

Intrepid of Black Signoras in and A Threecord Cord

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Abstract

South African literature is written either in African languages or in English. South Africa was colonized by many European countries from 1652 to 1961. The Dutch East India Company established its settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, which marked the beginning of European colonization in South Africa. Since South Africa is located in a coastal region, many European powers initially captured Cape Town to control the entire country.

This paper portrays the courage of Black women as depicted in Alex La Guma's novel *And a Threecord Cord*. In South African society, men and women often questioned women's bravery and mettle. Through this study, the researcher highlights the courage, resilience, and determination of Black women and demonstrates how they exhibit clarity of vision, strength, and moral courage within the family. These women answer societal doubts and prove their mettle through their actions.

The researcher adopts a qualitative research methodology to establish feminine valour. While men traditionally display courage to assert their strength, Black women equally demonstrate courage and resilience. Moreover, they analyze situations critically and reveal their bravery in protecting their families. The purpose of this paper is to show that women possess all the capabilities required to guide and protect their families just as men do. Carl Jung's theory of Animus is applied to explore the inner masculine psyche present within the feminine consciousness.

Keywords: Cowardly, Brave, Animus, Feminine, Valiant, Mettle

1. Introduction

Alex La Guma was born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa. After completing his school education, he actively participated in the Anti-Apartheid movement and voiced the struggle for Black freedom, continuing the legacy of his parents. In 1947, he joined the Young Communist League and worked as a journalist for the newspaper *New Age*, where he exposed the injustices of the apartheid regime through his writings.

The apartheid government banned both La Guma and his works in South Africa, forcing him into exile in England in 1966. His major works include *A Walk in the Night*, *And a Threefold Cord*, *The Stone Country*, *In the Fog of the Season's End*, and *Time of the Butcherbird*. He received the Lotus Prize for Literature in 1969. *And a Threefold Cord* is set in a ghetto and portrays oppression, apartheid, poverty, and the courage of Black women. The novel depicts the struggles of Mr. Paul's family to meet basic needs due to the apartheid policies imposed by the White government. Although some mixed-race individuals and government workers offer limited support, the family continues to suffer.

Mrs. Paul courageously faces adversity after her husband becomes bedridden. Her son Charlie neglects his responsibilities and spends his time drinking with his uncle. Realizing the severity of the situation, Mrs. Paul strengthens herself mentally and emotionally, adopting traditionally masculine roles to protect her family from the oppressive apartheid system. Similarly, Freda transforms her inner strength to protect herself and her children after her husband's death.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, specifically **textual analysis**. The researcher does not employ interviews, questionnaires, surveys, or case studies. Carl Jung's *Animus* theory is applied to analyze the feminine psyche. According to Jung, the *animus* represents masculine traits within a woman's personality. Florencia Sandra Marceline defines *animus* as "the masculine qualities or traits in the female psyche, in opposition to her outer appearance," contrasting it with *anima*, which refers to the feminine psyche within a man.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

South African Women's Courage

In traditional South African culture, Black men are often regarded as authority figures, financial providers, decision-makers, and protectors of the family. Monica Vilhauer notes that courage has historically been attributed to male warriors

and heroes. Black women, on the other hand, are expected to perform domestic duties and childcare.

However, when men are physically or emotionally unable to fulfill their responsibilities, Black women rise to the occasion. Despite systemic oppression caused by apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act and Pass Laws, women demonstrate extraordinary courage and resilience. These policies restricted Black people's movement, employment, housing, and wages, leading to severe socio-economic hardships.

Freda exemplifies courage by obtaining a pass to work in a White household after her husband's death, prioritizing her children's survival over fear of racial discrimination. Similarly, Ma Paul assumes both maternal and paternal roles when her husband becomes bedridden and her son neglects his duties. She ventures out in heavy rain to collect herbs for her husband's treatment and confronts the police to protect her pregnant daughter, revealing her inner masculinity and defiance against racial injustice.

Both Ma Paul and Freda psychologically transform themselves, adopting masculine traits to support and protect their families under apartheid oppression.

4. Conclusion

Alex La Guma powerfully portrays the intrepidity of Black women through the characters of Ma Paul and Freda. These women seize critical moments to reveal their courage, resilience, and animus, challenging both patriarchal norms and racial oppression. When men fail to fulfill their responsibilities, women emerge as protectors, providers, and leaders.

This study finds that Black women undergo a psychosomatic transformation, assuming masculine roles and confronting apartheid brutality to safeguard their families. La Guma's narrative ultimately asserts that women possess the strength, courage, and capability necessary to lead and protect families during times of crisis.

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