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*Ama Ata Aidoo's Our Sister Killjoy: Reflections from a Black-Eyed Squint (1977) in The Light of Chela Sandoval's The Psychology of The Oppressed*

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*We dedicate this work to*

*Our beloved parents, sisters, brothers, and all our friends*

*And to our passionate readers.*

*Lilia and Djedjiga*

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation critically examines Ama Ata Aidoo's novel *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977) through the lens of Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*. The focus is on understanding how the protagonist, Sissie, navigates and resists various oppressive structures. By closely reading *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977), the thesis explores Sandoval's methodology, including oppositional consciousness, forms of resistance (Equal-rights and Revolutionary), and differential consciousness as tools for personal and societal transformation. The analysis delves into the intersectionality of gender, race, and colonialism within Sandoval's framework, impacting Sissie's experiences. This study contributes to understanding the interplay of postcolonial theory, emphasizing the relevance of Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*. The thesis provides insights into transformative change and emancipation through strategic resistance within oppressed communities.

**Key words:** Methodology of the Oppressed, gender, race, colonialism, resistance strategies, marginalized, oppression, agency, emancipation.

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## I. Introduction

In the late 19th century, Africa bore the brunt of European colonialism, resulting in profound consequences. The push for decolonization gained momentum in the late 1940s and persisted through the 1950s and 1960s. Ghana's attainment of independence in 1957 signaled the advent of the postcolonial era, a period marked by newfound sovereignty. However, the aftermath of colonial rule posed substantial challenges to rebuilding the continent. The enduring legacy of colonialism wielded a significant influence over African societies, shaping their social structures, economies, and cultures. Despite the triumph over colonial forces, the complexities of postcolonial Africa underscored the need for a nuanced understanding of the enduring impact of historical legacies on the continent's development and identity.

Toyin Falola, a significant Nigerian historian, explored the roles of African intellectuals and the impact of cultures in shaping postcolonial identities. His works, such as *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (2001) and *The Power of African Cultures* (2003), delve into the influence of African intellectuals on nationalist movements and the contribution of cultural practices to identity formation and societal structures.

Key African postcolonial writers, such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi WaThiong'o, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, played pivotal roles as advocates for African perspectives and experiences. These literary giants, operating in the aftermath of colonial rule, sought to challenge the dominance of Western powers and promote greater equality and empowerment for African people. These writers utilized their craft to inspire pride and self-confidence among African people. They countered negative stereotypes, giving voice to the African experience.

As Ama Ata Aidoo, a prominent post-colonial and feminist writer, noted, “There are powerful forces undermining progress in Africa. But one must never underestimate the power of the people to bring about change” (Aidoo, 1991, p. 192). Aidoo herself contributed significantly to this transformative literary landscape, addressing colonialism, nationalism, and social justice in her work. Her assertion of the limitations women faces in achieving “it all” underscores the gendered challenges within postcolonial contexts (Aidoo, 1991, p. 53). The collective efforts of these writers, explored through the lens of postcolonial and feminist literature, offer a profound exploration of struggles, triumphs, and the complex dynamics of identity, oppression, and resistance within neocolonial African societies.

In this context, Ama Ata Aidoo’s novel *Our Sister Killjoy* stands as a poignant exploration, providing a critical examination of the postcolonial condition and offering insights into the intricate tapestry of power dynamics, cultural clashes, and the quest for agency amidst colonial legacies. This study, employing Chela Sandoval’s *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, seeks to unravel how Aidoo’s protagonist, Sissie, embodies and employs elements of this methodology within her own experiences. Through this exploration, the study aims to shed light on the strategies of resistance, identity formation, and cultural reclamation employed by Sissie, offering a nuanced understanding of their transformative potential for marginalized communities.

To achieve this, the thesis will first provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of *the Methodology of the Oppressed*, as articulated by Chela Sandoval. Building upon this foundation, the study will then conduct a detailed analysis of Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy*, examining how the methodology manifests the narrative. This analysis will explore the journey of Sissie, her interactions with other characters, the ways in which she negotiates oppressive structures, and the

implications of her acts of resistance with the postcolonial African context. As we delve into this exploration, it is essential to acknowledge the significance of understanding the experiences of oppressed individuals within postcolonial societies. By giving voice to these narrative and studying the methodologies they employ, we can gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of power, resistance, and liberation.

## **Review of literature**

The work of Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* has been subject of criticism, analysis, and discussion. It has been the object of different critical readings since its publication. Among the scholarly discourse on Aidoo's narrative, we may cite first Cheryl Sterling's essay entitled as "*Can You Really See Through a Squint Theoretical Underpinnings in Ama Ata Aidoo's Our Sister Killjoy*" (Sterling, 2010), the novel is read as a reversal of the colonial travel narrative. This essay posits Sissie, its focal character, as a cite of theoretical transformation, it also tackles the importance of Aidoo's work in deconstructing the meaning, the novelistic form and the Western thought. As well as, the novel has a great role in reconstructing the value of the African Women in the African development.

Other studies showed interest in the notion of exile presented by Aidoo in her novel *Our Sister Killjoy*. Wilentz Gay A in his entitled paper "*The politics of exile: Ama Ata Aidoo's Our Sister Killjoy*" (Wilentz, 1991). Gay argues that "the novel exposes a rarely heard viewpoint in literature in English – that of the African exile". In his article, he examines Aidoo's challenge to prevailing theories of exile, her questioning of the supposed superiority of European culture for the colonial subject, and her exposé of the politics of exile for African self-exile for the colonial subject (Wilentz, 1991)

In addition, the research entitled “*Gender Deconstruction in Our Sister Killjoy by Ama Ata Aidoo*” (Writers des Kadim, 2020). The dissertation has as main objective the discussion of gender marginalization, and investigate the reason behind women being victimized, marginalized and silenced by their male counterparts. The analysis also set to discuss the role that patriarchy plays in this marginalization, gender stereotypes, and the steps taken by these silenced women to respond back in order to deconstruct these gender barriers set by male dominated societies. In Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy* gender deconstruction is exemplified through the female characters who rise above the gender barriers and challenge the marginalization of women in order to free themselves. The analysis was done on the novel through the use of feminist deconstruction as a literary theory, which revealed that patriarchal norms, male chauvinism, gender stereotyping and silencing, as well as, cultural norms were the main causes of why women are subjected to gender marginalization.

## **Issue and Working Hypothesis**

Building upon the literature review, it’s evident that scholars have approached *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977) from diverse perspectives, such as examining it as a reversal of the colonial travel narrative or exploring it through the lens of exile. Despite this rich array of criticism, there is a notable gap in existing studies – no prior research has ventured to explore the different forms or methods of resistance and emancipation within the novel. This study seeks to fill this void, aiming to deepen our understanding of the oppression faced by colonized people, especially black African women. The focus is on analyzing responses to this oppression and the various forms of resistance, with a particular emphasis on the character development of our focal figure in the novel, Sissie.

To accomplish this objective, we turn to Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000). Sandoval's framework, guided by "Differential Consciousness" and manifested in the "Differential Social Movement," equips us with a set of technologies and practices. This framework allows us to forge a language of revolution, providing the means to reshape the world. The relevance of Sandoval's theory becomes apparent as we delve into the strategies and methodologies of oppression and resistance within *Our Sister Killjoy*, highlighting its significance in our analysis of the novel.

To achieve our aim, we used Imrad method, this study is divided into two main chapters, in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. The first chapter entitled "Oppositional Consciousness and Forms of resistance in *Our Sister Killjoy*". The next chapter entitled "Emancipation, Differential Consciousness, Deconstruction and the exploration of Otherness in *Our Sister Killjoy*".

## II. Methods and Materials

### 1. Methods

#### a. Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*

Chela Sandoval (1956- ) is an American scholar and critical theorist known for her work on feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory. Chela's research interest was concerned with methods of opposition to dominant structures. She is particularly recognized for her influential book entitled *Methodology of the Oppressed* first published in (2000). In this book, Sandoval presents her own theoretical framework, which she calls "methodology of the oppressed". She studies the theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world that develops in resistance to social hierarchy, she develops her idea of "differential oppositional consciousness" (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. I), as a mode of "ideology-paraxis" rooted in the experience of U.S Third World that resists binary categories of identity in favor of fluidity that moves between them. Sandoval's methodology explores the complexities of identity, power, and resistance, emphasizing the experiences of marginalized groups and the ways in which they navigate and challenge the oppressive systems.

*The Methodology of the Oppressed*, developed by Chela Sandoval, emerges as a significant theoretical contribution shaped by various oppositional social movements of the late twentieth century. These movements included the Third World Decolonization movements of the 1950s and 1960s, the Cultural Nationalist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and U.S. Third World Feminism in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Sandoval's mission was not merely to document who we are, but rather to challenge and undo what colonial and oppressive structures have made us become. She contends that we are all marked by colonization, but through her methodology, she provides tools and technologies for

decolonization. A key component of her theory is the idea that oppressed groups possess a skill she calls "differential consciousness"—the ability to perceive and navigate power dynamics in order to devise strategies for redistributing power.

Sandoval outlines five oppositional modes that are integral to social movements and activism: the Equal Rights Form, the Revolutionary Form, the Supremacist Form, the Separatist Form, and the Differential Mode of Consciousness (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. II). In this thesis, we focus on the first three modes the Equal Rights Form, the Revolutionary Form, and the Differential Mode of Consciousness as they are most pertinent to my analysis of Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*. The Supremacist Form and the Separatist Form are not explored in this study, as the text under analysis does not align with these modes of opposition, which emphasize dominance and exclusion respectively.

