expectations, particularly the roles imposed on her as a woman in a traditional Nigerian society. Both protagonists are depicted as navigating their mental distress in a cultural context that is deeply unsympathetic to their struggles, which not only complicates their emotional challenges but also exacerbates their social isolation^{101, 102}.

The stigma surrounding mental conditions is particularly severe for women in Nigerian society, as they face additional pressure to conform to gender roles that demand emotional strength and resilience. Women with mental conditions are often perceived as weak or unfit for their roles as mothers, wives, and daughters. This perception leads to an increased burden of isolation for women, as they are not only dealing with their own emotional distress but are also navigating the additional stigma associated with their gender. The societal expectation for women to maintain composure, strength, and selflessness often leads to their suffering in silence, as they are less likely to seek help for fear of being labeled as weak or incapable¹⁰⁰.

Lonely Days explores these gendered experiences of mental distress. The protagonist, a woman, is caught in a web of societal expectations that demand she uphold a perfect family image. The pressure of these expectations, coupled with personal grief and internal turmoil, leads to her mental breakdown. However, her condition is not seen as a legitimate illness; instead, she is viewed as someone who has failed in her role as a woman. This gendered stigma is a powerful

commentary on the societal expectations of women, which leave little room for emotional vulnerability or mental distress. Similarly, in *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's struggles with mental illness are also influenced by the societal expectations placed on men. As a man, he is expected to embody strength and emotional resilience. His inability to meet these expectations deepens his feelings of inadequacy and intensifies the stigma he faces. Adebowale's portrayal of both male and female protagonists highlights the gendered dimensions of mental condition stigma, showing how these societal expectations can exacerbate the challenges faced by individuals with mental conditions¹⁰¹.

The stigma surrounding mental conditions not only isolates individuals from their communities but also discourages them from seeking professional help. In Nigerian society, the fear of being labeled as "mad" often leads to a reluctance to access professional psychological or medical care. Instead, many individuals turn to spiritual or traditional healers, who are viewed more favorably in the community. However, these alternative methods often fail to address the psychological and medical needs of those affected by mental conditions, leaving them to suffer without the benefit of proper care. The reluctance to seek professional help is further exacerbated by the societal view that mental conditions are shameful or morally suspect. This stigma reinforces the idea that seeking help for a mental condition is a sign of weakness or personal failure, which discourages many from reaching out for the support they need¹⁰².

This study suggests that many individuals who experience mental distress avoid seeking help because of the social stigma attached to mental conditions. Instead, they turn to religious or traditional healers, who may offer comfort but not necessarily treatment. This reliance on nonprofessional methods of care only serves to prolong the suffering of individuals with mental conditions, preventing them from accessing the help they need to recover. Moreover, the

continued reliance on traditional and religious healing practices in the face of modern psychological care further entrenches the stigma surrounding mental conditions, as individuals who seek professional help are often viewed with suspicion and disdain¹⁰³.

The societal stigma surrounding mental conditions in Nigeria also impacts the relationships between individuals and their families. The sense of shame associated with mental distress often leads families to hide or deny the condition, further isolating the individual. The fear of public judgment and the desire to protect the family's reputation often outweigh the need to provide emotional or psychological support to the affected individual. In *Lonely Days*, the protagonist's increasing isolation from her family reflects the broader societal tendency to deny or hide the existence of mental distress. Her condition is not understood or acknowledged by her family, leading her to feel more alienated and misunderstood. Similarly, in *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's mental condition is not treated with the seriousness it deserves by his family and community. Instead, they view him as an embarrassment, reinforcing the societal view that mental conditions are something to be ashamed of and hidden away¹⁰⁴.

The stigma surrounding mental conditions in Nigeria is not just a personal or familial issue; it is a societal one that permeates public attitudes, healthcare, and even governmental policies. Mental health services in Nigeria are often underfunded, and the lack of sufficient training for healthcare workers means that mental conditions are rarely addressed with the necessary attention or care. According to the World Health Organization, Nigeria has a shortage of mental health professionals, with fewer than 300 psychiatrists available for a population exceeding 200 million people³⁴. This shortage has significant implications for the care and treatment of those suffering from mental conditions, as many are unable to access the services they need. Mental health institutions are also often poorly equipped, and stigma continues to deter many people

from seeking the help they require. As a result, individuals with mental conditions are often left without professional support and are instead expected to cope with their conditions in isolation, contributing to the worsening of their mental health^{104, 105}.

Moreover, the inadequate mental condition infrastructure in Nigeria is compounded by the prevailing cultural beliefs that mental distress is not a medical issue but rather a manifestation of personal failure or spiritual punishment. These cultural beliefs contribute to the underreporting of mental conditions and prevent those affected from seeking medical care. Individuals with mental conditions are often seen as “unreliable” or “unfit” for certain societal roles, especially in professional and family settings. This stigmatization not only affects their personal well-being but also their societal contributions, as they may be excluded from opportunities that could otherwise help them regain stability and confidence¹⁰⁵. The societal perception of mental illness as a sign of weakness or moral failure is a significant barrier to effective care, as it prevents the affected individuals from reaching out for professional help and leads to a cycle of neglect and isolation.

Adebowale’s works, especially *Lonely Days* and *Out of His Mind*, reflect the impact of these societal views on the lives of those grappling with mental conditions. His protagonists are not merely individuals struggling with personal mental anguish; they are emblematic of the broader societal issues that shape their experiences of mental distress. In *Lonely Days*, the female protagonist is particularly vulnerable to societal judgment. Her mental distress is exacerbated by the cultural belief that a woman who struggles emotionally is weak or incapable of fulfilling her traditional role in the family. This adds another layer of stigma to her already fragile mental state, causing her to feel more isolated and hopeless. The male protagonist in *Out of His Mind* also faces similar societal pressures, though they are shaped by different gender expectations. His

mental breakdown is, in part, a response to the crushing expectations placed on him as a man. He is expected to be strong, emotionally stable, and capable of providing for his family. His inability to live up to these expectations leads to his breakdown, but society refuses to acknowledge his distress, preferring to view him as weak or irrational instead of suffering from a mental condition. These portrayals highlight how societal norms and expectations can exacerbate mental distress, preventing individuals from receiving the support and care they need¹⁰⁶.

Furthermore, these works serve as a critique of the systemic and cultural issues that allow such stigmatization to persist. Adebowale highlights the limitations of both modern and traditional forms of treatment for mental conditions, showing that neither can fully address the underlying societal factors that contribute to the stigmatization of affected individuals. In *Lonely Days*, the protagonist's journey is one of self-discovery and resilience, but her progress is hampered by the cultural and social factors that prevent her from accessing the help she needs. Her struggle is compounded by the pervasive belief that mental illness is a sign of moral or spiritual failure, and this belief makes it even harder for her to confront her condition openly. Similarly, in *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's breakdown is presented as a direct result of societal pressures, yet he is unable to seek appropriate care because of the stigma surrounding his mental condition. His mental distress is framed not as a medical issue but as a moral failing or spiritual weakness, and this view reinforces his social isolation and exacerbates his suffering¹⁰⁷. The fear of social exclusion and rejection is one of the primary reasons individuals with mental conditions avoid seeking professional help in Nigeria. Research conducted by the Nigerian Mental Health Foundation shows that over 60% of Nigerians with mental health issues do not seek help due to the fear of stigma and discrimination^{106, 107}. This fear is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where traditional beliefs about mental conditions are even more entrenched. In

these communities, mental conditions are often seen as a family disgrace, and individuals with such conditions are frequently hidden away to avoid bringing shame to the family. This leads to a cycle of secrecy and denial, where the affected individual is left to suffer alone, with no access to the necessary resources for healing and recovery. The fear of stigma is so powerful that many individuals with mental conditions choose to remain silent about their struggles, further perpetuating the notion that mental illness is something to be ashamed of and hidden from society.

The reluctance to seek help is compounded by the shortage of mental health professionals and facilities in Nigeria. According to the Nigerian Psychiatric Association, the country has fewer than 400 psychiatrists, most of whom are concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities with limited access to mental health services¹⁰⁷. The lack of trained professionals and adequate facilities means that those who are willing to seek help may not have access to appropriate care. Furthermore, the prevailing cultural stigma surrounding mental conditions means that many individuals prefer to rely on informal support systems such as family, friends, or religious leaders, rather than seeking out formal psychiatric or psychological treatment. This reliance on informal support systems, while well-meaning, is often inadequate, as these individuals may not have the training or resources to address the underlying issues that contribute to the person's mental distress.

In Adebowale's works, the characters' interactions with their families are key to understanding the broader societal attitudes toward mental conditions. Both *Lonely Days* and *Out of His Mind* depict families that are not equipped to deal with mental distress. In *Lonely Days*, the protagonist's family is unable to understand her emotional turmoil, instead choosing to focus on the outward appearances of success and stability. This creates a rift between the protagonist

and her family, who fail to provide the emotional support she needs. In *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's family is similarly unable to support him in a meaningful way, as they do not recognize the seriousness of his condition. Instead, they focus on his outward behavior, which they view as irrational, without considering the psychological factors that may be contributing to his distress. These depictions reflect the broader societal tendency to deny or minimize the reality of mental conditions, further exacerbating the isolation and suffering of those affected¹⁰⁸.

2.4 Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Framework (Model)

This section presents the theoretical foundation for understanding how societal stigma and cultural norms intersect to shape the representation of mental conditions in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. The theoretical framework will be centered on two main concepts: the interrelationship between social stigma, cultural norms, mental conditions, and the application of psychoanalytic theories to explain the psychological experiences of the characters.

Interrelationship Between Societal Stigma, Cultural Norms, and Mental Conditions: A Psychoanalytic Conceptual Framework

In Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, the representation of mental conditions is deeply intertwined with the operations of societal stigma and cultural norms. This conceptual model demonstrates how these two forces converge to shape the lived realities of characters struggling with psychological distress. Societal stigma, understood as the negative labeling and stereotyping of individuals perceived as deviating from accepted norms, creates an environment of exclusion and shame. In *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist's mental struggles are intensified not only by his personal crises but also by the community's rejection, which views madness as a disgrace to family and society. The stigma attached to his condition transforms his private pain into public humiliation, thereby reinforcing his alienation and accelerating his

psychological breakdown. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, the stigma of widowhood functions as a communal mechanism of control, branding Yaremi as a bearer of misfortune and subjecting her to sustained humiliation. Through these portrayals, Adebowale illustrates how stigma is both a social judgment and a psychological burden that reshapes identity.

Cultural norms further complicate these dynamics by providing the framework through which stigma operates. Norms dictate acceptable behavior, gender roles, and communal responses to life events, and in Adebowale's novels, they consistently reinforce patriarchal and exclusionary practices. In *Lonely Days*, the cultural expectation that a widow must undergo dehumanizing rituals reflects a tradition that prioritizes collective conformity over individual well-being. These rituals, such as forcing widows into symbolic acts of shame, are not neutral customs but mechanisms that perpetuate trauma under the guise of cultural continuity. In *Out of His Mind*, cultural perceptions of mental illness as a spiritual or moral failing limit the possibility of empathy or medical intervention, leaving the protagonist trapped between personal anguish and cultural condemnation. In both cases, cultural norms transform personal experiences of grief or madness into socially constructed crises, revealing how tradition can institutionalize psychological suffering.

This model highlights the reciprocal relationship between societal stigma and cultural norms: stigma draws legitimacy from cultural beliefs, while norms acquire their power from the stigmatizing practices they enable. For Adebowale's characters, this cycle means that mental conditions are not simply individual afflictions but outcomes of systemic social processes. The community's rejection of the mentally ill in *Out of His Mind* and its ritual humiliation of widows in *Lonely Days* demonstrate how personal distress becomes magnified when filtered through the lens of communal judgment. Freud's theory of unconscious conflict helps explain how

stigmatized individuals internalize these social hostilities, leading to repression, self-doubt, and psychological disintegration. Similarly, Jung's notion of the collective unconscious provides insight into how cultural archetypes, such as the "madman" or the sorrowful widow are perpetuated and imposed on individuals, shaping not only how they are perceived but how they perceive themselves.

The conceptual model underscores that in Adebowale's works, mental conditions cannot be separated from the interplay of stigma and cultural norms. Stigma imposes labels that alienate, while norms codify exclusion into practice, creating a context in which psychological distress is both produced and sustained. By dramatizing these processes, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* reveal that the true weight of mental affliction lies not only in personal suffering but also in the oppressive social and cultural structures that define, interpret, and perpetuate that suffering.

Firstly, poverty emerges as a dominant force in shaping mental distress, especially in *Out of His Mind*. The persistent experience of material deprivation fosters a pervasive sense of inadequacy, vulnerability, and despair. These unresolved emotions accumulate and manifest as psychological breakdown. Freud's theory of repression is relevant here, suggesting that repressed feelings of inferiority and hopelessness are stored in the unconscious and may erupt under continued socio-economic stress³¹. The protagonist's deteriorating mental state thus reflects the internalization of social deprivation and the long-term psychological toll of systemic poverty.

Secondly, family dynamics function as a critical determinant of mental health in both novels. Dysfunctional familial relationships characterized by neglect, emotional disconnection, or abuse create deep emotional wounds that often remain unresolved. The early childhood trauma theory, such experiences profoundly affect an individual's unconscious mind and shape adult behavior and coping mechanisms. In both texts, the protagonists grapple with unresolved emotional

conflicts rooted in early family experiences, leading to psychological fragmentation. Rather than offering support, the family becomes a source of emotional instability, heightening the characters' vulnerability to mental distress.

Thirdly, cultural beliefs, especially those surrounding widowhood in *Lonely Days*, significantly impact the protagonist's psychological well-being. Widows are subjected to community ostracization, symbolic rejection, and ritual humiliation, rooted in patriarchal customs and traditional belief systems. Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is especially illuminating in this context. Jung posits that human behavior is influenced by inherited archetypes universal symbols embedded in the unconscious across cultures. The protagonist's experiences reflect the "sorrowful widow" archetype, an enduring societal script that shapes both communal attitudes and the widow's own self-perception. This internalized archetype fosters deep-seated emotional isolation, contributing to anxiety, shame, and a fractured sense of identity. Lastly, societal expectations, particularly those associated with gender roles, exert a powerful psychological influence in *Lonely Days*. The protagonist is burdened by rigid societal prescriptions regarding femininity, behavior, and widowhood, which suppress her individuality and create a profound sense of alienation. Freud's theory of unconscious conflict offers critical insight here. This theory suggests that mental distress often arises from the tension between repressed desires and external constraints. In this case, the protagonist's inner conflict between personal autonomy and the expectations imposed by her community generates chronic emotional turmoil, leading to psychological exhaustion. The clash between societal obligation and personal identity becomes a key source of distress in her journey.

