

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DEFENCE MECHANISMS AND STRATEGIES OF SELECTED INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS IN COPING WITH RACISM: THE CASE OF *MERIDIAN* AND *THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB*.**

**By**

**TREVOR MWANSA**

**A dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Literature**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

**LUSAKA**

**2020**

## **COPYRIGHT**

All rights reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced or stored in any retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from the author or the University of Zambia.

© **Copyright 2020**

## DECLARATION

I, **Trevor Mwansa**, do declare that this work is my own and has not previously been researched and submitted for any qualification at the University of Zambia or any other University.

Signed .....

Date .....

**APPROVAL**

This dissertation of Trevor Mwansa has been approved as fulfilling the partial requirements of the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Literature by The University of Zambia.

Examiner 1 .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Examiner 2 .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Examiner 3 .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Supervisor.....

Signature.....

Date.....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my family, my close friends and my beloved wife. You have all motivated, inspired and strengthened me along this journey. I am eternally thankful for the wonderful support rendered.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate, compare and contrast the defence mechanisms and strategies used by selected individual characters to cope with racism in Alice Walker's novel *Meridian* and Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb*. The study also sought to establish the significance of the mechanisms and strategies employed in coping with racism with the ego defence mechanism theory of psychoanalysis and the stress and coping strategies theory constituting the theoretical framework. The study endeavoured to identify and analyse; characters that experience and witness racism in the two texts, the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the characters and the differences and similarities in the mechanisms and strategies used. The research was qualitative in nature thus it employed a descriptive research design, explanations and interpretations of data were outlined upon analysing racist cases, instances, and experiences, defence mechanisms and coping strategies in *Meridian* and *The Tongue of the Dumb*. Findings were that the selected characters; Lubinda and Meridian, employ similar defence mechanisms at times which are; humour, sublimation, passive aggression and affiliation. The notable differences are that Lubinda also uses identification with the aggressor while Meridian employs altruism, regression, dissociation and reactive formation. Further, both use emotion focused and avoidance focused strategies though Meridian distinguishes herself from Lubinda as she also utilises problem focused strategies. The findings show that defence mechanisms and coping strategies are crucial in coping with unpleasant or negative states, feelings and situations. The mechanisms and strategies help the two characters to avoid, reduce, overcome, challenge and deal with racial prejudice and antagonism thus the significance of defence mechanisms and coping strategies is manifest. The differences and similarities demonstrate that defence mechanisms are general, applicable to daily challenges and that coping is a fluid process and cardinal process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation comes to its completion because of the support and assistance of various people. Without the personal and professional help of these people, I would not have been able to complete this work as they all sustained my commitment. Firstly, I would like to express my greatest appreciation to my Supervisor, Dr Cheela Chilala, for rendering wisdom, informative advice, aspiring guidance, constant encouragements and for the unwavering support.

Secondly, I would like to thank all those that lectured, supported and mentored me, Dr Sylvester Mutunda, Dr Stewart Crehan, Dr Parnwell Munatamba, Mr Moffat Moyo, the late Mr Namabanda Mundia, Dr Hambaba Jimaima, Dr Kelvin Mambwe, Mr Dennis Tembo, Mr Lombe Musonda, Mrs Bandana Kumar and all members of staff in the Department of Literature and Languages.

I also thank my relatives, course mates, friends and the church family. My relatives have always believed in me, my friends kept my morale up and the church family has always been a strong support system. My guardians, Mr and Mrs Choobe, have been very instrumental in my life, they raised me and made sure I had a proper education thus am forever grateful. Mr and Mrs Nabuyanda have also been very supportive thus am thankful to them. Memory Hankwa, Chitube Chiyaba and Mongela Mwenda have been wonderful friends, am grateful for their goodness, jovialness and endless support. I am also thankful for the continued encouragements and tremendous support offered by my only brother, Eugene Mwansa, together we have pressed on and our late parents who left us as children would have been proud of how far we have reached. Special thanks to my amazing wife, Lushomo Hachilensa Mwansa, her selflessness, care, love, prayers, enduring support and confidence in me, motivated, inspired and kept me afloat despite the many setbacks I encountered. I give a heart-felt thank you to each one of these people.

**Above all, I thank God for the knowledge, understanding, strength, good health and grace during the time I worked on the dissertation.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>COPYRIGHT</b> .....	i
<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	ii
<b>APPROVAL</b> .....	iii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study .....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.4 Purpose of the Study.....	6
1.5 Objectives of the Study .....	6
1.6 Research Questions .....	7
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.8 Delimitation of the Study.....	8
1.9 Methodology.....	9
1.9.1 Method of Research.....	9
1.9.2 Data Sources .....	9
1.9.3 Data Collection Techniques.....	10
1.9.4 Data analysis .....	10
1.10 Theoretical Framework.....	10
1.10.1 The Defence Mechanism Theory of Psychoanalysis.....	11
1.10.2 The Stress and Coping Theory.....	17
1.11 Definition of Terms.....	19
1.12 Structure of the Dissertation.....	20
1.13 Conclusion.....	20

<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	22
2.0 Introduction.....	22
2.1 Theoretical Studies.....	22
2.1.1 Studies on Defence Mechanisms.....	22
2.1.2 Studies on Coping Strategies.....	25
2.2 Textual Studies.....	28
2.2.1 Studies on <i>Meridian</i> .....	28
2.2.2 Studies on <i>The Tongue of The Dumb</i> .....	30
2.3 Conclusion.....	31
<b>CHAPTER THREE:SYNOPSIS OF TEXTS</b> .....	33
3.0 Introduction.....	33
3.1 <i>Meridian</i> .....	33
3.2 <i>The Tongue of The Dumb</i> .....	38
3.3 Conclusion.....	42
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF TEXTS</b> .....	43
4.0 Introduction.....	43
4.1 <i>Meridian</i> .....	43
4. 1.1 Defence Mechanisms used by <i>Meridian</i> .....	43
4.1.2 Coping Strategies used by <i>Meridian</i> .....	51
4.2 <i>The Tongue of The Dumb</i> .....	55
4.2.1 Defence Mechanisms used by <i>Lubinda</i> .....	55
4.2.2 Coping Strategies used by <i>Lubinda</i> .....	60
4.3 Conclusion.....	62
<b>CHAPTER FIVE:SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN DEFENCE MECHANISMS AND COPING STRATEGIES IN <i>MERIDIAN</i> AND <i>THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB</i></b> .....	63
5. 0 Introduction.....	63
5.1. Similarities and Differences in the Defence mechanisms and Coping strategies used by <i>Meridian</i> and <i>Lubinda</i> .....	63
5.1.1 Defence mechanisms.....	63

5.1.2 Coping Strategies .....	68
5.2 Significance of Defence mechanisms and Coping strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda .....	71
5.2.1 Significance of Defence mechanisms used by Meridian and Lubinda .....	71
5.2.2 Significance of Coping Strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda .....	78
5.3 Conclusion .....	82
<b>CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>83</b>
6.0 Introduction.....	83
6.1 Conclusions of Research Findings.....	83
6.2 General Conclusion.....	85
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>87</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Overview**

This chapter is an introduction thus it gives background information on the study. It discusses racism, its history, development, the types, characteristics and its impact on people. It also presents the concepts of coping, defence mechanisms and coping strategies. Further, the particular problem under investigation, the thesis statement and the aim of the study are outlined. The objectives, research questions and the significance of the study are also presented. The chapter also explains and elaborates on the theoretical framework, the methodology and delimitation of the study. Furthermore, the structure of the dissertation is outlined in this chapter.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

Coping with racism is not easy, it is complex and the diversity of racism makes it laborious thus the need to employ various mechanisms and strategies. Racism which this essay concerns itself with has been a problematic issue for a very long time; it has been manifest in different cultures, regions and countries. Even though there have been many attempts to reduce, eradicate, alleviate and cope with racism, it is still prevalent in today's society. The word racism refers to beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotype characteristics or ethnic group affiliation (Clark et al, 1999, p. 805). Racism may take the form of stereotyping, name calling or insults, negative commentary, derogatory speeches, racist graffiti, property damage or racial abuse. Further, racism manifests through subtle covert behaviours which are ingrained through the various systems of socialisation and the continuity of social engineering thus the need to examine and address this perpetual problem and how some people cope with it as it affects many individuals and societies.

Firstly, it is important to note that racialism, which is a belief in the superiority of a particular race, preceded the term racism thus it was commonly used in ancient times (Oxford English Dictionary, 1907). Words like racial stereotypes and prejudice have also been equated with racism yet they are different as they are more of racist behaviours. Racism in itself is the assumption that psycho-cultural traits and capacities are determined by biological race and that races differ decisively from one another which is usually coupled with a belief in the inherent

superiority of a particular race and its right to dominate other races (Zuckerman, 1990). Put differently, racism is the prejudice, discrimination or antagonism against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior ("What is racism", 2017). Van Dijk (1993) elaborates that a racist is someone who believes that a biological explanation can be given for characteristics of superiority or inferiority supposedly possessed by people of a given physical stock thus they marginalise, subjugate and mistreat others. In the same vein, Ridley (1995) posits that racism is specifically defined in behaviour rather than by attitudes or beliefs. While others avoid and overcome racism, others do not and one way individuals cope with racial tension is by being actively racist, this is coined as characterological racism (Aldefer, 1994). Racism can also include a wide range of behaviours from subtle jokes to murder; it can involve individuals or a collective system that unknowingly may encourage the suppression of other races.

Turning to the types of racism, the most discussed forms include scientific, symbolic, individual and institutional racism. Scientific racism is the act of attempting to identify biologically that the dominant culture possesses superior attributes, continues to exist for both intentional and unintentional reasons whereas symbolic racism which is unintentional and covert is the most insidious because this is where the people are often unaware of the harmful outcomes of their behaviours. On the other hand, individual racism is the type that works at an individual level based on personal prejudice while institutional racism or systemic racism is the intentional or unintentional manipulation and toleration of institutional policies that unfairly restrict the opportunities of particular groups of people and it also refers to the procedures and regulations that may not initially have a racist intent but that are discriminatory in their impact and reinforce racial inequality (Watts and Carter, 1991). The forums in which racism is often prevalent include; education, business, health care and the civil service.

It must be stated that it is difficult to ascertain when racism exactly began. Others opine that it began with the early Christian era while its history is often traced in ancient Greek. The people used terms like proto-racism and tribalism as synonyms to racism and these words denoted the narcissistic notion that only the non-Greek barbarians but also certain Greek tribes should be excluded from the Hellenic community as they were considered to be inferior to others.

Nevertheless, Aristotle's and the Greeks' conception of race was based on the environment, the soul and not the colour of skin (Bakaoukas, 2005).

Prior to the 1800's, race was generally used as a rough synonym for lineage but over the first half of the nineteenth century 'race' and its equivalents in other European languages assumed an additional sense that seemed tighter and more scientific. Racism was and has been a major issue since the slave and colonial eras. Racism was prevalent as dominant Europeans manipulated fellow vulnerable whites especially those of different races, the expenses of paying them later made them shift to using black people hence the introduction of slavery. These whites were the initiators and perpetrators of slavery. With time the European settlers exercised their power over African slaves emphasising their superiority. Though slavery and racism were manifest in countries like France and England, they were more prevalent in America. Racial segregation existed for many years despite the vision of an American dream thus African Americans were treated unfairly hence promoting the belief that some races are inferior and second class (Arthur, 2007).

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, racism was a noticeable world view and was used to legitimise European expansion and conquest of non-white populations. However, while the American economy flourished and racism continued, Greeks had to cope with Muslim oppressors for many years due to racial prejudice. In Africa, many countries were victims of racial discrimination but it must be noted that South Africa was and is still facing racial problems. Though most people do not openly express their racial sentiments, modern racism has evolved from an aggressive prejudicial behaviour to a more subtle prejudicial behaviour where the mindset views certain races to be better than others thus segregation, discrimination and marginalisation are still prevalent (Kadhim, 2016).

Focusing on its impact on individuals, there are many negative effects that racism has on people who experience and witness it. Racial trauma is one of them. This refers to the physical, emotional and psychological symptoms that the victims of racism experience. Some of the effects of racial trauma highlighted by Carter (2007) include fear, headaches, insomnia, body aches, memory difficulty, racial awareness, self blame, confusion, shame and guilt. Though it is often argued that racism is a social construct as humanity belongs to the human race, racism is still prevalent and it also represents contextually determined modes of exclusion, subordination,

inferiorisation, exploitation and repression. It must be noted that various researchers have also highlighted the fact that racism is a stressor and that it has significant negative psychological ramifications for victims of racial oppression (Truong and Museus, 2012). Conceptualising racism as a source of stress has allowed researchers to utilise models from the general stress and coping literature. Stevenson (2003) adds that some consequences of racism related stress may include experiencing depression, headaches, low self-esteem, humiliation, stomach upsets, chest pains, tunnel vision, ulcers, back pains, nightmares, loss of appetite or overeating, nausea, shortness of breath, weeping, vomiting, fatigue, increased heart rate, hypertension, frustration and difficulty in concentrating. Additionally, racism leads to the internalisation of negative racial experiences which give rise to helplessness, hopelessness, anger, anxiety, hate and sadness. For this reason, it is imperative that individuals find ways of coping with racism and the effects thereof as coping with it enhances ones wellbeing.

Coping as defined by the Meriam-Webster dictionary is dealing with and attempting to overcome problems or difficulties (“Definition of coping”, n.d). Coping also refers to an individual’s attempt to deal with or master demands that he or she appraises as threatening or challenging and it is important to note that coping does not imply successful outcomes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as a person’s constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person’s resources. Recent research shows that defence mechanisms and coping strategies can be employed to cope with various problematic, difficult and challenging situations. Some of the ways one can cope with racism or combat the effects of racism include; being involved in activities that make them feel empowered, being proactive by participating in change promoting programmes, channeling the anger, anxiety and hurt by speaking out against racial discrimination. Other than that; supporting racial activists and those who are victims of racism, seeking support or staying connected to family, friends and the community and sharing wisdom and collective strength for solidarity also helps to cope with racism (Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture, 2015). However, it is important to note that coping mechanisms and strategies can differ due to experiencing racism in disparate ways, racial socialisation experiences, gender, racial identity development, racial perceptions, personal experiences, collective experiences, individual characteristics, situational characters and racial contexts thus each case is peculiar.

It is worth noting that literary works have not been silent on matters of racism and coping with various issues. Seeing that literature mirrors society, the art of addressing universal issues like racism has been manifest. This has been done through slave narratives, songs and novels that depict the fight against racism. African American literature has played a crucial role in addressing racial issues as well, papers and journal articles have been written while global campaigns have been staged to fight, reduce, eradicate and cope with racism (Srivasta and Pridarshni, 2012). Additionally, there are many movements and individuals that have endeavoured to fight, subvert and cope with racism despite the inevitable challenges. Some of the individuals who have been very instrumental in making efforts to cope with racism over the years include: Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, William Garrison, Harriet Stowe, John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, Sojourner Truth, Susana Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Koffi Anan and Desmond Tutu. The individuals' efforts to cope with racism is also manifest in literary works though it has not been extensively explored hence this research seeks to use literary tools in analysing this idea. From what has been highlighted, it is evident that racism is a global issue that has affected and still affects people in various regions thus there is need to analyse this issue and bring to the fore the various ways in which characters who are representations of people cope with it. Literature has played a role in addressing, combating and dealing with racism thus this study joins in addressing this problematic issue which has exhibited continuity in human history. This research endeavours to examine how the racial problem is tackled by Alice Walker and Dominic Mulaisho in their novels *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb* respectively with a focus on the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by selected individual characters to cope with racism.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Racism is not a new phenomenon; it has existed for many years in various cultures, nations and geographical regions. Though there have been many efforts to reduce, combat and cope with racism at individual, societal, legal and political levels, it is still prevalent in various places and it is manifest in various ways as it is often reinforced and maintained on individual, cultural and institutional levels. Thus, this contributes to its pernicious and pervasive presence in society. Literature is one of the mediums that have been used to highlight and deal with racial issues. Since literature influences society in the same way that society influences literature, various

literary works have attempted to address racial issues despite its continuity. As will be noticed in the literature review, people have written and conducted research regarding racism and various novels including the selected texts have been analysed from various perspectives.

Racial discrimination, prejudice and antagonism is a vivid theme in *Meridian* and *The Tongue of the Dumb*. However, no study has focused on the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by literary characters to cope with racism, specifically the selected characters in *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*. Further, there is no study that has compared characters in these two text with regard to how they cope with racism thus this is a gap in the field of literature that needs to be filled. The problem that will be investigated is what are the differences and similarities in the mechanisms and strategies used by selected individual characters to cope with Racism.

Therefore, put in question form, the statement of the problem is: What defense mechanisms and coping strategies are used by individual characters to cope with racism in *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb* and what are the differences and similarities in the way the characters cope with racism.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The study aims to investigate, compare and contrast the defence mechanisms and strategies used by selected individual characters to cope with racism in Alice Walker's *Meridian* and Dominic Mulaisho's *Tongue of the Dumb*.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

With the above premise, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To identify and analyse the defence mechanisms and coping strategies employed by the selected individual characters in coping with racism in *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*.
- ii) To compare and contrast the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the characters to cope with racism.
- iii) To establish the significance of the identified defence mechanisms and coping strategies in coping with racism.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

- i) Which characters experience, witness or attempt to deal with racism in *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*?
- ii) What defence mechanisms are used by the individual characters to cope with racism?
- iii) How do the selected characters apply coping strategies to cope with racism?
- iv) What are the differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by characters to cope with racism in the two texts?
- v) What is the significance of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the selected individual characters?

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is of cardinal practical significance as it deals with a generic and perpetual problem which individuals encounter in their daily life. Informatively, the results of this study will be beneficial to people who are interested in the study of psychoanalysis, psychological literature and coping theories as the study analyses the two texts from these theoretical perspectives. Through this study, the people will know more about defence mechanisms, coping strategies and their significance. Furthermore, they may learn how to apply defence mechanisms and coping strategies to solve problems in their real lives as the study is equally informative in this regard. From a pedagogical point of view, the study will be useful to teachers and students in analysing other literary pieces of work using ego defence mechanisms and coping strategies as the study will bring to the fore the applicability of these theories to literary texts. The study will also enhance and promote a better understanding of the two texts, *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb* as it is comparative in nature and it will demonstrate how characters in these texts employ various mechanisms and strategies in dealing with the same challenge. Further, the study will add to the analysis and understanding of some characters in the novel, their actions, behaviours, what triggers them and how they respond to problems, difficulties and challenges.

Other than that, the study will add new literary knowledge to the collection of research on racism, defence mechanisms and coping strategies thus benefiting researchers. Since research is also aimed at verifying and extending the scope of theories, this paper will be relevant in this

regard and it can be a reference regarding theories of coping. Put differently, the study will give guidance in the understanding and the applicability of defence mechanisms and coping strategies in analysing novels and character responses to stress and challenges. Through this study, readers will be able to better understand the theme of racism, its characteristics and effects on people. Other than that, readers will be acquainted with how to cope with racism and contribute in ameliorating the effects of racism. Since the study also provides guidance in understanding how different characters cope with a problematic issue like racism, readers can relate with the characters, self-reflect and apply these mechanisms and strategies in dealing with their own emotions, problems and other challenges in their society.

Roberts and Crawford (2008) strongly suggest that real life calls for papers that provide comfort and models for coping with difficult times. With the maintenance of racist practices, the rise of racial diversity and with the world becoming more multiethnic, it is essential to have knowledge on racial issues and how to cope with racism. This study will be available and significant to all individuals who encounter, experience and witness racism. Furthermore, it will reinforce and be of aid to antiracist groups, institutions and organizations as it contains information on dealing with racism. Additionally, the study will be useful to human rights educators as they discuss and confront issues of racism in a wide range of teaching contexts. The mechanisms and strategies employed by the selected characters can be used to teach and discuss coping with racism as the study brings to the fore both theoretical awareness and practical utility. Furthermore, the study will serve as a springboard for further studies in this area, other related areas and it will promote academic discourse thus it is of vivid significance.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

According to Msalila and Nalaila (2013), the delimitation of the study signifies the boundary of your study thus it constitutes what one will focus on, the type of information, place, theory, materials and what you will not focus on and why?.

In this regard, this study only focuses on *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*. These texts were selected purposively on the basis that racism is manifest in these texts as there is a coming together of people of different races hence the conflicts. Alice Walker's *Meridian* is set in a community that was just emerging from the bondage of slavery thus sexism and racism are central. On the other hand, Dominic Mulaisho's *Tongue of the Dumb* it deals with racial issues as

Mulaisho depicts a traditional village and their struggle with the arrival of the white men who also have to deal with prejudice after the racial encounter with the native Africans.

The rationale for selecting these novels also has to do with diversity as the universality of racism cannot be denied. These texts are appropriate as they will enable the study to be focused by bringing to the fore how various individuals from different cultures and spaces use defence mechanisms and coping strategies to cope with racism seeing that *Meridian* is a western text and *Tongue of the Dumb* is an African text. Other than that, these texts were written during the same period and the major characters in both novels strive to cope with racism when they face racial encounters.

The research also focuses on certain selected characters in these novels and not all the characters; it mainly looks at Meridian in *Meridian* and Lubinda in *Tongue of the Dumb*. Furthermore, the study does not look at other themes and aspects of these novels as it focuses on racism and how different characters strive to cope with it with reference to the ego defence mechanism theory of psychoanalysis and the stress and coping strategies theory developed by Lazarus and Folkman.

## **1.9 Methodology**

### **1.9.1 Method of Research**

This research employs a descriptive research design as the objectives are explanatory, it is qualitative in nature thus it uses a qualitative method which is a means of exploring and understanding individuals or groups. Library research which involves the activity of analysing documents is applied in this research. The research presents explanations and interpretations in the meaning of data upon an inquiry of cases that appear in *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*.

