



## Research Article

© 2023 Abera Kassaw and Melakneh Mengistu.

This is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Received: 4 January 2023 / Accepted: 23 February 2023 / Published: 6 March 2023

# Parental Narcissism and Its Impact on Child: Amadu Maddy's Novel "No Past No Present No Future" as Example

Abera Kassaw<sup>1</sup>

Melakneh Mengistu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD candidate, English Literature,  
Addis Ababa University, NBH1,  
4killo King George VI St,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup>PhD, Addis Ababa University, NBH1,  
4killo King George VI St,  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/jicd-2023-0004>

## Abstract

*The study explores parental narcissism and its impact on child, adopting Amadu's novel 'No Past, No Present, No Future' as example to show how the theory of narcissism could be applied to reexamine Anglophone African novels. The study specifically focuses on how family dynamics and social issues have influenced the mental activities of the major character, Ade and how he fails to cope with the pressures of everyday life, often resulting in psychic dispossession. As such, the researcher uses textual analysis and descriptive criticism approach to unravel the causes and consequences of Ade's narcissistic disturbance. The theory of narcissism which is dominantly informed by Freudian and post-Freudian approaches to psychology is used to account for the intra-psychic forces which operate within the narcissistic character, Ade and his parents in Amadu's 'No Past, No Present, No Future'. The study reveals the existence of character with narcissism, whose psychopathology is as a result of the complementary roles of narcissistic parent-child relationship. The study further reveals that Ade's narcissistic disturbance is characterized by the fear of being dispossessed, narcissistic form of loving, aggression, and grandiosity.*

**Keywords:** Amadu Maddy, narcissism, psychoanalytic literary theory, African literature

## 1. Introduction

Like all human beings, literary characters do not exist in isolation. Just as they become human by interacting with other characters, they gain identity because of their cultural and political allegiances, their possessions, their jobs, and where they live, and move, and their psychological make up and have their being. (Roberts and Jacobs, 2003:238). And this considerable control of tangible and intangible possessions (economic, cultural, psychological, spiritual) could be the ultimate reason for the characters to find themselves in a state of dispossession because of the complementary roles of nature and nurture. However, dispossession does not occur in a vacuum, and its effects are tangible and real, which manifests in the lived lives of the characters and their fictional worlds. Thus, it takes within its ambit the various forms of dispossession – social, economic, or political and cultural – and its resultant effects of the psychopathological disorder (Onyebuchi, 2011).

The psychic dispossessed position of the Africans is mainly woven into the fabric of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the new economic order, the resultant effect of colonialism or imperialism (Irele and Kigandi, 2004) in addition to their psychopathology usually occurred due to the individual's psychic formation within the family, or due to the result of faulty negotiation with or repression of the pleasure principle (Freud, 1955).

Venturing into the Anglophone African novels especially into the characters' everyday lives, their histories, their personal relationships and identities, their sexuality and so on yield us a great deal of their psychic state in many forms. Given this background, one would assume the wide range of importance that studying the causes, forms, and consequences of psychic dispossession in the mainstream Anglophone African novel could have in obtaining a picture of the psychological experiences of Africans in general.

However, the interest of literary critics on psychic dispossession of characters in Anglophone African novels continues to be very limited. This is because the studies on the African literary works are still dominated by the traditional criticism which engages to demonstrate the African literary works as an extension of the themes of cultural conflict, opposition to colonial rule, disillusionment and protest to post-colonial governments and African women's predicament. The problem with this kind of study in Anglophone African novel is that it established an overarching trend that has stemmed out of the traditional criticism which profoundly limited the critics' horizons to examine and analyze the novels from different perspectives other than the established system. Thus, the characters' psychological conditions, I argue deserve much attention since they point to the lived experiences of Africans in general. Hence, by going beyond the traditional approach, this study has analyzed the narcissistic disturbance of the major character, Ade and his parents in Amadu Maddy's novel 'No Past, No Present, No Future (1973), and identified the causes, forms and consequence of narcissism with a primary

objective of sending signals to researchers about the African literary works' potential to be examined and investigated from psychoanalytic approaches to literature.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 *Narcissism: Freud, Kohut, and Kernberg*