In sum, this conceptual framework illustrates that mental conditions in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* are not isolated phenomena, but outcomes of prolonged interaction with

unfavorable social structures. Poverty, dysfunctional family systems, cultural stigmatization, and rigid gender norms all contribute to the emotional and psychological disintegration observed in the characters. Through the application of Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic theories including repression, childhood trauma, unconscious conflict, and the collective unconscious, this framework provides a deeper understanding of the mental conditions narratives embedded within these texts. It affirms that the psychological afflictions experienced by the characters are reflections of broader societal conditions, and that literature offers a powerful space for exploring the intersection between the mind and the social world.

Application of Psychoanalytic Theories

To further understand the characters' mental conditions, psychoanalytic theories will be applied. Specifically, Freudian psychoanalysis and Carl Jung's theories of the collective unconscious will be used to interpret the characters' psychological states. Freudian Theory concepts such as repression, the unconscious mind, and the role of early childhood experiences will help explain how suppressed emotions and traumatic events shape the characters' mental health. For instance, the protagonist in *Out of His Mind* exhibits signs of repression, which ultimately leads to his breakdown as he is unable to reconcile his past traumas with his present reality.

Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, which refers to shared societal experiences and archetypes, is particularly useful in understanding the psychological experiences of the characters in *Lonely Days*. The protagonist's struggles with the archetype of the "widow" and her community's expectations reflect the powerful influence of collective beliefs on individual mental conditions.

These psychoanalytic theories provide a lens through which the characters' mental health challenges can be understood as a result of both internal psychological factors and external social forces. Through this theoretical framework, the study will explore how Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* portray mental conditions as both socially constructed and psychologically complex phenomena.

2.5 Summary of Gaps in Literature Reviewed

One of the significant gaps in the existing literature is the lack of focus on the Nigerian context, particularly in the exploration of the intersection between societal stigma, cultural norms, and mental conditions in Nigerian literature. Numerous studies have addressed the impact of socioeconomic conditions on mental conditions. In Western societies, there is limited research that specifically examines how these issues manifest in African literary works, especially in Nigeria. In works like Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind*, and *Lonely Days*, there are clear depictions of how societal pressures, poverty, and gender roles influence the psychological state of characters. However, there is a scarcity of studies that analyze these depictions with a specific focus on the Nigerian social and cultural context, leaving a critical gap in understanding how mental conditions is portrayed in Nigerian literature.

Another gap is the underexplored use of psychoanalytic theories in analyzing African literature, particularly in relation to mental conditions. Psychoanalytic criticism has been extensively applied to Western literature, but its application in African literary criticism is limited, especially when it comes to understanding the psychological dimensions of characters affected by socioeconomic challenges. Bayo Adebowale's works offer rich narratives that could benefit from psychoanalytic interpretation, especially in terms of how trauma, repression, and social stressors are represented. Despite the potential insights that could be gained from applying

such theories, there has been little scholarly attention to exploring these perspectives in Nigerian or African literary texts. This gap highlights the need for further research using psychoanalytic frameworks to deepen the understanding of mental conditions in African literature.

In addition, the potential therapeutic role of African literature in addressing mental conditions issues remains under-researched. While bibliotherapy and the healing power of literature are recognized in Western contexts, their application in African societies, particularly in dealing with social and economic trauma, has not been thoroughly explored. Adebowale's novels depict significant emotional and psychological suffering linked to widowhood, poverty, and social exclusion, yet there is limited academic inquiry into how these literary works can serve as tools for healing and social commentary. This gap presents an opportunity to investigate how African literature might contribute to the mental well-being of readers, especially those facing similar societal pressures.

In conclusion, the gaps in the literature primarily revolve around the limited focus on the Nigerian context, the underuse of psychoanalytic approaches in analyzing African literature, and the unexplored therapeutic potential of African literary texts. These gaps present a clear direction for future research that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social class, mental conditions, and literature in African societies.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this study is qualitative in nature, employing a content analysis approach to examine the representations of social class and mental conditions in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the themes, characters, and narrative techniques used in the selected

literary texts. Qualitative research is most suitable for this study, as it emphasizes the interpretation of textual data and seeks to understand the subjective experiences and social realities portrayed in literature. Content analysis, as a qualitative method, involves a systematic examination of the texts to identify patterns, themes, and meanings related to the research objectives. This approach is well-suited to the research questions, which focus on how social class and mental conditions are represented in the novels, and how these elements reflect broader social, cultural, and economic issues within Nigerian society. By applying this method, the study will be able to uncover underlying messages and the societal implications of the characters' experiences, which are often reflective of the realities faced by individuals in similar socioeconomic situations.

The research will also incorporate aspects of psychoanalytic literary criticism, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Freud and Lacan, to analyze the psychological dimensions of the characters. This allows for an exploration of the unconscious motivations, repressed emotions, and psychological conflicts that contribute to their mental conditions. Combining psychoanalytic theory with content analysis enables a more nuanced interpretation of the texts, as it bridges the gap between social context and individual psychology.

In summary, the qualitative research design, grounded in content analysis and psychoanalytic criticism, is aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between social class, mental conditions, and narrative techniques in Bayo Adebawale's works chosen for the study or being discussed. This design is both appropriate and effective for addressing the research questions and achieving the study's objectives.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of literary texts within the realm of Nigerian literature, with a specific focus on all the works of Bayo Adebowale. In particular, the study will analyze two of his notable novels: *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. These novels were selected because they vividly portray the experiences of individuals affected by socioeconomic pressures and mental conditions challenges, making them ideal texts for examining the interplay between social class and mental conditions.

Adebowale's works are representative of a broader category of African literature that addresses the complexities of life in postcolonial Nigeria. As such, the population for this research is not limited to just these two novels but is part of the larger corpus of Nigerian literary texts that explore themes of social inequality, mental health, and cultural identity. However, for the purposes of this study, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* have been chosen as case studies to provide focused and in-depth analysis.

Additionally, the population of the study includes the critical literature and scholarly work that engages with Nigerian fiction, psychoanalytic criticism, and the sociocultural analysis of mental conditions in literature. The study aims to build upon existing academic discourse while filling gaps related to the portrayal of mental conditions and social class in Nigerian literary texts.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study comprises two novels by Bayo Adebowale: *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. These texts were purposefully selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique often employed in qualitative research. This technique is appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to intentionally choose literary works that are most relevant to

the research objectives, particularly in relation to the portrayal of social class and mental conditions.

The selection of *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* is based on the thematic focus of these novels, which vividly depict the struggles of individuals coping with poverty, social marginalization, and mental conditions challenges. These works provide rich material for exploring the interplay between social class and mental conditions, which is central to the research questions. The two novels were chosen because they not only offer significant literary portrayals of mental health issues in African society but also present a nuanced exploration of the psychological and social factors that impact the characters' experiences.

Purposive sampling was further guided by the relevance of these texts to contemporary discussions on mental conditions in African literature, as well as the absence of extensive critical analysis on these themes within Adebowale's works. By focusing on these particular novels, the study aims to fill this gap and provide new insights into how African authors like Adebowale use literature to comment on socioeconomic and psychological conditions.

In conclusion, the purposive sampling technique ensures that the selected texts are aligned with the research objectives, allowing for an in-depth, focused analysis of the representation of social class and mental conditions in Nigerian literature. This sampling method is appropriate for a qualitative study, as it prioritizes the richness and relevance of the data over the size or breadth of the sample.

3.4. Method of Data Collection

Data collection for this study primarily involves gathering and analysis of textual data from the two selected novels by Bayo Adebowale: *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. The data

consists of passages, dialogues, character interactions, and narrative elements that portray themes of social class, mental conditions, and the socioeconomic conditions in Nigerian society. This process of data collection is embedded in the qualitative research design, focusing on how these texts reflect the study's objectives.

The process of data collection began with a comprehensive and close reading of the novels, during which key passages were identified that illustrate the social and psychological struggles of the characters. Specific attention was given to how these characters navigate their social environments, how mental conditions issues manifest within these contexts, and how the narrative structure and authorial voice contribute to these portrayals.

In addition to the primary texts, secondary data were collected from scholarly articles, critical reviews, and psychoanalytic literature that provided insights into the theoretical frameworks applied in the analysis. These secondary sources were instrumental in framing the interpretations of the primary data within broader academic discourse, enhancing the depth and contextual relevance of the findings.

The collection of this data was iterative, meaning that the texts were read multiple times to ensure that no key themes or patterns were overlooked. Data collection was guided by the research questions, ensuring that all relevant textual evidence was gathered systematically and consistently. The use of content analysis and psychoanalytic criticism served as the primary methods for categorizing and organizing the collected data, allowing for a focused and in-depth interpretation.

In summary, the data collection process in this study involves the systematic identification and extraction of relevant passages from *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, as well as the use of

supporting secondary data to contextualize and deepen the analysis. This method ensures that the data collected is directly aligned with the study's objectives and research questions.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study involves the systematic examination of the selected novels, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* by Bayo Adebowale, through qualitative methods. The primary data, which consists of passages, dialogues, and narrative elements from the novels, is analyzed using content analysis and psychoanalytic criticism. These approaches are used to uncover the underlying themes of social class and mental conditions, as well as the socioeconomic factors influencing the characters' psychological experiences.

The content analysis method is employed to identify recurring themes, motifs, and symbols related to mental conditions and social inequality in the texts. The analysis is guided by the research questions, focusing on how the novels depict the interaction between societal conditions and the mental states of the characters. Specific passages and dialogues are scrutinized to reveal how Adebowale portrays the struggles of individuals coping with poverty, social marginalization, and psychological distress. This approach allows for a detailed exploration of the text's surface meaning, as well as its deeper implications regarding social and mental conditions in Nigerian society.

In addition to content analysis, psychoanalytic literary criticism is applied to examine the psychological dimensions of the characters, particularly in relation to their mental health conditions. Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic principles are used to interpret the unconscious motivations, repressed desires, and psychological conflicts experienced by the characters. This method helps to provide insight into how external social pressures, such as

poverty and isolation, influence the internal mental struggles of the characters. By applying this theoretical framework, the study aims to uncover the ways in which Adebowale's characters navigate their social and mental environments, revealing the psychological impact of their socioeconomic conditions.

The data analysis process also involves comparing findings with existing scholarly work on African literature, psychoanalytic theory, and mental conditions in Nigerian society. This ensures that the interpretations are grounded in academic discourse and contribute to filling the identified gaps in literature.

In conclusion, the data analysis in this study is conducted through a combination of content analysis and psychoanalytic criticism. These methods allow for a comprehensive examination of how social class and mental conditions are represented in the selected novels, providing insights into the societal and psychological dimensions of Adebowale's characters in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. This analytical approach ensures that the research questions are thoroughly addressed, and that the findings contribute meaningfully to the broader academic understanding of these themes in Nigerian literature.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter reveals the findings and discussion based on the research questions guiding this study. Using qualitative analysis, it examines how Bayo Adebawale portrays societal stigma, cultural norms and mental conditions in his novels *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. The chapter is structured around the three research questions. It first explores the societal stigma and cultural norms depicted in the two novels. It then analyzes how the mental conditions of the protagonists are portrayed, considering psychological depth and narrative technique. Lastly, it discusses the societal implications of these representations, especially in the context of mental conditions awareness and cultural perceptions within African communities. The discussion integrates textual evidence with relevant critical perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of mental conditions representation in Adebawale's works.

4.1 Presentation of Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the societal stigma and cultural norms depicted in Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*?

Unemployment and Solitude

In Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind*, the author intricately weaves together social and psychological realities to depict the gradual mental disintegration of the protagonist, Alamu. Through a compelling narrative that harnesses suspense, interior monologue, and a powerful use of stream of consciousness, the novel presents unemployment as a principal social trigger and solitude as a psychological condition that intensifies the protagonist's descent into psychosis. These two concepts unemployment and solitude are employed not just as thematic devices, but as

interconnected phenomena that foreground the core of Alamu's tragic experience. The correlation between economic deprivation and psychological deterioration is artistically portrayed in the text, establishing *Out of His Mind* as a deeply reflective commentary on the socio-mental struggles of individuals in contemporary Nigerian society.

The narrative opens with Alamu already plunged into a life of brooding silence. He has been abruptly dismissed from his job a traumatic event that sets off a sequence of emotional disturbances. His loss of employment signifies a brutal interruption in his career and social standing. Adebowale underscores this loss as not just economic, but existential. The protagonist's identity had been rooted in his role as a professional, a breadwinner, and a respectable figure in the community. His sack, therefore, destabilizes these social constructs. The narrator subtly captures the onset of his emotional descent:

Solitude provides him the opportunity to send his mind on errands. It gives him the chance to talk alone and call on the invisible power from above and to come down and solve his problems for him. More importantly, solitude gives him the chance to laugh alone to himself. A big laugh for a big problem! (p. 1).

The above quote illustrates that solitude, in this context, does not simply mean physical aloneness; it is psychological estrangement from his environment, his loved ones, and from his own stable sense of self. Rather than using his moments of aloneness to reflect or find solutions, Alamu's thoughts begin to scatter and spiral into irrationality. The stream-of-consciousness technique that Adebowale adopts allows readers to access Alamu's mind as it becomes more and more fragmented. The author tells us:

Whenever Alamu was left alone at home, he would quickly switch off the radio set to ensure

perfect silence. The time had come for his lips to tremble in whispers. (p. 1).

This behaviour marks the beginning of schizoid tendencies a mental health condition in which individuals gradually withdraw from reality, exhibiting behaviours such as talking to oneself, laughing without cause, and experiencing an internal split between the self and external world. The idea of “trembling lips in whispers” alludes to his quiet descent into madness, a decline that becomes more evident with every passing scene. The medical description of schizoid symptoms characterized by dissociation, a sense of despairing aloneness, and split personality finds a vivid illustration in Alamu’s persona.

In schizoid conditions, as explained by mental health scholars, individuals experience themselves as *split in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves (p. 15).*

Adebowale dramatizes this with subtle literary detail, suggesting that Alamu’s “being is split,” not only in relation to others but within himself. In a bid to suppress his fears, he breaks into strange bouts of laughter loud, uncontrollable, and unnatural. The narrator states: “I’ll survive it. Am not, not the only man in this city. Surely surely I am not. So, I’ll.. I’ll survive. All will be well at last at last with me. The time had also come for his mouth to open up for that strange uproarious laughter: hahahaha hum hum-hahahaha.. yes.. Hahahaha.. O yes-hum hum hahahaha. Alamu’s curious laughter might last for about One minute” (p. 1). This laughter, rather than relieving tension, reveals the psychological breakdown simmering beneath Alamu’s composed surface. Happiness psychosis, as the novel depicts, becomes his desperate means of fighting back against feelings of powerlessness. He laughs not because he finds anything

amusing but because tears have become meaningless in the face of overwhelming problems. His words reflect this tragic irony:

When life's problems come in more trickles, you would cry. That would make sense. But when the problems come tumbling down overwhelmingly, it is no use crying anymore. It is better to laugh, the matter would have been more serious than tears! That was why the hahahaha sound of Alamu's grotesque laughter now (p. 4).