### **1.9.2. Data Sources**

The research applied library research; data was collected from the two primary sources *Meridian* by Alice Walker and *Tongue of the Dumb* by Dominic Mulaisho which were published in 1976 and 1971 respectively. Both books have been successful in portraying the realities of racism and power in the societies and lives of individuals. Supporting data was derived from literature reviews, books, journals, articles and websites that will support the analysis of this research.

### **1.9.3. Data Collection Technique**

The researcher used the documentation technique as collecting data through examining the two documents yielded the desired results. First, the researcher closely read the novels *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb* to understand the plot, setting, characters and the theme of racism. The researcher sought to identify characters that experience, witness and make attempts to deal with racism. The defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the selected characters in the novels were identified and the researcher compared and contrasted the mechanisms used. The researcher also read other documents such as articles, journals, papers, books and websites to understand the two novels. Secondly, the researcher collected data through note taking upon analysing the texts and this data was in the form of narrations, dialogues and descriptions in the novel. A diary and a notebook were used as data collection aids as the research was mainly a desk study. Thereafter, the researcher sorted the data based on the defence mechanisms theory and coping strategies theory thus it was ready for analysis.

### **1.9.4. Data analysis**

The researcher used content analysis to analyse the data. The data was analysed descriptively by using the defence mechanism theory by Sigmund Freud and coping strategies theory by Lazarus and Folkman. The researcher sorted the data, listed the racist experiences and events that individual characters attempt to cope with and explained them. After that, the defence mechanisms and coping strategies were inferred by describing the context and interpreting the events. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the data on the differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms and strategies used to cope with racism by selected characters in the two novels.

## **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

Works of literature are highly varied thus it is important to use a suitable theory to analyse each and every work. It must be noted that several theories can be used and this enables the work to be analysed from various dimensions (Guerin, 2005). This component or section addresses the theories being used, it must be noted that the main theories used to understand, explain and analyse the problem or subject are the defence mechanism theory of psychoanalysis and coping strategies theory.

### **1.10.1 The Defence Mechanism Theory of Psychoanalysis.**

The theory of defence mechanisms is used in this research, it is used to identify and explain the kind of defence mechanisms that the characters in the two novels use in coping with racism and the significance of these defence mechanisms. Thereafter, the differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms employed by the characters in the two novels are analyzed.

The theory of defence mechanisms has a long history in the field of Psychology and it is a significant component of the Psychoanalytical theory. Psychoanalysis, a branch of literary criticism was built on the principles of a remarkable Austrian physician and psychologist called Sigmund Freud. According to Guerin (2005), this theory is said to have been used as early as the fourth century by Aristotle in setting forth his classic definition of tragedy as combining the emotions of pity and terror to catharsis. Other scholars who were believed to be psychologising literature include Sir Philip Sidney, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley. The poets and writers around the turn of the sixteenth century already explored the unconscious processes of the mind though the unconscious was not of scientific interest until Freud began to study it around the twentieth century. For this reason, the psychological theory came to be associated with the theories of German scholar Sigmund Freud and all those who were influenced by his work (Guerin, 2005). The psychoanalytical theory is essential and has been utilised by people of various fields. Commenting on psychoanalysis, Zimbardo (1995) states that the aim of psychoanalysis is to explain the origins and course of personality development, the nature of the mind, the abnormal aspects of personality and the way personality development can be changed by therapy. He further states that a key tenet of Psychoanalysis is that all human thoughts and actions are motivated by desires, either conscious or unconscious; no human action is random as there is an inner working of the mind even for seemingly irrational behavior.

One of the theories of psychoanalysis postulated by Freud is the topographic personality theory; he developed a theoretical model of the human psyche in order to better understand human behavior (Hjelle and Ziegler 1985). This theory distinguishes three levels of awareness and these include; the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The conscious mind is that which is aware of its environment and self thus it monitors thought processes and emotions while the preconscious mind contains content like memories, things we have learnt, our explicit knowledge of the world and the kind of implicit knowledge which are not actively used but can be recalled

easily. On the other hand, the unconscious mind constitutes unacceptable ideas, desires or motives that are pushed out of the conscious to alleviate the conflict between personal needs and social norms (Zimbardo, 1995).

The other prominent psychoanalytical theory is the structuralism personality theory where the human psyche is divided into three aspects; ego, superego and id. The Id is the first part of personality: it includes instinctive or rather primitive impulses that we are born with such as anger, hunger, hatred, desire for power and sex. The id is unconscious and it depends on the pleasure principle (Hoffman, 1957). The Ego is the second part of the personality; this part is both conscious and unconscious. It does not only decide what is suitable for the individual but also which impulses or desires offered by the id can be satisfied and to what degree they can be satisfied. Hartman (1906) adds that the Ego represents the I or the reality principle and centralisation of functional control. The last part of the personality is the Superego, it is certainly about the moral values of society in which we live or what we have been taught by our parents. The superego is partially unconscious, it issues blind commands just as the id issues blind demands and produces feelings of guilt when its commands are disobeyed (Jackson, 2000). The ego is a central part of the personality, Brenner (1984) adds that the ego plays a crucial role as it balances in satisfying the drives of the Id under the constraints of the Superego. In analysing and elaborating on the compromise in the conflict among the Id, ego and Superego, Freud introduced the revolutionary idea of defence mechanisms which he dubbed mediators in the compromise of these parts of personality.

The defence mechanism theory was first proposed by Sigmund Freud in a paper titled “The Neuro-psychoses of defence mechanisms”. Just like the topographic personality theory, it was developed to better understand human behaviour (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1985). Initially, Freud defined defence mechanisms as the unconscious mental operations that keep painful thoughts and emotions from awareness with emphasis on repression but later expanded his concept of defence mechanisms to describe a wide array of defence processes. He argued that defence mechanisms arose from the conflict between the Ego and the Id. While the Id is impulsive, the Ego seeks to bar the expression of unacceptable impulses by using defence mechanisms (Hoffman, 2006). Though Freud’s early writings dealt with terms like mechanisms of defence and repression, his later writings outlined other individual defences which include: denial,

displacement, dissociation, fantasy, hypochondriasis, isolation, projection, reaction formation, regression, splitting, sublimation, turning against self and undoing (Perri and Ianni, 1998).

It must also be noted that while Sigmund Freud originated the idea of defence mechanisms, various scholars have elaborated on this concept over the years as it is believed that defence mechanisms are common phenomena in everyday life. According to Fehr (2000) defence mechanisms are subconscious efforts for adaptation and coping: these efforts are made to protect the self, avoid any damage to the ego or to decrease anxiety and tension. Defence mechanisms which are also known as ego defence mechanisms are also defined as psychological strategies employed by a person in order to reduce or avoid negative states such as conflicts, frustration, trauma, anxiety and stress (Corsini, 1994). Further, Hilgard (1962) states that defense mechanisms are the immediate reactions to frustrations or challenges thus they are employed in order to solve problems. Contemporary theorists and researchers suggest that defense mechanisms have been expanded and play a role in protecting individuals from; internal and external threats, unconscious thoughts that might produce overwhelming anxiety if they became conscious as well as playing a role in managing relationships with others, managing external stressors, promoting overall good psychological adaptation and maintaining well being, self esteem, or self-concept (Cooper, 1998)

With reference to the explanations of Sigmund Freud, the documentation of defence mechanisms by Olson (2008) and Gokgad (2015), the generic defence mechanisms and those which will be used in this paper are outlined below:

Acting out:

This is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress through potentially destructive actions where the negative consequences are not considered. The actions are often related to the conflict or stressor. For instance, a victim of racism may cope with racism by resorting to violence as opposed to dialogue as the latter may appear futile yet discord and deaths may be the negative consequences.

Displacement:

This is the directing of emotions from the actual object to other objects that will replace the actual object. This is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by

transforming anxiety provoking feelings or responses from one object onto another object that is perceived as less threatening. When a person who wants to be free from oppression learns that it is not possible, he or she could attach themselves to someone or something else. Another example for displacement could be when a man who has to behave in the presence of elderly people all the time outside his home yet one who is unruly to his own family at home.

Dissociation:

Dissociation is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by temporarily breaking down the integration of the components of consciousness then detaching from and losing conscious contact with the environment and persons in the environment. To exemplify this, the effect of racial discrimination and abuse can be looked at as leaving a racial environment to avoid or reduce prejudice, discrimination and abuse.

Fantasy:

This is a defence mechanism by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by fantasising or day dreaming, often as a substitute for relationships with others. One may try to cope with problems or overcome stress by imagination, by not regarding events as they are but as they would want them to be.

Grandiosity:

Grandiosity is the process by which a person deals with stress or conflict by acting or thinking in a manner where exaggerated positive qualities or abilities are attributed to the self in an attempt to make the self superior to others. Each individual has an identity thus defence mechanisms can be used to protect the identity and self from being hurt which is likely to happen when one receives racist remarks or treatment. In coping with this, the individual can focus on their positive qualities and abilities as elaborated by the defence mechanism of grandiosity.

Humour:

Humour is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by making light of or emphasising the amusing or ironic aspects of the situation. Humour can mitigate the effects of racism though it is a difficult mechanism to employ as racial encounters are tense.

Identification with the aggressor:

This is a defence mechanism by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by taking on the same characteristics of the non-self object causing the anxiety. Victims of racism often cope with it by reciprocating racist behaviour.

Intellectualisation:

It is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by using abstract thinking, language and generalisations, thereby controlling or minimising the related effect.

Denial:

This is the refusal to accept problems, a painful or threatening reality. This defence mechanism involves an individual dealing with emotional conflict, internal and external stressors refusing to acknowledge some painful aspect of external reality or subjective experience that would be apparent to others. The conflict or stressor can be recognized but the consequences are not.

Passive Aggression:

Passive aggression is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by indirectly and unassertively expressing thoughts, words or actions toward the object causing the conflict or stress.

Projection:

A defence mechanism where one passes their own emotions to others thus a person deals with anxiety, stress or conflict by attributing their own distressing impulses to a non self object.

Rationalisation:

This is a process by which a person deals with emotional conflict, stress or anxiety by concealing the true motivations for his or her thoughts, actions or feelings, distorted elaborations and explanations which may be exaggerated.

Reaction Formation:

The process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by substituting opposite thought, feelings or behaviours which may either be positive or negative. A victim of racism with opposite feelings can devote most of their time supporting those who racially abuse them in an effort to prove that he is happy.

Regression:

Regression is the process by which a person deals with conflict or stress by reverting to a previously developmentally appropriate way of responding hence one could demonstrate childish attitudes in a bid to cope with the problem and to be understood.

Repression:

A defence mechanism by which one expels wishes, thoughts and experiences from conscious awareness in order to deal with stress, anxiety or conflict although traces of the conflict may remain. Here, an individual tries to forget their memories, painful feelings or stressful thoughts. For instance, victims of slavery can use this mechanism to try to forget their painful memories.

Sublimation:

This is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by channeling feelings or impulses into socially acceptable and productive behaviours.

Undoing:

A defence mechanism by which a person makes amends for previous behavior through verbal or behavioural negation, often via repetitive thoughts or actions that are directly or symbolically related to conflict.

From what has been discussed, it is evident that defence mechanisms can be employed to defend people from anxiety, anguish, fear, loss of self-esteem, negative effects, jealousy, bereavement, hostility, socially unacceptable drives, sexuality, the superego's drives and forbidden impulses. Seeing that the effects of racism include the aforementioned issues then the defensive mechanism theory is appropriate and can be used to identify and analyze the mechanisms used by selected characters in coping with racism. Folkman (2010) also notes that overcoming stress, anxiety or tension involves the behavior and thoughts of individuals to manage the results of stressful events thus it can be deduced that when one experiences racism, they will automatically employ defense mechanisms to cope with it.

### **1.10.2 The Stress and Coping theory**

The other theory that informs this research is the Stress and Coping theory. According to Haan (1977) coping is a mature defence mechanism and it is a positive defence mechanism thus it can be argued that there is a link between defence mechanisms and coping strategies as they both focus on how individuals can deal with unpleasant feelings, experiences and situations. Cramer (1998) adds that both defence mechanisms and coping strategies are adaptational processes though the former is negating, rigid and impulsive, the latter involves purpose, choice and flexible shift. It suffices to also indicate that unlike defence mechanisms which operate unconsciously, the coping process happens consciously and it is therefore modifiable, amenable to changes and potential intervention.

The Stress and Coping theory was propagated by Lazarus and Folkman who developed the classic model of coping that is multiculturally adapted and used as a theoretical base in various areas. The coping process or response is categorised and explained in terms of problem-focused coping or emotion-focused coping strategies, also referred to as active and passive coping strategies. These along with avoidance are also referred to as types of coping strategies. Individuals who are faced with challenges appraise them primarily and secondarily. Primary appraisal is where the individual assesses the challenge and gauges if it is either threatening or non-threatening while secondary appraisal refers to the individual assessing the challenge in terms of whether he or she has the resources to respond to or cope with the challenge effectively. If one does not believe that they have the capacity to respond to the challenge or feels a lack of control, he or she is most likely to turn to emotion-based coping strategies. Emotion based coping involves regulation of the emotions connected with the stressor and may include reappraising the event to create positive meaning or escape-avoidance in which one tries not to think of events or uses a behaviour to try to make himself or herself feel better. However, if one has resources or the capacity to manage the challenge, they will usually develop or resort to problem-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused coping is aimed at dealing with the challenge by changing or tackling it; it involves strategies used to deal with the stressor itself and may include such strategies as making a plan of action and following it. On the other hand, avoidance is the type of coping strategy that can be understood as denial where the individual tries to deal with the problem, stressor or challenge by forgetting (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987).

It must be noted that how individuals appraise a stressor, problem, challenge or difficulty will determine how they will attempt to cope with it. Recent research has shown that positive, problem focused strategies have been related to better outcomes whereas negative, avoidant strategies have been associated with greater difficulties thus it is cardinal that individuals familiarise themselves with these strategies (Altshuler & Ruble, 1989). Focusing on coping strategies, Folkman and Lazarus (1984) define them as individual efforts to resolve, manage, deal with, alleviate or endure problems or experienced stress; these efforts could be both behavioral and psychological. The following are the coping strategies that this paper will investigate and analyse with reference to the two texts.

Problem focused coping strategies:

These include; Planning or suppression of competing activities, finding out more information about the issue (information seeking), evaluating the negatives and positives within a given situation and learning new skills in order to manage, change or eliminate the problem, stressor or challenge.

Emotion-focused coping strategies include:

Wishful thinking where an individual thinks and wishes he could change or stop what they are experiencing, distancing which is where one tries to forget the whole thing or they try to emphasise the positive aspect, seeking comfort from others, working on emotions by using humour, working on emotions by using anger to release tension, emotional distancing, drug or alcohol abuse and seeking emotional and religious support or activities.

Avoidance coping strategy:

This includes denial which refers to an individual's way of dealing with a problem or stressor by forgetting, distancing or distracting him or herself from it. Here, an individual may decide to act like there is no stressor and therefore there is no need to change behaviour, perception or emotional response. The coping strategy of avoidance can also result from a sense that although the situation is stressful, it can never be changed thus it is a stop gap measure especially when the problem or stress is so acute that to acknowledge it would affect the individual more. For

instance, when one loses a loved one they can employ this by initially disbelieving that someone has indeed died (Roncaglia, 2014).

Lazarus and Folkmans (1984) model has been used as a basis for conceptualising race related stress and problems by various researchers (Outlaw, 1993). Since characters in these two novels are exposed to racism or are subject to negative based attitudinal evaluations (prejudice), race based belief and opinions (stereotypes), race-related events (situations) and unfair treatment on the basis of race (discrimination), the coping strategies theory is appropriate, relevant and it will help as it is a frame from which to identify and understand how characters cope with racism. Therefore, the study uses the defence mechanism theory and coping theory to investigate, compare and contrast the various strategies used by the characters in coping with racism as understanding defense mechanisms which are often unconscious and coping strategies which are conscious efforts can help to better examine, understand and address various challenges, problems and stressors including racism.

### **1.11. Definition of Terms**

Find below some of the key words that the study makes reference to. They are defined and explained according to how they are used and applied in the study.

1.11.1 **Racism:** Generally the negative thoughts, feelings, words, beliefs, actions, attitudes or behaviour of hatred towards a person based on their race.

1.11.2 **Race:** A biological or natural categorisation system of human species which is also referred to as a social construct.

1.11.3 **Racial Prejudice:** This refers to negative attitudes towards those classified on the basis of physical or cultural characteristics; people are identified as members of a particular group then judged according to the presumed characteristics of that group.

1.11.4 **Racial Discrimination:** Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, presence or unfavouratism.

1.11.5 **Racial Abuse:** Using or treating someone wrongly or badly because of their race.

**1.11.6 Stereotypes:** These are generalised, exaggerated or distorted images of people in a particular group or a category which are held whether or not most or even some people in that category fit the image.

**1.11.7 Coping:** This refers to an individual's attempt to deal with or master demands and problems that he or she appraises as threatening, challenging or exceeding a person's resources.

**1.11.8 Cope:** To deal with, attempt to overcome or solve problems or difficulties.

**1.11.9 Defense Mechanisms:** These are unconscious psychological strategies brought into play by various entities to deal with reality and to maintain self-image. These born strategies are used to reduce or avoid anxiety or unpleasant feelings and occur when the ego tries to find a way of dealing with the demands of the Id.

**1.11.10 Coping Strategies:** Conscious Strategies used to minimize, avoid or cope with stress, anxiety or problems.

## **1.12 Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation is made up of six chapters. The first chapter constitutes the introduction, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study, the objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework, the delimitation of the study and the methodology. Chapter two is a review of literature related to the topic whereas the third chapter includes the synopsis of the two texts under analysis which are *Meridian* by Alice Walker and *Tongue of the Dumb* by Dominic Mulaisho. Chapter four examines the defence mechanisms and coping strategies employed by the selected characters in the two texts. The fifth Chapter investigates the similarities and differences in the mechanisms and strategies used by selected characters in coping with racism, it also includes the significance of the defense mechanisms and coping strategies used to cope with racism. Chapter six is a summary of the findings and the conclusion of the study.

## **1.13 Conclusion**

This chapter includes the background of the study, the history of racism, its effects and the role of literature in addressing racism. Theories of coping have also been looked at. Further, the statement of the problem; the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, the

theoretical framework, methodology, delimitation of the study and the definitions of terms are the other aspects that have been highlighted. The next chapter is a review of literature related to the topic thus it will look at both theoretical and textual literature.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

Society influences literature just as literature influences society thus studying literature can shape individuals and society at large to an extent. As regards racism, Blum (2002) states that racism is a generic and particularly serious issue and it is evident that literature has contributed in alleviating it by addressing and analysing how characters respond and deal with racial issues. Therefore, this study is significant as it examines, compares and contrasts the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used to cope with racism. Nevertheless, it is important to do a review of what has already been written on this topic in various studies, books, novels, journals and articles so as to identify what is relevant, pertinent and contextually beneficial for this study. The review of literature will be grouped in two categories; the first category will be a review of literature that has employed the Ego defence mechanism theory and the Coping strategies theory while the second category is that of literature or rather studies on the texts *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*. The researcher sought to establish the relationship and/or differences between previous studies and the current research.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Studies

##### 2.1.1 Studies on Defence Mechanisms

Hoffman (2006) conducted a study on attachment styles and use of defence mechanisms; the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between adult attachment and maturity of defence mechanisms. The Adult Attachment Projective with its four categories were condensed in groups and compared to three levels of defence which include denial, projection and identification. The findings of this study argue that attachment may be a factor in the development of defensive structures; it also shows that immature defence mechanisms may be a better measure of psychological deficits than mature defences. The defence mechanism theory is the overarching theory in this study thus this study is significant as it zeroes in on the defence mechanism theory, its history and the use of defence mechanisms.

An article on defence mechanisms to cope with stress due to stigma among people living with HIV/AIDS reported in eastern India is another study that was reviewed. This article was written by Mukherjee (2017) and others, the aim of the study was to explore the stigmatising pattern in people living with HIV/AIDS and to assess the coping strategies adopted for quality of life appraisal. About 120 people attending the outpatient clinic at Kolkota were enrolled through snowballing sample and data was elicited through semi-structured interviews. Multiple defence mechanisms were identified; altruism, anticipation and humour were identified as the most preferred defence strategies. The study is relevant as it is comparative in nature like the current study. While this research focuses on coping with racism, the study that was reviewed looked at the defence mechanisms that various people living with HIV/AIDS employ to cope with the disease thus there is a relationship as both studies seek to identify and compare the defence mechanisms used by different people in dealing with challenging situations.

Gokdag (2015) carried out a research on defence mechanisms used by students to cope with stress. The study investigated the ten best known or most commonly used defence mechanisms. It was conducted with students taking the course of psychology after the researcher had taught them on defence mechanisms. The research found that the most frequently used mechanisms especially by the female participants were repression, denial, and displacement while the male participants mostly used the mechanism of projection thus this was the main difference. Further, it was discovered that females used the defence mechanism of sublimation with a rate twice higher than the male participants. Even though this research focused on stress, it is beneficial to the current study as racism can also be conceptualised as a stressor thus the tools and method of analysis will be of assistance in comparing and contrasting the coping mechanisms used and which ones are frequently used by the selected characters.

Another study by Shechter (2012) sought to investigate the role of defence mechanisms of Israeli society in relation to the Israel-Pakistan conflict. Based on the premise that there was no study that had examined the concept of defence mechanisms from a societal and cultural point of view, he reviewed the concept of defence mechanisms as coined by Sigmund Freud and then developed by later researchers and clinicians. The objectives of the research were to identify the defence mechanisms used in Israel society to deal with conflict, the reasons for the use and to analyse the consequences of the use. The study concludes that the concept of defence mechanism

is applicable to the Israel-Pakistan conflict and that it is crucial to deal with problems such as conflict. The study also shows that defense mechanisms help in moving forward, they are therapeutic and can help in creating better relationships between people who are at loggerheads. The relevance of this study lies in its analysis of the role of defence mechanisms as the role these mechanisms play in dealing with conflict can be related to the role they can play in coping with racism. Further, one of the objectives of this study is to examine the significance of defence mechanisms in coping with racism thus a juxtaposition with the role defence mechanisms play in dealing with conflict as this study suggests can be done.

