

Ideology in Thompson’s, Kailey’s, and Robbin-Coker’s collections of poems: A psychoanalytical exploration

Philip Foday Yamba Thulla^{1*}, Ibrahim Mustapha Fofanah²

^{1,2}Institute of Languages and Cultural Studies, School of Education, Njala University, Sierra Leone

*) Corresponding Author, email: pythulla@njala.edu.sl

ABSTRACT

This study employed psychoanalytic theory to delve into the ways Sierra Leonean poets Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker explored themes of despair, lust, and loss in their poetry. Addressing a notable gap in literary criticism, especially regarding Sierra Leonean authors, the research sought to raise the international stature of African writers and support students facing challenges with poetry in West African public exams. Employing psychoanalytic principles, the study uncovered deeper meanings behind the unconscious drives and emotions in these poets' works. It involved analyzing the occurrence of themes, detecting psychoanalytically significant lines and phrases, and identifying central themes and literary techniques used to express complex emotions. The analysis, which combined thematic and literary analysis, focused on the language, themes, and use of figurative language, diction, and other poetic devices in Thompson’s 41, Kailey’s 20, and Robbin-Coker’s 23 poems. This approach highlighted their distinct ways of depicting despair, lust, and loss. By integrating thematic analysis, the study offered a more profound comprehension of each poet's style. Ultimately, this psychoanalytic exploration aimed to enhance critical interpretation skills and helped in understanding the deeper psychological aspects of Sierra Leonean and other African poetry.

Keywords: despair; loss; lust; psychoanalysis; relationship

First Received:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
September 20 th , 2023	October 13 th , 2023	November 30 th , 2023	December 30 th , 2023

How to cite (in APA style):

Thulla, P. F. Y. & Fofanah, I. M. (2023). Ideology in Thompson’s, Kailey’s, and Robbin-Coker’s collections of poems: A psychoanalytical exploration. *Journal of Research on English and Language Learning (J-REaLL)*, 5(1), 24–35.
<https://doi.org/10.33474/j-reall.v5i1.20586>

INTRODUCTION

The study explored how Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker addressed themes of despair, lust, and loss in their poetry collections. These themes are common in literature, having been shaped by anxiety, death, and modern distractions (Bano, 2020; Hunter, 2018; Kanwar, 2014; Huber, 2008; Schaffner, 2016; Vidler, 2002). Roccas (2017) suggests that laziness, indifference, procrastination, relationships, dread of death, and worry are the causes of despair. This is reflected in literature such as Homer’s ‘Iliad’, Jane Austin’s ‘Pride and Prejudice’ and Christopher Marlowe’s ‘Doctor Faustus’, which demonstrate the effects of lust and loss as manifestations of despair. These issues remain relevant in today’s society.

The origins of psychoanalytic literary analysis can be traced back to Sigmund Freud, the Viennese psychiatrist. Freud proposed that the topics people discuss can be derived from a range of sources, such as past experiences, current relationships and issues, and future aspirations and goals (Hossain, 2017; Macherey, 2015; Ellmann, 2014). He also viewed dreams as a valuable source of analysis, paying attention to both explicit and implicit content (Khan, 2018; Frosh, 2008; Rosenfeld, 2003). Believing that novel protagonists are either poets or neurotics (Fromm, 2013; Fitriani, 2019; Killingmo, 2007), traditional Freudian criticism has focused on thematic content (Ellmann, 2014). However, psychoanalytic approaches to literary criticism go beyond this, examining works of art in terms of character attitudes, inspiration, audience appeal, motives, and language and symbolism (Niaz et al., 2019; Hossain (2017)). A comprehensive analysis of the relationship between reading, literature, and culture necessitates an exploration of the social objectives and physical effects of culture (Hossain, 2017; Wright, 2013). Holland (2000) argues that psychoanalytic critics must consider the author's, readers', and inferred mental states. Rosenfeld (2003) proposes that a death drive motivates people towards death, and Sewall (1994) suggests that metaphorical interpretations are often unrecognized. This study looks into how the visible and hidden meanings in poems interact with each other and how this affects the writing, granting it a sense of authenticity.

In their study, Zariyeva et al. (2019) found that the seven deadly sins of Catholic confessional practices, such as lust, loss, and despair, have been explored by renowned poets, authors, and theologians like Dante Alighieri, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, William Langland, and John Wycliffe. This study seeks to bridge the gap between the perspectives of non-African writers and what Sierra Leoneans truly know and believe by providing literary criticism of African writers, particularly Sierra Leoneans. It also aims to provide information about African poets and indigenous African knowledge. For instance, Sierra Leonean writers often draw inspiration from topics such as love, lust, and despair, likely due to the prolonged civil war, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks (Thulla et al., 2022; Fofanah et al., 2021). In 'The Song of the Woman of My Land', Oumar Farouk Sesay bemoans the suffering of women (Thulla & Fofanah, 2023). Mohamed Gibril Sesay's 'This Side of Nothingness' tells the tale of Momodu, a storyteller who creates stories from his family's history. Gbanabom Hallowell's 'The Art of the Lonely Wanderer' examines the yearning and desire for a stable and prosperous society. This paper examines the recent works of Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker, which are said to explore similar topics to teach us how to confront and manage vices, no matter how powerful they may be. It is expected that these poets' collections will contain multiple poems, have recurring lines, focus on shared topics, express universal themes, and use literary techniques to convey their message of despair, lust, and loss. The researchers expect that the poets' works will include a greater number of poems, feature recurring lines, center around familiar topics, express universal ideas, and utilize literary techniques to convey their feelings of sorrow, desire, and loss.