The word 'narcissism' originated from the mythological Greek legend 'Narcissus' by Ovid. In the original story, Narcissus's beauty was beyond comprehension. He was desired by many, but his excessive pride prevented him from being affected by his admirers. Echo, a nymph, who could only repeat the last words of what someone said fell in love with Narcissus. And she approached him with intentions of being with him, but he spurned her just like his other admirers. The god Nemesis, being disappointed by Narcissus's unreciprocated love, cursed him to fall in love but to fail to know who he is in love with. As he caught sight of his reflection in a pool of water, he fell in love with his image. He was transfixed in all his dialogues repeated by echo as he slowly died there of his grief.

This Narcissus myth which reveals the story of narcissus and Echo appears to have opened the door for psychologists to explore its importance in psychology. Havelock Ellis first identified narcissism as mental disorder and viewed it as a form of autoeroticism in which a patient is extremely absorbed in one's own body as love object (Pulver, 1970:321). Freud also dedicated a whole paper, "On Narcissism: An Introduction (1914)."

In his seminal essay, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), Freud discussed how narcissism develops. He divided narcissism into two categories: primary narcissism and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism is a type of inborn energy evident in infant. It is the earliest type of narcissism where the infant's libido is directed towards his/her own body. Infants at this stage do not see others as indistinguishable from the self. They see others as existing solely for their needs. This extreme selfishness, or primary narcissism is a normal psycho-sexual stage of development between the stages of auto-erotism and object-libido (Freud, 1914:73). In this phase the child is unaware of self or the external object. Therefore, the libidinal satisfactions which finds expression through the mother's care to her child becomes the sources of pleasure for the child. This regular care of the mother which was a source of pleasure for the child lead to a cathexis by which the child develops an affection for the mother as an external object which gradually helps him/her to be aware of object relationship. In other words, in normal child development, self-cathexis gradually transforms into object-cathexis (Freud, 1914:75).

Unfortunately, not everyone properly goes through these stages and attains the equilibrium of self-love and object love. Failure occurs due to several reasons. When this happens, fixation in this stage will become the fate of the individual, always obsessed with getting their needs met, being completely inconsiderate to the fact that others

have needs or wants of their own- patterns of behavior that Freud put under the domain of secondary narcissism. Secondary narcissism also referred to as pathological narcissism is a pattern of thinking and behaving in adolescence and adulthood. It often occurs when the libidinal energy is redirected into the self, withdrawing itself from the external object. For Freud, therefore, narcissism presumes pathology when libidinal energy is directed towards the self (ego-libido) instead of external object (object-libido). In other words, narcissistic pathology often occurs when there is a lack of attainment of ambivalence or whole-of-self and object functioning (Freud, 1914).

Building on Freud's concept of narcissism, Kohut (1971) introduces the concept of narcissism through his theory of the self. Kernberg (1975), on the other hand, explores narcissism and introduces a more validated object relations theory of narcissism.

Kohut (1971) suggests that the child's self develops and gains maturity through interactions with others that provide the child with the opportunities to gain approval and enhancement and to identify with perfect and omnipotent role models. Problems are introduced when the parent is unempathetic and fails to provide approval and appropriate role models. For Kohut, thus, narcissism is in effect developmental arrest- a halt in the child's development at what was normal and necessary stage, with the result that the child's self remains grandiose and unrealistic. At the same time, the child continues to idealize others to remain self-esteem through association (Kohut, 1971:67).