A main characters analysis on anxiety and defence mechanisms in the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* was done by Jakarta (2010). The focus of the research was to analyse the psychological problems of two main characters Jesse Aarons and Leslie Burke in the novel *Brige to Terabithia*; the anxiety and defence mechanism theory of psychoanalysis was used by the researcher. From the findings, the research shows that the two characters used five kinds of defence mechanisms to distort and deal with anxiety and these include: displacement, behavioural withdrawal, fantasy, denial and sublimation. Similarly, Farkhatun (2017) wrote a paper on anxiety and defence mechanisms of a character called Rachael Watson in Paul Hawkin's novel *The Girl of the Rain*. What is concluded from the analysis is that Rachael suffered from anxiety hence she used defence mechanisms such as repression, displacement, fixation, projection, rationalisation and denial to cope with stress and anxiety.

Additionally, Simma (2009) conducted a study to explore Mark Twain's Huck Finn and Edward Tudor in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Prince and the Pauper* respectively in order to establish the defence mechanisms used by the characters; why they use them and how the defence mechanisms affect the characters' self-adjustment. It must be noted that the comparative aspect of this study is relevant as it seeks to achieve a similar objective with the current study. What Simma's(2009) study discloses is that both characters used repression, suppression and rationalisation because they had realistic and moral anxiety from their family background and society. From the studies that have been reviewed, it is evident that the defence mechanism theory can be used to analyse different kinds of literature and different kinds of individual challenges thus this current study is significant and it can be placed in the context of previous research.

### **2.1.2 Studies on Coping strategies**

Turning to the Stress and Coping strategies theory, the researcher reviewed various works on this theory and its applicability to the analysis of different kinds of literature. To start with, Hudson (2013) did a research on the impact of stress-coping strategies on perceived stress, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy levels of students. The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of stress coping strategies on perceived stress levels, levels of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. The results of the research suggest that stress results from an imbalance between the requirements of the environment and one's ability to cope with it. In order to effectively analyse the impact of stress-coping strategies, the researcher examined and implemented three research based stress coping strategies which include emotion-focused, problem focused and avoidance-focused. Mitchell (2004) tested two theories from Lazarus and Folkman's transaction model of stress and coping. His study examined the interaction between cognitive appraisals of stressful life events, methods of coping and depressive symptomology. It was also designed to investigate the proposal that coping strategies tend to match the appraised controllability of a stressor and that the effectiveness of coping strategies is dependent on the appraised controllability. Just like Hudson's (2013) study, this study is relevant as it gives more information on the coping strategies theory which the current research utilises and it also highlights on the importance and effectiveness of coping strategies.

Coping strategies can be employed to cope with various day to day challenges. Tarres, Cantera and Pereira (2017) researched on gender-based violence, coping strategies and perceived support. The study was aimed at describing and analysing the discourse of five abused women from the province of Barcelona (Spain) as well as their coping strategies and their perception of support throughout their conjugal relation. The results indicated that the most frequently used strategy to cope with gender based violence was avoidance-focused coping as the data reflects isolation from family and friends, low perceived social support and problems to access that support. Baqutayan (2015) also discusses the relationship between stress and coping mechanisms in his study dubbed Stress and Coping mechanisms. The purpose of this today was to understand the history of stress related problems and to provide a suitable model that brings all ways of coping mechanisms into one. The results and explanations of this literature aimed to help everyone to find out the main reason for their stress and the best techniques to use as coping

strategies are useful in coping with stress. The objectives of the two studies were to investigate how coping strategies can be used to cope with gender based violence and stress respectively whereas the current study focuses on coping with racism. However, the current study uses the same theory that these two scholars used though the purpose is to analyse how coping strategies are used by different characters to cope with racism thus the prior study is essential and relevant as the similarities are manifest hence the two studies can enhance the attainment of the set objectives. Additionally, since the reviewed paper uses the same tools as the current research, it lays a good foundation in the analysis of character choices, efforts and actions to cope with racism.

In 2006, Esty researched on African-American ways of coping with racist events, including the use of binge Eating. This study was a response to the relative lack of literature examining African-Americans coping responses to racism. The main aim of the study was to examine empirically African-American women's coping styles in relation to their experiences of racist events using a comprehensive theoretical model that would expand current understanding. It also responded to the need in eating disorder literature to increase the understanding of binge eating by counseling psychologists. The findings of this study were that limited support was found for the application of Lazarus and Folkman's model, it also found that distress was an important primary appraisal process for problem focused coping, avoidance coping and that binge drinking was a possible strategy of coping with the distress of racism. What this study and the current study have in common is that both deal with coping with racism though one looks at real life people while the other looks at fictional characters thus this study enriches the current study by discussing the various events, situation and experiences which real life characters attempt to cope with amidst racism. However, the current study is opposed to the view that limited support was found for Lazarus and Folkman's model, the current study opines that through comprehensive observation and analysis, inferences and an analysis can be done using Lazarus and Folkman's model.

The other study that was reviewed is by Robbie Jean Walker (1981) which looked at coping strategies of the women in Alice Walker's novels *The color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. In this paper, Walker suggests that coping strategies are characterised as variously as carefully considered judgments or mere reactions devoid of ideological commitment. These

efforts have engaged the attention of historians, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, literary artists and other scholars motivated by a perceived obligation to explicate the nature of the struggle and articulate viable modes of ameliorating the effects of discrimination. The study points out that fictional literature deals with multifaceted problems of race survival and progress thus readers can evaluate characters as they respond to challenges and draw plausible inferences that shed light on problem construction and resolution.

Robbie Walker's (1981) study concludes that Alice Walker's portrayal of women presents a range of coping strategies that can be tested for their generalisability to real life situations although the regressions and failures accompanying the efforts of these women are frequently disappointing and occasionally alarming: the coping strategies employed by these women are revelatory of the problems and possibilities involved in recognising and assessing options. On one hand, this study brings to the fore how one can evaluate characters and the coping strategies that they use to respond to challenges thus it is in harmony with the current study and will be of aid as the researcher seeks to observe and make inferences in a bid to understand the various mechanisms and strategies used by characters. On the other hand, the study reveals the knowledge gap as it only focuses on *The Color Purple* and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* and not *Meridian* which this study concerns itself with. Further, the study merely analyses the two texts independently and makes a general conclusion unlike this study which seeks to do a comparative analysis of the coping strategies of characters in two texts.

Plummer and Slane (1996) conducted a study using the Lazarus and Folkman theoretical framework of coping to examine the coping behaviour of African-Americans which showed that African-Americans used significantly more emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies than whites. Therefore, this theory can be used to compare and contrast how different individuals and characters can employ coping strategies to cope with racism. The last but not the least study that was reviewed on coping strategies is Bellord's (2014) study which focused on mental coping strategies, breakdown and trauma in Pat Barker's *Regeneration Trilogy* and Sebastian Faulkner's *Birdsong*. The objectives of this study were to discuss mental coping strategies, to compare *The Regeneration Trilogy* and *Bird song* and their dealing with trauma. The researcher of this study concludes that despite the differences in setting and the different genders of the authors, there is no big difference in the representation of trauma and mental

coping strategies in the two novels. Although this study deals with trauma and not racism, it is essential, relevant and enlightening as it applies a coping theory to the study of a novel just like the current study seeks to do though it specifically utilises the stress and coping theory. Further, it is comparative in nature thus it serves as a good guide and framework in the area of comparative literature.

## **2.2 Textual Studies**

As outlined earlier, various works have been done pertaining to the two selected novels but not with the same objective and angle as this paper. However, it is imperative to review literature on these texts as similar and relevant works are often insightful and helpful in identifying the knowledge gap and acquiring more information on the texts.

### **2.2.1 Studies on *Meridian***

Starting with the novel *Meridian* by Alice Walker, Van Dyke (1992) analysed *Meridian* and made commentaries that are relevant to scholarly work and this paper as it zeroed in on the critical issues in *Meridian*. He opines that *Meridian* reveals issues beyond racism and social evils in the small communities of Alabama and Georgia that individuals face throughout the novel. Van Dyke (1992) discusses the rising power of social activism in the face of racist and segregationist policies. Though his paper focuses on the conflicted love triangle between three characters in the novel and not the individual's response to racism, it gives insights on the racial issues in the text which are relevant to this study.

De Grado (2016) is another scholar that conducted a study on *Meridian* in which he attempted to analyse the heroine in *Meridian* so as to illustrate the difficulties and dilemmas that she faced in her quest for an identity and in the construction of political consciousness. He concludes that the protagonist 'Meridian' transforms from being a victim of society into an emotionally independent woman who developed a mature political consciousness and performed the role of a spiritual leader in her community. As a result, she contributes to creating an environment in which she can heal and to the healing process of others and seeks to achieve an ideal community of which all human beings are equal and live in pacific fraternity with each other. Though this study does not focus on how Meridian attempts to cope with the racial challenges she encounters; the experiences of the protagonist on her journey of attaining political consciousness

and an identity are relevant to the current study as racism was one of the barriers she encountered throughout her pilgrimage.

Similarly, Mirshojaei (2016) wrote a paper in which he attempted to show the concept of identity in *Meridian*, *The Colour Purple*, *The Temple of My Familiar* and *Possessing the Secret Joy* by Alice Walker. She argues that men and women are within the race struggle with their identities, seeking to understand how to be men, women, American, black and a variety of other things at once while remaining true to their true selves. The researcher suggests that in the same way that being black in an America dominated by whites seems a problem and a strange experience, examining gender roles of the masculine and feminine becomes within the confines of race thus the identity of black no longer encompasses a whole race. Unlike the current study which focuses on defence mechanisms and coping strategies in two novels written by two different writers, Mirshojaei (2016) focused on the concept of identity in five novels written by the same author. The common ground is that both novels analyse *Meridian* and the struggles faced in battling with identity in *Meridian* are somewhat similar to the struggles faced in battling with racism thus there is some similarity in the studies.

Dhillon and Babu (2019) wrote a paper on *Meridian* that focused on race and human rights. While analysing the novel, their paper argued that many of the issues that are discussed as race issues specific to a particular country, region or location have actually a wider dimension and this wider dimension is the interface of human rights crisis in literature, the relationship between aesthetics and ethics. For this reason, the paper explored the violation of the human rights of African-Americans during and after the civil rights movement. The paper suggests that some of the human rights that were violated include the right to life and liberty and the right to vote, participate in the government, the rights of children and women. While it touched on racial issues, the study did not focus on how individual characters coped with the violations of their rights from a psychoanalytical perspective thus this paper will add knowledge on this issue.

Another study by Al-Banna (n.d), looks at *Meridian* and focuses on how female characters try to free themselves from oppression, misery, fear and underestimation by men in the patriarchal society. The study reveals that the oppressed characters in this novel show great resistance and resilience in the face of racial oppression, sexual abuse, brutality and they struggle for a free life despite the discrimination they face and in spite of being seen as objects. This study looked at the

resistance of the protagonist in the novel, it highlighted racial oppression and how the protagonist struggles with it from the resilience perspective but not from the coping perspective thus the current study will fill the gap as it deals with this crucial theme.

### **2.2.2 Studies on *The Tongue of the Dumb***

Muyendekwa (2007) analyses *Tongue of the Dumb* in his dissertation. His study draws attention to the images of women in *Ticklish Sensation*, *Cowrie of Hope* and *Tongue of the Dumb*. Focusing on *Tongue of the Dumb* which this paper concerns itself with, Muyendekwa asserts that Dominic Mulaisho vividly brings out patriarchy in his novel, gender is handicapped and sex role stereotyping are manifest as women are subjugated and treated like second class citizens. Though Muyendekwa's (2007) study focuses on the portrayal of women in *Tongue of The Dumb*, he gives some helpful insights on the events in the novel and discusses the setting and ideologies surrounding the writer at that time thus this will help in analysing why characters are portrayed in a certain way and why racial prejudice is prevalent.

Another researcher who conducts a study on *The Tongue of The Dumb* is Mbwayu (1987). He explores partisanship and craftsmanship in Andrea Masiye's *Before Dawn*, Grieve Sibale's *Between Two Worlds*, William Saidi's *The Hanging* and Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of The Dumb*. His study assesses the skills of the writers in a bid to discover the artistic abilities of the writers. Mbwayu's dissertation suggests that the commitment of the writers is not socialist; the writers are not aware of the existence of classes thus they omit this fact, their technical skills are clumsy and that the style is often direct in these texts. Unlike Mbwayu, the current study does not focus on style, partisanship and craftsmanship in *The Tongue of The Dumb*, it does not also ascribe to the notion that Mulaisho is not aware of the existence of classes as his portrayal of the missionaries, colonialists and native Africans shows his acknowledgement of classes thus racial and power struggles are manifest. Thus, this study adds more information and sheds more light on the class and racial struggles in *The Tongue of The Dumb*.

Macola's (2005) study titled 'Imagining Village life in Zambian Fiction' also analyses *Tongue of the Dumb* though it does not apply any of the aforementioned theories; it contributes to the study by talking about the cultural style and aspects of setting in the novel and the theme of moral bankruptcy. Furthermore, this study brings to the fore details of the characters as it does brief character analysis of the novel. Since this study focuses on selected characters, the study will

help to analyse these characters from the defence mechanisms and coping strategies point of view in a bid to bring out what influences their actions so as to link this to their response and reaction when faced with racial prejudice, discrimination and oppression.

The other study conducted on *Tongue of the Dumb* is that of Willian Purcell (2012). The study aimed to explore Mulaisho's examination of mission in the novel and the researcher argues that the missiological outlook of the writer of *Tongue of the Dumb* is rooted in a markedly Jesuit theology articulated by Pedro Arupe who emphasises on the primacy of witness through daily living. Thus, Mulaisho inscribes an authentic missionary life in one of the characters called brother Arupe. While this study leaves a gap on racial issues with regard to coping with the challenges that arose from the conflict of beliefs between the traditional people and the intervening whites, it provides relevant information as it highlights the class differences and how some characters allow these differences to shape how they treat and relate with others thus leading to racist behaviour. For instance, brother Arupe's appearances in the novel are almost juxtaposed with Father Oliver who is expected to live a life of service and justice yet he is discriminatory thus giving rise to racial barriers.

Additionally, Hal (1999) wrote a paper entitled "Jesuit Missionary Types and Nsenga Responses in Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb*". In this study, the focus is on Mulaisho's treatment of the missionary's interaction with Nsenga beliefs and practices. The paper also looks at the factors influencing Mulaisho's religious and cultural perspective. On the other hand, this study extends the discourse as it seeks to deal with the theme of racism with regard to the individual's efforts in coping with it thus it adds to what others have analysed and written on this literary work.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

While the first chapter focused on introducing the current study, this chapter provides a review of literature on defence mechanisms, coping strategies, *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*. From the literature that has been reviewed, it is evident that the theme of racism is crucial hence numerous organizations, groups and individuals have endeavoured to address it. It can be noted that different people have discussed racism through literary works and others have written about it though not from the perspective of this paper. Although various studies have looked at *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb* and examined the use of defense mechanisms and coping

strategies employed by human beings and fictional characters, a gap in this field exists regarding the characters in *Meridian* and *Tongue of The Dumb*. There is no study that has investigated or examined the defence mechanisms and strategies employed by individual characters to cope with racism as well as the similarities and differences in these two texts. Thus this study is a necessity as it fills the literary lacuna. The next chapter is a synopsis of the two primary texts *Meridian* and *Tongue of the Dumb*.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SYNOPSIS OF TEXTS

#### 3.0 Introduction

This Chapter provides summaries of the novels *Meridian* by Alice Walker and *The Tongue of the Dumb* by Dominic Mulaisho. Racism is manifest and prevalent in both texts and there are characters that endeavour to cope with racism thus making these two texts suitable for this comparative study. Firstly, the chapter will provide background information and a synopsis of *Meridian*, thereafter; it will focus on *The Tongue of the Dumb*.

#### 3.1 *Meridian*

First published in 1976 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, *Meridian* was written by Alice Walker. Walker is a prolific novelist, essayist and poet whose compelling works won her the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and enabled her to win the national book award. She was later inducted into the California Hall of Fame and received the Lennon-Ono Peace award in 2006 and 2010. Her books, *Meridian* inclusive, have been translated into more than two dozen languages and sold more than 15 million copies. *Meridian* is Walker's second novel, written at a time when civil rights movements began after decades of slavery and racial segregation. This novel demonstrates the racism, sexism and classism that prevailed through the 1960's.

The author, Alice Walker, is an African-American writer. She was born to poor sharecropper parents in Georgia, in 1944. She went to segregated schools and later graduated from high school as class valedictorian. After high school, Walker attended college in Atlanta, she later switched to Sarah Lawrence College in New York and graduated in 1965 which is the same year she published her first short story. After college, Alice Walker worked as a social worker, teacher and lecturer. Walker later became active in the civil rights movements, she was strongly committed to the fight for civil rights thus she actively took part in the civil rights movement which was aimed at claiming full citizenship rights for the black community and advocating for the abolishment of discriminatory policies. She was a key figure in the advocacy for racial, class and gender equality thus these themes are prevalent in her novels.

As regards *Meridian*, the story is set in the 1950's through to the 1970's. It characterises a time when African-American activists were striving for social progress and attempting to move away from nonviolent to more aggressive protests. Geographically set in America, some of the events take place in Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi while other events take place at Saxon College and in New York City. The story is told in the third person; the narrator is anonymous and tells the story in a non-chronological order thus flashbacks are utilised. Some of the themes that the novel is concerned with include: racism, sexism, identity, political activism, discrimination, motherhood and the difficulty of idealism.

Alice Walker's heroine in this novel is Meridian Hill. It must be noted that the title does not only make reference to the protagonist as the word Meridian denotes the highest point reached by a heavenly body, highest point of power, prosperity or the middle period of one's life. Therefore, the title refers to the highest point achieved by the activists of the civil rights movement and the protagonist's ability to balance amidst various ideologies while being at her prime in fighting for equality and liberty. Simply put, the novel follows the life of Meridian Hill, her involvement in the civil rights movement and her transformational journey.

At the beginning of the story, Truman Held who had been Meridian's lover arrives in Chicokema and finds commotion. Meridian Hill is at the centre of the things as she tries to boldly lead school going children who want to watch a mummified white woman at a show. Unfortunately, they go on a day when black and poor children are forbidden to attend but through Meridian's resilience they go in and watch. Meridian faints after the show, four strange men take her to her house where she links up with Truman. They chat at length after she regains consciousness, her house amazes him as she has no furniture and he quizzes her about her health though she insists that she is fine. A flashback follows and this characterises how the story unfolds. Although the plot structure is non-chronological, textual evidence gives the readers background information about Meridian and her journey as a revolutionist.

Meridian's pregnancy is one of the first major events in the story. At the age of 13, she gets pregnant and the school expels her despite her intelligence. She partly blames her mother for not telling her about sex and other important things in life. Meridian's mother does not have a strong relationship with her children whom she feels robbed her of happiness and she claims she trusted Meridian no wonder she did not tell her much. On the other hand, Meridian gets along with her

father, a former teacher who does his best to support his family. After dropping out of school, Meridian gets married to her boyfriend Eddie as both families agree. When the baby is born, Meridian and her husband live happily though the happiness is short lived as she loses interest in her husband hence they later divorce.

Meridian gains interest in the civil rights movement after bombings that occurred in her neighbourhood, she joins the movement and spends most of the time working there as a volunteer. However, her mother disapproves of her involvement and participation in protests. At the place she had volunteered to work, she meets a good looking and thoughtful gentleman called Truman, they protest together, get beaten and are arrested at times yet they persevere. Soon, Meridian is offered a scholarship and contemplates going to college. She goes home with her friends who help her to deliver the news to her mother, Mrs Hill expresses her concerns especially that this meant Meridian leaving her child but she agrees after the discussion. Despite the feelings of guilt over leaving her baby with the mother, Meridian joyfully prepares to go to Saxon college as she considers it a wonderful once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

At Saxon College, Meridian meets Annie Marion who becomes her close friend. Both are involved in the movement, they participate in protests and persevere despite the increasing police brutality. Meridian also gets to see Truman; they meet frequently and spend a lot of time together. She likes him and soon they make love though their relationship crumbles after some white exchange students come to Saxon college. Truman gets involved with one of them, Lynne, whom he later marries. Nonetheless, he still likes Meridian and finds time to see her especially when Lynne is not in the vicinity. Later, Meridian gets pregnant for Truman but she does not tell him. She goes for an abortion and asks the doctor to tie her tubes. When Truman expresses his love for her and asks her to have his children, she hits him with a bag and he starts bleeding as a spiral from a tablet cuts his cheek. She feels undervalued as she wondered why he left her for the white girl. In her mind she wondered if it was because she was not a virgin, she had a child or because she was divorced but these thoughts were to no avail as she purposed not to be in a relationship again.

While canvassing for voters during her campus days, Meridian meets a pregnant and homeless girl called Wile Chile the wild child, she tries to help her by taking care of her, feeding her and moving around with her but this unsettles some honour students who report her and she is told

that the wild child cannot stay at the institution. Saddened by this development, Meridian tries to find a place for Wile Chile but the wild child escapes and gets hit by a car as she is running on the streets. Numerous people turn up for the wild child's funeral. Meridian and her friends lead them as they seek to conduct a service at the chapel. To their surprise, the President denies them access to the chapel and this angers all the students who eventually riot and chop down the iconic tree at the School. "The Sojourner" as they called it, was believed to be a historical and magical tree thus many people including Meridian found comfort as they sat there yet it was unceremoniously chopped down in a moment of anger, disappointment and distress.

