

**YUSUF DAWOOD'S PORTRAYAL OF REJECTION IN THE  
PRICE OF LIVING AND EYE OF THE STORM**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED FOR EXAMINATION IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE.**

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**OCTOBER 2013**

**Declaration**

**This research project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.**

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**This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.**

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## **Dedication**

For Ann Wanjiku, my wife and my young twin sons; Chege and Karanja. My abandonment of the young family in the pursuit of this study, must have made them suffer both physical and psychological rejection.

Ann's resilience and stoicism is a virtue I shall forever be grateful for.

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## **Acknowledgement**

This research owes its completion to the invaluable help of my supervisors Professor Henry Indangasi and Anna Petikova-Mwangi. I am indebted to them for their unreserved dedication throughout the research and writing of this project, without which the study would not have been successful.

I wish to offer my gratitude to Dr. Tom Odhiambo for his assistance with the author's novels which were out of print during the period of study. His assistance went along way in keeping the fire of the research burning at a time of imminent blow out.

I note with gratitude the generous moral and intellectual support of the entire teaching staff of the department of Literature at the University of Nairobi. In their different ways, they added value to the quality of this research.

My colleague students Faith Kavila, Lucy Njeru, Bancy Munene and Joyce Kaigai provided the much required moral and intellectual company along the journey of this research. I shall always remember them.

## Abstract

This study focuses on a critical analysis of two novels by one of the most prolific contemporary writers in Kenya. These are The Price of Living and Eye of the Storm by Yusuf K. Dawood. As an immigrant author of Asian origin, his two novels provide literary lenses through which the outside world sees the Kenyan society. Written by a medical surgeon by profession, the novels open a frontier in the inter-disciplinary exchange of discourses.

The study interrogates the author's portrayal of the theme of rejection. Our interest here is to examine the relationship between rejection and vengeance. The study is based on the assumption that individuals can move on with life after rejection without resorting to vengeance. An important concern for this research is the motivation behind the various courses of vengeance. The author's choice of characters as carriers of his thematic and aesthetic beauty is examined.

My study is anchored on the psychoanalytic criticism. The influence of the author's experiences in life has a bearing on his thematic choices. Equally, the characters' subconscious mind has a lot of influence on their conscious choices of actions. The interface between the author and the choice of his characters determines the quality of a work of fiction. A Combination of methodologies have been used in the study including: close textual reading, critical analysis of the primary texts, library research and interviews.

This research contains four chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. Chapter two contains the author's literary biography. Chapter three is a critical analysis of the theme of rejection and characterization in the novel The price of Living. Equally, chapter four is a critical analysis of the theme and characterization in the novel Eye of the Storm. The two chapters are the heart of this study. A conclusion at the end of chapter four wraps up the study.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1:1 INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Yusuf Kodwawwala Dawood is a prolific Kenyan author with eleven works of literature to his name. He is however best known for his fortnightly column Surgeon's Diary in Sunday Nation. Dawood has staked out his neck high in the literary field to claim a rightly deserved position as a literary powerhouse. He has carved a niche for himself as an indispensable icon in the world of men and women of letters. Dawood straddles between the medical world and creative writing with the delicate balancing tactics of a gymnastic walking on a tight rope. His canon, most of which borrows heavily from his medical profession can loosely be classified as medical literature. In the same breath, he has enriched the literature field with what in this project is referred to as "Dawoodian characters" because of their unique, albeit bizarre, way of handling rejection. It is on the basis of these two unique features of Dawood's writing that this study was conceived.

Out of the eleven titles, six are novels namely No strings Attached(1978), The Price of Living(1983), One Life too Many(1987), Water under the Bridge(1991), Return to Paradise(2000) and Eye of the Storm(2010). Four form a quartet of collection of some of the best stories from Surgeon's Diary. These are Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (1985), Off my Chest (1988), Behind the Mask(1995) and The Last Word(2012). Nothing but the Truth (2002) is his autobiography. This research limits itself to two of his novels; The Price of Living (1983) and Eye of the Storm (2010) in which the theme of rejection is best portrayed and the characters fight it back with a vengeance.

The theme of rejection is prevalent in Yusuf Dawood's novels and specifically in the two selected novels under this study. My interest in this research however is to interrogate the various ways in which the characters react to rejection and what motivates them to make such choices. This

study is therefore born out of the need to find out how rejection is portrayed as a theme in the novels and the way it impairs the characters' ethical and professional judgment. This study ,therefore, gains insights from a study of characters' growth and development with a specific focus to the effects of rejection on their behaviour. This research further seeks to understand the author's intention in exposing the grim surgical malpractices in Eye of the Storm through the analysis of rejected characters' behaviour in the novel. In The Price of Living, the research seeks to understand the author's vision in crafting a very diligent personal secretary who suddenly decides to expose the confidential information of her long-time employer with an intention of destroying his business empire. In the novel, Mrs. Armstrong knows that Mr. Maina Karanja's business is anchored on some secretive dealings and that revealing them could not only bring the business to ruins but also bring her only source of livelihood to an end. This is surprisingly at a time that she needs her job most. This need is occasioned by her husband's sudden abandonment.

Yusuf Dawood is a senior surgeon in Kenya who has worked in some of Kenya's most renowned hospitals including The Aga Khan Hospital, Kenyatta National Hospital and The Nairobi Hospital. He therefore brings into the literary world a wealth of knowledge from the medical fraternity. This study hopes to interrogate the author's vision in his blunt revelation of grim incidences of gross professional omissions and commissions bordering on murder. The issue is whether the characters are outright murderers or their actions are inadvertent. In a case where the characters' actions are inadvertent, I seek to probe the forces which would make a hitherto diligent and senior surgeon commit a litany of surgical mistakes and deaths.

In Eye of the Storm, the study hopes to investigate the various surgical mishaps and find out if they have any bearing to Dr. Njoroge Maina's rejection by different people at various stages in life. In The Price of Living, the focus will be Mrs. Armstrong's sudden act of betrayal towards her long-time employer, Maina Karanja. Mrs Armstrong's rejection is at two levels, actual and apparent. In the former, her husband falls in love with Marian, marries her and deserts his former wife by escaping



abroad with his newly-wed. In the apparent rejection, Maina Karanja falls in love with Miss Valerie Collins and goes ahead to marry her. Mrs. Armstrong had considered herself the natural choice for Mr. Maina Karanja's love due to her long and dedicated service to him. In addition, it occurred to her that her dedication to Maina Karanja's business could have led to her marital problems. According to her husband, she devoted a lot of her time to her job at the expense of their marriage. She therefore hoped that Maina Karanja would compensate her by choosing her for a wife. Incidentally, her sudden break-up coincided with her employer's decision to get married. This to her was an apparent God send opportunity.

Yusuf Dawood himself has suffered enough rejection in his life. Born in India, the parents were later evicted during the partitioning. He grew up in Pakistan where he undertook his primary and secondary education. He took his tertiary education in England from where he also got married before settling in Kenya. As it emerges in chapter two of this study, the main reason for his life on the move has been rejection. Dawood has undergone various levels of rejection starting with his name, of course with racial undertones. The fact that one could be identified as an alien from the mere level of his name indicates rejection. It becomes even worse when people take it upon themselves to abbreviate one's name to show how alien and therefore difficult to pronounce it is. In his autobiography, Nothing but the Truth, he says this about his middle name, Kodwawwala:

I have often described it jokingly as a cross I have carried all my life! It was difficult to pronounce, write and spell and became even more of a problem when I travelled first to study in the United Kingdom and then finally settled in Kenya. It was therefore subjected to strange abbreviations and variations. (4)

A critical study of Dawood through the reading of his semi-autobiographical collection of stories which form his quartet, a reading of his autobiography; Nothing but the Truth and a personal interview with him gave insights about his vision of rejection and its influence on his writing career.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Rejection is a painful experience in the life of characters in fiction. Yusuf K. Dawood has ably presented rejection in his creative writing. In this study, I intend to investigate the treatment of the theme of rejection in Dawood's novels; The Price of Living and Eye of the Storm. In spite of the deeply ingrained pain of rejection, it does not necessarily have to resort to vengeance. An investigation of the characters' reaction to rejection in the two novels is envisaged. Of particular interest for this study is an investigation of the power of the subconscious mind in influencing the conscious actions of the characters.

There is need to evaluate Dawood's success in crafting characters that drive his vision of rejection. The study therefore hopes to investigate both the portrayal of the theme of rejection and the authenticity of the characters as vehicles of the theme. The theme of rejection has not received substantial literary focus in Dawood's novels. This study therefore intends to open new frontiers on the portrayal of the theme of rejection. The influence of the author's own experience in life to his fiction is examined.

## 1.3 Justification of the Study

Yusuf Dawood has largely been ignored in the literary world and is best known only for his Surgeon's Diary, which appears in the Sunday Nation. This study seeks to add to the contribution of the few critics in establishing the centrality and invaluableity of Dawood's contribution to the literary field, and particularly in Kenya. Masumi H. Odari, in her paper "Self-Identity: Reflection on Yusuf K. Dawood" appearing in The Nairobi Journal of Literature hails Dawood's indispensability saying that "Coming from one who is not traditionally schooled in the literary profession, Dawood's ability to weave out creative real life stories based on his professional life as a surgeon distinguish him as one of the greatest storytellers of our time" (12).

Literature as a reflection of the society can be used as a yardstick of a society's social, cultural and political fabric. In the two novels under this study, stiff competition in the career and business world is the curtain raiser for the drama that unfolds. It is the cause of some of the character's sudden turn from ethically and professionally upright people into betrayers, as in The Price of Living and murderers as in Eye of the Storm. Kenya, being a capitalistic country, such incidents will be common in the daily life of citizens. The author in his literary role as a mirror to society has a critical role of reflecting such dynamics in his creative works. In the case of Dawood, having worked in Kenya's most senior hospitals and also treated the rich, his novels are a treatise on what goes on behind the walls of opulence. In his own admission, in both his autobiography and semi- autobiographical works, Dawood has walked along the corridors of power at the highest level, both professionally and socially. His works therefore contain some highly confidential political secrets which have in a sense shaped the political graph of this country. In the author's Note to his Homecoming, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o writes as follows about the role of a writer in society:

It is the height of irony that we, who have suffered most from exploitation, are now supporting a system that not only continues that basic exploitation, but exacerbates the task of exposing the distorted values governing such a jungle precisely because this distorts healthy human relationships. (xviii).

Dawood is not a literary person by training. He is a career medical surgeon. He therefore brings to the literary field a wealth of knowledge from the medical fraternity. My choice of topic specifically focuses on how credible his characters are in reflecting the real life rejection of a character in inter-personal relations and the effect on their ethical and professional judgment. I therefore sought to explore characters' relationships and the motivation behind their behaviour. In his justification for choosing to study Dawood's books for his M.A thesis in literature at the University of Nairobi, Mwai Karekia, in his thesis, 'The Portrayal of The Doctor Character in Yusuf Dawood's Off my Chest and No Strings Attached , says that "Dawood's works reflect the Kenyan society before and

after independence hence his writing is relevant in enhancing the understanding of post colonial literature. It also reflects the doctor's role in society" (6).

Yusuf Dawood borrows from his hospital life experience. However, not much has been done in the area of rejection. More- so, the motivation behind his blunt revelation of medical malpractices has not been deeply researched on. Much of what has been done on him is in the areas of identity crises, multiculturalism and style, as shall emerge under literature review. The study of a character's reaction to rejection which this research has focused on has therefore not been given enough critical attention. This research aims at filling that literary gap.

Characterization is central in literary works of art. Characters are the carriers of both the plot and the themes in a novel. It is from characters' dialogue, actions and even silences that the theme unfolds. Dawood's characters are unique in regard to the way they react to mistreatment. While it would be expected of a character to take revenge when mistreated, some levels of vengeance are out of proportion to the mistreatment. There are other characters that react to perceived and not real rejection. Finally, there are those who chose to move on after rejection. A study of the motivation behind the various conscious or unconscious choices by Dawood's characters would therefore enrich the literary field. The varied choices and the uniqueness of the characters reaction qualifies the term "Dawoodian characters" .A critical study of the "Dawoodian characters" would be a literary milestone. It is these unique features that gave birth and the impetus for this study.

My choice of the two novels was informed by a need to study the consistency in Dawood's portrayal of the theme of rejection using his "Dawoodian characters" in spite of the big difference in years of publication. The Price of Living was published in 1983 while Eye of the Storm was published in 2010, a span of twenty seven years. This fixation with the same theme and through roughly the same caliber of characters tells a lot about Dawood's early years and their influence on his writing. At another level, the choice of the two novels in a sense reflects the "budding author" and

the “experienced author”. Both novels handle the theme of rejection hence offer a good comparative study of the author between the two different epochs of his writing career.

Dawood is an immigrant author. He is Asian by birth, European by education and marriage and finally Kenyan by Nationalization. His literature therefore rightly fits in the Kenyan literature loosely categorized as ‘Asian writers’, or ‘immigrant writers’. A study of this sub-category of Kenyan literature would widen the scope of knowledge of Kenyan literature. Working from the premises that literature is a reflection of society and that the author is a mirror to the society, a study of Dawood’s writing would reveal how he, having chosen to live and work in Kenya, views the Kenyan society and his likely feelings of rootlessness and hence rejection. The question here would be; does the immigrant Kenyan suffer from rejection? In this way, an answer to this question would be literature’s way of giving back to society what it got from society. Ngugi wa Thiong’o observes in Homecoming that “A writer responds, with his total personality to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, he registers, with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society” (47). Justus Kizito Makokha agrees with Ngugi on the role of a writer and literature in society. In his Phd. Dissertation entitled ‘Ethnic Identities and Gender Themes in Contemporary East African Literature’, he says the following:

Creative imagination is one of the pathways by which a people or culture presents itself to the world. It represents their internal and external environments. To study the sociology of literature is to contribute in the creation of awareness around a society and its vocal agents. (5)

My research endeavours to not only add to the wealth of knowledge given by previous researchers on the author and specifically on the two novels but to open up new fields of research. This is particularly on his recent novel Eye of the Storm which so far has not received critical attention beyond newspaper reviews. Having won two Kenyan literary awards within two years of its publication, Eye of the Storm is a novel deserving an intensive critical research.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

This research seeks to meet the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the author's portrayal of the theme of rejection in the novels under study.
2. To investigate the various forms of rejection in the novels under study.
3. To find out how credible the characters are as the vehicles of the theme of rejection.
4. To investigate the impact of the author's experiences in life to his writing.

## **1.5 Hypotheses**

This research is based on the following assumptions;

1. The author has questioned the use of vengeance as the only recourse to rejection.
2. The author has presented real and perceived rejection in the two novels.
3. The characters in the two novels are either justifiably or unjustifiably vengeful.
4. The author's childhood experience has largely motivated his portrayal of the theme of rejection.

## **1.6 Definition of terms**

For the purposes of this research project, the following terms are used in a special way out of their conventional meaning to give special meanings relevant to this study.

### **Rejection**

The term rejection is used in this research project to refer to any form of mistreatment, exclusion and segregation between and among people on the bases of indicators such as race, social, political, economic, religious, and professional status. The rejection may either be actual or perceived.

## **Multiculturalist.**

The term is derived from the term multiculturalism and is used in this study to refer to a person who espouses and campaigns for cultural integration, between and among people of the world irrespective of their cultural heredity. Such persons advocate for unity in diversity.

### **1.7 Literature Review**

Several critics have analysed the theme of identity crisis in Dawood's works including in one of the selected works in this study. Arguably, identity crisis is born out of rejection. H.O. Weche in his unpublished M.A thesis entitled "The Quest for Identity in the Selected Works of Dawood", focuses on the theme of identity crises in Dawood's No Strings Attached, Water under the Bridge and Return to Paradise. In the thesis, Weche observes that the 'stereotypical constructs of colonial history emerge in his works amidst his social vision of racial integration' (5). In the research, Weche observes that characters find it difficult to gain roots and establish fruitful inter- personal relationships in a foreign country. Segregation and suspicion along racial lines is prevalent long after Kenya gains independence. A person suffering from an identity crisis has first been rejected. Weche's research is however more of a partial study of rejection along racial lines while my study is however not limited to inter – racial exclusion but includes intra –racial. My study also goes beyond the theme and focuses on characterization. I investigate the motivation behind the exclusionist tendencies.