This research will be of interest to readers in Africa, where there is currently a scarcity of scholarly examinations of African literary works, notably those by Sierra Leonean authors. This information gap has an impact on West African students' academic achievement. The research is significant for English language studies since it helps challenge pupils and develops critical thinking in interpreting references in literature, particularly Sierra Leonean poetry. It also brings together non-African and Sierra Leonean perspectives on African literature.

The research objectives were as follows: 1) Quantify the occurrence of poems by Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker that address the themes of despair, lust, and loss. 2) Identify recurring lines or phrases within the poetry of these authors that contain allusions to the themes of despair, lust, and loss. 3) Examine the prevalent subjects and themes employed by these poets as indicative of themes related to despair, lust, and loss. 4) Determine the overarching and commonly recurring themes of despair, lust, and loss that are most prominently explored across the collective body of work by these poets. 5) Investigate the predominant literary devices and techniques employed by these poets to articulate and convey their emotions and sentiments associated with despair, lust, and loss.

METHOD

A thematic analysis, combined with literary analysis focusing on the words, languages, and themes of the poems as expressed by the authors and how they described these through figurative language, diction, and other poetic devices, was used to analyze the poetry collections *Pieces* by Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, *Between Two Hearts* by Princess Mildred Kailey, and *Dancing on My Way* by Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker. Thematic and literary analysis techniques were used to identify patterns in the poetry collections, primarily focusing on understanding and interpreting the contents. This method allowed for a deep understanding of contextual nuances and perspectives, providing essential insights into various features of the poems. Additionally, this approach helped to quantify the frequency of specific lexical units, sentences, subjects, or thematic aspects in the poetry collections. In this study, the content of the poems from each collection was closely read to identify psychoanalytic references. These references were manually broad-coded to include whole lines and verses, which were then grouped by theme and analyzed in relation to psychoanalytic theory. After analyzing each poem, the number of lines, subjects, themes, and literary devices were manually counted. Furthermore, the main literary devices used in each poem were identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section first presents the study's results, followed by the discussion (analysis). The study examined three poetry collections, *Pieces*, *Between Two Hearts*, and *Dancing on My Way*, using content analysis to identify psychoanalytic themes and literary devices. The themes and literary devices were then discussed. The research objectives were as follows: 1) Quantify the occurrence of poems by Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker that address the themes of despair, lust, and loss. 2) Identify recurring lines or phrases within the poetry of these authors that contain allusions to the themes of despair, lust, and loss. 3) Examine the prevalent subjects and themes employed by these poets as indicative of themes related to despair, lust, and loss. 4) Determine the overarching and commonly recurring themes of despair, lust, and loss that are most prominently explored across the collective body of work by these poets. 5) Investigate the predominant literary devices and techniques employed by these poets to articulate and convey their emotions and sentiments associated with despair, lust, and loss.

Occurrences of despair, lust, and loss in the poems of Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker

To address this objective, the researchers read the poems closely, identified those with themes of despair, lust, and loss, and counted them. The results are displayed in [Table 1](#) below.

Table 1
Poems with themes of despair, lust, and loss

Collection	Poems	Number of poems	Total number of poems in a collection
<i>Pieces</i>	'Man'; 'Pieces'; 'Splinters'; 'Ruins of destruction'; 'The beggar'; 'Thorn heart'; 'To Mount Sugar Loaf (14 August 2017)'; 'Lost Eastern Boy'; 'Your heart'; 'Holding hands'; 'One song'; 'Wars'; 'Innocent'; 'Bruised soul'; 'Dignity stares'; 'Mines'; 'The poors'; 'Rain'; 'Lonely stars'; 'Sword clash'; 'Dark child'; 'Too many flowers'; 'I am a prostitute'; 'When they return home'; 'When they were us'; 'Shoot me!'; 'To die in Aleppo'; 'The man by the dusty road'; 'I see you'; 'The un-noticed'; 'The unknown woman'; 'The unknown man'; 'Unaligned stars'; 'Natures model'; 'Losing the Sun'; 'Kaki n̄ du f̄o sajin' (The uniform is short of supply for the sergeant, the corporal is asking for one); 'J̄on pamayn [trowe pan Jon res]' (John's palmoil spilt on John's rice); 'M̄onki in blak an' (The monkey's black hand); 'Meledyu farinya' (a stale thing or person); 'Trade gentri man' (A once rich man); and 'Kombra f̄ol' (Hen).	41	81
<i>Between Two Hearts</i>	'Thought Of War'; 'Save my Soul'; 'The Golden Room'; 'The Beauty Of Love'; 'Rituals' 'Fill My Cup'; 'Lady In Red'; 'The Clock'; 'I Fell In Love With His Vision'; 'The Test of Time'; 'The Seed'; 'His Heart Is Inside Mine'; 'The Pen'; 'Ah It Pains'; 'His Heart Is Inside Mine'; 'The Pen' 'The Way I Breathed'; 'My Crime'; 'You Drive Me Wild'; and 'Adam Without an Eve'.	20	50
<i>Dancing on My Way</i>	'An African Abroad'; 'The Silence Between Two Echoes'; 'One Day Of Rain'; 'We Named it Freetown'; 'West Coast Gale Night'; 'Sleepless in Sierra Leone'; 'Rebel Rebel'; 'Basra Road'; 'The Mamba's Revenge'; 'Iremoje: Asipade'; 'Oriki Orisa-An Incantation'; 'The Borders of Vision'; 'Taste of Ashes'; 'Davidson Nicol'; 'The Empire Writes Back'; 'News of the World'; 'And To You My Brothers'; 'First World Love'; 'The Angelic Verses'; 'No Through Road for Poets'; 'A Stone's Throw From Freedom'; 'The Scarecrow Trade Journal'; and 'And After This Our Exile'.	23	23