### ● **The Equal Rights Form**

The Equal Rights Form (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. II) advocates for equality within existing systems of power. This mode of resistance is characterized by the demand for equal treatment and the assertion that all individuals are inherently equal, regardless of race, gender, or other socially constructed hierarchies. Sandoval explains that activists employing this mode “argue for civil rights based on the philosophy that all humans are created equally,” and that the differences which have historically placed marginalized groups in inferior positions are based solely on appearance and not on any real or substantive distinctions. This mode emphasizes legal and policy reforms to challenge discriminatory practices and ensure equal access to opportunities. Aidoo's text reflects aspects of this form, particularly through Sissie's critique of the racial and cultural disparities she encounters during her travels. Aidoo highlights the importance of equality, while also emphasizing that structural reforms are necessary to combat the ongoing effects of colonialism and racial discrimination.

- **The Revolutionary Form**

Sandoval's Revolutionary Form (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. III) goes beyond seeking reforms within the system, advocating instead for a radical restructuring of societal systems and power dynamics. This form calls for dismantling the oppressive structures themselves, emphasizing a complete transformation of society to address the root causes of injustice. Revolutionary consciousness is at the core of this mode, where marginalized groups not only challenge the status quo but also imagine and work toward alternative structures that embody justice and liberation. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Sissie's journey is emblematic of this revolutionary stance. Her personal awakening and her confrontations with the legacies of colonialism signal a broader call for systemic change rather than simply reform within existing power structures.

- **The Differential Mode of Consciousness**

The Differential Mode of Consciousness is perhaps the most versatile of Sandoval's oppositional strategies. It involves the ability to switch between different modes of resistance in response to changing circumstances. Sandoval describes this form as a tactical survival skill that enables marginalized groups to navigate power structures and adjust their strategies depending on the situation at hand. Those who adopt this mode can move between the other four modes—sometimes calling for equal rights, at other times advocating for revolutionary change—based on what is most effective in the moment. This mode highlights the fluidity and adaptability of oppressed groups in their struggle against power. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Sissie exemplifies differential consciousness through her ability to critique and resist various forms of oppression, whether through direct confrontation or more subtle acts of defiance. Her experiences reflect the necessity of adjusting one's tactics depending on the context, showing how the fight for liberation is not one-dimensional but multifaceted and dynamic

In Sandoval's framework, the Supremacist and Separatist Forms of opposition also play important roles in certain social movements. The Supremacist Form seeks dominance or control over other groups, often attempting to replace one hierarchical structure with another. The Separatist Form, on the other hand, advocates for the complete separation of marginalized groups from the dominant power structures, creating exclusive spaces for those who have been oppressed. These forms of opposition, however, are not employed in *Our Sister Killjoy*, as Aidoo's text does not suggest that one group should dominate another, nor does it call for isolation or separation as a means of resistance. Rather, the novel focuses on engagement with and resistance against oppressive systems in ways that promote equality, justice, and transformative change. Therefore, these modes are not central to the analysis in this thesis.

*Methodology of the Oppressed* is a single volume and doesn't have multiple parts in the traditional sense. The book is structured as a comprehensive exploration of Sandoval's methodology, encompassing various concepts and ideas related to oppression and resistance. Sandoval decisively maps out the Methodology of the Oppressed, embracing the five skills: semiotics, deconstruction, and differential consciousness (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. III).

Semiotics, in the context of Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*, refers to the study of signs and symbols and their meanings within a given cultural or social context. It is a field of study that explores how meaning is created, communicated, and interpreted through various signs, such as language, gestures, images, and other symbolic representations. In the methodology outlines by Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Semiotics can be utilized as a tool for analysing and understanding the ways in which power operates through signs and symbols (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. III). By examining the underlying meanings and discourses embedded within cultural texts, social practices,

and systems of representation, one can uncover ideologies and power dynamic at play. Semiotics can assist in deciphering how dominant ideologies are reinforced or challenged through the use of symbols, language, and other forms of communication. In the context of Sandoval's work, semiotics can be employed as methodological approach to critically examine and deconstruct the ways which oppressive ideologies and power operate within society. It allows for a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed, manipulated, and contested, contributing to the broader analysis of systems of oppression and potential for resistance and emancipation. We can certainly apply Semiotics to analyze and interpret *Our Sister Killjoy* by Ama Ata Aidoo, by examining the signs, symbols, and meanings embedded within the novel and explore how they contribute to the portrayal of power dynamics, social relations, and cultural contexts.

It is worth to mention that Sandoval engages with various theories and methodologies to explore the experiences of marginalized individuals and communities. Sandoval borrows the concept of "Deconstruction" (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. IV), a philosophical approach developed by Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) who is a French philosopher known for his significant contributions to postmodern philosophy and deconstruction. Deconstruction is a critical approach to understanding how meanings are constructed and how language shapes our perceptions. Derrida's work has influenced various fields, including literary theory, linguistics, and cultural studies. It involves critically analyzing texts, discourses, and systems of thought to reveal the inherent contradictions, hierarchies, and power dynamics with them. Deconstruction aims to challenge fixed meanings and binary oppositions, exposing underlying assumptions and highlighting the complexities and multiple interpretations of a text or concept. Deconstruction, in line with Sandoval's overarching objective of critically scrutinizing dominant discourses and ideologies, appears pertinent to the analysis of our narrative *Our Sister Killjoy*. Ama Ata Aidoo, the author, employs deconstruction in her novel to challenge prevailing

ideologies and empower marginalized individuals. Aidoo, through characters like “Sissie,” rebels against colonial and patriarchal ideologies, offering a voice to marginalized women and contributing to social justice through her work *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977).

“Differential Consciousness” (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. II) is another source of empowerment and resistance in Sandoval’s theory. She maintains that this element of resistance “has a mobile, retroactive, and transformative effect on the previous four, setting them all into diverse processual relationships” (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. II). The differential form requires the knowledge of the other four modes of “Oppositional Consciousness”.it is like a polyform in which previous movements, technologies depend for their own operation. Sandoval considers the differential form as consciousness in opposition that can gather up the modes of ideology praxis represented within previous liberation movements into a fifth, differential and postmodern paradigm.

Sandoval argues that traditional ways of thinking and knowing have often excluded or marginalized certain groups based on factors such as race, gender, class, and sexuality. Differential consciousness challenges this exclusion by advocating for broader and more inclusive understanding of knowledge production and social realities. Rather than relying on a singular, universal standpoint, differential consciousness encourages individuals to recognize the existence of multiple, intersecting social identities and their accompanying forms of knowledge. It calls for a rejection of fixed hierarchies and power structures and the embrace of complex and evolving subjectivities. Through “Differential Consciousness”, Sandoval seeks to disrupt the dominant discourses and ideologies that perpetuate social inequalities. By valuing and centring the experiences and perspectives of marginalized individuals and communities, she aims to empower those who have been historically silenced or erased. The concept seems to be relevant to *Our Sister Killjoy*, as Aidoo challenges oppressive systems, she

dismantles oppressive structures by giving voice to the marginalized, emphasizing the importance of understanding and appreciating the diversity of experiences within the narrative.

Chela Sandoval in her book *Methodology of the Oppressed* also uses the concept of “Otherness” (Sandoval, 2000, Pt. III) which refers to the condition of being positioned outside the dominant norms, power structures, and identities within a given society. “Otherness” is experienced by individuals and communities who are marginalized, excluded, or deemed as different from the social and cultural mainstream. Sandoval emphasizes that “Otherness” is not simply a state of being, but a social construction that arises from hierarchical systems of power and privilege. She claims that “Otherness” is often imposed upon individuals and groups based on factors such as race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability. Within the framework of Sandoval’s methodology, “Otherness” is closely tied to the experience of oppression and “the differential mode of consciousness” that emerges as a response. “Otherness” can serve as a site of resistance and a source of alternative perspective and knowledge. It challenges the homogeneity and universality of dominant discourses and opens up space for the expression and recognition of diverse identities and experiences. By embracing “Otherness”, individuals and communities can reclaim their voices, challenge oppressive systems, and work towards social transformation. Thus, “Otherness” becomes a source of empowerment and a catalyst for the cultivation of alternative ways of being, knowing, and relating to the world. It is important to note that Sandoval’s concept of “Otherness” goes beyond mere difference or diversity. It highlights the ways in which marginalized individuals and groups are positioned as “other” in relation to dominant social order, and it calls for the recognition and dismantling of oppressive structures that perpetuate this positioning. The concept of “Otherness” is related to our studied novel *Our Sister Killjoy*, the characters of the novel are positioned as “others” within the context of race, gender, sexuality, and power dynamics.

## **2-Materials**

### **A -Historical Background of Ghana: Colonialism and Its Impacts on Identity and Culture (1884–1957)**

Colonialism is a system of exploitation where one group controls and dominates another, maintaining power through cultural and political subjugation (Landsale, 1988, p. 38). In Ghana, during the colonial era, British laws and customs were imposed, often clashing with traditional African values. This led to a profound sense of cultural displacement among Ghanaians (Nkrumah, 1964). Colonialism in Africa caused severe disruption, stripping Africans of their history, language, and culture, and forcing them to adopt foreign ways (Achebe, 1958). These effects were deeply damaging and had lasting impacts on African identity and society (Boating-Ade, 2022). In Ghana, the erosion of indigenous cultures and languages was exacerbated by colonial education systems that promoted European values and marginalized local traditions (Brennan, 2009).

The colonial education system made Africans feel inferior and dependent on their colonizers, promoting European languages and values over African ones. This devaluation of African culture persisted even after independence, affecting Africans' self-perception and place in the world (Mudimbe, 1988). Schools during colonial times focused on European culture, history, and languages, neglecting African traditions and making them seem less valuable (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1986). Ghana, known as the Gold Coast before March 1957, experienced significant changes under colonial rule, with European powers exploiting its resources and imposing their control (Brent, 2016).

After World War II, the push for independence gained momentum, with leaders like Kwame Nkrumah advocating for Ghana's and Africa's liberation from colonial rule. In 1957, the Gold Coast became independent, renamed Ghana, and Nkrumah emphasized the importance of education in nation-

building (Britannica, 2023). He implemented the Education Act of 1962, making education compulsory and free, aiming to rebuild the nation (Bonney, 2009).