Godwin Siundu studied Dawood's work for his M.Phil thesis but focused on the theme of multiculturalism. His topic; 'The vision of Multiculturalism in Selected Novels of Yusuf K. Dawood', endeavours to show the cultural harmony among people of diverse cultures and races. The term vision would suggest the author's suggested life free of rejection. In another paper appearing in The Nairobi Journal of Literature entitled 'Transcending Racial/Cultural Space: The Power of the Woman in Yusuf K. Dawood's Works', Siundu furthers his study on overcoming racial and cultural barriers in Dawood's writing. In this paper, he focuses his study on The Price of Living and Water under the Bridge. The paper in a way focuses on rejection when it looks at transcending racial and

cultural spaces. Siundu says that “My major argument is that for Dawood, women are no longer passive embodiments of notions of cultural purity and identities but, rather, facilitators of change through their decisive initiation of cross-racial/cultural unions” (57). In the two studies, Siundu, through his study on multiculturalism in the former and transcending racial/cultural spaces in the latter, has in a sense looked at ways of overcoming racial and cultural rejection in Dawood’s works. It is however clear that both his studies have a thematic bias. My study goes beyond the theme and delves deeper in to characterization.

Masumi H. Odari, in an article appearing in The Nairobi Journal of Literature, Number 1 March 2003, comes closer to tackling the theme of rejection. In her paper entitled “Self-identity: Reflections on Yusuf K. Dawood,” She says the following:

Unlike his countryman Jawaharlal Nehru who once remarked that he had become a ‘queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere’, Dawood does not suffer such an identity crisis. According to him, his identity has been enriched by his diversity... He may not have been born an African, but he has lived and experienced the one Africa that you and I know...consequently, he has no other identity than that of our own for as he says, ‘the packaging may be different but the content is the same’. (12-13).

Odari observes that through his own personal life and the life of his characters, Dawood has overcome identity crisis. As mentioned earlier, identity crisis is a result of rejection. By overcoming identity crises, the author and his characters overcome rejection hence the connection of this study to my own study on rejection.

Benson Kairu has studied Dawood’s choice of style in his M.A thesis entitled, ‘An investigation of form and style in Dawood’s work’. His work focuses on the author’s effective use of style to present his thematic concerns. The point of departure is that this particular research is specific on the theme of rejection and how credible the characters are as vehicles of the theme. Related to



Kairu's research on style is Nicholas Oluoch Asego who wrote his M.A thesis at the University of Nairobi entitled, "Form in Yusuf Dawood's Autobiographical Works: Behind the Mask, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow and Nothing but the Truth". In his research, Asego centers his research on Dawood's use of the style of dialogue in his autobiographical works leaving out the area of thematic concerns and specifically rejection which is the focus of this research project.

Mwai F.Karekia wrote his M.A. thesis at the University of Nairobi entitled, 'The Portrayal of the Doctor Character in Yusuf Dawood's Off my Chest and No Strings Attached'. In his research, Karekia examined the image of the doctor and the impression of the medical world as presented in Dawood's work. His research therefore had a leaning towards characterization. My research focuses on both characterization and thematic concerns in equal measure. His research is unique in the sense that it looks at a character that is derived from the profession of the author thereby "uncovering how the author fictionalises his own profession" (8). His research is a good study of the melting point between the medical field and the literary field.

David Dorsey has written a paper entitled "Yusuf Dawood's Pastel Paradise", which is a corpus review of Dawood's earlier fiction. Dorsey's paper focuses more on Dawood's literary biography. Among other character traits, as shall emerge in chapter two, he says that Dawood is a latent racist. Dorsey observes that in most of Dawood's writing, the marriage between whites and blacks are not at equal prism. They present the black as a beneficiary of the white. Other studies on Dawood are newspaper reviews which hardly delve deeper into the author's penchant for the theme of rejection. Eye of the Storm is relatively a recent publication at the time of this study and hence largely unresearched on. This study therefore pioneers an in-depth critical attention to the novel which I think it deserves.

My intention in this research project was to delve into Dawoods' treatment of rejection. Past studies have fleetingly focused on rejection and where they do, the effect has not been attended to. There must be a reason for the author's prevalent portrayal of rejected characters. A critical study on

its effect on characters' life is a worthy literary venture. My study combines both the thematic analysis and characterization.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by the psychoanalytic literary criticism. The psychoanalytic literary criticism is very useful in analysing the motivation behind a character's behaviour. In An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory, Peter Barry says that the human being's conscious actions are motivated by the unconscious mind, writing as follows:

...when some wish, fear, memory, or desire is difficult to face we try to cope with it by repressing it, that is, eliminating it from the conscious mind. But this doesn't make it go away: It remains alive in the unconscious, like radioactive matter buried beneath the ocean, and constantly seeks a way back into the conscious mind, always succeeding eventually. As Freud famously said, 'There is always a return of the repressed'. Slips of the tongue or pen, the forgetting of names and similar accidents' show this repressed material in the act of seeking a way back. (100)

Using this theory the study seeks to understand whether the conscious actions of characters in the selected novels, some of which are bizarre, are motivated by their unconscious mind. In this respect, an investigation on whether the surgical mishaps under the hands of Dr. Maina Karanja in Eye of the Storm are a manifestation of parapraxes or 'slips of the scalpel' has been carried out. In The Price of Living, I sought to find out whether Mrs. Armstrong's intention of bringing her employer's business down by exposing confidential files is a manifestation of projection. Projection in psychoanalytic criticism occurs "When aspects of ourselves (usually negative ones) are not recognised as part of ourselves but are perceived in or attributed to another, our own desires or antagonisms, for instance, may be 'disowned' in this way." (Barry 98).

Specifically, Sigmund Freud's Dynamic model under psychoanalytic criticism which concerns itself with the dichotomy between the conscious and the unconscious mind of a character is used. I also used the psychobiography approach under psychoanalytic criticism. I interviewed Dawood in an effort of gathering more on his world view which assisted in understanding his works. In this respect I undertook to understand his intention in portraying murderous characters in his latest novel, Eye of the Storm. Writing about psychobiography, Charles E. Bressler in Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice says the following:

.... this method of analysis begins by amassing biographical information about an author through biographies, personal letters, lectures and any other document related in some way to the author. Using this data and the author's Canon (collected works), psychoanalytic critics believed they could theoretically construct the author's personality, with all its idiosyncrasies, internal and external conflicts, and more importantly, neuroses. In turn, such a devised theory, they believed, could illuminate an author's individual works, giving rise to the latent content in the author's texts. (158).

Apart from interviewing him, a critical reading of the author's autobiography, Nothing, but the Truth and his quartet, which have been compiled from the best of his surgeons Diary' in Sunday Nation, was done to get a better psychobiographical view of Dawood. Most of his semi-autobiographical works especially the quartet are real stories with only alterations of the names of his clients for confidentiality purposes.

## **1.9 Methodology**

This research was carried out through a close textual reading of the two primary texts. This equipped me with enough evidence on the depiction of the theme of Rejection. An investigation of characterization in the novels revealed the inter-personal relationships between and among the

characters which contain incidents of rejection and the subsequent effect on the rejected characters' ethical and professional judgment.

I also read the rest of Dawood's novels and collection of stories contained in his quartet to gain a sound understanding of his world view. Of particular interest to me was his autobiography Nothing but the Truth which gave me the autobiographical information necessary for this study.

I read secondary critical and theoretical materials relevant to this study. Under the critical materials, I was interested in looking for insights from the views of other scholars who have preceded me in the study of Dawood's writing. Under the theoretical materials, I read widely on theory and practice, specifically on the psychoanalytic literary criticism, the theory propping this study.

Critical journals and reviews in reputable literary journals both print and on- line were a rich source of knowledge for my research. Before embarking on the analysis of the primary texts, a reading of human psychology, specifically on rejection and revenge was invaluable to me. These enhanced and enriched an understanding of the motivation behind characters' behaviour.

A personal interview with Yusuf Dawood was conducted. This enabled me to understand the author better. I also conducted an interview with a professional psychologist to gain knowledge on the theme of rejection. Dr. Lucas Mwaura, a senior lecturer in the department of psychology at the University of Nairobi was very useful. Corroborative information about Dawood from his colleagues was sought. Dr. Nderitu Gichuhi, a heart and chest surgeon at The Nairobi Women's hospital was of great assistance. This gave me enough knowledge and understanding of Dawood, the "author with four wives". I was interested to know their feelings about Dawood's seemingly surgical expose. I also wanted to know from the surgeons the efficacy of Dawood's portrayal of surgical mishaps. The concern here was whether the incidents are as prevalent in real life as they are in Dawood's novel Eye of the Storm.

Once adequately armed with primary information on theory, practice, human psychology and Dawood's life history, I proceeded to subject the knowledge in the critical analysis of the two novels.

I endeavoured to obtain evidence of rejection in the two novels and how characters react to it. My approach involved picking incidents of rejection in the two novels. These ranged from family, social, professional to racial levels. After the theme had fully been explored, I proceeded to analyse the characters' reaction to rejection. I picked each character at a time and focused on the actions of revenge that are meted out on the actual or perceived perpetrators of rejection. At this juncture, I was able to evaluate Dawood's portrayal of the theme of rejection. The characters' response to rejection was interrogated.

## **2.0 Scope and Limitation**

My research confines itself to the two selected novels as the primary texts. The interest was to examine the depictions of the theme of rejection and its effect on ethical and professional judgment of the characters. The rest of his writing is referred to as corroborative materials for the primary texts. The research also gained knowledge from secondary sources like critical and theoretical books, journals, theses, internet and interviews. Any research on Dawood that has a bearing to the topic of the current study was taken into account.

Beyond library research was personal interview with the author of the two novels under study. I also interviewed a professional psychologist. A colleague surgeon of the author was also interviewed to gain as much as possible of Dawood's life history which went a long way in enriching this study.

## 2.1 Conclusion

From the foregoing, I have described the intentions of the current topic of research. The study hopes to add new knowledge in the study of Yusuf Dawood's works who, as explained in the justification of the study has not received a sustained critical attention equal to his contribution to Kenyan literature. This is in particular his medical background which enriches literary studies. The areas of doubles end split personality are very important in literary studies. In fact the blurb of the novel Eye of the Storm best captures the plot of the novel. It says that "Eye of the Storm is the story of a surgeon tortured by trauma he suffered in the past. To release himself from the psychological shackles imposed on him as a result, he turns into a modern day *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*."

Having critically read the novel Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and in view of the author's portrayal of doubles as an inescapable human reality, I hope to add knowledge in the area of split personality. The doctor-patient relationship as depicted in Eye of the Storm and employer-employee relationship as presented in The Price of living are important for the study of characterization in general and in particular to the topic of this research paper.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Yusuf K. Dawood; A Literary Biography.

Yusuf K. Dawood strides across the Kenyan literary map like a colossus. His indelible ink is a lasting legacy of his contribution to literature for generations to come. Although he is not a literary scholar by training, Dawood is a literary giant. He is an accomplished short story writer, a novelist, a humourist and an autobiographer. He has experimented with the various sub-genres of literature with a monumental success. David Dorsey agrees with this view in his “Yusuf Dawood’s Pastel Paradise” saying the following:

I have suggested that the popularity of Dawood’s work must reflect the popularity of his worldview, and his view of Kenya, his patriotism. To the extent that the Kenyan reading public wish their literature to offer a sanguine and laudatory appraisal of their own lives and society, Dawood is representative.(13)

Dawood literally travelled all the way from his motherland , Pakistan, to come and adopt Kenya as his country of literary exploration. He takes it as his literary duty to tell us what and how we are. As an outsider, both racially and professionally, he does this with the innocence of a child. He spreads his gospel of multiculturalism with a rare feat owing to his “ triple heritage “. Born in India, he was educated in Europe from where he also married, before settling in Kenya. His travelogues which permeate in all his writing are a rich heritage to the field of literature.

Dawood was born on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1928 in India to Kodwawwala Dawood and Rahima Dawood and named Mehmood-Arabic for most loved. He is the fifth born in a family of six, five brothers and one sister. He took his early education in India. He later moved to England for his medical education where he also married his wife Marie. He later migrated to Kenya, his adoptive country, to practice surgery rising to the highest levels as a senior surgeon. He arrived in Kenya in

1961 and worked at the Aga Khan Hospital, Kenyatta National Hospital before finally settling down at the Nairobi Hospital where he is currently a senior surgeon. He is married to Marie and has two children, Jenny and Jan, who are married and live in London. He is a Kenyan by nationalization.

Dawood's monumental writing is attributable to a psychological process of dream work. Under dream work is the process of displacement. Peter Barry in his book, Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory, says the following about displacement:

...dream work [is] the process by which real events or desires are transformed into dream images. These include: displacement whereby one person or event is represented by another which is in some way linked or associated with it, perhaps because of similar sounding word, or by some form of symbolic substitution ... Thus, characters motivation and events are represented in dreams in a very 'literary' way, involving the translation, by the dream work, of the abstract ideas or feelings into concrete images.(98)

It is from this understanding that the analysis of Dawood's literary biography is hinged. That is, his creative energy is unconsciously motivated by his experiences in life. Writing to him is his way of venting out his frustration.

Dawood's penchant for the theme of rejection is a clear testimony of his own life. In part one of his autobiography, aptly entitled 'The Early Years' he narrates the hard times of his years of childhood. His early years were turbulent and traumatic. This painful experience of rejection is reflected in his writing. Henry Ole Kulet, another Kenyan author of reputation agrees that a writers experience heavily influences his writing. In an article he wrote for the Saturday Nation of August 31, 2013, he said this:

One of the rules that I have formulated for myself and which I have always adhered to is to write from my own experience. When I was writing my first novel, Is it Possible?, I learnt that my own experience was absolutely unique. I told



myself then, that if I was going to be heard out of all those thousands of voices telling their stories through novels, I had to present my own experience truthfully to the readers. (22)

It is from this premises that this research proceeds to analyse Dawood's life history in an endeavour to find out how his past has influenced his writing. A deliberate effort is made to connect his experience in life with the theme of rejection.

Dawood suffered rejection right from his childhood. He was born in a minority Muslim community that was rejected by a dominant Hindu community. The rejection came in various forms, namely, philosophical, religious, political, and racial. This explains why he captures the theme of rejection so fervently; sometimes even melo-dramatically. He lost his mother at an early age of eight years. He later lost his father when he was twenty years. What was more traumatic was that he was present in the two incidents. The death of his parents left the young Dawood a dejected and rejected person. Philosophically, the world had rejected him by denying him the privilege of parents.

The death of the mother heralded very difficult times for Dawood. The step-mother rejected Dawood and his siblings. He says the following about the step-mother:

Life at home was miserable. My step-mother had a strange notion about her role and had decided that it could only be fulfilled by being as unkind and cruel as possible...One morning while I was sitting on the straw carpet spread on the floor,....There was a fierce argument and as my step-mother stamped about in a temper, she knocked over the hot cup of tea on the floor. It split over my foot and I sustained a scalding. That was it. Zainab picked Ghaffer up from the floor...The three of us walked out, never to return to our home again. (35-6)

Home had rejected Dawood and at an age of thirteen, he was raising his four year old brother at the expense of schooling.

Religious rejection is interconnected to political rejection. During the partitioning of the Indian sub-continent, the Muslims were sent away from India to Pakistan. On the basis of their religion, the Muslims were politically rejected and consequently ejected from their homeland. Dawood captures this rootlessness in his autobiography saying as follows:

As a result, the divide that existed between the Muslims and Hindus of my hometown...surfaced with a vengeance...Even though I was not physically a part of this evacuation, I felt that I had suddenly lost my roots. For me now, Bantwa was no more and with it went my childhood and many happy memories. India, my country of birth, had rejected me outright and as a result a little bit of me had died. (64)

Religious rejection was later to come into play in denying Dawood a chance at Miraj Medical College. It took the patience of his father who travelled there for twenty six times to plead with the dean to admit Dawood. An accidental chance finally arose in the form of a late death of a Christian student who had been admitted to the college. After admission to the college, the problem of accommodation almost made him to forfeit the chance before a good Samaritan volunteered to host him. He writes this about the encounter, "...so there I was, a poor Muslim, denied a roof over my head simply because of my religion, something I was born into without the benefit of an option" (58-9).

Racial rejection was to confront the writer much later in life when he arrived in Kenya to work at the Aga Khan Hospital. The patients had been used to European doctors and were very reluctant to be operated on by an Indian. One of his very first patients could not conceal his doubts about Dawood's qualifications and openly asked for a second opinion from a European surgeon. In reflection, he writes the following about the racial bias:

I would not have minded a second opinion from a senior surgeon but it was the colour connotation that stung me. It took a great effort on my part to keep my indignation and sense of injustice from showing on my face. Ten years later when

the tables were turned and people came to me for a second opinion after having consulted a senior surgeon- and a European at that- my hurt lifted and I felt redeemed. (178)

The foregoing discussion opens a window through which one can peep into Dawood's mind. The philosophical, religious, political and racial forms of rejection are deeply embedded in his subconscious mind largely influencing his writing.