The researchers anticipated that the poets' collections would contain more poems conveying messages of despair, lust, and loss. This is evidenced by Thompson's collection which contains around half of her poems (41/81), Kailey's collection which contains 20 poems out of 50 poems on the three themes, and Robbin-Coker's collection which contains 23 poems out of 23 poems on the same themes (see Table 1). This finding is significant, as it supports the notion that Africans are writing more about what is most meaningful to them, based on past experiences and current circumstances.

Recurring lines and phrases reflecting despair, lust, and loss in the poems of Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker

To address objective 2, the researchers read the poems to identify and count the most common lines that allude to despair, lust, and loss. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Recurring lines of despair, lust, and loss

Collection	Common lines	Number of References
<i>Pieces</i>	/...wags in the morning like a dog.../ (Man: Line 5). /...waddles for survival like a fish.../ (Man: Line 5). /Man is trapped.../ (Man: Line 1). /...he is strapped.../ (Man: Line 1). /He tries every day to un-wriggle.../ (Man: Line 2). /...save himself to from the scrabble.../ (Man: Line 4). /...praises.../ (Pieces: Line 1), /...hallelujah.../ (Pieces: Line 2), /...crucified.../ (Pieces: Line 2), /Master's.../ (Man: Line 6), /...save.../ (Man: Line 10). /Earth.../ (Man: Line 2). /Mars.../ (Man: Line 2). /...dog.../ (Man: Line 7). /...fish.../ (Man: Line 8). /...wind.../ (Man: Line 9). /...dribbles at night like the	63

wind.../ (Man: Line 5). /...too many shattered pieces.../ (Pieces: Line 5). /...some thrive in other's pieces.../ (Pieces: Line 6). /...others run from other's pieces.../ (Pieces: Line 9). /...when the cloud cracked, and the rays muddled in fresh blood bruised in dust.../ (Splinters: Line 4). /I turned, as splinters dared me. / (Splinters: Line 5). /Some came in pieces.../ (Pieces: Line 1). /Some scattered in hallelujah.../ (Pieces: Line 2). /...others crucified in glory.../ (Pieces Line 2). /Dwarfed silhouette bears fractured frames.../ (Splinters: 2). /...cracked faces forsook.../ (Splinters: Line 3). /...talking splinters? / (Splinters: Line 3). /Crying splinters? / (Splinters: Line 3). /...naked, for the capture of her captor. / (The Beggar: Line 20). /...bleach the stains and iron the wrinkles.../ (Thorn heart: Line14). /I came to pick up the crumbs beneath Mount Sugarloaf.../ (To Mount Sugar Loaf: 14 August 2017: Line 1). /Speechless for neighbours swallowed in anguish. / (To Mount Sugar Loaf (14 August 2017: Line 2). /I came to pick up the crumbs beneath Mount Sugar Loaf.../ (To Mount Sugar Loaf: 14 August 2017: Line 1). /Speechless for survivors haunted in silence as mangled flesh squirm in sugar. / (To Mount Sugar Loaf: Line 3). /...find directions/ (Lost Eastern Boy: Line 3). /...swollen water.../ (Lost Eastern Boy: l-Line 4). /...water rises.../ (Lost Eastern Boy: Line 6). /...faded.../ (Lost Eastern Boy: Line12). /...face-less face.../ (Lost Eastern Boy: Line 13). /...ghastly shepherd boy.../ (Lost Eastern Boy: Line 14). /I wish I planted your heart.../ (Your heart: Line 1). /I wish our hearts were one! / (Your heart: Last line). /Wither displaced young flowers planted to blossom.../ (War's Innocent: Line 2). /Tired, hot red eyes watch baked soiled sole as dried leaves return.../ (Bruised Soul: Line 1). /Torn clothes dragging; clutching dignity became dampened spirit shivers.../ (Dignity stares: Line 1). /Water, like snowfalls digging enemy mines migrating scattered bodies.../ (Mines: Line 1). /You will not redeem my need, so I work. / (I am a prostitute: Line 4) /You will not hire, so I rock.../ (I am a prostitute: Line 5). /...prostitute; who are you? / (I am a prostitute: Line 7). /...hen the Syria sky splits with acrobatic prowess and its people lie dusted. / (To die in Aleppo: Lines 16-18). /When stars disagree, birds fly backwards as hyenas whistle. / (Unaligned stars: Line 1) /Mightily you impose your stand like a staring obelisk daring the sky./ (Natural model: Line 1). /She never begged for anything.../ (The Beggar: Line 1). /After your clouded brows cracked the cloud, dimmed the sun's ray, you slumped.../ (Losing the Sun: Line 1). /You can lose the sun if in your quest...? (Shifting Clouds: Line 1). /Kombraføl kin wakawaka/ (Kombra føl: Line 1). /Jømpjømp, enføtfet.../ (Kombra føl: Line 2). /Bøt I nò de jømp faya. / (Kombra føl: Line 3). /...clouded.../ (Shifting clouds: Line 1). /...sun's rays.../ (Shifting clouds: Line 2). /...dust.../ (Shifting clouds: Line 7). /...breeze.../ (Shifting clouds: Line16).

