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Journal of Gender and Power is aimed at providing an international forum for discussing various issues and processes of gender construction. It is a scholarly, interdisciplinary journal, which features articles in all fields of gender studies, drawing on various paradigms and approaches. We invite scholars to submit articles and reviews reporting on theoretical considerations and empirical research.

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Editor's Preface

We are often oblivious of the extent to which we think through and live by metaphors. These metaphors, if present in our lives since the childhood, frequently become the core of our identity. They become us, and vice versa, we become them. Even if in the future the various biography paths we tread on reconstruct them, the metaphors still constitute most important reference points which frame our thinking and doing.

A similar line of thinking applies to femininities and masculinities. In this case, metaphors constitute the crystallisation of diverse sociocultural dogmas and anxieties, archetypes and hopes. These metaphors also form an inherent part of socialisation into femininities and masculinities, the basis of pedagogical practices which shape identities. And even though we are frequently unaware of the power of metaphors, they mould our feminine and masculine identities, at the same time being the source of strength or complexes—if, for instance, they are related to what we accept as ideals of femininity and masculinity. Here, of crucial importance is sensing the distance between who we are and who we would like to be in the context of these metaphorical crystallisations.

Fables and fairy tales are sources of powerful cultural metaphors which influence identities, even if this is only assumed or covert. A case in point is the figure of Little Red Riding Hood who is the source of an infinite number of interpretations and the struggle for the meaning of femininity. However, the cover of the present issue of JGP features a peculiar metaphor of the Cinderella metaphor. Here, a contemporary woman loses her beautiful slipper on the stairs while fleeing the (perhaps) royal ball. Looking at her, we still perceive a classic Cinderella. Even today the Cinderella metaphor can be applied to the discussion concerning the situation of women. In a broader context, we can place her in a lottery-like conception of success, which is gained through a stroke of luck in an almost immediate fashion—almost like the victory

of a talented yet underappreciated America Got Talent (female) singer—which contrasts with the idea of a self-made man.

Worth mentioning is also the Cinderella complex defined as women's fear of independence, one who is willing to submit herself to a strong man in control of her life. More radical versions of this interpretation reference feminist theories in which Cinderella is criticised for her readiness to subservient behaviour and the focus on appearance (beauty and youth), as well as setting her goals around finding the right partner.

It seems that most emancipated women—in their thinking and behaviour—have do not see the Cinderella metaphor as underpinning their identity. They do not seek success and happiness through sheer coincidence, they take their lives into their own hands and are active agents in choosing their partners, it does not happen thanks to a lost glass slipper. These women of strong personalities, sometimes powerful and fully aware of the determinants of their lives, seem to break up with the Cinderella myth. However, few of us would deny the fact that there are women who still are on the lookout for their Prince Charming, and permanently adrift, they lose something in the hope that the wonderful prince will find them through the lost object. One way or another, subsequent reconstructions and deconstructions of Cinderella, subsequent new versions of this fairy tale—in the form of a book, film, theatrical play or used in advertising—will testify to the fact that the Cinderella myth is still alive.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
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ARTICLES

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Aggression from a gender perspective and the development of a moral compass

ABSTRACT. It is often claimed that the world in which we live is full of cruelty, ruthlessness and violence. Media reports on violence among students often paint a bleak picture of teachers and the school environment struggling to cope with manifestations of aggression among young people. We questioned whether the absence of the internalisation of moral norms or as this paper will refer to a it a 'moral compass'. Numerous studies confirm associations between aggression and moral disengagement (Arsenio et al., 2006; Tisak, Tisak & Goldstein, 2006; Paciello et al. 2008; Krettenauer et at., 2008) and these media reports and research confirm that aggression is not just the domain of men (Krahe, 2005; Card et al., 2008; Bjorkqvist, 2017). Is there a difference between genders? Throughout the ages, there have been debates about gender differences in morality from Aristotle to Aquinas to Freud, but the study of female aggression as a phenomenon has only relatively recently begun to receive due attention (Bjorkqvist, 1994, p. 180). It should be noted that social patterns predispose women to the role of victims, while men act as perpetrators of violence.

KEYWORDS: aggression, gender, development, morality

Introduction (News story)

Such a news story, which reported on an incident at the school in Poland recently (2017), prompted me to examine and reflect on this topic. In the incident*, two **girls** beat their schoolmate in front of other students outside the school building—interestingly, none of the students watching intervened, most observers cheered on the aggressive girls, while the rest*

filmed the violence on their phones. We deliberately use italics here to emphasise the point that acts of violent aggression, contrary to accepted views, are not solely restricted to the male domain.

Something we have discovered, through working at the Jubilee Centre, is that wilful aggression and the lack of a moral compass coexist with each other. Therefore, a question arises as to whether the girl's behaviour in the media report can be traced to the absence of an internalised moral compass. Aggression is in direct opposition to values such as building interpersonal relationships or respecting the natural right of everyone to self-determine. Interestingly, in recent years more attention has been devoted to examining the relationship between moral thinking, or in this case the development of a moral compass, and aggressive affirmation, raising the question for many scholars of whether a link exists between a tendency towards aggressive behaviour and an individual's level of moral development.

Aggressive behaviour

A human being from birth to death is surrounded by other people, always interfering and arranging himself among others (Sztompka, 2007). From the theory of socialisation, the world that people share with others is what shapes and modifies their behaviours and personality properties at a time and in the future (Harris, 1998).

Nowadays we have many definitions of aggression. One of them has been defined as *a category of behaviour that causes or threatens physical harm to others* (Loeber & Hay, 1997, p. 373). Today, many theories attempt to explain aggressive behaviour. These can be reduced to three main theoretical assumptions:

- The theory of instinct, which presents aggression as an innate behaviour, determined by the biological need to unleash aggressive energy (Freud & Lorenz, 1966).
- The frustration-aggression theory, which maintains that all aggression is the result of frustration and that this frustration gives rise prone to aggression (Dollard et al., 1939; Buss, 1963; Harris, 1974; Leyens & Parke, 1975; Berkowitz, 1989).
- The social learning theory, which states that aggression is the result of learning through instrumental conditioning and modelling (Bandura, 1977; 2001).

Social learning theory is fascinating. That is, children learn social behaviour such as aggression through the process of observation learning—through watching the behaviour of another person. We can see this in the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1961). This study has important implications for the effects of media violence on children. An important factor in the development of aggression may be the amount of violence that children and young people are exposed to on television, which acts as a model of behaviour. Unfortunately, even in many TV programmes, games and cartoons aimed at young children, there is already more aggression than positive examples and the constant exposure of the child to acts of beating and killing may lead to an indifference towards human suffering and a distortion of their moral compass

Moreover, in the case of aggressive young people, the problem may also lie within the family environment. For example, in one instance, where parents were asked by the media as to why their child behaved in a particular way, the father responded by giving them the 'middle finger'. Such conduct is demonstrative of some parents' attitude and lack of concern towards their child's hostile behaviour.

Interestingly, Rita C. Ramos (2013, p. 442) has pointed out that 'several empirical studies considered aggression to be of negative connotation. However, in one of them (Farmer, 2007) it has been categorised into good, bad and ordinary which suggests that aggression has a hierarchical implication. Often the word 'aggression' has been used to denote pessimistic behaviours'. Also, a comprehensive, integrative, framework for understanding aggression is The General Aggression Model (GAM) (DeWall & Anderson, 2011; Allen & Anderson, 2017). This Model considers the role of social, cognitive, developmental, and biological factors on aggression and includes many domain-specific theories of aggression, including cognitive neoassociation theory, social learning theory, script theory, excitation transfer theory, and social interaction theory (Allen et al. 2017, p. 75). However, as emphasised by its authors, there is a need for additional research to further develop GAM as a comprehensive model of human aggression and violence (Allen et al., 2017, p. 78)

In the context of gender issues, three different styles of aggressive behaviour have been identified: physical aggression, direct verbal aggression, and indirect aggression (Lagerspetz et al., 1988; Bjorkqvist, 1992). While the first two are easily understandable, it is worth men-

tioning the definition of indirect aggression which was conceptualised as social manipulation with the intention to harm the target person psychologically and socially (Bjorkqvist, 2017, p. 39).

Noel A. Card and his colleagues in 2008 conducted a meta-analytic review of 148 studies on gender differences in child and adolescent direct and indirect aggression. They found that gender differences were almost absent. Therefore, indirect aggression is not a 'female' aggression and asked themselves why the misperception that girls are more indirectly aggressive than boys is so pervasive. However, direct aggression has been confirmed to be more common in boys. Regardless of the proportions of total aggression scores in Bjorkqvit's studies, gender specific preferences were found: while boys used proportionally more physical aggressive than girls, girls used more indirect aggression. As the results of the above research shows, the problem of aggression in the gender perspective is the field of discussion. The analysis of the above results cannot be separated from the cultural context, the accepted methodology and the research group.

Gender perspective

Having undertaken a literature review, we have found that the relationship between gender and aggression is still considered an open question despite lots of research having been conducted in this field (Krahe, 2005; Card et. al., 2008; Cappele, 2013; Bjorkqvist, 2017). As stressed by Noel Card at al. (2008), historically speaking, the research on aggression among young people (but not exclusively) has been focused more on boys than on girls, because males are more aggressive than females. What Card observes (Card et al., 2008, p. 1185) is that in Bjorkqvist's analysis (1994) 'some studies have not included girls in their samples, and even studies that include boys and girls have not always analysed the potential for gender differences'. It was because 'women are so seldom aggressive, that female aggression is not worth the trouble to study' (Bjorkqvist, 1994, p. 177).