Yusuf K. Dawood is a surgeon and an author. It is the surgical background that gives his writing its unique flavour. This uniqueness coupled with Dawood's gift to translate real life experiences to works of literature sparked the interest in the current study as appears in the forthcoming chapters. This chapter looks at Yusuf K. Dawood, "a surgeon with four wives" as he writes in the sub-title of his autobiography on the cover page. To do this, this research approaches the author from three distinct fronts and every effort is made to avoid any unnecessary overlaps. These are author, surgeon and ordinary person. Dawood is a multifaceted person, as his four wives phrase suggests, therefore calling for a multifaceted approach.

Dawood is a "multiculturalist" by both practice and theory. By practice, he defied cultural barriers by marrying Marie, an English woman, against his immediate family and Pakistani society's tradition and expectations. In Nothing but the Truth, Dawood says this of his cross cultural marriage:

Family cohesiveness was a hallmark of my upbringing and it had to be upheld. ... There were many reasons for my trepidation. First I was asking a family immutably rooted in tradition to accept a cataclysmic departure from them. My three elder brothers, all advocates, had followed the conventional orthodox route and were supremely happy. Why not follow the tested and well trodden path? ... She did not understand their language, nor could she fathom their custom...there was the looming danger of the community's reaction to an "intruder". Marie, or indeed all of us, might be ostracized. (128-9).

As an author, Dawood has espoused multiculturalism in his writing. Most of his characters overcome racial and cultural barriers to marry across borders. In The Price of Living Christiane, the daughter of an affluent African defies the father and finally gets his blessings to marry Gavin, a Briton from a humble background. Apart from racial difference, Karanja, Christian's rich father, was opposed to the marriage due to Gavin's obvious signs of poverty. Ironically, Karanja later marries Valerie, an English woman. The suggested marriage between Christiane and Gavin, having been born out of love is hinted as not only possible but being happy while Maina's own engagement and marriage to Valerie is portrayed as blissful.

In Eye of the Storm, Dawood makes an attempt at cross cultural marriage between Njoroge Maina, an African, and Jill Hawkins, a Briton. Jill's father, Mr. Hawkins, could not allow her to be married by an African. He is blunt in his second reason of disallowing the marriage saying as follows:

Marriage is a difficult institution. Why make it more so by trying to bridge the ethnic, colour and cultural divide? I don't think Jill is very well equipped to cross all these barriers and take that quantum leap....As I understand, amongst other things, the culture, the traditions, the lifestyle, the mode of dressing and the weather are all quite different in your country. On a lighter note, even Christmas is celebrated at the wrong time of the year where you live- climatically speaking, of course. December is the hottest month in your part of the world, while Jill looks forward to a white Christmas (40).

Ironically, Mr. Hawkins was to meet his death in the same part of the world he had rejected and under the hands of the same Joe Maina, the incident which forms the heart of this research paper. Dawood has achieved by showing the folly and the price to pay for being a cultural 'exclusionist'.

In Return to Paradise, Imran who is of Asian origin, marries princess Malika, an African from Uganda. His twin brother, Jamil, marries Jyote, an African from Kenya while their sister Azra marries Alan a Briton. In this novel, Masood Khan allows his children the freedom to choose their spouses

without any interference or misgivings. In fact, it is the only novel in which multiculturalism is portrayed without any initial hindrances and in which Dawood's multicultural 'campaign' comes out clearly.

Several literary critics agree that Dawood is a multiculturalism crusader. As pointed out in chapter one under literature review, Godwin Siundu wrote his M.Phil thesis on Dawood's works entitled "The Vision of Multiculturalism in Selected Novels of Yusuf K. Dawood". He later wrote a paper in The Nairobi Journal of Literature entitled "Transcending Racial/ Cultural Space: The Power of the Woman in Yusuf K. Dawoods works", focusing on The Price of Living and Water under the Bridge. On her part Masumi H.Odari in a paper appearing in The Nairobi Journal of Literature No 1 March 2013, entitled "Self-identity: Reflections on Yusuf K.Dawood" says that, "Dawood does not suffer such an identity crisis. ...the packaging may be different but the content is the same" (13). In Nothing but the Truth, Dawood suggests that what probably gave him his multicultural inclinations is his privilege to operate on people of all races. He says the following:

I do not suffer from an identity crisis. In fact, my identity has been enriched and embellished. I' am a child of three continents and feel at home in all three. I have imbibed the three main cultures- born and brought up in India, trained as a surgeon in England and settled for most of my life in Kenya.... My multiracial surgical practice gave me a unique opportunity to enter not only the body but quite often, the heart and mind of people from different races, religions, social and cultural backgrounds. Operating on them all, I soon realized that in all cases the blood is red, the muscles are brown, the retina is black and the bones are white. Only the packaging is different, and the wrapper of a parcel is no indication of the quality of its contents!(330).

Thus clearly and graphically put, it is clear that Dawood is a multiculturalist.

Like his main characters in The Price of Living and Eye of the Storm, Dawood suffers from split personality. He is the sharp contrast of the fore-mentioned trait in that he comes out as a latent racist. In his writings, Africans occupy a dehumanized position in relation to the other races. When they occupy a privileged position in society, it is as a crude business moguls as in the case of Maina Karanja in The Price of Living and Gethi ,in One Life Too Many. When an academic is created as in Eye of the Storm, he is soon brought down crumbling. The successful African is highly stereotypical and laughable. David Dorsey in his paper entitled “Yusuf Dawood’s Pastel Paradise” observes as follows:

There are, in addition to the characters mentioned, some Africans...A baby patient from Limuru probably, and certainly the patient Salim Juma may be inferred to be African from his name and from the indignity and open ridicule to which he is subjected. Twice black waiters are mentioned... “the waiter looked gorgeous in a white starched uniform over his pitch black skin...” This mention is particularly notable because it so quickly follows this description of another factotum, who, however is perceived as a human being”. (4).

The portrayal of the African in Dawood’s writing is as Dorsey puts it “beasts of burden”. He says that “The point is aptly put. What appears to Ahmed [No Strings Attached] on his arrival remains true for the reader throughout these novels, except that the beasts of burden, the general population of Kenya, bear their burdens invisibly” (5).

But perhaps the best evidence of Dawood’s racist tendencies is in his portrayal of marriage between blacks and whites. To Dawood, a marriage between an African and a white can only succeed if the African commits class suicide. In The Price of Living, Maina Karanja, Dawoods’ stereotypical African business magnate marries a lowly employed Miss Valerie and not an affluent Briton. In the same novel, Maina Karanja’s daughter, Christine marries a poor English boy described as having problems paying fees. Christine does not even know her parents and no effort is made to present them

in the novel. David Dorsey in his “Yusuf Dawood’s Pastel Paradise” sums this imbalance in marriage thus:

Despite the father’s expectation, Christine falls in love with a British boy, whom the novel seems at pains to describe as a person with no distinction of intellect, latent, character, prospects or of social class. We are given no reason why Christine finds him attractive. But then, her father, too, falls in love with a British woman of no discernible attractions. In Dawood’s novel the most privileged, accomplished and refined Africans often marry the lowest class of Britisher capable, of grammatical English.... In Dawood’s works every African who marries a European marries below his station in life, and all such marriages are successful and permanent. (6)

Dorsey’s argument here is that the African is inferior and cannot marry a European of their equal social status. They can only “look down”. This is racism, though partial. It allows cross cultural marriages but not on equal terms. This is what stands in sharp contrast to Dawood’s multicultural credentials. Arguably therefore, he, like his characters in The Price of Living and Eye of the Storm suffer from split personality disorder. He equivocates between supporting multiculturalism and condemning it.

Dawood is indisputably a humorist. His gift of the garb comes out clearly especially in his autobiography, his semi- autobiographical quartet and in his Surgeon’s Diary in Sunday Nation. Dawood calls himself “a Surgeon with four wives”. Recounting the genesis of this tag, he humorously writes in his autobiography Nothing but the Truth:

In the polygamous society in which I live, I am officially allowed more than one wife. So I have acquired four- Surgery, Writing, Rotary and Marie. Needless to say, when I went home after the interview, I was in trouble with Marie for getting both my chronology and my priorities wrong. Once again I had to seek the help of

my adopted African culture and remind her that the last wife is usually the youngest, the prettiest and the most loved. (271-2)

The two stories told impromptu at a Rotarian's lunch and which lead Dawood up the path to Surgeons' Diary proves that he is a humorist. It is after the two anecdotes that Joe Rodrigues, the then Editor-in-chief of The Nation noted Dawood's humour and requested him to put it down in writing. Rashid Mughal, the then Features Editor 'christened' it Surgeons Diary. And it took off... "The Eye of a needle" appeared in the Sunday Nation of 25<sup>th</sup> May 1980. (Dawood 282).

But perhaps one of the most hilarious is his fictitious explanations on why he chose to become a doctor. In the first episode in Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, he writes thus:

I was born in Bantwa, which is a small town in Junagadh state. In pre-partition India, the state was ruled by a Nawab. Being a true Muslim, the Nawab could marry only four wives, which he promptly did. All the four wives could not satisfy his polygamous nature and ..., he decided to set up a harem.... Antibiotics against venereal diseases had just arrived at the chemist's counter and contraceptive pills and coils were still a long way away. For these two reasons and saddled with the responsibility of keeping such a large household healthy, it was necessary for the Nawab to secure the services of a full time doctor who could look after medical needs of harem.... "The salary is meager but there are over a thousand perks attached to this job" (1-2).

In an interview I held with the author on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013, I asked him how he got his gift of the garb. He told me the following:

"This question has arisen within my own family because none from my closest family members is humourous. I cannot really pin it to anything in particular, but I think that because the Surgeon always encounters grim pictures of his patients and is likely to live and lead a dull life, my subconscious brings forth some humour to



brighten my life. This is what I share with my readers. Otherwise surgery is a dull profession”.

To get something amusing from an otherwise dull profession that deals with the matter of life and death and to make it a humorous read marks out Dawood as a humourist.

To me, Dawood’s humour emanates from his subconscious desire to survive in a hostile world. It is a survival tactic of assisting him to be socially relevant and noticeable in a world that rejects him. A humorous person will certainly attract the attention of those who would wish to suppress his voice. The writer must have used humour in his early years as a tool for social recognition and acceptance. This was later to become an indispensable tool in his writing. Humour captures and sustains the interest of Dawood’s readers.

Dawood is elitist, either by design or default. Throughout his fictional writing, the anecdotes in his quartet and Surgeons Diary are drawn from the families of his rich clientele. Certainly by default only the very rich in society can seek medical services from the three hospitals that Dawood has practised in Kenya. By design, which confirms Dawood’s elitist nature, his fiction focuses on the affluent. In none of his fiction does he craft a poor character as the main character. The house servants are just props in the story who play no significant role in the progression of his plot lines. The majority of his financially average characters that he crafts are nurses and secretaries whose financial status is improved through marriage to his rich characters.

From his autobiography, Dawood was born and brought up in a humble background. The problems of post-partition India with men working away from home for the whole year are chilling. As he puts it, their annual appearance at home was marked by a new child. He says this in Nothing but the Truth:

One could call it an inhuman system, which tore families apart for long periods. The bread winner was dispatched to faraway places, like Calcutta...for a period of about eleven months in a year.... During the last month of the year, he would come

home laden with gifts – and with some extra holiday money to spend... Every time the head of the family departed on his new assignment, there were signs of pregnancy, a legacy of the husband's one month sojourns with her! (7).

The circumstances under which Dawood's own parents died under his own watching eyes are even worse. It was therefore expected that he would pay homage to this sad reality that marked his birth and early life. But Dawood comes out as an escapist author who runs away from the reality and cuts a niche for himself in the comfort zone of affluence with stories of dinner parties, coastal holidays, sundowners and travellings. David Dorsey better captures this elitist trait in Dawood. He says as follows:

Dawood is nowhere more earnest and passionate in arguing a social philosophy or any other perception than he is whenever he condemns any orientation towards diminishing the gap between rich and poor, between servants and the served... In Dawood's novels there are no poor, abused, destitute, over – worked, underpaid, malnourished, under – educated or unemployed Kenyans. ...These are novels about Kenya which omit the Kenya...The wealthy live in a social or human vacuum (12)

Dawood's elitist tendencies are a result of his subconscious way of hitting back at the society that rejected him. He therefore unconsciously strives to associate with the educated and rich who have superseded their respective societies' exclusivist ideas. At Muthaiga members only Golf Club, where Dawood patronises, membership is based on one's social status and not on the basis of religion, race or political affiliation. Here, Dawood gets full acceptance and recognition. He also interacts with the rich clientele that enriches his surgery practice.

In The Price of living, Dawood is at pains to demolish Muhoho's socialistic venture. He joins the father in his business after undergoing a head operation after the accident. He struggled and succeeded to retrieve the "confidential" files that Mrs. Armstrong had escaped with which would

have exposed his father's corruption and bring his business down. The operation of the head is symbolic in that his world view as far as socialism is concerned changes. At the end of the novel, he changes his mental orientation and regrets his former socialistic stand. The novel ends with Muhoho saying the following:

I was told by my surgeon that during my operation, I underwent a brainwash and some of my brain was even washed away! The fact that I am a director of a very successful firm only proves to me that one does not need a lot of brains to achieve this position..... I hope that my brainwash and my father's change of heart have brought our viewpoints together. (164).

Muhoho therefore joins the elite club of corruption and sheds away his intellectual ideas on socialism.

Dorsey best sums up Dawood's elitism when he writes as follows:

Except for a few servants, all characters belong to the most privileged Kenyan social strata, and indeed some effort is made to suggest that this elite is but one harmonious stratum consisting of Europeans, Asians and adverse African ethnicities, sharing unanimity of values, aspirations and ethics.( 2)

Despite Dawood's major contribution to the medical, literary and philanthropic fields in Kenya, one is left with a critical suspicion that he settled in Kenya as a runaway from the problems of Pakistan where the rest of the family lives. Having arrived in Kenya in 1961 when there were few qualified surgeons, Dawood has operated and socialized with the cream of the Kenya's political, academic and business class. These are the characters that he ably and convincingly crafts in his writing. As an author, he largely misrepresents the society not only in Kenya but in the world. By ignoring the poor and oppressed of the world, Dawood fails the test of a committed writer.

Dawood is explorative and experimental. His canon reveals a restless author who is eager to try his hands in different genres and sub-genres within the same genre. He made his debut in writing with the publication of his inaugural novel; No Strings Attached in 1978. He followed this by

venturing into the short story with his Surgeon's Diary which kicked off in May 1980 in the Sunday Nation. From the best of his Surgeon's Diary, he published the first of his quartet under the title Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow in 1985. His innovation is best seen when he slightly modifies the newspaper stories to fit the expectations of the book industry. Apart from the autobiographical quartet, he went ahead to write his autobiography, Nothing but the Truth in 2002. In between his writing career spanning three decades, he experimented in the novella with such 'short distance' writing as One Life Too Many and Water Under the Bridge. Dawood's ability to fictionalize his profession into books that now form his canon is a feat only achievable by an innovative and experimental author. In fact it is no wonder that Dawood is best known for his writing and specifically for his Surgeon's Diary. One therefore sees in him a faithful student of his writing role models, heroes and favourite authors, Somerset Maugham and Oliver Goldsmith, the latter who abandoned surgery to a full time writing career.

Psychologically, this explorative writing by Dawood is a defence mechanism. He explores in writing just like he explored in life in search of an accommodative society. In life, the author went beyond the limited boundaries of his Indian and later Pakistan communities, the two of which had rejected him. His fear that he might get rejected in the field of practice he stands at a particular time makes him explorative and innovative. This is geared towards remaining relevant and accepted.

Dawood is philosophical. He can actually be described as a philosophical writer. His works are full of witticism, which also enhances his humour. When talking about Oloo's downfall – a character in his novel Water under the Bridge, Desai the old man said that "Prosperity and adversity in life are like the tide of the sea – there is both ebb and flow. The politicians of today were paupers yesterday and the roles can easily be reversed." (311)

The sudden fall of Oloo's from glory to dust is very well explained in Desai's words.

Philosophy is a discipline that deals with the meaning of the world in regard to such ideas such as death, life, truth among other abstract ideas. The effect of Dawood's rejection at an early age

made him become philosophical in search of answers to his predicament. The witticism in Dawood's writing is an indicator of his answers to the question in life such as rejection. His writing is a reflection of his world view.

