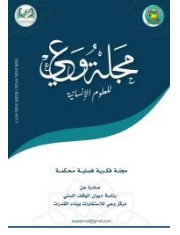




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# مجلة وعي للعلوم الإنسانية

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## Conflict, Memory, and Remorse in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dream Count: A Critical Review*

الصراع والذاكرة والندم في رواية "حساب الأحلام" لتشياماندا نغوزي أديشي : مراجعة نقدية

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Abstract

**Conflict;**  
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**Criticism**

*This thoughtful article takes quite a deep dive into the main issues of conflict, memory, and remorse in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Dream Count." The article shows how the plot and character development are shaped by historical, social, and personal conflicts. Remorse, according to the story, is a sign of moral responsibility, ethical reflection, and the chance for reconciliation. The article is a book review, literary criticism based, which unites various critical opinions on the themes, literary styles, and moral questions of Adichie. It also identifies major issues and neglected areas such as the impact of gender and socio, political factors in conflict, the story, telling role of individual vs. collective memory, and the moral aspects of remorse. The review eventually provides an all, round grasp of the "Dream Count" role in the African literary discourse and points towards the directions for further studies. Between all the three selected novels, trauma cannot be only seen as a thematic concern but also a formal narrative principle that disrupts the linear and traditional storytelling. This study found that the contemporary fiction, particularly the Iraqi, uses a nonlinear narration and flashback techniques as central strategies to represent the complexity of the traumatic experience and its seemingly everlasting psychological effects.*

## الملخص

## الكلمات المفتاحية

تستعرض هذه المراجعة النقدية المواضيع المتشابكة للصراع والذاكرة والندم في رواية "حساب الأحلام" لتشيماماندا نغوزي أديشي. تضع الورقة النص في سياق الأدب الأفريقي المعاصر وأعمال أديتشي الأوسع، مبرزة كيف تشكل الصراعات التاريخية والاجتماعية والشخصية السرد وتطور الشخصيات. يتم استكشاف الذاكرة كاستراتيجية سردية وعدسة موضوعية، تعكس التفاعل بين التجارب الماضية والهويات الحالية. الندم، كما هو موضح في الرواية، يبرز المسؤولية الأخلاقية، والتفكير الأخلاقي، وإمكانية المصالحة. استناداً حصرياً إلى المنح الدراسية الأدبية المستندة إلى الكتب، تلخص هذه المراجعة وجهات نظر نقدية حول اهتمامات أديتشي الموضوعية، وتقنيات السرد، والاستكشافات الأخلاقية. تقدم المراجعة في النهاية فهماً شاملاً لمساهمات "حساب الأحلام" في الخطاب الأدبي الأفريقي وتحدد مجالات البحث المستقبلية، مما يضع أعمال أديتشي ككل من انعكاس وتعليق على تعقيدات المجتمع النيجيري المعاصر.

## 1. Introduction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most acclaimed present, day African writers who focus on exploring the connections between individual, social, and political experiences in postcolonial Nigeria through her writings. In "*Dream Count*," Adichie reflects extensively on the themes of conflict, memory, and remorse that are so deeply interwoven, and her stories reveal the moral, historical, and psychological aspects of human experience. The element of conflict in Adichie's writing is not only individual or between two parties but is also ethnic and socio, political. These tensions point to a longer history of events that have affected Nigerian society and the present, day challenges it faces. As Achebe (2012) observes, The legacy of conflict from history continue to influence both personal and collective identities in postcolonial Nigeria, "indeed for all of us, as the prospect of civil war cast a dark shadow over our lives" (Achebe 2012), a motif runs through "*Dream*

*Count*” and brings out the idea that the wounds of yesteryears continue to have repercussions on relationships of the present. Along the same lines, Soyinka (1994) remarks that, “literature must bear witness to both the private and public dimensions of struggle” (Soyinka 1994), pointing to how Adichie’s stories blend personal life with the issues of the society at large.

Memory functions in “*Dream Count*” not only as a narrative tool but also as a major thematic element that connects the characters to themselves and their surroundings. According to Nfah-Abbenyi (1997), “Memory and narrative are central to articulating the female experience in African literature” (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, 102), highlights the role of remembrance in helping the characters define who they are, come to terms with history, and deal with trauma. A common feature in Adichie’s treatment of memory is the equal emphasis on individual recall and shared history, resulting in a complex story that explores how earlier experiences influence current moral and psychological states. To quote Renate Lachmann correctly, the text’s memory lies in its intertextuality (Lachmann 1997 15), and African literature, by and large, represents the struggle between individual and communal memory at a time of postcolonial transformation. The memory of literature, therefore, points to the “idea of an inner-literary memory, a memory of literature as a symbol system which is manifested in individual texts” ((Erl, 2008 25). For instance, Adichie’s “*Half of a Yellow Sun*,” as a work of post memory, not only retells the earlier stories of Biafra, but also evokes the memory of the earlier literary texts in various forms of intersexual and met textual references. This viewpoint helps in understanding the complicated temporal and social aspects of “*Dream Count*.”