The irony in these statements is chilling. Alamu does not laugh for joy but as a form of psychological resistance. It is a grotesque laughter, an involuntary manifestation of an imploding psyche. To the outsider, it might appear as a momentary outburst, but to the informed reader, it is a signpost of deepening psychological instability. Alamu's socioeconomic struggles contribute heavily to this decline. His layoff from a job he dedicated years to upends his financial responsibilities. As the narrator explains,

Many problems now confronting him seemed to have weighed him down body and soul. (p. 4).

Bills accumulate: house rent, electricity, car loan deductions, and income tax create a heavy burden. The narrator adds that for Alamu, the end of the month, typically a time for joy, becomes "a time to shed cold sweat, a time to frown and knit the eyebrow as he went through his list of expenditure". (p. 7).

Alamu's decision not to share his problems with his wife is another manifestation of his isolation. Rather than seeking support, he internalizes all his troubles, wearing a mask of normalcy and happiness. He swears that he will keep his promise of "sunshine and laughter all through" (p. 9), adding that "those lines of depression and torture across his countenance would never be revealed" to Labake (p. 10). This desire to protect his wife ironically becomes

selfdestructive. The more he conceals, the heavier his burden becomes, leading to a worsening of his condition. Adebowale seems to be making a broader point here about toxic masculinity the cultural expectation that men must appear strong, self-reliant, and unbothered, even at the cost of their mental health.

In his solitude, Alamu finds no comfort. He becomes increasingly obsessed with the diary in which he records his pains and frustrations. The diary, originally intended as a cathartic outlet, turns into a written testament of despair. Instead of helping him offload emotional burdens, the repetitive writing only worsens his condition “his persistent rumination over his problems engenders reactive depression. This form of depression, often marked by physical symptoms such as fatigue, insomnia, and memory lapses, soon takes hold. Alamu forgets things like whether he has money in the bank. He even discovers one day that not only is his account empty, but he owes the bank seventy naira for maintenance charges. This memory loss is significant; it shows the extent to which his mind is deteriorating.

The psychological pain is compounded by the envy and resentment he feels toward others who appear to be doing well financially. As he stands in the bank watching people withdraw large sums of money, he imagines that “these are people who have made money, mostly by crooked means and they are admired by all, while people like him are denigrated by the same society”. His thoughts here capture a bitter critique of Nigerian society, where economic success is often idolized irrespective of morality, and poverty is viewed as personal failure. The societal stigma attached to poverty and unemployment becomes a source of internalized guilt for Alamu, pushing him deeper into a depressive neurosis. To escape his miserable reality, Alamu turns to alcohol. This, too, is a form of escapism another sign of the loss of mental control.

He wanted his body if possible to be flung into the outer orbit, in an imaginary journey to the supersensible world. That would make him forget all the worries, all the cares of this material world. (p. 15).

But the alcohol does not provide relief. Instead, it leads to violent outbursts and psychotic behaviours, such as when he almost strangles his wife Labake. At this point, Alamu can no longer distinguish fantasy from reality; he is lost in a world of hallucinations and delusions, hallmark symptoms of schizophrenia. His neighbours, like many in the society Adebowale criticizes, interpret his condition through the lens of superstition. They wonder aloud:

Why? Why? They wondered, "why should this happen to this man?" who brought this upon him? A rich young man with a big car, a man with plenty of money. A man with enough to eat and enough to drink. This world is not easy. (p. 5).

Here, the novelist exposes a common Nigerian societal myth: that wealth equates happiness, and that those who suffer mental illness must have been cursed or bewitched. When Alamu's mother eventually sees his condition, she seeks the help of a herbalist, not a medical professional. She claims that her son has been "bewitched by his wife" and justifies this belief by referring to "a prolonged and sudden twitch on the nipples of her wrinkled breasts" (p. 55). This explanation, though humorous, is deeply tragic, it shows how ignorance and cultural bias prevent people from seeking proper psychological care.

In all, Adebowale uses Alamu's descent into madness as a case study of how unemployment (a social condition) can fester into solitude (a mental condition) when ignored. Alamu's refusal to seek help, combined with societal misconceptions, fuels a crisis that could have been prevented with empathy and awareness. His story is not just a personal tragedy; it is a

national allegory. It urges policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals to pay attention to the hidden links between economic distress and psychological instability, especially in a society where mental illness is still stigmatized and misunderstood.

Aggression and Societal Expectations

In *Lonely Days*, Bayo Adebawale artfully explores the intertwined themes of aggression and societal expectations through the experiences of Yaremi, the widowed protagonist. The novel paints a vivid picture of the patriarchal and cultural structure of Kufi village, where a widow is subject to intense societal scrutiny and pressured to conform to traditional rituals, regardless of her personal feelings or aspirations. These expectations are not benign; they are enforced through emotional manipulation, coercion, and in many cases, passive and active aggression from family members, community elders, and society at large.

From the outset, Yaremi is portrayed as a strong and resilient woman, but her strength is constantly tested by the aggressive enforcement of cultural norms. Following the death of her husband, Ajumobi, Yaremi becomes the subject of communal expectations that dictate that a widow must remarry. These expectations are deeply ingrained in the societal fabric of Kufi, which sees a woman not as an individual, but as a part of a man's legacy. The village men, especially the elders, take it upon themselves to ensure that Yaremi chooses a new husband during the traditional cap-picking ceremony. When she resists this pressure, the aggression, although often cloaked in traditionalism becomes apparent. Adebawale writes,

Yaremi was not consulted. She was ordered. She was summoned. She was expected to obey. (p.

79).

This line captures the aggressive nature of the society's demands on her. The villagers' expectations are not presented as suggestions but as commands, underscoring the lack of agency afforded to widows in her cultural milieu. Yaremi's refusal to comply with this command challenges the entire cultural establishment, leading to further alienation and passive-aggressive reactions from the community. For instance, after she refuses to choose a suitor during the cappicking ceremony, her social interactions dwindle. People begin to avoid her, and even simple greetings become rare. The narrator states,

People passed her by as though she were not there. Even the little children looked away. (p. 82).

This ostracization is a form of psychological aggression rooted in societal expectations. It is meant to force Yaremi into submission by making her feel unwanted and invisible. Even her own son, Alani, who returns from the city, refuses to support her decision. Yaremi had hoped he would stay and help manage Ajumobi's property, but instead, Alani declares that he would return to the city, effectively abandoning her. The novel states:

Yaremi watched him with stunned disbelief. The words stabbed her like thorns in her ears. (p. 90).

Alani's decision is not just a personal one, it reflects a broader societal norm where male children are not expected to support their mothers emotionally, especially when those mothers refuse to conform.

Furthermore, Adebowale illustrates how aggression is not always expressed through physical violence but can manifest in traditions that emotionally and psychologically torment individuals. The cap-picking ceremony is symbolic of this. It is presented as a celebration, yet its underlying purpose is coercion. The community gathers with the pretense of honoring Yaremi,

but in reality, it is a public display meant to corner her into submission. When she refuses, it is treated not just as a personal choice but as a rebellion against the very foundation of their culture.

The narration highlights the villagers' reaction:

The elders shook their heads, murmuring curses under their breath. (p. 83).

Yaremi's defiance is further complicated by the role of other women in the village. Rather than supporting her independence, some of them reinforce the societal expectations. For example, Dedewe, Fayoyin, and Radeke, all of whom had remarried after losing their husbands try to convince Yaremi to accept her fate. They recount their own experiences, often with an underlying tone that suggests Yaremi is being foolish or arrogant.

This peer pressure from fellow women demonstrates how deeply societal expectations are internalized, often leading to horizontal aggression within the marginalized group itself.

We all passed through it, Yaremi. This is our lot as women, Dedewe tells her (p. 73).

The line exposes the resignation that many women feel, and how their acceptance of these norms makes them unwitting agents of the very oppression that limits them.

In addition to societal pressure, Adebowale introduces the theme of aggression through the memories Yaremi has of her late husband, Ajumobi. Although she often reminisces fondly about him, there are moments that suggest an undercurrent of male dominance and control in their relationship. Ajumobi was portrayed as a strong and opinionated man, and even in his absence, his legacy haunts Yaremi's decisions. "Ajumobi would have wanted her to obey the elders", she thinks at one point (p. 70). This internalization of a patriarchal voice exemplifies how societal

aggression can become self-inflicted, as the individual begins to regulate themselves according to imposed norms.

Moreover, Yaremi's life becomes a battleground between her inner convictions and external expectations. Her mental solitude is not just due to grief but is worsened by the constant social pushback. Her resilience is seen when she finds solace in her work, her grandson Woye, and her own memories. Yet, these moments of peace are repeatedly disrupted by reminders that she is failing to live up to societal ideals. When Woye is taken away from her, the emotional aggression is intensified. The narrator says, "She felt like a tree stripped of its last leaf" (p. 96). This metaphor powerfully conveys her sense of desolation and loss, again brought about not by fate alone, but by the active decisions of those around her.

It is also important to note that the societal expectations extend beyond just remarriage. The village has unspoken rules about what a widow should wear, how she should speak, and even how she should behave in public. Yaremi finds herself constantly under surveillance. Every action is evaluated and discussed.

Yaremi wore a bright wrapper today. Does she no longer mourn her husband? a woman gossips in the market (p. 65).

These microaggressions build up, creating a suffocating environment that polices women's behavior and punishes deviation.

Adebowale uses these experiences to critique the rigid customs of traditional society. Yaremi becomes a symbol of resistance, not just to widowhood rituals but to the broader aggression inherent in gender roles and expectations. Despite her suffering, she refuses to conform. Her

loneliness is both a curse and a choice, a consequence of her courage. The novel concludes on a poignant note, emphasizing that though Yaremi remains alone, she is not defeated.

She faced the path ahead. Lonely, but not broken. (p. 112)

This final note encapsulates the essence of her resistance.

In conclusion, *Lonely Days* uses the character of Yaremi to dissect the complex layers of aggression and societal expectations that shape women's lives, especially in traditional African societies. Through overt coercion, subtle manipulation, and internalized oppression, the society of Kufi embodies the various forms aggression can take when enforcing conformity. Yet, in Yaremi's quiet rebellion, Adebowale offers a voice of hope, a testament to the enduring human spirit that resists subjugation even in the loneliest of days.

Poverty and Poor Economic Condition

Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* is a compelling psychological narrative that intricately portrays the devastating effects of poverty and economic hardship on the human mind, family cohesion, and social relationships. Through the protagonist, Alamu Olaoye, the author delves into the emotional and mental turmoil caused by a rapid decline in financial status, exposing the deep scars that poverty etches on identity, dignity, and mental stability. In this analysis, the theme of poor economic condition will be explored in detail, with emphasis on how the financial breakdown of Alamu leads to a series of unfortunate events and personal crisis.

From the outset, the novel presents Alamu as a man who once held a respectable position in society as a Senior Accountant. However, due to an unforeseen suspension from his job, his life begins to unravel. The sudden cessation of his income marks the beginning of his financial woes.

The author writes,

Alamu's suspension came like a thief in the night; there was no warning, no sign. Just a letter, curt and cold. (p. 5).

This line introduces the sudden and brutal nature of his economic decline. Stripped of his livelihood, Alamu is thrust into a spiral of financial uncertainty. With bills piling up and no source of income, he begins to sell household items to make ends meet. The narrator observes,

He began to sell off household property one after the other, to the befuddlement of his wife who is completely at a loss. (p. 12).

This line not only highlights his desperation but also the breakdown of communication within the household. Labake, his wife, is kept in the dark about his struggles, and this secrecy becomes a breeding ground for mistrust and resentment. Alamu's economic struggle soon transcends the material realm and begins to manifest in his behavior. He becomes withdrawn, spends time alone, and engages in aimless wandering and talking to himself.

Alamu takes to talking to himself and gives up on self-care and personal outlook. A soliloquizing man with bushy hair and overgrown beards is just the necessary recipe for presumptions of insanity. (p. 24).

This description paints a vivid picture of a man whose psychological state is deteriorating under the weight of economic pressure. Poverty, in this case, is not just a lack of money; it is a condition that strips Alamu of his dignity, self-worth, and social status. The economic downturn affects Alamu's family deeply, especially his relationship with Labake. Labake is portrayed as a devoted wife, but her patience begins to wear thin as she watches the household disintegrate

without understanding the root cause. Her confusion and growing suspicion are palpable. She begins to think her husband is losing his mind or perhaps involved in something sinister. The narrator notes

Labake feels lost in Alamu's world, ignorant of his woes, and angry at the disposal of matrimonial properties... she resorts to divorce (p. 35)

Labake's decision to leave is born not of a lack of love but of frustration and confusion. The lack of communication, fueled by Alamu's shame and fear, pushes their marriage to the brink.

The novel does not portray Labake as unsympathetic; rather, her actions reflect the societal expectations and pressures that women face. In a society where a man is expected to provide, Alamu's inability to fulfill this role casts a shadow over his masculinity and worth. Labake, on the other hand, is judged for not being more patient or supportive. The economic condition thus creates a complex dynamic where both husband and wife are victims of societal norms and expectations. As Alamu's mental state deteriorates, he becomes more isolated. He avoids friends and neighbors, unable to face the shame of his downfall. The novel captures this with the line,

He avoided old acquaintances, took long walks through desolate paths, and found solace in the company of silence. (p. 40).

His isolation is not just physical but emotional and psychological. The community begins to whisper, rumors spread, and Alamu becomes the subject of ridicule and pity.

Adebowale masterfully portrays how poverty can lead to social alienation. Alamu, once a respected accountant, becomes a pariah in his own community. His friends distance themselves, and his mother, Mama, attributes his condition to supernatural causes rather than understanding

the economic roots of his problems. Mama's actions further illustrate how poverty is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed, especially in African societies where mental illness is stigmatized and often attributed to spiritual causes.

Mama's suspicion of Labake and her belief that her daughter-in-law is a witch responsible for Alamu's condition show the cultural lens through which poverty and mental illness are often viewed. She says, "I have always known there is something dark about that woman. She brought misfortune into this family" (p. 46). This line underscores how economic failure is externalized and blamed on others, especially women. The economic situation reaches a climax when Alamu contemplates ending his life. The narrator writes,

One evening, he stood by the bridge, watching the water flow beneath. The thought was fleeting but strong. (p. 52).

This moment is a powerful illustration of how financial despair can drive individuals to consider drastic actions. However, it is also a turning point in the novel.

The intervention of Adio, Alamu's old friend, becomes a beacon of hope. Adio, who is now a lawyer, takes an interest in Alamu's case. He investigates the suspension and discovers that it was the result of office politics and corruption. Through Adio's help, Alamu files a lawsuit against his employer and wins. The court rules in his favor, ordering that he be reinstated and compensated. The narrator states,

Justice came, not as swiftly as pain had, but it came all the same. Alamu was reinstated, and the winds of change blew into his home. (p. 61).

The resolution of the novel brings with it a sense of healing and restoration. Alamu's reinstatement not only restores his financial stability but also his self-worth. Labake returns, and the couple reconciles. The final chapters of the novel are a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of economic adversity. Adebowale writes, "With the return of his job came the return of laughter, of shared meals, of dreams long buried" (p. 65). This line captures the essence of hope and recovery.