Social normalities predispose women to the role of victims and men to the role of perpetrators. The problem of violence against men raises extreme emotions because it contradicts the common stereotype of a man to whom attributes such as power and domination are accorded. You can say that there is some public tolerance of aggressive behaviours

in boys and men that testify to their strength, and similar behaviours are stigmatised and unacceptable in girls and women (Chylewska-Barakat, 2002). Furthermore, according to Luci and Baenninger, aggressive behaviour is interpreted differently by the public as signs of various internal states, depending on who shows them—aggressive behaviours in women are perceived as symptoms of hysteria, and mental breakdown, the same behaviour manifested by man is a display of strength. It is related to the perception of women's behaviour according to prevailing stereotypes and the underestimation of women's aggression potential (Luci & Baenninger, 1991). After analysing the media reports, it is evident that the journalists are reporting the events of violent cases in which women were involved more often than men, presenting them as persons with emotional problems or mental illness (Wozniakowska-Fajst, 2010). Desperak also noted that women are often 'monsterized' in the mass media. Female perpetrators are portrayed in the press as monsters, whose deeds are displayed as extremely pathological and impossible to explain or justify. According to the researcher, women engaged in murder are often referred to as cold manipulators, while men, in this case, are passive in their hands (Desperak, 2011).

However, in most cases, gender stereotypes and traits attributed to femininity in our culture increase the risk of the stereotype of a woman as a victim and a perpetrator at the same time, or a perpetrator that has been shaped by the conditions of life (Kowalczyk & Summer, 2016). Such colloquial, stereotypical approaches make it difficult for a man—a victim exposing the violence. It under-estimates the statistics and reduces the problem in the eyes of the public. Violence against men is not well-researched, making it difficult to develop appropriate supportive and therapeutic programs (Makara-Studzińska & Madej, 2015). In the meantime, research has shown that women are equally inclined to aggression and violence (Hamberger & Larsen, 2015; Carmo, Grams & Magalhaes, 2011). The most commonly used forms of violence are physical (pushing, kicking, scratching, or punching), and psychological: name-calling, ignoring or harassment (Carmo, Grams & Magalhaes 2011; Drijber, Reijnders & Ceelen, 2013). Due to the way of socialisation, women have more advanced social competencies, and consequently, the violence they employ can take on a more sophisticated form. These include behaviours such as public mockery, humiliation, showing contempt, blame, where the emotional charge is hidden, and the level of damage depends on the context in which they are manifested (Korpolewska, 2014).

Some philosophers have pointed to the fact that there are things that women cannot perceive or achieve, and there are things that only men can see and attain. Conversely, Carol Gilligan (1982) reversed that perspective and asked whether it is women that notice something that man cannot see. She claimed men think abstractly and believe in logic and their strength, while women think more instinctively and intuitively. Women also concentrate less on understanding the laws and rules and attempt to understand responsibility for others in certain specific conditions. Whereas men feel responsible for stopping aggression and the will to dominate, women take a more caring approach, which is related to the belief that 'others are counting on you.'

Many people become aggressive or passive in the process of shaping their identity, among other things through parents, education, society, by existing patterns of sociocultural gender (Dziutok et al., 2010, p. 9), as referred in previous scientific theories. What's more, Barbara Krahe (2005, p. 540), citing Eagly and Wood (1999) notes that 'the social role model posits that gender differences in aggression are the result of an individual's social learning experiences. They are rooted in differential gender role socialisation, which rewards males for being assertive and dominant and females for being caring and submissive'.

An aggressive woman

It would be wrong to say that aggression is a solely educated behaviour. Reasons for aggressive and violent behaviour in women can be ascribed to biological factors; however it is a relatively small number of women. For example temporal lobe epilepsy that causes an intermittent explosive disorder characterised by an inability to control anger and a definite mood change leading to acts of violence. Behavioural changes and violence are associated with electrical discharge in the temporal lobe. They make the limbic system unable to stop the sudden mood change that follows a series of releases. There are no seizures unlike in epilepsy. Changing attitude can take the form of a brutal attack of anger and aggression and even end with assault or rape (Bodzon, 2013).

In the theories of sociobiological determinants, aggression is also sought in changes of the hormonal system. In the case of women hormonal changes associated with Menstrual Syndrome (LLPDD) may become relevant. Estimated 3–4% of women are affected (Bodzon, 2013). LLPDD

is characterised by cyclical attacks of aggression, which can even take violent forms. Progesterone and oestrogen deficiency cause PMS. In addition to fluctuations in hormone levels; it has been observed that blood sugar changes just before the onset of menstruation. In combination with the decrease in progesterone, it results in an increase in adrenaline production in the body. It can lead to attacks of unbridled aggression (Bodzon, 2013). Menstruation, for instance, already in the nineteenth century became associated with behaviours such as delusions, quarrels, jealousy, nymphomania, binge drinking, pyromania, maniacal murder, or delirium. However, the strongest relationship with menstrual periods was with kleptomania. Dalton interviewed 156 prisoners and analysed prison reports and found that 49% of the crimes they committed had been committed before or during menstruation. These were mainly thefts (56%) and cases of prostitution (44%). Again Ellis and Austin, who also studied the prisoners, said that during the menstrual period participants in the study tended to be more aggressive towards the environment than on other days of the month. Psychologists believe that menstruation is stressful and reduces the psychophysical resistance of a woman's body and affecting the level of coping with a difficult situation (Dalton, 1990; Cabalski, 2014).

Another period in a woman's life when her hormonal balance undergoes an intense transformation is pregnancy and childbirth. The delivery of a child is described as something of a psychological crisis. Women are then more impulsive and self-absorbed, and their self-defence mechanisms are weakened (Wilkowska, 2015). Disorders in the emotional sphere are accompanied by changes in the sphere of consciousness, causing some pregnant women to be more prone to theft, child abuse and infanticide. It is reflected in the legislation of some countries i.e. Sweden and Estonia, where infanticide is a privileged type of offence. It is currently under discussion whether the impact of childbirth on the woman's psyche is so significant that killing the new-born should be treated in a different way, or whether it is a crime committed primarily for social reasons (difficult economic situation, lack of partner) (Grudzien, 2012).

Another example is a menopause. A menstrual cessation begins on average in women around the age of 50. This results in a decrease in oestrogen levels, causing changes in the neuroendocrine system, regulating the brain functions responsible for mood and behaviour. The excessive excitability of menopause causes some women to behave aggressively or defensively in contact with other people (Cabalski, 2014).

When looking at the biological basis of aggression, genes influence was also analysed. The genes of antisocial behaviour in twins raised separately show that it is not possible to talk about the inheritance of individual attitudes and behaviours (i.e. criminal behaviour). Although, according to Harris, hostile parents are more likely to have aggressive children due to inheriting aggression in genes. Genetic research has not shown any difference between women and men in this regard (Cabalski, 2014).

It should be noted that aggressive behaviours associated with menstruation, pregnancy or menopause affect a relatively small number of women; however, the perception of the effects of physiological cycles on women's tendency to be aggressive and violent has inspired criminologists to study the effects of periodic hormonal changes in women.

It is interesting that in many former legal systems these concepts were reflected, and a woman, who, at the time of committing the crime, for example, was menstruating, could count on acquittal or leniency by the court (Dalton, 1990). Her biology gave her a privileged position in this respect. Similar justice practices have never been observed about male hormone disorders. Although the results of many studies confirm that there is a cause and effect relationship between biological factors and the aggression of women, the effect of hormones on behaviour was, however, considered relatively weak. Social or psychological factors were more important. However, the physiological basis of aggression in the body was not entirely excluded.

Evolutionary concepts explaining aggressive behaviour in women

Evolutionary psychology suggests an interesting understanding of aggression. It is believed that the psyche of man, biologically defined, can be understood by reference to the process of adaptation. Psychological mechanisms responsible for aggressive behaviour are triggered by a particular adaptive problem and are dependent on the cost-benefit analysis.

Here are two hypotheses that explain the aggressive behaviour of women in an interesting way. The first is *Hypothesis of raising rivals' costs.* It refers to cases of aggression of women against other women. Aggression is linked to rivalry for sexual partners. Acts directed against

another woman are the result of competing for the most valuable male—the future or current sexual partner. Aggressive behaviours are designed to bring rivalries; these are the most common triggers: mockery, gossip, deprecation, avoidance, revenge by making contacts and friendship with others, and fighting.

Many factors increase women's aggression towards women and condition it. Firstly, the age. Young women fight more often than older ones. Men's preferences for youth determine the tendency of women to behave aggressively; the chances of finding a partner are closely related to their age. The woman is most attractive to a man between the ages of 15 and 25. The second factor is the ratio of the number of women to men in each area. There is a higher rivalry, where the number of women per man is greater. If there are few men in a 'field', they become desirable, and women are fighting for a temporary affair with their resources at that time. Another reason for the aggression of women towards women is the envy of more physically attractive competitors or girls who have already matured, who have a better chance of choosing an attractive partner and longer reproductive careers. The macro structural factor is unemployment and poverty, which causes women from lower classes to seek out social partners from the higher levels, which generates rivalry with elite women. In this concept, aggressive behaviour of women promotes reproductive success and increases the chances of gene transfer to future generations. The two most common tactics of deprecating a competitor are attributing her promiscuity and indicating defects in beauty. Both ways are beneficial, as they strike a sensitive point of male expectations towards a constant partner (Buss, 2003).

The second theory concerns aggression used by women in a fight for a place in the hierarchy and the deterrence of potential aggressors. The acts of aggression or aggressive behaviour can be a tool to achieve a better position in a given group, respect or authority. The background of aggression is thus related to power and influence. Until now, such behaviour has been attributed primarily to men; but in current society, social prestige is increasingly becoming a value for women. Aggression serves an adaptive function of improving social position, especially in those areas of social life that are still dominated by men. In this situation, the competition between women is even more intense. Aggressive behaviours also act as a deterrent to potential competitors competing for our goods. Aggression can be used to maintain the status quo—reputation or access to resources. In many societies, men earn more

than females and therefore women carefully watch their "territory" (Stadnik, 2014).