In Adichie’s novel, remorse is a tool that characters use to deal both morally, and mentally, with the wrongdoing of themselves and others. Okpewho (1992) mentions that “Remorse in African fiction is often the narrative vehicle through which moral consciousness is both tested and

revealed,” (Okpewho, 1992, 115) which means that through personal and social conflicts, the ethical aspects are highlighted. Adichie, by focusing on remorse, shows that humans are capable of self, examination, owning up to their mistakes, and making peace, thus linking personal morality to the collective historical awareness.

This paper is a critical review of literature that discusses issues of conflict, memory, and remorse in “*Dream Count*.” Its goal is to extract the dominant trends, highlight the major problems, and pinpoint the things that need to be done in the future. Mainly, it is based on the book-as a-theory and covers those pieces of writing that shed light on narrative techniques, thematic development, and moral questioning in Adichie’s works. Given that side of discussion, the present piece, one side, highlights the. In “*Dream Count*,” ethical deliberation and the awareness/remembering of the past, on the other hand, A. literature approach is considered amongst, the various form of African literary criticism. As Ngugi notes, “The writer’s task is to negotiate between aesthetic expression and social responsibility, creating a literature that speaks to both history and imagination,” (Thiong’o, 1986, 59). a motto that informs the thematic study of conflict, memory, and remorse in Adichie’s story.

This review’s remit includes studies that have explored conflict in internal and external memory as a mediating lens, the moral dimensions of remorse, and it also brings together a variety of informed views to give an all, around understanding of “*Dream Count*.” Hence, the article points out the major gaps in the critical literature such as the scant focus on the gendered side of memory, the ethical turn and its role in postcolonial narratives, and the newer schools of thought like trauma theory and narrative ethics. The paper, by bringing together these different views, considers “*Dream Count*” as a major work in African literature that shows both the historic persistence of

conflicts and the power of story, telling to change people's consciousness through memory and moral responsibility.

## 2. Contextual Background

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "*Dream Count*" is a unique piece of modern African literature. It not only deals with the postcolonial aspects of Nigeria, but also brings out the universal traits of human nature. When we look at "*Dream Count*" within the path of her writing career, it is clear that Adichie has stayed true to her aim of depicting intricate social and political situations through a storytelling device that brings out the small characters, their awareness of the past, and their ethical considerations. In a way, just like Ngg wa Thiong'o in his classic book, "*Decolonizing the Mind*" (1986), independently define "African literature as works produced in African languages, reflecting the continent's diverse cultures and histories" (Thiong'o. 1986. 27), situating Adichie's work within a broader literary movement that addresses both private and public dimensions of life in postcolonial Africa.

The historical and socio, political background of the "*Dream Count*" is key to grasping its thematic concerns. Nigerian writer postcolonial era, a country of war, ethnic conflicts and political instability is the novel's conflict and memory a theme. On the Biafran War, Achebe 2013 said, "The experiences of conflict and displacement leave indelible marks on memory and identity" (Achebe, 2013, 63), are the same struggles of the character, s in "*Dream Count*." Adichie's portrayal of violence is not limited to the political violence but also includes the psychological effects of social and family tensions on the individual.

Memory serves a dual function in storytelling and the exploration of themes in Adichie's writings. The novel, focusing on memory, serves as a medium through which it is explored how our past experiences determine

our identity, moral choices, and self-perception. Nfah, Abbenyi (1997) emphasizes that “memory is the connective tissue between history and narrative, allowing the author to engage with trauma, recollection, and cultural continuity” (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, 87). In “*Dream Count*,” Adichie makes use of a multi, layered narrative technique where the characters’ memories of their past reveal their current ethical and psychological issues. Such a method is in agreement with the idea that time and memory manipulation in African literature is a conscious interaction with not only individual but also communal histories, thus emphasizing the influence of narrative technique on thematic development.

