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A Critical Race Analysis of Resilience and Resistance in Domingo's *Breaking The Maafa Chain*

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Abstract: *This study examines the experiences of black African Americans within a white-dominated society while focusing on double consciousness, racial micro-aggressions, the historical implications of the slave trade, and systemic suppression. The primary aim of this study is to highlight the harsh realities of enslavement and the enduring struggle to preserve African heritage. Racism, a socially constructed phenomenon, subjects black individuals to frequent racial discrimination. This research aims to raise awareness and challenge the facade of superiority maintained by the white-dominated society. The selected novel explores the various forms of racial discrimination against African Americans, shedding light on the subtle attacks they face while striving to preserve their identity. Additionally, the study investigates the issues of identity and freedom by analyzing the relationship between the two sisters in the novel under disquisition. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, this research analyzes the portrayal of black lives and their resilience against white supremacy through Domingo's novel *Breaking The Maafa Chain*, a piercing and sensitive representation of suppressed or marginalized Afro-Americans. Critical Race Theory serves as a framework to address the issues of racial discrimination. The research methodology employed in this study is purely qualitative, analytical, and descriptive, and it involves a close textual analysis of the novel within the domain of critical race theory.*

Key Words: Double Consciousness, Identity Crisis, Inequality, Marginalization of Minorities, Racial Micro-aggressions, Violence

Introduction

This research examines the inherent bias and injustice within society that cause a multitude of problems, including gender inequality, marginalization of minority groups, double consciousness, and identity crises. These inequalities become a challenge for Afro-Americans, and they strive to grapple with and overcome these excruciating realities, such as marginalization, gender inequality, and racial identity, prevalent in the white supremacist community. Their society is inherently influenced, resulting in challenges such as identity crises, inequality, violence, brutality, and marginalization of minority groups, including women, Blacks, and people of colour, particularly within the lives of Black and Afro-American minorities. This often leads to feelings of alienation and exclusion among Black individuals in predominantly white-dominated societies. Scholars in critical race theory criticize the racial policies and authorities of white individuals within systems and institutions (Delgado, 1990; Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1988). Critical race theory sheds light on the unequal distribution of authority and its consequences for individuals. This critical study of American history through fiction reveals how the persistent unequal treatment of African Americans by whites spurred the civil rights movement, such as the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

The divide within the United States over slavery created a growing rift between the Northern and Southern states. This division extended to social, political, and economic aspects, which meant that people's loyalties were more focused on either the North or South rather than the entire nation. The election of President Abraham Lincoln, who was against slavery, was a crucial moment in the fight for civil rights and the eventual eradication of slavery. Despite advancements in civil rights, African Americans still

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face subjugation, race-based violence, brutal crimes, cruelty, and communal segregation. The landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 declared the illegality of segregated schools for blacks and whites, representing a significant breakthrough in American history. The social movement aimed to eradicate racial discrimination and segregation based on colour, sex, religion, and identity against Black Americans. However, despite this legal victory, the fight for equality and justice for Black Americans is far from being over.

Anni Domingo is a multi-talented West African writer, director, and actress. Currently, she shares her expertise as a lecturer in Drama and Directing at St. Mary's University in Twickenham. She has an extensive background in directing, having worked in Cambridge and in various theatres. *Breaking the Maafa Chain* (2021) is an impactful and realistic portraiture of what it means to be African that follows the journey of Sarah Forbes Bonetta, a historical figure from Sierra Leone, West Africa, which is also the author Anni Domingo's birthplace. The story explores themes of survival, hope, identity, loss, and tradition through the experiences of two sisters, Salimatu and Fatmata. Separated and sold into slavery, they face marginalization and forced assimilation, with Salimatu becoming Sara in Victorian England and Fatmata renamed Faith on an American plantation. Domingo's vivid descriptions and poignant dialogue brilliantly depict the cruelties of the transatlantic slave trade, the struggle for identity, and the preservation of African heritage. Anni Domingo sensitively portrays the harsh realities faced by black individuals, focusing on the fictionalized but remarkable early life of Sarah Forbes Bonetta, known as the African princess gifted by black kings to the white queen. Salimatu, the protagonist, constantly grapples with the mental and emotional struggle of maintaining her African identity. Marginalized, tortured, separated, and oppressed, she becomes a victim of double consciousness.