Unable to live on campus after the wild child's death, Meridian moves out of campus and finds a place to stay in the ghetto. Aware that her parents are unable to pay her rent, she works as a typist for a professor who had recently retired. The professor's office is a few blocks from her door; he gives her money for rent, buys her other gifts and makes advances towards her which she is careful to avoid. As a black woman concerned with the racial crisis in her society, she continues being active in protests and demonstrations in a bid to fight racial policies, inequality and segregation. Meridian later falls ill, she is bedridden for a while and things get worse as she loses her sight temporarily. Annie Marion her close friend abandons her as she feels she is unable to love Meridian due to her poor health. This decision haunts Annie. They later meet in New York and share a room but after Meridian goes back to the south, Annie Marion endeavours to write letters to Meridian though their friendship does not rekindle as they take different paths. Miss Winter, one of the few people to have come from the same town as Meridian and was among the few black instructors at Saxon college helps and nurses Meridian till she gets better and continues with her civil rights activities despite the movement falling apart. Meridian soldiers on in the movement for many years; she later decides to go to the south so that she could live with her people and be able to help them effectively.

The narrator also highlights the challenges Truman and Lynne face in their marriage after they move to Mississippi. In Mississippi, True man and Lynne join the movement and Lynne supports the movement as she had always hated the idea of being an oppressor. After Truman, Lynne, Tommy Odd and others leave a Liberal Trinity Baptist Church, they are followed and Tommy Odds gets shoot and loses his arm. This changes Truman and Tommy Odds' feelings about Lynne as it is believed that it was her presence that led to them being followed and sought after.

Truman feels the pressure of getting rid of Lynne but struggles as she has sacrificed many things for him and the movement. Taking advantage of the situation, Tommy Odds rapes Lynne who wants to deny his advances but sympathises with him as she does not want to hurt his feelings. He later brings other black friends to sleep with her but they all refuse. She keeps this to herself as she fears to bring chaos. Lynne feels disrespected and undervalued thus she sleeps with many other black men after Truman leaves her. When Camara, her daughter with Truman is beaten, raped and is lying dead in hospital, she looks for Truman as she needed his support. She finds him with another white woman and gets upset as she gave him up for Meridian and not any other lady. When Camara dies, they both turn to Meridian who comforts them. When in Chicokema, Lynne visits Meridian and they chat at length. Truman also visits and looks for Meridian at every given opportunity.

In Atalanta, Meridian continues with voter-registration drives as she wants all black people to have equal opportunities and properties in life. Together with Truman, they move around advocating for the black residents to vote as this was one sure way of bringing about revolution and change. Others agree with them while others do not see the need to vote but this does not derail Meridian from canvassing in the black communities as racial abuse is constantly manifest. She experiences and witnesses various racist encounters and acts which lead to the death of some black people, rekindling her desire to fight against racism.

Though not a religious person from childhood, something which often displeased her mother, Meridian starts going to church consistently and notices that things have changed as the music is uplifting and no one sleeps when sermons are preached. She is awakened by one particular speech given at a church she attends when the speaker powerfully addresses the congregation and an old man whose son had been killed because of his involvement in protests. Moved by the words, she vows and feels ready to kill for the movement as she believes that sometimes violence is inevitable. Unlike Annie Marion and her acquaintances who consider themselves revolutionaries yet they have no record of killing for the cause, she is ready to be a type of revolutionary who is willing to kill and does not give up on justice.

As the story comes to a close, Meridian seemingly heals and leaves Truman. What puzzles those who know her is that she stays optimistic in the fight for freedom and equality, even when her health is failing she does not stop fighting and this highlights her transformation from a passive

and weak person to a fearless and courageous civil rights worker. Truman Held did not fully understand her but admired her as always and the story ends with him thinking about the inner struggle he must take up after Meridian seemed to have overcome her struggles.

### **3.2 The Tongue of the Dumb**

Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb* was first published in 1971. Heinemann publishers of the United Kingdom later published a printed edition in 1973 and Multimedia Zambia published it in 1989. The text analysed in this study is the 2007 version reprinted by Maiden publishers. This novel was one of the first post-colonial novels to gain international recognition though it has not received much scholarly notice. Apart from the setting, the other difference between *The Tongue of the Dumb* and *Meridian* is that the protagonist of *Meridian* is female while the main character in *The Tongue of the Dumb* is male. However, both novels deal with the crucial theme of racism, power struggles and how the writers portray the struggle of racial encounters.

The author of *The Tongue of the Dumb*, Dominic Mulaisho was a patriot, gifted thinker and Zambian novelist. He rendered selfless service to Zambia and was well vested with the Zambian culture. Mulaisho was born in 1933 in Feira, Zambia and died in 2013. He received his early education at Katondwe mission and later graduated at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in what is now called Zimbabwe. His post graduate career was characterised by working as the permanent secretary in the Office of the President, in the ministry of Education and in other ministries. Later on, he moved and worked as: the Chairman of the Mining Industry, General Manager of the National Agricultural Marketing Board, Managing Director of Indeco, Editor in Chief of Southern African Economist and the Governor of the bank of Zambia. Though much of his career was spent working for the Zambian government and holding several senior positions, he had profound interest in literature which explains why he found time to write the novels *The Smoke that Thunders* and *The Tongue of the Dumb*. His vast experience enabled him to reflect the various issues that were prevalent in his time thus he portrays power struggles, racial issues and indigenous traditions in his first novel.

From a thematic perspective, *The Tongue of the Dumb* is about internal power struggles and the conflict between mission Christianity and indigenous culture. Nsenga beliefs regarding divination, witchcraft, marriage, healing and other dimensions of indigenous culture give rise to

the clash between the Western and African culture. The other issues that are manifest in this novel are jealousy, discrimination, factional disputes and violence.

The Story is set in the valley of the Kaunga River of south-eastern Zambia almost to the east of Lusaka between 1948 and 1949. Most of the action takes place in Mpona village with a few events taking place at the mission and part of Lusaka. The Nsenga characters are illiterate, they are committed to their beliefs and practices thus the establishment of mission schools is not appreciated. Furthermore, the people in Mpona village are subsistence farmers who keep goats and plant maize despite living in a drought prone area. Other than the conflict between the locals and the missionaries, Chief Mpona, Natombi and the resident catholic teacher are pressured by Lubinda who has his sights on the Chiefs throne, Natombi and he is against the whites mans beliefs, teachings and regulations. Other events take place at Katondwe mission headed by Father Superior and his assistant Father Paul Oliver or Chiphwanya. The former is seasoned, sympathetic and kind towards the locals while the latter is impatient and dictatorial. These two men have different approaches to missionary work thus they often debate and treat the indigenous people differently. The setting shifts back to Mpona village in the closing chapters as Mulaisho sums up the two narratives.

Dominic Mulaisho derives the title of the novel from Isaiah 35: 5-6 which says: “Then shall the blind men’s eyes be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb shout aloud.” Mulaisho alludes to these verses in the later stages of the novel when Mwape who had been dumb is able to speak, father Oliver is heralded for his intervention thus the boys healing reminds him of Isaiah 35:5-6. It can be argued that Mulaisho deliberately picks this title as the boy’s healing harmonises the two plots and leads to the resolution of the story.

The plot takes the story through different experiences and challenges that the people of Mpona village go through. The chief, Mpona, goes mad and is away for about 5 years. In his absence, Lubinda the councillor and medicine man takes over as the Chief. This delights Lubinda as he had been envious of the chief’s position for a very long time. When the chief returns, everyone except Lubinda is genuinely happy thus he uses every device to turn the people against the chief.

Due to the arrival of the white men, chief Mpona is under pressure as he seeks to appease them while trying to defend the traditions of the natives. The white men send a teacher to open a

school and teach the gospel as they consider the native Africans as pagans. The teacher, Aphunzisi as he is called is not welcomed by some people in the village who consider his teachings contrary to their customs. Lubinda is the only character who boldly opposes the whites, he leads the protest and suggests that the school is closed. Mpona struggles to handle the situation as he fears what the white men at the mission would do if the teacher is chased and the school is closed.

Lubinda is at the centre of these occurrences, not only does he seek to frustrate the teacher but Natombi as well. The readers learn that Lubinda had always admired Natombi, he had started pursuing her a long time even when her husband Dulani was still alive. At some point, Lubinda made Dulani believe that he was impotent thus he suggested that he helps him have a child by sleeping with his wife. This false act leads to Dulani believing that the child they had with Natombi was not his but Lubinda's even when Natombi tries to convince him that he is the father. Despite Lubinda's attempts to seduce Natombi, she constantly rejects him and this leads to him fabricating false stories about her being a witch so that the people turn against her hence Natombi suffers. After her husband, Dulani, dies due to a flood, she is blamed for her husband's death and her child's dumbness thus she endures torment as she is segregated and condemned. When the white man visits Mpona Village, he asserts that the dumb boy just needs an operation thus he is taken to hospital. This shocks the people and displeases Lubinda especially when the boy seemingly disappears thus he blames Chief Mpona.

In another instance, the district commissioner visits Mpona Village. The chief had been told to ensure that latrines are built and that there should be no lepers. This angers some of the lepers who feel unprotected and Lubinda uses this opportunity to mock the chief and accuse him of not respecting the traditions of the people who considered it a taboo to have latrines which should be used by parents and their children. Mpona has no option thus he asks the people to build fake latrines and pretends to have sent the lepers to the hospital thus the DC does not punish them. Later, Lubinda organises a diviner to purge the community of witchcraft and surprisingly the diviner declares the teacher and the chief as witches. The teacher is banished from Mpona village and the chief is put under house arrest. This excites Lubinda as things seem to be going according to plan.

After some time, the teacher returns to Mpona village. Accompanied by his fellow Christians, they bring food aid which the villagers refuse to accept despite the hunger situation. He further goes ahead to reopen the school and this angers some of the villagers. Later, the teacher is attacked and beaten. Lubinda suggests that the teacher was attacked by the spirits, however, the villagers and the readers later discover that it is Lubinda who attacked him and stole the food. This episode does not stop Lubinda from accusing the chief thus he implicates the chief for using witchcraft to kill the teacher and organises people to burn the teacher who survives and is taken to Katondo mission.

At the mission, the narrator tells us about the conflict between the two priests who commissioned the teacher to set up a school in Mpona village. Father Superior is the head of the mission, he is elderly and sympathises with the locals. On the other hand, Father Chiphwanya is a junior and he is radical in his approach and treatment of the natives whom he considers to be pagan, uncivilised and inferior to the whites. For instance, when Father Superior paints Jesus, Mary and Joseph black during Christmas, father Oliver who had painted them white as he decorated his crib was unhappy as he strongly believes that Jesus could not be black as no civilised person could have listened to a black person spreading the gospel. Later on, father Oliver expresses his disapproval and displeasure with regard to how the locals mourn a departed person. When brother Arupe, a layman who is culturally integrated with the locals dies after a lion kills him, the locals mourn and sing traditional songs which father Oliver regards as pagan songs yet father Oliver suggests that it is okay for the locals to mourn in their own way. The criticisms and differences in approach by the two priests highlight the pros and cons of religion and its conflict with African traditions.

In the closing stages of the story, Lubinda intensifies his accusations towards chief Mpona. He arranges a diviner who states that the chief is a witch and he is the reason why the people of Mpona Village have experienced so much misfortune. Lubinda rejoices as his plans seem to come to fruition but before the Chief is dethroned, the white man returns to the village with the boy Mwape who is now able to talk. This makes the people realise that Lubinda's accusations were false, they celebrate their chief and Lubinda runs away. Though Lubinda covets the throne and his pursuit of it dominates the story, his efforts in fighting against racial stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination are of cardinal practical significance.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

This chapter presented summaries of the novels *Meridian* by Alice Walker and *The Tongue of the Dumb* by Dominic Mulaisho which are the two texts under study. These two texts are comparable as racism is a recurring theme in both texts and characters employ various strategies to cope with it. The next chapter will be an analysis of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used to cope with racism by two of the main characters namely Meridian Hill in *Meridian* and Lubinda in *The Tongue of the Dumb*. It will also look at the differences and similarities of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used as well as the significance of the mechanisms and strategies.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF TEXTS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter gave a background and summary of the texts *Meridian* and *The Tongue of the Dumb*. This chapter aims at addressing the first objective which is concerned with identifying and analysing the defence and coping strategies employed by selected characters to cope with racism in *Meridian* and *The Tongue of the Dumb*. The chapter analyses the two texts using the ego defence mechanism theory and coping and stress theory. The selected characters are Meridian in Walker's *Meridian* and Lubinda in Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb*. Both are main characters and are at the centre of racial issues in the two novels. They witness, experience and respond to racial abuse, acts, comments, prejudice, discrimination and antagonism.

#### 4.1 *Meridian*

##### 4.1.1 Defence Mechanisms used by Meridian

Meridian is the protagonist in Walker's novel. She is a young African-American woman who grows up during the civil rights movement. In a bid to fight racial oppression, discrimination and inequality, she becomes a civil rights worker and spends most of her time canvassing for voters. As a young black woman involved in political activism, the racism she witnesses and experiences leads to her embarking on a journey to challenge and fight racist ideologies.

##### 4.1.1.1. Altruism

The first defence mechanism that Meridian employs when faced with racism is altruism. Altruism is a defence mechanism by which one satisfies internal needs through helping others or the offering of constructive service to others that brings pleasure and personal satisfaction (Cherry, 2019). As a civil rights worker, Meridian is so keen about justice and equality. In the opening chapter, Meridian guides a line of children to see a show about a mummified woman. Due to the policies that do not favour black children, the white men prohibit them from entering till Thursday thus the children protest. Saddened by this injustice, Meridian ignores the armed police men and boldly leads the way. Rather than firing, the police men disarm and allow the children to go inside and watch the much desired show:

Meridian did not look to the right or to the left. She passed the people watching her as if she didn't know it was on her account they were there. As she approached the tank, the blast of its engine starting sent a cloud of pigeons fluttering, with the sound of rapid, distant shelling, through the air, and the muzzle of the tank swung tantalising side to side-as if to tease her-before it settled directly toward her chest. As she drew near the tank, it seemed to grow larger and whiter than ever and she seemed smaller and blacker than ever. And then, when she reached the tank she stepped lightly, deliberately, right in front of it, rapped smartly on its carapace-as if knocking on a door-then raised her arm again. The children pressed onward, through the ranks of the arrayed riflemen up to the circus car door. The silence as Meridian kicked open the door, exploded in a mass exhalation of breaths, and the men who were in the tank crawled sheepishly out again to stare (Walker, 1976, p.6).

This amazes Truman who says to the man standing next to him, "How can you not love somebody like that" (p. 6). Upon his arrival, Truman finds this commotion. Eager to see what is happening, he discovers that his former lover is at the centre of the controversy. In this incident, Meridian manages to help the children to watch the show hence she overcomes the negative state of unhappiness caused by the biased rules in Chicokema.

Furthermore, Meridian satisfies her internal need for justice and equality by helping the children to see the show on a day that black children are not allowed to go to the tank. This also shows how wide spread racism is as it does not only affect the old but the young and this contributes to its continuity as younger generations emulate and carry on racist practices. Through Meridian's actions we see how she utilises the defence mechanism of altruism to cope with racial discrimination and segregation.

#### **4.1.1.2. Dissociation**

The second defence mechanism that Meridian uses is dissociation. Dissociation is the process by which a person disconnects from events, states and environments that are stressful and challenging. As Jakarta (2010) points out, defence mechanisms help to cope with situations that are hard and painful to bear. Having worked as a civil rights worker and experienced racism in the North, Meridian decides to move to the South at the end of the story so as to live and work amongst her people, a decision that puzzles Truman:

And so she had left the North and come back South, moving from one small town to another, finding jobs\_some better or worse than others-to support herself; remaining close to the people\_to see them, to be with them, to understand them and herself, the people who now fed her and tolerated her and also in fashion, cared about her (1976, p. 18).

Meridian resolves to avoid the North and face a new challenge in her life. Despite the financial and economic pressure, she is stress-free as being in the South is far better than constantly witnessing and experiencing racism which is the order of the day in the North. Thus, Meridian uses dissociation to withdraw from racism in the North. In verity, she perceives it to be a threat as freedom; liberty and equality appear far-fetched in the North.

#### **4.1.1.3. Humour**

Humour is the third defence mechanism that Meridian uses to cope with racism. As a defence mechanism, humour is the process by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by making light of something or emphasising the amusing or ironic aspects of the situation (Cherry, 2019). When the Wild Child dies, Meridian and Annie Marion lead the funeral procession. They are accompanied by other students and the neighbourhood residents who carry the casket. The mourners walk together heading to the campus so that they could conduct a funeral service. Unfortunately, the President denies them access to the chapel, a clear case of racial discrimination and segregation. However, Meridian's immediate reaction is laughter:

Meridian laughed in spite of the occasion. She imagined the president-a tan, impeccably tailored patriarch with glinting, shifty gray eyes-coming up to The Wild Child's casket saying, as if addressing a congregation: We are sorry, young woman, but it is against the rules and regulations of this institution to allow you to conduct your funeral inside this chapel, which as you may know, was donated to us by one of the finest robber baron families of New York. Besides, it is nearly time for vespers, and you should have arranged for this affair through the proper channels much earlier (1976, p. 32).

This restriction, wrong and bad treatment of the black community was based on race as the institution would have not been opposed to having a funeral service at that same time if a white

person in the community had died. Further, emphasis on prioritising vespers over the death of a person shows how insignificant black people were to the white community. Evidently, Meridian uses humour as a defence mechanism to cope with the shock and sadness emanating from the discriminatory treatment of the Wild Child's funeral. Laughing about it and seeing the humorous side of the President's statement is simply a defence mechanism that she employs.

#### **4.1.1.4 Passive aggression**

The other defence mechanism that Meridian uses is passive aggression. Simply put, passive aggression is indirectly and unassertively expressing anger (Cherry, 2020). One may not directly express their anger to the person that angers, frustrates or stresses them but they can do something that shows that they are angry about something. Meridian's behaviour with her fellow students after they deny them access to the chapel is one example of passive aggression:

That night after the Wild Child was buried in an overgrown corner of a black cemetery, students, including Annie Marion, rioted on Saxon campus for the first time in its long impeccable history and the only thing they managed to destroy was a Sojourner (1976, p. 34)

The above excerpt shows that Meridian, Annie Marion and the other students are angry with the President for not allowing them to use the chapel for the Wild Child's funeral service as this was a clear sign of institutionalised racism. Driven by sadness, frustration and anger, they work all night to cause chaos but they do not dare go to dismantle the President's house or attack him directly as they riot. Even Meridian who asks her colleagues to do so does not have the courage to go to the President's house as the consequences would be grave yet this mechanism enables her to cope with the frustrations of racial discrimination.

Meridian's impulse to use passive aggression is also manifest when there are segregated hospital facilities in their town and when her fellow demonstrators are arrested and locked up in jail. We see that black people are racially abused in Meridian's society; their lives are regulated by the oppressors and the conditions inside the black section of the jail are not good. The narrator states that this injustice made Meridian's body to twitch with dread thus she resorts to participating in a midnight march to express her dissatisfaction (Walker, 1976). As opposed to violence which is

aggressive, Meridian employs passive aggression by peacefully protesting against inequality and injustice.

#### **4.1.1.5. Regression**

Meridian also uses regression to overcome the trauma of racial oppression. According to Striker (2000), regression is like reacting or taking the position of a child. It is also said to be a method of defence that works by returning to a previous or primitive development. For instance, David who is the main character in Dave Pelzer's *A Child Called 'It'* shows signs of regression. When he faces an unwanted action, David starts mumbling, screaming and whining thus regression is seen in his behaviour (Pelzer, 1995).

Similarly, Meridian's regression is shown when she constantly cries during and after the demonstrations. When Meridian becomes more politically involved, she participates in demonstrations and protests against racism. Unfortunately, the police officers are at hand to beat and arrest the protestors thus Meridian later becomes a victim. Every peaceful protest that the civil rights workers make is met with violence thus Meridian gets weary, helpless and overwhelmed.

The narrator states thus: 'She was as weary as anyone, so that she spent a good part of her time in tears. At first she had just burst into tears whenever something went wrong or someone spoke unkindly or even if they spoke, period. But now she was always in a state of constant tears'(Walker, 1976, p. 73). This behaviour would go on for days or even weeks, the shame and pain of racial oppression leads her to this state. Thus, it can be noted that the defence mechanism of regression was at play as Meridian reverted to constantly crying, a pattern of behaviour often used earlier in a child's development.

#### **4.1.1.6. Sublimation**

When one deals with emotional conflict, frustrations or stress by channeling feelings or impulses into socially acceptable and productive behaviours, it is called sublimation. This defence mechanism involves the channeling of unpleasant impulses, thoughts and emotions into more acceptable directions. For example, a person who is extremely angry at a friend can decide to concentrate on working on something or taking a long walk so as to cool down as opposed to starting an argument (Cherry, 2010). McWilliams (2010) observes that refocusing unacceptable

or harmful impulses into productive use helps a person to channel energy that otherwise would be lost or used in a manner that might cause the person more anxiety, stress or sadness.

Frustrated, unhappy and angry about the bombings that occur in her neighbourhood, Meridian volunteers for a voter registration drive as she seeks to channel her emotions into more acceptable ones. She is saddened and traumatised by the ruthless treatment of the black people. To Meridian, the issue of the bombings needs a response even when she is not sure of the best way of responding to it as can be seen when Walker narrates: ‘What was she volunteering into? She had no real idea; something about the bombing had attracted her, the obliteration of the house and the knowledge that had foreseen this destruction’ (p. 69).

The first task she is given is to work as a typist thus she gets to work as she is asked to type copies of a petition: ‘Meridian typed and typed, until her back seemed to be cracking and her eyes smarted’ (1976, p. 71). The petition is meant to help the pioneers of the voter registration drive to find out how many local people are interested in marching downtown to protest the injustices that have become prevalent in their city.