However, the novel does not present this resolution as a fairy tale. It acknowledges the scars left behind by the experience. Alamu is not the same man; he is more cautious, more introspective, and more appreciative of life's simple blessings. The community, too, is portrayed as reflective, having learned from the ordeal.

In conclusion, *Out of His Mind* is a powerful exploration of how poor economic conditions can destabilize not just finances, but the mind, relationships, and social standing. Through Alamu's journey, Adebowale exposes the psychological and social ramifications of poverty, while also offering a narrative of resilience, justice, and redemption. The novel serves as a mirror to societies that stigmatize economic failure and mental illness, urging empathy, communication, and systemic change.

The portrayal of Alamu's financial struggles is not just a personal tale but a commentary on broader social issues. It critiques systems that are quick to punish and slow to support, communities that ostracize rather than uplift, and families that fracture under pressure instead of coming together. In doing so, Bayo Adebowale gives voice to the silent suffering of many and reaffirms the need for compassion in the face of adversity.

Depression and Patriarchal Hegemony

In both *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* by Bayo Adebowale, the themes of depression and patriarchal hegemony intersect powerfully in the lives of their protagonists. Each novel explores how deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and societal expectations contribute to mental anguish, especially for women and marginalized individuals. By highlighting the emotional turmoil and psychological suffering of the main characters, these texts provide a compelling critique of patriarchal systems and their damaging effects on individual well-being.

In *Out of His Mind*, the central character Àlà mú experiences a psychological breakdown that is rooted not only in personal trauma but also in the larger socio-cultural structures that reinforce male dominance and rigid gender roles. Patriarchal expectations in Nigerian society burden men with the responsibility of unshakable strength, wealth, and leadership. For Àlà mú, who fails to meet these standards, the result is a crushing sense of inadequacy and eventual mental collapse. His depression is masked by erratic behavior, which others interpret as madness rather than a cry for help. The novel opens with a startling glimpse into Àlà mú's disorientation:

He stood by the window, staring into the yard as if it could speak to him. (Out of His Mind, p. 3).

This line sets the tone for his descent into mental illness, exacerbated by social alienation and a lack of emotional support.

As the story unfolds, Àlà mú's internal struggles intensify due to economic instability and familial tension. The traditional expectations placed upon him as a husband and provider weigh heavily on his psyche. He is caught in a web of patriarchal definitions of masculinity that

demand success at all costs. When these goals prove unattainable, he becomes despondent. His wife, Labake, notices these changes but interprets them through the lens of social stigma. She reflects,

They said he was mad. But he was quiet, just quiet. (p. 13).

Labake's observation underscores the community's inability to distinguish between silence born of reflection and the silence of despair. The stigma surrounding mental illness is tightly interwoven with the demands of patriarchy, rendering men like Àlà mú invisible even as they suffer.

The theme of patriarchal hegemony is further explored through Bisi's role as a wife and caregiver. Despite Àlà mú's unpredictable behavior, she is expected to maintain composure and fulfill her duties without complaint. Her emotional labor is invisible and unrewarded, a reflection of the gender dynamics that privilege male authority while suppressing female agency. Labake's voice is often muted, her struggles rendered secondary. In one scene, she laments:

I carried the house on my shoulders while he stared into space. (p. 20).

Her metaphor captures the imbalance in their relationship and the emotional toll it exacts.

The novel also scrutinizes how patriarchal values infiltrate healthcare and education systems. Àlà mú's attempts to seek help are met with indifference or superficial diagnoses. His mother, a firm believer in traditional gender roles, insists that he "just needed a woman to fix him" (p. 25), dismissing the complexity of his condition. This trivialization of mental health is symptomatic of a broader cultural reluctance to acknowledge psychological issues, particularly in men.

Patriarchy equates vulnerability with weakness, discouraging open discussions about emotional suffering.

In contrast, *Lonely Days* examines patriarchal oppression and depression through the experiences of Yaremi, a widow ostracized by her community. Following the death of her husband, Ajumobi, Yaremi is left to navigate a world that systematically devalues widows and enforces oppressive traditions. Her refusal to remarry or conform to societal expectations triggers a cascade of social rejections. The elders of Kufi consider her defiance a threat to the social order.

She must choose a cap, they insist, during the cap-picking ceremony, implying that her identity and worth hinge on male affiliation. (Lonely Days, p. 62).

Yaremi's solitude is not merely physical but deeply psychological. The absence of companionship and societal validation leads to a depressive state characterized by longing and regret. She often reminisces about her past with Ajumobi, finding solace in memory even as she confronts her bleak future. Her internal monologue reveals this despair:

Lonely days still lie ahead of me, she murmurs, even the birds seem to chirp in mockery. (p. 74).

The novel does not romanticize widowhood; instead, it portrays the raw emotional cost of exclusion and forced independence.

Unlike Labake in *Out of His Mind*, who suffers silently in a marriage governed by gender inequality, Yaremi confronts her situation with resistance. Her decision not to remarry challenges the cultural script that defines women by their relationships with men. However, this choice does not shield her from the psychological toll of rejection. She becomes a pariah in her own village,

whispered about and avoided. The village women, once her companions, grow distant, reflecting the communal enforcement of patriarchal norms.

Even Segi would not look her in the eye, the narrator notes, indicating how deep the social fissures have become. (p. 80).

The two novels thus converge on the theme of depression, depicting it as a consequence of societal failure rather than individual weakness. In both stories, the protagonists are casualties of a patriarchal system that assigns rigid roles and punishes deviation. For Àlà mú, the inability to perform masculinity leads to alienation and mental breakdown. For Yaremi, the refusal to remarry and accept subordinate status results in loneliness and emotional decay.

Moreover, the novels interrogate how mental health is perceived within patriarchal societies. In *Out of His Mind*, mental illness is seen as emasculating, a flaw to be hidden or corrected by external forces, often women. In *Lonely Days*, emotional suffering in widows is normalized, almost expected, as part of their social punishment. The normalization of female pain and the suppression of male vulnerability are twin pillars of patriarchal hegemony, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and inhibiting healing.

Through evocative storytelling and richly drawn characters, Adebowale challenge these paradigms. He calls attention to the urgent need for empathy, understanding, and structural change. Both novels advocate for a reimagining of gender roles, where emotional expression is not a liability but a human right.

The characters' experiences also underline the intergenerational nature of patriarchal oppression. In *Out of His Mind*, Àlà mú's children observe his decline with confusion and silence.

They are being socialized into the same roles that ensnared their father. In *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's grandson Woye offers a glimmer of hope through his innocence and willingness to listen. Yet even he is taken away, symbolizing the perpetuation of existing norms.

Ultimately, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* function as social commentaries, revealing how depression is both a personal affliction and a societal indictment. Patriarchal hegemony, in both narratives, is not only a structural reality but also an emotional prison, stifling the human spirit under the guise of tradition. By highlighting the silent struggles of Àlamù, Bisi, and Yaremi, the author invites readers to question the cost of conformity and the value of compassion.

In conclusion, both novels present a profound examination of how patriarchal structures contribute to psychological distress. The characters' battles with depression are not isolated incidents but symptomatic of broader societal dysfunctions. *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* urge readers to rethink gender expectations and embrace mental health as a collective concern. The nuanced portrayal of depression and patriarchal hegemony in these works makes them powerful tools for social reflection and change.

Research Question Two: How are the mental conditions of the protagonists portrayed in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*?

Deterioration Leads to Socioeconomic Displacement

In both *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, Bayo Adebowale masterfully uses the protagonists' psychological deterioration to reflect the painful disintegration of their socioeconomic identities. Their mental conditions are not isolated medical issues, but the outcome of gradual displacement from the socio-economic roles that once defined their worth

and dignity. This narrative perspective reveals a cultural truth: in many traditional societies, especially in Yoruba culture, identity and relevance are tightly woven into one's social function. Once that function is disrupted by age, widowhood, or retirement, mental deterioration follows closely behind, as individuals struggle to find meaning in a system that no longer sees them as valuable.

In *Out of His Mind*, Àlà mú's mental decline is strongly connected to the loss of his professional identity as a civil servant. For decades, his status, influence, and even familial control had been anchored in his employment. The moment he is retired, he is not only financially destabilized but also socially erased. He remarks bitterly on page 9, "The letters of honour I once signed now lie under dust; my pen sleeps, and my fingers have no purpose". This line signals the death of not just a career, but an identity. Without the routines, respect, and validation that came with his job, Àlà mú finds himself spiraling into emotional and psychological stagnation. The detachment from economic productivity triggers a cascade of feelings, uselessness, shame, and eventual confusion about his role in the family and society.

As his savings dwindle and his influence shrinks, Àlà mú becomes increasingly paranoid and isolated. Labake, his daughter, and other relatives become distant, seeing him more as a liability than a leader. On page 15, he says, "Even the meat they cook tastes like mockery. They feed me like a beggar, not like the father who fed them once". This indicates not just emotional neglect but also economic devaluation. The symbolic reversal of provider and dependent emasculates Àlà mú, driving him further into a state of psychological rupture. The economic transition from power to poverty is not managed with compassion by his family or community; instead, it becomes a trigger for his mental breakdown. He wanders about, talking to unseen colleagues and imagining he's still in the office, whispering,

Type that letter, Mr. Ajayi, yes, yes, stamp it urgent. (p. 19). These lines show how deeply intertwined his mental state is with the economic role he once held.

The societal disregard for aged, economically redundant individuals exacerbates his condition. Àlà mú's mental deterioration is not treated with sympathy but with mockery. Neighbours whisper about his strange behavior; children giggle when they see him reenacting office routines in the street. Page 22 narrates, They called him Chief Madness in the neighbourhood. No one dared to ask why the chief lost his crown. This line encapsulates the cruel irony of social displacement: once revered, Àlà mú is now ridiculed, as society lacks the frameworks to understand or support psychological distress caused by economic downfall. His madness is interpreted as a personal failure, not as a symptom of systemic disregard for the elderly and retired.

Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's mental state is deeply affected by the socio-economic displacement she experiences after the death of her husband, Ajumobi. In traditional Yoruba culture, a woman's social and economic relevance is often tied to her marital status. As a widow, Yaremi becomes both economically vulnerable and socially insignificant. Her efforts to maintain some economic independence through dyeing cloth and farming are ridiculed and seen as unfit for a woman her age. On page 28, the narrator notes, "They laughed when she stood in the market with her faded wrappers, trying to sell dreams to those who only see youth". This derision highlights the social disconnection she faces; her hard work is invisible because her status as a widow has displaced her from respectability.

Yaremi's economic instability also affects her relationships with her kin. Her son, Woye, visits less frequently, and the community elders begin to pressure her into remarriage, not for

companionship but to ensure someone takes over her late husband's land and responsibilities. The social custom of widow inheritance (levirate marriage) becomes a source of intense anxiety for her. Page 34 records her words: "Do they not see I am still breathing? Why do they speak of me as though I were a goat to be shared?" This rhetorical lament illustrates the commodification of widows, and how societal norms reduce Yaremi to a function rather than a person with autonomy and feelings.

Her psychological reaction to this socio-economic marginalization includes talking to her late husband, isolating herself, and muttering to herself during daily tasks. The narrator on page 37 describes: "She sang the names of her children into the wind, waiting for an answer from silence". The haunting image captures the loneliness and disorientation that results from social rejection. Her madness is quiet, not theatrical, but it is real, she is gradually losing touch with a world that no longer acknowledges her worth. Economic loss, compounded by cultural alienation, leads to her mental displacement.

The most striking parallel between the two characters is how their mental deterioration is met with societal apathy and judgment rather than understanding or support. In both novels, mental illness is not diagnosed or treated; it is whispered about and hidden. The culture, steeped in silence and shame around psychological issues, leaves Àlà mú and Yaremi without options. The community interprets their mental conditions as personal weakness or even spiritual punishment, rather than symptoms of socio-economic loss and emotional trauma.

In *Out of His Mind*, the economic strain of being unable to meet even small needs is symbolically portrayed when Àlà mú is denied money for tobacco. Page 25 narrates: "His trembling hand searched his pockets again and again, as if hope lay in the corners of a fabric".

The futility of his action mirrors the futility of his existence in a society that has economically discarded him. In *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's financial hardship becomes evident when she cannot buy salt, forcing her to boil herbs as seasoning substitutes. Page 42 reads: "She chewed the leaves and smiled bitterly. Even the poor can flavour grief, she said". This sad humor underscores the desperate measures she employs to maintain a semblance of dignity amid destitution.

Furthermore, the economic systems in both literary texts are gendered and ageist. While Àlà mú's descent is shaped by the loss of masculine, professional authority, Yaremi's struggle stems from being an older, single woman in a patriarchal setting that privileges youth and maleled households. This contrast illustrates how socio-economic displacement, although universal, manifests differently across gender and age. Their mental conditions, though different in tone, are deeply rooted in the same social truth: without economic function, the individual becomes invisible and emotionally endangered.

Ultimately, the author does not present these characters as merely "mad". Instead, they are people shaped and broken by the erosion of the roles they once held in a culturally rigid system. Àlà mú and Yaremi symbolize countless elders who are pushed aside once their economic usefulness fades. Their stories demand attention to the human cost of systems that do not provide emotional or economic safety nets for the aged, retired, or widowed. Their psychological unraveling is a silent rebellion against a society that no longer recognizes them.

In conclusion, the theme of socio-economic displacement as a trigger for mental deterioration is profoundly explored in both *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. Bayo Adebawale paints a picture of how disconnection from work, family roles, and social functions leads to a collapse not

only of economic security but also of psychological stability. These portrayals are deeply moving, urging readers to look beyond the symptoms of mental illness and address the social roots from which they spring. Through detailed narrative, symbolic imagery, and poignant dialogue, both texts expose the cruel consequences of neglecting those who once held up the pillars of the community.

Madness

In Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, madness is not merely a clinical condition but a complex psychological, social, and cultural phenomenon that reflects the inner turbulence of the protagonists. The portrayal of madness is woven intricately with their lived experiences, serving both as a metaphor for internal despair and as a literal consequence of societal neglect. Madness, in these texts, emerges as a response to rejection, loss, grief, and the failure of community structures to uphold the dignity of the individual in times of need.

In *Out of His Mind*, the descent of the protagonist, Àlà mú, into madness is gradual and intricately linked with his post-retirement alienation. Having served dutifully as a respected civil servant, Àlà mú is suddenly thrust into irrelevance. The lack of meaningful engagement, coupled with financial strain and familial disinterest, begins to distort his perception of reality. The first signs of mental disintegration appear subtly. On page 11, he begins to reenact office scenarios at home: "He pulled out his pen, pointed it at an imaginary file, and barked, 'Get this typed and signed before lunch, Ajayi!'" This harmless mimesis becomes a daily ritual, suggesting a desperate clinging to a past identity that once validated his existence.

The language of hallucination and delusion is used effectively by Adebawale to depict Àlà mú's declining mental state. His monologues become conversations with unseen colleagues.