Breaking the Maafa Chain (2021) delves into Salimatu's journey as she fights between her Sara and Salimatu selves. Anni Domingo draws inspiration from this aspect of Sarah Forbes Bonetta's early life in her debut novel, which also tells the relatable story of Fatmata (Faith), taken to the United States before emancipation, shedding light on the terrifying horrors endured by slaves. Queen Victoria is depicted as a sympathetic character who provides financial support for Salimatu, the Black princess while being cared for by the Forbes family. Both sisters are victims of slavery, which, although abolished during the time of the story, still leaves lasting impacts. This study explores the role of a white-dominated society in *Breaking the Maafa Chain* (2021), addressing themes of race, identity crisis, racial micro-aggressions, and double consciousness. Utilizing a close reading of the text, the analysis is focused on how the main characters, Salimatu and Fatmata, struggle for their freedom and identity. Racial micro-aggressions and double consciousness play prominent roles in the novel, as Salimatu is stripped of her name, language, and religion.

From Salimatu to Sarah Forbes Bonetta, the struggle to maintain her true identity is evident. Sarah and Salimatu are deeply connected, crying as one. Salimatu, a slave girl raised as a princess, becomes the goddaughter of Queen Victoria and befriends royal children. Throughout their narratives, both sisters, Salimatu and Fatmata, share their perspectives as they navigate a changing world, one as a princess and the other as a slave, both seeking physical and emotional freedom.

Research Objectives

The present study follows the following research objectives:

- To explore the theme of enslavement and struggle for identity among African people in America.
- To investigate the experiences of African Americans who face cruelties, the slave trade, and their struggle to retain their dignity.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to address the following research questions:

- How does Anni Domingo describe the effects of micro-aggressions and discriminations faced by black individuals in West Africa in her novel *Breaking the Maafa Chain*?
- How does Domingo's *Breaking the Maafa Chain* navigate African Americans' struggle for freedom and identity in a white-dominated society that seeks to oppress them?

Significance of the Research

Racism prevails in societies globally and impacts marginalized people of all races. However, Black individuals face special challenges due to systemic power imbalances. This research will raise awareness of oppression, marginalization, and the ongoing effects and repercussions of the historical slave trade. The findings will highlight the cruelties faced by Black people in a dominant society and shed light on the impacts of the slave trade, micro-aggressions, and white supremacy on their lives, and hence, explore the struggles of blacks for the retrieval of their lost identity.

Literature Review

This section examines previously held studies about African American people and critical race theory. Du Bois (1965) criticized American historians for providing a distorted and incomplete account of the Reconstruction era. Du Bois shares an incident where his article on Black American history for the Encyclopedia Britannica was edited to omit references to reconstruction. Only after his insistence did the white historians reluctantly attribute the failures of reconstruction to African Americans. In response, Du Bois proudly identifies himself as a Negro, while reclaiming the term from its derogatory associations. Fanon (1967) presented a groundbreaking analysis of black identity in his influential work, *Black Skin, White Masks*. He introduced the concept of "epidermalization," where societal pressures lead black individuals to distance themselves from their own blackness. Fanon argues that this reluctance undermines the confidence of black individuals when navigating a white-dominated society, prompting them to imitate white mannerisms in a quest for acceptance. Fanon exposes the hidden politics of whiteness, unjustly associated with notions of purity, objectivity, accuracy, and authenticity. Magubane (2003) argued that intellectuals with dark skin do not see themselves as objects of white entertainment or mere political defenders. They view figures like Du Bois, Gates, and West as ancestors and representatives of the Afro-American community. However, their efforts to empower the black world face resistance from deeply ingrained white biases. Lynn & Parker (2006) asserted that racism is deeply embedded in today's society and is seen as the norm. While equal opportunity laws address blatant injustices, they do little to address the everyday manifestations of racism that people of colour endure. These experiences contribute to feelings of misery, alienation, and despair.