*Between Two
Hearts*

/I like to sit at the doorstep like a woman looking forward to her favourite love.../ (Thought Of War: Line 1). /...for I am sick of love.../ (Thought Of War: Line 1). /A new day has arrived; a new problem on its way.../ (Thought Of War: Line 7). /Would you love me like your first love; and like breath to a dying man? / (Save my Soul: Line 5). /...the key to my heart, and take hold of my night.../ (The Golden Room: Line 8). /He comes from my behind.../ (The Beauty Of Love: Line 1). /Only the water that drips from your dripping pipe.../ (The Beauty Of Love: Line 7). /...with a blow job.../ (The Beauty Of Love: Line 5). /Hold my sword.../ (Thought Of War: Line 4). /...consumed in a world clean like water.../ (Thought Of War: Line 7). /...magical tongue.../ (Save My Soul: Line 8). /You left me alone in the room.../ (The Beauty Of Love: Line 5). /I feel neglected.../ (The Beauty Of Love: Line 12). /Beneath his skin lies the vision I fell in love with. / (I Fell In Love With His Vision: Line 1). /But, it turns into division! / (I Fell In Love With His Vision: Line 4). /...I like/ (You Drive Me Wild: Line 2). /I love,/ (You Drive Me Wild: Line 3). I enjoyed.../ (You Drive me Wild: Line 8). /I wait.../ (Adam without an Eve: Line 1). /...hold.../ (Adam without an Eve: Line 1). /...comes.../ (Adam without an Eve: Line 2). /...cool.../ (Adam without an Eve: Line 2). /...glow.../ (Adam without an Eve: Line 3). /...beam.../ (Adam without an Eve: Line 3). /...pow, pow.../ (You Drive