The theme of remorse is intimately connected to memory and conflict and it also constitutes a kind of moral instrument through which the characters can perceive their ethical obligations. In this respect Okpewho (1992) states that “literature in Africa often examines the moral consequences of individual actions within the broader fabric of society” (Okpewho, 1992, 18), this is exactly one of the principles manifested in Adichie’s story. In “*Dream Count*,” the characters, on the one hand, are faced with the consequences of their decisions while on the other hand, their reflections also extend to their communities. This actually Gikandis (2000) concept to some extent that “literary texts provide a framework for exploring ethical dilemmas and the complexities of social morality” (Gikandi, 2000, 149). By including remorse as an essential part of the narrative, Adichie foreground how one’s responsibility, awareness of history, and reconciliation among the community can be interconnected.

Adichie’s storytelling methods in “*Dream Count*” deeply echo the major themes of African literature at large particularly issues of gender, diaspora, and time as a reflection of morality. Nfah, Abbenyi in the text *African Women Writers: Paradox and Perspective* states: “African women writers foreground the intersection of gender, culture, and memory, challenging patriarchal

norms and expanding narrative possibilities” (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, 112). Explains that African women writers consistently highlight the intersection of gender, culture, and memory, not only confronting patriarchal ideologies but also breaking the boundaries of traditional narratives. Therefore, the women in “*Dream Count*” who struggle with the constraints of society, the scars of history, and the dilemmas of ethics are the novels characters whose transformations both on a personal and a social level are reflected through the story. Ngugi (1986) also emphasizes that style and language are the elements through which cultural awareness is formed. He writes that liberation of the language in literature: “the decolonization of literary language is inseparable from the exploration of identity, memory, and social responsibility” (Thiong’o, 1986, 64). Adichie’s richly interconnected narrative voice and form manifests her adherence to these literary tenets, thereby composing “*Dream Count*” as a literary as well as a socially commutative piece of work.

#### Personal and Interpersonal Conflict

Consider the characters of “*Dream Count*” that on a personal level are grappling with the internal struggles, moral dilemmas, and relational tensions. In her stories, Adichie also explores the emotions and the moral consequences of the different personal decisions, as well as how innate conflicts reveal the societal tensions. Soyinka (1994) has pointed out that African stories have always been a kind of mixture of personal experiences and political and social realities, which is the rule that can be seen in Adichie’s writings. A person last decision is influenced not only by his a desire or inclination but also by modes of behavior prescribed by the society and the situation in the past, all this as a way of showing the link between one’s private and public lives.

Erll (2008) stresses that historical conflict leaves “That memory and identity are closely linked on the individual level is a commonplace” (Erll, 2008, 6), which in “*Dream Count*” is manifested through characters’ complaints of remorse, regret, and reconciliation. The novel indicates the psychological hardship resulting from decisions made under pressure or restricted by social conventions, thus depiction of the complex connection between internal and external conflicts. Pamela Kimario (2024) states out that “African women writers have written about liberation, equality, and opportunities to access available resources in their society” (Kimario, 2024, 6), a theme that is tune with Adichie’s narrative.

### Social and Communal Conflict

Besides individual pain, “*Dream Count*” also highlights the social and communal dimensions of the conflict including issues of gender inequality, ethnic diversity, and family disputes. The play points to how societal factors contribute to the formation of personal characters and how communities manage conflicts. Olaniyan and Quay son have observed that, “African literature is often concerned with the social fabric of the community and its historical transformations, documenting how individual experiences are shaped by communal values and collective histories” (Olaniyan, & Quayson, 2007, x), stressing that the resolution or the continuation of the conflict is largely rested upon on community frameworks and historical awareness.

Adichie’s characters figure out their way through complicated social relations, which aside from generating tension they also misunderstand, judge and impose cultural expectations on each other as a way to keep the tension going. For example, women characters find themselves at the mercy of patriarchy which limits their freedom however men characters are equally challenged as they are required to display power and comply with social norms. Nfah, Abbenyi (1997) points out that “narrative spaces created by

African women writers allow for critical engagement with gendered conflict and resistance, which opines that the rise of female writers in African literature reconstructs the identity of women” (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, 85), In fact, the rise of female writers in African literature reconstructs the identity of women situating Adichie in a wider literary tradition that is concerned with power and social justice.

### Political and Historical Conflict

Conflict in “*Dream Count*” is not only about the characters but also closely related to Nigeria’s political and historical background. Adichie, through her writing, captures the aftermath of civil wars, colonial history, and ethnic conflicts and how such places of macro violence find resonance at the level of individual and community life. Achebe (2013) emphasizes that “the shadow of historical conflict continues to shape personal and collective identities in postcolonial Nigeria” (Achebe, 2013, 45), which is a view that highlights the historical awareness present in Adichie’s story. Through the inclusion of the historical setting, the book shows how collective trauma can be transmitted from one generation to another, which ultimately affects one’s ethical decisions, feelings, and ways of relating with others.