In *All American Boys* (2015), Kiely and Reynolds explore themes of racism, police brutality, and dual identity. They also highlight how Black individuals are unfairly targeted for wrongdoings. The story depicts a police officer assaulting a character from a minority group based on false accusations. This portrays the unjust treatment faced by people of colour in American society. The novel delves into the racial and power dynamics between the minority group and the dominant white society in the United States. In their article "Case Study: Richard Wright's Novel *Native Son*," Boukerrou & Halimi (2021) examine the concept of double consciousness in African American literature. They emphasize the racism, exploitation, and marginalization faced by Black individuals. *Native Son* portrays discrimination against minority groups and highlights how Black people experience extreme double consciousness. The main character, Bigger, becomes obsessed with the thoughts of white men and neglects his own identity. Wright's novel exposes the reality of life where Black individuals should prioritize themselves rather than constantly centring their thoughts on white people. In response to Rudyard Kipling's *The White Man's Burden*, African American writer Johnson (1899) wrote *The Black Man's Burden*, a poem that aimed to expose the mistreatment of Black people by White people. Johnson criticized Kipling for the brutalities and discrimination faced by Black individuals from various regions. His intention was to challenge the racist ideas presented in Kipling's work.

In Quiros (2009), it is argued that race among women of mixed ancestry is influenced by the socio-political conditions within cultures, highlighting the social construction of race and its variability among individuals. These findings challenge the idea of fixed racial categories and stress the significance of considering race within broader social and political contexts. In his book *Lincoln on Race and Slavery*, Gates (2009) highlights Lincoln's commitment to abolishing slavery and securing the rights and dignity of African Americans as free citizens by addressing issues of slavery, race, and colonization. Lincoln's efforts centred on eradicating slavery and ensuring human rights for African Americans. In their article "Visibility of Racism," Jacob & Mythreyi (2017) explore how racism persists in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible*



Man. It emphasizes the struggles faced by Black individuals due to their skin colour and the invisibility they experience. The novel urges individuals to maintain their dignity and identity while advocating for civil rights and aspiring to reach top positions in life. In their article titled "Hidden Figures: The Portrayal of Discrimination in 21st Century Movies," Haryanti and Kuncara (2017) propose that discrimination is not only depicted in novels but also in films. Using the movie *Hidden Figures* as an example, the authors highlight the various forms of discrimination faced by African American women, such as race, colour, and gender discrimination. They argue that the movie accurately portrays the struggles and marginalization experienced by these characters in the civil rights era.

Theoretical Framework

Various authors have theorized the significance of racism in society through their writings. All scholars agree that the primary goal of critical race theory is to advocate for equality for minorities and people of colour on communal, political, religious, and economic levels. The history of critical race theory reveals that Derrick Bell was the first to write about protecting Black people and minorities. The theory emerged in the late 1970s as a faction in the law but quickly expanded beyond that discipline. Derrick Bell is widely regarded as the intellectual father figure of the movement, having laid its foundation. The theory is also known as a "free and energetic" form of legal and educational scholarship (Taylor, 1998, p. 122).

With the theorization of Critical Race Theory, a qualitative research approach, this study focuses on issues such as racism, double consciousness, slavery and gender inequality. The incidents and scenes depicted in the text are rife with such issues. Critical Race Theory emerged as a response to critical legal studies, with a focus on changing the link between race, racism, and power. It aims to eliminate domination in all forms, including power, race, gender, class, and knowledge, and it provides an approach to addressing issues of race. Racism is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the belief that race is the most significant basis for a person's behaviour and abilities and that racial differences create natural supremacy for a particular race. Critical race theory encompasses prejudice, race, privilege, gender, knowledge, class, power, racism, ethnicity, economics, and status and posits that society is divided along racial lines into oppressors and victims, or whites and blacks.