27

	Me Wild: Line 1). /Hmm.../ (You Drive Me Wild: Line 3). /...Oh.../ (You Drive Me Wild: Line 5).	
<i>Dancing on My Way</i>	/My dreams have gone down with the measles./ (An African Abroad: Line 38). /All I can do is brace myself for crude/ (An African Abroad: Line 40). /Awakening and the of even darker blues. / (An African Abroad: Line 41). /...to listen in sleep.../ (An African Abroad: Line 21). /It is not right/ (An African Abroad: Line 26). /That destinies like yours and a star-crossed moon's should be sighing in tandem here.../ (An African Abroad: Lines 27). /What one needs is not truth but an alibi.../ (An African Abroad: Line 37). /She has been to hell in the search for heaven.../ (The Silence Between Two Echoes: Line 3). /But for this, people would have ridiculed me. / (The Silence Between Two Echoes: Line 23). /...a biased Hebrew Chronicle.../ (One Day of Rain: Line 14). /Of a hybridic fog band Orisha/ (One Day of Rain: Line 9). /Are just so many verse prints in sand, / (One Day of Rain: Line 10). /They will perish, like rootless portents./ (One Day of Rain: Line 10). /...the embers of the words quietly expiring.../ (One Day of Rain: Line 32). /Untruth, injustice, contradictions/ (We Named it Freetown: Line 7). /Tangible incarnadine manumissions.../ (We Named it Freetown: Line 8). /...spirit.../ (We Named it Freetown: Line 33). /My homeboy-mojo's undismayed, as he polevaults/ (We Named it Freetown: Line 31). Over the neighbourhood's fragile fences:/ (We Named it Freetown: Line 32). /Cow Yard, Red Pump, Fire Stone, Cotton Tree,/ (We Named it Freetown: Line 33). /Fire Burn, Dondono, Dove Cut, Recree/ (We Named it Freetown: Line 34). /Brown-brown is passed round/Like candy at playtime. Their Commander/ (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 6). /'Petty Rambo', is sporting the bland (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 7). /Inscrutable smile of a seasoned/ (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 8). /Fourteen-year-old death-dealer./ (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 9). /He fires in the air – the call to order. (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 11)./Bo lef mi ya; pikin dey jòyn soja?/ (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 14). /There's no such thing as a child soldier, surely?/ (Rebel Rebel: Line II: 13). /I am still fearful that after the burial,/ (Rebel Rebel: Line IV: 4). /Those undead child soldiers will not / (Rebel Rebel: Line IV: 5). /Let us back in through the gates of history./ (Rebel Rebel: Line IV: 6). /The brother from Cumbria.../ (The Borders of Vision: Line 2). /...high in the air, his torso swaying/ (The Borders of Vision: Line 8). /Suggestively to the pulsating clan.../ (The Borders of Vision: Line 9). /The West runs a credit resource/ (News of the World: Line 3). /And gives underdevelopment 'grants' To/ (News of the World: Line 4). /...the Rest of Us./ (News of the World: Lines 5). /A vengeful Gabriel dragged me through the mire/ (And To You My Brothers: Line 1). /Of my own banished uninvited dreams./ (And To You My Brothers: Line 2). /That even conspires, now and then, to celebrate/ (First World Love: Line 10). /The wayward benevolence of First World charity./ (First World Love: Line 11). /Many had agreed to set aside/ (The Angelic Verses: Line 5). /Salman's recklessness, his understated/ (The Angelic Verses: Line 7). /Ignorance of the loneliness in bear-baiting./ (The Angelic Verses: Line 8). /You have reached your destination –/ (No Through Road for Poets: Line 1). The shrine and dwelling place of/ (No Through Road for Poets: 2). /Oya, the future wife of Obatala,/ (No Through Road for Poets: Line 3). /As yet a child, radiant in child-light. (No Through Road for Poets: Line 4). /Mind the gap as you approach./ (No Through Road for Poets: Line 5).	49

The researchers anticipated that the poets' lines would allude more to the subjects of despair, lust, and loss. As Table 2 above shows, many lines in the poets' collections reflect psychoanalytic messages, with Thompson's collection having the most (63). This finding holds significant importance as it reinforces the idea that African writers employ poetic lines as a crucial means to articulate and address everyday issues.

Common subjects employed by these poets as indicative of themes related to despair, lust, and loss

To address this objective, the researchers closely examined the poems and identified and counted the recurring subjects of despair, lust, and loss. The results are presented in [Table 3](#).

Table 3
Common subjects and themes

Collection	Common Subjects	Common Themes	Number of References
<i>Pieces</i>	fear, conflict, moral decline, social inequality, frustration, disillusionment, exploitation, confusion, erosion of philosophy, poverty, destruction, rebuilding, ravaging human dignity, helplessness, social issues, economic inequality, indifference to prostitutes, alienation, assimilation, insufficiency, selfishness, delusion, doom, temporary world, misery, man's actions (and inactions), bemoaning, regret	Despair	25
	momentariness of life, death, war, sense of being lost, violence, brutality, consequences of defying nature, notoriety	Loss	8
<i>Between Two Heart</i>	melancholy, disappointment, nagging, resentment, loneliness, cultural taboos and prejudices surrounding sex and sexuality, annoyance, noncommittal, insincerity of lover	Despair	9
	Desire, cravings, love-sickness, violent yearnings, insatiability, increased lust, eagerness, want for intimate sexual contact, romantic intimacy, sexual relationship, the viability of love, sentimentality, sensuality, gentle passion, sumptuousness, love, the reality of being loved	Lust	17
<i>Dancing on My Way</i>	unaffectionate gestures, hopelessness, hope, sedation, bitterness of parting, desire, uncertainty, sluggishness, conflict between conscience and truth, oppression, lamentation, dramatization of the past, questioning the authority of the Yoruba gods and the Santeria faith's initiation	Despair	13

The table above summarizes the common subjects, themes, and number of references in the three different collections of poetry. The first collection, *Pieces*, has 25 references to subjects related to despair and 8 references to subjects related to loss. The second collection, *Between Two Hearts*, has 17 references to subjects related to lust and 9 references to subjects related to despair. The third collection, *Dancing on My Way*, has 13 subjects relating to despair.

Commonly recurring themes of despair, lust, and loss that are most prominently explored across the collective body of work by these poets

The researchers looked for similar themes such as despair, lust, and loss to address this objective. [Table 3](#) above shows the result. All of the collections dealt with the themes of despair, lust, and loss, which is significant as it confirms the poets' initial premises that the collections would explore psychoanalytic messages of despair, lust, and loss.

Common literary devices and techniques employed by these poets to articulate and convey their emotions and sentiments associated with despair, lust, and loss

The result of the researchers' close reading of the poem to address this objective is displayed in [Table 4](#) below; they identified the common literary devices that convey the message of despair, lust, and loss.