In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Ama Ata Aidoo vividly portrays the lingering impacts of colonialism on identity and culture through her protagonist, Sissie. Aidoo criticizes the glorification of the West and highlights the struggles of Africans in exile, who often face discrimination and are treated as outsiders. Sissie embodies a strong sense of nationalism and cultural pride, rejecting the superficial allure of the West. Instead, she advocates for Africans to return home and contribute to rebuilding their own societies, where they can live with dignity and maintain their cultural identity. This mirrors Nkrumah's vision of a self-reliant Ghana, free from colonial influence and proud of its heritage. Aidoo's narrative, through Sissie's journey, underscores the importance of resisting cultural erasure and reclaiming one's identity in the face of oppressive power structures.

### **B-Biographical Background of Ama Ata Aidoo**

Ama Ata Aidoo, born on March 23, 1942, in the former Gold Coast (now Ghana), is a celebrated Ghanaian writer and the first Ghanaian woman to publish a novel. Her work spans various forms of writing, including novels, plays, criticism, and teaching, making her a versatile and influential figure in African literature. Aidoo grew up in a noble household, with her father being a prominent leader who established the first primary school in their village, emphasizing the importance of education amidst the neocolonial struggles they faced. This background deeply influenced Aidoo's understanding of African traditions and her commitment to social justice.

During her early education at Wesley Girls High School in Cape Coast, Aidoo discovered her passion for writing. She continued her studies at the University of Ghana, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. It was here that she wrote her first play, "The Dilemma of a Ghost," published by

Longman in 1964 when she was just 22 years old. This play, addressing the conflict between traditional beliefs and Western education, marked a significant milestone in her career.

Aidoo's professional journey took her to the United States, where she worked and received a creative writing fellowship at Stanford University. Returning to Ghana in 1969, she taught English and lectured at the University of Cape Coast. Briefly, she served as Ghana's Minister of Education from 1982 to 1983, resigning after 18 months. In 2000, she founded the Maabassen Foundation to support African women writers. Despite her teaching commitments in various countries, including the United States, Germany, and Zimbabwe, Aidoo remained deeply connected to Ghana and its cultural heritage.

Aidoo's literary works explore themes such as the impact of colonialism, feminism, and the dynamic interaction between traditional and modern influences. Her writings often reflect on the consequences of Westernization on both literate and non-literate members of African communities. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Aidoo critiques the glorification of the West and highlights the struggles of Africans in exile, who face discrimination and cultural displacement. The protagonist, Sissie, embodies a strong sense of nationalism and cultural pride, advocating for Africans to return home and rebuild their societies. Sissie's journey in the novel mirrors Aidoo's own views on the importance of cultural identity and self-reliance. The narrative emphasizes the need for Africans to reclaim their heritage and resist cultural erasure, reflecting Aidoo's lifelong commitment to these ideals

. Aidoo's other notable works include the plays "Anowa" (1970), the short-story collection "No Sweetness Here" (1970), and the novel "Changes: A Love Story" (1991), which won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize Africa Division. Her poetry collections, such as "Someone Talking to Sometime" (1985) and "An Angry Letter in January and Other Poems" (1992), further demonstrate her literary prowess. Through her extensive body of work, Aidoo continues to advocate for the

transformation of women's roles and the preservation of African culture, making her a pivotal figure in postcolonial and feminist literature.

### **C-Summary of the Novel**

*Our Sister Killjoy: Reflections from a Black-Eyed Squint* by Ama Ata Aidoo, published in 1977, is a compelling novel that intricately explores themes of identity, colonialism, and resistance in the postcolonial era. Set against the backdrop of Africa and Europe, the story follows the protagonist, Sissie, a resilient Ghanaian woman on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment. As Sissie ventures to Europe in search of new opportunities, she confronts the harsh realities of racism and cultural alienation. Through her experiences, she grapples with questions of belonging and agency, resisting the pressure to conform to Western ideals while advocating for the celebration of African culture and identity. Alongside Sissie, the novel introduces a diverse cast of characters whose stories illuminate different responses to colonialism and exile. Sammy represents the allure of Western ideologies, embracing assimilation, while the unnamed African man embodies the internalized oppression of the colonized, remaining silent in the face of injustice.

As Sissie navigates her journey, she confronts the realities of neocolonialism and the erasure of African identity. Through her experiences, she learns the importance of resistance and self-determination, ultimately deciding to return to Ghana and contribute to rebuilding her homeland. Through richly drawn characters and a thought-provoking narrative, *Our Sister Killjoy* invites readers to reflect on the enduring legacy of colonialism and the possibilities for reclaiming agency and autonomy in a postcolonial world. Aidoo's novel, published in 1977, stands as a powerful testament to the strength and resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

## Results

In this section, we present the key findings of our analysis of Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* using Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Our research aims to uncover the ways in which the novel engages with themes of oppression, agency, and resistance. In the first chapter, entitled *Oppositional Consciousness and Forms of Resistance in Our Sister Killjoy*, we explored various forms of resistance and the pervasive issue of racism within Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*. Our investigation revealed that the voices of marginalized individuals possess a transformative potential that transcends their social limitations. Within the novel, characters such as Sissie grapple with oppressive societal structures, colonial legacies, and the insidious effects of racism. Applying the concept of Oppositional Consciousness, we observed that Sissie actively engages in self-discovery, questioning norms, and seeking agency. The narrative serves as a vehicle for social critique and resistance, including resistance against racial prejudice.

Another key finding is the development of survival strategies by the characters in response to racism. Characters like Sissie confront racism as they navigate foreign environments. They experience not only cultural dislocation but also face discrimination and prejudice. These characters employ subversive tactics to reclaim their identities and combat racism, emphasizing their resilience and determination. Our analysis also highlighted various acts of resistance within the novel, where characters challenge racial hierarchies and stereotypes. Collectively, these acts resist the established racial status quo and contribute to the ongoing discourse of empowerment and social change.

These findings illuminate the multifaceted nature of Oppositional Consciousness and resistance within *Our Sister Killjoy*. The characters' journeys reflect the transformative potential of marginalized voices and their capacity to address and confront deeply ingrained issues of racism. The novel serves as a testament to the agency of individuals who confront oppressive structures, particularly the racial dimensions of their social realities.

In the second chapter, we delved into the themes of Emancipation and Differential Consciousness in *Our Sister Killjoy*. The primary objective was to analyze how these themes manifest in the novel and to gain insights into the characters' experiences and interactions within these frameworks. Our analysis revealed a central theme of emancipation, representing a form of individual and cultural revolution, as characters like Sissie navigate the complexities of their identities and the societies in which they live. Through the lens of Differential Consciousness, we observed that these characters actively engage in self-exploration, seeking to understand their identities and assert their agency. Their quests for emancipation underscore the transformative potential of individual consciousness.

Another significant finding pertains to the deconstruction of dominant narratives within *Our Sister Killjoy*. The novel critically examines colonial legacies and cultural assimilation. Utilizing deconstruction as a lens, we noted that the text dismantles hegemonic narratives, exposing their fallacies and the complexities of postcolonial identity. Characters grapple with the remnants of colonialism, inviting readers to engage with alternative perspectives and challenge established truths.

Our analysis also uncovered a nuanced exploration of otherness and intersectionality in the novel. Characters experience cultural dislocation and are often perceived as "other" in foreign contexts. Through the framework of otherness, we identified moments of intersectionality where characters confront multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. This exploration highlights the importance of acknowledging diverse experiences within the narrative. Collectively, these findings highlight the richness of themes in *Our Sister Killjoy* and their intersection with emancipation, Differential Consciousness, deconstruction, and the exploration of otherness. The characters' journeys reflect the transformative potential of individual consciousness, the deconstruction of dominant narratives, and the complexities of identity within a postcolonial context.

## **IV. Discussion**

In the ensuing discussion, we undertake a comprehensive analysis of the thematic and interpretive dimensions explored within the purview of chapters one and two. Chapter one, centered on the paradigm of oppositional consciousness and expressions of resistance within *Our Sister Killjoy*, establishes the conceptual underpinnings that inform our exploration of marginalized voices grappling with prevailing structures of oppression. In chapter two, we embark on a nuanced examination of emancipatory dynamics, differential consciousness, deconstructionist tendencies, and the nuanced inquiry into otherness embedded in the narrative. This section encapsulates our findings, interpretations, and the broader significance of these themes, offering a comprehensive reflection on the multifaceted world that Ama Ata Aidoo crafts in her work

### **Chapter One: “Oppositional Consciousness” and Forms of Resistance in *Our Sister Killjoy*.**

#### **A-Oppositional Consciousness**

Ama Ata Aidoo's novel, *Our Sister Killjoy: or Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint* (1977), serves as a platform for Aidoo's expression of discontent towards both white oppressors and complicit Ghanaians (Banerjee, 1978). The narrative delves into various themes such as colonialism, exile, racism, and identity crisis. This study, particularly in its initial chapter, will center on the application of Chela Sandoval's theory of the oppressed within the context of *Our Sister Killjoy*. The ensuing discussion aims to scrutinize the manner in which marginalized individuals cultivate a discerning awareness of their social and political circumstances, subsequently engaging in resistance against prevailing power structures that perpetuate oppression.

The significance of the novel's title, *Our Sister Killjoy: Reflections from a Black-Eyed Squint*, merits careful consideration. The titular character, Sissie, is colloquially labeled "Killjoy," a term commonly denoting someone who dampens the enjoyment of others. Within the narrative, Sissie emerges as a contrarian figure, challenging societal norms and expectations. Her actions often disrupt the established order, urging those in exile, particularly Africans in England, to reassess their lives superficially lived abroad. Sissie, portrayed as a black-eyed squint, symbolizes a critical perspective, emphasizing the need to abandon artificial lifestyles in foreign lands and return home for active participation in the reconstruction of their native environment (Aidoo, 1977, p. 6). This naming choice encapsulates the character's role as a catalyst for reflection, challenging prevailing norms and encouraging a reconsideration of the African diaspora's relationship with their homeland.