At this point, Meridian’s sublimation is in typing though she is not very good at it initially. Other than venting her anger towards the oppressors who bombed the house or attempting to do something distractive, sublimation is at play as Meridian resorts to participating in the voter registration drive and the peaceful protests. These are perceived as respectable and acceptable activities thus Meridian channels her unpleasant feelings to productive things. This is in line with Vidal (2016) who observes that Meridian avoids the radicalisation of political activism and engagement in tyrannical acts as they conflict with her ethical principles of pacifism and equality. Her main desire was that inequality, injustice and oppression are combated. Meridian’s use of Sublimation is commendable as sublimation is regarded as a mature defence mechanism, it allows people to function normally and positively contribute in their respective societies without being destructive.

#### **4.1.1.7 Affiliation**

In any form that it takes, racism gives rise to stress, anxiety and challenges to the victims thus affiliation is a defence mechanism that is used to combat the negative feelings that people

experience due to racism. Spending time with supportive people is said to be an effective way of releasing stress and reducing isolation when one experiences racism. This also helps one to be an ally and to have allies who are important partners in countering racism. As Cokley (2007) puts it, associating with people and being part of a group where one feels a sense of belonging helps to buffer racism.

Though Meridian's childhood is characterised with isolation as she did not have many friends save her father whom she liked accompanying. The racial issues in her community transform her life thus she gains courage to join the movement so as to be actively involved in advocating for equality and get connected to people who can support her. While at Saxon campus, she associates with students that are supportive of protests against racial oppression. Meridian and her fellow students at Saxon consider the white racist society as enemies. The writer says of Saxon, Meridian and the other students:

A saying about Saxon was that you could do anything there, as long as you wore spotless white gloves. But because the gloves must remain clean and white, there was very little you could do. In fact, Meridian and the other students felt they had two enemies: Saxon, which wanted them to become something-ladies-that, was already obsolete, and the larger, more deadly enemy, white racist society (Walker, 1976, p. 86).

This excerpt highlights how Meridian and the other black students feel about racism at their institution and in their society. It is for this reason that Meridian joins the Atlanta movement as her fellow students are allies in coping with racism. Furthermore, Meridian's voter registration errands are a way of sensitising people about the need to voice out and fight for equality. It is evident in the story that in some instances she seeks the support of Lynne while in most cases Truman accompanies her. This need for support from her fellow students and her friends reveals how affiliation was at play in coping with racial issues.

#### **4.1.1.8 Reactive formation**

The last but not the least defense mechanism that Meridian uses is reactive formation. Reactive formation involves converting a socially unacceptable impulse into its opposite (Baumeister, Dale and Sommer, 1998). For instance, implications, insinuations and feelings of hate for other

racism can be countered with efforts to prove oneself of not being a racist thus one can subjectively repudiate such thoughts or feelings and act in a way that shows that they care and love people who belong to other races.

Meridian employs reactive formation as she relates with Lynne. Lynne is one of the exchange students that come to Saxon College; she interacts with the black students and marries Truman who had been Meridian's lover. Lynne is an idealistic lady who tries to transcend her upbringing and overcome the guilt of coming from a privileged race thus she is very active in the movement. As the story ends, she is reduced to a life of regret, pain and defeat as she is plagued with losing her child, being divorced and later being raped by Tommy Odds. Nevertheless, it is her slightly aggressive character, subtle prejudice and her sense of self-importance that Meridian struggles to like.

While chatting with Meridian one day, she tells her that black folks are not special, a comment that can be dubbed racist. Further, Lynne suggests that no one is perfect yet when Meridian says except white women, Lynne agrees without hesitation. From this, it can be noted that Lynne embraces some racial stereotypes and believes that her race is superior to the blacks though she participates in the civil rights movement due to guilt and her disregard for racial injustice. Despite Lynne's negative comments, Meridian does not despise or treat her badly. As Vidal (2016) points out, Meridian manages to control the instinctive loathing of white women and sees beyond race labels despite the prevailing interracial hatred in her society and the preconceived ideas based on what her mother told her about white women.

Meridian could have found many reasons to totally hate Lynne. Apart from robbing Meridian of her lover Truman, she is very argumentative and some of her remarks as she interacts with Meridian are racist as earlier illustrated. During her last evening with Lynne, Meridian opens up about her inner struggle: 'I want to tell you something,' said Meridian. "I tried very hard not to hate you. And I think I always succeeded" (Walker, 1976, p. 172). This shows that Meridian employs reactive formation. Hate is an unacceptable impulse thus she responds by caring for Lynne despite the difficulty. From the first time that Meridian meets Lynne, she does not hate her or hold any racist prejudices towards her. In fact, she likes Lynne and speaks highly of her as can be seen when she tells Truman about the exchange students:

One is exactly like the little Dutch boy on Dutch boy pants. A pale blond with ear-length hair. She's the prettiest. The other two are kind of homely. Susan is short and mousy with thick legs. Lynne is thin and dark, with bright black eyes that sort of stab you. They've been here a week and I've already been out canvassing voters with Lynne. I like her (1976, p. 91).

Meridian's confession about struggling not to hate Lynne suggests that feelings and thoughts of hate may have started creeping in with time due to her racial experiences. However, she uses reactive formation and becomes generous and kind towards Lynne as a way of countering the feelings and thoughts of hate. It is for this reason that Lynne likes and often turns to Meridian. She freely visits and chats with Meridian. When Lynne's daughter Camara dies, Lynne and Truman who is the girl's father mourn separately yet both call upon Meridian to comfort them. Just like Mark Twain's Huck Finn who does not racially abuse the black slave Jim, Meridian does not abuse and mistreat Lynne despite the tense racial conflicts in their society. She successfully employs reactive formation thus Lynne appreciates Meridian as can be noted on their last evening together: "Thanks Meridian, for everything. I honestly don't know what I would have done without you" (Walker, 1976, p. 172).

#### **4.1.2 Coping Strategies Used by Meridian**

##### **4.1.2.1 Emotion focussed**

The first type of coping strategy that Meridian employs is emotion focussed coping. Ogden (2004) states that this type of coping strategy can involve the use of behavioural or cognitive strategies when one faces a problem, difficulty or stressful events. Examples of emotion focussed coping include: wishful thinking, distracting oneself, seeking comfort from others, working on emotions by using anger to release tension, emotional distancing, drug or alcohol abuse, seeking emotional support and religious support or engaging in religious activities.

One of the emotion focused coping strategies that Meridian uses is seeking religious support. It is worth mentioning that Meridian is not portrayed as a religious person though her mother is devoutly religious. A behavior that is contrary to Parsons and Bales (1956) who assert that religion is an essential agent of socialisation and children tend to develop or rather adhere to the

same religious beliefs as their parents. When Meridian is young, she refuses to accept the church and this angers her mother who hopes she will give her life to God:

Say it now Meridian and be saved. All he asks is that we acknowledge him as our master. Say you believe in Him. Looking at her daughter's tears: Don't go against your heart but she had sat mute, watching her friends walking past her bench, accepting Christ, acknowledging God as their master, Jesus their savior and her heart fluttered like that of a small bird about to be stoned (Walker, pp. 14-15).

This passage reveals Meridian's reluctance to commit her life to God and it also highlights her dislike for religious activities as she does not want to associate with church in the same way that her mother is. Even when she goes to Saxon college, Meridian openly states that she does not believe that there is God. In fact, her circles of friends at college have no regard for church and any religious activities. However, due to the unending racial oppression that Meridian experiences and witnesses, a time comes when she seeks religious support as a way of responding and coping with racism. The writer highlights that she starts going to different churches for several weeks till finally she finds herself in a church that changes her perception of the then black churches.

Realising that the church is a place of communal spirit, togetherness and righteous convergence, she comments that: 'Perhaps, it was, after all, the only place left for the black people to congregate, where problems of life were not discussed fraudulently and the approach to the future was considered communally and moral questions were taken seriously' (Walker, 1976, p. 195-196). It can be deduced that the religious support that Meridian sees and experiences helps her to cope with racism as the church has a shared history, people there have the same values and a common heritage. This can be seen when the members strengthen the father of a slain Martyr in the civil rights struggle, they emphasise on solidarity and fighting racial oppression together as a black community.

Other than seeking religious support, Meridian also utilises wishful thinking which is an emotion focussed coping strategy. This is where an individual thinks and wishes he or she could change or stop what they are experiencing. It must be pointed out that Meridian lives in a sexist and racist society, a society in which a woman is expected to be subordinate and submissive to men. Furthermore, the social ladder suggests that below the white man, is the white woman. The black

man is below the white woman and at the bottom of the black man is the black woman thus Meridian and her fellow women are portrayed to be at the bottom of the social ladder (Tembo, 2009). While at Saxon College, Meridian is a victim of racism and sexism. There are some instances when she is taken advantage of because of her gender and race, a common phenomenon in Alice Walker's novels.

Mr Raymonds, a University Professor who Meridian works for often makes sexual advances towards her. This experience traumatises her hence she is unhappy when Truman asks her if the professor hobbles her around the desk. She tells Truman that he does not but as she recalls and thinks through, it becomes evident that the Professor does hobble her. Walker (1976) writes: 'Yes Mr Raymond did limp her around the desk. And what was more and worse, he caught her. But she knew Truman would never understand. She had hardly understood and believed it herself, at first (p. 103). The reader gets to learn that Meridian wishes she could do something about Mr Raymond's racist and sexist attitude but her dependence on him for school expenses and other needs silences her thus she endures the oppression and she can only adopt the coping strategy of wishful thinking. Meridian's continual struggles corroborate well with Suresh and Anuradha (2018) who observe that black women have always been part of literature and men have endeavoured to dominate them socially and sexually. It is for this reason that coping strategies should be employed to minimise and deal with gender and race based oppression.

#### **4.1.2.2 Problem Focussed Strategies**

Problem focussed coping is the second strategy that Meridian uses to cope with racism. According to Folkman and Lazarus (1985) problem focussed coping is an adaptive mode of coping that involves actively planning and engaging in a specific behaviour to overcome the problem or challenge the one that one faces. One can use various problem focussed strategies: planning or suppression of competing activities, making an indirect or direct response, finding out more information about the issue, evaluating the negatives and positives within a given situation and learning new skills in order to manage, master, change or eliminate the problem, stressor or challenge.

Meridian responds to racism using problem focussed strategies by being active in the struggle against the oppression of the black community. When she learns of the bombings that take place at the house where voter registration is to take place, the cruel racial act bothers her and she

seeks to be a participant (Walker, 1976). Meridian plans to be a volunteer, she joins and shows willingness to learn new skills like typing and tries to be of aid in any possible way as she believes that the movement is capable of dealing with the problem of racism that the local blacks constantly face.

Further, Meridian is active in responding to racism by devoting herself to the work of being an activist; she participates in demonstrations and protests in a bid to achieve political, economic and social equality for the blacks. Her efforts do not go unnoticed as the local blacks appreciate and sympathise with her: 'The Majority of black townspeople were sympathetic to the movement from the first and told Meridian she was doing a good thing: typing, teaching illiterates to read and write, demonstrating against segregated facilities and keeping the movement house open when the other workers returned to school' (Walker, 1976, p. 74).

According to Esty (2006), problem focused strategies are often employed when one sees racist events as changeable or highly stressing. Meridian is optimistic that racial oppression would come to an end someday thus she resolves to continue canvassing, protesting and demonstrating. This explains why she is always preoccupied with the civil rights movement even when her mother disapproves and is unsympathetic with the activists. In her second year at Saxon college, Meridian joins the Atlanta movement and Walker (1976) highlights why: 'She found it impossible to study while others were being beaten and jailed. It was also, surprisingly, an escape for her. After her friendship with Annie Marion, they marched often together and would go to jail with their toothbrushes and books and cigarettes under their arms' (P. 85-86). As earlier stated, problem focused strategies are used when one appraises a problem as being highly stressful and frustrating. It is evident that Meridian is stressed and frustrated by racism thus she endeavours to cope with the racial oppression, discrimination and abuse by being actively involved in protests and demonstrations.

#### **4.1.2.3 Avoidance Coping Strategy**

Avoidance coping strategy is the type of coping strategy one uses to reduce stress, anger or frustration related to an event or an experience by forgetting, distancing or distracting him or herself from it. Individuals often use this strategy when they appraise an event as distressful and when it is not perceived as changeable (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Meridian utilises this strategy after the Wild Child's death. It is Meridian who tries to transform and help the Wild

Child before she dies thus she is affected by the death of the vulnerable girl. However, what stresses her most is the institutional racism that she experiences at Saxon College in relation to the Wild Child. Firstly, she is prohibited from keeping the Wild Child at the campus and secondly Meridian and other students are not allowed to use the chapel services for the Wild Child's funeral and this racist event affects Meridian and the other black students. Walker (1976) writes:

After the Wild Child's death she could not live on campus, although she continued to attend classes, and lived instead in the ghetto that surrounded it. It was a poor community but friendly and very calm'. In order to pay her rent and to buy other items that one needed at a school like Saxon-tennis racket, bathing suit, ballet slippers and tights, etc.-she went to work as a typist for a professor who had recently retired and whose office was a few blocks from her door (p. 88-89).

This excerpt from the story is evidence that Meridian uses avoidance coping strategy after being unable to bear the racism she witnesses and experiences at Saxon college. It can be noted that she perceives the institutional racism as unchangeable thus she resorts to distancing herself from the campus and opts to live outside campus despite the costs. Distancing herself from the college is Meridian's way of avoiding, reducing and overcoming the anger, anxiety and sadness that emanates from the racist events that occur at Saxon College.

## ***4.2 The Tongue of The Dumb***

### **4.2.1 Defence Mechanisms used by Lubinda**

Lubinda is one of the main characters in Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb*. He is a councillor and medicine man who covets the Chief's position thus he endeavours to turn people against the chief. On the other hand, he is one of the brave locals who fight against racism as he opposes the ideologies of the white men and the missionaries that frequent Mpona Village. Lubinda uses various defence mechanisms to cope with the negative states, feelings and experiences that arise from racial prejudice and abuse.

#### **4.2.1.1 Displacement**

Displacement is the first defence mechanism that Lubinda uses to cope with racism. By definition, displacement is the channelling of anger, anxiety or frustration to a less threatening object or person (Andri and Dewi, 2007). It also refers to the redirecting of thoughts, feelings and impulses directed at one person or object but taken out on another person or object (Plante, 2010).

Chief Mpona is the main victim of Lubinda's anger and frustrations. Lubinda thinks that the Chief is less threatening compared to the whites that oppress, subjugate and undermine the people of Mpona village. When the white man learns that the school is closed, he rushes to Mpona village so as to order the Chief to reopen the school. Father Oliver looks down on the natives; he regards them as pagans and unrefined people that he could easily control. The narrator states thus 'To him the work was clear. It did not consist simply in baptising people, but also in curing them, curing them of their bodily diseases as well as the ills of their minds' (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 40). Such thoughts, beliefs and attitudes are a sign of racial stereotyping and prejudice.

Father Oliver's arrival frightens the chief and the other men in the village. After expressing sympathy regarding the funeral that the people of Mpona village have, Father Oliver tells Mpona that the school must open and he threatens to inform the District Commissioner if the school is not reopened. This discussion is tense and as the white man orders Mpona to open the school, Lubinda is very upset but does not directly express his anger to Father Oliver thus he expresses his anger by telling Mpona whom he considers less threatening to disagree with the white man: 'The school will not open. Tell him that. We have all agreed already that it will not open' (2007, p. 43). This is a manifestation of the employment of displacement by Lubinda who considers Mpona less threatening than the white missionary who makes orders.

#### **4.2.1.2 Passive aggression.**

The next defence mechanism that Lubinda uses is passive aggression. Exhibiting resistance to requests or demands is another sign of passive aggression (Chery, 2019). Afraid that the village would be destroyed if the people of Mpona village accept the ways of the white man who clearly lacks respect for the traditions of the natives, Lubinda responds to the white man's demand that

the school is opened: 'You despise us and do not respect our customs. This village will be destroyed by the spirits of our ancestors if we agree to this (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 44).

This quotation shows that Lubinda resists the white man's demand as a way of expressing his dislike and anger regarding the opening of the school and the manipulation of the blacks. Unlike Chief Mpona and the other elderly men who fear to speak, Lubinda has the audacity to do so thus he demonstrates the use of passive aggression. It must also be noted that the people of Mpona village are socialised to learn skills and attitudes through traditional education, they have initiation ceremonies and knowledge is passed on from one generation to another thus Lubinda's resistance is justified.

Lubinda also uses passive aggression when he has another conflict with father Oliver. This time around, Father Oliver demands that the dumb boy Mwape goes with him to the mission. This request is against the will of the people thus Lubinda is unhappy and he expresses his anger by strongly disapproving of the white man's statement (Mulaisho, 2007). The priest has a negative attitude towards the natives, he always tries to exercise his power and manipulate them based on race. This can be seen when he says that his words were final and he expects the people to be obedient as he considers himself superior to the blacks. Nevertheless, Lubinda challenges him, he becomes furious and even starts pointing at him.

According to Cherry (2019), the situation has an influence on passive aggression thus people respond in a less aggressive way when they are in a situation where displays of aggression are not socially acceptable. Though Lubinda is furious, he does not reach the extent of fighting the white man as this is socially unacceptable and capable of landing him into serious problems with people at the Boma. Therefore, he ends at pointing and shouting at the priest who in turn makes racist remarks towards Lubinda. Lubinda's response to racism in this case is different from Okonkwo's response in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In a bid to fight racial oppression, Okonkwo kills one of the leaders of the white missionaries. Realising that his clansmen do not join him in the uprising, he ends up hanging himself thus the district commissioner finds that he has committed suicide (Achebe, 1992). This is a clear case of direct aggression as opposed to the passive aggression that Lubinda uses.

#### **4.2.1.3 Affiliation**

The other defence mechanism Lubinda uses is affiliation which involves turning to others for support or requesting other people's help. When one employs this mechanism, they seek to collaborate with others. For instance, when one is a victim of rape, they can seek the support of others and collaborate with anti-rape groups in a bid to minimise and cope with the trauma.

In the case of Lubinda, he experiences stress because of the commands of the white men and their afflictions towards the natives of Mpona through tax, banishing their lepers and digging latrines. Aldefar (1994) points out that racism can involve individuals or a collective system that may subjugate, oppress and suppress other races. Cultural prejudice is manifest when it came to the issue of latrines; the whites regard the locals as being primitive and endeavour to compel the natives to build latrines. However, the people of Mpona are not socialised to use latrines thus they do not embrace this command by the whites. Lubinda takes advantage of this opportunity and speaks out:

'It is impossible for us to agree to this.' Lubinda was holding forth. The white man cursed us.....now the white bwana comes and we must dig latrines. How far must we go in obeying these people? The time has come for us to call them to kill us, if that is what they want'. There was a murmur of approval (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 40).

In this part of the story, Lubinda seeks support from others as he tries to encourage them to disobey the white people and to his delight his words are met with a murmur of approval. It is for this reason that Lubinda continues to speak and argues that it is against their tradition to defecate in the same hole as their mothers in law. Therefore, Lubinda succeeds in coping with racial and cultural prejudice using the defence mechanism of affiliation by seeking the support of the villagers in protesting against the idea of building latrines. The readers later learn that the villages did not build the real latrines; they did not build more than a foot dip thus the small huts they built made them look like latrines.

#### **4.2.1.4 Humour**

Humour is another defence mechanism that Lubinda uses to reduce the anger and anxiety that is caused by the whites. Lubinda employs humour as a way of minimising the tension and anger that he feels. Humour as a defence mechanism can be defined as revealing the funny or comical

side of a situation, making light of or emphasising the amusing or ironic aspects of a situation. If one fails to see the funny side, irony or to make light of every unpleasant situation, it can be dispiriting thus humour is an essential defence mechanism (Swaminath, 2006).

In his work, *The Tongue of The Dumb*, Mulaisho puts the people of Mpona village in various difficult situations which make them angry and anxious. An example is the command that they should build latrines. The whites endeavor to show their superiority of the natives by imposing practices that are contrary to the African ways thus the natives are unhappy. As regards getting the latrines dug and using them, Lubinda comments:

‘How can we go to the same hole as our mothers-in-law when we cannot even eat in each other’s sight. Are we Mfungo? They all laughed but uneasily, because the greater the objections the more worried they become at the thought of obeying the white man’ (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 90).

From this excerpt, we can see that the people of Mpona are worried and unhappy about obeying the commands of the white men. It can also be noted that Lubinda employs humour at this point, his comment minimises the anger that everyone feels thus the people are able to laugh as he makes a comparison with animals that have no shame and freely move naked. This also temporarily calms Lubinda as defence mechanisms do not always take away the anger that people feel but can help them suppress the negative feelings that they experience at a given time.

#### **4.2.1.5 Identification with the aggressor**

Lubinda also employs identification with the aggressor to cope with racial prejudice, discrimination and antagonism. Identification with the aggressor involves the emulation of characteristics, qualities or attitudes. It is a defence mechanism by which a person deals with emotional conflict or stress by taking on the same characteristics of the object or person causing the anxiety. Cramer (1987) asserts that identification with the aggressor can serve the purpose of developing and maintaining one’s self esteem, happiness and identity.

The anxiety and anger that Lubinda faces is caused by the white men who had a very bad, negative and unfavourable attitude towards the people of Mpona Village. For instance, when the District Commissioner visits Mpona village, he exhibits an intimidating and hostile behaviour

towards the locals. Other than that, he writes demeaning things about the natives in his tour report book: ‘Treated to a primitive and uncivilised pagan dance called Dedeule-a culturally barren dance in which the indolent native revels. The stench exuding from the unwashed bodies of the dancers is enough to knock out even an Italian’(Mulaisho, 2007, p. 94). These negative and derogatory comments regarding people of another race are indicators of cultural racism. The natives are not pleased with how they are treated by the whites; they are labelled and called all sorts of demeaning and derogatory names. In emulating the antagonistic attitude of the whites, Lubinda calls the District commissioner a pig when the messenger is not in earshot.