Table 4
Common literary devices

Collection	Common Literary Devices
<i>Pieces</i>	Apostrophe, Metaphor, Refrain
<i>Between</i>	Dramatic Monologue, Apostrophe, Simile, Metaphor, Onomatopoeia, Refrain,
<i>Two Hearts</i>	Assonance, Comparison
<i>Dancing on My Way</i>	Dramatic Monologue, 'Dramatic Dialogue', Personification

The authors of the three collections used 'apostrophe' and 'dramatic monologue' most often, with 'refrain' and 'metaphor' also being two of their frequent devices. This is significant as it demonstrates that African poets often utilize literary devices that best emphasize the meaning of their work.

DISCUSSION

This paper examines the psychoanalytic messages of despair, lust, and loss conveyed in the three collections of poems: *Pieces*, *Between Two Hearts*, and *Dancing on My Way*. The analysis below covers the common lines, subjects, themes, and prosodic elements of the poems.

Occurrences of despair, lust, and loss in the poems

Thompson's *Pieces* explores 41 poems that treat internal conflicts and human journeys, including despair. This exploration, consistent with the findings of [Fromm \(2013\)](#), [Fitriani \(2019\)](#), and [Killingmo \(2007\)](#), becomes a canvas for addressing the internal conflicts that define the human journey. Kailey's *Between Two Hearts* uses 20 poems that challenge societal norms about sex and sexuality, hinting at themes of lust. Through her verses, readers are beckoned to immerse themselves in the realm of authentic love, while the poetess's underlying intent remains to infuse a sense of joy through the celebration of love itself. This is discovered by [Hossain \(2017\)](#), [Macherey \(2015\)](#), and [Ellmann \(2014\)](#) who state that Freud proposed that the topics people discuss can be derived from a range of sources, such as past experiences, current relationships and issues, and future aspirations and goals. Robbin-Coker's *Dancing on My Way* explores all 23 poems to evoke a poignant sense of nostalgia, weaving intricate threads of college friendships and the rich tapestry of Sierra Leone. This stands in stark juxtaposition to Robbin-Coker's 'An African Abroad', where an undercurrent of anguish courses through the verses, mirroring the poet's struggle to reciprocate the love he's been given. The composition is bifurcated into two sections - one a heartfelt homage to a departed friend, Pius, and the other a portrayal of the melancholy tied to the departure from college life. The poet's suggestion of adopting a trance-like state to preserve the past echoes Keats' yearning for transcendence in 'Ode to a Nightingale', illustrating a shared desire to bridge temporal gaps, similar to Shashi Deshpande's quest for identity and freedom in [Bano \(2020\)](#).

Recurring lines and phrases reflecting despair, lust, and loss

The three poets explore recurring lines that reflect despair, lust, and loss. Kailey's *Between Two Hearts*, the opening poem 'Man' reflects human suffering and despair. Robbin-Coker's *Dancing on My Way* uses lines that evoke a sense of loss and detachment, such as in 'The Silence Between Two Echoes'. Thompson's *Pieces* employs language that reflects despair and the fractured nature of human existence. as discovered by [Niaz et al., \(2019\)](#) and [Hossain \(2017\)](#). Together, their works resonate through themes of love, introspection, and the human condition, revealing a rich tapestry of perspectives.

Common subjects

Many subjects point to despair, lust, and loss in the collections of the three poets. For example, Robbin-Coker's Collection reveals themes of cultural identity, resilience, and nostalgia. Within the lines of 'One Day of Rain' and 'We Named it Freetown', he passionately resurrects Yoruba deities and the Santeria faith, crafting a reverent homage to his roots. The former piece stands as a testament to the valorous past, challenging the erosion of African legacy. 'We Named it Freetown' stands as a critical reflection on his birthplace, condemning champions of tyranny. Through vivid imagery and

celestial allusions, Robbin-Coker fortifies his verses with an unyielding call to rescue fading customs and repudiate subjugation. Kailey's collection focuses on love, its various dimensions, and emotional closeness, similar to [Kanwar's \(2014\)](#) portrayal of love in literature. Her verses, exemplified in 'Save My Soul' and 'The Golden Room' become portals into realms of vulnerability, affection, yearning, and reassurance. 'Save my Soul' bares the ache for a profound communion, while 'The Golden Room' chronicles the metamorphosis of emotional hesitance into a tapestry of romance. With tender phrases, Kailey adroitly unravels the intricate threads of love's labyrinth, her verses perpetually orbiting the theme of seeking emotional closeness and solace. This inferred mental state is what [Holland \(2000\)](#) talks about when he states that psychoanalytic critics must consider the author's, reader's inferred mental states. Thompson's collection addresses colonialism, societal inequities, disillusionment, and the human spirit's resilience. Her stanzas, and housing poems like 'Ruins of Destruction', 'The Beggar', and 'To Mount Sugar Loaf' (14 August 2017), unearth the scars left by colonial powers. 'Ruins of Destruction' and 'The Beggar' converge on the melancholic themes of bereavement, bondage, and moral decay. 'To Mount Sugar Loaf' stands as a poignant elegy, enlisting nature's tableau to convey exasperation and mortality. Thompson's metaphors pierce the soul, invoking visceral imagery to portray the stark panorama of colonial hardships and tragedy. Her verses form a chorus of lamentation, a poignant testament to injustice.