Sandoval's theory emphasizes the crucial role of oppositionality tailored to the unique experiences of various marginalized groups. This framework proves valuable in scrutinizing the characters' experiences in the novel. The concept of Oppositional Consciousness, as outlined by Sandoval, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the transformative potential inherent in marginalized voices. Applying Oppositional Consciousness to *Our Sister Killjoy* allows us to unveil how Aidoo's characters navigate their social realities. They develop survival strategies and engage in acts of resistance that challenge the prevailing societal norms. Aidoo, in her novel, delves into the intersections of race, gender, and colonialism, portraying the experiences of marginalized groups in postcolonial Africa. The narrative follows Sissie's journey to Europe, where she confronts various forms of oppression and marginalization. Sissie's journey in *Our Sister Killjoy* vividly illustrates the complexities of identity formation amidst colonial and racial struggles. Navigating Europe, her encounters unveil the clash between her identity and Eurocentric expectations, underscoring the challenges imposed by colonial legacies. The novel adeptly explores the intersectionality of race and

gender in Sissie's experiences, revealing the unique discrimination faced by a black woman. Her refusal to conform becomes a powerful narrative of resistance, challenging societal norms and reflecting the struggle for authentic identity. Amidst cultural alienation, stereotyping, and racial prejudice, Sissie's multifaceted challenges echo the broader difficulties confronted by marginalized individuals in postcolonial contexts. Aidoo, through Sissie, provides a nuanced portrayal of the intricate web of oppressions shaping the postcolonial experience.

Sissie's evolution mirrors the principles of oppositional consciousness outlined by Sandoval. Initially grappling with identity complexities and cultural displacement, Sissie undergoes a transformative journey marked by an increasing awareness of oppressive power structures. Sandoval's notion of oppositional consciousness is evidenced in Sissie's questioning of hegemonic norms and the development of various forms of resistance. As Sissie challenges societal expectations, especially those related to gender, race, and cultural conformity, her narrative becomes a powerful exploration of the limitations imposed by these factors. Interacting with other characters, she gains insights into the oppressive forces hindering personal growth. Sissie's journey of critical awareness aligns with Sandoval's strategies, empowering her to resist and challenge the dominant powers marginalizing her and her community. Sissie's journey is intricately woven with the principles of oppositional consciousness, a concept articulated by Sandoval. At the outset, Sissie grapples with the intricacies of identity and the challenges posed by cultural displacement. However, her narrative takes a transformative turn as she progressively becomes more attuned to the oppressive structures governing her existence. Sandoval's oppositional consciousness posits that oppressed individuals, like Sissie, challenge prevailing norms and devise varied forms of resistance. Sissie's narrative becomes a canvas where this unfolds, especially in her questioning of societal expectations that extend to gender, race, and cultural assimilation. Her story serves as a poignant exploration of the constraints imposed by these

factors on personal agency. As Sissie engages with other characters, her insights deepen, unraveling the oppressive forces that impede not just her own growth but that of her community. Sandoval's strategies, as articulated in the theory of oppositional consciousness, manifest in Sissie's journey of critical awareness. This awakening empowers her to confront and resist the dominant powers perpetuating marginalization. In essence, *Our Sister Killjoy* becomes a powerful narrative that mirrors Sandoval's theories, offering a nuanced exploration of how individuals, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, navigate and resist oppressive structures in a postcolonial context.

Ama Ata Aidoo channels her voice through the character of Sissie, a young woman deeply connected to her African identity. Unlike seeking refuge in revolutionary ideals, Sissie embraces her African heritage. In the novel's initial section, *Into a Bad Dream*, Aidoo vividly portrays the pervasive perception of the West as superior. When individuals come searching for Sissie, their approach in a black Mercedes-Benz draped with a flag symbolizes this superiority. During an evening Sissie meets encounter Sammy, a boy who is also from Ghana and whose real name she "does not catch". Sammy extols the virtues of the West, deeming the trip as the "biggest opportunity" and showcasing familiarity with European ideologies. Sissie perceives Sammy as a tool singing the wonders of Europe, an oppressed man forsaking his true identity to assimilate into a foreign society. Aidoo masterfully captures Sissie's inner questioning, her refusal to passively accept the unfolding events. Sissie, driven by a thirst for understanding, challenges the prevailing narrative. The section concludes by contemplating the influence that dictates survival and demise, hinting at the intricate power dynamics at play. Aidoo, through Sissie's lens, critiques the glorification of the West and the internalized oppression that compels individuals to forsake their roots for an elusive foreign acceptance.

Within *Our Sister Killjoy*, Aidoo maintains a critical stance on the idealization of the West and the experience of exile. In the novel's third section, titled "From Our Sister Killjoy," Sissie departs

Germany for England with initial excitement and curiosity. However, this anticipation soon turns to disillusionment as she grapples with the ambiguous nature of England. The narrative underscores Sissie's motivation to pass through England: she carries questions, a quest for clarity, and a determination to reveal the truth about this foreign place. Upon arrival in England, Sissie confronts the stereotyping, eroticizing, and fetishizing of Africans by Westerners. She keenly observes the harsh realities faced by many Africans living there — forced into poverty, squalor, and subjected to discrimination. Sissie, deeply critical of this oppression, contends that Africans are treated unequally, exposing the disparity between the idealized image of the West and the harsh actualities experienced by African individuals. Aidoo, through this narrative arc, sheds light on the complexities of the African diasporic experience and challenges romanticized notions of life in the West.

In the novel, Sissie emerges as a character deeply connected to her identity and culture, navigating the challenges of exile while maintaining a profound love for her roots. Aidoo intricately portrays Sissie's struggle to reconcile her sense of self with the complexities of being in a foreign land. The depiction of Sissie's surprise at encountering numerous black people in England underlines her initial lack of awareness regarding the extent of emigration from Africa. Behrent (1997) notes this dynamic, emphasizing Aidoo's revelation of the stark reality behind immigration, challenging preconceived notions. Aligning with Sandoval's perspective, Aidoo's narrative becomes a platform for exploring resistance rooted in the experiences of marginalized individuals. Sandoval's call for creating new ways of thinking and acting against existing power structures resonates as Aidoo advocates for a form of resistance based on understanding and inclusion, pushing for a more just and equitable society. This cohesive narrative underscores the thematic continuity in the exploration of identity, immigration, and resistance throughout the novel.

In articulating Sissie's perspective, Aidoo challenges the notion of assimilation and acceptance within Western societies. Sissie's experiences in the West, marked by resistance and unequal treatment, become a microcosm of the struggles faced by Africans in the diaspora. Aidoo suggests that the pursuit of acceptance in foreign lands may be futile and even counter-productive. Instead, she advocates for a return to Africa, emphasizing the importance of rebuilding their home continent. Aidoo envisions a society where individuals can live authentically, free from the constraints of foreign expectations. Sissie's journey, culminating in her return to Ghana, becomes a symbolic act of reclaiming identity, culture, and a commitment to contribute to the development of their own land. Aidoo, through Sissie, challenges the narrative of seeking validation in Western societies and encourages a reconnection with African roots for a more equitable and authentic existence.

## **B-The development of Revolutionary Forms of Oppositionality**

Colonialism and neocolonialism have left lasting impacts on African societies, fundamentally altering cultural values and identities. While colonialism, depicted as a one-eyed and one-legged entity losing its identity, involved direct control and exploitation by foreign powers, neocolonialism represents a more subtle form of domination, often characterized by economic and political influence exerted by former colonial powers or other global actors (Ocheni & Nwanko, 2012). The consequences of both colonialism and neocolonialism have been profound, reshaping African modes of reasoning, identity, and historical narratives.

In Ghana, the novel *Our Sister Killjoy*, published in 1977, offers a poignant exploration of the aftermath of colonialism and the enduring legacy of neocolonial ideologies. Through its narrative delving into the complexities of African history and the lingering effects of colonialism of the mind, highlighting how colonial ideologies continue to shape African societies long after formal colonization has ended (Seekapor, 2020). By examining these themes, *Our Sister Killjoy* provides insight into the

ongoing struggle for cultural autonomy and identity in the face of persistent neocolonial influences. The novel contains a quote that serves as a clear illustration:

*“We are the victims of our history and our present. They place many obstacles in the way of love. And we cannot enjoy even our differences in peace”.* (Aidoo, 1977, p.29).

This statement underscores the enduring legacy of colonialism and neocolonialism on African societies. This statement vividly portrays the persistent impact of historical and present-day forces, hindering the ability to embrace differences and find peace. It serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggle for cultural autonomy and identity in the face of persistent neocolonial influences, linking the themes of the novel to broader discussions of race, identity, and power dynamics in postcolonial contexts.

### **C-The Equal Rights form**

Sandoval argues that the development of a revolutionary form of Oppositionality is necessary for achieving social change and liberation for oppressed groups(Sandoval, 2000). Sandoval discusses four forms among them, the “equal form”, which refers to the idea that the dominant power structures create an idealized form of identity that is based on only external characteristics such as race, gender, sexuality, and culture. According to Sandoval this idealized form of identity emphasized external differences between individuals and groups. As mentioned in her book, the equal rights form insists on a profound resemblance between social, cultural, racial, sexual, or gender identities across their (only) external differences.