In several of his stories that deal with incident of sterility, and hence childlessness, he philosophically laughs at men who are duped to belief they are the biological fathers of their children. Dawood says that "paternity is a matter of presumption, maternity is a matter of certainty." When one thinks about the witticism critically, the truth of the in the statement in real life is not lost.

On the supremacy of a brain surgeon over a heart surgeon, he says that 'a heart, like a car spare part can be replaced but brains cannot.' Dawood's literally meaning could be that matters of the heart like love can change but not ideas conceived in the mind. He is actually right that the brain is more superior to the heart. He dismisses the heart as purely a pumping machine.

In his novel The Price of Living, Muhoho dismisses capitalism in a witty remark. He tells his father Maina that to him "... a million means six circles with holes in them" (116). This was at a time that he was at the height of socialistic idealism. The evil of capitalism is therefore aptly captured in the 'circles with holes in them' remark. This is more when put in the context of Maina and his demand for consideration of the financial position of Gavin over love. The practicability of such statements among many others is not in the context of specific works but as universal truths. This makes the author come out as a philosophical man.

Dawood is an ambitious man. In an interview he gave to Saturday Nation of 8<sup>th</sup>, December, 2012, he that "I have completed an explosive book which, perhaps no Kenyan publisher would touch because it is very political. But because it is international in its angle and orientation, a foreign publisher would just do fine" (18). When I interviewed him in his Nairobi Hospital office, I asked him about the book. He revealed to me that it is not about the politics of Governance but social-religious politics of deception and brainwashing. He compared the forthcoming book to Suleiman Rashidie's Satanic Verses. But he would not reveal more details about it. However, going by the mistreatment

that Muslims underwent in the hands of Hindus, my guese is that the book will be a scathing attack on Hinduism and its religious intolerance. Suffice to point here, however, that to compare himself to Suleiman Rashidie is to be highly ambitious.

I understand Dawood's ambition to be a result of a psychological process of sublimation. In his book, Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory , Peter Barry says this about sublimation:

[ In sublimation] the repressed material is "promoted" into something grander or is disguised as something 'noble'.For instance, sexual desires may be given sublimated expression in the form of intense religious experiences or longings.(97)

Dawood's ambition can therefore be attributed to his subconscious desire to excel in life.It is a way of showing his worth in a world that rejected him. If his forthcoming book is published and gains the international reputation of Satanic Verses, the world can no longer afford to ignore him.

As a professional physician and surgeon, Dawood is humane. From his autobiography and the short stories, it is clear that he values his patients and the human life. He insists that his patients be referred to in their names and not in their bed or file numbers. His approach to his patients is more social and informal than professional and formal. He starts with a friendly and fatherly history taking session despite the seemingly urgent situation. The rapport created from these sessions does not only bridge the otherwise wide patient – doctor gap, but gives important hints in to the possible cause of a seemingly elusive prognosis. The trouble he goes through to get to a proper prognosis leaves the patient satisfied that the option of an operation is arrived at as a final and the only available option and not informed by the greed for money. The case that best illustrates his judiciousness is the one when he left the patient and drove home to read more on the right procedure of an operation. There is also the dilemma he finds himself in as far as professional fees are concerned. He is so much appalled by fellow surgeons who put patients under an operation with the full knowledge that it is only going

to make a bad situation worse save for their financial gain. In Nothing but the Truth, he says this about such callous physicians:

Aziz's death touched me to the core, both professionally and personally, and for many weeks, I could not get this wholesome, upright, honest and hard-working man out of my mind. Even as I write this today, almost forty years after it happened, it makes my blood run cold and I am horrified by such callousness.....Was I prepared to be a crusader for the rest of my life? Was it possible that in time I, too, would compromise and stoop so low as to join the bad? After all it was the easier option. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and loose his own soul, I often asked myself.(158-159).

These are clearly words of a man deeply pained by the ethical and professional shortcomings of his colleagues and a testament that he would not stoop that low. Dawood therefore emerges clearly as a humane physician.

Dawood's humane nature springs from his experiences of rejection in his early years. He variously became a recipient of humane gestures from people which left lasting effects in his mind. When he was just about to forfeit his studies at Miraj Medical college due to lack of accommodation, Ralumatullahi assists him to get accommodation from his friend Hakimsab. He had been denied a hostel on the basis of his religion. It is such humane gestures that the author unconsciously pays back to society.

As an ordinary human being, he comes out clearly as rebellious and independent minded. At an early age in his life, Dawood broke the family tradition by studying medicine while three of his elder brothers had chosen law. Despite his humorous explanations as to why he chose medicine as a career, it is clear that the death of his mother of a curable disease must have affected him so much. He must have therefore made up his mind to study medicine so as to enable him protect humanity from such undeserving and unfortunate deaths. In fact, it remains a mystery that Dawood chose to practice

medicine in a far away country. His choice to work and live in Africa is also a trait of rebellion. Dawood's choice of a wife from a different race is an act of independent mindedness. This independence of mind was to affect him professionally making him disagree with the management at the Aga Khan Hospital. He quit the job and joined Kenyatta National Hospital before finally landing at The Nairobi Hospital.

Dawood's rebellion is born out of his experiences of rejection. He consciously or unconsciously rejects the societal norms which he feels are not tenable with his philosophical standpoints. Seeing that the same society rejected him, he is very careful to follow its dictates. When the exclusivist muslim society expects him to marry from one of its own, he rejects this and marries a European. This rebellion is his way of answering back to the society.

Dawood's rebellious streak is seen in his writing. In One Life too Many, Sydney Walker had cut links with his mother country to come and work in Kenya where he actually died and was buried. His love for adopted country is seen in a letter he wrote to his estranged wife Anna, slightly before he died after a road accident. He said the following in the letter:

“Of course nothing about Sydney would be complete without mentioning Kenya...I think I have done my bit for this beautiful land and if you come back, I will find a little love for ourselves somewhere between Mombasa and Malindi, perhaps in Lamu, and we'll retire there. We will sit there holding our hands .In between I might write a travel guide of Kenya pointing all its enchanting beauty spots, its glorious beaches and its unique wildlife and game lodges (141).

This is a character who is not only physically but psychologically detached from his mother land.

In Return to Paradise, Dawood's best book on family harmony, the twin brothers Imran and Jamil marry across cultures with Jamil marrying Jyoti, a Kenyan and Imran marrying Malaika a Ugandan. In the Eye of the Storm the protagonist, Mr. Njoroge Maina defies tradition by giving marriage a wide berth. This is in spite of the fact that he is academically and financially at the highest



level of society. The fact that his first attempt at marriage was rejected by his lover's father does not mean that he could not get another woman to marry. He therefore rebels against societal expectation on marriage.

In his novel Water under the Bridge, Irene Fraser comes to Kenya for a two year teaching contract only to end up a citizen. She finally brings his son and mother, severing her contact with her mother country, Britain. Likewise Count Clauss, perhaps Dawood's most rebellious character abandons his father's industrial empire in Germany to come and invest in Kenya. He finally re-unites with Irene Fraser and they remarry and settle in Kenya. In fact, every other marriage in the novel, and they are several, is cross cultural showing cultural rebelliousness. Like Return to Paradise, Water under the Bridge is another of Dawood's best experiment at multiculturalism. But looked at differently and a little positively, the same reasons make the author come out as an adventurous man in his real life. His choice of career, spouse and continent of living are acts of adventure which have served him well. However one looks at it, rebellious or adventurous, Dawood is not a conformist. He can therefore be described as a self – made man.

Dawood is a mischievous and witty man. The incident in an examination room when he threw out a foetoscope out of the window because he could not remember which side of the instrument goes to the doctor's ear reveals a mischievous but witty person. In Nothing But The Truth, he humorously describes the incident thus:

...I could not remember which side of the foetoscope went where. Prof de – Sa, the lady examiner, was having a quick cup of coffee while I was given ten minutes to examine my subject. I knew that when she returned, the first thing she would ask me to do would be to tell her the foetal heart rate and show her the use of the foetoscope – a very elementary procedure... The examination was being conducted on the first floor of the maternity unit and as I glanced despairingly out

of the large open window, I could see a dustbin just down below. I will leave my readers to guess what I did! (85).

The author's wit is a survival tactic he developed at an early age. Growing up without a mother, and with an absent father who also later dies, mischief and wit came in handy. Like the discussion on the author being philosophical above, wit is Dawood's tool of understanding a society that rejects him. Rejection therefore plays a part in the author's development of wit, something that is evident in his writing.

Yusuf Dawood has a photographic memory. He has a knack for dates and time. He describes his episodes so graphically that the readers re-live the actions with him. Dawood could have picked this trait from his father who carried an old note book with him. He describes the actual dates, times and places that special events in his life happened. This gift enhances his writing particularly in the autobiographical works. In an interview with him, I asked him how he manages to remember some events that happened when he was very young. He answered me in the following words:

“I think I have a photographic memory. Some of the things that happened to me when I was young come to my mind as if they happened yesterday. I remember the death of my mother as if it happened yesterday. But of course it must have been enhanced by my writing career where I deliberately take note of everything happening around me as a possible material for my stories”.

The painful experience of the death of his parents made Dawood feel completely rejected by the world. The fact that he was physically present in both incidents means that they have remained deeply embedded in his mind. The rejection by the step-mother has also been retained in his mind. Perhaps in his meditation about such unforgettable cases of rejection, among many others, he developed an urge to re-enact the horrible scenes. This was a psychological way of living with rejection. This enactment of memorable scenes clearly comes out in his quartet which is a vivid description of memorable hospital scenes. The photographic memory is seen in his autobiography.

Dawood is a philanthropist. All royalties from his books and the Surgeon's Diary go to Rahima Dawood Foundation – named after his mother – and is used to sponsor education and Travelling Fellowship. Later, a larger version of the Foundation called Marie Rahima Dawood Foundation was established in England. This is perhaps to incorporate the wife in the glory of philanthropy. Initially, the foundation in Kenya sponsored research in medicine but in an interview with him, he said it has been broadened to give prizes to the best students in the Literature Department at the University of Nairobi from the year 2012. This extension is perhaps in the recognition that royalties from writing should actually belong to the field of literature where his books are given a more academic attention. This particular research paper is a case in point. It is important to note that Dawood is actually giving back to society what he got from it. Having grown up in a poor family, his college education was sponsored by an Indian philanthropic foundation, Memon Education and Welfare Society. His vision for philanthropy is best captured in his autobiography Nothing but the Truth. He says that “As I have mentioned before, money to me is a means to an end and not an end in itself” (286).

The Memon Educational and Welfare Society that sponsored Dawood's education was founded to assist the muslims who had been excluded from the mainstream political landscape by the dominant Hindu. Philanthropy was therefore initiated as a survival tool for the rejected. The need to assist the poor and rejected people was born in Dawood's mind influencing his life and writing.

Apart from the charitable organizations where his royalties go, Dawood is a Rotarian, “his fourth wife”. The Rotarian's contribution in assisting the needy is more symbolic than real and their activities are not well brought out even in his autobiography despite occupying a good part of his life – and a whole section of the autobiography – but the fact that Dawood rose to become a president of the Rotarians in Kenya and East Africa indicate his charitable inclinations.

In both his fiction and the episodic autobiographies, Dawood is incurably prurient. The penchant for sexual escapades is the author's unconscious outlet to suppressed sexual desires. It is

noteworthy that the author at one time was the only boy in a purely girls' school. All the other schools that he went to were church sponsored and single sex schools where romance could only be imagined. His first experience of a mixed institution did not make things any better for him. In fact it can be observed that it worsened his orientation because it exposed him to the girls but did not allow him to extend the hand beyond the elbow. His curtailed desire to mingle with the girls is vividly captured in his autobiography when he says the following:

St. Xavier's College was my first taste of a fully-fledged co-educational institution. Unlike Bahauddin College in Junagadh, the lady students were there in significant numbers. Most of us were in our teens, happy, easy-going, breezy, almost Bohemian. There was limited interaction between the two sexes, in line with the prevailing restrictive culture of Indian society. It was a calf-love which hardly went beyond the balcony scene in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet! It was mainly in the form of furtive glances, corridor conversations and a very occasional exchange of love letters, some delicate and romantic, others sensual and torrid.

(53)

This is a confession of a man whose sexual exploits were largely hindered by a restrictive society. To Dawood's young mind, this was a form of rejection by the opposite gender. In this study, this is perceived rejection. The perceived rejection comes out in Dawood's characters as discussed in the subsequent chapters on characterization. The author's portrayal of incurably prurient characters is a projection of his suppressed sexual desires during his teenage.

In The Price of Living, the rich relish the open sex liaisons when they attend business conferences in foreign countries, either in Africa or Europe. In this novel particularly, sex is at the centre stage of the plot line and Maina Karanja looks forward to his trips abroad to satiate his insatiable sexual appetite. Sex is portrayed as the reward for business excellence. Though Karanja abstains from any sexual affairs in Kenya, his reward comes bountifully when he flies to London to

meet his lover, Cynthia. As in his under -world business, the sexual partner is chosen in a business like style. Dawood captures this when he writes as follows:

The arrangement was discreet, safe and well-organized. Like Denning's arrangement for Tony Wingale in Nairobi, Cynthia was lined up to reciprocate. It was done in the same high state and in anonymity. ...The caller did not know Cynthia or Maina, but was just repeating a message given to her by the personal assistant of Tony Wingale. ...Cynthia would later put in an entertainment account- no questions asked, no skeletons in the cupboard. (85).

The arrangement was part of corruption in the filling of financial returns in books of accounts under the entertainment vote head. The discreet arrangement mirrors the discreet business transactions. The sexual partners are more in business than in love because no one knows the other. The author however manages to make the affair more sensuous and gratifying.

In One Life Too Many, Sydney Walker gravitates between Anna and Patricia but finally looses both in a road accident. Patricia has an erotic affair with Walker's lawyer, Joe Brindley, who certainly is poised to take her after the death of the despised Walker. As the novel ends, it is clear that the family's closest friend Dr. Hyder will take up Anna as a wife. Dawood craftily places Dr.Hyder and Joe hanging on the wings lasciviously waiting for the unstable family to tumble down so that they can pick up the spoils.

In The Price of Living, the twin brothers have an eye for the same woman, Jyoti, though Imran gives way as if on arrangement to his twin brother Jamil. Later when Jamil dies, Imran comes back to her and marries her. Jyoti writes to her father telling him of her choice to marry her late husband's brother. In the letter, Dawood justifies and glorifies this rather incestuous marriage. This is part of the letter:

Dearest Dad... you remember me writing to you once that I had met two of the most attractive men that I had ever come across in my life- twin brothers as

different from each other as chalk and cheese. I had also told you then that my heart craved for one but my head fancied the other. I also mentioned that as a woman I was swayed by my heart but as a lawyer I was listening to my head. Finally my head got the better of my heart and you know all that followed both the happy times and the sad. But something very strange has happened recently. The man who once upon a time ruled my heart, my real heart throb has come back on the scene. Not only that, he has asked me to marry him. I have taken a month to think over his proposal and have finally decided to accept it today. I feel doubly blessed Dad. (279)

In Eye of the Storm, the pairing of professional colleagues is done when they attend a seminar in Naivasha. Dawood deliberately uses Naivasha town to give the hint of the sexual orgies practiced by the British aristocracy during the colonial period infamously referred to as “The valley of life”. However, Joe Maina is not lucky to win the heart of the matron, Ayesha Hyder, who would not bring herself to betray her fiancée, Najib Nassir. It is this perceived rejection that makes Joe plan to kill Najib before Prof. Kipkorir stopped him in his tracks, just on the spur of the moment. The sensuous anecdotes in his episodic writing in the quartet and his Surgeon’s Diary bear out Dawood as a prurient writer. The senior medics in the hospital prey to the junior staff members such as nurses and secretaries. He presents these sexual scenes and innuendoes as incurable as they are normal. This is the author’s fantasies about sex. It is a psychological way of dealing with the denied sexual experiences of his youth.

In his autobiographical writing, Dawood comes out as proud and suffering from self-glorification. He presents a picture of himself as a perfectionist, which is a salient feature of the genre of the autobiography. He recounts his monumental contribution to the change of the financial fortunes of The Aga Khan Hospital catching the eye and commendation of the Aga Khan himself. In Nothing

but the Truth, he says that “On a regular basis, my patients occupied a quarter of the private wing. As a result, every year I received a letter from the hospital thanking me for boosting the hospital occupancy and helping to keep it afloat financially” (218).

He gives evidence of the commendation in form of a letter from his highness the Aga Khan which reads as follows:

“Dear Yusuf, I have been asked by his highness the Aga Khan and the Board of Governors of our Hospital to convey to you grateful thanks and indebtedness for the contribution you have made since 1972 in selecting this hospital to admit so many of your private patients. Your loyal support is greatly appreciated”. (218).