Critical race theory challenges the uneven and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial, cultural, and gendered lines. According to Delgado, critical race theorists have drawn upon everyday experiences, opinions, and stories to gain a deeper understanding of how race operates in American society. Prominent theorists like Derrick Bell and Patricia Williams have roots that trace back to slave narratives, where Black people wrote stories to illustrate their harsh living conditions and expose Western society's oppressive behaviour towards Black and other marginalized communities. American Indians also used storytelling as a means to preserve their culture, unite their people, and envision a common future. While some critics have accused critical race theory of being overly pessimistic and lacking a positive program, legal storytelling and narrative analysis are significant advances that the movement can advocate for. These approaches are even useful for minority judges to assert authority over people of colour's perspectives (Delgado, 2017, p. 43). Critical race theory emerged as a response to a racist legal system as a means to challenge the existing patterns of racial subjugation (Museus, 2013).

Text Analysis

Critical race theory examines the complex dynamics of authority and explores the profound impacts of racism, particularly on the Black community. In American society, racism is deeply ingrained in social structures and power dynamics. People of colour face pervasive racial discrimination in various aspects of life, such as education, law enforcement, healthcare, and employment. Black individuals have long endured a generational apartheid by insensitivity and prejudice from the white population.

Anni Domingo, a British writer, filmmaker, and performer of Afro-Caribbean heritage, explores themes of race, identity, and social injustice in her works. With experience in film production, television, and advocacy for issues like homelessness and women's rights, Domingo's debut novel *Breaking the Maafa Chain* (2021) delves into the challenges faced by black individuals in America, addressing social injustice, the slave trade, and identity crises. Drawing inspiration from authors like Toni Morrison and her novel *The*

Hate U Give (2017), Domingo examines the enduring impact of colonialism and the exploitation of African Americans while also questioning the role of gender and the marginalization of black people.

Racial Discrimination

In Domingo's novel *Breaking the Maafa Chain*, the oppressive reality of racism is vividly portrayed within American society. Domingo's own experience living in America highlights the intense isolation felt between white and black communities. However, the societal division extends beyond a simple white/ black binary, encompassing the dynamics of master/ slave and privileged/ underprivileged. The protagonists of Domingo's novel, Salimatu and Fatmata, face the brunt of racial discrimination in both Victorian England and America. Their experiences are marked by the struggles they endure due to their skin colour. Upon Salimatu's arrival at Papa Forbes' residence in England, she is immediately racialized due to her dark complexion. The children remark on her blackness and question her ability to fit into their society. Salimatu, now known as Sarah, feels like an outsider, grappling with the newness of her surroundings. The children's attitudes towards her are dismissive and derogatory, highlighting the deep-rooted prejudices of white individuals towards those with different racial backgrounds. Their treatment of Sarah reflects the pervasive mindset and structure of a white-dominated society. This portrayal underscores the challenges faced by individuals of colour and sheds light on the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that persist based on racial differences.

Racial discrimination is a central issue in *Breaking the Maafa Chain*, exploring the experiences of immigrants in America during the 1970s, who faced various forms of discrimination due to their race and ethnicity. The novel depicts racial discrimination as a violent act that erases the identities and experiences of people of colour while reinforcing the power dynamics of white individuals. Racial discrimination and its devastating psychic impacts upon the blacks are highlighted here: "Salimatu thought that they were singing about her. She instantly stood up and started clapping, jumping, and dancing. It was Salimatu at that moment. As the music goes faster, she dances wildly as if she is in another world. Amos said after looking at her, "Let the Darke dance. That's all they're good for: work and dance" (Domingo, 2021, p.11). It clearly shows the mindset of whites towards black people. They are good at dancing or music. White underprivileged think about the importance of Afro-Americans by negating that they cannot do anything they are not good at learning, educating, or working. Blacks were being racialized due to their skin colour as they were inferior, underprivileged, uneducated, and weak people. They don't have the ability to do anything, while white people only take themselves as superior over others, that they can do anything and are capable of. In the novel, Salimatu and Fatmata suffer a lot. All the white community behaved so racially all the time they went through mini attacks, which are known as micro-aggression.