Ojaide believes that literature should not only depict the public side of struggle but also reveal the private side. He asserts that “Literature records, bears witness, and expresses feelings and ideas” (Ojaide, 2012, 73), and this is demonstrated in the poem “*Dream Count.*” Adichie’s depiction of conflict refers both to the big issues that cause it as well as the individuals involved. She guides readers to understand the entire context of how society, history, and psychology affect an individual. Ngg WA Thiong (1986) adds that, “the decolonization of literary language is inseparable from the exploration of identity, memory, and social responsibility” (Thiong’o, 1986, 64), which is

why Adichie's narrative technique to depict postcolonial conditions is quite a reflection.

Summing up, the strife in "*Dream Count*" operates on three closely related levels: the person, the community, and the state. Through the theme of conflict, Adichie reveals the character's deepest psychological turmoil, to the extent of reflecting a wider socio-historical setting of postcolonial Nigeria. The story intertwines individual problems with societal and historical pressures so tightly, that it probes very intensively how conflicts can change a person's identity, their understanding of right and wrong, and the way they relate to others. In this way, conflict is much more than just a subject; it is also an element of design that allows the investigation of memory, guilt, and moral duty.

### 3. Memory as Narrative and Thematic Strategy

In Adichie's "*Dream Count*," memory is used as both as a storytelling tool and a theme. It alters the characters' self-perception, their understanding of the community, and the historical knowledge. Memory acts as a medium for Adichie to trace the intertwining of an individual's remembrance and a collective's shared experience, thus she uncovers the ways in which the relics of the long past continue to shape the psyche of people. The novel, by probing into memory, raises questions regarding the suffering, our identity, and the moral responsibilities. At the same time, it attempts to understand the conflict and remorse from another perspective.

#### Personal Memory and Identity

The characters in Adichie's writing are frequently reflecting on past events to gain a clearer picture of their current circumstance. Memory functions in a way similar to that of a mirror for characters to examine deeper into themselves when they face moral dilemmas, and recognize their own

mistakes. As Pierre Nora (1989) rightly points out, “memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived” (Nora, 1989, 8). In “*Dream Count*,” the woman characters dealing with the memories of committing wrongs, being confined by society, and betrayal by others, clearly showing how remembering leads to both understanding who one is and making the right moral choices.

In addition, Forna (2010) relates that, in her view, “memory is not merely recollection; it is the lens through which characters interpret their moral and social worlds” (Forna, 2010, 45). It is indeed through Adichie’s narration that we see how she uses memory as a tool for characters’ remembering, feeling and ethical deciding. Memory, according to her, is not only about recall but also about characters’ emotional and ethical engagements like feeling guilty or regretting or even yearning for something. Concerned and provoked by the widespread and inappropriate identification of Africa as one single country rather than a continent, Adichie ironically uses the example of an announcement on a Virgin flight promoting charity work through India, Africa and other countries to illustrate her point, “I still get quite irritable when Africa is referred to as a country; the most recent example being my otherwise wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in India, Africa and other countries” (Adichie, 2009). She goes on to say that the mistake really annoys her sometimes quite a lot not only in the examples she cites but in everyday situations as well Apart from emphasizing that historical events have profound and lasting effect on individual conscience, Adichie also attempts to correct and changes people’s negative perception of Africa.

### Collective and Historical Memory

Memory in “*Dream Count*” also works on a collective level, marking the larger socio, historical milieu of Nigeria. The novel depicts how historical conflicts, e.g. civil war, ethnic tensions, and political upheaval, through communal impacts by shaping collective consciousness and enhancing moral awareness. Halwachs points out that “each impression and each fact, even if it apparently concerns a particular person exclusively, leaves a lasting memory only to the extent [...] that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu” (Halwachs, 1992, 53), that the revival of literary language is intertwined with the exploration of identity, memory, and social responsibility.

Okpewho (1992) states that “oral and literary memory preserve collective experience, transmitting cultural values, ethical norms, and historical knowledge” (Okpewho, 1992, 115). In the “*Dream Count*,” the author focuses on character behavior and choices that are shaped by memories of community trauma and inherited conflict, thus depicting the moral side of remembering. Emenyonu (2000) states, “memory bridges individual experience and communal history, making literature a site for negotiating moral and social understanding” (Emenyonu, 2000, 71).