Kernberg (2004), on the other hand, describes how the nature of object-relations determines self-esteem regulation and pathological narcissism. The theory emphasizes the interactions between children and their primary caretakers(objects). He states that the interaction between the child and external objects is a fertile ground for intrapsychic structure that determine the child's concept of self and the nature of his/her relationships. He further discusses that narcissistic personalities refer to patients whose main problem usually stems from a disturbance of their self-regard due to specific disturbances in their object relationships. Kernberg argues that narcissism resumes pathology when there is a refusion between the internalized self and object images: "a fusion of ideal self, ideal object, and actual self-image as a defense against an intolerable reality in the interpersonal realms, with a concomitant devaluation and destruction of object images as well as of external objects" (Kernberg, 2004:227) to emerge. As a result, the patients will start to live in the fantasy of their ideal self-denying their inherent need to depend on external objects and "on the internalized representations of external objects." (Ibid, 2004:228). This ultimately leads to the occurrence of an exaggerated self-concept within which the actual self and the ideal self and ideal object are fused.

Generally, based on what these scholars all unpack, narcissism could generally be understood as a cognitive and affective self-absorption characterized by aggression, narcissistic love (Freud, 1914; Kohut, 1971; Kernberg, 1975; Jeffrey,1990), grandiosity, lack of empathy, a need to exploit others, envy (Kernberg, 1975, Kohut, 1971). Narcissists often exhibit these features to manage negative affect and maintain self-

esteem since they inherently lack cohesive sense of self and stable self-esteem.

## 2.2 Parental Narcissism and Its Impact on the Child

The study of the relationship between the rearing behaviors of parents and children's psychic wellbeing assumes centrality in many ground-breaking literatures of psychoanalysis. Kohut (1971) particularly states that the role of parents or primary caregivers through mirroring is paramount for children's self-development maturity. Kernberg's (2004) viewpoint also pays emphasis on the impact of early object relations on personality structure. He argues that children will have an integrated self-concept and achieve total object relations when they have a healthy object relationship with their primary caregivers. Lacan (1981), on the other hand, discusses the maternal function which finds expression in her mirroring and the paternal function in his effort to assist the child to recognize the paternal law which is very essential for the child to form identity and understand his boundaries both sexually and generationally:

*"while the child is born into an environment conditioned by the symbolic to use language, the child must pass from its reliance on the maternal function through the imaginary into the symbolic by accepting the authority of what he calls the 'Name-of-the-father that defines the law governing the correct use of language'" (Lacan, 1981:34).*

Unfortunately, narcissistic parents neglect the very essences of how family sets the survival of human species and civilization, their rearing behaviors arguably falling to the ground. This point fetches us to immerse into the idea that starting infancy to go further into the origins of narcissism is indispensable, because on the nurture side, we have the pathological parents. There are many people in the field of psychology who effectively elucidate how bad parenting can lead to personality disorders in children (Kohut, 1971, Kernberg, 2004, Mollon, 1993, Jeffrey, 1990).

Both Kohut (1971) and Kernberg (2004) focus on the disturbances in early parental relationships as the genesis of adult narcissistic personality disorder. They both view narcissism at its core as a defect in the development of a healthy self which is caused by narcissistic parents who fail to provide their children with the necessary nurturing elements.

Mollon (1993), based on his clinical observations of the matter, also elucidates that the child's sense of self is built on the amount of recognition the child gains from others, and failures in this area will lead to a lack of experiencing the sense of self efficacy and agency. This failure, according to Mollon, stems from narcissistic parents who rather weigh more value on their narcissistic desires ignoring the child's own initiatives (Mollon, 1993:110).

This explains; thus, the parent can spoil the child and delude him/her of what the world offers. The motivation behind this for parents is to live by curiously to the child as the child follow their dreams and wishes based on what they didn't achieve. This gradually halts the child's individual subjectivity.