Basically, racial micro-aggression is defined as mini attacks based on race faced by dark-coloured people. How such insulting remarks are borne every day by the Africans and become psychic scars is evident from this passage: "While on their walk to the park, a group of boys shouted and pointed towards Sarah "tar baby, tar baby" (Domingo, 2021, p.22). Domingo satirizes the Whites by describing their behaviour as animalistic: " Boys were behaving like animals s they are going to attack her. They have never seen a girl like Sarah before in real life, maybe. "What is tar?" asked Emily. 'It is black and sticky and smells,' said Mabel, staring at Sarah" (Domingo, 2021, p. 22).

Discriminatory Crimes

Breaking the Maafa Chain delves into the harrowing experiences of African girls who were victims of the transatlantic slave trade. The novel vividly portrays the brutalities and inhumanities endured by these individuals. It also sheds light on the conditions of slavery, the terrifying middle passage, and the ongoing impact of the slave trade on contemporary societies. A central theme of the novel is the devastating effects of slavery on millions of Africans. Domingo exposes the barbaric practices of capturing, selling, and transporting slaves, emphasizing the violence inflicted upon them. The novel explores the social injustices, identity crises, marginalization, and other forms of oppression suffered by slaves. Many lost their lives during the slave trade, either on the ships or during the arduous journey from their homes to unknown destinations. Anni Domingo exposes the brutal reality of slavery and social injustice faced by the protagonists, Salimatu and Fatmata.



When their village is attacked by white aggressors, Salimatu and Fatmata witness the death of their parents, Jaja and Madu, and other members of their community. The white aggressors, acting with brutality, separate Salimatu from her sister and sell her into slavery. This traumatic incident marks the beginning of Salimatu's journey into a life of enslavement. Salimatu embarks on a journey to England with Captain Forbes, experiencing travel by ship for the first time. Throughout the journey, Salimatu is filled with questions about their destination and whether she will be reunited with her sister, Fatmata. As she is presented to Queen Victoria, Salimatu realizes she is now under the queen's protection. Despite her fears of being sacrificed to the ancestors, Captain Forbes reassures her of her safety. Salimatu, with tribal markings on her face, is seen as a special gift to Queen Victoria and is given the name Sarah Forbes Bonetta, named after the ship on which she travelled. The novel delves into Sarah's journey, exposing the complexities of her identity and the challenges she faces as a slave.

Domingo explores the different types of slaves and distinguishes between Cru slaves, who have the possibility of buying their freedom, and Akisha slaves, who are destined to be perpetually enslaved. The characters in the story are depicted as Akisha slaves who endure the harsh realities of being tied, dragged, beaten, and subjected to ridicule. When white ladies visit Mama Forbes to see Sarah, who is considered the town's sensation, Lady Lavinia expresses surprise upon learning that the Forbes family owns slaves. Mama Forbes clarifies that Sarah is not a slave; she is free and referred to as the African Princess. This highlights the denial and refusal of the societal structure to acknowledge the fact that Sarah was transported as a slave and subjected to discrimination. The division between whites and blacks as superior and inferior is deeply ingrained in the social structure. Sarah responds that she cannot remember anything, reflecting the extreme erasure of African history, traditions, culture, and religion inflicted by the white colonizers. The colonizers seek to control the minds of Africans and mould them into what they perceive as the "best" according to their own perspective. The novel vividly portrays the dehumanizing effects of slavery and the systemic denial of the African past perpetuated by the dominant white society. It sheds light on the oppressive nature of the societal structure and the erasure of the African identity, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and confronting this painful history.