It can be observed that Lubinda also takes on the unsympathetic attitude that Father Oliver has. When Chief Mpona comes back from the mission after following up Mwape’s case, he indicates that they bear bad news as a white man had died when they were at the mission. Lubinda reacts without sympathy which is the same way that Father Chiphwanya reacts when he meets black people going to bury their fellow black man who is just from dying: ‘A pagan yelled the priest, ‘why didn’t you call me to baptise him? Satan! Satan! (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 41). By not caring about what people of other races are going through like Father Oliver, Lubinda manifests the attributes of identification with the aggressor as he portrays and takes up a similar attitude to that of Father Oliver.

## **4.2.2 Coping Strategies Used by Lubinda**

### **4.2.2.1 Emotion Focussed Strategies**

One of the coping strategies that Lubinda of Mulaisho’s *The Tongue of The Dumb* employs is emotion focused coping. Working on emotions by using anger to release tension is an example of emotion focused coping strategy and Lubinda utilises it to cope with racism. It must be noted that racist encounters often lead to conflict, tension and anger. Anger is inevitable thus individuals adopt different responses (Truong and Museus, 2012). The whites who come to Mpona Village oppress the locals and undermine them. Lubinda is angered by this and emotion focussed coping occurs when he uses anger to release tension as he responds to Father Chiphwanya. When the priest orders Chief Mpona to reopen the school that they had closed and to allow the teacher to continue teaching the white man’s ways, there is tension and the villagers

are angry yet lack courage to express their anger. One man who is not intimidated by the white men and racial threats is Lubinda thus he speaks out. Mulaisho (2007) narrates:

The chief looked at Lubinda. Lubinda looked at the others in turn, at Simbeya, at Yuda; he looked into the face of Banda, of Simutowe, of Silwima. He looked straight at Cumba, at them all. But they were all cowed and silent. They were not going to speak out in the presence of the white man. Lubinda shot a glance at Aphunzitsi. If you leave this man here we shall see what we shall see....you despise and do not respect our customs (p. 44).

In this scene, Lubinda expresses his anger and threatens the oppressor. The tension is reduced, the atmosphere eases and people laugh after the priest leaves. Unlike the other locals, Lubinda is not afraid of responding to the white man. This act of directly responding to a perpetrator of racism as opposed to soliciting others to intervene is a form of emotion focussed strategy. As Mellor (2004) points out, emotion focussed coping looks at how things can be resolved thus victims respond directly when faced with a challenging situation.

#### **4.2.2.2 Avoidance coping strategy**

Lubinda also uses the avoidance coping strategy to cope with racism. This coping strategy is said to be very effective and used by various people who experience racism. Binge eating is an example of avoidance coping strategy, it is used as a response to racism and most African-American women are said to have utilised this strategy (Esty, 2006). Other than eating, using drugs and drinking alcohol are other examples of avoidance coping. Lubinda employs the latter as a way of coping with the distress that arises from the ethnicity-based discrimination experienced by the natives of Mpona village.

Lubinda sets off with his nephew for Cakuwamba village after the many things that have been happening in the village. The readers learn that Lubinda is displeased with the teacher, the teachings of the missionaries and the whites at the boma. This dominates the dialogue that he has with his nephew while they drink beer. He is seen trembling and complaining yet he keeps drinking as he feels it will relieve him of the stress (Mulaisho, 2007). By going to Cakuwamba village to drink, Lubinda employs avoidance strategy as he distances himself from the stressful racist events and uses beer as a stress reliever.

Apart from the white men's way and attitude, Lubinda is affected by the threat that the white men pose with regard to exercising power. Jones (1997) observes that racism is not just about discrimination and prejudice, it is an ideology of power thus the race that considers itself superior seeks to control, manipulate and overpower the perceived inferior race. Father Chipwanya is radical in his approach, he seeks to control the natives and it is this power struggle that also makes Lubinda rebellious thus he uses various coping strategies.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

This chapter identified and analysed the defence mechanisms and coping strategies that Meridian in Alice Walker's *Meridian* and Lubinda in Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb*. The general findings were that both characters employ defence mechanisms and coping strategies as they both witness and experience racism. It is also evident that Meridian uses more defence mechanisms and coping strategies than Lubinda and this can be attributed to the fact that she is solely the central character thus she experiences more racist encounters and events. This chapter shows that the mechanisms and strategies help the characters to avoid, overcome and deal with racial abuse, prejudice, discrimination, antagonism and oppression.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN DEFENCE MECHANISMS AND COPING STRATEGIES IN *MERIDIAN* AND *THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB*

#### 5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter identified and analysed the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used to cope with racism. It focussed on the strategies used by Meridian in Alice Walker’s *Meridian* and Lubinda in Dominic Mulaisho’s *The Tongue of the Dumb*. This chapter builds up on the previous one. It aims to compare and contrast the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the selected characters in coping with racism; and to establish the significance of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies applied by the characters in coping with racism.

#### 5.1 Similarities and Differences in the Defence Mechanisms and Coping Strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda.

##### 5.1.1 Defence Mechanisms

**Table 1: Similarities and differences in the defence mechanisms used by Meridian and Lubinda**

<b>Meridian</b>	<b>Lubinda</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Differences</b>
<i>Altruism</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Both characters employ affiliation, humour and passive aggression to cope with racial discrimination, abuse and antagonism.</i>	<i>Meridian uses Altruism, dissociation, reactive formation, regression and sublimation while Lubinda adopts displacement and identification with the aggressor.</i>
<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Displacement</i>		
<i>Dissociation</i>	<i>Humour</i>		
<i>Humour</i>	<i>Identification with the aggressor</i>		
<i>Passive aggression</i>	<i>Passive aggression</i>		

<i>Reactive formation</i>			
<i>Regression</i>			
<i>Sublimation</i>			

The table above shows the defence mechanisms used by Meridian and Lubinda as well as the differences and similarities. The two characters employ similar defence mechanisms in certain instances but also differ in the defence mechanisms used in other situations. What is vivid is that both Meridian and Lubinda witness and experience racism as there is a coming together of different races in their respective societies which leads to conflict, oppression and antagonism. The racial issues that they face make it inevitable for them to employ defence mechanisms in a bid to avoid, reduce and overcome negative states.

As earlier pointed out, the defence mechanisms that both characters use are: humour, passive aggression and affiliation. Meridian and Lubinda use these defence mechanisms as these are the immediate reactions that both characters experience when faced with racist events. Meridian laughs when she learns that the President of Saxon College denies them access to conduct a funeral service for the Wild Child (Walker, 1976). Lubinda also reacts by seeing the comical side of things when the whites instruct the locals to build latrines (Mulaisho, 2007). Both characters use humour as a way of minimising the shock and anger that they experience due to the racial discrimination and oppression. This illustrates that humour can be an immediate reaction to racial abuse thus one can employ it even when faced with an unpleasant situation.

To avoid being aggressive and doing something that can lead them into problems, Meridian and Lubinda use passive aggression to respond to racial abuse. Meridian participates in rioting while Lubinda opposes the demands of the white men that constantly subjugate the native blacks. This suggests that both characters think about appropriate responses given the situation thus passive aggression is employed as it enables them to express their dissatisfaction without doing something that would place them in more difficult situations like prison, being killed or alienated from their societies.

Meridian and Lubinda also use affiliation in a bid to gain support from other people. Both characters acknowledge that racism cannot be overcome by an individual thus they seek to partner with others. It is easier for Meridian as the black community, students and friends all seek to fight for equality, freedom and justice. Lubinda struggles as many of the villagers are extremely afraid of the white men yet he succeeds in gaining approval from some when he places emphasis on valuing traditional beliefs, customs and practices. Thus, both characters employ these three defence mechanisms to deal with stress, anger, frustration, anxiety and the shock that they experience because of racism. The similarity in the defence mechanisms used can be attributed to the sameness in reacting to an unpleasant situation and also the sameness in the effects of racism on the two individual characters. This finding is in agreement with Hilgard (1962) who elaborates on defence mechanisms as individual reactions to stress, problems or any unpleasant situations.

In terms of differences, there are various differences that can be noted as earlier pointed out. It suffices to say that there are a lot of factors that lead to the use of different defence mechanisms despite Meridian and Lubinda facing the same problem of racism. This is in harmony with previous studies which show that individuals who experience a similar problem can employ different defence mechanisms to avoid and overcome the same stressor, problem or situation.

The first reason that leads to the use of different defence mechanisms is gender. Studies have shown that men and women differ in their use of defence mechanisms. Petraglia, Thygesen, Lecours and Drapeu (2009) observe that gender differences have been regularly noted in the choice of defence mechanisms. Other scholars opine that gender is a predictor of defence mechanisms and styles (Furnham, 2012). Cramer (1987) carried out a study and found that women scored significantly higher on internalising defences, whereas men favoured externalising defences thus gender differences have been found in defence mechanisms.

In *Meridian*, the protagonist who is female uses regression thus she goes back in psychological time when she faces racial oppression. Meridian's regression is in crying, the frustration, pain and anxiety caused by racial abuse leads to her constantly crying. Meridian employs this defence mechanism as it helps her to minimise the pain and anger. Unlike Meridian, Lubinda of *The Tongue of The Dumb* does not resort to any childhood or primitive behaviour as he is a strong, fearless and resolute man. In fact, he is eager to face conflict with his fellow villagers and the

white men. As can be seen during his confrontation with the white missionary, he acts like a man who assumes the responsibility of defending the culture of the natives thus he even becomes wild. (Mulaisho, 2007). From this, it can be observed that gender plays a role in the defence mechanisms that these two characters use.

The study also established that personality traits are another cause for differences in the defence mechanism used by Meridian and Lubinda. Personality traits reflect people's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours. These traits differ from one person to another in terms of where they stand on a set of basic trait dimensions that persist over time and across situations (Diener and Lucas, 2020). Additionally, personality traits can either be positive or negative and they are determined by actions, attitudes and behaviour.

Looking at Meridian, Walker portrays her as a sociable character. Her interaction with the college students, the white exchange students and her love for meeting different people while canvassing illustrates that she loves meeting and interacting with people. This can also be seen when they talk about going for a party with Truman. He is reluctant yet she is eager and persuades him to go with her as all the students are likely to be there (Walker, 1976). Walker recounts Meridian's experience that illustrates her outgoing and social character:

At the party Meridian danced, as seemed to be her fate at most parties, with a plodding young man from Arkansas, His first name was Terrence; she deliberately kept herself innocent of his last. They pushed along the floor until a white boy broke in. Terrence, exhibiting his freedom from prejudice practically shoved Meridian into his arms (Walker, 1976, p. 95).

Meridian is seen dancing and interacting with various people. Her ability to relate with Terrence and have a lengthy conversation with Scot whom she just meets shows that she is social and lacks segregation. It is this personality trait that enables her to use the defence mechanism of reactive formation with regard to Lynne, the white exchange student. Meridian endeavours to be friendly to Lynne and deals with her feelings of anger by being social to Lynne despite some of her racist statements and attitude.

Meridian is also compassionate, her sympathy and sadness for the suffering and injustice of others is evident. For instance, the bombing of the black people's house in her town saddens her

hence she is awakened to the racial oppression obtaining in her society and decides to join the civil rights movement. Meridian also sympathises with the black protestors who are mistreated, killed and constantly beaten while she is at Saxon College. Therefore, she joins them as her feelings of sadness trouble her and incite her to suffer with her people. Her compassionate personality can also be seen when black children are segregated and restricted from watching the mummified woman on the day they go to the tank. Meridian is displeased as she does not expect children to also be victims of racism. She finds a way of ensuring that the children are able to watch thus the defence mechanism of altruism is employed. This also shows that compassionate and sympathetic people are more likely to be altruistic.

In contrast to Meridian, Lubinda is radical, impulsive and not sociable. His treatment of the teacher who is sent by the white missionaries to teach their ways demonstrates his personality. He despises the teacher; he does not want to interact with him and labels him as an agent of the white missionaries (Mulaisho, 2007). Another example of Lubinda's strong personality is his impulsive reactions to the commands of the white men from the District commission and those from the mission. He is not hesitant to respond and disagree thus his personality enables him to employ identification with the aggressor as this defence mechanism enables him to reciprocate racial antagonism.

The other reason for the differences in the defence mechanisms used by Meridian in Alice Walker's *Meridian* and Lubinda in Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of The Dumb* has to do with the environment. This is in agreement with Morrison and Bennet (2009) who state that the environment determines the coping mechanism or strategy. The setting of place is crucial as novels are set in different environments and that has a bearing on the actions of the characters as they are confined to operate in a given space.

*Meridian* is set in a time between 1960 and 1970, the action shifts from the south to the north of America. It can also be noticed that the society is somewhat civilised as cars, televisions and other technological developments are present. One of the defence mechanisms that Meridian uses is dissociation which involves avoiding negative states and situations by changing the environment. While at Saxon College, she moves from the campus to a nearby ghetto as the racist environment at Saxon college becomes unbearable especially after the Wild Child dies. Later on, she moves back to the south as a former civil rights worker so as to live among her

people as racism in the North is more rampant. The environment in which Walker places Meridian enables her to navigate and employ dissociation as a defence mechanism.

On the contrary, Lubinda lives in Mpona village. A primitive society where mobility is problematic thus the villagers do not have the luxury of travelling beyond their villages and constantly encounter people from nearby communities. It is for this reason that Lubinda is persistent about staying in Mpona village, not allowing the white people to rule and lingering around as he is not able to employ dissociation even when frustrated by the racist events that unfold in Mpona Village. From this, it can be observed that characters are limited and influenced by the environments in which they are placed.

### 5.1.2 Coping Strategies

**Table 2: Differences and similarities in the coping strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda**

<b>Meridian</b>	<b>Lubinda</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Differences</b>
<i>Avoidance coping Strategy. -Distancing oneself herself from a an unpleasant environment</i>	<i>Avoidance coping Strategy. -Distracting oneself</i>	Both characters employ avoidance and emotion focussed coping strategies when faced with racist events.	Meridian uses problem focussed strategies whereas Lubinda does not use any problem focussed strategy to deal with the challenge of racism.
<i>Emotion focussed strategy: -Seeking religious support -Wishful thinking</i>	<i>Emotion focussed strategy. -Using anger to release tension</i>		
<i>Problem focussed strategy: -Planning to be part of the civil rights movement -Willingness to learn new skills that can be of aid</i>			

<i>in coping with racism -Direct response by actively participating in civil workers activities</i>			
---	--	--	--

Table 2 shows that there are some similarities and differences in the coping strategies used by Alice Walker’s Meridian and Dominic Mulaisho’s Lubinda in coping with racism. As highlighted, both characters used avoidance and emotion focussed coping strategies to cope with racism. The only variance is that Meridian also employs problem focussed strategies. There are various reasons that could be attributed to these similarities and differences.

Starting with the similarities, Meridian and Lubinda use avoidance coping strategies and emotion focussed strategy because of how they appraise certain racist events. This resonates well with Altushuler and Rubles (1989) who argue that the coping strategies are determined by the way individuals appraise challenges, demands and stressors. It can be observed that when Meridian and Lubinda use avoidance strategy, they both appraise there situations to be stressful hence they endeavour to reduce and avoid the effects of racism which is the stressor. Meridian opts to distance herself from Saxon College after experiencing the perpetual segregation, discrimination and unfavoratism. Moving to another place where she was less likely to directly witness and experience racism was a way of dealing with the racial stress and trauma as the treatment of blacks like the wild child greatly affected her. Lubinda also endeavour to reduce the stress brought about by the oppression and negative attitude of the whites in Mpona village thus he distracts himself by going to Cakuwamba village to drink with his nephew. Simply put, distancing and distracting oneself are practical avoidance coping strategies that Meridian and Lubinda employ respectively.

As regards the emotion focussed coping strategies, it can also be said that both characters appraise some racist events in a similar way. Ogden (2004) points out that when an individual appraises an event as being potentially stressful, the coping strategy is elicited. Meridian employs emotion focussed strategies by seeking social support while Lubinda employs emotion

focussed strategies by expressing his anger to reduce tension as they both consider racial antagonism as a threat and challenge. The emotion focussed strategies help both characters to reduce the stress, tension and anger levels experienced due to racism. This finding is in agreement with Brannon and Fiest (2007) who also found that the appraising involves the categorising and evaluating whether the problem is a stressor, a threat or challenge.

Turning to the differences, the dissimilarity in the coping strategies used can be attributed to the socialisation process. Socialisation is the interactive process by which individuals learn basic skills, attitudes, values and behavioural patterns of society. Socialisation occurs in the family, in schools, among peers, in the neighbourhood or many different areas of society (Thomas, 1995). Shapiro (2002) comments that the way an individual is socialised determines how they respond, regard or relate with people of other cultures.

On one hand, Meridian lives in a somewhat civilised society where she is socialised to deal with racism by being a civil rights worker. The civil rights movement was one of the main agents of fighting racial injustice, oppression and segregation. The blacks in Meridian's time responded to racism by protesting and demonstrating thus she was also active in these problem focussed strategies. Voter registration was another common activity that the oppressed blacks carried out as they hoped that they could put an end to racial discrimination by voting for equality. Walker narrates how there was a voter registration drive in Meridians neighbourhood, a civil rights movement at her school and how Tommy odds convinced other black people to register to vote as emphasis was placed on the liberation effects of voting (Walker, 1976). Canvassing required planning, basic skills and the belief that it would make a difference someday thus Meridian employed these problem focussed strategies as they were the prevalent ways of coping with racism.

On the other hand, Dominic Mulaisho's Lubinda lives in a primitive society, the natives are illiterate and have no systematic way of expressing their grievances to white supremacy and oppression thus Lubinda is not socialised in a way that can enable him to employ any problem focussed strategies. The locals are afraid of the whites and many of them do not know how to handle racial antagonism. It is evident that the whites do not have the same beliefs with the people of Mpona village and this leads to conflict. For instance, the natives are socialised to believe in taboos, they pray to the spirits of their fathers and their ancestors whereas the whites

are Christians who are socialised to believe in God. Lubinda thrived on this conflict as he expresses his anger whenever anything regarding the white men's schools and their way of life is brought up though he does not use problem focussed strategies like Meridian. The finding that socialisation patterns have a bearing on the coping strategies used corroborates well with the findings of Petragliaetal (2009) who also suggest that differences in the use of defence mechanisms and coping strategies can be attributed to socialisation processes and patterns.

## **5.2 Significance of Defence mechanisms and Coping strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda.**

### **5.2.1 Significance of Defence Mechanisms used by Meridian and Lubinda.**

The defence mechanisms help both Meridian and Lubinda to develop and grow into characters that are able to cope with racism more directly. Simma (2009) observes that defence mechanisms are necessary, they are important for personality development. It is important to note that defence mechanisms are not only significant in the character development of real life people but also in the development of characters in literary works as they are semblances of human beings.

Alice Walker's Meridian lacks self-confidence when she is younger, her self-esteem is low and she is portrayed as a weak character. For instance, she is afraid of confronting and facing her mother on several occasions. This can be seen when she fears to talk to her mother even when she receives good news about the scholarship she is offered to go to Saxon College. She relies on her friends Nelda Henderson and Delores Jones to speak for her. Walker writes that 'it was cowardly of her, but Meridian could not face her mother alone' (Walker 1976, pp. 74-75). Her weak character is also seen when it comes to her hesitance to join the movement, the reader learns that one of the reasons why she was not politically involved was because of her mother and she tries to conceal her involvement as much as possible because of the fear she has for her mother: It had taken Meridian a long time to tell her mother she was in the movement and by the time she did, her mother already knew (p. 74).

Another example that reveals Meridian's weak and conscientious character when she is younger is her refusal to kill for the movement. When Meridian goes to Saxon college, she opts to join a revolutionary movement, a group of intellectuals and students. This group converted to a belief

in violence after witnessing the extreme violence against black dissidents, of the federal government and police thus those who wanted to join were required to make a declaration of their willingness to die for the revolution and positively respond when asked the quest “will you kill for the revolution?” (Walker, 1976, p. 13) . Meridian responds to the former but struggles to respond to the latter as she is fearful, dislikes violence and lacks self-confidence. However, employing the defence mechanisms of sublimation and affiliation helps her to develop into a strong character. These mechanisms lead her into participating in protests, demonstrations and voter registration for over seven summers from her awakening to the time she goes back to the south as a former civil rights worker. Thus, Meridian moves from the idea of dialogue and sporadic acts of violence to considering retaliating, murder and killing for the freedom of black people. Walker (1976) illustrates that Meridian eventually sees the need of becoming a true revolutionary unlike her earlier stance thus she ends up being a fearless, resolute and determined character.

Similarly, Lubinda develops as a character as he employs defence mechanisms. It must be pointed out that Lubinda is portrayed as a strong and impulsive character though his experience enables him to move from being a strong to a tougher and more courageous character. Like every other black character of Mpona village, Lubinda initially has some fear for the white men. It is for this reason that he employs displacement the first time he has an encounter with the white men. His anger is displaced onto chief Mpona whom he considers weak and responsible for allowing the whites to oppress, undermine and subjugate the people of Mpona village. In another instance, Lubinda does not employ displacement when there is a conflict, he uses passive aggression and directly opposes the white men when he demands that the school is opened and Mwape is taken to the mission (Mulaisho, 2007). It is vivid that there is a shift and development in his characterisation which enables him to confront racial antagonism more directly.

Another significance of defence mechanisms is that they help both characters to temporarily minimise the anger, stress or sadness emanating from racist events. This is in accordance with Cherry (2019) who posits that though defence mechanisms are thought of as negative reactions, we all need them to temporarily ease stress, anger and protect self-esteem during critical times. When Meridian is shocked and saddened by the institutionalised racism she witnesses at Saxon College during the funeral of the Wild Child, she uses humour as a defence mechanism. It is

clear in Meridian's mind that racial discrimination is at play when the blacks are not allowed to have a funeral service for the Wild Child, a situation that would have unfolded differently had the person involved been white. In that moment, Meridian laughs about this ironic experience. The defence mechanism of humour temporarily eases the anger and stress thus Meridian and her fellow students riot after a while.