The author claims that since leaving the Aga Khan hospital in 1978, the hospital lost the glory it had attained in his leadership and its financial returns took a nose dive since then. The downward trend started immediately. He writes the following in the autobiography:

The upshot of all this was that the hospital reverted to its annual deficits- but in an escalated form. Michael Curtis, in his letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1978 to me, had predicted as much. “It will not be easy to find anyone who can maintain the excellent financial record gained by the hospital under your own administration. (244-5)

The author’s sense of self importance is an unconscious way of taunting the world that rejected him. It is his way of telling the forces of rejection that they have not managed to silence him. The autobiography and the other autobiographical books and stories in Surgeon’s Diary are actually a litany of braggadocio recounts of the dexterity of his surgical hands, medical excellence and managerial acumen. Although this is a salient feature of autobiographies, it’s so blunt and glaring in Dawood’s writing.

This sense of self importance is live in his fiction. In The Price of Living, Karanja is so proud that he struggles to prevent a marriage between his daughter Christian and her love Gavin on account

of his low financial status. In Eye of the Storm, Maina is so proud that after the rejection by his first love, Jill, he gives marriage a wide berth. He could not stoop so low and marry another woman.

Dawood is a workaholic. As “a Surgeon with four wives” it is clear that his in tray is always full. His success in surgery and writing are especially monumental and are indicators of a man dedicated to his call(s) and hardworking. He is a holistic person who gets time for every activity he lays his hands on without compromising on quality. In my interview with him, I wanted to know when he gets time to write in view of his busy schedule as a surgeon. He answered most emphatically that “Writing, to me is my form of entertainment. It is the time I use to rewind and relax from the grim life of a surgeon. At the same time, my wife is very understanding and accommodating. Without her patience, writing would certainly have been compromised”. This is necessitated by his punctuality which he picked from his missionary education in high school. To succeed at the Aga Khan Hospital as the C.E.O, he says the following in his autobiography:

But there was a price to be paid and I paid it willingly. I arrived at the hospital every morning at 7. am, long before the lowest paid member of the day staff came on duty. I left at about 9. p.m when the night trolleys were going round the wards. While Marie was putting our two children to bed at home, I was putting the hospital to sleep. I had to be introduced to my children every weekend, because during the week I hardly saw them. (230)

The author had to be extremely hard working to survive in a world that rejected him. He had to be the best in any task he undertook for him to be recognized. To gain admission at Grant Medical College, he says he had to be the best. The virtue of hard work and determination is seen in his main characters in the two novels under this study. Karanja in The Price of Living and Maina in Eye of the Storm have both worked their way up the social- economic ladder to the highest notch. Both of them suffer from real and perceived rejection.



Connected to hardworking is that Dawood is a voracious reader. He says this in his autobiography:

While in college, I studied classic authors like Shakespeare, Charles Lamb, Jane Austin, Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens and others. In the realm of poetry I had read Lord Tennyson, William Word worth, John Milton and Longfellow... It is very likely that Somerset Maughan with A.J Cronin and Arthur Conan Doyle, all of whom I read extensively... have subconsciously been an inspiration during my writing career. (77-78)

To be a good author, one must be an avid reader of other writers.

Reading is the author's welcome abode in a world that rejected him. Dawood could have projected his rejection to reading where he could comfortably converse with writers. It also provided him with answers to his earthly questions. He probably got solace from the characters he encountered in his reading, giving him the strength to keep moving on in a hostile world. He got good company in the characters that he decided to re-create them in his fiction. He actually accepts that it is from his reading of his hero authors that he got the inspiration to write fiction. Rejection therefore made an author in Dawood.

Unlike other writers of his literary reputation, Dawood is sociable and humble. He is a down to earth person who readily accepts and honours interviews. He is easily reachable and interactive. He easily honoured my request to interview him and has promptly replied my emails on the course of my research. To be social is a virtue in a hostile world. Like wise, humility will make an individual survive even among people who are exclusivist. The two traits do not invite negative attention. In the contrary, they can be used to endear an individual to even the harshest of his enemies. These are traits the author must have developed, either by design or default, to live in inhospitable environments.

Lastly, Dawood is a sincere person. This claim is however made in the full knowledge that people and faces are deceptive. It is also made largely from the reading of his autobiography in full

cognizance of the fact that the genre suffers from autobiographical truth as contrasted to the absolute truth. However, his own disclaimer in the preface to his autobiography suggests a person likely to go to the point of telling it all, with reservations for the absolute essentials which might not be for the good of anyone save for sensational consumption. He says the following in the preface to the book:

Except for the person in the confessional- and even there I doubt if the whole truth and nothing but the truth is always disclosed- nobody can claim to give a full and truthful account of himself. Thus, for a writer of an autobiography to claim that he has written the whole truth may prove to be either an aberration of memory or an over-ambitious claim. I for one cannot indulge in such delusions of grandeur, but in mitigation, I must say that everything written here is- nothing but the truth. (X)

Such a candid disclaimer suggests a person likely to give the reader the ‘necessary’ though not the essential which is acceptable for scholarly purposes. Reading through his autobiography, one forms the opinion that Dawood is more sincere than not. Although he does not tell us of his rendezvous with the junior female medical staff, a favourite topic in his writing, he does not wear a holier than thou face. In fact he seems to glorify the sexual exploits. It therefore leaves the reader to make their own judgment which is obvious and the same time shield himself from family and professional backlash. Asego N. Oluoch, in his M.A. thesis at the University of Nairobi, entitled, ‘Form in Yusuf Dawood’s Autobiographical Works: Behind the Mask, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, and Nothing but the Truth observes that “The title of Yusuf Dawood’s autobiography: Nothing but the Truth: The Story of a Surgeon with Four Wives; brings to mind several thoughts. One such thought is a sense of candidness and honesty overcoming all natural inhibition to telling the truth” (27-28).

The title of his autobiography therefore introduces him to his readers as a sincere person.

Sincerity is connected to rejection. When the author almost forfeited his chance at Miraj Medical College, his sincerity about his predicament touched his benefactors. He was promptly given free accommodation making him realize his cherished dreams of becoming a doctor. This sincerity is

reflected in his characters. In Eye of the Storm, Jill Hawkins is sincere about his misgivings on the viability of his daughter's intended marriage to Joe Maina. Likewise, in The Price of Living, Karanja is sincere when he rejects the intended marriage between his daughter Christine and her lover Gavin. To the author therefore, sincerity is a virtue in the face of rejection.

From the foregoing discussion of Dawood's literary biography, it is clear that his rejection in life and particularly during his early years has played a central role in making him the literary giant that he is. His mistreatment was a blessing in disguise in that it hardened his resilience in life. He was able to overcome rejection and move on to become a surgeon and author of great reputation. He has created characters in his fiction who have survived in life by being resilient. As an experimental author, he has also created other characters who take revenge against forces of rejection. This raises critical doubts about his vision of rejection. This is the subject of concern in the forthcoming two chapters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Theme of Rejection in *The Price of Living*.

Rejection is a painful experience in the life of characters in fiction. This is clearly portrayed in the novel of The Price of Living. In an interview with Dr. Lucas Mwaura, a psychology lecturer at the University of Nairobi, he said the following about rejection:

Mistreatment of a person certainly leaves behind some indelible marks in their mind. But it doesn't always have to resort to vengeance. The way to live with mistreatment depends on the individual's capability to adjust to the situation. People who have the strong and uncontrollable urge to fight back certainly suffer from a psychological maladjustment. They are unable to move on, and this is a psychological disease. If the person keeps alternating from good to evil, he or she suffers from dissociative identity disorder, also called multiple personality disorder.

The theme of rejection is central in the novel The Price of Living. In this chapter, the study looks at how the theme of rejection is portrayed and how credible the characters are as vehicles of the theme. I shall further interrogate the author's vision in his treatment of the theme of rejection and his presentation of the characters caught up in rejection. A major question in this respect is; is there no other way of living with rejection without resorting to vengeance of bizarre proportions? Must there be a high price to pay for living?

Dawood experiments with his characters in his novel The Price of Living. There is a set of characters that faced rejection as part of life and faced it softly finally emerging the winners. These include Christine and her brother Muhoho. There is another set that took rejection deep in their hearts and minds and decided to take revenge. These are Mrs. Armstrong and her employer Mr. Maina. Dawood presents the young as more reasonable and ready to adjust to the reality of rejection. The old

are portrayed as reactive and rigid. The latter pair of characters suffer from personality maladjustment. For Mr. Karanja, nature favours him and saves him from the verge of death. However his heart operation leads to a change of heart allowing his daughter to marry her lover, Gavin Taylor. He relinquishes his position as the chairman of Kenya Foods Limited to his son. Unfortunately, for Mrs. Armstrong, she had taken a deep dive leading to death. I shall first give attention to the vengeful set and later compare their reaction to the resilient set. This experimentation with characterization is a literary style of Dawood just like he experiments with different genres of literature. Dawood therefore presents a contrast between vengeance and compromise. He favours the resilient and patient characters condemning the vengeful ones.

In The Price of Living, Mrs. Armstrong is the epitome of rejection. She had faithfully and diligently worked for Mr. Karanja for a decade, growing with him from a humble businessman to a chairman of an industrial empire, Kenya Foods Limited. Apart from four other directors of the company, she was the senior-most employee sitting in board meetings. She was therefore by virtue of her official position as the secretary to both chairman and the board privy to all the business secrets of the company.

The sudden downturn for Mrs. Armstrong happened when out of the blue her husband of two decades, Henry, abandoned her for another lady, Marion, and went abroad with her. The shock of the devastating blow was delivered in a scanty but monumental note which read as follows:

Dear June,

For twenty years I have led a life of unhappiness with you. Now that both our children are off our hands, I have decided to leave you. Please do not look for me because by the time you come home and find this note, Marion and I will be out of this country. (78)

Thus devastated, Mrs. Armstrong decided to avenge her husband's rejection by looking for a male lover. In her mind Mr. Karanja, himself a widower, was an easy target. After all, as she tells

Valerie, Mr. Karanja's newly found lover, her dedication to his service was partly responsible for her husband's sudden decision to abandon her. She tells Valerie the following:

Can't you see? I have given the best years of my life to him and in the process even wrecked my marriage. My husband did not leave me because he did not love me, but because he could not share me. He always used to tease me that my husband was Kenya Foods and he was the second. I thought it was very light-hearted chiding till he dropped the bombshell ...I feel that, having given so much loyalty and devotion to him for so long, I must now ask him to return it in the form of love – and fill the vacuum that he has been instrumental in creating.(111)

Incidentally, at the time Henry was leaving Mrs. Armstrong, Karanja had got a change of heart and fallen in love with Miss Valerie, a nurse-cum-secretary at Executive Med Clinic. When Karanja did not fall for the ruse, Mrs. Armstrong suffered her second rejection in a row. Like her husband before him, Karanja had unknowingly rejected her and had to be punished. Ironically, Mrs. Armstrong never got the courage and time to express her desires to Karanja. She hoped that Valerie would tell him. Hers was therefore a perceived not a real rejection. She went full throttle on a revenge mission. She warns Miss Valerie that if she dares not stop seeing Mr. Karanja and allow her, to take him, she would bring both the business and their love to an abrupt end. She tells Valerie the following:

Perhaps this will help you to make a decision. Talking of files, I have kept a few with me –one with correspondence related to over – invoicing, another containing letters regarding transfer of money into a Swiss numbered account and a third one with documents showing losses for income tax purposes. A few disclosures from these files won't do Mr. Karanja much good, especially when the government is determined to wipe out magendo.(113)

Dawood presents a different face of Mrs. Armstrong hitherto unknown, a devious and vengeful character in total contrast to the loyal and devoted Armstrong he presented earlier in the novel. She stops at nothing to get a man to bed and avenge both husband and employer. When Mr. Maina gets a cardiac arrest after the knowledge of the missing files, Mrs. Armstrong unwittingly takes Muhoho to bed. Unknown to her, Muhoho is not interested in her love or even sex but to retrieve the sensitive files. To her however, getting Muhoho to bed is her weapon to settle scores with the two men who had caused her a heartbreak. She tells Muhoho the following:

“You know, since the brute of a man, my husband-my late husband,...abandoned me in the cold so to say, I haven’t experienced any warmth...I mean human warmth... .To a woman, married life does not necessarily mean just sex; it means love, affection, respect, protection-what I sum up as warmth.(132-3)

To Mrs. Armstrong, any man who sleeps with her is assuaging her heartbreak. Ironically, there is no love between her and Muhoho and it is this encounter with Muhoho that causes her death.

The mental turmoil in Mrs. Armstrong’s life totally impairs her judgement, ethically and professionally. Ethically, Muhoho was so young and not the right age to take to bed in the style of “a consultant guiding an intern, a professional leading the amateur up the garden path”(134).She comes out as sadomasochist. In fact her prurient lures to Muhoho reveals her inner mental maladjustment. She bluntly tells Muhoho the following:

Make love to me, Muhoho. You are so young, so handsome, so virile’...’make love to me again, darling,’ she pleaded. ’You are so a magnificent lover and once is not enough...You know, you are the second man I have made love to in my whole life. I could’nt imagine the difference could be so vast...We must do this more often. (136-7)

This inexplicable urge to have sex and with any available man is hedonistic and it eventually causes her death.

Professionally, it was untoward to have an affair with her boss, worse when it is forced after blackmail. It was also the height of professional misconduct to blackmail her own boss with confidential files that she intended to give to Mr. Karanja's business competitor, Mr. Wahome. However, the stakes were so high and she had already made some irretrievable steps. She perishes in a road accident while trying to re-posses the files that Muhoho had cunningly retrieved during the sexual ordeal.

Dawood's vision of rejection in regard to the old gives no room for compromise and forgiveness. Rejection to them should be met with the full force of vengeance. These characters are driven by some psychic powers to revenge, leading them to the bizarre. Mrs. Armstrong does not seem to be aware of the dangers she exposes herself to in her revenge mission. Her subconscious mind is in control of her conscious actions and conventional reason and wisdom is suppressed to allow her get even with her real and imagined enemies. There is for example no reason to harm her employer, Mr. Karanja, because at no time was he made aware that his business relationship with Mrs. Armstrong was at any time perilous to her marriage. And at no time does Dawood make Mrs. Armstrong bold enough to approach Mr. Karanja for either sex or love. In fact, the impression created of Mr. Karanja's latent sexual appetite is that Mrs. Armstrong's approach for sex from him would have been relatively easy. At the very least, Mrs. Armstrong should have as a matter of convention, first tried to express her desires to Mr. Karanja before resorting to blackmail. Instead she chooses to convey her feelings through Miss Valerie, who is already in love with Mr. Maina.

The critical question here is how powerful a character's subconscious mind can be so much so that it impairs their judgment of even the most mundane subject of their life. Charles. E Brassier, in his book; *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, says this about the Freudian economic model:

According to Freud, the pleasure principle craves only pleasures and instantaneous satisfaction of instinctual drives, ignoring moral and sexual boundaries established



by society...Its chief aim being to maximize pleasure because the principles' goal is immediate relief from all pain and suffering.(144)

Armstrong's motive was to get even with her husband for abandoning her for another woman thereby clouding her vision to any other kind of recourse which is socially acceptable, less painful and free of risks. But is there a way of living with rejection without having to revenge?

Dr. Mwaura, a psychology lecturer at the University of Nairobi and catholic priest says that though rejection is painful, it doesn't always have to resort in more painful experiences for the victim. He observes that though the pain of rejection is a matter of nature, a well- rounded person should be able to adjust and move on. These survival skills are bestowed by nurture, what he called the nature-nurture relationship. Due to the environment in which people grow and develop through parental, religious and school institutions, different people react differently to rejection. The different reactions are informed by the differences in nurture's influence on an individual. He was, however, in agreement with Dawood that vengeance is most likely to be used to assuage rejection. Only a few people can move on. The majority suffer from personality disorder as a result of maladjustment.

From the fore-going, it is clear that Mrs. Armstrong was not herself when she made the hasty and ill informed decisions which led to her death. Dawood presents her as a bitter character who knows no bounds. Dawood, however, condemns vengeance through the death of Mrs. Armstrong and the continued prosperity of Mr. Karanja's business empire. As the novel ends, Miss Valerie who was patient is "booked to go on a world tour on the Queen Elizabeth II the day after [Christine's] wedding" (167).