The African individuals living in European countries experience various negative impacts as a result of the “racial” and “cultural” identities imposed by the dominant power structures. The

protagonist Sissie experiences a hard experience and a deep sense of surprise and shock due to the challenging circumstances she encounters in Europe and her ultimate goal is to achieve equality (Bouchra, 2021). The equal rights form is an important aspect of achieving social Justice and liberation for oppressed groups. Advocates of this particular ideological tactic assert that their right to have their humanity recognized and validated treating it equally in the eyes of law and striving for integration into the most advantageous expression of human authority (Sandoval, 2000, p75). The concept of human rights being universally applicable is strongly connected to its claim of universality (Weston, 2023). Back to *Our Sister Killjoy*, the protagonist, Sissie, experiences prejudice due to her appearance and cultural background, leading to the denial of education and other opportunities. Furthermore, she must confront the impact of both colonialism and racism on her perspective and understanding of the world.

In Chela Sandoval's book *Methodology of the Oppressed*, it is argued that that "race" is a construct imposed by dominant power structures, existing primarily as an outward characteristic rather than an intrinsic one. Africans living in Western countries face discrimination and inequality solely due to their skin color and racial identity (Poger & Shepherd, 2008). The novel delves into the complex issue of racial discrimination, as Aidoo portrays the reality of Africans living abroad and exposes the harsh realities they face due to racism and discrimination from the Western community. The characters in the novel primarily face challenges of racial discrimination, particularly through the character of Sissie, a female character studying in a colonial capital. Sissie's experiences illustrate how racism impacts individuals in that society and the difficulties they face as a result of discrimination. Therefore, the novel explores racial inequality and the obstacles it presents for individuals like Sissie. In addition, it addresses the issue of unequal treatment experienced by Ghanaians compared to Westerners. In the opening chapter, the author includes a quote that highlights the presence of racism:

*“As the announcement for departure came, Sissie went on a board. She looked at her boarding pass and took the seat indicated on it. It was in the front section of the plane, and by two other seats already occupied by some of the Europeans she later learnt were South Africans. Immediately after they were airborne and instructions had come for them to loosen their belts and feel free to smoke, a neatly coiffured hostess of the airline walked to her. She said, ‘you want to join your two friends at the back, yes?’” (Aidoo, 1977, p10).*

This quote emphasizes that racism emerges from the moment she leaves Ghana and embarks on to her European destination, this statement highlights the continuous manifestation of racism and how it closely linked to the historical process of African decolonization. Moreover, this quote can be relevant to the issue of racism.

*“Suddenly, she realized a woman was telling a young girl who must have been her daughter ‘Ja, das schwartzeMadchen’. From the little German that she has been advised to study for the trip, she knew ‘das schwardzeMadchen’ meant ‘black girl’. She was somewhat puzzled. Black girl! Black girl! So she looked around her, really well this time. And it hit her. That all that crowd of people going and coming in all sorts of directions had the color of the pickled pig parts that used to come from foreign places to the markets at home”.*(Aidoo, 1977, p12).

The previous statement indicates that racism is evident in the behavior of a woman who refers to her daughter as a” black girl”. And engages physically to harm her. Additionally, the women describe different skin tones of people from various geographic areas comparing them to the coloring of a pig. The individual expresses a feeling of wanting to vomit in reaction to the presence of a significant number of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the super market. Additionally, racism becomes evident when Marlyn participates in her teacher training alongside Sissie at the college

during one evening. One of the initial actions by the teacher id to draw Sissie's attention, who was the sole black student among the group, highlighting a clear instance of racial discrimination.

*It happens all the time at first a showpiece at eighteen a darling What shall you be at night? A dog among the*

Additionally, racial discrimination which based on color skin can be seen in the following quote:

*"And he, my Indian, in a Social order that Froze a thousand years gone, would Starve Today Should be open in a private practice anywhere at home" (Aidoo, 1977, p85).*

The Indian doctor maintains that individuals of African descent in foreign locales are typically preoccupied with employment obligations to the Western society, yet ultimately subjected to mistreatment.

Aidoo sheds light on the challenging circumstances faced by black laborers of African descent, particularly in the context of Europe. Through poignant passages such as the following:

*"Black construction workers sweat under the tropical sun, making Ice-skating rinks for The beautiful people...With vacant stares or busy, spitting their lungs out. Just like the good old days before independence" (Aidoo, 1977, p. 56)*

Aidoo vividly portrays the harsh realities experienced by black individuals working in Europe. This passage highlights the tireless efforts of black laborers, who toil under challenging conditions to fulfill their duties. Despite their dedication and hard work, they continue to face systemic inequalities and discrimination, reflecting the enduring legacy of colonialism and its impact on contemporary society.

As previously noted, in the *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Chela Sandoval explores the concept of “equal form”, where dominant power structures construct an idealized form of identity that is largely based on external differences such as culture. According to her, the concept of equality is a tool used by those in power to dominate and manipulate marginalized communities. Due to this these marginalized groups are lacking the ability to recognize and analyze their diversity in social and cultural aspects.

The novel effectively demonstrates how the dominant power structures construct an idealized form of identity. Thus, Africans always face harsh judgment and criticism when it comes to matters concerning their cultural practice (Al-Matari, 2021). Sandoval believes that culture is something that can be seen from the outside. There is significant difference between the African traditional beliefs and western culture. In broad terms, culture encompasses a variety of components such as language, traditions, food, innovations..... and events among numerous other aspects (White, 2001) The clash between African traditional beliefs and Western culture shows the tension between the knowledge and beliefs of people and the ideas brought by the colonial powers. Western education has often made African cultural traditions less important and pushed them to the sidelines (Gyekye, 1966).

In *Our Sister Killjoy* Sissie, the protagonist who has received a scholarship to study in Europe faces challenges in reconciling her African heritage with the Western culture that she experiences while in Europe. She believes that the Africans who left their countries for education and improvement purposes are often disregarded their roots, cultural identity, and heritage. During her journey from Africa to Europe, she observes a significant contrast with her home country. The living conditions of people with African roots surprise her. She is strongly unsatisfied with the current situation that is concerned about the cultural transformation of her fellow Africans, particularly their clothing habits, which she finds unacceptable. As mentioned in the following quote:

*“Above all, what hurt our sister as she stood on the pavements of London and watched her people was how badly dressed they were. They were all poorly clothed”.* (Aidoo, 1977, P.88)

In the given quote, Sissie is seen experiencing discomfort, and is in pain while she observes The African community members on the streets of London, who appear to be poorly dressed and lacking appropriate and proper clothes.

Aidoo employs food as a tool for delineating cultural perspectives within *Our Sister Killjoy*. . Sissie’s journey to Frankfurt exposes her to the cultural disparities evident in her new friend’s garden. This cultural encounter serves as an ideological influence, potentially compelling individuals of African descent to forsake their own cultural norms. Illustrated in the novel, Sissie’s recognition of familiar vegetables amidst foreign fruit trees evokes a nostalgic yearning for home, highlighting the clash between African heritage and Western influence (Aidoo, 1977, p. 178). The meeting of African and Western cultures is further complicated by linguistic domination. Colonial powers, exercising linguistic authority, imposed their languages on indigenous populations, resulting in a fragmentation of African cultural identity. This imposition led to a rupture in the fabric of African culture, causing profound disruptions and challenges for indigenous communities (Memmi, 1991).

The imposition of the colonial language resulted in the suppression and assimilation of indigenous languages and cultures. It served as a mean for the colonizer to exercise control and dominance, perpetuating linguistic and cultural inequality. This has had lasting effects on affected communities, shaping identity and limiting opportunities(Jeyifo, 2004, p112). Cultural differences can also be seen in language, Sissie finds it challenging to use the unfamiliar language of the West as her abilities to comprehend it are limited, and she lacks the appropriate vocabulary to articulate her ideas. Her sense of obligation to speak the language of the oppressor who already marginalized her, has led her to constant limitation of her communication. Her viewpoint is that Africans still under the influence

of Western oppression due to requiring them to communicate in a language that is not native to their culture. As she mentioned in this quote:

*'There you go again, Sissie, you are so serious.' But how can I help being serious? Eh, my love, what positive is there to be, when I cannot give voice to my soul and still have her heard? Since so far, I have only been able to use a language that enslaved me, and therefore, the messengers of my mind always came shackled? <sup>85</sup>(Aidoo, 1977, P.112).*

Ama Ata Aidoo tries to portray the reality that Africans suffer from racial, and cultural discrimination in Europe. Aidoo observed the brutality of whites towards black students, because of their skin color and African identity. Because of the teaching of the colonial discourse, white individuals have come to believe that they are superior. Aidoo's intention in this piece is to illustrate how individuals of color are subjected to discrimination and oppression based on their skin color and cultural background(Simour, 2009)

#### **D-The Revolutionary form**

Revolutionary consciousness as mentioned in Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* is born when people refuse to accept their unfair and oppressive conditions around them and strongly believe that a better world is possible(Davis, 2016). When marginalized communities use revolutionary approaches, they can take back control and challenge the unfair systems that keep them oppressed and unequal(Johnson, 2020). Revolutionary movements arise as a response to the oppression imposed by the ruling class, and through collective action they seek to challenge and overthrow the prevailing power structures(Sandoval, 2000, p54.5).

The novel's exploration of colonialism, specifically the colonization of the mind, and racial discrimination (racism) based on skin color and cultural differences, makes the revolutionary

form of oppositionality which challenges dominant ideologies and institutions present in the novel, as a result we can utilize it accordingly. The characters in the novel are compelled to confront and challenge dominant ideologies, necessitating the development and creation of alternative forms of knowledge and culture to resist oppression.

Ama Ata Aidoo uses the character of Sissie in *Our Sister Killjoy* as a tool to challenge dominant power structures and initiate a revolutionary movement aimed at achieving change. Upon Sissie's arrival in Europe, she is shocked to discover that many Africans still experience racial discrimination based on their physical appearance, particularly their skin color. For example, Sissie herself faces discrimination because of her skin tone, which leaves her feeling unwelcome and devalued by the white community. Her response to this racism can be seen as a revolutionary act, one that seeks to combat oppression in various ways. Sissie becomes actively involved in what can be interpreted as a form of activism, working to fight the oppressive systems of power that target her and her community. Through shared understanding and collaboration with others who are similarly subjugated, Sissie embodies a form of oppositional consciousness.