### 3. Interpretation and Analysis

#### 3.1 Parental Narcissism and its Impact on the Child's Psyche in Amadu's "No Past, No Present, No Future" (1973)

##### 3.1.1 Engulfing Mother

Ade's self-construction has been affected by an almost unbearable parentage arising from the parents' narcissistic personality disorder, which was constantly infantilizing and abusive, pertaining to neglect his individual subjectivity. The mother was clearly a very domineering figure who was the source of authority in the family. This acquisition of authority lent her an air of power to literally invade the mother-son relationship by her desperate desire to mold him in the likeness of her own, giving the least trace of recognition to his individual subjectivity or uniqueness which eventually subject him to develop an insecure self.

*"Narcissists natural development was arrested due to faulty, early parenting, usually by a mother who didn't provide sufficient nurturing and opportunity for idealization" (Ellis, 2009; Russell, 1985).*

Her parenting is characterized by age-inappropriate over involvement and intrusiveness in her son's life. This results in a pattern of narcissistic attachment, with her continuing to see him as only a child even after she has to stop seeing him that way by a reason of certain reality that his age exceeds the limit of childhood:

They were also tired of Ade's mother's way of treating them as if they were nine-years-olds. She fused over everything and about nothing. 'children do not eat eggs. You will suffer from dysentery.' That was her daily early-morning complaint when the boys asked for fried eggs for breakfast. 'children must not stay out late at nights (Amadu, 1973, 9).

The narrator explicitly states the age which would have been appropriate to the treatment of the above kind because it is as subtle as always the mother's stepping in and setting moral codes of behavior which is no longer appropriate to Ade's age. This is why both Ade and his friend Joe find their Christmas break at Ade's family tiresome and unbearable as their growing adolescent demands to be allowed more freedom.

In addition, we can see in her an element of maternal narcissism which makes her feel her son is still part of herself. Because of this, she relentlessly feeds him the moral lessons that she had been fed when she was a little girl back in the old days before forty years:

When I was your age, I never played with boys. Never looked at them. And in these days, boys much older than you wore tail shirts. They had nothing to hide. They didn't dare wink at girls lest they get caught.' Ade's mother never stopped moralizing, telling the boys how it was thirty years ago, forty years ago, when she was as young as they. (Amadu, 1973:9).

As highlighted in the extract above, she was devoid of any attachment with boys of her age when she was a little girl. She didn't even have the courage to see boys let alone playing with them. And the boys of her time were also grown in a culture that forced them to suppress any adolescent emotional needs. She expects Ade to follow in their footsteps and live life within that reference point, because she sees him as an extension of herself.

On the other hand, the mother seems unconsciously wishes her son not to grow matured as a man through humiliation by removing him from the penis on a literal and symbolic level. Her hidden desire to remove him from the 'male organ' becomes clearer especially in her persistence on disapproving his involvement in any issues related to sex. This over involvement and intrusion of the mother in her son's sexual urges becomes more explicit especially in the severe punishment she chose to use when she heard that her son was involved in sexual assault which resulted in the victim's pregnancy and an eventual death that ensued abortion. In fact, the idea of the mother deciding to punish him is not a problem at all because all parents use different kinds of punishment to respond to misconduct, or deviance. But the problem lies with the sort of punishment she chose to use. Instead of reinforcing a punishment that would help him to judge, criticize, and restrict himself from further wrongful conduct, she chose to humiliate him in a very strange way by taking off his pants and asking him to show her his manhood by which he impregnated Mary:

*'you don't even know how to write your name properly; but you know how to give 'oman belly, ehn?' she clobbered my ear with a box.' she pulled my trousers down so hard and fast she nearly pulled my flesh off with the trousers. "drop your trouser down an' show me the worm that you use to get her pregnant."*  
(Amadu, 1973:48).

The metaphor which compares "penis" and "worm" in the above extract conveys two important meanings about the mental activity of the mother. Firstly, we can defer the ambivalence of the mother who is left somewhat stranded to fight through the inevitable anxiety of a mother's condition to love and at the same time not to claim and possess her son for ever. Secondly, Human's penis is not literally a worm. By asserting that her son's penis is a worm, she uses points of comparison between his male-organ and worm to reduce his manhood to the level of an insect, showing her unconscious desire of keeping away from reminders that her son is a grown man now and is no longer be her narcissistic supply. Her narcissistic project of making her son 'Penis-less' on metaphorical level is defeated when she finds out that her son involved in sexual assault. Thus, with that failure comes her abusive and aggressive behavior. Her over involvement in her son's life left a huge scar in the son's psychic state which finds expression in the fear of being possessed and fear of intimacy.