Mr. Karanja is the other vengeful character in the novel. When he gets the news that three confidential files are missing and that Mrs. Armstrong has been drinking with Wahome, his business rival, he is so bitter that he gets a heart attack. His planned lunch meeting with Wahome in which he had planned to gather as much information about the files does not take off. Karanja's state of mind, like Mrs. Armstrong, is in shambles. Even Mrs. Armstrong is herself shocked at Karanja's

forgetfulness. Dawood shows Karanja's confusion when he cannot remember simple things such as whom he is going to lunch with. His confusion is aptly captured this way:

Whom am I having lunch with?" Maina asked Mrs. Armstrong... This was very unusual. Maina Karanja always checked his diary before he left the house and he was always tuned up for the day's events; but now asking about his lunch appointment! (118)

Dawood does not reveal the course of action that Karanja intended to take against Wahome. He looked even more confused about the course of action against Mrs. Armstrong, who conventionally would have been the first person to tackle. Just like Mrs. Armstrong had projected her frustrations towards him and later his son Muhoho instead of tackling her husband, Maina was preparing to face Wahome instead of facing Mrs. Armstrong who was holding the confidential files. Karanja's projection is shown when Dawood writes the following:

..., after getting all the information from his directors on his return from Britain, he had decided on one thing. He must meet Wahome, and do so informally at lunch. It was going to be a session of extracting information, coaxing, threatening, of soft velvet alternating with Iron fist, a game at which Maina knew he excelled. After all, one could not establish an empire without knowing the strategies and the tactics. In a game of chess, you capture your opponent's king before he captures yours; the time had come to make a bet for Wahome. (118)

Unfortunately, it is immediately after being reminded that he was having lunch with Wahome that he gets a heart attack just after cancelling the lunch meeting. It would seem that whatever was in his mind and heart was too heavy for his heart to bear.

The two vengeful characters, Mrs. Armstrong and Karanja suffer from a psychic condition in which they avoid the real course of their painful experience by transferring them to others. Peter

Barry, in his Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory says the following about projection:

...Projection, [occurs] when aspects of ourselves(usually negative ones) are not recognized as part of ourselves but are perceived in or attributed to another; our own desires or antagonisms for instance, may be 'disowned' in this way.....that is psychic procedures for avoiding painful admissions or recognition.(98)

Dawood however does not allow Karanja to bring out his vengeful actions. Even after undergoing a heart operation and therefore metaphorically a change of heart, memories of his bitterness towards Wahome are retained in his mind. At the end of the novel, he warns the directors, in his new role of a consultant for the company saying that "In our line of work, the beast is never tamed for good. It only lies low, waiting to pounce when the opportunity comes. So, constant vigilance is the price to pay for lasting safety (167).

Dawood has, in the two vengeful characters ably demonstrated how the suppressed pain caused by mistreatment can turn normal characters into psychic ones with the subconscious mind controlling their conscious actions, impairing their ethical and professional judgment as laid down in society.

The second pair of characters who have been subjected to rejection is personalized by the young, represented in the novel by Muhoho and his sister Christine. For Dawood, the young are more receptive to pressures from the society that may inflict pain. For these two the pressure emanates from their father who demands that they follow certain norms which to them have lost taste in modern times. Dawood deliberately presents two young scholars whose world view is poles apart from the old generation. They are however able to strike a balance between the old generation and the young, though it is a delicate art of compromise. They do not rush to act and avenge. At the end of the novel, the two emerge the winners.

Christine was the first to suffer rejection. By a trick of fate, her mother dies while she is young. She therefore grows without a mother figure. To make matters worse, she is separated from the extended family when her father sends her abroad for studies. Her decisions in life are therefore largely informed only by the modern world of books. The closest family members she has are her brother Muhoho and her father Karanja. Ironically, the two of them operate from two diametrically opposed philosophical standpoints. Karanja is a capitalist to a hilt while Muhoho is a socialist, albeit in theory. The two therefore would only complicate her already confused mental framework. In fact the father feels that her daughter has missed something in life. When they disagree on Christine's choice of a husband, his thoughts are telling. Dawood captures Karanja's thoughts in the following way:

He felt sorry that having lost her mother at such a tender age, she had missed the companionship and closeness that a daughter cherishes from her mother. During her next visit to Nairobi over the University vacation, he must have a serious chat with her about finding a suitable groom for her, commensurate with her education, with his own financial and business status in society, someone who might even join him in business. (81)

But if the psychological rejection she suffered as a result of the death of her mother could be lived with, it's the rejection of her choice of Gavin Taylor as a husband that shocks her. When she breaks the news of her intention to marry Gavin, her father's response is immediate. After a series of history gathering about the boy, it is clear he had rejected the idea though subtly. He tells her daughter the following:

“As you appreciate, there will be a great difference in the style of life that you have been brought up in and the life you might lead after marriage...I meant it in a greater context than money alone...It is much more than that, though money is the

main argument...It means comfort, status, security, all the essential elements of a happy and successful life.”(54)

The discussion about Gavin was postponed to Maina’s visit at Cambridge to give each other time for soul searching. But when they met, it was still bad for Christine. After a very brief discussion, Christine summarizes the exchange by telling her father that “I have reached a point of no return” ( 93), which actually meant she was expectant with Gavin’s child and the only option to her was marrying him. The description of Christine after that short closing sentence best shows her feelings of rejection. Dawood captures the rejection this way:

For the first time, she realized how much she missed her mother, with whom she could have been so much more candid. Her mother would have probably thumped her for being so stupid, but thereafter, her maternal instinct would have been a source of solace and comfort. Instead, now it was like talking through a wall; they both could hear each other if they shouted, but could not see the expressions, the contortions and the reactions. Like listening to a play on the wireless.(93)

Christine comes out as a resilient character. Despite the differences in world view between her and the father, she decides to compromise and actually accepts the idea of an abortion. Surprisingly, when her brother strongly rejects the idea of abortion, leading to an altercation between him and the father, which he later misconstrues to be the cause of his father’s heart attack, Christine summarily dismisses the topic saying that “Since I am the cause of this argument, I want to end it once and for all. ...My decision has been made by me and all your hot air is only of academic interest” (117). Unfortunately, a few hours after this argument, Karanja gets a heart attack in the office. In the meantime, Muhoho thinks that it is this argument with his father over Christine’s intended abortion that causes the heart attack.

Christine seems unaffected by her fathers’ decision to have her procure an abortion. She has no hard feelings and somehow nature, the same that had caused her the initial rejection through the

death of the mother, leads to her father's change of heart. After the operation on his heart, Karanja readily accepts Christine's marriage to Gavin. He breaks the news to the directors of Kenya Foods Limited in such a way that no one would think he was ever opposed to the idea. After handing over his Chairmanship of the company to his son Muhoho, he tells the board members the following:

This is the subject closest to my heart and probably best kept secret. You all had an inkling to a greater or lesser degree of what has transpired till now, at this board meeting. What I propose to disclose now must be a surprise to you... This is about my daughter. She is getting married to a boy of her own choice, Mr. Gavin Taylor. The date is set for 27<sup>th</sup> October, exactly ten days from now. I wish to request your help in making it the wedding of the year.(167)

Christian therefore is able to overcome rejection by being patient and seemingly complacent. Dawood uses nature as an omniscient character who plays a role to suit the weak. Nature assists Christine to not only marry a man of her choice but also to get her father's blessings. Dawood proposes that rejection does not have to be met with rejection. It can either be lived with or left out to nature to carry out its own unseen but startling vengeance.

Like her sister Christine, Muhoho personifies resilience and triumph in the wake of rejection. His socialistic ideas are rejected by his capitalistic father. In a conversation with Valerie, Muhoho reveals his socialistic ideas saying that "Ujamaa villages are an African experiment in socialism...It may prove an answer to this unacceptable face of capitalism"(46). He comes out openly when his father suggests that the business empire was spreading and Muhoho's help was required. Muhoho is very prompt to object saying that "I am not sure if I am ready to take the plunge, Dad"(69). When his father pushes him further he elaborates saying that "When I said I was not prepared I did not mean it in the narrow sense – I meant mentally and emotionally. I am not yet ready to commit myself to a career in business" (70).

Dawood presents a character suffering from a philosophical rejection, but who is ready to compromise, unlike the vengeful type. Muhoho's compromise is seen when Dawood writes as follows:

Muhoho had a reply, but withheld it. He disagreed with his father, but nevertheless, he respected him. His reply would have been too caustic. He had been outspoken with Valerie, but there it was conversation with no consequence, an academic exercise. Here, it was dialogue between father and son, mutual affection and respect superseded debating ability (70).

Muhoho is an understanding character who knows that playing hard could only spoil his relationship with his father. Muhoho is a split image of Dawood himself during his teenage. During the serious altercations between his hot tempered father and his elder brothers, Dawood neither participated though he knew that his father was in the wrong. His respect for his father is what made the later make twenty six trips to Miraj Medical College to plead with the dean to admit his son. This paved the way for the start of his medical career. For Muhoho in the novel, the reward for his patience with his father in spite of their divergent views comes when the latter relinquishes his chairmanship of his business empire to him. This shows the author's idea on how to handle rejection peacefully and to one's own advantage.

Dawood uses the style of dreams to show the reconciliation between father and son over their different philosophical standpoints. It is in the dream that the two undergo a philosophical transformation, with each one of them stepping down from their rock pedestals. In the dream, Muhoho says the following:

I will succinctly sum up our essential differences over there. To you, a million meant the means to barter the whole world. To me, it meant six circles with holes in them....I believe that I am in my father and my father is in me.(153)

Dawood uses Mrs. Armstrong as a bridge that connects father and son. Through Mrs. Armstrong's intention to revenge, Maina gets a heart attack and is operated on. At the same time, Muhoho struggles to retrieve the confidential files which Mrs. Armstrong intends to use to ruin Karanja's business. In the process he loses control of his car, causes an accident, and ends up in hospital for a head operation. Father and son are operated on the same hospital and at the same time. Metaphorically, Karanja deserves a heart operation to soften his stand on love matters. After the operation, he readily accepts and allows his daughter Christine to Marry Gavin. On his part, Muhoho is operated on his head to soften his hard socialistic ideas. After the operation, he readily accepts to join the capitalist world and inherits his father's chairmanship at the Kenya Foods Limited. Dawood captures this monumental transformation saying this:

Both father and son had been discharged from the hospital a fortnight back and they had plenty of time and opportunity to take stock and review everything- both personal and professional. ... Although most of the books he devoured were of the same ponderous and speculative nature as his favourite reading and debates in Cambridge, here in the quiet and isolation of his father's mansion and after the great trauma of his accident and subsequent operation, they began to strike him with their smug lack of practicability.(160)

Muhoho captures the transformation even better and humorously during his acceptance speech as the new chairperson of Kenya Foods Limited. He tells the board members the following:

I was told by my surgeon that during my operation, I underwent a brainwash and some of my brain was even washed away!...However, my ordeal was much lighter compared to that of my father... Dr Crossely tells me that during his cardiac arrest and subsequent successful resuscitation, my father also underwent a change of heart, a transplant done without surgery. I reckon, we both have paid our pound of flesh over and more. We both have paid the price of living - in its most inflated



terms. I hope that my brainwash and my father's change of heart have brought our viewpoints closer (164).

Dawood uses this transformation to show that rejection is better tackled through compromise and change of heart. The title of the novel The Price of Living metaphorically represents the sacrifice one has to undergo in order to live. For Karanja and Muhoho their "price of living" was the operation which Muhoho says was in 'inflated terms' which reads to softening of hard stances. It is a process of compromising. For Christine, the acceptance and the shock of undergoing an abortion was her "price of living". Mrs. Armstrong refuses to pay the price and hence had to die.

In the novel, Dawood uses dialogue to bring out the characters' state of mind. The altercation between Muhoho and his father reveals Muhoho's socialist ideas and his father's capitalistic ideas. The argument between Mrs. Armstrong and Miss Valerie bring out the bitterness in Armstrong's mind. The brief but terse answers by Christine to her father are an indication of her finality in the decision she has made. Dialogue has therefore largely enhanced characterization and thematic concern in the novel.

Critically, the novel is a case study of Dawood's vision of the theme of rejection. He presents various forms of rejection namely, social-cultural, psychological and philosophical. Maina Karanja rejects her daughter's intended marriage to Gavin Tylor on the basis of the latter's poor financial status. To Karanja, money is the corner stone of a stable and happy marriage. He cannot conceal his contempt for poverty. Psychologically, Christine suffers rejection in the death of her mother when she is so young. To make matters worse, she is soon whisked away from the extended members of her family to Europe in pursuit of education. She is therefore denied the opportunity to live a full life. In a sense, she suffers from feelings of rootlessness. Muhoho suffers a philosophical rejection when his socialistic ideas are rejected by his father who is a capitalist. The two opt to handle rejection by being strategically complacent. They emerge successfully at the end of the novel.

This is the resilience that the author envisions as a strategy of moving on when confronted with rejection. He strongly condemns vengeance through the horrid death of Mrs. Armstrong. In this novel, unlike in Eye of the Storm, Dawood is categorical that vengeance is not a panacea for rejection. In The Price of Living, the characters are authentic and prop the theme of rejection in a realistic way.

The influence of the subconscious mind to a character's conscious actions is better portrayed through Mrs. Armstrong. After being rejected by her husband, she projects her frustration to her employer, Maina Karanja. The projection is a defence mechanism by which she hopes to forget the painful experience of her husband's departure. She fails in her desires of roping in Karanja in to her frustrations. Her subconscious mind hinders her proper judgement. She makes hasty decisions, some in the realm of melo- drama, ending in her death. By her death, the author condemns vengeance.

### **Characterization in *The Price of Living*.**

Characters are very vital tools for a writer of fiction. Without characters, there would be no fiction. They are the carriers of the theme envisaged in a creative work. In this section, the study focuses on how effectively the author has used characters as vehicles of the theme of rejection. The Price of Living is an experiment on rejection and the characters' consequential reaction to it. The price to pay in order to live after being rejected is high but worth it. Those who pay it live but those who do not, personified by Mrs. Armstrong, have to die. Dawood's characters successfully drive the theme of rejection. His division of characters in two age groups, young and old, is deliberate. The old, represented by Karanja and Mrs. Armstrong, are portrayed as conservative while the young generation is portrayed as liberal. The novel is a masterstroke on the price to pay in order to live in this world. The price is compromise in the face of rejection.

The characters in The Price of Living, are simple and authentic. They exhibit raw emotions expected of a rejected person. The author has presented a simple family conflict emanating from divergent philosophical standpoints. This is played side by side with a conflict in the work place

emanating from business rivalry. Raw emotions of a jilted wife spark the drama in the novel. The characters suffer both real and perceived rejection. The author has succeeded in castigating vengeance that resorts from the perceived rejection. This is through the death of Mrs. Armstrong.

The character of Mrs. Armstrong is however not convincing. Despite the hard times she is going through, her reaction is beyond. The author interferes with the character's freedom of choice of action. It is not convincing that within the short period of time that Henry left Mrs. Armstrong, the latter should have developed such strong romantic dreams towards Karanja to warrant her intended level of blackmail. Her lascivious explosion towards Muhoho and her seemingly insatiable appetite to sex is also not convincing. The ease in which she takes Muhoho to bed on their first meeting is a characteristic of an experienced fulltime commercial worker. Dawood seems to have been motivated by his characteristic prurient expose common in his writing. For all his efforts in crafting her, Dawood immediately kills her after her 'fantastic' sex with Muhoho. If a heavy dose of sex could assuage her hurt feelings, then the author ought to have given her more time. The futility of it would probably have brought her back to her senses. Despite this shortcoming, Mrs. Armstrong, however, plays an important role in the presentation of the power of the subconscious mind. She is also the only character in the novel that rolls out an action plan for revenge and tries to put it to practice.

There is an obvious and striking case of parallelism between Dawood's autobiography and fiction. As a budding author, Dawood was unable to draw a clear line between his life history and fiction. The influence of Dawood's early life to his writing was discussed in the preceding chapter but in a general way. In The Price of Living, Christine is a fictionalization of Dawood's early life while Maina Karanja represents Dawood's latter years in Kenya.

Christine, like Dawood, loses her mother at an early age. This plunges her into a psychological rejection. The denial of the mother figure impacts on her world view which is largely informed by formal education. As expected, her decisions in life are not in tandem with parental and societal expectations. Her choice of a husband from a different social and cultural background is

rejected by her father. However, through strategic complacency and resilience, the man of her choice is later accepted. This was the same case with Dawood's own life, the difference being that the rejection of Marie as Dawood's wife was perceived and not real. Dawood's adult life in Kenya is marked by elitism and opulence. Similarly, Karanja is rich and elitist. Both live in the affluent Muthaiga estate in Nairobi and are members of Muthaiga Golf Club.