### Memory and Trauma

Memory in the novel is not only a recollection but a medium for trauma to manifest. Individuals turn back to their wounds, working through the mental and affective changes brought about by the war. Hanley (1991) emphasizes that “literature provides a space to confront trauma, offering both reflection and catharsis for individuals and communities” (Hanley, 1991, 33). What Adichie does with traumatic memory is very compatible with the above thought, where characters are depicted that reconcile their own and their peoples suffering. Onega, del Ro, & Escudero, Alas (2017) see it this way, “traumatic memory in literature functions ethically, prompting readers to

consider responsibility, justice, and reconciliation” (Onega, et al 2017, 57), which is a role obviously played by “*Dream Count*.”

Books about memory and literature reveal even more about how Adichie does things. For example, Adebayo (2024) points out that “narratives of postcolonial Africa frequently use memory to interrogate the legacies of conflict and displacement” (Adebayo, 2024, 78), whereas “*The Palgrave Handbook of Literary Memory Studies*” (2025) observes that “the most obvious and straightforward connection between memory and literature is the literary preoccupation with acts of individual and collective remembrance” (Bond, et al, 2025, 5). These perspectives pointed how memory plays a major role not only the storytelling of “*Dream Count*” but also its major themes.

In short, “*Dream Count*” *Dream Count* nicely shows us all the different levels at which memory can function: inside the individual mind, in the collective memory of a group, and as a moral force. Through memory, Adichie deals with issues of the self-identity suffering, and morality, and uses a wide spectrum of narrative techniques to reflect the complex nature of memory as a tool for reconciling conflicts and remorse’s mainly through linking personal memories with broader historical and social contexts. By using memory as heavily as a narrative device, not only does Adichie move the story forward, she also makes her readers think deeply about the moral, emotional, and historical aspects of the human condition.

### Personal Remorse and Ethical Awareness

Adichie’s characters often wrestle with a sense of remorse that they have buried deep inside as well as with the emotional consequences of their actions. That is in line with the moral aspects of human behavior, and

literature gives us a chance to examine the ethical side of human actions, especially when it is memory reminding us of what we did wrong in the past. Through the introspection of characters over their past mistakes, the story “*Dream Count*” portrays how their ethical awareness develops, showing that remorse can be a psychological and moral motivator at the same time. Basically, mistakes just like failures in relationships, social or political life can be the reason characters through the mind work to get in touch with their deeper self, change their minds about the decisions, and seek for peace.

Trilling (1972) draws our attention to reflection as a way of achieving sincerity, pointing out that “the cultivation of sincerity and reflection depends on the careful engagement with one’s past” (Trilling, 1972, 89). In this sense, Adichie’s depiction of remorse mirrors this understanding: the characters’ development in morality is the results of their ability to recall, face, and process their past actions. Likewise, Hanley (1991) recognizes that “literature provides a forum for the examination of remorse, enabling characters and readers to grapple with the moral weight of past deeds” (Hanley, 1991 48). In many ways, “*Dream Count*” serves as a vehicle for the same role of literature, exposing remorse not as mere feeling but as looking in the mirror of one’s guilt and taking responsibility for one’s self (ethical responsibility) (first time).

### Collective Remorse and Social Responsibility

Aside from the self-reflection aspect of the story, “*Dream Count*” also explores the communal remorse and responsibility of the community. Adichie situates the feeling of guilt and remorse in the broader socio-historical context of Nigeria and how these communities that are struggling from the effects of violence, forced migration, and social injustice. In his article, Achebe (2013) wrote that “societies emerge from conflict burdened with the moral responsibility of acknowledging historical wrongdoing” (Achebe, 2013,

112). Moreover, in the book, the communal memory of past conflicts that the community has experienced shapes how they relate to one another and establish moral principles, thereby showing the connection between personal and communal morality.

Okpewho (1992) states: “Literature preserves collective memory and facilitates moral reflection on shared experiences.” (Okpewho 1992 p. 127) Adichie’s story uses the memory of communal recollection to explore the morality of social and political behaviors. This shows how remorse can be a tool not just on the individual level, but on the communal level as well. This is supported by the same quote above, emphasizing how the morality of literature lies on its power to serve as a bridge between the individual and the social.

#### Narrative Mediation of Remorse

Adichie in a very artistic way connects remorse to memory and ethical reflection by making a combination of structural and different stylistic choices. Apart from the use of flashbacks, interior monologues, and multiple perspectives, a variety of other forms are allowed to be explored for a witness to characters moral deliberations and emotional struggles. In 2000, Gikandi wrote, a “literary form shapes the ethical register of a narrative, mediating the reader’s engagement with guilt, responsibility, and reflection” (Gikandi, 2000, 148). In “*Dream Count*,” the use of such literary devices highlights the intricacies of human mind in the act of remorse and, at the same time, shed light on the ethical behavior, i.e. both its motivation and consequence.