### 3.1.2 Ignoring Father

We could also find that the father's recklessness towards Ade's physical and psychological development has also contributed a lot to Ade's narcissistic disturbance. Kohut discusses that when the mother is unable to properly play her maternal function, the child remains fragmented unless he can make use of his second chance- the father by whom the son would be able to make identification. If he can't do either of these things, he would have no stable self-esteem, and he can't regulate his self-esteem properly and he would turn to aggression, rage, exaggerated self-entitlement and self-centeredness to hold himself together in the face of fragmentation.

With the same vein, Ade's father was unable to play his paternal function and was not as successful as to "hold the symbolic paternal function or law" (Molon, 1993:115)- which the child should internalize to identify with the father and form the masculine identification of the father. As a result, Ade was barely provided with fatherly mentoring:

My father takes pleasure in giving his own people the sack. None of his Bauyan staff gets loans. They are often queried for being away ill while the white staff do just as they please. I remember once a Bauyan engineer's wife died in childbirth. The chap came asking my father for emergency leave and a loan for the funeral. This was at our home. And do you know what my father said? "No, I don't encourage private visits from people who work with me. Besides, we don't have money. You know that the kitty is empty. Sorry I can't help you privately either!" I know that my father signs and offers, of his own free will, government advances to all the white staff at the post office... my father's greatest ambition is to become a knight. He is already an O.B.E., and he expects his white bosses to do him the honour before his retirement. Ade breathed (Amadu, 1973:51).

Though Ade seems to express a feeling of displeasure over his father's narcissistic personality, he subconsciously identified with his father and equated lack of sympathy and exploiting others for personal gains with matured object relations. Consequently, he becomes aggressive, less empathetic, and ego-centric to others. This in turn erodes his object relations and struggling to get out of self-enclosure has become one of the sole traits of his personality in all facets of life. In a nutshell, both parents exhibit a non-nurturing, domineering, and neglectful parental style which is highly injurious and dysfunctional to Ade because it later subjects him to be a victim of narcissistic disturbance.

### 3.2 Characteristics of Ade's Narcissistic Disturbance

Many of the scenes which represent Ade's story are the overt demeanor of his narcissistic traits. His narcissistic form of loving, grandiosity and need to project an image, his aggression and lack of sympathy to others, and his fear of being possessed



are all clearly the hallmarks of his narcissistic disturbance.

### 3.2.1 *The Fear of Being Possessed*

Ade spent a childhood dried of opportunity to develop self-efficacy and autonomy. His mother was an authoritative figure who was rather determined to fulfill her narcissistic desires and wishes at the cost of her son's wishes and desires. As a result, he developed a fragile self-esteem which forces him to see relationship as a step towards engulfment. As such, he keeps off or spurn relationship because he grew up viewing relationship as only a means of being possessed.

His fear of engulfment is seen in his constant giving up of long-term relationship. He becomes the kind of person who likes to have sex with different women but never been romantically attracted to any woman beyond sex:

*"For him, women were to be relished sexually. That's what they were for. He didn't thrive on love. The lying verb he called it- love. Once he had been to bed with a girl, it was all over. His next thought was to seek out a new find." (Amadu, 1973:53).*

In his world, there is no such a thing called love. He doesn't enter or stay in a relationship for love because he identifies through his mother and equalizes love as just engulfment.