In conclusion, aggression in women can be used to solve an adaptive problem of optimising partner selection and access to resources. On the other hand, it could also evolve as a defence mechanism against attacks by others. Of particular note is that the evolutionary paradigm as a theoretical construct envisages various styles of aggression based on sex and concerning the role played by the sex. It also works regarding applicability to understand aggression in situations related to the realisation of sexual and reproductive needs. However, it seems that with the increase in employment and the independence of women, these hypotheses may lose its importance. It is impossible to consider the significance of specific behaviours only in the context of biological evolution, in isolation from intensively changing cultural changes, especially within the social roles of women.

Character Education and Morality

When returning to the fascinating relationship between morality and aggressive behaviour, it's particularly noteworthy to mention those theories explaining aggression as a result of specific characteristics in the processing of social information—which is related to the development of moral thinking or as outlined in this paper the formation of an a moral compass. It is believed that experiencing unfriendly relationships in the social and family environment during childhood may lead to the elaboration of a perception of the world as hostile and threatening to the individual (Krahe, 2005), which, in turn, can result in aggressive behaviour. As Emma Palmer and Asia Begum (2006) point out, moral reasoning can be one of the elements in which to understand aggressive behaviours, and a lack of moral understanding would undoubtedly contribute to a dam of ubiquitous aggression among the adolescent.

Reverting to the previously-posed question about whether a lack of internalised moral compass may allow for aggression against another person, there is certainly evidence to support the claim that a link exists between the tendency for aggressive behaviour and level of moral development. However, we do need to be cautious here; as Stanislaw Wojtowicz emphasises, 'It is not always easy to distinguish situations in

which morality makes us not choose aggression from the situations when we refrain from using it for economic reasons'.

It is worth mentioning the latest *Framework for Character Education in Schools* by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2017)[1] at the University of Birmingham. The revised Framework explains the Jubilee Centre's outline of character education from an Aristotelian viewpoint. It contains a comprehensive breakdown of what character education is and what it is not whilst highlighting the 'Components of Virtue'—which if cultivated successfully will likely lead to an individual mastering that specific character virtue. The Components of Virtue consist of:

A—Virtue Perception
B—Virtue Knowledge and Understanding
C—Virtue Emotion
D—Virtue Identity
E—Virtue Motivation
F—Virtue Reasoning
G—Virtue Action and Practice

It is very rare for all of these components to align perfectly and individuals may be stronger in different components for different virtues but ultimately the aim is for one to act virtuously. This can be seen most commonly in component G—Virtue Action and Practice. Virtue Action and Practice is defined as doing the right thing in the right way.

The Framework contains a Neo-Aristotelian Model of Moral Development which attempts to demonstrate the pathways to Virtue Action and Practice. The Model foregrounds the importance of early family upbringing, although it does not exclude the adjustment of negative moral traits formed in early childhood. To continue down the path of moral development via internalised virtuous habitats and full autonomous virtue, one must have been exposed to and have begun developing moral habits during their upbringing which, subsequently, with the aid of Virtue Knowledge and Understanding, will lead to moral habituation and

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[1] Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2017) *A Framework for Character Education in Schools*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham, [Online]. Available from: http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf. [Accessed: 20.08.2017]. The *Framework for Character Education in Schools* sets out the Jubilee Centre's position on character education and calls for all schools to be explicit about how they develop the character virtues of their students. It has been disseminated to over 9000 UK schools and worldwide.

critical reflection. This is not to say that an individual who is not exposed to positive moral habits cannot progress to Virtue Action and Practice, they can but their path will take a different route consisting of more practical habituation and self-regulation.

This Aristotelian model further explains that the flourishing of an individual and society is the ultimate aim of life. By developing a series of intellectual, civic, performance and importantly moral character virtues an individual can begin to develop practical wisdom—an intellectual virtue the ancient Greeks called *phronesis*. This enables the individual to know what to do and what to want when one or more of the virtues collide and to therefore put this knowledge into an acceptable course of action. Practical wisdom, often referred to as the meta-virtue, forms part of all of the other virtues and enables deliberation, well founded judgement, open-mindedness, foresight and the ability to learn from experiences.

We can already begin to see a correlation between the character of an individual and their development of a moral compass Research suggests that children and adults live and learn better with good moral character (Arthur et al., 2015a; 2015b). There is a growing consensus that virtues which contribute to good moral character are part of the solution to many of the challenges facing society today (Arthur et al., 2015a). The development of such moral virtues as, courage, honesty, humility, integrity, justice and respect will contribute towards aggression or the lack of and the meta-virtue of practical wisdom will equally have a large role to play on how an individual perceives and acts in situations where aggression may be a possible consequence. Therefore a moral education in the form of character education is a vital element when discussing ones development of a moral compass and therefore their tendency of aggression.

In regards to character education in the UK, a survey conducted by the Jubilee Centre has shown that 84% of UK parents believe that teachers should encourage good morals and values in their students (Jubilee Centre, 2013). Throughout Jubilee Centre teaching resources, such as Knightly Virtues (Arthur et al., 2014) and Teaching Character Through the Primary Curriculum (Fullard, 2016)—which have been extensively and successfully trialled with pupils in the UK—we can see how 'Virtue Literacy' (which consists of three inter-related components) is greatly important in the development of a morally virtuous individual and may be connected to aggression. Virtue Literacy consists of:

a) Virtue Perception—Noticing situations involving or standing in need of the virtues
b) Virtue Knowledge & Understanding—Understanding the meaning of the virtue term and why the virtue is necessary, individually and as part of a well-rounded, flourishing life of overall virtue, and being able to apply this attribute to episodes of one's own and others' lives
c) Virtue Reasoning—Discernment and deliberative action about virtues, including in situations where they conflict or collide.

The first component is concerned with noticing situations standing in need of virtues. The second part involves acquiring a sophisticated virtue language usage through familiarity with virtue terms. However, knowledge of the virtues themselves will not necessarily change behaviour. The third component concerns making reasoned judgements which include the ability to explain differences in moral situations. All are key components of one's moral compass.

The need for character education has been supported by the UK government with former Secretary of Education Nicky Morgan MP (2014) stating 'that for too long there's has been a false choice between academic standards and activities that build character and resilience' and with the UK Department of Education (2015) providing grants for the development of character within schools and other youth organisations. Character education's strong links to morality and aggression can be highlighted during the August 2011 riots which took place in several major UK cities. A large proportion of the rioters were self-reported disillusioned or disfranchised youths but the question of where this sudden act of overwhelming aggression, in the form of vandalism, looting and violence to others appeared from was widely asked. Prime Minister David Cameron (2011) claimed that the riots were caused by people 'showing indifference to right and wrong' and having 'a twisted moral code'.

In response the UK government formed the Riots Communities and Victims Panel (2012) to answer such questions and give recommendations for future action. One such recommendation was that parents and schools ensure children develop the values, skills and character to make the right choices at crucial moments. The Panel also proposed that there should be a new requirement for schools to develop and publish their policies on building character. This would raise the profile of this issue and ensure that schools engage in a review of their approaches to nur-

turing character attributes among their pupils. Therefore this report made links between the aggressive nature of the riots and the morality of the rioters and that of character education.

Conclusion

Gender differences in aggressive behaviour and morality do exist (Bjorkqvist, 1994; 2017; Card et al., 2008). But apart from that, the world in which we live creates the need to provide a moral backbone to young people through both formal and informal teaching so that they can internally and externally develop their own moral compass. In other words, educators are to demonstrate and explain, through proper instruction and example, what is right and what is wrong. It does not mean that they must be experts on moral development, but through their well-methodically chosen methods of conduct, the student should be able to develop the ability to exercise individual attitudes and moral values. Moreover, the teacher should be competent in this vision of building and be articulating an ethos in a school where confidence, respect and empathy are the key prerequisites for stimulating moral development. Moral compass, in this perspective, constitutes the core building block of human development, which is capable of counteracting wilful aggression. Moreover, in the Jubilee Centre, we work on the Aristotelian assumption that the ideal moral development should do with the cultivation of a virtuous character.

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On Gender Disparities in Disability Identification and Special Education Services

ABSTRACT. In the present paper the author discusses the issue of gender imbalance in disability identification, with a special focus on the referrals to Special Education Services. Having identified a significant prevalence of male students being referred to Special Education, the article discusses a range of factors that influence the disparity. The paper explains the role of the subjective opinion as well as the gender-biased behavioral and academic expectations in the process of disability identification. Furtherly, the behavioral differences are identified as another cause for the underrepresentation of female students in the special education referrals. In addition, the gender-biased studies play a significant role in establishing of the diagnostic criterias focused on the typically male symptoms of disabilities. The final section presents the gender differences in earliness of diagnosis and the severity of disability among students referred to special education services. The paper seeks to explain the reasons of gender disparities in the special education and identify the possible focus areas for the further studies in the field of gender, disability and behavior oriented sciences.

KEYWORDS: special education, disability identification, referral bias, learning disorders, gender expectations

Introduction

In the United States, male and female students are nearly equally represented in the public-school population; however, boys outnumber girls more than two-to-one among students receiving special education services (Arms, Bickett & Graf, 2008; Coutinho & Oswald, 2005). Specifically, male students from low-income backgrounds are high risk characteristics predictive of disability identification (Sullivan & Bal, 2013). This gender disparity is noted in virtually every disability category, and is even more pronounced for certain disabilities. For example, autism has

been diagnosed in boys at a rate of about four-to-one compared to girls (Szalavitz, 2016). In fact, these numbers hold true across race, ethnicity, and class, making gender the single greatest predictor of whether a student will be identified as having a disability (Arms et al., 2008).