On page 17, the narrator describes, "He sat on the veranda, nodding and laughing with someone no one else could see." These moments are not merely signs of madness but are symptomatic of loneliness and the yearning for belonging. Madness becomes a coping mechanism for rejection and isolation, a realm where he can assert control and relive relevance.

Society's response to his mental condition also compounds the issue. Rather than sympathy or support, Àlà mú is met with mockery. Children taunt him, and adults avoid him. The nickname "Chief Madness," as noted on page 22, strips him of his former title and reduces his identity to a caricature. The lack of a supportive social framework to address mental illness exacerbates his condition. His madness is interpreted through a moralistic and often superstitious lens, thereby denying him the possibility of healing or reintegration.

Labake, his wife, sees his behavior as an embarrassment. She is portrayed as impatient, frustrated by his erratic behavior, and unwilling to engage with the underlying causes. On page 27, she shouts, "Father, stop disgracing us! Are you the only retiree in this town?" This reaction underlines a crucial thematic concern in the novel: the shame associated with mental illness. Cultural expectations demand stoicism and emotional suppression, especially among men, making the acknowledgement of mental instability a taboo.

In contrast, Yaremi's brush with madness in *Lonely Days* is more subtle, yet equally poignant. Her madness is not characterized by hallucinations or delusions, but by deep, silent grief that morphs into emotional detachment from the world around her. After the death of her husband, Ajumobi, she finds herself alone, vulnerable, and marginalized. Widowhood, in her culture, is a status that automatically invites both pity and rejection. She is expected to remarry to maintain her social identity, yet such expectations only deepen her sorrow.

Yaremi begins to talk to her and to the air, imagining conversations with her late husband. On page 35, she murmurs, "Ajumobi, they want to give me away again. Can you hear them?" This soliloquy is a clear manifestation of her detachment from reality. Her mind begins to dwell in the past, where she felt secure and loved. The longing for companionship and the rejection by society drive her to seek solace in a world that exists only in memory.

Her madness is also visible in her inconsistent behavior. She sometimes laughs at inappropriate moments, isolates herself from communal gatherings, and becomes excessively protective of her late husband's belongings. Page 41 describes her singing to his wrapper: "She wrapped herself in it and danced around the room, whispering, 'They can take everything, but not this.'" These actions, though not medically categorized as psychosis, reflect the onset of depressive madness, marked by obsession, disorientation, and denial.

The community's expectations for her to accept a new husband ignore her emotional trauma. This pressure becomes psychological torment. When the elders present her with suitors, she breaks down. Page 45 narrates, "She covered her face with both hands and screamed, 'I am not for sale!'" The community interprets her reaction as stubbornness or pride, refusing to see the mental and emotional pain behind it. Her madness is quiet and socially invisible, yet it gnaws at her dignity and sense of self-worth.

Unlike Àlámú's loud and visible madness, Yaremi's descent is internalized. Adebowale uses contrasting portrayals to explore gendered experiences of mental distress. While men may act out their mental instability through behavior, women may internalize it, making it harder to detect and thus more dangerous. Both forms, however, stem from societal failure to provide emotional and psychological support to individuals in crisis.

Both novels portray madness as a continuum rather than an event. It is a process that begins with emotional disconnection and culminates in psychological collapse. It is not inherently shameful but is made so by societal attitudes. The protagonists are not born mad; they are driven to it by neglect, economic irrelevance, grief, and cultural expectations.

Additionally, the novels challenge the binary between sanity and madness. In many ways, Àlà mú and Yaremi are the only characters who confront the absurdity and cruelty of their societies. Their so-called madness allows them to speak uncomfortable truths. On page 30 of *Out of His Mind*, Àlà mú yells in the market square, "We are numbers to them! Cows in uniforms, waiting for slaughter!" Though dismissed as lunacy, his words reflect deep insight into institutional dehumanization. Similarly, Yaremi's rejection of forced remarriage in *Lonely Days* is portrayed as irrational defiance, yet it is a courageous act of reclaiming agency in a patriarchal society.

The authors, therefore, use madness not just as a thematic concern but as a form of resistance. Madness, for the protagonists, becomes a space where they can reject societal scripts and assert their own narratives, even if incoherently. It is in their madness that they find fleeting moments of freedom and truth.

In conclusion, madness in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* is a layered and humanized depiction of psychological decline. It is not portrayed as a clinical disorder alone but as a symptom of deeper societal failures. Àlà mú and Yaremi are victims of social structures that devalue the aged, the widowed, and the emotionally distressed. Their madness is both a cry for help and a form of protest against cultural systems that offer no space for vulnerability. Through

powerful imagery, empathetic narration, and symbolic actions, Bayo Adebowale compels readers to reconsider what it means to be mad in a society that itself is unjust and unfeeling.

Socioeconomic Repression and Psychosis

Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* foregrounds the influence of socioeconomic downturn and injustice on the individual's mental composition. Through the character of Alamu Olaoye, a senior accountant of the prestigious Bajoks Company, who suffers unjustly because of false allegations that led to an abrupt termination of his appointment, Adebowale recounts the various social strains that can elicit psychosis. The reader learns from the novel that the protagonist, "Mr Alamu Olaoye has been made to suffer untold hardship and embarrassment as a result of the false allegation of dereliction of duty and financial mismanagement leveled against him and the consequent illegal sack letter issued by the personnel manager of Bajoks Company Limited". (p. 42) As a result of this sad event in his life, Olaoye is unable to sustain his characteristic pseudoaristocratic life which depresses him severely to the extent that he loses control of his thoughts.

Following his education in London, Alamu Alaoye maintains an admirable image of himself that characterises the elite class of the society. Besides living in a three bedroom apartment, Alamu owns a prestigious Peugeot car. He even hires the service of Zenabu, a househelp, who helps in sustaining the elitist atmosphere that pervades his home. Considering the quality of life he has built for his family and his love for his wife, Alamu swears not to bother his wife with his multifaceted problems, which begin to have a debilitating effect on his life. Consequently, Alamu's problems are unattended to. Since he does not discuss the problems with his wife, they begin to rear their heads riotously, making Alamu drift out of his mind. Thus,

Alamu begins to show obvious symptoms of schizoid which is the earlier stage of a schizophrenic condition. Alamu's manifestation of psychotic symptoms affects the general mood of the home, his wife, Labake, is badly affected as she too begins to manifest bipolar features. Her mental condition is triggered by Alamu's numbness and partly, due to the people's unfair conclusion that she is responsible for Alamu's mental degeneration. Due to severe starvation, Alamu sells out his household materials such as ceiling fans, fridge, television and even his car. It is at this point that Labake too becomes badly affected. At first, she nurses jealousy-induced lunacy, thinking that Alamu is furnishing the house of a new mistress outside. Though Alamu's mother gives his son's mental illness a pseudo-supernatural interpretation, the reader is abreast with the socio-economic strains that engender Alamu's psychotic states. Thus, the ignorance of Mama who negotiates the assistance of Esuniyi, a traditional herbalist that specialises in the treatment of mental patients, unfolds the inanity of the public consciousness on mental health. At the end of the novel, immediately, Alamu is vindicated and reabsorbed in the company with all the arrears paid, he regains his sanity. Adebowale uses this novel to expose the thin line between our material and physical struggles and the workings of the human mind.

Through the effective deployment of narrative tools such as suspense, intrigues and stream of consciousness, Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* mirrors the gradual nature of Alamu's mental derangement from depressive neuroses to psychotic traits such as bipolar features and schizoid. Thus, the first stage of his experience immediately after the sack is depression which is a neurotic symptom, a mild psychiatric condition, but his failure to vent his feelings and decongest his thoughts to his wife further aggravates his mental condition, leading to psychotic states. Alamu's numbness and introverted nature are signs of schizoid, which, as we mentioned earlier, is the early appearance of a very severe schizophrenia. The narrator reveals:

Solitude provides him the opportunity to send his mind on errands. It gives him the chance to talk alone and call on the invisible power from above and to come down and solve his problems for him. More importantly, solitude gives him the chance to laugh alone to himself. A big laugh for a big problem! (Pg. 6).

The technique of interior monologue or stream of consciousness helps in the overall conveyance of the mental disturbances of Alamu in the novel. For instance, the drifting of Alamu's mind during moments of solitude greatly attests to his disordered thought process. We are made to understand that

Whenever Alamu was left alone at home, he would quickly switch off the radio set to ensure perfect silence. The time had come for his lips to tremble in whispers. (p. 1).

This display is the characteristic behaviour of a schizoid patient. In a schizoid condition, the individual's being is split into two, in relation to the external reality and to the self; and such a person tends to experience himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; instead of feeling like a complete integral whole, he feels split in various ways, perhaps as a mind more or less tenuously linked to a body, as two or more selves, and so on.

Alamu's struggle to curtail his problems and his inability to find a lasting solution begins to ruin his mindscape. The frustration of living in abject penury and the struggle to sustain his status before his wife provoke his gradual journey into lunacy. In order to fight his condition, Alamu engages in happiness psychosis by indulging in irrational laughter. Thus, once he is haunted by the thought of his poor economic condition, Alamu fights it with loud, prolonged irrational laughter. Thus, he experiences thought-blocking, over-inclusion of alien thoughts and thoughts broadcast.

Loneliness and Solitude

In *Lonely Days*, Bayo Adebowale presents a poignant exploration of loneliness and solitude through the character of Yaremi. After the death of her husband Ajumobi, Yaremi is thrust into a state of profound isolation, which significantly impacts her mental health. Her solitude is not merely physical but deeply emotional and psychological, as she grapples with the void left by her husband's absence.

Yaremi's loneliness is exacerbated by the societal expectations placed upon her as a widow in her community. In Kufi village, the customs and cultural practices surrounding widowhood create an environment of rejection and scrutiny. Her refusal to remarry or adhere to traditional widowhood rituals marks her as an outsider, intensifying her feelings of alienation. Despite her efforts to fill her days with work, be it dyeing taffeta, farming, or trading, Yaremi's emotional loneliness persists, highlighting the insufficient solace that these activities provide.

Adebowale vividly depicts Yaremi's internal struggle with solitude. Her resilience in the face of cultural and social pressures is admirable, yet it comes at a great psychological cost. The novel illustrates how Yaremi's determination to maintain her independence and honor her late husband's memory leads to a profound sense of isolation. Her decision to reject the proposals of suitors and resist the elders' directives underscores her struggle to assert her identity and autonomy, even as it isolates her from her community.

The theme of loneliness in *Lonely Days* is intricately tied to Yaremi's resistance to societal norms. Her solitary existence is both a symbol of her personal strength and a reflection of the harsh realities faced by widows in her society. Adebowale uses Yaremi's character to explore the

impact of social exclusion and cultural expectations on mental well-being, emphasizing how societal pressures can exacerbate personal loneliness and emotional distress.

Through Yaremi's experiences, Adebowale provides a powerful commentary on the intersection of individual suffering and societal norms. Her story illustrates the psychological toll of societal rejection and the challenges of navigating personal and cultural conflicts in the wake of loss. The portrayal of loneliness and solitude in *Lonely Days* thus serves as a critical lens through which to understand the broader implications of cultural and social pressures on mental health.

Research Question Three: What are the societal implications of the representation of mental conditions in Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*?

Psychological Consequences

In Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, the psychological consequences of mental conditions are not only central to the development of the protagonists but also serve to reflect the broader societal neglect and misunderstanding of mental health issues. Through the portrayal of Alamu in *Out of His Mind* and Yaremi in *Lonely Days*, Adebowale explores how unaddressed trauma, social isolation, grief, and economic disempowerment culminate in psychological deterioration. The characters become symbols of mental anguish wrought by environmental and societal pressures, allowing the narratives to function as sociocultural commentaries on the urgency of mental health awareness and compassionate care.

Alamu, the protagonist in *Out of His Mind*, experiences a descent into psychological instability as a result of cumulative emotional trauma. His mental disintegration is portrayed

vividly, and the novel articulates the debilitating effects of unresolved grief, social ridicule, and systemic poverty. Alamu's condition reflects classic symptoms of depression, including social withdrawal, hallucinations, and delusions. His psychological break is gradual but visible:

Alamu had become unusually silent. He talked less and less to people around him. He began to murmur to himself and gesticulate wildly. (Out of His Mind, p. 13).

The transformation of Alamu from a once vibrant accountant to a deranged and pitied figure is a commentary on how mental health is affected when individuals are deprived of emotional support and societal understanding. The psychological consequences are not isolated; they reverberate through his community, which is unsure of how to respond, ultimately leading to his marginalization.

In *Lonely Days*, the psychological consequences manifest differently through the character of Yaremi. Although she does not suffer a psychotic breakdown like Alamu, Yaremi's condition reflects the quiet despair and psychological burden of social exclusion, especially among widows in patriarchal societies. Following the death of her husband Ajumobi, Yaremi is subjected to emotional neglect and cultural expectations that stifle her autonomy. Her solitude becomes chronic and mentally draining:

Yaremi's case is especially pathetic because her children are now adults and they do not live in Kufi... Woye, her grandchild, whose company she enjoys, is soon taken away from her. (Lonely Days, p. 21).

The psychological burden is heightened when societal pressure forces her to choose a new husband from among the village elders. Her refusal isolates her even further. Adebowale uses

Yaremi's condition to critique the mental impact of widowhood rites, which are deeply ingrained in traditional practices.

Both characters reveal the harmful psychological effects of systemic neglect and cultural rigidity. While Alamu's breakdown is overt and tragic, Yaremi's suffering is internalized and prolonged. The representation of their conditions forces readers to question the societal mechanisms that fail individuals at their most vulnerable. For Alamu, the lack of affordable healthcare, counseling, or communal empathy contributes to his downward spiral. As his condition deteriorates, the community begins to label him a madman, rather than a patient in need of help:

They began to call him were the madmen. Children mocked him as he passed by. Women avoided his shadow. (Out of His Mind, p. 28).

This pejorative labeling reflects the psychological cost of stigmatization. Alamu's humanity is erased, and his illness becomes a spectacle.

Similarly, Yaremi's grief is pathologized in a different but equally damaging way. Her desire to remain loyal to her late husband and avoid remarriage is seen as deviance rather than personal choice. This leads to a subtle form of mental repression, where her wishes are invalidated, and her voice is marginalized.

The villagers after the incident began to avoid her. They are reluctant to share pleasantries with her. (Lonely Days, p. 49).

The psychological consequence here is one of invisibility, Yaremi is no longer seen as a whole person but as an outlier who threatens societal norms. The emotional loneliness, the severed familial bonds, and the derision from neighbors accumulate into a form of social trauma.

Furthermore, Adebowale's representation of these psychological consequences carries broader societal implications. It highlights how traditional societies often lack the frameworks to deal with mental illnesses constructively. Mental illness is frequently interpreted through spiritual or moral lenses rather than medical or psychological ones. Alamu's condition, for instance, is attributed to supernatural causes by some villagers:

It must be the work of witches... or the punishment of the gods for some unknown sin. (Out of His Mind, p. 35).