### 3.2.2 *Narcissistic Form of Loving*

Ade's narcissistic form of loving becomes apparent in his inability to love and maintain healthy relationship with women. Much like the mythological figure Narcissus, Ade refuses romantic offers from a variety of women, because he believes that women are not worthy of his love. In addition, he is deluded by personal perfection. As a result, he takes his special approach to women and his ability to obtain sexual partners easily as an affirmation that he is liked, loved, and desired. His concern with getting others to admire him leads him to seek out sexual conquests in order to have something to boast about to his friends:

*"Ade always had a girl when he felt like one. He boasted that he had never been turned down by any woman or girl, and never would be. His conceit gave him great success with women, and he used them without respect or regard for their persons" (Amadu, 1973:53).*

Furthermore, the returned 'yes' he receives from different women for sex only increasingly feeds his affection, adoration, and admiration for himself. Even more enthralled by this, he fails to settle and find someone to share life with. Instead, he continues to search a new narcissistic supply because he depends on a regular flow of narcissistic supply in order to sustain his superficial and conceited self-image:

*"For him, women were to be relished sexually. That's what they were for. He didn't thrive on love. The lying verb he called it- love. Once he had been to bed with a girl, it was all over. His next thought was to seek out a*

*new find.” (Amadu, 1973:53).*

A subject of central importance in Ade’s narcissistic form of loving is the underlying theme of illusion. The significant component in this theme of reflection is Ade’s entrapment in a vicious circle of moving from one woman to another like there will be no end to it. Thus, he is searching the self he doesn’t know, because of which he is in love with the illusion of the self-reflected in every woman he sleeps with, a self which he can never be united with. Because of this, he keeps searching. This ultimately leads him to despair and failed future.

### 3.2.3 Aggression

Ade's aggression stems from his lack of empathy, and grandiose sense of self. The extent of Ade’s lack of empathy is reflected through sexual aggression. Rape and sexual assault are a serious social problem which results in the victim’s traumatic suffering. Although sexual aggression occurs for a variety of reasons, recent theories suggest that narcissistic expressions such as grandiosity, and lack of empathy could foster an increase in reactance against rejection of sexual desire which often ends in sexual aggression. (Bushman, Bonacci, Van Dijk, and Baumeister, 2003). Ade's case is not an exception. His sexual aggression is caused by lack of empathy for others and inflated but unstable self. Ade views himself as superior and unique which makes him think that he possesses all the charms which make women to owe him sexual favor. He also seeks out sexual conquests in order to have something to boast about to his peers, thereby to maintain his over exaggerated sense of superiority and uniqueness:

*“he boasted that he had never been turned down by any woman or girl, and never would be.” (Amadu, 1973:53).*

But his sense of grandiose self and deficient empathy only fosters an increase in his reactance against rejection of sexual desire which drives him to wind up in sexual aggression. An aspect of great significance that offers an evidence of Ade’s sexual aggression is the sexual assault which he has committed by raping Mary without giving a moment of thought to the consequent effect of his action on Mary and his close friend Joe who has apparently been having sex with Mary before Ade suddenly appears and jumps to raping her.

Though sex is an aspect of human intimacy which requires mutual consents of partners, Ade shows no sign of interest to get Mary's consent. He rather tries to force her without her consent to sleep with him by twisting her hands:

*“Ade came up to them, looking intently at Mary. She had got up, looking down at the grass at her feet, half dead and trodden down. Ade ignored Joe. It’s my turn now, Mary,” he said smiling cynically... he held her hands apart.” (Amadu, 1973:17).*

His attempt to take what he needs from Mary without ever happen to consider her

consent clearly indicates his sexually coercive behavior. The reactance from Mary fostering an increase in his sexual desire, Ade attempts to take what has been denied through the use of blackmailing specifically threatening her to tell her sexual affair with Joe for her aunt if she keeps being reactant against his move:

*'No need to let your aunt know. Or would you rather?... You know what the consequences are, Mary, don't you? ... she succumbed quietly without a word. She didn't smile; she just went down like a big, rootless cotton tree eaten up by earthworms. (Amadu, 1973:17).*