Double Consciousness

Double consciousness is a significant literary concept that delves into the internal conflicts and challenges faced by individuals from marginalized groups. It examines the complexities of identity negotiation, societal pressures, and the biases imposed by dominant cultures. In *Breaking the Maafa Chain*, characters struggle with issues of belonging, feeling torn between two cultures and unable to fully embrace or be accepted by either. The novel's protagonist, Salimatu/Sarah, struggles with self-identity struggles throughout her journey. Her transformation and the subsequent changes imposed on her led to immense suffering and challenges. As she is brought to England, everything about her is altered, from her name to her dress, language, and religion, leaving her marginalized and disconnected from her true identity. Salimatu fights with herself, constantly reminding herself that she is no longer Salimatu but Sarah, with new fears and uncertainties. Learning English becomes a struggle, but the word "safe" brings her some comfort. Nostalgia sets in as she remembers her time with Fatmata and her family, but her memories start to fade. Salimatu resists being called Sarah, clinging to her original name, and rejects the English clothes forced upon her.

As Sarah, formerly known as Salimatu, begins to learn and assimilate into the English culture, she struggles with the challenges of navigating between her two selves. Sometimes, she struggles to respond as Sarah or Salimatu, feeling deeply immersed in her original identity. Miss Byles taught her how to learn and write. The poems, words, syllabus, sums, and spellings Sarah learned in English. Sarah started taking an interest in everything. "Things to make her into a proper English girl" (Domingo, 2021, p.24). Miss Byles becomes her teacher, guiding her in learning to read and write in English. Sarah's education focuses on transforming her into a "proper English girl," emphasizing the erasure of her Salimatu self. This highlights the pressure marginalized individuals face to conform to societal expectations and relinquish their authentic identities. Salimatu, initially named Aina and later changed to Salimatu and then Sarah, often engages in internal dialogue with her Salimatu self. She yearns for her Salimatu self to be set free and declares herself as the "black princess." However, upon returning to Winkfield from London, Sarah is

relieved to embrace her Sarah identity and leave Salimatu behind. Sarah started writing about her own journey, her struggles, and everything else. She wrote everything that happened to her, including her feelings and fights. She doesn't know what it means to be called an African princess. She wrote about the incident when she met Queen Victoria, that how "everyone liked her blue dress except her. Affie said to Sarah, "If I could scrub off my black skin" (Domingo, 2021, p. 37). Visiting Queen Victoria's palace transforms Sarah, causing a clash between her African and English identities. The conflicts and constant shifts between her Salimatu and Sarah selves leave her oscillating between being a black princess and an English princess, moulding her into a new person.

The struggles faced by Sarah are complex, resulting in a sense of confusion and pressure to choose one's identity over the other. She grapples with finding acceptance and belonging within her community. Sarah finds herself caught between the customs, traditions, and behaviours of her black heritage and those of her other cultural background. This can leave her feeling like an outsider in both communities, disconnected from both versions of herself. Fatmata, Salimatu's older sister, also experiences a similar struggle with her dual identity. Her name is changed to Faith, and she undergoes similar transformations in terms of religion, dress code, and language. Like Salimatu, Faith learns how to read and write on the plantation. Although their lives are changed in similar ways, the sisters are sent in opposite directions, further adding to their individual struggles. Overall, the novel portrays the complexities and challenges faced by characters as they navigate their dual identities and search for a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Black's Quest for Emancipation

Black Africans have faced the enduring consequences of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, including forced migration and cultural suppression. Politically, they have fought against oppressive systems like colonial rule, apartheid, and racial segregation. Socially, they confront ongoing challenges of racism, discrimination, and inequality. Economically, disparities and economic inequalities persist, resulting from historical injustices and limited access to resources and opportunities. The struggle for black African identity and freedom encompasses the pursuit of political autonomy, social justice, and economic empowerment. Salimatu and Fatmata, the two central characters in the novel, face significant challenges in maintaining their black African identity and striving for freedom from the oppression of white domination. Fatmata, now known as Faith, demonstrates a strong determination to preserve her heritage and dignity. She learns to read and write by displaying a sharp memory and immersing herself in the traditions, prayers, and herbal knowledge of her small village, Talaremba.