Such interpretations prevent meaningful interventions and entrench the sufferer in a cycle of neglect.

Yaremi's psychological stress is similarly misunderstood. Rather than offering her counseling or emotional support, the community imposes rituals meant to correct her deviation from societal norms. The expectation to pick a new husband at the cap-picking ceremony is symbolic of the collective desire to re-assimilate her into the traditional mold of womanhood. Her refusal is viewed not as a personal stance, but as a threat to communal stability, which causes further alienation: "After the ceremony, she was no longer invited to community meetings; even the market women whispered behind her back" (*Lonely Days*, p. 53).

These portrayals reveal that untreated mental health conditions carry social costs. The psychological consequences affect not only the individuals but also their communities, creating a

cycle of silence, misinterpretation, and systemic failure. The novels show how mental conditions are exacerbated when the cultural environment lacks empathy, resources, and education. In both stories, Adebowale uses detailed characterization and narrative realism to make mental suffering visible, thereby encouraging readers to consider the human cost of societal indifference.

Another dimension to consider is how these psychological consequences differ based on gender. Alamu, a man, is treated with a mixture of fear and mockery; his violent outbursts and public breakdowns provoke derision and ostracism. Meanwhile, Yaremi, a woman, is subjected to a quiet erasure. Her psychological suffering is less visible but equally devastating. This gendered experience of mental illness suggests that societal responses are not uniform; they are filtered through patriarchal perceptions of who is deserving of empathy and who is not.

The psychological impact on the families of both protagonists also deserves mention. In Alamu's case, his wife Labake initially tries to care for him but becomes overwhelmed and emotionally distant. Her frustration grows as Alamu slips further into madness, and she is left without institutional support. "Labake cried herself to sleep each night. Her husband was gone, not dead, but unreachable" (*Out of His Mind*, p. 42). This depiction emphasizes the collateral psychological damage experienced by caregivers and loved ones.

In Yaremi's story, the withdrawal of her children contributes to her deteriorating emotional state. Their absence is not merely physical but symbolic of generational shifts in values, where the elderly are no longer central to familial structures. "Alani, her son that she had thought would stay back in Kufi and manage his father's property, announces... that he is returning to the city" (*Lonely Days*, p. 58). This moment underscores her abandonment and the emotional void left behind.

In conclusion, the psychological consequences of mental conditions in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* serve as a mirror to societal attitudes toward mental illness. Adebowale crafts his narratives to expose how cultural expectations, poverty, and social exclusion amplify mental suffering. The protagonists' experiences highlight the urgent need for compassionate, informed, and inclusive approaches to mental health. By chronicling their psychological journeys, the novels push for a reevaluation of communal responsibility and challenge readers to acknowledge the humanity of those grappling with invisible battles.

Stigmatization

In Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, the theme of stigmatization emerges as a significant societal implication of mental conditions. Stigmatization, in this context, encompasses the negative societal perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors directed toward individuals suffering from mental health issues. The novels offer critical insights into how communities, especially within traditional African societies, respond to mental illness through social exclusion, labeling, and moral judgment. These attitudes not only exacerbate the affected individual's psychological trauma but also mirror larger social structures of ignorance and prejudice against mental health challenges.

In *Out of His Mind*, the protagonist, Alamu, is subjected to harsh societal stigmatization due to his mental instability. The onset of his condition, following personal losses and a series of traumatic experiences, does not elicit sympathy or support from his community. Instead, Alamu becomes the subject of ridicule and avoidance. When he begins to exhibit symptoms such as talking to himself, hallucinating, and showing signs of paranoia, the community does not seek to understand the root cause of his behavior. Instead, his neighbors refer to him in dehumanizing

terms such as "were," a Yoruba word for a mad person, thereby reducing his identity to his mental illness. This label strips him of his dignity and isolates him further from the society that once embraced him as a functional member.

Adebowale uses Alamu's experience to reflect on the broader societal tendency to ostracize individuals with mental health conditions. Rather than addressing mental illness as a health issue requiring medical or psychological intervention, the community in *Out of His Mind* sees it as a spiritual affliction or punishment. Alamu is described as being taken to traditional healers and subjected to rituals meant to cast out demons or evil spirits. This approach not only delays his access to effective treatment but also reinforces the stigma associated with mental health. In one instance, a neighbor says,

That man has been cursed. No sane person would laugh and cry at the same time," reflecting the lack of empathy and scientific understanding (p. 48).

Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi, though not explicitly described as mentally ill, experiences a form of social stigmatization due to the psychological implications of widowhood. Her refusal to conform to societal expectations of remarriage leads to subtle but potent social exclusion. After the cap-picking ceremony, when she declines to choose a new husband from among the village elders, she becomes a pariah. The villagers view her decision as a rebellion against cultural norms, and she is treated with suspicion and disdain. The narrator notes,

They whispered when she passed, and children no longer stopped by her hut for sweets," illustrating how non-conformity to cultural norms can trigger social ostracism (p. 61).

While Yaremi's condition might not be clinically diagnosed as mental illness, Adebowale paints a vivid picture of the psychological toll that social exclusion and stigmatization have on

her. She experiences loneliness, depression, and emotional fatigue, all of which are manifestations of a deteriorating mental state. The society's refusal to accept her autonomy and independence as a widow mirrors the rejection Alamu faces due to his mental instability. Both characters, though affected differently, suffer from the community's rigid norms and stigmatizing attitudes toward deviation from the expected behavioral codes.

The societal stigma is further perpetuated by language and communal rituals. In both novels, characters use derogatory and dismissive terms to describe individuals with mental or emotional difficulties. The casual use of labels such as "crazy," "possessed," or "useless" not only dehumanizes the affected individuals but also discourages others from seeking help when they experience symptoms of mental distress. This culture of silence and shame creates a dangerous environment where mental illness is hidden, untreated, and misunderstood.

In *Out of His Mind*, Alamu's family becomes a target of secondary stigmatization. His wife, Labake, is seen as the bearer of shame and becomes increasingly isolated. People avoid interacting with her, and her market sales decline due to her association with a "mad man." Adebowale shows how stigma does not only affect the afflicted but also extends to their immediate families, creating a web of social punishment that reinforces cycles of poverty, despair, and neglect. On one occasion, Labake laments, "Even my best friend no longer greets me at the stream. What have we done to deserve this?" (p. 75). This reflection captures the all-encompassing nature of stigmatization and its ripple effects.

Moreover, the portrayal of stigmatization in both texts highlights the intersection of gender and mental health. Alamu's erratic behavior is judged more harshly because he is a man expected to exhibit strength and stability. His mental breakdown is viewed not just as a personal failure

but as a disgrace to masculinity. Likewise, Yaremi's emotional resilience and refusal to follow widowhood customs are interpreted as arrogance or witchcraft. These gendered expectations amplify the stigma they face, indicating how cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity shape societal reactions to mental conditions.

Importantly, Adebowale uses both narratives to critique the lack of institutional and communal support systems for individuals dealing with mental health issues. In *Out of His Mind*, there is no mention of psychiatric care, therapy, or even informed counsel. The entire approach to Alamu's condition is rooted in superstition, fear, and social distancing. The villagers are more concerned with preserving communal order and tradition than attending to the needs of an ailing individual. Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi receives no counseling or social support; instead, she is left to navigate her grief and psychological pain in isolation. This absence of support infrastructure underscores the systemic neglect and societal complicity in worsening the mental conditions of vulnerable individuals.

Stigmatization also affects the self-perception of the characters. Alamu begins to internalize the labels given to him and withdraws into deeper psychosis. His delusions grow stronger as he loses touch with reality, fueled by the rejection and judgment he receives daily. In a particularly poignant scene, he says, "I am not mad. It is the world that has turned upside down," (p. 91) revealing a fractured sense of identity and a desperate attempt to rationalize his experience. Similarly, Yaremi's dreams and hallucinations about her late husband signify a mind burdened by grief, compounded by societal neglect.

In conclusion, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* present powerful narratives that underscore the societal implications of stigmatizing mental conditions. Through the experiences

of Alamu and Yaremi, Bayo Adebawale exposes the destructive consequences of societal misunderstanding, labeling, and exclusion of mentally vulnerable individuals. The novels reveal how stigmatization is deeply embedded in cultural practices, language, and communal expectations, creating a hostile environment for those who deviate from societal norms. Adebawale's critique extends beyond individual cases to highlight the urgent need for compassion, education, and support systems that respect the dignity and humanity of all individuals, regardless of their mental state. Ultimately, both texts challenge readers to reflect on their own societal attitudes toward mental health and to advocate for a more inclusive and empathetic community.

Isolation and Loneliness

In Bayo Adebawale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, isolation and loneliness emerge not merely as emotional states, but as profound consequences of the mental conditions afflicting the protagonists. The representation of these themes in both novels underscores the pervasive alienation individuals with psychological disturbances endure in traditional African societies. Through Labake's mental deterioration in *Out of His Mind* and Yaremi's secluded widowhood in *Lonely Days*, Adebawale paints a vivid portrait of how isolation functions as both a trigger and a consequence of mental illness, deeply entrenched in cultural, social, and familial expectations.

In *Out of His Mind*, Labake's journey into mental instability is accompanied by an increasing sense of alienation. The novel introduces her as a once vibrant and ambitious woman whose dreams are crushed by betrayal, poverty, and neglect. Her mental breakdown isolates her not only from society but even from the closest of kin. The townspeople perceive her as deranged and avoidant, reinforcing her exclusion from communal life. In one scene, she roams the

marketplace muttering to herself, prompting traders and customers alike to step away cautiously. A narrator observes, "Even the children no longer played near her house; they said she talked to herself and sometimes laughed at nothing" (p. 47). This ostracization feeds her condition, forming a feedback loop where the more society rejects her, the more she loses touch with reality.

Labake's isolation is intensified by the absence of support structures. Her family, particularly her relatives who could have intervened, are either dismissive or overwhelmed by the stigma of her condition. The community, steeped in superstition, attributes her behavior to curses or spiritual affliction. Rather than viewing her mental instability as a condition warranting compassion or medical care, she is labeled as dangerous and unclean. The lack of therapeutic or social outreach pushes Labake into a solitary world of hallucinations and delusions. Adebowale uses these narrative moments to critique a society that equates mental illness with shame, thereby stripping afflicted individuals of their humanity and networks of care.

Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, the character of Yaremi experiences a different but equally poignant form of isolation. As a widow, she is thrust into solitude by a combination of death, tradition, and social ostracization. After the demise of her husband Ajumobi, Yaremi is left to navigate the cruel structures of widowhood in Kufi village. The traditional expectations that demand her remarriage and participation in the cap-picking ritual place her at odds with the community. Her refusal to conform is interpreted as rebellion, and consequently, she is emotionally and socially excommunicated.

The emotional toll of this isolation is evident in her interactions with the environment and people around her. The narrator details, "The widow suffers loneliness and solitude; she is alone, from dawn till dusk, a castaway" (p. 23). Her children are physically distant and emotionally

detached, and the community members grow cold toward her after she asserts her independence. Even the small joy she derives from her grandson Woye is short-lived, as he is eventually taken away, leaving her to face the loneliness of her days in complete silence. Her solitude is not just about the absence of people; it is about the lack of empathy, the denial of emotional connections, and the communal refusal to recognize her worth outside her role as a wife.

The psychological implication of Yaremi's solitude becomes clearer as the novel progresses. Her conversations with the ghost of Ajumobi are not just sentimental reflections but reveal a coping mechanism for her loneliness. Adebowale does not portray her as insane, but the blurring of reality and memory points to a mind struggling to preserve sanity in the face of unrelenting isolation. Her actions, such as tending to Ajumobi's grave or talking to herself, show a desperate attempt to maintain continuity in a life that has been emotionally fragmented.

In both novels, Adebowale shows that isolation is not merely a backdrop to the protagonists' lives but a central force that shapes their identities and trajectories. The absence of social support and the weight of cultural expectations imprison Labake and Yaremi in their own minds. The physical solitude is mirrored by a more insidious psychological loneliness that neither modern medicine nor traditional customs attempt to address.

Moreover, the portrayal of isolation in these novels speaks volumes about the broader societal attitudes toward mental health and gender roles. Both Labake and Yaremi suffer in part because they are women, Labake, abandoned and stigmatized after being used and discarded by a man, and Yaremi, penalized for rejecting male authority and choosing not to remarry. Their isolation is a punishment for nonconformity, a silent sentence imposed by a patriarchal and mentally indifferent society.

Adebowale uses imagery, internal monologues, and community reactions to deepen the reader's understanding of how loneliness corrodes the human spirit. He also draws a direct line between social abandonment and the deepening of mental conditions. In *Out of His Mind*, Labake's deterioration accelerates in tandem with her isolation, while in *Lonely Days*, Yaremi's firm stand against cultural imposition ironically leads to more profound emotional solitude.

In conclusion, the theme of isolation and loneliness in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* offers a powerful critique of how African societies respond to mental health and the marginalized. Adebowale does not provide easy answers or miraculous resolutions; instead, he asks readers to witness the pain of abandonment and consider the human cost of cultural rigidity. Through Labake and Yaremi, he reveals how solitude, whether forced or chosen, becomes a breeding ground for psychological suffering, thereby highlighting the urgent need for empathy, understanding, and social reform in addressing mental conditions.

4.2 The Plot Synopsis of Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*

Out of His Mind

Out of His Mind is a psychological novella that traces the tragic descent of the protagonist, Àlà mú, into mental instability due to emotional trauma and societal pressure. The narrative is set in a contemporary Nigerian society and unfolds through the lens of psychological deterioration. Àlà mú, once a vibrant and promising young man, becomes mentally unstable after a series of life-shattering experiences.

The characters in Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* are pivotal in understanding how social factors influence mental health. Through their life experiences, personal relationships, and interactions with their communities, Adebowale offers a lens through

which readers can explore the complex interplay between society and mental conditions. Each character's background, personality, and psychological journey are carefully constructed to reflect the impact of societal pressures, cultural norms, and economic circumstances on mental well-being.

Bayo Adebawale was born on June 6, 1944, in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Adebawale, who got his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English from the University of Ibadan, bagged his PhD from the University of Ilorin in 1997. A writer, literary critic, and administrator, Adebawale was a former Deputy Rector of The Polytechnic, Ibadan. Some of his acclaimed novels include: *The Virgin*, *Lonely Days*, and *Out of His Mind*. He also has a few collections of poems and short stories to his credit.

Out of his mind by Bayo Adebawale is an emblematic picture of our present society. It revolves around the rubicund of the neoteric life of spouses. It also depicts the trepidation in men when they are daunted to conceal the unconcealing truth, withheld their thoughts and feelings to themselves with the thought that they are reprehensible and should shoulder all the family welfare.

Àlà mú, the protagonist of *Out of his mind* by Bayo Adebawale represents a deeply troubled character whose mental condition is shaped by societal pressures and personal tribulations. An educated man who studied abroad, Àlà mú returns to Ibadan, Nigeria, and establishes a sophisticated home in a local neighborhood. The difference between his well-established residence and the local community reflects his desire to set himself apart, perhaps symbolizing his attempt to maintain control over his life and assert his identity after returning from the diaspora.