While this gender imbalance may be due in part to male over-representation, current research indicates that it is more a result of female under-representation (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001; Arms et al., 2008). Wehmeyer and Schwartz (2001) noted that, for the most part, boys receiving special education services have academic needs or challenges that warrant their identification and placement. However, they also noted that many girls who would benefit from similar services are not referred to special education, or are referred later than boys with comparable disabilities. Thus, the gender imbalance is inequitable not because more boys are served per se; rather, it is inequitable because girls who otherwise qualify for, or would benefit from, special education services do not receive them (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001).

A number of explanations, many complementary, have been put forth to explain this trend. Some common theories include the role of referral bias and subjective opinion in special education referrals; gender bias inherent in diagnostic tests and criteria; teacher bias in behavioral and academic expectations of boys vs. girls; the generally more active and disruptive behavior of male as compared to female students; and the impact of severity of disability on identification and referral. Most likely a combination of these factors contributes to female under-representation in special education (Arms et al., 2008).

Referral Bias: The Role of Subjective Opinion in Special Education Referrals

One explanation for the gender imbalance focuses on the role of referral bias, defined as referral based on subjective personal and professional opinions rather than objective criteria (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001). Common biases may include a teacher's tolerance level for certain types of behavior as well as personal biases based on gender, race, or ethnicity (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001).

Population-based studies have often found greater gender balance than is reflected in school special education programs. For example, Learning Disabilities (LD) account for about 42% of all special education

eligibility, and research indicates that an equal proportion of boys and girls experience the reading difficulties that commonly characterize LD. However, two-thirds of all students identified with LD are male (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Similarly, research indicates that an equal number of boys and girls have dyslexia, but schools identify boys at a rate of three- or four-to-one (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001). Finally, although a gender gap of three-to-one is noted in population studies of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), this gap grows to between five-to-one and nine-to-one in clinical samples (Bruchmüller, Margraf & Schneider, 2012).

In all of these disability categories, referral and diagnostic bias is noted as a root cause of the shortfall between gender ratios in the general population and those found in special education and clinical programs (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001; Bruchmüller et al., 2012). In the case of ADHD, for which clear diagnostic criteria are established in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, several studies have shown that clinicians often make diagnoses based not on the standard criteria but instead on their own heuristic and biased judgment (Bruchmüller et al., 2012). These personal biases include an image of the "typical" child with ADHD, which often reflects the hyperactivity seen in boys with ADHD rather than the inattention noted in girls with ADHD (this is discussed further in the "Role of Behavior" section below). When students are identified based on subjective opinions rather than more objective criteria, such a process often favors those who reflect the biases of those making the referrals and those making the diagnoses (Bruchmüller et al., 2012).

The Role of Gender-Biased Expectations in Special Education Referrals

Closely related to the role of behavior in special education referral and identification is the impact of gender-biased behavioral and academic expectations. Sadker and Sadker (1994) noted that, while boys are praised for risk-taking and intellectual pursuits, girls are praised for behaving appropriately and being submissive to authority (as cited in Arms et al., 2008). Classroom success is often defined for girls as "being good." In other words, girls are socialized to please, and they often fear bringing undue attention to their needs (Arms et al., 2008). In fact, Jans

and Stoddard (1999) theorized that girls work hard to mask their disabilities, and can often deal with their disabilities more independently than boys due to faster maturation (as cited in Arms et al., 2008).

Generally speaking, boys are held to higher academic standards and higher societal expectations, while girls are held to lower achievement standards (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001). In a 1999 study, Froschl, Rubin, and Sprung asserted that "boys are more likely to be classified as Mentally Retarded (MR), Learning Disabled (LD) and Emotionally Disabled (ED) because society's standards for achievement are higher for males than for females; thus traits similar to those assigned to children with LD or MR are considered 'healthy' for females" (as cited in Arms et al., 2008).

The 1992 American Association of University Women (AAUW) Report provides further examples of gender bias in the classroom that may impact special education identification. These include teachers' tendency of "calling on boys more often than girls…, evaluating boys' papers for creativity and girls' for neatness, and giving boys the time and help to solve problems on their own, but 'helping' girls along by simply telling them the right answers" (as cited in Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001).

The Role of Behavior in Special Education Referrals

In addition to referral bias and biased teacher expectations, another explanation for the gender imbalance focuses on the role of behavior in special education referral and identification. Arms et al. (2008) note that "teachers are the gatekeepers for entrance into special education programmes, and the primary reason for referral is student disruption of the classroom." Thus, behavioral considerations, rather than specific academic or learning concerns, are the priority in special education referrals (Arms et al., 2008). This prioritization of behavior over academic concerns has led to a de facto prioritization of boys over girls, as boys generally display more disruptive behaviors than girls (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001; Arms et al., 2008; Szalavitz, 2016).

Sadker and Sadker set the framework for this discussion in 1994, positing that girls are marginalized and overshadowed by the more assertive and disruptive behavior of their male classmates (as cited in Arms et al., 2008). Because boys generally act out more, frequently get out of their seats, and often disturb the classroom environment, they are

more likely to attract the attention of their teacher and are more likely to be referred for special education. For a girl to be referred, she usually must exhibit disruptive behaviors on par with boys. Due to this focus on behavior, underperforming students without overt behavioral problems are often low priorities for special education referrals, and the evidence suggests this impacts girls more heavily than boys (Arms et al., 2008). Overtness of behavior is key to referral and identification; girls often have internalized behaviors, such as depression and learned helplessness, that are not particularly disruptive and therefore do not attract the same attention from teachers as the more disruptive externalized behaviors of boys (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001).

Research into Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has shed much light on this phenomenon. Studies suggest that ADHD expresses itself differently in boys and girls; while boys with ADHD tend toward hyperactivity and aggression, girls with ADHD tend toward inattentiveness (Bruchmüller et al., 2012). Inattention is generally less likely to be disruptive than hyperactivity and aggression, leading to less frequent diagnoses and treatment of ADHD in girls (Bruchmüller et al., 2012). Furthermore, because more boys are identified as having ADHD than girls, co-occurring disabilities such as reading disorders are more likely to be identified in boys than in girls (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001).

The Role of Gender-Biased Studies, Criteria, and Testing in Special Education Referrals

An additional bias discussed in the literature is the fact that many disabilities were first identified and studied in boys, and diagnostic tests and criteria often reflect how these disabilities present themselves in boys without always giving as complete a picture of how girls are affected. This is important because many disabilities present themselves differently in girls (Arms et al., 2008). Girls with autism, for example, tend to have fewer or less obvious “restricted interests” or fixations than their male counterparts, but these interests are at the core of diagnostic criteria for autism, especially at the milder end of the spectrum (Szalavitz, 2016). In addition, the literature and tests abound with examples involving stereotypically “male” interests, including train timetables and numbers (Szalavitz, 2016). Futhermore, issues inherent to the

testing process may delay diagnostic timing for females on the autism spectrum (Beeger et al., 2013).

Current research also indicates that the disinterest in, and disengagement from, social interaction that is associated with autism is true only of boys with autism (Mandavilli, 2015). Ongoing research in brain imaging conducted by Kevin Pelphrey indicates strong social brain function in girls with autism, which is counter to the prevailing image of autism as reflected in diagnostic criteria and tests (as cited in Mandavilli, 2015). The most significant preliminary finding is that girls with autism may be closer in social functions to typically-developing boys than to either boys with autism or typically-developing girls (Szalavitz, 2016). Stated otherwise, "if typical girls have the most active social brains and boys with autism the least active, typical boys would tie with girls who have autism somewhere in the middle" (Mandavilli, 2015).

Gender Imbalance as a Function of Severity of Disability

Finally, a common theme across disability categories is that the average girl with a given diagnosis has more severe disabilities than the average boy with the same diagnosis (Arms et al., 2008; Mandavilli, 2015). In other words, girls receiving special education services are more likely to fall on the severe or lower-functioning end of the disability spectrum (Arms et al., 2008). They generally have lower IQ scores at the time of referral, and are more likely to be placed in self-contained classrooms than their male counterparts (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001; Szalavitz, 2016).

Girls with milder disabilities are often identified later than boys with similar disabilities, and generally only if they exhibit disruptive or inappropriate classroom behavior (Arms et al., 2008). For example, girls with mild autism are diagnosed on average two years later than boys, and it is not uncommon for girls to be misdiagnosed and/or identified with another disorder prior to being diagnosed with autism (Mandavilli, 2015).

Current studies suggest that there are many girls on the higher-functioning end of many disabilities, such as autism, that go unidentified. A 2012 study by Francesca Happé, for example, found that when girls and boys displayed similar autism-spectrum traits, girls had to either exhibit more behavioral problems or have significant intellectual disability, or both, in order to be diagnosed (as cited in Szalavitz, 2016). As

a result, the male-to-female ratio at the high-IQ end of the autism spectrum may be as high as ten-to-one, as compared to the overall average of four-to-one (Mandavilli, 2015).

The prevailing explanation for these trends is that students with significant disabilities are more easily identified, often at birth or early in life, and frequently experience comorbidity of disabilities (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001). Referral and diagnosis of these more severe disabilities is less reliant on subjective opinion and personal bias, and less gender imbalance is therefore noted at the severe end of the disability spectrum (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2001; Arms et al., 2008).