The simplicity of characters in the novel is an indication of Dawood's fledgling writing career at the time of writing the novel which was his second novel after No Strings Attached. This is also discernable from the near copy and paste from his life to his fiction. In spite of their simplicity, the characters ably convey the theme of rejection.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Yusuf Dawood's Portrayal of Rejection in *Eye of the Storm*

Eye of the Storm is certainly Dawood's most ambitious experiment at the portrayal of the theme of rejection. In this novel, unlike in the Price of Living, Dawood largely uses the surgeon character, Dr. Njoroge Maina as the recipient of various kinds of rejection. They include racial, social, professional and romantic. The novel is roughly divided into three sections namely, rejection, vengeance and justification. The initial chapters of the novel expose Dr. Maina to a series of rejections. The middle shows Maina taking revenge on both his real and perceived perpetrators of rejection. Finally, the court scenes at the end of the novel are Dawood's attempt at justifying acts of vengeance. The power of the unconscious mind is best portrayed in this novel.

Dawood's recipient of rejection, Dr. Maina is a brilliant surgeon at U.K.H hospital. Although the sources of his mistreatment, both real and perceived are varied, he resorts to using his scapel at the operating table as a weapon of revenge. This literally raises both professional and ethical issues. It is noteworthy that Dawood is himself a surgeon and his experience in the medical field must have influenced his writing of the novel. The novel is therefore a reflection of the behind the scenes drama in the medical field. This study however approaches the novel from the perspective of fiction.

In Eye of the Storm, unlike in The Price of Living, Dawood crafts his characters into a convergence style. This means that rejection is perpetrated by different characters but to one character. These are Everard Nigel, Harold Hawkins, Prof. Terblanche, Dr. Odongo, Dr. Desai and Ayesha Hyda, all of who variously cause Dr. Maina some mistreatment of a kind. Like in the Price of Living, however, at a less conspicuous level, he crafts a horizontal type of rejection. This is where Dr. Karanja himself rejects his son Muhoho despite being his putative father.

As in the Price of Living, Dawood uses the age to show that the old are conservative while the young are liberal. Dr. Maina who represents the old cannot withstand rejection and has to avenge

it in the most bizarre way. On the contrary, his son Muhoho does not take revenge. In fact, it is Muhoho who saves him from the hung man's noose by giving expert opinion in the court. Muhoho's psychiatric opinion was highly instrumental in saving Dr. Maina from a harsh sentence to merely losing his practicing license.

Dawood equivocates between glorifying rejection and condemning it. On one side he shows that it is not possible to overcome rejection. This he does through Dr. Maina. In the court room, Fred Wangai, Dr. Maina's advocate says, "Almost 40 years on, those words have haunted my client, and the image of the man who inflicted this insult and humiliation on him has remained permanently etched in his memory"(329). On the other hand, Muhoho shows forgiveness. In fact, when Dr. Maina changes his mind and wants to recognize his son, Muhoho tactically refuses because he wants to save his putative father. After the trial is over, he shows his father the folly of vengeance and promises never to raise the issue of paternity again when he says that "For years my mother and I were craving for you to recognize me as your son. But you didn't ... You must pledge to yourself and to us that for the rest of your life, you will never own up or disclose to anybody that I am your son"(394).

Dawood presents two kinds of rejection, real and perceived. Under real rejection, Maina was racially rejected by Everard Nigel when he was a young boy. While accompanying his father on his weekly visits to Patel's grocery store, " he came face to face with a bigoted monster" ( 21). He accidentally collides with Nigel Everard who tells him, "Don't you know, you little brat, that when you see a white man walking on a footpath, you get off the pavement and give a mzungu a wide berth"(21). This unpleasant experience remained deeply buried in his mind until an opportunity arose for vengeance. This is when Nigel finds himself on the operating table under the mercy of Dr. Karanja, forty four years later.

On his part, Harold Hawkins rejects Dr. Karanja as a suitable suitor to his daughter, Jill Hawkins. Once again this is racially motivated. Hawkins payback time comes when he tours Kenya

in the company of his daughter. On falling sick, Jill takes him for an operation under Dr. Maina where he meets his death on the operating table.

Dr. Odongo and Dr. Desai reject Dr. Maina socially and professionally respectively. For Dr. Odongo, he blackballs him from getting admission of membership of Muthaiga Golf Club. He therefore cuts him off from socially interacting with the elites in the club where Dr. Maina would have met and socialized with people of his social status. As for Dr. Desai, he sends his patients to other surgeons, namely Dr. Thokare. Earlier on, he was sending his patients to Dr. Maina for operation. Their payback time comes when their wives need operations. They send them to Dr. Maina for operation. He gets an opportunity to avenge by disfiguring them.

On the other hand, Prof. Terblanche and Ayesha cause in Dr. Maina a perceived form rejection. For Prof. Terblanche, it is not true that he rejected Dr. Maina because he was black, when he failed him an examination at Dublin. So many other students had failed and as was history in that University, his classmates had consoled him saying, “You now belong to the majority because very few pass this examination at the first go. And those who do are put in the pillory and chastised as egg-heads and book-worms!”(32). Here, Dr. Maina suffers from a perceived rejection. In fact, during Dr. Maina’s trial, the state prosecutor, Mr. Mugo says that “ Is it possible that candidates who fail have to find some justification for their failure?.. It is therefore quite conceivable that if the incident ever took place, the accused erroneously perceived a colour prejudice on your part” (334).

For Ayesha, it was perceived rejection in Dr. Maina’s mind in the sense that she was already engaged to a man. She actually made Dr. Maina know that. It is not possible that every romantic or otherwise approach must be met with acceptance. This can only happen in a chaotic world. Dr. Maina seems to be of the view that every woman he asks for a hand in marriage must accept. To me, this is perceived and not real rejection.

Dawood’s vision of rejection is well explored through Dr. Maina. To Dawood, a society that is poor is supposed to be rejected and forgotten once a person climbs up to the apex of opulence.

Dawood completely rejected his Pakistan society to come and live in the opulence of the Kenyan elite community. Reading his autobiography, one forms the opinion that he is cut off from his motherland and operates between Nairobi and occasional visits to his children in London. Likewise Dr. Njoroge has completely abandoned his parents and relatives in Nyeri to live at Muthaiga in Nairobi. Since becoming a surgeon, no mention is made of his parents in Nyeri despite the struggle they went through in bringing him up. He makes only one trip to Nyeri and that is to visit father Johnson. His only 'relatives' during the trial are father Johnson, his putative son whom he has rejected, Muhoho, and Muhoho's mother, Muthoni. To Dawood therefore anybody or anything that does not contribute to one's upward mobility and recognition should be rejected. It is no wonder then that Dr. Maina lives a loner's life in Nairobi with no close family member.

As usual, Dawood once again equivocates on this abandonment of one's roots. In the novel, nature plays the role of punishing those who reject their roots by ensuring that they are rejected in their effort to form their own nuclear families. Dr. Maina is rejected by Jill's father and Ayesha. He lives a bachelor's life in spite of his wealth. It is only after he apologizes to Muhoho and recognizes him as his son that a glimpse of hope arises. This is in the words of Jill. As the novel ends, Jill says, "You are the only man I have ever loved in my whole life"(393). This, however, only suggests that they might get married. It would however come at high price, having lost his practicing licence. To make matters worse, memories of having killed Jill's father would last in his subconscious mind.

Unlike in The Price of Living, Dawood contrasts rejection with acceptance. At around the same time that Nigel Everard rejects him, Mr. Patel accepts him. Both Nigel and Patel are colonial settlers in Nyeri but their treatment of the young Maina is contrasted. While evil is paid back with more evil, good is paid back with more goodness. In the novel, while Nigel is maimed on the operating table, Patel is treated free of charge. For the first time, the human side of Dr. Maina emerges. When Patel requests for a free note, Dr. Maina answers him as follows:



Do you remember the shillings and sweets you pressed into my palm every Sunday when I came into your shop with my father? If you total them up, add the interest and adjust the figure for inflation, it would amount to much more than what I would charge for a hernia operation.(96)

It is important to note that it was Patel who introduces Everard to Dr. Maina only for the latter to be left incontinent under Dr Maina's hands.

Likewise, Gallworthy had accepted Dr. Maina when he wanted a loan to buy a house and a car. Although it was under instructions from Mr. Mutisya, it was Gallworthy who took credit. It is an example of perceived acceptance in the sense that Gallworthy was just implementing his boss's orders. He was operated free of charge. On asking for a fee note, he was told he would never see it. On insisting that the money was being paid by the bank, Dr. Maina said " The recipient will be the same, and it is he whom you treated so kindly and so promptly while he came to you begging for a loan"(169).In the above two cases, Dawood contrasts acceptance with rejection with an aim of showing the evil of rejecting others. But it is the vengeful incidents that he gives more prominence. Ironically the people that Dr. Maina waives professional fees for are the well to do who can afford.

Finally, Dawood makes a subtle statement as far as living with rejection is concerned. This is presented through Prof. Kipkorir. It emerges that when Prof. Kipkorir is rejected by his family, he took solace in books and in his profession becoming a perfectionist. This is, however, brought as an after thought by the author in his experimentation with rejection. It is instructive to note that the revelation is occasioned by none other than Dr. Karanja Maina. Prof. Kipkorir was Dr. Maina's mentor and hero .Dr Maina could have been trying to borrow a leaf on surviving without a family. For Prof Kipkorir he had set the stage for rejection after he abandoned his wife and child to concentrate on his work. When asked whether he had a family he says the following:

Of course I did, but I soon lost it. I fell with a girl in New York ... We were madly in love ...we got married and had a daughter. I brought them out

here...Here, my surgical work took precedence over everything else and I neglected them... The situation became more when I started missing on my child as well. Finally she walked out on me and took the baby with her.(198)

For Prof. Kipkorir, however, this rejection did not colour his professional ethics. He was able to move on. His professional perfectionism is his psychological wife which is a survival tactic. It was, however, too late for Dr. Maina to salvage his professional life. For Dawood, this moving on after rejection requires a level headed character and not the melodramatic character in Dr. Maina. His treatment of rejection has already made a landmark. The use of Prof. Kipkorir, as an example of leaving with rejection was an incident in experimenting with the theme of rejection.

Dawood shows that rejection is motivated by the societal need for self preservation. A critical study of characters rejecting others reveals characters suffering from personal and social insecurity. Dr. Maina's meteoric rise from a scanty dressed rural boy to a professionally and economically independent character elicits both envy and fear. There is therefore an unhealthy competition for scarce resources in a society that has recently emerged from the social-political and economic realities of colonialism.

Nigel Everard is insecure in the wake of the turbulent wind of independence blowing in the country. His position as an immigrant settler is threatened by the young Maina who is a 'future leader'. Maina's dare-devil action of literally rubbing shoulders with the colonial master is a protest statement which must be nipped in the bud. It is an ominous sign of times to come. Nigel's fear makes him monstrously protective and therefore rejects young Maina.

Harold Hawkins is protective of both his family and race. The two reasons he gives for rejecting Maina's proposal to marry Jill are hinged on family and race. When Maina asks for his word on the latter's proposal to marry Jill, he answers him this way:

I have two good reasons to reject your proposal. One is personal but you would be excused if you called it selfish. The other is more general and borne out of

practical consideration ... As you know, Jill is our only daughter. It will break our hearts to see her go as far away into the unknown, more or less permanently...(40)

This, as he himself says, is a selfish preservation of his family's space. For racial preservation, Harold says as follows:

Marriage is a difficult institution as it is. Why make it more so by trying to bridge the ethnic, colour and cultural divide? I do not think Jill is very well equipped to cross all these barriers and take that quantum leap...As I understand, amongst other things, the traditions, the lifestyles the mode of dressing and the weather are all quite different in your country. (40)

Dr. Odongo's rejection of Dr. Maina is motivated by the need to protect his position in the social circles. He fears that Dr. Maina's admission to Muthaiga golf club is a threat to his impending take-over as the chairperson. His is a selfish preservation of social status. For Dr. Desai, his fear is that Dr. Maina was bound to take over as the senior-most surgeon in town. He wanted to pull him down. Dr. Desai's rejection of Dr. Maina is a selfish preservation of professional reputation.

Ayesha is protective of her personal and social standing in matters of love. During the Naivasha excavation, she rejects Dr. Maina's advances saying as follows:

There is someone else...I am engaged to a young man chosen for me by my parents... As you might know, in my culture, marriage is not a matter between two individuals. It is a union of two families, sometimes two clans. We don't just fall in love and marry. Instead we first get married, and then fall in love. (73)

For those two reasons, personal and societal, she rejects Dr. Maina.

Dr. Maina rejects his putative son, Muhoho, to preserve his social position among the elites. Muhoho's intrusion in his life was going to interfere with his possible marriage to either Jill or Ayesha, the two women who inadvertently make him commit murder and contemplate murder respectively. He had promised each of them separately that they were the only ones he loved.

Ironically, even after Muhoho helps him to get a lenient sentence during the trial, leaving him a free man, he tells Muhoho, “let us promise that it will remain a secret between the three of us and let us resolve to carry it to our graves”(394). The fact that this is the very last statement in the novel shows the height of the urge for self preservation. Muhoho was, therefore, among the rejected. His rejection was necessary to Dr. Maina so that he does not stand in the way of his possible come back into social and professional high status. As the novel ends, Maina’s single goal is to marry Jill, and Muhoho would have interfered with it.

Dawood has therefore aptly demonstrated that rejection in the novel is motivated by selfishness. It is motivated by real and perceived fear of an interruption of a personal, social, professional, and racial security. To the author, fear, envy and selfish protection of personal space are the genesis of rejection. Ironically, apart from Ayesha’s case, Joe Maina is unstoppable and achieves his desired goals. It is only when he becomes melodramatic in his efforts to thwart rejection that he loses all that he had gained. His only hope is that of marrying Jill. The author leaves the reader in suspense about the possible consummation of their marriage.

A comparative thematic study between the two novels reveals the author’s fascination with the theme of rejection. He demonstrates that rejection results from the need to protect an individual’s social, economic and professional space. This need gives rise to a sense of either real or perceived insecurity. Dawood captures the social-economic sensibilities of post-independent Kenya. Stiff competition to reach the apex of the Maslow’s pyramid breeds rejection. In The Price of Living, Karanja gets a heart attack upon learning that Wahome, his business rival, is bound to get the secret files which are the backbone of his business. This would have brought his business to the ruins. In Eye of the Storm, Dr. Odongo wants to protect his social position at Muthaiga Golf Club when he blackballs Dr. Maina’s admission. Dr. Desai wants to protect his professional status when he refers patients to Dr. Thokare instead of sending them to Dr. Maina.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Dawood experiments with various facets of rejection. Social, economic and professional rivalries become the source of the conflict between the two novels.

### **Characterization in *Eye of the Storm*.**

Let me start from the basic. The person afflicted with this disease is normal in all other aspects .In fact he is super normal. Deep in the recesses of his mind, though, are stored all the perceived injustices and rejection he has suffered. They lie there dormant until they are triggered off. Then like a lion, the person afflicted with this dangerous psychosis, pounces upon his long awaited and unsuspecting victim who at some time subjected him to such indignity and who by now might have forgotten the incident... But he or she becomes available and vulnerable, the resentment turns into revenge. Dawood (369)

In this section, I look at the credibility of characters as vehicles of the theme of rejection. At the same time I investigate their reaction to rejection and its impact to their ethical and professional judgment. Characters in any work of literature are vital in pushing the author's mission in it. Their credibility determines whether the author achieves the mission or not.

In *Eye of the Storm*, Dawood uses Dr. Maina primarily as his prime mover of the theme of rejection. Dr. Maina is variously rejected and in turn fights back. As a professional surgeon, Dr. Maina is guided by the hipocratic oath and his actions will be measured by how much they deviate from it. Dr. Maina's rejection and his consequent reaction is a good case study in psychoanalytic literary criticism. He clearly demonstrates how the subconscious mind controls the conscious actions of a person. The dynamic model in psychoanalytic literary criticism best explains Dr. Maina's behavior as an exhibition of Freudian slips. Writing about Freudian slips, Charles E. Brassier, in *Literary Criticism. An introduction to Theory and practice*. (Fourth Edition) says this:

For Freud, the unconscious is also the storehouse of the disguised truths and desires that want to be revealed in and through the conscious. These disguised truths and desires inevitably make themselves known through our so-called mistakes of speech or actions. Freud calls such mistakes parapraxes or Freudian slips. Through seemingly innocuous actions, such as slips of the tongue, failures of memory, the misplacing of objects or the misreading of texts, Freud believes we consciously bring to our conscious minds our unconscious wishes and intentions. (145)

Dr. Maina's surgical mishaps are a good example of Freudian slips, which can be described as 'slips of the scapel'. Dawood therefore draws a clear distinction between real culprits and perceived culprits. As mentioned earlier, this is the symmetry he draws between real and perceived rejection. The three cases involving Mrs. Odongo, Mrs. Desai and Najib are certainly unjustifiable, as will emerge in the forthcoming discussion on the credibility of character's motivation.