Marija, a European woman whom Sissie befriends during her travels, plays a key role in the novel by offering a contrasting perspective to Sissie's own. A married woman with a child, Marija is initially portrayed as a companion who accompanies Sissie through Europe. However, beneath this friendship, Marija's presence reveals much about the subtle workings of racism and cultural superiority. Aidoo uses Marija to exemplify the ingrained racial biases of white Europeans, particularly those who, like Marija, view non-European races as inferior. While Marija provides Sissie with insights into European culture, her perspective often reflects a deeply embedded belief in white supremacy and cultural dominance. This can be seen in Marija's casual dismissal of non-European peoples and her

adherence to stereotypical notions of race, which Aidoo uses to critique the pervasive cultural racism present in Western society.

Marija's interactions with Sissie offer a profound exploration of whiteness and privilege. Although outwardly friendly, Marija embodies a form of racial superiority that is revealed through subtle remarks and assumptions. For instance, her lack of curiosity about Sissie's African heritage and her failure to truly engage with Sissie's cultural identity highlight a deeper cultural ignorance. While Marija may not display overt hostility, her worldview reinforces the idea of non-European inferiority. Aidoo's portrayal of Marija illustrates how, even in seemingly benign relationships, racial hierarchies and colonial legacies continue to operate. Marija's character thus becomes a foil to Sissie, whose growing disillusionment with European society leads her to reject the values and norms that Marija represents.

Aidoo wants to rebel against the mistreatment of black people, and she aims to shed light on the negatives of white communities. She expresses disapproval towards the way westerners eat and their food habits, which differ from what she grew up with in Ghana. She comments: "*Sissie would always puzzle it over, cold food*" (Aidoo, 1977, p68). She finds it puzzling that people eat cold food. It's strange to her that they don't bother to warm up cooked food that has gone cold, but it's even stranger to her that they purposefully cool their food before eating it. Ultimately, she believes it is related to white people's appearance and the cold climate they live in.

Additionally, through her actions, she intends to create a sense of inferiority in the minds of white individuals and challenges the stereotypes that depicts individuals of African descent as uncivilized and uncultured. Aidoo actually reverses the order of the superior and-inferior system.

In another moment, she proudly expresses her black pride, denouncing her distaste for white skin color, traditions, and beliefs. However, Marija's own skin seemed to fluctuate like a two-color neon sign, shifting in accordance with her emotions. Observing this, Sissie couldn't help but ponder the implications of being white. It appeared to render one awfully exposed and vulnerable, akin to being born without protective skin. This metaphorical interpretation of whiteness as a precarious state reflects Sissie's contemplation on the complexities of racial identity and societal perceptions (Aidoo, 1977, p. 76).

In addition, Aidoo boosts Sissie's feeling of superiority through providing her with a more advanced education and granting her a higher social status. Marija a non-native English speaker who is no proficient in the language, may feel inferior with communicating with fluent English speakers. Less knowledgeable and educated in comparison to Sissie, implying a lower status or level of intelligence. Aidoo aims to convey to the reader the perspective that individuals of white ethnicity possess. Black people may have a higher education. Marija provides a great illustration when she catalogues, she referred to her dinner as "flash" instead of using the commonly known as "meat".

In conclusion, Chapter One has explored the themes of oppositional consciousness and various forms of resistance in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*. By examining the revolutionary and equal rights forms of resistance articulated in the novel, we have uncovered how the characters, particularly Sissie, challenge and subvert the oppressive structures imposed by colonial and postcolonial regimes. This analysis has highlighted the ways in which Aidoo's narrative fosters a revolutionary consciousness among its characters, advocating for social change and liberation from systemic injustices. The exploration of these themes underscores the novel's role in promoting a radical rethinking of power dynamics and the pursuit of equality, laying a critical foundation for further examination of complex identity negotiations in the subsequent chapter.

## Chapter two: Emancipation, Differential Consciousness in *Our Sister Killjoy*

### A- Differential Consciousness

The study of the racial issue in the previous section revealed that the African migrants in Europe in the novel of *Our Sister Killjoy* by Ama Ata Aidoo were being marginalized and treated unequally by the westerners. It revealed as well that this treatment is due to their race and origin. Our focus in this following chapter is on the exploration of feminine emancipation and critiques of the gender structures. Aidoo's work explicitly fights against the axis of oppressive social constructions of gender and their consequences on women. She blames colonialism for importing a "fully developed sexist system, which has been adapted, maintained and exacerbated as it has been integrated into different aspects of African culture".(Aidoo, 1987). The novel delves into the experiences of women, particularly women of color, and addresses the societal expectations, limitations, and challenges they face. Sandoval emphasizes the importance of "Differential Consciousness", which refers to a particular mode of thinking and perceiving the world that arises from the experiences of marginalized individuals such as woman, the concept has an aim of challenging the dominant systems(Sandoval, 2000, 146.7). The female character "Sissie" in *Our Sister Killjoy* exhibit a differential consciousness, as discussed by Sandoval. She navigates and resists gender inequality. "Sissie" of *Our Sister Killjoy* asserts her agency, challenging traditional norms and subvert by oppressive expectations.(Sandoval, 2000)

The protagonist possesses a multifaceted personality shaped by her experiences and quest for self-discovery. Sissie is curious and adventurous, she exhibits a sense of curiosity and a thirst for adventure. She embarks on a journey to Europe, seeking new experiences and perspectives. Her curiosity drives her to question societal norms, cultural expectations, and the limitations placed upon women. She resists conforming to traditional gender roles and challenges the expectations placed upon her as a woman. Sissie's nonconformist nature can be reflected in her choices and actions throughout

the novel. She chooses to travel alone to pursue her education, challenging the traditional African norms, that a woman has to stay home to raise her children.

Aidoo made Sissie as an intellectually engaged and introspective character. She reflects upon her experiences, engages in critical thinking, and questions the world around her. This intellectual engagement gives her the ability to explore personal and societal issues, including gender inequality. Sissie demonstrates a heightened consciousness of her gendered experiences and the power dynamics at play. Her strong personality possesses a keen sense of observation and empathy. She closely observes people and cultures she encounters, seeking to understand their experiences and perspectives. For instance, Aidoo in the entitled chapter “The Plums”(Aidoo, 1977, p17): sheds light on Sissie’s encounter with the German woman named Marija, whose husband is almost never home, Marija has one child but she is happy that he is a boy not a girl. Her empathetic nature allows her to connect with others and recognize the complexities of their lives.

The novel shows the way in which Sissie demonstrates resilience in the face of adversity. She encounters various challenges, including gender based discrimination. Despite the obstacles, Sissie remains resilient and determined in her pursuit of personal growth and liberation, she challenges oppressive structures and seeks agency within the circumstances. Sissie’s personality evolves and develops over the course of the novel as she encounters new experiences and confronts societal expectations. Her multifaceted personality allows the readers to witness her journey of self-discovery and her resistance against oppressive structures.

### **B- The Differential Mode of Consciousness in Opposition**

Under the auspices of Sandoval’s *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Aidoo is a practitioner of the “Differential mode of Consciousness in Opposition” because she is able to investigate “the current

situation of power”(Sandoval, 2000, pt II), and self-consciously chooses and adopts an ideological position that aligns with her own convictions. Aidoo speaks “to and against power”(Sandoval, 2000, pt III) by challenging the European dominant narratives and point of views related to Africans in a way, and the narratives related to the African women in specific, or women from all over the world in general. She believes in a distinct African identity, which she sees from a female perspective(African Success, 2009). Aidoo in her novel manages to give voices to the African immigrants that were being humiliated in Europe and seen as different from them, the Europeans. Aidoo, in her narrative, gives the reader an opportunity to understand better the real version of the story captured by the eyes of our protagonist.

Aidoo reveals the injustices that were perpetrated against innocent African immigrants, whose countries have suffered from colonialism for a long time and continue to live in harsh conditions even after independence. Moreover, Aidoo empowers her text without being a conventional narrative or biography, she uses the framework of an account of a state-sponsored visit to Germany by a young Ghanaian woman (‘the Sister ‘of the title, usually addressed as ‘Sissie’), to analyze what Europe is and does to those Africans whom it ‘sponsors’ and ‘educates’(Gagiano). The prose portions of *Our Sister Killjoy* are given from a limited third-person. Through this perspective, the reader gets to see some of Sissie’s thoughts and impressions about the world around her, without entering fully into her consciousness. Aidoo focuses on the emotions of the protagonist, by doing this, she gives the reader the ability to be inside the character’s thoughts, feelings, and sensations which allows the reader get deeper into the character’s experiences and scenes. She allows the reader to see through the eyes of Sissie, as it is mentioned in the novel’s title *Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint*.

In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Aidoo skillfully depicts the European perspective, one that seeks the assimilation of African immigrants into the mainstream European culture. Throughout her narrative,

Aidoo masterfully unveils the prevailing tendency in western societies to ostracize individuals who exhibit distinct appearances and behaviors. She provides vivid illustrations of the exclusion African immigrants face at the hands of Europeans, primarily due to their diverse backgrounds and origins. Indeed, African lifestyles inherently differ from those in Europe. However, it's imperative to view this disparity as a detriment but as an enriching factor, for it lends a unique character to each nation's cultural tapestry. Aidoo's narrative encourages a critical reflection on the value of diversity and the consequences of imposing a singular, homogenous social order.