Conclusion and Future Study

This paper discussed some of the common theories that, either individually or together, account for the gender imbalance in special education referrals and identification. These include referral bias, gender bias in diagnostic tests and criteria, biased behavioral and academic expectations, behavioral differences between boys and girls, and severity of disability. Future research in this area may focus further on the intersectionality of gender and disability, as well as intersection with race, ethnicity, poverty, and other factors (Arms et al., 2008). In addition, research may be conducted in brain imaging and behavioral sciences to further explore the different ways in which disabilities manifest themselves by gender. Finally, research may look into how public policy can ameliorate the negative outcomes of female underrepresentation, which include school dropout, teenage pregnancy, underemployment, and lifelong poverty (Arms et al., 2008).

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Gender Disparity and Psycho-sexual Violence: An X-ray of How Imbalance is Perpetuated by Sexual Behaviour

ABSTRACT. The author presents the problem of gender disparity and different forms of sexual violence and identifies the traditional roots of female inferiority in the society. The article shows how the gender roles assigned to each sex manifest not only in the inequity on the socio-economic field, but also in the sphere of sexual behaviours. The findings discussed in the present paper are based on a range of studies carried out across cultures as well as on the results of a Focus Group Discussion held among women of South Nigeria. The author focuses on how the submissive role of woman in a society remains upheld through traditions, religious beliefs and most of all by various acts of sexual violence, such as virginity testing, female genital mutilation, polygamy or early marriage. Furthermore, it is presented that not only are men the managers of women's sexuality but also women act out as wardens of the female docility. In conclusion, the paper recommends the possible ways of matriarchist approach that women can adopt in order to change their social role and presents actions which help to close the gap between genders, such as increasing educational opportunities and political awareness among women.

KEYWORDS: gender disparity, sexual violence, patriarchy, matriarchy

Introduction

The issues of gender disparity, sexual violence and male dominance are themes that transcend national borders, historical eras and social classes and appear in all spheres of life- religion, politics, and economy. Worldwide, extant literatures on gender dynamics abound, portraying men as superior and women as inferior or subservient. The basic tenets of the theory of gender power propose that sexual division of labour, sexual division of power, and *cathexis* (affective attachments and social norms) create social and economic environments that predispose women

to gender inequities in hetero-sexual relationships. (Wingood & DiClemente, 2000). Unarguably, sexual division of labour creates economic imbalance between men and women; distinguishes professions according to sexuality and defines, with traditional precision, a man's role at home and in the public versus those of the woman (Mies, 2001; Hirut, 2001). For example, Ogunleye (2015) painted a scenario of women prejudice in labour as shown is this discussion between an Uncle and his Niece titled "old versus new order".

- Male Prof: … Now to the most amazing part of the Lagos to Kenya trip! I slept, woke up to eat, watched a film and slept again; it was when we landed that I saw that it was a girl who flew us all the way from Lagos. If I had known that, I would not have slept a wink.
- Niece: Glad you had such a wonderful and relaxing trip… Slightly surprised to hear that you might not have enjoyed yourself so much had you known the pilot was a woman…

Most men will not approach a lady mechanic for car repairs just because she is female and some women will not also approach a male midwife for delivery not just because he is a man but for fear of another man seeing their husband's private property despite the toll it takes on them. Sexual division of power acknowledges gender power inequities ascribing to men a sense of superiority, risk taking potentialities and intelligence. It presupposes that men's role is to provide and protect women and children (weaker creatures). While c*athexis* accounts for the emotional investment one has in a relationship as well as the social norms men and women are expected to follow. There are many stereotypical beliefs about the differences between men and women based on biological politics and societal constructions (WIC, 2005) of what should be men's and what should be women's including sexual behaviours, attitudes, professions, ownership rights and inheritance. Scientific evidence, however, suggests that although many of these beliefs are, in fact true, others are clearly false depending on culture and context.

Biologically, there are some significant differences between female and male brains. For example, the language centre in the male brain is usually in the dominant (usually left) hemisphere, whereas females use both hemispheres of the brain to process language. This may explain why females seem to have stronger communication skills and relish interpersonal communication more than males and why, on average, girls learn to speak and read earlier than boys. Experts disagree on whether differences between males and females result from innate, bio-

logical differences or from differences in the ways that boys and girls are socialized. In other words, experts disagree on whether differences between men and women are due to nature, nurture, or a combination of both.

Beyond nature, males and females are socialized in gendered ways conforming to their respective gender roles enunciated by the society (Kabira & Masinjila, 1997). A gender role is a set of behaviours, attitudes, and personality characteristics expected and encouraged of a person based on his or her sex. In today's society, the colour pink is associated with females and the colour blue with males. As babies, males and females are dressed differently, according to what is considered "appropriate" for their respective sexes. Even parents who strive to achieve a less "gendered" parenting style unconsciously reinforce gender roles. The toys and games mothers select for their children are often unconsciously intended to socialize them into the appropriate gender roles. Girls receive dolls in an attempt to socialize them into future roles as mothers. Since women are expected to be more nurturing than men, giving a girl a doll teaches her to care for it and fosters the value of caring for others. While boys receive toy guns or cars, they are likely to be action figures designed to bring out the alleged aggressive tendencies and superiority in boys.

In traditional patriarchal societies like Africa, men and women are on parallel gender trains. Men provide security and protection for women and children; serve in the highest level in all areas of the society; and decide the extent of freedom women enjoy. The role played by women is described in relation to childbearing and sex. Interestingly, male dominance is enunciated firstly by nature, sustained by nurture through the enactment of socio-cultural and religious practices. Monagan (2010) states that "biological essentialism focuses on sexual differences to justify inequality and the safeguarding of male supremacy". If a woman engages in multiple sex partnership, she is branded promiscuous or a prostitute, but the man gets away with admiration and branded as smart, go-getter, lady's man or machismo.

All over the world, gender stereotyping is a commonplace. The man is the macho, strong, dominant and aggressive; and the woman is stereotyped as weak and subservient. Lending credence to this, Szasz (1998a) maintains that men are confident and forceful, while women are modest and innocent. Expectedly, the societal expectations of each gender predict the pattern of hetero-sexual behaviours each exudes.

Thus, men fight, compete, prove to be knowledgeable, earn money, provide and protect women in order to maintain their masculinity and match up to the "approved" model. In accordance with societal approval of what makes a real man in a hetero-sexual relationship, penetration is an important experience. In a society where sexual intercourse and particularly penetration has a high symbolic importance in masculine identity, men are under pressure to "prove" their masculinity to some extent and an important way to do this may be through demonstrating sexual prowess (Szasz, 1998b).

In contrast, pre-marital virginity is a highly priced virtue for women. Amuchlastegui, (1998) asserts that prevailing metaphors for sexual intercourse include "pollution, dishonour and shame". A young woman starting her sexual life outside marriage risks being perceived as worthless, or of dubious sexual morals. Worse still, the primary objective of the expectation of a woman's premarital virginity is not necessarily for her own but to the credit of the family, the father who is the owner prior to marriage or hand over to the secondary owner, the husband.

Socio-Norms and Sexual Violence

A critical analysis of the literature on gender dynamics suggests that gender roles are fluid and multi-dimensional concepts influenced by socio-cultural and familial contexts (Fiorentino, Marano-Rivera, 2000).

> Socio-cultural norms build notions of masculinity and femininity which in turn create unequal power relations between men and women. This power imbalance impacts women's and men's access to key resources, information, and their sexual interactions. It curtails women's sexual autonomy and expands men's sexual freedom and control over sexuality.

These gender roles have mostly been described as rigid sexual scripts that are endorsed by norms. Among the Latinos, the marianismo is expected to be sexually naïve, maintain absolute fidelity and submit to their partners' sexual directives. While the machismo, the counterpart of marianismo, is expected to be more assuming, powerful and dominating in a relationship, and permitted to be promiscuous (De la Cancela, 1986; Marín, 2003; Noland, 2008). The gender role prescribed for women, or 'femininity', demands a submissive role, passivity in sexual relations, and ignorance about sex. Consequently, Like Isla 2004 puts it "Because

women are thus constituted as a coherent group, sexual difference becomes coterminous with female subordination and power is automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (men) and people who do not have (women)." Roles are then prescribed under the socially appropriate characteristics and behaviours, beliefs and values that prove male superiority and female inferiority (Mantjes, Pilley & Turshen, 2001).

Therefore, it cannot be over-emphasized that the degree to which hetero-sexual partners demonstrate the ability to negotiate the timing of sex, conditions under which sex takes place and the use of condoms are shaped by gender-related values and norms defining masculinity and femininity which evolved through a process of socialization starting from an early stage of infancy. Boys are brought up to be sexually aggressive, dominant and conquering, as a way of affirming their masculinity. According to Check and Malamuth (1983), men are taught to take the initiative and persist in sexual encounters, while women are supposed to set the limits. Catharine MacKinnon (2011) argues that men who rape share the same reasons with those who don't—identification with masculine norms and expression of sexual prowess. These values and norms determine and reinforce themselves through traditional practices such as virginity testing, female genital mutilation, polygamy, widowhood related rituals, early marriage, and the condoning of gender-based violence. Cultural practices, values, norms and traditions have strong influences on the visible aspects of individual behaviours and are important determinants of women's vulnerability to sexual violence.