Thus, at the heart of this sexual aggression was a serious psychological duel which leads him to leave no stone unturned to fulfill his urges at the cost of others. Following the rape, however, Mary gets pregnant and dies because of abortion. As we have discussed Ade's childhood, his narcissistic personality disorder stems from his narcissistic parents who failed to give recognition to their son's individual subjectivity. That negative childhood experience continues through his youth and adulthood, looming as subconscious in his feeling of insecurity and inferiority. His fragile self-esteem often comes to the fore whenever he sees things which he feels would expose his deeply engraved sense of inferiority. Therefore, the moment Mary shows a sign of refusal to have sex with him, his fragile self-esteem awakens his hidden inferiority complex. In response to that sense of inferiority, he immediately transforms into being the horse of his id drive and jumps into raping her to show his grandiose fantasy. As Freud opines, narcissists usually have a deficient super-ego which permits the predomination of the id that forces them to misbehave and involve in misconduct such as sexual assault. Thus, behind Ade's sexual misconduct, lurks a fragile self-esteem.

### 3.2.4 Grandiosity

What's indicting about Ade's grandiosity is for all his life, he has experienced as being more important and superior to others; he acts entitled and unique, and prone to easily explode into rage whenever he feels attacked by even the slightest criticism.

Ade's unrealistic sense of self-importance and superiority is reflected in his over exaggerated sense of future achievement. In fact, it is inevitable as well as healthy, as human beings, to have hopes and dreams of future achievement and to think of also the ways how we can support ourselves, family, society etc. with the kernel of our future success. But what makes Ade's thought of future achievement narcissistic is it comes coupled with his excessive sense of self-importance and desire to project superiority. This leads him to view himself as someone very important that people want to cash in on him to bribe his future achievement. This has become more apparent especially when he views that the parcel his parents sent to him after he had gone to London as a form of bribery they offer to gain benefit from which his future success holds:

*No it's not because they feel it's their duty. It is a bribe. They know that I am going to become a successful somebody in a matter of years. My coming to England without their help is in itself unquestionable proof of a*

*determined will. And so you see, my dear Santigie, they want to cash in on me. On my future success... (Amadu, 1973:82).*

The above excerpt clearly indicates that Ade is consumed by unrealistic sense of self-importance and exaggerated future achievement that spread within him like a disease. Thereupon, he becomes a grandiose delusional who lacks the capability for reality-testing. As a result, he loses a sense of gratitude for others and blinds him from seeing every positive thing that people including his parents do to him. He comes to believe that the only reason why people become so good to him is because he is unique and special.

In addition, Ade usually tends to perceive himself superior to his friends because he is the son of a privileged elite class parents in the fictional setting of Bauya- surrogate of Sierra Leone. He sees this social structure as prospect for respect and superiority to his friends who belong to the less privileged classes. But he is in London where his privileged class no longer a privilege. His privileged social class was nothing, but a fantasy conjured in his self-absorbed mind. Therefore, this conflict between his engraved wish for superiority and respect which he thought his class could give him and the existing reality which doesn't allow him to earn it makes him prone to easily explode into rage:

*That bloody prig. The bum who came to me looking for refuge and protection and help. I gave him help and food and affection regardless of what his background was. That little, illiterate, country body. He despised his parents, cursed them, was ashamed of them, denied them... Now he talks to me as if we are the same, he wants to tell me we are the same and equal because we are in England'... his blood raced in his head. (Amadu, 1973:130).*

Generally, we can see Ade's over exaggerated sense of self-importance deterring him to understand the value of the people around him. He often establishes relationship with people to fulfill his grandiose supply giving the least trace of concern to their needs and interests. But this grandiose behavior causes the people around him especially his friends to be particularly disappointed and impulsive of him which at the end forces them to distant themselves from him.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Amadu, in his magnum opus "No Past, No Present, No Future' has fashioned his characters in such a way that they are true to life with thoughts, feelings, emotions, and dreams, allowing the reader to understand the psychic state of the characters as well as their resultant behaviors and actions. As has been laid bare in the objective, this study has promised to undertake a critical investigation into the existence of narcissistic disturbance in the major character, Ade.