The African individuals whom Sissie encounters in *Our Sister Killjoy*, during her journey often strive to assimilate with the Europeans, adopting their customs and behaviors in a bid for acceptance. Many among them have forsaken their national identities, gradually distancing themselves from their cultural roots. Yet, despite the profound sacrifices made to mirror European ways, these Africans continue to be regarded as outsiders, forever denied the privileges enjoyed by their white counterparts. Sissie herself, as an African woman, experiences the harsh gaze of societal disdain.(Saad, 2020) The persistent exclusion and rejection they face in European society coerce them into conformity with European norms, paradoxically, even in their efforts to conform, they remain objects of scorn and perpetual exclusion.

### **C- Deconstruction**

Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* stands as a powerful critique of both gender norms and colonial legacies, using deconstruction as a central method for challenging dominant ideologies. Deconstruction, as introduced by Jacques Derrida and later discussed by feminist theorists like Chela Sandoval, involves exposing the instability of language, structures, and meanings that have long been regarded as natural or universal (Sandoval, 2000, pt III). This method becomes especially useful in exploring how Aidoo unravels the complexities surrounding gender and colonialism. By examining

how fixed categories—male and female, colonizer and colonized—are constructed and reinforced in society, Aïdoò critiques and disrupts these rigid binaries, suggesting more fluid, nuanced ways of understanding identity.

Aïdoò's deconstruction of gender norms is particularly significant within the postcolonial context, as African women have historically been positioned as both victims of colonial subjugation and patriarchal structures. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, the protagonist, Sissie, emerges as an empowered African woman who refuses to conform to the traditional gender roles assigned to her. She defies the stereotype of the passive, subservient African woman, challenging the narrative that has historically oppressed and silenced African female voices. In one passage, Aïdoò juxtaposes Sissie's strength with the "heroine's man", the unnamed male character represents the complexities of male privilege and societal expectations, serving as both a potential ally and a reflection of the patriarchal structures that Sissie, the protagonist, seeks to challenge. His interactions with her highlight the tensions between gender dynamics and the quest for female empowerment in a post-colonial context. He suggests that "*the woman knows her position*" (Aïdoò, 1977, p. 177). This quote reflects the deeply ingrained patriarchal ideology that expects women to adhere to strict gender roles. However, Sissie's complex character defies these expectations by actively engaging with, and often rejecting, these fixed roles.

Furthermore, Aïdoò critiques the colonial discourse that sought to construct African women as either primitive or in need of "civilizing." Sissie, who is well-educated and politically conscious, stands in stark contrast to the colonial caricature of African women. In one powerful passage, she metaphorically compares African women to the dolls of European colonizers who "*fainted at the sight of their own bleeding fingers*" (Aïdoò, 1977, p. 177). This image critiques not only the infantilization of African women under colonial rule but also the hypocrisy of European ideals of femininity, which were imposed on African societies as symbols of supposed "progress" and "civilization." Aïdoò uses

Sissie's voice to critique both the colonial and traditional expectations placed on African women, deconstructing the layers of oppression that have shaped gender relations both during and after colonial rule.

Aidoo's exploration of gender norms intersects with her critique of colonialism, as the subjugation of African women is often tied to the broader colonial project. By portraying Sissie as a figure who navigates both African and European spaces with a critical consciousness, Aidoo suggests that liberation from colonialism also requires a liberation from patriarchal structures. Sissie's refusal to marry or adhere to conventional domestic roles, such as motherhood, signals her rejection of both European and African gender expectations. In one telling scene, Sissie reflects on the expectations placed on her as an African woman, noting that "*they say that any female in my position would have thrown away everything to be with you: first her opinions, and then her own plans*" (Aidoo, 1977, p. 117). Here, Aidoo highlights the tension between individual autonomy and societal pressures, suggesting that true liberation can only come from rejecting the constraints placed on women by both colonial and traditional patriarchal systems.

Through her portrayal of Sissie, Aidoo effectively deconstructs the power dynamics that shape gender relations within postcolonial societies. Sissie's complex character serves as a critique of both colonial and patriarchal ideologies, as she embodies a new vision of African womanhood that resists easy categorization. In doing so, Aidoo not only challenges traditional gender binaries but also offers a more fluid, inclusive vision of identity that allows for the possibility of resistance and empowerment.

This deconstruction of gender norms is closely tied to Aidoo's broader critique of colonialism. Just as Sissie rejects the limitations placed on her by patriarchal society, she also challenges the colonial discourse that positions Africa as inferior to Europe. In one instance, Sissie reflects on the absurdity of Europeans viewing Africans as primitive, despite the brutal history of colonial

exploitation. She notes the irony of Europeans claiming to be “civilized” while engaging in violence and oppression, suggesting that the entire colonial project is built on a foundation of hypocrisy and exploitation.

#### **D- Otherness**

In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Ama Ata Aidoo explores themes of exclusion and “otherness,” particularly through Sissie’s experience of exile. Upon arriving in Germany, Sissie is initially excited to learn and experience new things. However, her optimism soon fades, as she becomes disillusioned with the societal and racial prejudices she encounters. This realization leads her to long for her motherland, prompting her to urge her fellow African exiles to return home. Despite their shared ethnicity, Sissie finds herself different from the other exiles in key ways. As a woman traveling alone, which was uncommon at the time, and as someone critical of her peers’ romanticized view of Europe, she is positioned as an outsider.

Sissie observes that Europeans will never fully accept African immigrants, noting, “*Someone somewhere would always see in any kind of difference, an excuse to be mean*” (Aidoo, 1977, p. 13). This understanding sets her apart from her cousin Kunle, who has spent years in London and now views Africa as inferior, only to meet a tragic end. Additionally, Sissie’s symbolic act of gathering fruits like plums and apricots for her colleagues contrasts with their inability to connect with the land, highlighting her difference from them.

Sissie also challenges traditional expectations for African women. Rather than settling into domestic roles, she becomes more concerned with the political and social problems of Africa. Her criticism of her fellow exiles, including her intimate friend, reflects her growing frustration:

*“They say that any female in my position would have thrown away everything to be with you: first her opinions, and then her own plans. But oh deliciously naïve me. What did I rather do but daily and loudly criticize you and your friends for wanting to stay forever in alien places?”* (Aidoo, 1977, p. 117).

As a liberated woman with a strong sense of political and cultural consciousness, Sissie is excluded not only by European society but also by her fellow Africans, who fail to share her sense of responsibility toward their homeland. Her rejection of both European and African expectations positions her as an “other” in every sense, making her journey one of both personal and political alienation.

Aidoo also explores “otherness” through Sissie’s relationship with Marija Sommer, a German woman who befriends Sissie during her stay in Germany. Marija, a lonely housewife, gives Sissie gifts and grows emotionally attached to her, eventually expressing romantic feelings. However, Sissie rejects Marija, confused by her advances. Their relationship serves as a reflection of the complexities of cross-cultural interactions, where loneliness, affection, and desire collide with cultural and racial differences. This dynamic underscores how, despite potential connections, fundamental differences in identity and experience can still create distance.

In both cases—Sissie’s alienation from her fellow exiles and her relationship with Marija—Aidoo explores how “otherness” manifests not only between races and cultures but also within the same community

## **E- Deconstructing Colonial and Gender Narratives through Semiotics**

In Barthes' semiotic theory, a sign is composed of two parts: the signifier (the form that the sign takes, such as a word, image, or symbol) and the signified (the concept or meaning that the signifier represents). One of Barthes' major contributions was to show how these signs are arbitrary, yet culturally encoded, to uphold certain ideologies.

In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Ama Ata Aidoo uses various signs to challenge and deconstruct the colonial narratives that have traditionally portrayed Africa and Africans as inferior. For example, Europe itself functions as a powerful sign in the colonial narrative, often signified as the center of civilization, progress, and modernity. This is evident when Sissie initially feels excited to visit Europe, expecting to learn and experience new things. However, through her journey, Aidoo deconstructs this dominant sign by showing the disillusionment, alienation, and racism that Sissie encounters in Europe. The "Europe" that was supposed to signify progress and opportunity is instead revealed to be a space of exclusion and oppression for Africans.

In this way, Aidoo deconstructs the signifier of "Europe" by exposing the ideological nature of the signified meaning that it represents in colonial discourse. Barthes' concept of myth is particularly useful here. A myth, according to Barthes, is a second-order semiological system, where cultural meanings are layered onto ordinary signs to naturalize certain ideologies. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, the myth of European superiority is dismantled as Aidoo reveals the lived reality of African immigrants and challenges the notion that assimilation into European society is desirable.

Barthes' semiotics can also be used to deconstruct the dominant signs associated with gender and race in colonial and postcolonial contexts. In the colonial imagination, the "African woman" has often been represented as submissive, dependent, and rooted in traditional roles. This image serves as a signifier for colonial discourse, signifying the stereotype of African women as primitive and uncivilized compared to European women

Aidoo deconstructs this sign by presenting Sissie as a strong, independent woman who rejects the patriarchal and colonial expectations placed upon her. Sissie's decision to travel alone, without a male companion, challenges the signifier of the "African woman" as subservient. Instead, Aidoo offers a counter-narrative that positions Sissie as an empowered figure who defies traditional gender roles

Furthermore, Sissie's rejection of marriage and motherhood as the ultimate goals for women deconstructs the sign of "womanhood" itself. Rather than conforming to societal expectations that define women by their relationship to men, Sissie embraces her independence and autonomy. Aidoo's portrayal of Sissie aligns with Barthes' idea that signs can be deconstructed to reveal the arbitrary nature of the meanings attached to them.

Barthes' semiotic theory can also be applied to the way Aidoo uses cultural symbols in *Our Sister Killjoy* to deconstruct dominant narratives. The traditional African foods that Sissie shares with her friends, for example, function as cultural symbols that signify her connection to her homeland. These foods, such as plums and traditional dishes, carry signified meanings related to identity, community, and cultural roots.