In other words, a husband can commit an act of sexual violence against his wife. It includes rape, virginity test, physical force, psychological intimidation, blackmail or other forms of threats. A wide range of sexually violent acts can take place in different circumstances and settings. These include, for example: rape within marriage or dating relationships; rape by strangers; systematic rape during armed conflict; unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favours; sexual abuse of mentally or physically disabled people; sexual abuse of children; forced marriage or co-habitation, including the marriage of children; denial of the right to use contraception or to adopt other measures to protect against sexually transmitted diseases; forced abortion; violent acts against the sexual integrity of women, including female genital mutilation and obligatory inspections for virginity; forced prostitution and trafficking of people for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The World Health Organization (2002) defines sexual violence as:

> any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

Sexual violence committed by men in most parts of the world is rooted in the ideologies of the social construction of the male and female bodies or the polarised gender relation as described earlier. The man has a prerogative to initiate sexual advances; the woman may object but the man should persist until he achieves his objective. Many men therefore, exclude the possibility that their sexual advances can be turned down by a woman. Such men simply refuse to accept that a woman's "no" to his sexual advances actually means "no" in real terms and should be respected. In many cultures, and nay African, women have little or no autonomous right to decide when and how to participate in sex especially in a marital relationship. Affirming this claim, UNFPA (2008) states that "a considerably high proportion of women all over the country still accept wife beating for some reasons and also believe that women are not justified in negotiating or in refusing sex with their husbands even if they are at health risk". Instead sex between couples is perceived as obligatory for the woman in marriage. This, images a popular setting for women all over Africa. A woman who participated in an FGD in Southeast Nigeria stated as follows:

> Even when he knows that I am sick and truly very sick, he still comes back to demand for sex from me. When I resist, he describes it as lack of love and respect. And sometimes, he threatens that he would get it from another woman outside. So I am afraid to think of saying "no" to sexual demands by my husband. I am his property. That's what my mother taught me.
>
> *Agbonma, 44, Ifite-Ogwari, Southeast, Nigeria*

Agbonma's case is an example of women (mothers) as agents of socialisation of violence; obviously her mother is building a platform of gender imbalance and inferiority complex which must be sustained if measures are not taken for correction. It is also a typical case of how tradition relegates the woman to social acceptance of violence, despite civilisation, the need to encourage the women to use their experiences (virtues) to moderate the expression of their feelings remains unchanged.

These belief systems grant women extremely no courage nor legitimate options to refuse sexual advances. Even when a woman knows it is not healthy for her to engage in unprotected sex, she has little no option than to deny herself the sense of risk because of the emotional investment involved in the relationship and the cost of refusal. Though, a woman might have the knowledge of her spouse's extra-marital sexual interactions, she is often unable to protect herself due to an imbalance of power within relationships created by economic and emotional dependence. Murray (2008) acknowledges that financial viability and other barriers can be limiting for any female who is victimised to seek freedom from violent situations. Another participant at the FGD describes her experience with tears:

> I know my husband has a girlfriend outside our matrimony. Yet, my husband hated condom use. He never allowed it. He used to beat me when I refused to sleep with him without condom… He said 'when we are man and woman married, how can we use a condom?'… It's a wife's duty to have sex with her husband because that is the main reason you come together. But he didn't listen to me. I tried to insist on using a condom but he refused. So I gave in because I really feared him and I don't want my marriage to break. If he sends me out of his house, he will bring in another girl. Besides, not even my parents will support me if I tell them that he sleeps other girls which make it unsafe for me.
>
> *Nwabugo, 33, Ifite-Ogwari, Southeast, Nigeria*

There are other innumerable variables that lever the act of violence against women which are rooted in social norms. These variables have defied ecclesiastical and civic interventions and to regulate them proves difficult. Among these are:

Virginity Testing

Virginity testing is another form of sexual violence against women. It is a huge sensitive subject not only related to sexual behaviour of a person but is intrinsically associated with far more complex questions of gender, sexual politics, history, religion and culture. A virginity test is the practice and process of determining whether a female person has ever engaged in sexual intercourse or not (GSR & H, 2015). The test involves an inspection of a female's hymen, on the assumption that her hymen

can only be torn as a result of sexual intercourse. Because of the patriarchal basis of most societies, the concept of virginity in girls came to be laden with notions of purity, honour and worth. According to patriarchal constructs of female identity, a woman is a man's (her father's or husband's) possession who has the right to decide when and with whom she can have sex. Thus, the huge importance of virginity for women was one of the ways of gaining control of the sexual behaviour of women.

In some traditional societies around the world (Asia, Africa and Middle East), girls are still expected to remain virgins until marriage which is most often arranged by the elders of a family according to prevailing caste, religious and community principles. Among the Bantu of South Africa, virginity testing or even the suturing of the labia majora (called infibulation) is a commonplace. Traditionally, Sudanese Kenuzi girls are married before puberty by adult men who inspect them manually for virginity. Some cultures require proof of a bride's virginity prior to her marriage. The physical examination would normally be undertaken before the marriage ceremony, while the "proof by blood" involves an inspection for signs of bleeding as part of the consummation of marriage, after the ceremony. Depending on whether the girl in question is declared a virgin, the aftermath of the test can be joy or danger.

In the Zulu culture, there is a tradition in which girls of a certain age perform annual dance for the king of the Zululand to select his newest wife from among the virgins. If a girl is tested and declared a virgin, she brings honour to her family. If a girl is found not to be a virgin, her father may have to pay a fine for 'tainting' the community and the girl may be shunned from the 'certified' virgins (GSR & H, 2015).

It is not known in any culture that the male counterparts (boys) are tested for virginity prior to marriage. Hence, the practice is seen as sexist, perpetuating the notion that sexual intercourse outside of marriage is acceptable for men, but a taboo for women, and suggesting that women's sexual activity should be subject to public knowledge and criticism, while men's should not.

Early Marriage

Marriage is often used to legitimize several of forms of sexual violence against women. The practice of early marriage is found in many parts of the world. Although, this is legal in many countries it is a form of

sexual violence, since the young girls involved cannot negotiate sex with their much older husbands as they know little about sex and marriage. They therefore frequently fear it (George, 1997) and their first sexual encounters are often forced (Forum on MRWG, 2000). Early marriage is most common in Africa and South Asia, though it also occurs in the Middle East and parts of Latin America and Eastern Europe (Kumari, Singh & Dubey, 1990). In Ethiopia and parts of West Africa, for instance, marriage at the age of 7 or 8 years is not uncommon. The obligation of an under aged wife to submit to sexual relations and give birth in pains symbolized slavery and such might land her into having VVF-an ailment that her husband could ill afford to live with or take care of, yet the exercise of submission is required of her.

> I hate early marriage. I was married at an early age and my in-laws forced me to sleep with my husband and he made me suffer all night. After that, whenever day becomes night, I get worried thinking that it will be like that. That is what I hate most.
>
> *11-year-old girl from Amhara, Ethiopia;*
> *married at age 5, first had sex at age 9.*

In Nigeria, the mean age at first marriage is 17 years, but in the Kebbi State of northern Nigeria, the average age at first marriage is just over 11 years (UNICEF, 1990). High rates of child marriage have also been reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Niger and Uganda (Kumari, Singh & Dubey, 1990). In South Asia, child marriage is especially common in rural areas, but exists also in urban areas. In Nepal, the average age at first marriage is 19 years. Seven per cent of girls, though, are married before the age of 10 years, and 40% by the age of 15 years (100). In India, the median age at first marriage for women is 16.4 years. A survey of 5000 women in the Indian state of Rajasthan found that 56% of the women had married before the age of 15 years, and of these, 17% were married before they were 10 years old. Another survey, conducted in the state of Madhya Pradesh, found that 14% of girls were married between the ages of 10 and 14 years. Elsewhere, in Latin America for instance, early age at first marriage has been reported in Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Paraguay. In North America and Western Europe, less than 5% of marriages involve girls younger than 19 years of age (for example, 1% in Canada, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, 2% in Belgium and Germany, 3% in Spain, and 4% in the United States) (Demographic Yearbook, 1999).

There are other customs leading to violence in many places—uch customs other than child marriage that result in sexual violence towards women. In Zimbabwe, for instance, there is the custom of *ngozi*, whereby a girl can be given to a family as compensation for a death of a man caused by a member of the girl's family. On reaching puberty the girl is expected to have sexual intercourse with the brother or father of the deceased person, so as to produce a son to replace the one who died. Another custom is *chimutsa mapfiwa*—wife inheritance—according to which, when a married woman dies, her sister is obliged to replace her in the matrimonial home. The same practice obtains called *Nkuchi* in Ifite-Ogwari, Southeast, Nigeria.

Religion and Gender Disequilibrium

Besides socio-cultural practices, sexuality disequilibrium is also deeply rooted in religion and religious beliefs as the foundations of community life in many of societies. Religion offers an extant sexual division of power and prescribes sexual ethics and guidelines for many aspects of daily life and norms surrounding sexuality. Unfortunately, the majority of religiously tailored belief systems do not only condemn pre-marital sex, contraception including condom use, and homosexuality but promote sexuality disequilibrium between males and females even though it is believed that all humans are equal in the eyes of God. Some religions promote cutting-edge submissive role for women, foster gender inequality in marital relations, and promote women's ignorance in sexual matters as a symbol of purity.

With due respect to your religious beliefs and inclinations, permit us to take a few instances from the Bible to illustrate this point. Leviticus 12:1-5 stated that a woman who has given birth to a boy is ritually unclean for 7 days. If the baby is a girl, the mother is unclean for 14 days. "If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days... But if she bears a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks..." (Holy Bible, 1982)

It would appear that the act of having a baby is a highly polluting and the mother therefore requires more days for cleansing compared to giving birth to a boy. Deuteronomy 25:11: If two men are fighting, and the wife of one of them grabs the other man's testicles, her hand is to be chopped off. There is no penalty if a male relative were to grab the other

man. “When men strife together one with another and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets. Then thou shalt cut off her hand...” (Holy Bible, 1982). No equivalent punishment is prescribed for the menfolk.