Dr. Maina's first encounter with rejection is with Nigel Everard when he is a young boy. Forty years down the line, the effect of the mistreatment supercedes his conscious actions on the operating table. The result of this battle between his conscious and unconscious mind is that his ethical and professional judgment is interfered with leading to irrevocable damage of the patient, who is Nigel. Dawood aptly captures the antagonism playing in Dr. Maina mind when he writes the following:

Sluggishly Joe Maina turned his head towards his assistant. In that brief moment, Dr. Lumba saw an expression in Maina's face which he had never seen before. It seemed as if he had been possessed by the devil himself. He was in a trance and it took a little time for him to recognize his assistant. There was a far away look in his eyes, which were dazed and glassy.(119)

The description of Dr. Maina certainly leaves no doubt that he is not in control of himself. The end result is that Nigel is left with a permanent urinary incontinence problem. Dr Maina had avenged his earlier rejection.

The same antagonism between the subconscious and conscious mind of Dr. Karanja is played out when he operates on Harold Hawkins. Hawkins had rejected Dr. Maina's proposal to marry his daughter, Jill Hawkins. During the operation, Dr. Maina is described as uncharacteristically silent:

Normally Dr. Maina talked about a patient and the operation while he was scrubbing but today Dr. Lumba found him uncommunicative-almost incommunicable!..Today, somehow there seemed to be tension in the air and Joe Maina's tight lipped reticence did not help to defuse the atmosphere. There was clumsiness in the way he put on his surgical gloves and a tremor in his voice...

(80)

This time Dr. Maina kills his first patient on the operating table.

The case of the operation of Najib is a classical example of mental displacement. Dr. Maina and Najib were not known to each other on one on one. However Dr. Maina wants to avenge his rejection by Ayesha by killing her fiancé. Peter Barry, in his Beginning Theory : An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory, says that '...displacement, [is] whereby one person or event is represented by another which is in some way linked or associated with it, perhaps because of similar-sounding word, or by some form of symbolic substitution...' (98). This clearly shows that Dr. Maina is psychic and displacing his rejection to an innocent character. Perhaps it would have been justifiable if he was venting his frustration on Ayesha who was the actual object of his anger. Najib was an innocent person in the saga.

Conversely, however, Ayesha is partly to blame for her seemingly indecision. She equivocates in her stand concerning her fiancée. When on a retreat at Naivasha, she tells Dr. Maina that she is engaged to someone else, but does not affirm her refusal emphatically. This sends mixed signals in

Dr. Maina's mind creating the impression that he could win her over at a second trial. In any case, this was their first chit-chat on romance and she could just be protecting her feminine dignity. The second chance comes soon when they attend a retreat at Nanyuki. When there, Ayesha drops her guard and allows Dr. Maina to 'walk up the garden path', only to stop him at the last minute. One gets the sneaky impression that she enjoyed the seduction only she did not want to go the whole hog. Dawood captures this romantic scene this way:

Ayesha said neither aye nor nay. She inserted the key in the door and opened it. Joe followed her. He closed the door behind him and hugged her from the back resting his hands on her breasts. He held them tight until she gently released herself and turned towards him. ...They moved up to the bed. Ayesha lay on it and Joe sat on the edge of the bed by her side, kissing fondly and caressing. He then unbuttoned her blouse and touched her bare breasts. "Please stop".

This was certainly an act of extreme provocation to a man who had expressed his wish for sex. Her guilt is seen soon afterwards when she apologises to Dr. Maina saying, " I am sorry to have let you come this far and then stopped you going further, but I was aroused. After all I am not a statue carved out of stone" (146).

The same mental displacement as in Najib's case, affects Dr. Maina when operating on Mrs. Jennifer Odongo and Mrs. Kamini Desai. In Mrs. Odongo's case, it is Dr. Odongo who blackballed Dr. Maina from gaining admission to Muthaiga Golf Club. He however does not get an opportunity to hit back at Dr. Odongo directly. In fact, this is not a case of mental aberration on the operating table. It is a case of deliberately taking revenge on a person associated with the real object of revenge. His running commentaries when operating on Mrs. Odongo shows he maimed her with an intention to hurt her husband. The same applies to the operation of Mrs. Desai. It is Dr. Desai the husband who had professionally rejected him by sending patients to other surgeons for operation instead of sending



them to him. A case in point is that of Mr. Gallworthy who was given a letter of reference to take to Dr. Thokare.

During the court trial, the evidence given for the mishap of the three victims does not indicate a 'slip of the scapel'. This is because the three were victims by association. The vengeance is directed to the real target through them because they were available. Muhoho told the judge the following:

Take the case of Jennifer Odongo. While removing the parotid tumor, Joe Maina was giving a running commentary to his first assistant on how not to damage the facial nerve... The association fibres in Joe Maina's sick brain linked this information to the mortification he suffered at the hands of the patient's husband who had blocked his admission to the most prestigious club in Nairobi. Quickly, the mind made a switch. 'I cannot avenge the real culprit but I have his wife at my mercy.(375)

Muhoho, a psychiatrist by profession, admits in his defence of Dr. Maina that this mishap was a case of mental displacement as opposed to a slip of the scapel.

Dawood, however, becomes intrusive and grips Dr. Maina's mind. An author is supposed to give his characters a free will to operate naturally. Dawood uses Dr. Maina like a puppet to drive his agenda. Dr. Maina therefore becomes unauthentic. The theme of rejection is soon lost and revenge takes centre stage. At this level, revenge is not equal to rejection caused. The cause-effect relationship is lost. It is revenge bordering on lunacy. By being unnecessarily intrusive, the author denies his main character, Dr. Maina, the benefit of doubt he could have got as a victim of 'slips of the scapel'. This highly dents the characterization in the novel. By gagging Dr. Maina, Dawood makes him melodramatic and incredible.

In the case of Hawkins, it is unbelievable that Dr. Maina could later want to rekindle his love affair with Jill after the death of her father. It can only mean that Dr. Maina consciously killed Harold Hawkins in order to get her daughter Jill. The eagerness to get love instead of first offering

commiseration to her is not normal. Worse still, Dr. Maina chooses to write instead of travelling to talk on one on one. Jill's reply to him shows the folly of his actions. She writes as follows:

Dear Joe,

Thank you for your proposal made for the second time. I am afraid that the argument put forward by you in support of your renewed offer is precisely the reason for me to reject it. My beloved father's ghost would haunt me for the rest of my life if I married the man at whose hand-perhaps inadvertently-he met his death.

It is better that we never see each other again.(125)

Dr. Maina does not come out as a character operating in the realm of subconscious mind but a common criminal out to drive his selfish agenda.

Similarly, in the case of Najib Nassir, Dr. Maina seems to be quite aware of his actions. He operated on Najib successfully. His conscious mind was in control, though in constant battle with the subconscious. But to go back to the ward late at night with a mission to kill him is incredible. If the "accident" occurs on the operating table, that would be justifiably blamed on his subconscious mind. Had he succeeded, it would have been outright premeditated murder. Dawood does not succeed in portraying the power of the subconscious mind. He says as follows:

When he had recovered from the frightening experience and came back to his senses, he looked out of the window... The car park was almost empty. All the visitors had left after leaving flowers and gifts for their loved ones. The night askari was sitting in a box-dozing. Maina opened the drawer of his desk and picked up a small parcel. (224)

The fact that the author says that he had come back to his senses means he was aware of his action when leaving his office on a mission to kill Najib Nassir.

The cases of Mrs. Odongo and Mrs. Desai clearly demonstrate premeditated crime and not accidents on the operating table. As observed earlier the two women were not the target objects of

revenge. They just happened to be caught up in the cross fire. They suffered the consequences meant for their husbands. For a person of Dr. Maina's professional and social standing, it is incredible. Dawood fails to give the character the traits expected in a natural setting. These are highly melodramatic traits of the soap operas not of a serious literary work. Melodrama dents Mr. Maina's Credibility as a character operating in the realm of the subconscious.

Muhoho's role in the novel is too much predictable. He makes the novel read more of a work of choreography than a work of fiction. He is a stage managed character. Dawood interferes with the plot of the novel by having Muhoho study psychiatry so that he can come and defend his putative father. However, on another level, it is a strength in the novel. Dawood's mission was to demonstrate the evil of rejecting others. Dr. Maina rejected his son Muhoho only for the latter to defend him during the trial. Ironically, it was Muhoho who made him get a rather lenient judgment. As observed earlier, Muhoho demonstrates the way to live with rejection. It is to forget the past and move on. This is Dawood's equivocation on his vision of rejection, to avenge or not to.

But perhaps what raises more questions on characterization is Dawood's use of a doctor character to explore the relationship between rejection and revenge. Doctors are supposed to be guided by the Hippocratic oath and are supposed to do everything within their power to save life. It is therefore incredible that Dr. Maina uses his defenseless patients to revenge. Worse still is the use of associates of the real culprits to avenge. In an interview with Dr. Nderitu, a heart, and chest specialist at the Nairobi Women's hospital held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the Nairobi Women's Hospital Cafeteria, he said this of the doctor – patient relationship:

Professional ethics prohibit a surgeon from operating on patients he or she feels uncomfortable with. These include close relatives. The blood relationship between a surgeon and a patient is likely to influence his or her judgment. When one sees blood during operation, he or she may panic and become sympathetically involved instead of remaining empathetic. Even the general physicians may give a stronger

dose to a relative with the hope that it is going to ease pain faster. This overdose could become catastrophic. For relatives and other patients that one has a conflict with, the rule is to disqualify oneself just like lawyers do citing a conflict of interest. You can imagine what could happen if such a surgeon lost a parent or sibling on the operating table. It would be too difficult to live with such a painful memory.

The choice of a surgeon character to explore the theme of rejection vis- a- vis vengeance is therefore not suitable. As a rule, literature must perpetuate morals in a society. Dr. Maina, Dawood's prime vehicle of exploring his major theme in the novel is down-right unethical and unprofessional.

Conversely, in characterization, Dawood has succeeded in translating the medical profession into a credible work of fiction. In spite of the excesses of Dr. Maina, he still emerges a credible doctor character. In fictionalizing his profession, Dawood has emerged as an experimental and innovative author who infuses the literary field with the medical profession. Eye of the Storm therefore qualifies and occupies a special place in what could loosely be termed as medical fiction. It is no wonder that Dawood is more famous for his writing than for his medical profession.

In using Dr. Maina as his protagonist in the novel, Dawood lowers an erstwhile 'godly' position of a surgeon to the level of an ordinary human being. Dr. Maina comes out as a person who has feelings. He has both his good side and bad side. He is grateful to those who extend acceptance to him but is ruthless to those who reject him. If it were not for his excesses that border on criminality, Dr. Maina is an example of a character who works his way up the social-economic ladder. Dawood uses him to demonstrate a society experiencing social political transition, from colonialism to political and economic independence.

At this juncture therefore, a comparative study of the author's biography and his doctor character is inevitable. Dr. Maina is to a larger extent a mirror to Yusuf Dawood's life. Both Dawood and his character Joe Maina come from poor backgrounds. Their parents and specifically fathers

struggle to see them through the education system. When it becomes difficult to pay school fees, well wishers pay for their university education. Dawood got his scholarship from the Memon Education and welfare society. On the other hand, Maina gets a scholarship from the Catholic Church in Italy at the behest of Father Johnson.

Both Dawood and Maina studied at Dublin University and University of Leeds. Both had a short stint at Cambridge University. At Cambridge, they both faced rejection in the form of a notice which read that ‘Only fellows are permitted to walk on the lawns. If it is not a fellow it most certainly is a foreign tourist who probably cannot read English’(133). This was certainly meant for non-whites. Despite all the odds, both got their fellowship in surgery. After University Education, both severed their links with their families to establish a surgical career in Nairobi. The racially run U.K.H Hospital that Dr. Maina launches his surgeon’s career is unmistakably the Aga Khan hospital where Dawood started his career in Kenya. Like in The Price of Living Dawood has fictionalized his life in the character of Dr Maina.

Eye of the Storm is a good novel in contemporary Kenyan literature. One of the purposes of studying literature is to gain knowledge. The novel is an eye opener to a reader into the world of medicine. Dawood’s capability to weave medical terms with ordinary English language that can be easily read by both lay people and literary critics is a big literary score. For non-professional medics, it is easy to see the intricacies of the hospital theatre. As a work of fiction, Eye of the Storm is appropriate for use in the study of the psychoanalytic literary criticism.

A comparative study of characterization between the two novels reveals Dawood’s use of stock characterization in which characters with similar traits and functions are given the same name. In both novels, the protagonists share a name. These are Maina Karanja in The price of Living and Njoroge Maina in Eye of the Storm. The two are up the social- economic scale and the envy of their peers in their respective fields. They both have sons who share the name Muhoho. Similarly, the sons have risen to the apex of academics. Muhoho of The price of Living takes over the management of

his father's business. In Eye of the Storm, Muhoho goes into his father's medical profession, though as a psychiatrist. The stock characterization is evidence of Dawood's character bankruptcy. This emanates from his long experience with autobiographical writings in which there is ready characters hence no need for creativity.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined two literary works by Yusuf K. Dawood, a Kenyan novelist, short story writer and autobiographer. These are The Price of Living and Eye of the Storm. I have interrogated the author's portrayal of the theme of rejection in the two novels. These are the two novels, out of his large retinue of works of fiction that best present the theme of rejection with its attendant evil of vengeance. The author's fixation with the theme of rejection indicates his literary urge to demonstrate the dynamics and intrigues of inter-person relations.

In this study, I found out that the author has presented two forms of rejection: real and perceived rejection. In real rejection, characters are excluded from freely enjoying rights and privileges on the basis of such indicators such as colour, religion, social-economic status and professional achievements. There are, however, some covert forms of rejection like psychological and philosophical rejection. Perceived rejection exists only in the mind of characters making them see imaginary enemies and threats.

The author has ably shown that vengeance is not a recourse to rejection. It only breeds more pain and finally a total rejection of the individual from the rest of humanity. In The Price of Living, Mrs. Armstrong's intentions to revenge are not only nipped in the bud but also lead to her death. In Eye of the Storm, Joe Maina succeeds to carry out his revenge but loses both his professional and social status. The pronouncement by the judge that Joe is 'guilty but insane' alienates him from humanity. Aptly put, vengeance against rejection breeds total rejection.

The research reveals strong autobiographical elements in both Dawood's novels under this study. The author has recreated his childhood experiences through his character Christine in The Price of Living. His youth, education and profession are personified by Dr. Joe Maina in Eye of the Storm. The fictionalization of the author's medical profession through the use of a doctor character has achieved both aesthetic and thematic beauty in Eye of the Storm for a literary critic. For the

general readership, the novel has demystified the medical profession in general and the surgery speciality in particular.

The study evaluated characterization in the form of a corpus overview of Dawood's fictional and autobiographical works for the purpose of chapter two. For the purpose of chapters three and four, which form the heart of this study, characterization in the two novels was critically examined. We found out that Dawood presented two types of characters. The first is the resilient and stoic. This type is personified in the novels by Christine and Muhoho in The Price of Living, and Prof. Kipkorir in Eye of the Storm. The second type of characters is the vengeful and abrasive represented by Mrs. Armstrong in The Price of Living and Dr. Joe Maina in Eye of the Storm. The former appear as authentic while the latter are melodramatic. The resilient and stoic characters survive through rejection and later gain recognition and acceptance while the vengeful and abrasive ones suffer more rejection and finally perish. This is the author's way of castigating vengeance: his vision of the theme of rejection.

The study clearly demonstrates that the subconscious mind of an individual clouds their judgments leading to unbelievable conscious actions. Dawood has explored the power of the suppressed emotions of mistreatment to make a comeback in the conscious actions with catastrophic consequences. He has employed characters suffering from psychological maladjustment. Dawood earns his right place in the literary field as a writer of psychological fiction.

The study recommends further research in the field of the psychological novel. This would open new frontiers not only in the understanding of the literary world but also the world of social relations in the contemporary society. A more close multi-disciplinary research between literature and psychology should be done. This would enhance a better understanding and application of the psychoanalytic literary criticism. In recent studies in literature, new fields have come up to join the canon of the written word. Such new areas include green studies and more lately animal studies. This



study recommends an opening of a new field of study to be called medical literature. Such a discipline would not only broaden the literature field but would also aesthetically enrich it.

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