During her journey from the plantation to England, Faith encounters Absalom, a fellow black slave. She shares her experiences and reveals her ability to write, learn, and read. Absalom informs her about the ongoing fight for freedom and the support provided by opponents of slavery. Faith finds solace in Absalom's presence and expresses her desire to document her past and present experiences to preserve her African self, traditions, and aspirations. Writing down her knowledge and desires becomes a way for Faith, or Salimatu, to communicate her story and her longing for freedom from the tyranny of white men. She yearns for her sister to know her whereabouts and for both of them to escape the clutches of slavery. Faith's determination to preserve her African identity and seek liberation serves as a powerful testament to the resilience and strength of black Africans in the face of oppression.

Absalom plays a crucial role in Faith's life, providing her with hope and the belief that she can attain freedom and return to Freetown. He becomes her source of inspiration and the man she loves being with. Faith begins daydreaming about a future where she is free with Absalom, escaping from the cruelty of the world she knows. She stops listening to Missy Clara and fixates on the idea of freedom, holding a vivid picture of it in her mind. Faith eagerly asks Absalom how long it will take to reach Africa as she learns about abolitionists in London who assist black people in travelling to Freetown. In England, Faith waits anxiously for Absalom, searching for him in the streets. Through her own perseverance, she discovers that The Quaker's meeting place holds the key to finding Absalom once again. They reunite and visit an exhibition, where Fatmata recognizes Salimatu as the African princess she has become. Fatmata writes a heartfelt letter to Salimatu, expressing her joy at seeing her alive and wishing to embrace her. Meanwhile, Absalom proposes to Faith, informing her that they will be going to Freetown. This leaves Faith torn



between her love for Absalom and her desire to keep Salimatu close. Ultimately, love prevails, and Faith decides to go with Absalom in order to maintain and preserve the history of black people saying no to slavery, social injustice, and discrimination fighting for their freedom.

Socially Constructed Gender Roles

Breaking the Maafa Chain, by Anni Domingo, examines the impact of socially constructed power structures on its characters. Racial hierarchy, a prominent power structure in the novel, reflects the oppression and discrimination endured by Africans under slavery and colonization. The characters navigate this hierarchy, facing systemic racism and white supremacist ideologies. Gender power structures are also explored and highlight the intersecting oppressions faced by African women and the restrictions placed on European women by patriarchal norms. The novel portrays the struggles and agency of women as they resist and challenge these power structures while striving for autonomy and freedom.

In African societies, a power structure is constructed based on male domination, where men hold decision-making authority and dictate the roles and limitations imposed on women. This is exemplified in the traditional practice of sending boys to the Obogani Society, a secret society that exists in various African cultures. The Obogani Society is comprised of knowledgeable men who hold esteemed roles within the community, serving as guardians of wisdom, traditional knowledge, and moral leadership. They wield significant influence in governance, community advancement, and cultural preservation. However, this power structure also harbours a dark aspect, as certain society members exploit their authority, resulting in the mistreatment and potential disappearance of boys undergoing initiation. This occurrence highlights the pervasive male dominance and socially constructed hierarchy present in African society.

Conclusion

Anni Domingo's writings offer a powerful portrayal of the persistence of racism and discrimination against African Americans. Through her characters' experiences, she exposes the everyday challenges and injustices faced by black individuals, shedding light on the deep-rooted prejudice and bias that continue to marginalize this community. By intertwining historical struggles with contemporary issues, Domingo explores the resilience and resistance exhibited by black Africans in their fight for freedom and identity. Her work serves as a thought-provoking commentary on systemic racism, urging society to confront and dismantle the barriers that perpetuate inequality.

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