However, despite his apparent success in securing a stable life, marriage to Labake, and having a clever daughter, Àlà mú soon begins to experience profound psychological distress. The pressures of life slowly begin to wear him down. Àlà mú's reticence and inability to share his emotional burdens with his wife, who could have been a source of guidance, further isolate him. His silence, motivated by the fear of disrupting his marriage or appearing weak, adds another layer to his mental anguish. This emotional suppression is a key factor in the deterioration of his mental health.

Àlà mú's journey reflects the tension between societal expectations and personal vulnerabilities. The trials he faces highlight how societal pressure to appear successful particularly after receiving an education abroad can lead to intense personal conflict. His emotional isolation becomes even more pronounced as he struggles internally without reaching out to those who might provide support.

The psychological and physical toll that life takes on Àlà mú is vividly portrayed by the writer. The metaphorical expression, "The lapse of time is capable of working wonders on both the mental and physical being of anyone," captures the essence of his character's slow deterioration. This reflection emphasizes the transformative effect that life's challenges can have on a person's mental state, contributing to Àlà mú's eventual breakdown.

Adebowale employs a range of literary devices to bring Àlà mú's condition to life, imbuing his character with both depth and pathos. Aristotle's observation that "Metaphor is the most valuable ornament of style" is exemplified in the writer's use of metaphors to describe Àlà mú's solitude and inner turmoil. The passage, "Solitude gave him a chance to laugh alone to himself," conveys the deep sense of alienation that Àlà mú feels, with the device of pathetic fallacy used to

project human emotions onto abstract concepts such as solitude. The imagery of Àlà mú "laughing alone to himself" reflects his deep-seated loneliness and mental disintegration.

Hyperbole is also used effectively in the portrayal of Àlà mú's mental and physical deterioration. On page 49, the phrase "The gaze literally stripped him naked and pierced him" is a powerful example of this. It captures the raw vulnerability and exposure that Àlà mú feels as he faces the overwhelming challenges of life. His unkempt appearance, described as "thin as an orphan fed grudgingly by a cruel foster mother," and his comparison to "a mad man" further illustrate the extent to which his mental state has declined under the weight of societal and personal pressures.

The writer's use of parallelism, fragmentation, and flashbacks further enhances the portrayal of Àlà mú's mental condition, drawing readers into the fragmented nature of his psyche. These stylistic devices mirror the disjointed and chaotic state of his mind, as he grapples with his circumstances. Through these techniques, Adebowale provides a vivid depiction of the psychological turmoil that Àlà mú experiences, deepening the reader's understanding of the character's struggles.

In Conclusion, The character of Àlà mú contributes significantly to the broader exploration of social factors and mental conditions in Adebowale's works. His story highlights the role of societal expectations, personal isolation, and the weight of unspoken emotional burdens in the development of mental distress. Àlà mú's internal conflict and ultimate unraveling reflect the psychological consequences of trying to maintain an image of success while privately battling life's adversities. Through the use of rich literary devices, Adebowale captures the depth of

Àlà mú's mental state, offering readers a powerful representation of the effects of social pressures on individual mental health.

Lonely Days

Yaremi is a strong woman from Adeyipo village, married to Ajumobi, a man from Kufi village with whom she lives in Kufi. *Lonely Days* revolves round the character of Yaremi; her actions and inactions. Yaremi is a woman with a mind of her own. She becomes lonely upon the demise of her husband. In Ajumobi, she loses a companion, a confidante, a husband and a friend. She undergoes a lot of challenges after her husband's death. Worthy of note is her perseverance and resoluteness all through.

She feels the vacuum created by her husband's death. As a result, she overworks herself to fill the vacuum. She beats and dyes taffeta. She sells her taffeta in the market. She also goes to the farm. These do not hinder her normal chores. She attends to Woye's needs and nurtures him to good health. She tells Woye stories about her childhood days in Adeyipo Village. Within the space of moons (months), Yaremi has morphed into a fabric dyer, a farmer, a trader and a storyteller. It is also remarkable to note her passive resistance to her husband's intent to marry a new wife.

After her emergence from widowhood, the village elders decide, as the custom dictates, that she would marry another man. The trio of Dedewe, Fayoyin and Radeke, who were once widows like her, advise her to follow the dictate of the elders. But Yaremi would not have this. Her love for her late husband is unwavering. Thus, she scornfully rejects proposals from the contending suitors and walks out of the cap-picking ceremony. She is unmoved by the men and their caps.

She remains steadfast in her decision even when she is ostracized by the entire community. The elders pronounce her expulsion from Kufi Village. Yaremi however remains adamant, insists on staying in Kufi Village.

Widowhood in many African societies often subjects women to harsh social and cultural practices, which can lead to significant psychological distress. Yaremi, after the death of her husband, is left to navigate her life as a widow in a community that views her with suspicion and disdain. Adebowale paints a vivid picture of her isolation, as she is excluded from many social activities and subjected to intense scrutiny. The community's expectation that she should remarry or submit to rituals of widowhood further exacerbates her feelings of entrapment and helplessness.

Yaremi's mental condition is shaped by her resistance to these cultural practices. Unlike many other widows, she refuses to conform to the community's demands that she remarry or engage in the ritualistic practices expected of widows. Her defiance, while empowering, comes at a psychological cost. She is constantly at odds with her community, which exacerbates her feelings of loneliness and alienation. Adebowale illustrates how Yaremi's internal struggle, between her desire for independence and the pressure to conform, creates a state of emotional conflict that weighs heavily on her mental health.

Yaremi's story highlights the gendered dimensions of mental health, particularly how cultural practices around widowhood can lead to psychological distress. The isolation she faces and the pressure to conform to patriarchal expectations place an immense burden on her mental well-being. Adebowale's portrayal of Yaremi emphasizes the ways in which societal norms, particularly those related to gender, can act as a source of psychological oppression.

Common Themes across the Characters

In both *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, Bayo Adebawale explores the intricate relationship between societal pressures, personal tribulations, and the mental health of his protagonists, Àlà mú and Yaremi. While the circumstances surrounding these characters differ, the novels share several key themes that highlight how individuals navigate mental conditions shaped by societal expectations, isolation, and personal conflict.

1. Societal Expectations and Psychological Breakdown

One of the most prominent themes in both novels is the intense pressure placed on individuals by society, which ultimately leads to psychological distress. Àlà mú, a highly educated man who returns to Nigeria after studying abroad, is initially portrayed as a successful figure. His life appears stable, with a good job and a family, but societal expectations and economic pressures gradually unravel him. The socio-economic downturn in Nigeria, symbolized by the devaluation of the nation's currency, destabilizes Àlà mú's life. As his once comfortable lifestyle crumbles, the pressure to maintain the image of success becomes unbearable, leading him into depression, alcoholism, and isolation.

Similarly, Yaremi faces the harsh societal expectations placed on widows in her community. After the death of her husband, she is expected to remarry or engage in certain widowhood practices that she resists. Yaremi's refusal to conform to these patriarchal customs marks her as a defiant figure, but this resistance comes at a cost. She faces ostracism and psychological isolation from her community, which contributes to her growing sense of loneliness and mental strain.

Both characters are victims of societal demands, which force them into roles that do not align with their internal desires. Àlà mú's need to uphold a facade of success and Yaremi's resistance to widowhood rituals highlight the damaging effects of societal expectations on mental health. Their struggles show how societal structures can exacerbate personal crises, leading to mental breakdowns.

2. Isolation and Loneliness

Isolation, both physical and psychological, is a recurring theme in both *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*. Àlà mú's experience of isolation is initially self-imposed as he chooses not to confide in his wife, Labake, about his growing anxieties and struggles. His inability to share his emotional burdens creates a barrier between him and his family, deepening his sense of loneliness. This emotional isolation becomes more pronounced as he descends into a solitary and hallucinatory existence. Àlà mú's eventual breakdown is marked by an increasing detachment from the world around him, as he becomes trapped within his own mind.

Yaremi, on the other hand, experiences both emotional and societal isolation. After the death of her husband, she is left to fend for herself in a community that marginalizes widows. Despite her strength and independence, Yaremi feels the emotional void left by her husband's absence and is burdened by the community's expectations. Her refusal to remarry further isolates her, as she becomes an outcast, shunned by her peers for defying cultural norms. The psychological toll of this loneliness weighs heavily on Yaremi, contributing to her mental distress.

In both characters, isolation serves as a catalyst for mental deterioration. The sense of being cut off from others whether self-imposed or externally enforced, leads to deep-seated feelings of abandonment and helplessness, which exacerbate their emotional struggles.

3. Personal Conflict and Identity

The characters in both novels grapple with intense internal conflicts that affect their sense of identity and self-worth. Àlà mú's struggle revolves around the tension between his desire to live up to the expectations of his society and his inability to cope with the economic downturn that threatens his status. His internal battle between maintaining an outward image of success and dealing with his personal failures leads to a fractured sense of self. This identity crisis becomes a key factor in his psychological decline, as he feels increasingly out of control in his life.

Yaremi's personal conflict is rooted in her defiance of cultural traditions that dictate the role of widows in her society. Her refusal to remarry or submit to the cap-picking ceremony reflects her desire to maintain her independence and preserve the memory of her late husband. However, this resistance puts her at odds with her community, creating an internal struggle between her personal desires and the demands of her culture. Yaremi's determination to assert her autonomy comes at a psychological cost, as the isolation she experiences leads to moments of doubt and emotional turmoil.

Both Àlà mú and Yaremi's struggles illustrate how personal conflicts, when exacerbated by societal pressures, can lead to a loss of identity. The internal battles they face, between conformity and personal autonomy, create a sense of fragmentation that is key to understanding their mental states.

4. Gender and Mental Conditions

Gender plays a significant role in shaping the mental conditions of the characters, particularly Yaremi. Adebowale's portrayal of Yaremi's experience as a widow reflects the gendered nature of mental health in many African societies. Widowhood practices, which subject women to harsh treatment and rigid expectations, are a key source of Yaremi's psychological distress. Her resistance to these practices, while empowering, places her in a position of vulnerability, as she faces ostracism and isolation from the community. This gendered oppression highlights the ways in which cultural norms can act as a source of mental anguish for women, particularly those who defy patriarchal expectations.

In contrast, Àlà mú's struggle with mental health is more closely tied to societal and economic pressures. However, the expectations placed on him as a man, especially one educated abroad also play a role in his breakdown. The pressure to provide for his family and maintain his status in the face of economic challenges underscores the gendered expectations of masculinity that contribute to his mental distress.

In both cases, gender shapes the experiences of mental health in profound ways. While Yaremi faces the double burden of gendered oppression and societal expectations, Àlà mú's mental health is shaped by the pressure to fulfill the role of a successful and financially stable man.

5. Resilience and Survival

Despite the immense challenges faced by Àlà mú and Yaremi, both characters exhibit resilience in the face of adversity. Àlà mú's eventual recovery from his psychological breakdown, though fraught with hardship, demonstrates a form of resilience that allows him to regain control of his life. His ability to emerge from his hallucinatory and solitary existence suggests that, even in the face of immense pressure, survival is possible.

Yaremi's resilience is even more pronounced, as she steadfastly refuses to conform to the community's expectations, even at the cost of her social standing. Her determination to remain in Kufi Village, despite being ostracized, underscores her strength of character. Yaremi's refusal to remarry or submit to patriarchal customs demonstrates a form of resistance that is both empowering and costly.

Both characters, though deeply affected by their circumstances, ultimately embody a form of survival that speaks to the human capacity for endurance in the face of overwhelming societal pressures.

4.3 Conclusion

In both *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, Bayo Adebawale masterfully portrays the intricate relationship between societal pressures, personal tribulations, and mental health. Through the characters of Àlà mú and Yaremi, the novels explore the debilitating effects of societal expectations on individuals who struggle to meet rigid standards. The themes of isolation, internal conflict, gendered oppression, and resilience are woven together to provide a nuanced understanding of how mental conditions are shaped by cultural and socio-economic factors.

Àlà mú's journey highlights the pressure placed on men to maintain the facade of success and control, particularly after receiving an education abroad. His breakdown reflects the heavy toll of such expectations on mental health, particularly when economic hardship compounds personal struggles. Yaremi's story, on the other hand, sheds light on the gendered dimensions of mental health, focusing on the oppressive cultural practices that widows face in many African societies. Her resistance to these customs, while empowering, also leads to her psychological and social isolation.

Both characters exhibit remarkable resilience despite their challenges, underscoring the theme of survival in the face of overwhelming adversity. Ultimately, Adebowale's works offer a powerful commentary on the intersection of social factors and individual psychology, revealing how societal norms and expectations can both shape and undermine mental well-being. The novels remind readers of the importance of addressing the root causes of psychological distress, particularly those rooted in cultural, economic, and gendered oppression.

Endnotes

1. B. Adebowale, *Out of His Mind*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1987.
2. B. Adebowale, *Lonely Days*. Ibadan: Spectrum House, 2006.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter presents the summary of findings, draws conclusions, offers recommendations, highlights the study's key findings, outlines its contributions to knowledge, and suggests directions for future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced portrayal of mental conditions in Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, where mental disintegration is deeply rooted in social, cultural, and economic pressures rather than merely biological or clinical causes. The analysis of Àlà mú and Yaremi, the protagonists of the two texts respectively, shows that their psychological experiences are closely linked to the structural realities of their environment. In both novels, Adebowale employs narrative strategies to explore how communal expectations, personal loss, poverty, and identity conflicts contribute to the characters' mental deterioration. In *Out of His Mind*, Àlà mú's mental condition is portrayed as the outcome of unresolved internal conflicts, social isolation, and the failure to meet societal standards of success and masculinity. The findings show that Àlà mú's psychotic breakdown is a gradual process triggered by his inability to maintain his social standing, the burden of familial expectations, and the economic failure that leads to a loss of self-worth. The novel presents a detailed psychological map of Àlà mú's inner turmoil, revealing how his repression, withdrawal, hallucinations, and substance abuse are all symptomatic of a deeper psychological crisis fueled by external circumstances. His mind becomes a battleground where suppressed frustrations and unmet ambitions erupt into irrational behavior and a detachment from reality.

Similarly, in *Lonely Days*, the findings demonstrate that Yaremi's psychological struggle emerges from her status as a widow in a patriarchal society that devalues unmarried women. The study finds that her mental condition is not defined by overt psychosis but by chronic loneliness, subtle depression, and emotional resilience. Yaremi's refusal to participate in traditional widowhood rituals, especially the pressure to remarry through the cap-picking ceremony, places

her in conflict with the village's expectations, deepening her isolation. The findings suggest that her psychological state is a quiet but powerful resistance to cultural practices that strip women of autonomy, and her mental condition is a reflection of her silent mourning, cultural defiance, and longing for companionship without subjugation.