Adebayo (2024) points out that one of the features of postcolonial literature is that it combines the use of the author’s memory and the ethical reflection to reveal the moral aspects of the historical and social heritage, “Literature’s relationship with memory is most commonly approached as

memory in literature, which, to put it simply, means the portrayal of individual and collective remembering in literary texts” (Adebayo, 2024, 14). Adichie’s novels and stories are good examples of this combination, and they show remorse as a moral means through which memory, conflict, and identity are connected. The story uses the placement of remorse in the plot and in the message of the book to draw attention to how emotion, morality, and knowledge of the past are linked to each other.

### Remorse, Reconciliation, and Ethical Resolution

Remorse is a key element of a series of events leading to reconciliation and ethical reparation in “*Dream Count*.” By recognizing their remorse and regretting their actions, characters gain the opportunity to make peace with themselves, others, and the entire community. Onega, Del Ro, & Escudero, Alas (2017) state that literature depicting traumatic memory and ethical commitment can help to bring about reconciliation as they offer both moral and emotional bases to deal with past wounds, showing “the representation of traumatic memories and individual and collective suffering in contemporary literature. This fact justifies the rethinking of the relationship between trauma narratives and memory that lies at the heart of this volume” (Onega et al, p. 7). Through memory and remorse, characters in the story are able to deal with old conflicts, thus leading to emotional healing and ethical illumination.

Forna (2010) states that “literature’s ethical potential lies in its capacity to reveal the consequences of action and provide avenues for moral growth” (p. 62). The moral growth in the story of remorse in “*Dream Count*” highlights responsibility, compassion, and deep understanding of the moral sense. The literary story provides a wonderful example how a story can illustrate the laws of justice and reconciliation to one personally and to the whole community.

To sum it up, the notion of contrition in “*Dream Count*” is multi-leveled: personal, communal, and gender-based. In fact, through the character's feeling of remorse, we see not only the separation between good and bad and the idea of taking responsibility for oneself, but also the side of the story where the person might be forgiven by others, Adichie’s story combines memory, turmoil, and ethical reflection so well that it presents an ethical experience that encompasses the characters’ struggles to deal with their own pasts and the legacies they have inherited from society. Not only is remorse a theme of the narrative, but it also serves as a catalyst for the character's development and guides the progression of the storyline, while causing readers to reflect upon the character’s morality and emotions. Adichie’s work demonstrates how literature may create a forum for moral contemplation that unites one’s conscience with the collective duty to society.

#### 4. Debates, Gaps, and Emerging Readings

The novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “*Dream Count*,” has gained a lot of attention for its content. On the other hand, academic studies have shown that the story is a subject of a number of debates and gaps for further analysis. For example, although critics have shown a lot of appreciation for Adichie’s skill and ingenuity in the story’s content and theme, they do not agree in their understanding of the concept of moral responsibility, memory, and women’s issues. The analysis of these debates will help us to understand that the literary work is a complex one and that there is a lot of potential for further analysis in that area.

#### Debates on the Nature of Conflict

One of the key issues about the conflicts depicted in “*Dream Count*” is whether the conflicts are historical or political in nature, and to what degree they are connected to one another. Many scholars, such as Achebe, assert that the only source of conflict in “*Dream Count*” is historical and political.

According to Achebe, “historical conflict affects both public consciousness and private moral reasoning” (Achebe, 2013, 63). This viewpoint presents “*Dream Count*” as a member of the postcolonial Nigerian literary community. On the other side of the fence are some researchers, like Nfah Abbenyi, who argue that “*Dream Count*” is as much about the interpersonal and gender conflicts as it is about historical and political conflict, and that the transgressions of social and relational boundaries are just as significant in understanding the meaning of the work: “African women writers foreground the tensions between personal desire and social obligation, revealing the moral complexity of human experience” (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, 112). This difference leads to puzzled minds about the importance of macro, versus micro, level conflicts and whether Adichie gives more importance to historical than to personal aspects, or if she does the text to combine both.

Moreover, the ethical role of conflict in literature is a subject of further discussion. Gikandi (2000) believes that through showing the effects of different actions in a social context, literature is able to influence one’s moral comprehension: “Literary texts provide a framework for exploring ethical dilemmas and the complexities of social morality” (p. 149). Critics have different opinions on whether “*Dream Count*” uses conflict mostly as a tool to reflect on ethics, or whether it realistically shows the socio, political tension. Hanley (1991) points out that African literature mostly uses conflict to depict trauma and highlight the ability to withstand it. That is why he believes that the novel not only engages ethical dilemmas but also historical witnessing: “Literature provides a space to confront trauma, offering reflection and catharsis for individuals and communities” (p. 33).