In *The Tongue of the Dumb*, Lubinda and the people of Mpona experience stress and anger due to the unfair treatment and forced rules imposed by the white men. The incident regarding the building of latrines stresses and saddens the people of Mpona village (Mulaisho, 2007). In this moment of distress, the significance of humour as a defence mechanism is evident. Lubinda jokes about the situation and everyone laughs for a while. As a result, the sadness, tension and stress caused by the whites is minimised.

Defence mechanisms are also significant in avoiding and overcoming anxiety caused by racism. According to Freud (1959) anxiety is a signal to the ego that danger is coming. It warns the ego to do something to prevent the danger from doing harm to the ego. Anxiety creates worry, pain, fear and uncomfortable feelings that people would prefer not to bear thus it is imperative that defence mechanisms are employed to protect the ego from being overwhelmed by anxiety (Hall, Gardner and Campbell, 1997).

It must also be noted that when one is anxious, they fear that the cause of anxiety can lead to something bad happening thus defence mechanisms are brought into play to overcome anxiety and its cause. In the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* (2008), Jessie Aarons and Leslie Burke both suffer anxiety, their thoughts of what would happen and fear make them experience anxiety thus they employ defence mechanisms to cope with the anxiety (Jakarta, 2010). Since racism leads to the internalisation of negative racial experiences which give rise to anxiety, stress and hate as Stevenson (2003) points out, it is imperative that defence mechanisms are employed. Commenting on the role of defence mechanisms, Corey (1980) states that the significance of defence mechanisms is to help people overcome anxiety and prevent threats from overwhelming the ego or individual.

Alice Walker's Meridian experiences anxiety which arises from the racial discrimination, oppression and abuse. The bombing of the black people's voter registration apartment, the segregated hospital facilities and arrests of people in the black community make her fear and

worry as they are beaten and unfairly treated. Walker says of Meridian: ‘she was arrested for demonstrating outside the local jail and then beaten (Walker, 1976, p. 72). Nevertheless, Meridian continues to demonstrate as she believes that not demonstrating and protesting will lead to continual racial inequality and segregation. To cope with the anxiety, pain and fear caused by racial abuse, Meridian employs regression.

The reader learns that Meridian reaches a point where she is constantly crying yet she continues with canvassing, demonstrations and talking at rallies. It can be argued that the use of regression as a defence mechanism is significant as crying is therapeutic thus it helps her overcome the anxiety. Davies (2015) argues that many people cry because of being anxious as it helps to cope with stress and anxiety. She adds that if symptoms of anxiety are not addressed, they can have a serious impact on a day to day life thus it is okay to cry when anxious. Previous research links crying to the release of endorphins which makes one feel better as emotional tears contain stress hormones. Letting down one’s guard and defences by crying is a very positive and healthy thing as crying releases anxiety, stress, anger and pain (Govender, 2005). From this, it can be argued that Meridian uses the defence mechanism of regression as a way of coping with anxiety when she is racially abused as it helps to cope with the anxiety caused by racist experiences.

On the other hand, Lubinda does not employ regression to deal with the anxiety emanating from racist events. This could be attributed to the gender as earlier pointed out. Like Meridian, Lubinda experiences anxiety which comes from the racist policies and antagonism that the natives in his village are subjected to. To prevent the anxiety from overwhelming him, Lubinda uses the defence mechanism of identification with the aggressor. This helps him to release the pain and anger that he experiences due to racism. When the whites from the office of the district commission come, the people of Mpona become anxious and the relief when they are about to go can be seen: ‘The whole thing was over and done with, and this time an even heavier cloud lifted from the shoulders of the village as they sang and clapped the bwana away’ (Mulaisho, 1976, p. 94).

Lubinda’s demeaning remarks about the white men are his way of releasing stress, anger and anxiety. In the same way that the whites call the native blacks pagans, he calls the whites pigs and this delights him even as the women cheer. Mulaisho narrates that ‘Lubinda took his leave with more ceremony than the chief’ (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 94) . The anxiety that he and the other

villages have before the district commissioner arrives is apparent in the lengthy debates they have about what they should do and Lubinda is at the forefront suggesting that the people should unite in rejecting the orders of the whites. The chief however, suggests that the people pretend to cooperate thus Lubinda is still furious yet he overcomes his anxiety by reciprocating racist comments and living with his head lifted high. Therefore, the defence mechanism of identification with the aggressor helps him to deal with feelings of anxiety.

Relating and living well with others is another significance of defence mechanisms. Human beings are relational beings and defence mechanisms are part of normal personality functioning thus it is of cardinal practical significance that people are acquainted with the various defence mechanisms as they can be of aid in social and interracial relations. It has been observed that defence mechanisms help people to live happily in society and to peacefully relate with others (Ivonda, 2018). Roongrattananakul (1986) also states that defence mechanisms help individuals to adjust themselves to live in society and accommodate others.

The defence mechanism that enables Meridian to live happily and relate well with others is reactive formation. Meridian lives in an era when there is conflict between black people and white people. Most black people in the novel are prejudicial towards white people and consider them as oppressors. This can be seen in the way Lynne is regarded by some black people. Despite her efforts to help in canvassing, supporting the movement and living with the black people, there are some people that are antagonistic towards her especially after Tommy Odds is shot. When Truman goes to check on Tommy Odds, Tommy insults all white people and tells Truman that he wants to see them destroyed because of how they treated black people. When Tommy Odds demeans Lynne and blames her for what happened to him as he believes that the whites shot him because he was found with a white lady, Truman entertains the thought of blaming Lynne and concludes that Lynne was indeed guilty of whiteness (Walker, 1976). Furthermore, the people in the movement become antagonistic towards Lynne despite her efforts to make them like her:

They did not even see her as a human being but as some kind of large, mysterious doll, a thing of movies and television, of billboards and car and soap commercials. They liked her hair, not because it was especially pretty but because it was long. To them, length was beauty. They loved the tails of horses. Against this fear, Lynne

used her considerable charm. She baked cookies for them, allowed them to drink wine in her house and played basketball with them at the centre, jumping about in her shorts, tossing her long hair, she laughed and sweated and shouted and cursed. She forced them to like her. But while this building of trust and mutual liking was coming into being, the movement was changing. Lynne was no longer welcome at any of the meetings. She was excluded from the marches. She was no longer allowed to write articles for the paper. She spent most of her time in the centre or at home (Walker, 1976, p. 130).

This excerpt shows how Lynne tries to make the black community like her but it is to no avail as they do not relate with her and peacefully live with her because she is white. Meridian is the only person that is there for Lynne throughout the story. Even when Lynne passes racist comments that Meridian could take personal, Meridian endeavours to relate well with Lynne and lives happily with her despite her whiteness.

It can be observed that Meridian lives up to the words of one of the greatest civil rights activists, Martin Luther King, who strongly believed that people should not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. Meridian's reactive formation enables her to overcome racial antagonism by looking at Lynne as an individual. She overcomes racial profiling; stereotyping and generalisations as her main goal is to fight for equality and freedom thus her target are the oppressors who perpetuate racism and not anyone who is of another race.

From the time that Meridian meets Lynne at Saxon College when she comes as an exchange student, they relate well and go for canvassing together. Even after college they continue to be friends; Lynne always enjoys visiting and staying with Meridian. It is for this reason that Lynne expresses her gratitude on their last evening together. Meridian also relates well and lives happily with the other white exchange students, the white gentlemen she meets at the party and the white professor Dr Raymonds. Thus, it is apparent that reactive formation is of significance as it enables Meridian to relate and live happily with people of other races and also those that are victims of racism like Lynne.

Lastly, the significance of the defence mechanisms used by Meridian and Lubinda is that they enable the characters to fulfil their desires and to help others who are victims of racism. This is in accordance with Boerae (2012) who states that defence mechanisms help to fulfil one's desires

and to help others fulfil their desires. Individuals who try to help others can also fulfil their desires through others and in most cases such individuals attempt to live their lives for others.

Freedom, equality and liberty are the desire of the black people in Meridian's era. However, they face many challenges due to the racist policies and racial abuse. Meridian's altruism enables her to contribute to the fight against racism; it helps in fulfilling her desire and the desires of others. For instance, when Meridian helps the black children to watch the show of the mummified woman, she fulfils the desires of the black children and also fulfils her desire for equality as she challenges the segregation that was prevalent in her society.

Another example of how the defence mechanism of altruism enables meridian to fulfil her desire and help others can be seen when black children drown due to the excess waters of the reservoir that are allowed to drain off in any direction by the white city officials. This happens every year and the people of the community are displeased:

The people of the community habitually cried and took gifts of fruit and fried chicken to the bereaved family. The men stood about in groups, cursing the mayor and the city commissioner, and the board of aldermen, whom ironically, never failed to refer to as city fathers. The women would sit with the mother of the lost child, recall their own lost children, stare at their casing husbands who could not look back at them and shake their heads (Walker, 1976, p. 186).

The frustrations of the black community are apparent though they do not have the courage to confront the white officials and make their grievances known. In such a difficult situation, it is Meridian who comes to their aid. As a civil rights worker, her role is to represent the people, to speak on their behalf and indeed on her own behalf. Walker states that 'It was Meridian who had led them to the mayor's office, bearing in her arms the bloated figure of a five year old boy who had been stuck in the sewer for two days before he was raked out with a grappling hook' (Walker, 1976, p. 186).

The people had turned with her, followed her to the town meeting and supported her as she speaks for them. This fulfils their desires thus they make numerous promises to her though she only requests them to promise that they will learn to use the vote. In this regard, the desire of Meridian and that of the black community is fulfilled due to her use of the

defence mechanism of altruism. Her desire to help people and gain satisfaction from doing so is similar to what Katnas does in the novel *Hunger Games*. Katnas always does her best to please her sister Prime, when Prime asks her to win the hunger games; she says she will have to because of Prime as her happiness comes from seeing Prime and others happy (Suzzane, 2009). For this reason, it can be said that the defence mechanism of altruism is indeed of aid in fulfilling ones desires and those of others.

Turning to Lubinda in *The Tongue of the Dumb*, the defence mechanism that helps him to fulfil his desires is affiliation. Lubinda is stressed by the dictatorial tendencies of the white men. They endeavour to dominate and enforce rules on the natives of Mpona Village. Lubinda's desire is that the people of Mpona should not obey the commands of the whites thus he employs affiliation to collaborate with his fellow villagers to disobey the commands of building latrines as it is considered unacceptable in their village. As Lubinda's speaks against obeying the white men, he is supported by the people thus the narrator comments that 'there was a murmur of approval' (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 90). Lubinda's desire is that people support him and that they disobey the white men by not doing what they command thus his desire is fulfilled and affiliation clearly plays a role in helping one fulfil their desire even against racial oppression and manipulation.

### **5.2.2 The Significance of Coping Strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda**

Just like defence mechanisms, coping strategies are very important and help individuals to cope with racism. The intentional and purposeful nature of coping strategies makes them cardinal adaptational processes. On one hand, the coping strategies that Meridian uses are problem focussed strategies, emotion focussed strategies and avoidance coping strategies. On the other hand, Lubinda only uses two coping strategies in coping with racism: emotion focussed and avoidance coping strategies as has been highlighted.

Focusing on the significance of coping strategies, they are significant in helping individuals to avoid unpleasant environments and situations. Avoidance coping strategy which often involves distracting oneself and distancing oneself is often employed when one wants to avoid unpleasant places and situations. This coping strategy is important as failure to avoid unpleasant situations even on a temporal basis is detrimental. For instance, in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, one of the main characters fails to employ avoidance coping strategy. The opening chapter of the

novel highlights how Margaret's failure to capitalise on an opportunity that represents possibly her only avenue of escape from a miserable situation. Margaret feels that it is her duty to bear the burdens she faces, her appraisal of her own situation and her hasty dismissal of this opportunity to escape her life with Grange, a life marked by his violent rages, excessive drinking and infidelity leads to her being stressful and unhappy (Walker (1970)).

On the contrary, Alice Walker's *Meridian* capitalises on the opportunity to distance herself from Saxon College when she appraises the institutional racism as unbearable. Living in the ghetto enables her to be happy and avoid stress thus the avoidance coping strategy is of aid. Similarly, Lubinda utilises the avoidance coping strategy by temporarily distancing himself from Mpona village and distracting himself by drinking beer. The time he spent with his nephew at Chakuwamba village helps him to avoid the unpleasant situations at Mpona village as the presence of the whites stresses him to the core. Both characters do not want to adhere to systems that dictate and perpetrate their subservience and it can be noted that avoidance coping strategy helps them to distance and distract themselves from unpleasant situations.

In *Meridian*, the protagonist employs emotion focussed coping by seeking religious support. This strategy is beneficial as the presence or availability of people who express concern, love and care can help an individual to cope with negative states and situations. Shorter-Gooden (2004) comments on social support and states that it involves seeking out others as a means of coping with racial discrimination and is labelled as leaning on others. Just like seeking social support, seeking religious support can be said to be leaning on the shoulders of others in moments of stress, sadness and discrimination. Seeking religious support is important as it helps Meridian to cope with racism; it promotes a sense of security and connectedness and helps her to understand that racial oppression is experienced and felt in the black community. Walker (1976) writes that there is a reason Meridian witnesses what happens in the church, it helps her understand that there is communal spirit, togetherness and righteous convergence in the black church and this delights and strengthens her.

Coping strategies are also significant in that they enable individuals to cope with racism by defending their culture. Culture refers to the beliefs, arts, customs, institutions, habits, traditions that characterise a particular society, nation or that constitute a people's way of life. In Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb*, there is a clash between mission Christianity and

colonialism on one hand and indigenous culture and traditional authority on the other hand. It is evident that with the coming of the whites, the culture that largely reflects and reinforces the villagers of Mpona is threatened. In Mpona village, skills and attitudes are to be acquired through traditional education thus they have initiation ceremonies and knowledge is passed on from the old to the young. The people of Mpona village are also committed to their African spirituality, traditions, practices and beliefs in taboos and witchcraft which the white men consider pagan, primitive and superstitious.

The British colonial authority and the white missionaries both have a negative attitude towards the natives thus they seek to undermine, manipulate them and change their way of life. The command that the people of Mpona should build latrines and the insistence on opening the school so as to teach the white man's ways are all signs of cultural prejudice. Father Chiphwanya says of the people of Mpona: 'The natives had to be forced into becoming Christians. They also had to be forced to abandon superstition, he was appalled by father superior who would rather have let the natives go on living as they had always done' (Mulaisho, 2007, p.40). This shows that the culture of the people of Mpona village was not respected and the whites sought to force them to change their ways.

In coping with the cultural prejudice, Lubinda uses anger to release tension on certain instances and this emotion focussed strategy is significant as it enables him to defend the culture of the people of Mpona village. After Dulani dies, Lubinda approaches the chief who is the first contact person with the whites and tells him that there was no misfortune before the coming of the white man and the spirits cannot hear our prayers for rain because we have admitted the worship of an unknown spirit (Mulaisho, 2007). When the white missionary insists that the school must open, Lubinda angrily opposes while everyone is afraid to talk and states that the white men despise and do not respect the customs of the people of Mpona thus the school must not open. Though it is an uphill battle, Lubinda's use of an emotion focussed strategy is significant as it helps him to defend the culture of the people of Mpona village which was constantly under threat by the colonialists and missionaries.

The other significance of coping strategies is that they make one have optimism. Optimism is a belief in ones power to make their life and future better and the belief that negative events in one's life are not permanent thus an individual's optimism downscapes the lasting effect of

negative events. It is also extended to include the attitude of hope for future conditions unfolding well. Optimism is about being positive and having positive expectations, some of its benefits are persistence, less stress, superior health and greater achievement. Those who are optimistic learn all they can from adversity and then propel themselves forward towards their goals and vision (Esonis, 2013).

Meridian's optimism is renewed and manifest when she applies problem focussed strategy of directly responding to racial problems. It can be observed that when she joins the civil rights movement, she is willing to learn and be of assistance in fighting racial oppression and discrimination. She participates in voter registration and demonstrations. These activities give her hope that inequality will come to an end and the black people will be free at last. Even when arrested, beaten and weary due to battle fatigue, Meridian is persistent and does not give up as she believes that things will change. In the words of Pifer (1992), Meridian sees in the civil rights movement, a means of combating racism.

At Saxon college, she joins the Atlanta movement as she believes that through marching and protesting, justice will prevail among the black people. On one of her canvassing travels with Truman, they meet a man who has no hope and considers voting as a meaningless activity. When the man asks Meridian what voting will benefit him, she says 'it may be useless or maybe it can be the beginning of the use of your voice. You have to get used to using your voice you know (Walker, 1976, p. 201). This shows how Meridian is optimistic the voting process will yield fruit some day and play a role in establishing equal opportunities and privileges for the black people.

Optimism is a cardinal trait among civil rights activists as it motivates them to persevere. Meridian's optimism can be likened to Martin Luther King Junior's optimism. Martin Luther King was a resolute patriot; the civil rights movement that he led brought the United States a long way down the road towards justice. He lived in a turbulent period, optimistically led the civil rights movement and is said to be one of the broadest and most defining civil rights activists in American history (Simmons, 2017). According to Washington (2005), king was a man of optimism, he was optimistic in the face of death threats, bombings, jailing and dangerous adversaries. His optimism arose from the sense of affirmation generated by the challenge of embracing the struggle and surmounting obstacles.

Looking at Meridian, the problem focussed strategy she employs to cope with racism vividly enhances her optimism. By being constantly engaged in the struggle to improve lives, to redeem the black community and actively working to surmount the obstacles that the black people face, Meridian's optimism is enhanced and rekindled. This explains why she does not give up on the pursuit of freedom, liberty and equality. Even when she faces opposition while canvassing, Meridian stays resilient as these activities enhance her optimism thus it can be observed that problem focussed strategies play a crucial role in igniting optimism in activists and victims of racism.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Chapter five has discussed the differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the two characters in coping with racism. The significance of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies employed has also been looked at in this chapter. The study established that there are differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used. Apart from personality traits, socialisation, appraisal and setting, it is observed that different negative states and situations give rise to the use of different coping mechanisms and strategies. The findings also show that these defence mechanisms and coping strategies are very significant and play a crucial role in helping these characters to cope with racism and its effects on individuals and society as a whole. The next chapter is the conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. The conclusions are drawn from the analysis of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by Meridian in Alice Walker's *Meridian* and Lubinda in Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of The Dumb*. The Chapter also summarises the differences and similarities as well as the significance of the mechanisms and strategies used.

#### 6.1 Conclusions of Research Findings

The three objectives that this study sought to address were: i) to identify and analyse the defence mechanisms and coping strategies employed by selected characters to cope with racism in *Meridian* and *The Tongue of The Dumb*. ii) to compare and contrast the similarities the defence mechanisms and the coping strategies used by the selected characters in coping with racism. iii) to establish the significance of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies applied by the characters to racism. These objectives were achieved by analysing the novels and characters using Sigmund Freud's ego defence mechanism's theory which Anna Freud and other scholars elaborated and the stress and coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman. Due to the classification and conceptualisation of the concept of ego defence mechanisms, there are numerous defence mechanisms and these include: altruism, affiliation, repression, regression, denial, displacement, dissociation, sublimation, humour, reactive formation, identification with the aggressor, fantasy, projection, rationalisation, fixation, introjection, passive aggression, undoing and isolation. As regards coping strategies, they are categorised into three types: emotion focused, problem focussed and avoidance coping strategy thus these were tools of analysis.

6.1.1 Objective One: To identify and analyse the defence mechanisms and coping strategies employed by selected characters to cope with racism.

The first research objective identified and analysed the defence mechanism and coping strategies used by Meridian and Lubinda who are main characters in *Meridian* and *The Tongue of the Dumb* respectively. Findings were that both characters used defence mechanisms to cope with racial prejudice, oppression, discrimination, abuse and antagonism which were prevalent in their

spaces. Meridian is a victim of individual, cultural and institutionalised racism. The defence mechanisms that she used to avoid and overcome racism include: affiliation, altruism, reactive formation, passive aggression, regression and humour. Lubinda also struggles with racism as he encountered the white missionaries, the district commissioner and his white counterparts. To cope with the stress, anger and anxiety he experiences due to racism, he uses affiliation, identification with the aggressor, sublimation, humour and passive aggression.

As regards coping strategies, the findings were that Meridian employs emotion focussed, avoidance and problem focussed strategies and Lubinda uses emotion focussed and avoidance focussed strategies to deal with racism. To be more precise, Meridian uses: wishful thinking and seeking religious support as resources of emotion focussed coping, she uses planning, learning and directing dealing with problem of racism and she uses distancing oneself from racist situations under avoidance coping strategy. Lubinda employs release of anger as an emotion focussed resource and distracting oneself under avoidance coping strategies. The stress, anger, frustration, trauma and anxiety that Meridian and Lubinda experience due to racism gives rise to use of defence mechanisms and the racial problems, challenges and conflicts necessitate the use of coping strategies as racism is detrimental thus it needs appropriate responses, reactions and actions to cope with it.

6.1.2 Objective two: To examine the differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used.

Research objective two sought to examine the differences and similarities in the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the selected characters. The study revealed that both Meridian and Lubinda use passive aggression, humour, affiliation and passive aggression. This can be attributed to the fact that the characters have similar reactions to the stressor, cause of anger and anxiety and that the effect of the negative state is similar hence the sameness in the response. Meridian also uses reactive formation, regression and dissociation while Lubinda also uses identification with the aggressor and displacement. The findings of the study suggest that gender, personality traits and the environment contribute to the differences in the defence mechanisms used. Concerning coping strategies, they both employ emotion focussed and avoidance coping strategies. The only difference is that Meridian also uses problem focussed strategies. The similarities are due to how both characters appraise certain racist situations and

events as the way an individual appraises a challenge determines the coping strategy that they will employ. The difference in how the two characters are socialised is the main cause for the difference in the coping strategy used.