Male pre-eminence ruled also in the satisfactions of the flesh. A formal recognition of polygamous unions in various cultures reinforces the patriarchal notion that women should passively accept their partners’ sexual decision making. It broadens the scope of masculine sexual freedom and further limits the horizon of feminine sexual autonomy. Polygamy is permitted in the Old Testament and is covered by a number of statutes. A man was free to have as many wives and concubines as he could support. The great Jewish patriarchs, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon all had more than one wife. A man could marry and literally "become the master of the woman as often as he desired. In Genesis 4:19, Lamech became the first known polygamist when he took two wives. Subsequent men who took multiple wives included: Esau with 3 wives; Jacob: 2; Ashur: 2 amongst others (Holy Bible, 1982).

Despite occasional exceptions, the woman's subsidiary role enforced in the Old Testament was continued in the New. Writing as mentor to Timothy at Ephesus and giving him instructions to be passed on to the Christian assembly there, Apostle Paul laid down these injunctions:

> I direct the women to wear suitable clothes and to dress quietly and modestly; not with braided hair, gold, jewellery, or expensive clothes. Their adornment is to be the doing of good deeds of the kind that are proper for women who profess religion. During instruction, women are to remain silent and submissive. I permit no woman to teach or to tell a man what to do (Holy Bible, 1982).

His reason? “Because Adam was formed first, then Eve. Bear in mind, it was not Adam who was led astray and fell into sin, but the woman.” Paul does concede, however, that “a woman may be saved through bearing children; provided that she remains modest and is constant in faith, love, and holiness.”

Although, most Protestant churches today flout these instructions even as they hold that the scriptures are the inerrant Word of God. After many centuries, during which these edicts were more or less obeyed, most churches have bowed to the changing times. There is an increasing number of women clergy and a host of women teachers, although, com-

pared to men, the number remains small. But even this modest step, took the better part of two thousand years to achieve, and most of these changes are not yet widely accepted.

Priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church till today is the prerogative of the males. Women may counsel and assist but, they may not lead. They may be more numerous than men in the pews and more active in doing good works of God, but in the majority of the basic expressions of Christianity, women remain subject to and secondary to men.

Men as Psycho-Sexual Managers of Women's Sexuality

With a veritable ground nurtured by culture, ordained by religion and fated by nature, men thrive on the vulnerable, supposedly passive and sexually subservient women and even applying the October Man Sequence strategy to ensure unreserved submission.

October Man Sequence first gained public attention when Neil Strauss mentioned it in his bestselling book *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists (Neil, 2003)*. Since then, it had acquired cult status amongst the underground seductive community. Expert seducers who have used the technique successfully first hand reported amazingly powerful results. There could be some hyperbole in the assumption of its efficacy, but the effectiveness of the technique has never been disputed. Ever since mentioned in 'The Game' by Neil Strauss, the ***October Man Sequence*** has become somewhat of a legend. It's purportedly able to make a woman want to go to bed with a man in as fast as 15 minutes.

According to men who are familiar with the technique, using the October Man Sequence to seduce women is like "bringing a machine gun to a stick fight". It's somewhat unfair, and certainly dangerous—yet nothing is done about it. Using the technique, master seducers are reputedly able to control a woman's feelings, and would often bend them to their will. This is dangerous because unsuspecting women could well be manipulated and in the process become vulnerable.

The basic premise of the October Man is symbolism. The sequence was designed around hypnosis and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) concepts such as framing, focus, intention and fractionation. The concept of symbolism in hypnosis is the idea of turning a particular feeling in a person into a symbol which is then manipulated. The symbol is

anchored towards another person (the hypnotist) and this is further used in order to invoke certain feelings (pleasure or pain) in the person. This symbol is the link into a person's unconscious. By controlling this symbol, it is therefore possible to control the person's feelings at will. Fortunately, many men adopt and apply the October Man sequence on a range of unsuspecting women. Perhaps this explains why sometimes you can't explain why you fell in love.

Women as Wardens of Sexual Docility in Hetero-Sexual Relationships

Women's sexual docility in hetero-sexual relationship is an age long product of gendered socialisation which starts as soon as a child is born. Gender socialisation is a more focused form of socialisation; it is how children of different sexes are taught what it means to be male or female (Condry & Condry, 1976). Gender socialisation begins the moment we are born, from the simple question "is it a boy or a girl?" (Gleitman, Fridlund & Reisberg, 2000).

The primary agent for gender socialisation in the family is the mother, followed by peer groups, schools and the media. We largely behave man-like or woman-like because our mothers' gender-socialised us from birth to think and behave in accordance with male or female gender norms. Mothers are the primary influence on gender role development in the early years of one's life (Kaplan, 1991). With regard to gender difference, the family in fact, unlike other groups, is characterized by a specific way of living and constructing gender differences through a process that is surely biological, but also relational and social. The family is "the social and symbolic place in which difference, in particular sexual difference, is believed to be fundamental and at the same time constructed" (Eccles, Jacobs & Harold, 1990).

Sexual violence, particularly female genital mutilation, breast-ironing practiced in rural parts of Cameroun and corseting are performed by women not men in most cultures of the world. These procedures are normally carried out by older women in the communities or traditional birth attendants.

Furthermore, the crave for gender balance by the womenfolk is not only skewwhiff but serves the selfish interest of few who are enlightened enough and so feel marginalised in the man's world. Women are

sympathetic to a system which adds to female power and privilege, so long as it does not dislodge or upset the existing power and privilege. This is why many matriarchic women organized to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment—a constitutional amendment that was supported by feminists, but which could have undermined traditional female privileges in many areas (such as the draft). Women in general supported the aspects of it that resulted in educational and economic opportunities, greater sexual freedom, easy divorce but insisted that female privileges be retained ("chivalry", female child custody, male obligation in the form of child support and alimony, etc.). Gender balancing must be all inclusive to be comprehensive. We must learn to balance our drive for gender equality. Hence, equal recognition and female supremacist is achievable but only if it must radically alter current matriarchal order.

Way Forward

1. Matriarchist approach

As a way forward, this paper recommends that the women folk adopt the *matriarchist* approach expounded by Chinwezu (1990) in his book *Anatomy of Female Power*. Chinweizu, a Nigerian critic, poet, and journalist, author of the *Anatomy of Female Power: A Masculinist Dissection of Matriarchy* proposed three types of women in power terms:

- Matriarchists—women who believe men should serve women, and the most effective way to do this is for men to think they are "in charge" while actually submitting to female control
- Tomboys—women who wish they were men
- Termagants—women who insist on showing openly that they are "in charge", and who take pleasure in openly bossing around and harassing men

Chinweizu stipulates that all three types have always existed, but that *matriarchists* have always been the vast majority of women. For him, *matriarchists* have mastered the art of making the menfolk serve women yet believing that the woman is under their whims and caprices. These groups of women do not roll out drums on the street nor challenge the authority of the man in accordance with culture and religion publicly, yet they rule world in which men falsely believe they are the masters having been created after the image of God and given divine authority to rule over the women. He postulates that every woman has

been imbued with enough natural prowess to rule over and overawe even the strongest man on earth including Samson the strong. The natural attribute possessed by every woman but utilized by the intelligent few include the man's stomach of which she is the custodian and traditionally prescribes what he puts in there as his meal; the woman's womb that bore the man (his mother) and the woman's reproductive tools which the man needs desperately for his sexual satisfaction and procreative gratification. Women who are women enough have used either of these or a combination of two or all to make the hard man soft.

The second class of women called the militant tomboys vent their frustration at not being men by expressing anger and outrage at "male privilege" and "male power", while the non-militant tomboy is glad for an atmosphere in which she can pursue male roles with less resistance than in the past—"she goes into previously all-male fields, and still uses them to the full advantage of the skills and weapons of female power."

And as for termagants, Chinweizu analyzes them as follows:

> The termagant (the shrew, scold and harridan of old) is a misandrous sadist whose greatest pleasures come from man-baiting and man-bashing. She resents the matriarchist code which would have her pretend that she is not boss to her man. Under the banner of feminism, she can truly blossom. (…) The termagant claims for herself absolute freedom of conduct, and would punish any reaction, however natural, she provokes from men. She is the type of woman who would wear a miniskirt without panties, a see-through blouse without bra, and swings her legs and wiggles her arse as she parades up and down the street, and yet insists that no man should get excited by her provocative sexual display. Any man who whistles at the sight is berated for male chauvinism. (…) Under the guise of "radical feminism", some termagants, in their utter misandry, have retreated into lesbian ghettos, and from there attack, as traitors to womankind, those other women who are heterosexual, and who do not totally refrain from social and sexual intercourse with men. Under the banner of feminism, all this is treated as legitimate human behaviour.

Chinweizu's approach as suggested in this paper could be frowned at based on ecclesiastical reasoning or in the parlance of gender exigencies as a subtle way of maintaining the male superiority. But it is noteworthy that biblical women like Debora and Ruth adopted Chinweizu's matriarchist strategies successfully. Closer home, the likes of Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, one of the few women elected to the native House of Chiefs,

serving as an Oloye of the Yoruba people and a ranking member of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons out-smarted men in the quest for recognition without confrontation of the order of male supremacy. Many others like the Queen Amina, a Hausa Muslim Warrior Queen of Zazzau (now Zaria), who refused to marry like Elizabeth, the First Queen of England for the fear of losing power; the great Omu Iyasele of the traditional Onitsha society, whose exploits are well documented; and the leaders of the Aba Women Riot of 1929 are classical examples of women who stood shoulder to shoulder as contemporaries of men in a male dominated society. One character is common to these great women leaders. They all possessed and applied Chinweizu's *matriarchist* strategy in their quest to close ranks with men.