Commonly recurring themes

Common themes across all three poets include love, introspection, the human condition, despair, and loss. Each poet's work reflects a unique perspective on these themes. Robbin-Coker's voice, for instance, resonates with a clarion call to heritage, Kailey orchestrates verses that echo the heart's whispers, and Thompson crafts elegies that honor history's overlooked wounds. Together, their words harmonize to compose a symphony of human experience, each note distinct yet profoundly resonant. Thompson's poetry delves into the decline of philosophy in African nations, the erosion of identity, and the pursuit of reconciliation. Her piece 'Lost Eastern Boy' employs the metaphor of a shepherd boy gone astray to vividly illustrate the harsh realities of poverty and disillusionment. Through the lens of nature, she weaves themes of lost identity and societal responsibility. In another work titled 'Your Heart', Thompson's tone shifts from an initial sense of foreboding to a more emotionally charged one. Here, she articulates a yearning for reconciliation and mourns the loss of love, conveying a profound sense of defeat and a longing for resolution ([Huber, 2008](#); [Holland, 2000](#)). Kailey, on the other hand, engages with themes revolving around intense and potentially destructive love. Her poems, notably 'The Beauty Of Love' and 'Rituals', employ striking imagery to explore the depths of intimate relationships. Even in their intensity, she views love as a ritual, acknowledging its captivating yet potentially damaging facets. Through her verses, she employs explicit sexual references and rituals to convey the complex landscape of emotional experiences.

Common literary devices and techniques

The poets - Thompson, Kailey, and Robbin-Coker - distinguish themselves through their individual stylistic choices, thematic explorations, and emotional resonance, thus contributing to a rich tapestry of poetic expression. Thompson's poetic compositions accentuate the destructive potential inherent in human conduct. She achieves this by skillfully weaving religious diction and allusions to the natural world, effectively portraying the decline of humanity and the consequent necessity for divine intervention. This thematic thread is particularly evident in her poem 'Man', wherein dictions such as 'praises' (1), 'hallelujah' (2), 'crucified' (2), 'Master' (11), and 'save' (22) are strategically employed to underscore this overarching motif. Furthermore, her verses 'Man' and 'Shifting Clouds' harness an array of nature-centric lexicons, such as 'Earth', 'Mars', 'dog', 'fish', 'wind', 'clouded', 'sun's rays', and 'dust', to accentuate the urgency of divine intercession for humanity's preservation and the restoration of the environment. This has been found by [Niaz et al., \(2019\)](#) and [Hossain \(2017\)](#), who state that psychoanalytic approaches to literary criticism go beyond this, examining works of art in terms of character attitudes, inspiration, audience appeal, motives, and language and symbolism.

In essence, the distinctiveness of each poet's style and thematic preoccupations comes to the fore. Kailey's body of work is characterized by its sensuousness and sentimentality, expertly employing vibrant imagery and recurring refrains. Thompson, on the other hand, employs apostrophes, dynamic rhetoric, and vivid visual descriptions to delve into the complexities of disillusionment and vexation. Although the details about Robbin-Coker are limited, they provide insights into his distinctive style and the themes explored in the narrative.

In summary, the poets each adopt a unique artistic approach and focal point in their compositions. Thompson's verses grapple with matters of displacement, affection, and societal imbalance. Kailey crafts her prose to center on sentiment and interpersonal connections. Robbin-Coker's poems, in turn, grapple with subjects spanning imperialism, religiosity, and cultural identity. These three poets collectively offer a range of perspectives to the realm of literature, effectively showcasing the capacity of poetry to tackle a diverse array of human encounters and societal predicaments.

CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore how Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker addressed themes of despair, lust, and loss in their poetry collections, using content analysis and computational methods. The research objectives were as follows: 1) Quantify the occurrence of poems by Celia Eva Beatrice Thompson, Princess Mildred Kailey, and Kayode Adesimi Robbin-Coker that address the themes of despair, lust, and loss. 2) Identify recurring lines or phrases within the poetry of these authors that contain allusions to the themes of despair, lust, and loss. 3) Examine the prevalent subjects and themes employed by these poets as indicative of themes related to despair, lust, and loss. 4) Determine the overarching and commonly recurring themes of despair, lust, and loss that are most prominently explored across the collective body of work by these poets. 5) Investigate the predominant literary devices and techniques employed by these poets to articulate and convey their emotions and sentiments associated with despair, lust, and loss.

The results of the study suggest that:

1. Sierra Leonean poets often express their emotions through their poetry, conveying feelings of despair, lust, and loss.
2. They often use repeated lines to emphasize these emotions.
3. They focus on common topics that allude to these same feelings.
4. Poets from Sierra Leone delve into a range of topics, from despair and lust to loss, in their works. Celia's writings focus on the idea of connection, while Princess delves into emotional turmoil and recollections. Kayode's poems, on the other hand, explore African memories and experiences.
5. Many Sierra Leonean poets employ poetic devices to express their current and past grievances.