Amadu portrays how defective family dynamics could be a contributing factor for psychic dispossession using the character, Ade. Ade is one of the central characters whose adult age is invaded by the narcissistic personality disorder which is deeply rooted to lack of

adequate psychic formation within the family. His parents who have so enormous an influence on him finally thwarted his individuality, resulting in his narcissistic disturbance. The fact that he has to lead a life engulfed with the symptoms of narcissism such as the fear of being possessed, narcissistic form of loving, aggression, and grandiosity can be seen as the factors of his failed future. In conclusion, by going beyond the traditional approach, this study has identified the causes, and consequences of narcissism in Amadu's 'No Past, No Present, No Future' within the framework of psychoanalysis, hoping that it will significantly contribute in sending signals to researchers about the African literary works' potential to be examined and investigated from different critical approaches.

## References

- Amy Tak, Y. (1998). Reflections of Narcissism in Three Novels by Oscar Wilde, Yukio Mishima and Gu Cheng. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Berman, Jeffrey (1990). *Narcissism and the Novel*. London: New York University Press.
- Bertens, H. (2001). *Literary Theory: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Caroline, F. (2019). *Narcissistic Mothers: How to Handle a Narcissistic Parent and Recover from CPTSD*.
- Durkin, M. P. (2017). "Unorthodox Conduct": Re-membering Queer Africa in Literature and Film (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/12>
- Freud, S. (1995). The Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality. *The Freud Reader*. London: Vintage. Pp, 239-93.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1995). Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood. *The Freud Reader*. London: Vintage. Pp, 443-80.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1995). "On Narcissism: An Introduction." *The Freud Reader*. London: Vintage. Pp, 545-61
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1995). Beyond the Pleasure Principle. *The Freud Reader*. London: Vintage. Pp, 594-625
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1995). The Ego and the Id. *The Freud Reader*. London: Vintage. Pp, 628-58.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1955). *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. (Edited by Thompson, C. Mazer, M. and Witenberg, E). New York: The Modern Library.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1901). *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Translation by A. A. Brill (1914). London: T. Fisher Unwin.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1935). *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1933). "A Philosophy of Life". *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Irele, A. and Kigandi, S. (2004). *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jeffrey, B. (1990). *Narcissism and the Novel*. London: New York University Press.
- Kernberg, O. (2004). *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*. Northvale: J. Aronson.
- Kohut, H. (1971). *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorder*. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis.
- Lacan, J. (1977). *Ecrits*. (Translated by Alan Sheridan). London: Routledge Classics.
- Liz, K. (2017). *Parental Narcissism: Impact on the Child and the Formation of Self*.
- Lowen, A. (1997). *Narcissism: Denial of the True Self*. New York: Touchstone.
- Mollon, P. (1993). *The Fragile Self: The Structure of Narcissistic Disturbance*. London: Whurr Publishers.
- Peter, T. and Paul, C. (1995). Pathways to Defense of the Self: A Theory of Two Types of Paranoia. *American Psychological Association*. Vol. no. 6. Pp, 263-278.
- Philip, C. (2006). Freud's 'On Narcissism: An Introduction'. *Journal of Child Psychology*. Vol. no. 32. Pp, 4-20.
- Pulver, S. (1970). "Narcissism: The Term and the Concept." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. Vol. no. 18. Pp 319-41.
- Roberts, E. and Jacobs, H. (2003). *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Vinge, L. (1967). *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature up to the Early Nineteenth Century*. Robert Dewsnap and Nigel Reeves, trans. Lund: Gleerups.
- Windt, G. (2005). *Artistic Creativity: Sublime Expressions of Inner Body Wisdom. Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*. Vol. 6. No. 3.
- Yulisa, Amadu. (1973). *No Past, No Present, No Future*. London: Heinemann.