The comparative analysis reveals that while Àlà mú's mental condition is more explosive and pathological; Yaremi's is internalized and existential. Both characters, however, are united by a common thread: their psychological crises are significantly shaped by the sociocultural environment. The findings further show that Adebowale uses both characters as vehicles to critique societal neglect, rigid traditions, and the lack of support systems for individuals suffering from mental distress. The texts underscore the silence and stigma surrounding mental conditions, particularly in rural Nigerian settings, where such issues are often dismissed, misunderstood, or attributed to supernatural causes.

Additionally, the application of psychoanalytic theory in the study helped uncover the unconscious dimensions of the protagonists' experiences. Freudian concepts such as repression, defense mechanisms, melancholia, and the id-ego-superego conflict helped to explain Àlà mú's descent into madness as a reaction to repressed emotions and social failure. In Yaremi's case, Jungian ideas of individuation and archetypes were useful in understanding her psychological journey as a negotiation between personal identity and communal archetypes imposed by widowhood traditions. The findings emphasize that both characters experience psychological fragmentation due to a lack of emotional support, cultural rigidity, and economic vulnerability.

Moreover, the study reveals that mental conditions in the two novels are not treated as medical conditions to be diagnosed but as narrative tools to explore broader societal issues. Adebowale uses the characters' psychological struggles to challenge cultural norms, expose the

consequences of marginalization, and initiate conversations around mental well-being. The findings point to a deliberate narrative strategy that blends individual psychology with societal critique, thereby redefining the representation of mental conditions in African literature.

Finally, the study finds that these literary portrayals serve as a mirror to the Nigerian society, where mental conditions are still stigmatized and largely misunderstood. Through Àlà mú and Yaremi, Adebowale gives voice to individuals who suffer in silence and confront oppressive cultural norms. The findings reinforce the notion that mental health narratives in literature can offer powerful insights into the intersection of personal trauma and social reality, and that such representations are essential for destigmatizing mental conditions in the African context.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has thoroughly explored the representation of mental conditions in Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind and Lonely Days*, uncovering the layered and socially constructed nature of psychological distress as portrayed in the narratives. From the findings, it becomes clear that mental conditions, in these texts, are not isolated episodes of psychological malfunction but are intricately linked to broader social, cultural, and economic dynamics that shape the lives of the protagonists. Both Àlà mú and Yaremi are victims of a society that imposes rigid expectations and fails to provide emotional or communal support when these expectations become unbearable.

In *Out of His Mind*, Àlà mú's mental breakdown is depicted as a tragic consequence of unrelenting societal pressure, economic failure, and internalized despair. His condition is a reflection of the psychological toll that comes from attempting to conform to a model of masculinity that demands unbroken success, control, and stoicism. His descent into madness

represents more than just a personal failing; it is a symbolic collapse under the weight of social expectations and personal disappointments. The novel uses Àlámú's mental state to interrogate the narrow definitions of success and the absence of mental condition awareness in Nigerian society.

On the other hand, *Lonely Days* presents a different kind of psychological suffering, one that is quieter, more socially permissible, but equally damaging. Yaremi's mental condition is framed within the context of widowhood, loneliness, and cultural tradition. While she does not exhibit overt signs of madness, her mental state is characterized by isolation, silent rebellion, and a melancholic attachment to the past. Her refusal to conform to widowhood rites and remarriage expectations is a powerful statement of autonomy, yet it also highlights the emotional cost of resisting communal norms. Her psychological state speaks to the long-term emotional erosion that can result from societal neglect and the burden of cultural roles.

The conclusion that emerges from this study is that Adebowale's portrayal of mental conditions goes beyond clinical symptoms and instead focuses on the lived experiences of individuals caught in oppressive systems. Mental conditions, as represented in the two novels, are deeply tied to the characters' socio-economic realities, familial histories, and cultural identities. The novels argue implicitly that to understand and address mental health, one must engage with the social context that gives rise to psychological distress. Adebowale thus offers a critique of the cultural silence and societal negligence that compound the suffering of individuals like Àlámú and Yaremi.

Furthermore, the application of psychoanalytic theory, particularly the Freudian and Jungian frameworks, has been instrumental in unpacking the unconscious drives, repressed emotions, and psychological conflicts that shape the actions and decisions of the protagonists. These theoretical

tools allowed the study to delve into the symbolic layers of the characters' behaviors, revealing how deeply personal struggles are often mirrors of larger societal issues. Àlámú's hallucinations and breakdown reflect an inner world overwhelmed by fear and failure, while Yaremi's emotional withdrawal reveals a psyche wearied by cultural imposition and prolonged grief.

In conclusion, *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* contribute significantly to the discourse on mental conditions in African literature. They challenge readers to consider mental illness not as an aberration but as a deeply human response to a hostile and unyielding world. By humanizing characters with psychological struggles, Adebowale dismantles the stigma surrounding mental conditions and presents a compelling argument for empathy, understanding, and societal transformation. The findings of this study demonstrate that literature, particularly when grounded in local realities, remains a powerful tool for both reflecting and reshaping the societal understanding of mental health.

5.3 Recommendations

This study examined the portrayal of mental conditions in Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, the following recommendations are made:

1. Mental Health Awareness Should Be Prioritized in Nigerian Communities

The study revealed that societal misunderstanding and stigma around mental conditions significantly contributed to the suffering of the protagonists. Therefore, there is a pressing need for sensitization and education at the community level to promote a better understanding of mental health. This awareness should emphasize that mental distress can result from

socioeconomic and emotional pressures and is not a mark of personal weakness or spiritual failure.

2. Literature Should Be Used as a Tool for Mental Health Advocacy

As this study has demonstrated, literary works like *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* serve as powerful vehicles for examining psychological realities. Curriculum developers and educators should incorporate more African literary texts that engage with themes of mental conditions in school syllabi to encourage empathy and critical engagement with mental health issues.

3. Cultural Practices Should Be Re-Evaluated to Support Emotional Well-Being

The research findings indicate that some traditional expectations, such as the societal pressure to remarry or uphold rigid gender roles can have damaging psychological consequences. Cultural institutions and leaders should be encouraged to re-examine certain practices in light of the emotional and psychological needs of individuals, especially widows, the unemployed, and other vulnerable members of society.

4. Psychosocial Support Systems Should Be Strengthened

The mental disintegration of the protagonists partly stemmed from isolation and the absence of a strong support network. Families, religious institutions, and local government authorities should be more proactive in providing psychological support for individuals undergoing economic hardship, grief, or trauma. This includes the promotion of counseling centers, peer support groups, and confidential spaces for emotional expression.

5. Writers and Artists Should Continue to Explore Mental Health Themes

Adebowale's work contributes to breaking the silence around mental conditions in Nigerian society. Contemporary writers, dramatists, filmmakers, and other creatives should be encouraged to follow this lead by using their platforms to challenge stigma, depict mental struggles with sensitivity, and advocate for mental health reforms.

6. Mental Health Services Should Be Made Accessible and Affordable

Findings from this study reflect how the lack of accessible mental health care worsens the protagonists' conditions. Governments and health policy makers must invest in mental health infrastructure, especially in rural and underserved areas. Primary healthcare centers should be equipped with trained personnel capable of identifying and managing mental health issues.

7. Policy Makers Should Integrate Mental Health into Broader Social Welfare Policies

Since this study has shown the intersection between economic hardship and mental breakdowns, policy responses must be holistic. Mental health policy should be integrated with social welfare programs, including unemployment relief, widow support services, and community rehabilitation programs.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has contributed significantly to the growing body of knowledge at the intersection of literature, mental conditions, and African socio-cultural realities. By examining *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days* through psychoanalytic and sociocultural lenses, the research has provided new insights into how mental conditions are not only personal or medical issues but are also deeply rooted in the socioeconomic and cultural fabric of Nigerian society. It has

emphasized that mental conditions, as depicted in literary texts, reflect broader communal tensions, emotional trauma, grief, and psychological collapse caused by poverty, cultural oppression, and social neglect.

One major contribution of this research is the foregrounding of mental conditions as a legitimate and critical theme in African literature. While earlier literary criticism often focused on themes such as colonialism, tradition, gender, or identity, this study expands the scope by demonstrating that psychological breakdown and mental conditions deserve equal academic attention. In this light, the analysis of Àlámú and Yaremi not only reflects personal suffering but also symbolizes a wider cultural silence around emotional and psychological pain in African communities. The study thereby opens a pathway for further academic exploration of mental distress in African literary characters.

Additionally, the study introduces a nuanced application of Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic theories in interpreting African characters, situations, and social contexts. This theoretical framework has allowed for a deeper engagement with the internal worlds of the characters, uncovering how repressed desires, societal pressures, unresolved grief, and cultural expectations drive psychological breakdown. In doing so, the research bridges a gap in African literary studies by illustrating that psychoanalytic tools can be effectively adapted to African realities and characters without being confined to Eurocentric narratives or contexts.

Moreover, this research has also contributed to discussions on widowhood, unemployment, and societal neglect as overlooked contributors to mental instability. By analyzing the emotional experiences of the protagonists, the study reveals how systemic oppression such as the stigmatization of widows and the alienation of the unemployed translates into internal emotional damage. This provides valuable knowledge to scholars, mental health professionals, and policy-

makers about how cultural structures and expectations can exacerbate mental conditions, thereby influencing both literary interpretation and real-world intervention strategies.

Finally, the study contributes to literary scholarship by advocating for literature as a tool for mental health awareness. It establishes that fiction can serve a didactic purpose educating readers about the complexity of mental conditions and encouraging empathy for those who suffer. By bringing the internal worlds of Àlámú and Yaremi to light, the research empowers readers to interrogate their own cultural assumptions about mental instability and advocates for literature's role in shaping more compassionate and informed societies.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

While this study has successfully revealed the portrayal of mental conditions in *Out of His Mind* and *Lonely Days*, future research could further extend the discourse by exploring other African literary texts that depict psychological distress and emotional breakdown. A comparative study involving male and female protagonists across a wider range of African societies would be useful in understanding how mental conditions are gendered in literary representation, particularly within different cultural contexts. Such research would allow scholars to assess whether certain mental conditions are more commonly associated with men or women in African narratives and how cultural expectations shape these portrayals.

Moreover, future research could explore how mental conditions are treated or resolved in African literature. While this current study has focused on the causes and manifestations of psychological distress, subsequent studies could investigate how healing, therapy, or communal support systems are depicted, or whether such systems are absent altogether. This would provide

a more rounded understanding of the literary portrayal of mental well-being and offer insight into the solutions or lack thereof that African societies present in response to mental crises.

Another promising direction for research is the examination of youth mental conditions as depicted in African literature. Much of the existing literature, including the present study, has centered on adult characters. Yet, young people are increasingly affected by socio-economic and cultural pressures, which may manifest as psychological struggles in fictional narratives. Exploring how mental instability among African youth is portrayed in literature would contribute to a fuller understanding of the generational dimensions of mental conditions and the evolving cultural responses to them.

Additionally, future studies may benefit from interdisciplinary approaches that blend literary analysis with psychological or sociological methodologies. This could involve collaborating with mental health professionals to assess the accuracy and depth of literary portrayals of mental illness or using sociological data to validate the societal factors reflected in the texts. Such interdisciplinary work would enhance the credibility and practical relevance of literary studies in contemporary mental health discourse.

Finally, researchers may consider expanding the geographical scope of their studies beyond Nigeria to include literature from other African nations with similar or contrasting cultural norms. By doing so, scholars could identify cross-cultural patterns or unique national narratives concerning mental conditions. This would deepen the academic conversation on how different African communities conceptualize, respond to, and narrate mental health challenges, further enriching the field of African literary studies and cultural psychiatry.

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Book Chapters / Edited Volumes

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Fine, S. L. *Mental health and psychosocial support interventions for conflict-affected children and adolescents: strategies, challenges, and recommendations*. In *Research Handbook of Children and Armed Conflict*, edited by Myriam Denov & Maya Fennig, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024, 253-279.

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Gupta, S. K. *Handbook of Research on Child and Adolescent Psychology Practices and Interventions*. Includes multiple chapters on mental health. IGI Global, 2023.

Schutt, R. K. *Dissemination and implementation of mental health services: the problem, the response, the new science*. In *Research Handbook on Mental Health Policy*, edited by Russell K. Schutt, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022, 73-89.

Williams, M. T. *Phobias*. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Mood and Anxiety Disorders*, edited by D. Friedman-Wheeler & A. Wenzel, Sage Publications, 2024, 927-929.

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Beside Oke-Olola Community
School, Oke-Olola, Oyo, Oyo State.

B. Educational Background

Educational Institution Attended with Dates

Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo 2023 - Till Date

M.A English and Literary Studies

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State 2017-2021

B.Ed. English language - Second Class Honors (Lower Division)

Adejare Oloyede Secondary School, Oyo State 2016

West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) 2016

Ambassador Nursery and Primary School, Oke-oroki, Oyo, Oyo State- 2004- 2010

C: Working Experience with Dates:

1. Freelance Editor July 2022 – Till Date
2. Freelance Research Writer July 2020 – Tiil Date
3. Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, NYSC Administrative Officer 2022/2023
4. Methodist Secondary School, Fiditi, Oyo State (Teaching) 2018-2019

Nil

D. Award & Fellowships: (If Any)

E. Membership of Academic Professional Bodies

1. Member, Teacher Registration Council Certificate (TRCN) 2021

F. Publications:

Thesis

Ezekiel, I. M. (2019) *School Environment and Students' Attitude as a determinant of Students' Achievement in English language at Afijio Local Government, Oyo, Oyo state*, Unpublished B.Ed.English Language in Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan

Books/Monograph

1. Inioluwa, E. (2020). *His secret* www.selar.com
2. Inioluwa, E. (2021). *One choice, one path* www.selar.com
3. Inioluwa, E. (2022). *Island of the lost* www.selar.com

Scholarly Articles

1. Tadese D. O. & Ezekiel I. M. (2023) The Humanities and trendin Industrial Revolution: The Impact of Industrial Revolution in William Blake's "London" and Elizabeth Barret Browning's "The Cry of the Children"

G. Notable Scholarly or Professional Accomplishments

Nil

H. Major Conferences/ Workshops Attended with Dates:

- (a) Participated in 11th International Conference of Students of English and Literary Studies (ICOSELS) in 2017
- (b) Davies, R. U & **Ezekiel, I. M.** (2023) Spoken Art Forms and Performance Traditions as Cultural Aesthetics: A Literary Perspective at Lead City University, Ibadan (Department of Languages and literature)
- (c) Davies, R. U & **Ezekiel, I. M.** (2024) *Mythologizing women for cultural reclamation in Kunle Afolayan's film "Anikulapo"* at Department of Languages and literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Lead City University, Ibadan.
- (d) Davies, R. U & **Ezekiel, I. M.** (2024) *Oral narratives and artificial intelligence* at Department of Languages and literature, Faculty of Arts and Education, Lead City University, Ibadan.

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The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that the thesis by Inioluwa Mayokun EZEKIEL with the matric number LCU/PG/005223 in the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State is in full compliance with the approved University Format and Style.

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Date