The study's implications are important. It offers new insights into the deconstruction of poems for greater comprehension through its extensive examination of psychoanalytical subjects, themes, and characterizations. Furthermore, these interpretations act as a beacon for persons dealing with the issues of love and the pain of losing loved ones. At the same time, this research will benefit literature students who are having problems with the interpretation of poems by promoting the development of their critical thinking skills.

It should be noted, however, that the study focusing on only three poets limited the scope of its conclusions. Still, the findings are valuable because they delve into common human experiences such as despair, lust, and loss that we all face on a daily basis. While the scope of this study is limited to three collections from a single country, the conclusions are noteworthy despite their limitations. They demonstrate efficient approaches for analysing African writers' work, thus improving reader comprehension. To broaden the relevance of these findings, longitudinal studies on poetry by many different writers from different cultural backgrounds are advised. This method will help in widening the generalization of the findings and providing a more thorough grasp of African literary landscapes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the poets of the three collections for permitting us to use their poetry collections for our analysis.

REFERENCES

- Bano, S. (2020). Despondency of women as portrayed in Shashi Deshpande's 'That Long Silence'. *Journal of Science and Innovative Technologies*, 82.
- Ellmann, M. (2014). *Psychoanalytic literary criticism*. Routledge.
- Fitriani, Y. (2019). The analysis of psychological aspects of the main character in movie 'Joker' based on Sigmund Freud's theory. *Humanitatis: Journal of Language and Literature*, 6(1), 119-128.
- Fofanah, I. M., Thulla, P. F. Y., & Moriba, S. (2021). Practitioners and uses of contemporary Mende folk literature in south-eastern Sierra Leone. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 10(6), 97-97.
- Fromm, E. (2013). *Man for himself: An inquiry into the psychology of ethics*. Routledge, 102.
- Frosh, S. (2008). *For and against psychoanalysis*. Routledge.
- Holland, N. N. (2000). The mind and the book: a long look at psychoanalytic literary criticism. *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 2(1), 13-23.
- Hossain, M. M. (2017). Psychoanalytic theory used in English literature: A descriptive study. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Linguistics & Education*, 17(1), 41-46.
- Huber, E. R. (2008). *For Y am sorwe, and sorwe ys Y: Melancholy, despair, and pathology in Middle English literature*. University of Rochester.
- Hunter, E. (2018). *Damned above ground: Dreadful despair in Elizabethan and Stuart literature*. In *fear in the medical and literary imagination, Medieval to Modern*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. (pp. 157-175).
- Kailey, P. M. I. N. (2019). *Between two hearts*. Sierra Leonean Writers Series.
- Kanwar, M. G. (2014). Portrayal of love in literature. *Research scholar, An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Explorations*, 2.
- Robbin-Coker, K. A. (2019). *Dancing on my way*. Sierra Leonean Writers Series.
- Khan, M. M. R. (2018). *The privacy of the self: Papers on psychoanalytic theory and technique*. International Universities Press.
- Killingmo, B. (2007). Relational-oriented character analysis: A position in contemporary psychoanalysis. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 30(2), 76-83.
- Macherey, P. (2015). *Theory of literary production*. Routledge.
- Niaz, A., Stanikzai, S. M., & Sahibzada, J. (2019). Review of Freud's psychoanalysis approach to literary studies. *American International Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(2), 35-44.
- Roccas, N. M. (2017). *Time and despondency: Regaining the present in faith and life*. Ancient Faith Publishing.
- Rosenfeld, H. (2003). *A clinical approach to the psychoanalytic theory of the life and death instincts*. Melanie Klein Today, Volume 1: Mainly Theory: Developments in Theory and Practice, 7, 239.
- Schaffner, A. K. (2016). *Exhaustion: A history*. Columbia University Press.
- Sewall, R. B. (1994). *The life of Emily Dickinson*. Harvard University Press, 1.
- Thompson, C. B. E. (2019). *Pieces*. Sierra Leone Writers Series.
- Thulla, F. Y. P., Koroma, A., Moriba, S., & Fofanah, I. M. (2022). Folk media: Existence, forms, uses and challenges in Mende indigenous communities of Southern Sierra Leone. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 3(4), 13-25.
- Thulla, P. F., & Fofanah, I. M. (2023). Constructivist referents in Oumar Farouk Sesay's 'The song of the women of my land'. *Elsya: Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(3).
- Vidler, A. (2002). *Warped space: Art, architecture, and anxiety in modern culture*. MIT Press.
- Wright, E. (2013). *Psychoanalytic criticism*. Routledge.
- Zarieva, N. P., Iliev, K., Krsteva, M., & Donev, D. (2019). The origins of the seven deadly sins. *Yearbook-Faculty of Philology*, 10(14), 49-53.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright © 2023 Philip Foday Yamba Thulla, Ibrahim Mustapha Fofanah