## Debates on Memory and Its Function

Memory, which is a major theme in “*Dream Count*,” represents yet another area of academic disputes. For example, Forna (2010) and Adebayo (2024) argue that memory serves mainly as a device for personal and psychological self, reflection, reminding the characters of their relapse, remorse, and trauma. Forna (2010) remarks, “Memory is not merely recollection; it is the lens through which characters interpret their moral and social worlds” (p. 45). On the other hand, some scholars such as Okpewho (1992) and Emenyonu (2000) believe that memory is a shared and cultural medium that connects individual experiences to community and historical awareness: “Oral and literary memory preserve collective experience, transmitting cultural values, ethical norms, and historical knowledge” (Okpewho, 1992, p. 115). These sharply diverging views not only invite speculation on whether Adichie’s emphasis is more individualistic or communitarian, but also on the multiplicity of functions of memory, e.g. as an ethical, historical, or narrative device.

Some ethical issues related to memory have been discussed in connection with a literature review of works dealing with traumatic memory by Onega, Del Ro, & Escudero-Alías (2017). They maintain that such representations of traumatic memory hold moral authority as they encourage the thinking about responsibility and justice: “Traumatic memory in literature functions ethically, prompting readers to consider responsibility, justice, and reconciliation” (p. 57). On the one hand, certain critics argue that through memory, Adichie foregrounds the healing aspect of memory reconciliation and virtuous growth. On the other hand, they opine that she reveals the tragic side of memory burden being stuck with the devastating effects of trauma (Rieff, 2016).

### Gaps in Gendered and Intersectional Analysis

Adichie's work on gendered experiences has been recognized; however, there remains a shortage of thorough intersectional analyses. For example, while Nfah, Abbenyi (1997) states that African women writers reveal the ethical and moral challenges faced by gender, very few academics have examined the intersection of gender with other factors such as ethnicity, class, or generational conflict in the context of "*Dream Count.*" They argue that "African women writers foreground ethical and moral dilemmas, highlighting the intersection of gender, identity, and social responsibility" (Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, 115) Likewise, Forna (2010) points out that the gender aspects of trauma and remorse in African literature are rarely discussed, especially in pieces that also deal with historical and political upheavals. This omission implies that it is necessary to have research that combines feminist, postcolonial, and ethical perspectives for a better understanding of the complexity in Adiche's depiction of women characters...

#### Emerging Approaches: Trauma, Diaspora, and Narrative Ethics

Through new interpretations of "*Dream Count,*" trauma theory, diaspora studies, and ethical principles unveil new perspectives about the literary works studied. Adebayo (2024) notes the relation of postcolonial trauma and its impact on the narrative structure and ethics, "Postcolonial literature often integrates personal memory and ethical reflection to interrogate the moral implications of historical and social legacies" (Adebayo, 2024, 102). Additionally, Gilroy (1993) discusses diaspora consciousness and double temporality, which are used to understand memory and moral reckoning: "The Black Atlantic framework reveals the tension between historical experience and contemporary identity formation" (Gilroy, 1993, 37).

In examining memory and narrative in Adichie's work, scholars can explore both the characters' memories and how those memories are the basis for and

are linked to moral, legitimate, and communal healing in her narrative (p.102).

### Future Directions for Scholarship

The analysis of *“Dream Count”* reveals several opportunities for further investigations. Firstly, an in-depth analysis of the intersection of gender, class, and ethnicity can reveal how these social stratifications impact the experience of conflict, memory, and remorse. Secondly, an in-depth ethical analysis can reveal how the reader is engaged by the narrative and how this engagement informs the reader’s experience of conflict, memory, and remorse. Thirdly, the use of trauma and memory discourse can offer a theoretical lens for analyzing the psychological and historiographical aspects of the narrative. Finally, an analysis of other literary pieces by Adichie, such as *“Half of a Yellow Sun”* and *“Notes on Grief,”* can offer an opportunity to situate the story more firmly in Adichie’s body of literature and reveal both evolutionary and essential aspects of her depiction of conflict, memory, and remorse (Adichie, 2006; Adichie, 2021).

In a nutshell, the academic literature on *“Dream Count”* shows that there is a consensus as well as a lack of consensus on the significance of conflict, memory, and remorse. The majority of the arguments are on the significance of personal conflict that is experienced by an individual as opposed to the conflict that is experienced by a nation in history. Similarly, the arguments are on the memories that an individual has as opposed to the memories that a nation has. Finally, the arguments are on the significance of remorse from a moral viewpoint. There is a huge gap in the literature on gender, intersectionality, and ethics. This shows that there is a huge gap for new interpretations. The integration of the ideas of trauma theory, narrative ethics, and the diasporic viewpoint will add a new layer of depth to the analysis of the work of Adichie. This will show that *“Dream Count”* is a novel

that examines the relationship between history, consciousness, and morality. The book is still a useful source for literary, ethical, and interdisciplinary research. The book encourages further research on the complex relationships between conflict, memory, and remorse.