In contrast, the European meals that Sissie is offered during her stay in Germany symbolize assimilation and the erasure of cultural identity. Aidoo deconstructs the binary opposition between traditional African culture and European modernity by showing how food, as a cultural sign, can signify resistance or submission depending on the context. Through Sissie's decision to reject European norms and embrace her African heritage, Aidoo reveals the ways in which cultural symbols can be repurposed to resist colonial domination.

Language, a key aspect of Barthes' semiotics, also plays an important role in the deconstruction of dominant narratives in *Our Sister Killjoy*. In the novel, language functions as a

signifier of power and colonial dominance, with European languages (English, German) being associated with authority, education, and civilization. The colonial legacy elevates European languages as superior to African languages, reducing the latter to the status of the “Other.”

Through Sissie’s rejection of colonial languages and her embrace of her native language, Aidoo deconstructs this linguistic hierarchy. Sissie’s linguistic journey mirrors Barthes’ idea of deconstructing dominant signs by showing that language is not a neutral tool of communication, but a site of cultural and political power. By reclaiming her African language, Sissie resists the colonial imposition of language and asserts her cultural identity. Additionally, the moments of code-switching and multilingualism in the novel highlight the fluidity of language as a signifier. Just as Barthes argues that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, Aidoo shows that the meanings attached to language are not fixed. African languages, once signified as inferior by colonial discourse, are reclaimed as symbols of resistance and emancipation.

Barthes’ semiotics provides an invaluable framework for analyzing the deconstructive elements in Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy*. By examining how signs and symbols function within the novel, we can uncover how Aidoo challenges and deconstructs dominant colonial, racial, and gender narratives. Through Sissie’s journey, Aidoo dismantles the myths of European superiority, the exotic Other, and the subservient African woman, offering a complex and nuanced portrayal of identity, resistance, and cultural reclamation. Barthes’ semiotic tools help us to see how these signs are arbitrary, constructed, and ultimately open to reinterpretation, thus providing a deeper understanding of the novel’s deconstructive power.

## **F-Language of Emancipation**

The concept of the “language of emancipation” in Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy* encapsulates the transformative power of language in resisting oppressive systems and asserting agency. It involves using linguistic strategies to dismantle oppressive discourses and empower marginalized groups. In social and political theory, this idea is closely tied to movements that address inequality, injustice, and marginalization, underscoring the critical role language plays in shaping social realities. By reclaiming language and using it as a tool for resistance, marginalized individuals and communities can promote liberation, social justice, and equality.

Within the narrative of *Our Sister Killjoy*, language functions as both a mechanism of oppression and a vehicle for resistance. Aidoo portrays this dual nature to highlight the complexities of communication, identity, and power dynamics in a postcolonial world. The protagonist, Sissie, embodies this tension through her evolving relationship with language, which mirrors her broader quest for freedom from colonial domination. Initially, Sissie’s use of the colonial language reflects her subjugation within a system that marginalizes African identities. However, as she progressively reconnects with her native tongue, this linguistic shift becomes a symbolic rejection of colonial authority and an assertion of cultural autonomy. This transformation underscores the crucial role language plays in the formation and liberation of postcolonial identities.

Moreover, Aidoo employs code-switching and multilingualism among characters to underscore the intricate relationship between language and identity in the postcolonial context. These linguistic strategies serve not only as modes of communication but also as acts of resistance that challenge essentialist and monolithic views of language and culture. Through these nuances, Aidoo demonstrates that identity is not static but fluid and dynamic, shaped by historical and socio-political forces. By

embracing linguistic plurality, characters transcend rigid colonial frameworks, affirming their hybrid identities and reconnecting with their cultural heritage.

Aidoo also critiques the dominance of English, using her narrative to elevate the significance of indigenous languages like Akan. By integrating African languages into the text, she disrupts the colonial legacy that prioritizes European languages and downplays African linguistic traditions. This act of linguistic reclamation challenges the long-standing association of English with power and progress, while African languages were relegated to the margins. In celebrating the richness of indigenous languages, Aidoo empowers her characters to resist cultural erasure and affirm their African identities. This linguistic resistance, therefore, becomes an act of defiance against colonial attempts to suppress local cultures.

Additionally, the novel's focus on intersectionality enriches the concept of the "language of emancipation." Sissie's experiences are shaped by the intersecting oppressions of race, gender, class, and culture, emphasizing that true liberation cannot be achieved without considering the complex interplay of these factors. This theme resonates with Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*, which advocates for a nuanced understanding of liberation through differential consciousness. Sandoval argues that the oppressed must be able to navigate multiple identity categories to challenge systems of domination effectively. In *Our Sister Killjoy*, Sissie's awareness of these intersecting oppressions enables her to develop a critical consciousness that rejects the binaries imposed by colonial and patriarchal systems. Her journey thus becomes not just one of personal growth but a powerful critique of how colonialism and patriarchy work in tandem to oppress African women.

Sissie's narrative is also one of cultural reclamation, a journey where she rediscovers her African roots and resists the cultural erasure caused by colonization and Westernization. This process is depicted as both an act of empowerment and resistance, as she reclaims her African heritage in defiance

of Western cultural domination. Her journey from cultural dislocation to reclamation is emblematic of a broader struggle faced by many in the postcolonial world, where the remnants of colonial power structures continue to shape identity. This reconnection with African roots is essential not only for Sissie's personal emancipation but also for the broader assertion of cultural sovereignty in the face of Western hegemony. Through Sissie's narrative, Aidoo highlights the enduring legacy of colonialism and the importance of reclaiming African traditions, values, and languages as integral to the process of emancipation.

In *Our Sister Killjoy*, feminist discourses also function as a critical "language of emancipation." Aidoo uses assertive and bold language to challenge entrenched gender roles, advocating for women's rights and independence. The novel emphasizes the importance of women's voices in shaping their destinies. Sissie's reflections and dialogues reveal her inner struggles and aspirations, underscoring the need for women to articulate their experiences and assert their desires. Her journey away from traditional roles and expectations symbolizes a broader rejection of societal limitations imposed on women. Sissie embodies a modern feminist perspective, seeking fulfillment and autonomy beyond the roles assigned to her by both African and Western societies. Aidoo crafts a feminist narrative that advocates for self-definition and liberation, urging women to resist patriarchal constructs and carve out spaces for their voices to be heard.

The novel's critique of Western ideals serves as a powerful language of emancipation. Aidoo interrogates the pervasive influence of colonial systems, particularly in how they shape identity and cultural dislocation. Sissie's disillusionment with Western ideals reflects her growing recognition of their detrimental impact on her African identity. While abroad, she encounters Western ideologies that undermine her sense of self, positioning her in opposition to both the Western world and its colonial legacies. Aidoo highlights the complexities of this confrontation, revealing how Western narratives

often perpetuate stereotypes and cultural alienation. Sissie's rejection of these Western frameworks represents a broader call for Africans to reclaim their narratives and embrace their cultural values. By resisting Western notions of progress and superiority, Aidoo advocates for a more self-determined African identity, grounded in indigenous knowledge and traditions. This act of reclamation is not merely a rejection of Western values but a profound step toward empowerment, enabling individuals like Sissie to redefine their place in a postcolonial world.

In conclusion, Chapter Two has delved into the intricate concepts of differential consciousness, deconstruction, otherness, and the language of emancipation as depicted in *Our Sister Killjoy*. Through the lens of differential consciousness, we have explored how Sissie navigates multiple intersecting identities and oppressions, employing deconstructive strategies to challenge and redefine traditional gender and cultural norms. The theme of otherness was examined to reveal how Aidoo addresses identity and belonging in a postcolonial context. Furthermore, the exploration of the language of emancipation demonstrated how linguistic strategies are employed to resist colonial oppression and reclaim cultural identities. This chapter has deepened our understanding of the complex relationship between identity, resistance, and cultural transformation in Aidoo's work, paving the way for a broader analysis of these themes within the context of postcolonial literature in the final chapters.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this research, we have navigated the intricate landscape of postcolonial literature, shedding light on the complexities of identity, resistance, and the fluidity of subjectivity. Our central focus was the examination of how Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* challenges established gender roles, questions normative ideas of identity, and explores the experiences of marginalized voices within a postcolonial context.

To address this complex issue, we utilized Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*, which provided a theoretical framework for critically analyzing the narrative. Sandoval's emphasis on deconstruction and the multiplicity of subjectivity allowed us to challenge essentialist notions of identity and delve into the intricacies of resistance, emancipation, and the deconstruction of dominant narratives.

Throughout this study, we embarked on a multifaceted journey. In the first chapter, we explored oppositional consciousness and forms of resistance, revealing how characters within *Our Sister Killjoy* confront oppressive structures. Chapter two extended our inquiry to include themes of emancipation, differential consciousness, deconstruction, and a nuanced examination of otherness within the narrative. Our analysis demonstrated the novel's capacity to engage with complex issues of identity, agency, and social critique.

We delved into the multifaceted dimensions of oppression, showcasing various ways in which characters navigate and resist oppressive structures. Additionally, we examined the intricate landscape of gender issues, highlighting the fluidity of identity and its resistance to normative constraints. This research has also provided valuable insights into broader social issues that permeate

postcolonial literature. Themes of racism, language, and emancipation have been scrutinized, offering a comprehensive view of how the characters' experiences mirror the complexities of postcolonial societies.

As we conclude this study, it is evident that the narrative is a rich tapestry of themes, with much uncharted territory remaining. Future researchers are encouraged to delve into the nuanced complexities of narrative perspective and voice, exploring how they shape our understanding of the characters and their world. Furthermore, a deeper examination of reader reception and cultural context promises to unveil how this work resonates across diverse audiences and temporal contexts. The narrative form and structure also present fertile ground for analysis, providing insights into Ama Ata Aidoo's storytelling prowess. These themes, in synergy with the central issues of identity, oppression, and resistance, invite ongoing scholarly inquiry, ensuring that *Our Sister Killjoy* maintains its place at the forefront of postcolonial literary exploration.

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