Generically, the similarities reveal the generalisability and applicability of defence mechanisms and coping mechanisms in dealing with problems, stressors, challenges, negative states or situations. On the other hand, the differences in the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used shows that coping is a fluid process in which different demands, states, problems, situations and events can give rise to the employment of different mechanisms and strategies and that individuals can deal with similar problems differently at times.

6.1.3 Objective Three: To establish the significance of the defence mechanisms and coping strategies used by the selected characters.

Findings in line with research objective three which set out to establish the significance of the defence mechanism and coping strategies were that both defence mechanisms and coping strategies are significant in the coping process. The defence mechanisms are significant as they contribute to the personality development of the characters which enables them to use more mature mechanisms. They help to: temporarily minimise the negative states caused by racial experiences, avoid anxiety, live and relate well with others as well as to fulfil their desires and those of others with regard to the racial struggle. Coping strategies are also significant in the in coping with racism as they help individuals to: avoid unpleasant environments and situations, promote a sense of security and togetherness when one has difficulties, enable individuals to defend their customs and they ignite optimism as one endeavours to cope with problems.

## **6.2 General Conclusion**

Racism is a problematic issue and various scholars have endeavoured to explicate the nature of the struggle against racism and the viable modes of ameliorating racism and its effects. Literary scholars have also contributed greatly in addressing racial issues and illuminating the realities of prevailing challenges. It can also be noted that Alice Walker and Dominic Mulaisho have played a role in dramatising and highlighting the realities and struggles that people experience due to racism. *Meridian* is not just a novel about the civil rights movement, gender based oppression and self-discovery, it is a novel about the need to challenge, fight and eradicate racism.

Similarly, *The Tongue of The Dumb* is not just a novel about power struggles but also about race-based oppression. Thus, though both writers deal with various issues in the two novels, racism is a central theme and the challenges they wrote about are still manifest even today. The two characters that have been analysed bring to the fore the challenges of racism and how one can endeavour to cope with them.

From this study, it can be observed that coping is an important process thus it is important that people are acquainted with the use of defence mechanisms and coping strategies as they can be used to analyse people in real life and help in solving stressors, problems and situations that individuals face. Every day, we are faced with various challenges, stressors and obstacles which require the employment of defence mechanisms and coping strategies. If understood, used properly and appropriately, defence mechanisms and coping strategies can be effective.

Apart from helping people to avoid and overcome negative states, defence mechanisms help to protect and defend people's inner selves, self-esteem and personality in that they enable people to distance themselves from unpleasant thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It is important to note that some defence mechanisms are mature while others are primitive and because defence mechanisms are often unconscious, some training and constant deliberate effort can help individuals to be aware of them and employ them efficiently.

In terms of Coping strategies, they are cardinal and essential in our everyday life. Though coping is mostly studied in the field of psychology as Sommerfield and Mcrae (2000) point out, it can be utilised in the field of literature to analyse characters and the daily challenges they face as this study has shown. Coping strategies can be beneficial even to readers and understanding these strategies can help one to determine which strategy they can employ when faced with stress, problems or any other difficulties. Coping strategies are not rigid thus one can learn various strategies that can be beneficial to their lives and help them to cope with racism and various challenges of life.

## REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1992). *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Knopf.
- Andri, L., & Dewi, P. Y. (2007). Anxiety Theory Based On Classic Psychoanalytic and Types of Defence Mechanisms to Anxiety. *Journal of the Indonesia Medical Association*, Vol 57 (7), pp. 233-237.
- Al-Banna, J. A. I. (nd). Alice Walker as an Active and celebrator of Resistance in *Meridian* (1976) and *The Color Purple* (1982). *Journal of the College of Languages*, Issue 36.
- Aldefer, C. (1994). *A White man's perspective on the unconscious process within black white relations in the United States*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Altshuler, J.L. & Ruble D, N. (1989). *Developmental changes in Children's awareness of strategies for coping with uncontrollable stress*. New York: New York University Press.
- Alumni Advisory Group. (2015). *Racial Trauma is Real*. Institution for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture.
- Arthur, J. (2007). *Equality and the Burdens of History*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bakaoukas, M. (2005). *Ancient Greek cultural Proto-Racism*. Athena: The University of Piraeus Press.
- Barret, H. (1964). *Existentialism in Grahams Greens "The Name of Action, The Heart of the Matter, A Burnt-out Case: The Theme of Racism"*. Thesis: University of Windsor.
- Baqutayan, S. M. S. (2015). Stress and Coping Mechanisms: A Historical Overview. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 479-488.
- Baumeister R. F , Dale, K & Sommer, L. K. (1998). Freudian Defence Mechanisms and Empirical Findings in Modern Social Psychology: Reactive Formation, Projection, Displacement, Undoing, Isolation, Substitution and Denial. *Journal of Personality*, Vol 66 (6), pp. 1081-1095.
- Bellord, L. (2017). *Signs of Coping, Signs of Trauma: Mental Coping Strategies, Breakdown and Trauma in Pat Barkers Regeneration Trilogy and Sebastian Faulks' Birdsong*. MA Thesis. Leiden: Leiden University Press.

- Blum, L. (2002). *I'm not a Racist, But...: The Moral Quandary of Race*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Boerae, C. G. (2012). *Personality Theories: Sigmund Freud*. Shippensburg: Shippensburg University Press.
- Brannon, L., & Fiest, J. (2007). *Defining and Measuring Stress In Health Psychology: An Introduction to Behaviour and Health (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Higher Education.
- Brenner, C. (1984). *The Mind in Conflict*. New York: International University Press.
- Broomberg, P. M. (1998). *Standing in the Spaces: Essays on Clinical Process, Trauma and Dissociation*. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press.
- Campu, A. (2014). Irony and tragedy in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *No longer at Ease*. *Philology and Cultural Studies*, Vol 7 (56).
- Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and psychological and emotional injury: Recognizing and assessing race based traumatic stress. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(1), 13-105).
- Cherry, K. (2019). Understanding Passive Aggressive Behaviour. *Verywell Mind*. Retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2019, from <http://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-passive-aggressive-behavior-22795481>.
- Cherry, k. (2020). *Defence mechanisms*. Retrieved on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, from <http://www.verywellmind.com/defence-mechanisms-279560>
- Clark, R., Anderson, N.B., & Williams, D. R. (1999). Racism as a stressor for African Americans. *American Psychologist*. 54(10), pp 127-136.
- Cokley, K. (2007). Critical issues in the measurement of ethnic and racial identity: A referendum on the State of the Field. *Journal of Councelling Psychology*, Vol 32 (6), pp. 224-243.
- Cramer, P. (1987). The Development of Defence Mechanisms. *Journal of Personality*, Vol 55, pp. 597-614.
- Cooper, H. (1998). The Happy Personality. A Meta-analysis of 137 personality traits and Subjective Well-being. *Psychology Bulletin*, Vol 124 (2), pp. 197-229.

Corey, G. (1980). *Theory and practice of counseling and Psychology*. United Kingdom: Brooks Cole Publication.

Corsini, R. J. (ed). (1994). *Encyclopedia of Psychology (Vol 1)*. Canada: John Wiley & Sons.

Cramer, P. (2006). *Protecting the Self: Defence Mechanisms in Action*. New York: Guilford Press.

Davies, C. (2005). Feeling Anxious? It's good to cry. *Mental Health*. Retrieved on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2019, from [www.theguardian.com/society/2015/sep/22/anxiety-crying-mental-health-mind](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/sep/22/anxiety-crying-mental-health-mind) .

De Grado, T. D. F. (2016). *The Construction of Identity and Political Consciousness of a Black Woman In Alice Walker's Meridian (1976)*. Thesis: Universidad De Salamanca.

Diener, E., & Lucas, R. E. (2020). *Personality Traits*. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds, Noba textbook series: Psychology. Champaign, IL: DEF publishers. Retried on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, from <http://noba.to/96u8ecgw>.

Dhillon, K., & Babu, D, P. (2019). Between Race and Human Rights: Meridian Hill's Therapeutic Journey as a Civil Rights and Human Rights Activist in Alice Walker's Meridian. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 7(1), 52-58.

Durall, L. (1994). *Respecting our differences: A guide to getting along in a changing world*. Minneapolis, MW: Free Spirit Publishing.

Dyck, M. (2009). *A Psychological Analysis of the struggle with racism in Search of April Rantree*. MA. University of Saskatoon.

Erikson, E. H. (1964). *Inner and Outer Space: Reflection on Womanhood*. In the Woman in America, ed R, J. Lifton. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Esty, D. M. (2006). *African American Womens ways of coping with Racist Events, including the use of binge eating*. Retrieved from <http://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/African-American-women-ways-of-coping-with-racist-Esty/e0e664d40e78d15219ed79f8992abeb036a3849>.

- Farkhatun, A. (2017). *Anxiety and Defence Mechanism of Rachel Watson In Paula Hawkin's Novel The Girl On The Train*. (Bachelors Paper). University Sunan Kalijaga, Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences State Islamic, Yogyakarta.
- Fehr, S. S. (2000). *Grup Terapisine Giris*. Istanbul: Sisten Yayincilik.
- Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1980). An analysis of coping in a middle-aged community sample. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, Vol 120, pp. 219-139.
- Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. (1985). If it Changes It Must Be a Process: Study of emotion and coping during three stages of college examination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 48, pp. 150-170.
- Folkman, S & Moskowitz, J. D. (2004). Coping: Pitfalls and promise. *Annual Review Psychology*, Vol 55, pp. 745-774.
- Folkman, S. (2010). Stress, Coping and Hope. *Psycho-Oncology*, Vol 19(9), pp. 901-908.
- Freud, S. (1959). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume X (1909): The Igo, Id and other works* Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press.
- Furnham, A. (2012). Lay Understanding of Defence Mechanisms: The role of personality traits and gender. *Psychology, Health and medicine*, Vol 17 (6), pp. 723-734.
- Glen, B.D & Marilyn, S. (1995). Adjustment to Occupational stress: The relationship of perceived control to effectiveness of coping strategies. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, Vol 42(3), pp. 294-303.
- Gokdag, R. (2015). Defence Mechanisms Used By University Students to cope with Stress. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, Vol 6(2), pp. 1-12.
- Govender, S . (2005). *Is Crying Good For You? Crying: The Health Benefits of Tears*. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/is-crying-good-for-you> .
- Guerin, W. L. et al (2005). *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grohal, J. M. (2019). *15 Common Defence Mechanisms-Psych central*. Retrieved on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, from <http://Psychcentral.com/lib/15-common-mechanisms> .

Hal, F. (1999). Jesuit Missionary Types and Nsenga Responses in Dominic Mulaisho's Tongue of the Dumb. *Zambezia*, xxvi (ii), pp. 211-226.

Haan, P.M. (1977). *Coping and Defending* . San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Hall, C. S., Gardner, L., & Campbell, J. H. (1997). *Theories of Personality*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Hande, I. (2015). The Journal of Academic Social Science. *A Freudian Psychoanalytic analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorens the Scarlet Letter*, Vol 32, pp. 499-511.

Hartman, H. (1960). *Psychoanalysis as a Scientific Theory*. In *Psychoanalysis, Scientific method and Philosophy*. New York: Grove Press Inc.

Helms, J. E. (1990). An Overview of Black racial identity theory. In Helms, J. E., editor. *Black and White racial identity: Theory, research and practice*. Westport, Conn: Praeger, Vol 1, pp 9-32.

Hilgard, E. R. (1962). *Introduction to Psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Hjelle, L. A & Ziegler, D. J. (1992). *Personality theories: Basic assumptions, research and applications*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hoffman, F. (1957). *Freudianism and the literary mind*. Louisiana: Louisiana University Press.

Holahan, C. J., & Moos, R. H. (1987). Risk, Resilience and Psychological Distress: A Longitudinal Analysis with Adults and Children. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol 96, pp. 3-13.

Hudson, T. M. (2013). *Impact of Stress-Coping Strategies on Perceived Stress, Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Efficacy Levels of Students* (Doctoral Dissertation). Garden-Webb University.

Ikechukwu, S. O. M. (2018). An Appraisal of Prof. Segun Ogungbemi's Article on Okonkwo and the Polarities of Existence In Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. *Canadian Social Science*. Vol 14 (3), pp. 29-37).

- Ivonda, R. I. (2018). *Anxiety and Defence Mechanism of Anne As Depicted in a Diary of a Young Girl*. New York.
- Jackson, L. (2000). *Literature, psychoanalysis and the New Sciences of the Mind*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Jakarta, S. H. (2010). *A Main Characters Analysis on Anxiety and Defense Mechanisms in 'Bridge to Terabithia' Novel* (The Degree of Strata one Thesis). Universitas Islam Negeri.
- Jones, J.M. (1997). *Prejudice and Racism* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kadhim, M.M (2016). *Racism as reflected in Toni Morrison's novels*. Sudan, Sudan University of Science and Technology Press.
- Kerry, N. A. (2011). *Stress and Coping Style: An Extension of the Transactional cognitive-appraisal model*. FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Retrieved on, from <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/346>.
- Lazarus, K. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, Appraisal and Coping*. New York: Springer.
- Lazarus, K. S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional Theory and Research on emotions and Coping. *European Journal of Personality*, Vol 1(1), pp 141-169.
- Lye, J. (1997). *Some attributes of Modernist Literature*. London: Brook University; Department of English.
- Luther, S. S., & Cichcheti, D. (2000). The construct of resilience: Implications for interventions and social policies. *Development and Psychopathology*, vol 12, pp. 857-885.
- Macola, G. (2005). *Imagining Village Life in Zambian Fiction*. *Cambridge Anthropology*, Vol 25 (1), pp. 1-10.
- Mbwayu, J. L. (1987). *Craftsmanship and Partisanship in Zambian Prose Fiction Since Independence: A Critical Evaluation of The Novels of Mulaisho, Masiye, Saidi and Sibale*. MA, Dissertation. The University of Zambia.
- McWilliam, N. (2010). *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis: Understanding Personality Structure in the Clinical Process* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed). New York: Guilford Press.

- Mellor, D. (2004). Responses to Racism: A Taxonomy of Coping Styles used by Aboriginal Australians. *America Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 74(1), 56-71.
- Mirshojaei, M. (2016). Concepts of Identity in Alice Walker's Major Novels in the Light of Post-Colonialism. *International Academic journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, Vol 1 (3), pp 67-80.
- Mitchell, D. (2004). *Stress, Coping and Appraisal in an HIV-Seropositive Rural Sample: A Test of the Goodness-of-Fit Hypothesis* (Master's Thesis). Ohio University.
- Moosa, E & Munaf, S. (2012). *Emotion and Problem Focused Coping Strategies: A comparative Study of Psychiatric Patients and Normal Adults*. Karachi: University of Karachi publishers.
- Morrison, V., & Bennet, P. (2009). *An Introduction to Health Psychology (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Msalila, D. T., & Nalaila, S. G. (2013). *Research Proposal and Dissertation Writing: Principles and Practice*. Dar es Salaam: NyambariNyangwe Publishers.
- Mukherjee, A., Lahiry, S., Mukherjee, A., Choudhury, S., & Sinha, R. (2017). Study on Defence Mechanisms to Cope with Stress Due to Stigma among People Living With HIV/AIDS Reported in Eastern India: A Single Center Experience. *Indian Journal of Critical Medicine*, 8, 1-6.
- Mulaisho, D. (2007). *The Tongue of The Dumb*. New York: Maiden Publishers.
- Muyendekwa, L. (2008). *Images of Women in Ticklish sensation, Tongue of the Dumb and Cowrie of Hope with Perspective of Sex Role Stereotypes*. MA Thesis. University of Zambia.
- Ogden, J. (2004). *Health Psychology: A Text Book*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Outlaw, F. H. (1993). Stress and Coping: The Influence of Racism on the cognitive appraisal processing. *Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, Vol 1 (14), pp. 620-625.
- Panza, C. and Gregory, C. (2008). *Existentialism of Dummies*. Indiana Wiley Publishing.
- Parsons, T & Bales, R. (1956). *Family Socialisation and Interaction Process*. London: Routledge and Keagan Paul Inc.

- Parvan, A and Yasmin, S. (2016). Imperial Journal of interdisciplinary Research. *A Psychoanalytical Study of Okonkwo by Chinua Achebe and Macbeth by William Shakespeare*, Vol 2 (9).
- Pelzer, D. (1995). *A Child Called 'It'*. Washington: HCI publishers.
- Petraglia, J., Thysegen, k. L., Lacours, S., &Drapeu, M. (2009). Gender differences in Self-reported Defence Mechanisms: A Study Using the New Defence Style Questionnaire-60. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, Vol 63 (1), pp. 87-99.
- Plante, T. G. (2010). *Contemporary Clinical Psychology (3<sup>rd</sup>ed)*. New York: Wiley publishers.
- Plumer, D. L. &Slane. S. (1996). Patterns of Coping in Racially Stressful Situations, *The Journal of Black Psychology*, Vol 22 (3), pp 302-315.
- Priest, S. (2001). *Basic Writing*. New York: Routledge.
- Psychoanalysis-Defence mechanisms-Sigmund Freud. (2002). AROPA. Retrieved on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2019, from [www.freudfile.org/psychoanalysis/defence\\_mechanism.html](http://www.freudfile.org/psychoanalysis/defence_mechanism.html).
- Purcell, W. F. (2012). Witnessing to the Gospel: Pedro Arrupe's Mission Theology and Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dum*. *Christianity and Literature*, Vol 61(3), pp 419-440.
- Ray, C., Lindop, J & Gibson, S. (1982). The Concept of Coping. *Psycho Med*, Vol 12 (2), pp. 385-395.
- Ridely, C. (1995). *Overcoming Unintentional Racism in Counseling and Therapy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ryan, K. (2013). *How Problem focussed and Emotion Focussed Coping Affects College Students' perceived Stress and Life Satisfaction*. Dissertation: DBS School of Arts.
- Roberts, S. K., & Crawford, P. A. (2008). Young Children. *Literature to Help Children Cope With Family Stressors*. Vol 16, pp. 12-18.
- Roncaglia, I. (2014). Coping Styles: A Better Understanding of Stress and Anxiety in Individuals With Autism Spectrum Conditions Through Sport and Exercise Models. *Psychology Journal*, Vol 7(2).

- Roongrattananakul, D. (1986). *Escapism of Tennessee Williams: Prominent female characters* (MA Thesis). Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok.
- Shapiro, I. (2002). *Training for Racial Equity and Inclusion*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute.
- Shechter, K. (2012). *The Role of Defence Mechanisms of Israeli Society in Relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: From 1948 Repression to Artistic Sublimation* (Doctoral Dissertation). Lesly University.
- Shorter-Gooden, K. (2004). Multiple resistance strategies: How African American women cope with racism and sexism. *Journal of Black Psychology*, Vol 30(3), pp. 406-425.
- Simma, W. (2009). *An Analysis of Defense Mechanisms Used by the Main Characters in Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn And The Prince and The Pauper* (Master's Thesis). Srinakharinwirot University.
- Sirola, L. (2013). *Setting the World Right: A Psychoanalytical analysis of Revenge in Hamlet and in Harry Potter Series*. MA Thesis. University of Tampere.
- Soanes, C. & Stevenson, A. (1907). *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Srivastara, V & Pridarshni, M. (2012). International Journal of English and Literature. *Racial discrimination within African American communities in Tony Morrisons novels*, Vol 2(2), pp. 2249-6912.
- Stevenson, H. C. (Ed). (2003). *Playing with Anger: Teaching coping Skills to African American boys through Athletics and Culture*. Westport .CT: Praeger.
- Stone, A. A., & Neale, J.M. (1984). New Measure of Daily Coping: Development and Preliminary results. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 52, pp. 988-993.
- Suresh, P., & Anuradha, P. (2018). A Critical Analysis of Women Oppression in Alice Walkers Major Novels. *Eurasian Journal of Analytical Chemistry*, Vol 13(4), 95-102.
- Swaminath, G. (2006). Joke's A Part: In defence of humour. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol 48 (3), pp. 177-180.

- Tarres, A. P., Cantera, L., & Pereira, J. (2017). Gender-Based Violence, Coping Strategies and Perceived Social Support. *Psicologia, Conocimiento y Sociedad*, 7 (1), 98-122.
- Tembo, D. (2009). *The Self and the Community In Alice Walker's The Colour Purple and Meridian*. MA Thesis: University of Zambia.
- Thadious, D. (1992). *Satire or Evasion?: Black Perspectives on Huckleberry Finn*. Duke: Duke University Press.
- Thomas, L. W. (1995). *Sociology: The Study of Human Relationships*. New York: Hoit, Rinehart and Winston Inc.
- Truong, K. A., & Museus, S.D. (2012). *Responding to racism and racial trauma in doctoral Study: An inventory for coping and mediating relationships*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- Van Dyke, A. (1992). *The Search for a woman-centred Spirituality*. New York: University Press.
- Van Dijk, T. (1993). *Elite Discourse and Racism*. New Bury Park: Sage Publications.
- Vidal, E. M. (2016). The Construction of Identity and Political Consciousness of a Black Woman in Alice Walker's *Meridian* (BA Thesis). University of Salamanca.
- Walker, A. (1976). *Meridian*. New York: Open Road Media
- Walker, R. J., (1987). Implications of Survival: Coping Strategies of the Women in Alice Walker's Novels, *Explorations in Ethnic Studies*, Vol 10 (1), pp. 9-20.
- Watts, R. & Carter, R. (1991). Psychological aspects of racism in organizations. *Group and Organizational Studies*, Vol 16(1). Pp, 328-344.
- Zetzel, E. R and Meisner, W. W. (1973). *Basic Concepts of Psychoanalytic Psychiatry*. New York: Basic Books Inc.
- Zambardo, P. et al (1995). *A European Text*. London: Harper Collins.
- Zuckerman, M. (1990). *Some dubious premises in research and theory on racial differences*, *American Psychologist*, Vol 45, pp. 1297-1303.