### Conclusion

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "*Dream Count*" is a powerful reflection on conflict, memory, and remorse. In the story, the author does not just skillfully portray personal experiences, but also collective ones. The main purpose of this analytical paper is to reflect the presentation of the three themes in the book. The article also highlights that the author skillfully blends different contexts, personal, social, and historical interactions, into the story which is not only ethically thought provoking, emotionally touching, but also culturally meaningful. By placing the story in the context of modern African literature and the author's overall body of work, this review has highlighted the ways in which conflict, memory, and remorse function as interdependent narrative and thematic structures.

Conflict in "*Dream Count*" is manifested on three levels: individual, societal, and political. On an individual level, the characters' struggles with their internal moral conflicts, the tensions in their relationships, and the uncertainty of ethics occurrence mirror quite well the resulting psychological and emotional effects of human behavior (Soyinka, 1994; Nfah, Abbenyi, 1997). On the other hand, social and communal conflicts consisting of gender hierarchies, family relations, and cultural practices determine the nature of the characters' interaction and depict the communal pressures of expectation (Emenyonu, 2000). Political and historical issues, especially in the context of Nigeria's postcolonial situation, reveal how the larger societal and historical factors impact the individual lives, control the choices, moral justifications, and create one's sense of self (Achebe, 2013; Ngg wa Thiongo, 1986). The fact

that Adichie manages to weave these conflict levels together is a proof of the novel's narrative ingenuity and its addressing the universal existential and societal issues.

Memory, both as a plot element and a theme, adds a new level of moral and emotional intricacies to the story. Through characters' memories of old events, they not only find ways to explain their current situations but also face their traumas and contemplate ethics (Forna, 2010; Adebayo, 2024). On one hand, memory influences personal identity and ethical decisions; on the other hand, it is a tool for a community to remember its history and culture (Okpewho, 1992; Emenyonu, 2000). Adichie's ways of writing, such as changes in time, memories, and inner thoughts, provide detailed depictions of memory and highlight how remembering is connected to disagreement and taking up one's duties (Gikandi, 2000; Hanley, 1991).

Remorse, guilt, and ethical reckoning are intricately associated with the theme of memory and conflict that the novel addresses. "*Dream Count*," by focusing on the characters who have come to terms with their past errors and moral weaknesses, reflects the process of self-examination, moral growth, and ultimate reconciliation (Onega, et al, 2017). Remorse is not only an individual, inner experience but also a social one that brings together the individual conscience with society (Achebe, 2013; Forna, 2010). The point of view of gender adds another dimension to the story, with female characters both confronting the double bind of societal expectations and historical legacies, and enacting relational ethics that ultimately brings out the theme of moral diversity (Nfah, Abbenyi, 1997).

The review also discussed the ongoing debates and gaps in the literature on "*Dream Count*." Different authors have discussed that Adichie's focus in the novel is either on the historical or personal conflict, individual or collective memory, and the ethical importance of remorse (Achebe, 2013;

Nfah, Abbenyi, 1997). Intersectional studies on the topic are very rare, especially in the context of how gender, ethnicity, and social classes intersect and impact the conflict and ethical importance. New paths in trauma theory, narrative ethics, and diasporic studies offer vast potential for future studies that can help in understanding the ethical, emotional, and historical importance of the novel (Adebayo, 2024; Gilroy, 1993; Bond et al, 2025).

Overall, “*Dream Count*” is a perfect example of the excellent writing abilities that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie possesses and how she vividly presents the complex relationship between conflict, memory, and remorse. Apart from being a platform for questioning human virtues, a means to raise historical awareness and a presentation of human feelings and ethics, the novel is also a presentation of the author’s accumulating emotions over the course of the years. The analysis of how these three elements were brought together in the story has also served to highlight the depth and diversity that can be found in Adichie’s masterpiece and the need for the continuation of academic study. Later studies should focus on cross, disciplinary, moral, and comparative approaches, while memory and trauma theory should be used as a basis to further bring out the psychological, moral, and social intricacies that can be found in Adichie’s writings. In this way, the researcher will be able to further enhance their understanding not only of “*Dream Count*” but also of the potential that modern-day African literature has in serving as a link between personal stories, social history, and morality...

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