2. Education and Income as liberators

Generally, Richardson (1995) proposes that a critical predictor of gender balance is women's education and related income-earning. Increasing opportunities for girls' education has proven to close the gap between and reduce the tension between what the society hitherto considered exclusive rights and roles of men and women. It has also resulted in increase in the number of adolescent girls in school decrease in number of early marriages (Richardson, 1995). Another significant predictor of gender balance is participation (Cornwall, 1997) participation in political awareness, Improving the condition and status of women in the family, community and national level, freedom -from -violence workshops/conferences, men-women forum on freedom from violence (Jejeebhouy & Sather, 2001; Cornwall, 2011; Okam, 2015). All this creates empowerment necessary for correcting gender disparity. We can as well use other avenues like theatre as suggested by (Ogunleye 2015; Okam, 2015).

3. Theatre as a tool for re-socialisation

Ogunleye (2015) suggests a re-socialisation approach through the process of attrition in order " to destroy 'en-caging' propensities of long held fallacies… by raising our collective voices, -male and female- through the theatre and media" in areas where the woman has been ignored, discriminated against, legislated against, and oppressed. This could happen through the "Theatre of Reciprocal Violence—devoid of stones and cudgels, of reversed discrimination, of hatred nor blood and

gore, but of rationality and articulation of needs of women, wants of women and the freedom to exist in their own nature, to be free to express themselves and be comfortable in their own skin." Or as (Okam, 2015) suggests, a theatre, forum where men and women equalling as oppressed and oppressors come together to discuss their issues and find a way out, in the same way that Andrea Cornwall (2011) has advised that men should be involved in any discussion of violence against women. Women's actions must be reconstructed and their thinking and behaviour socialised within the context of the relations both sexes have established between themselves. Forum where it is possible to view the relations between men and women as nurtured whose past should and can be reviewed as needed.

Conclusion

This paper explores the socio-cultural, religious and environmental factors that created the 'machismo' and 'marianismo' and explicates how masculine stereotyping is created by the cultures but vocalized and sustained by religion and society at large. (Marín, 2003; Noland, 2008). A qualitative analysis of selected studies across cultures was triangulated with views generated through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among the womenfolk in Ifite-Ogwari, Southeast Nigeria. The findings of the paper will be informative for designing women emancipation programmes and gender balancing.

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Binary Constructs: Gender and Power Relations in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

ABSTRACT. In the colonized African world there exists a binary order of oppositions in which imperialism and patriarchy are the major players. In this world, western religion is considered superior to African traditional practices, and the woman is reified, and considered inferior by virtue of being the *other*. One agent of imperialism which thrives till this day is the Christian church. In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, this Christian faith is represented by extreme Catholicism. The woman is at the receiving end of the twin evils of church and patriarchy. And so if one considers the church as an imperialist agent, and then patriarchy as a culturally-determined construct, one can conclude that the woman is doubly marginalised. The author, in this debut novel, deconstructs existing episteme to uncover the underlying falsehoods in the Christian religion and patriarchy. Through a textual analysis methodology, and a deconstructive approach, this paper intends to explore how the author, through the instrumentation of strong and revolutionary female characters, a female narrative voice backed up by authorial presence, and an ingenious literary technique, reinvents the African woman.

KEYWORDS: Chimamanda Adichie, binary, purple hibiscus, gender, imperialism

Introduction

Gender issues and power relations have always featured prominently in postcolonial feminist discourse. But I must state here that long before the arrival of the Europeans on the African continent, gender inequality had always been a critical part of the grand narratives of patriarchy. Certain rituals and rites (kinship rites, succession and inheritance rites, initiation, etc.) often exclude the participation of women. In such traditional societies, specific roles are assigned to women; childbearing, housekeeping, farming, and such other duties considered suitable for them. The implicit intention is to make them seem inferior to men. Gender is thus to be considered as 'the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are socially determined' (Nwagwu, 2009, p. 3).

These roles and responsibilities are imposed social constructs, and they help determine how individuals are 'expected to think and to act as women and men because of the way society is organised and not because of… biological differences' (Nwagwu, 2009, p. 3).

On its part, colonialist discourse inaugurated 'the binary logic of imperialism' (Ashcroft, 2000, p. 19). Drawing from the pioneering work of Ferdinand de Saussure on the linguistic sign, the European created frames for fixing meaning and identity on the basis of binary oppositions. And so while it can be said that 'signs mean by their difference from other signs, the binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible' (Ashcroft, 2000, p. 18). This binary logic

> is a development of that tendency in Western thought in general to see the world in terms of binary oppositions that establish a relation of dominance. A simple distinction between centre/margin; colonizer/colonized; metropolis/empire; civilized /primitive represents very efficiently the violent hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively perpetuates (Ashcroft, 2000, p. 19).

Thus, the imperial colonial structure of binary oppositions helped stoke the fire of gender inequality among colonized peoples, and patriarchy seeks to perpetuate it in 'a violent hierarchy, in which one term of the opposition is always dominant' (Ashcroft, 2000, p. 19). Let us consider the analogy which Ashcroft (2000, p. 93) draws between imperialism and patriarchy:

> Both patriarchy and imperialism can be seen to exert analogous forms of domination over those they render subordinate. Hence the experiences of women in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled in a number of respects, and both feminist and post-colonial politics oppose such dominance.

Not only are imperialism and patriarchy genetically related, they are also both extremist by nature. Patriarchy, just like imperialism is the cover under which sets of identities are created in an ever-evolving game of power in which the *other* is the ultimate loser. For Ropo Sekoni (2008, p. 15), patriarchy is 'the appropriation of social power by men to the exclusion of women and the inferiorization of women by men as a way of justifying the subordination of women'. But, beyond the Saussurian concepts of *signifier* and *signified*, and the arbitrariness inherent in this linguistic model, imperialism and patriarchy derive their *raison*

d'être from mental archetypes common in all human. This is to say that from time immemorial, the complexities of reality are such that the human thought process tries to reduce this reality to a binary reordering which makes it possible to create hierarchies which have come to stay, through discursive practices, as orthodoxies.

However, orthodoxies are constructs which serve to protect the interests of a particular society or class. In the colonial period, imperialism provided the impetus for the desecration of Africa, and in contemporary African societies, patriarchy is the bedrock of male dominance. In the Nigerian context, the socio-political, religious and economic domains consign the woman to the background, making her a victim 'of a dependent and impoverished structure of justice' (Lorapuu, 2015, p. 160).

Orthodoxies as constructs can be challenged to unearth underlying falsehoods; that is to say that they should be viewed not as finality, but rather as contingent reality. One can assume that if patriarchy continues to find expression in western imperialist language of identity and domination, feminism seeks to appropriate language in order to deconstruct it in a quest for a new wholesomeness.

The novel, *Purple Hibiscus* tells the story of an Igbo family in disarray. The patriarch, Eugene rules his household with an iron hand. In a vice-like grip, he rides roughshod over every member of his "fiefdom". Hiding under the cloak of an extremist brand of Catholicism, Eugene unleashes untold hardship on his wife and children. In the end what rescues the traumatised family from disintegration and demoralisation is maternal love and warmth.

In the present study, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie adopts a feminist stance in her denunciation of religious fanaticism, violence against women, and their exclusion 'from what Jean Franco would call male games of power' (Gikandi, 1991, p. 207).

The violence of religion and patriarchy

The church played a pivotal role in brainwashing Africans into believing in the omnipotence of the Judaeo-Christian God. The subjugation and domination of Africans through the instrumentation of the church was therefore deliberate. This domination of the church over the various colonized peoples in Africa was part of the discourse of binary oppositions. The assumption of the ascendancy of an imported religion over

African traditional belief systems is overwhelming. This is evident in the outright rejection of traditional ethos by the overzealous Eugene. His aversion for anything traditional comes to a head when he bars his own father from coming to his house, and subsequently forbids his children from accepting food from the grand patriarch, Papa Nnukwu because the old man pours libation to traditional gods. Eugene tries to impose this received religious dogma on his family. On one occasion, Kambili, the narrator tells Aunty Ifeoma:

> Pagan, traditionalist, what did it matter? He was not catholic, that was all; he was not of the faith. He was one of the people whose conversion we prayed for so that they did not end in the everlasting torment of hellfire (Adichie, 2006, p. 89).

Later in the novel, Aunty Ifeoma, a moderate catholic, educates her young niece, Kambili. She tries to make the young girl understand that Africans have their own kind of traditional religion which they practised before the arrival of the Church. And when these two religions come in conflict, what one requires is compromise. On another occasion, when Aunty Ifeoma attributes the recovery of Papa—Nnukwu to the intervention of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Kambili disagrees because as far as she is concerned 'How can Our Lady intercede on behalf of a heathen?' (Adichie, 2006, p. 173).

Kambili also recalls an event during which her mother had knelt down in the traditional way to greet the *Igwe* (traditional ruler) of their village. Her father rebuked her mother for bowing before a human being. But later when the family went to visit the Bishop at Awka, Kambili explains:

> I did not kneel to kiss his ring. I wanted to make papa proud. But papa yanked my ear in the car and said I did not have the spirit of discernment: the bishop was a man of God; the igwe was merely a traditional ruler (Adichie, 2006, p. 102).

Through language, the West created subtle identities which have stuck. One of such identities is the term "pagan" reserved for Africans and other colonized peoples who do not practice Christianity. Thus, Christianity, as epitomised by the Catholic Church, wrought violence on the traditional way of life of the very people it sought to 'redeem' from the pangs of hell.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie also denounces another kind of domination which occurs among her people. She hails from Abba, a community in present day Anambra state of Nigeria. She is therefore of the Igbo stock of south-eastern Nigeria. Among her people exists a deep-seated, pristine, patriarchal structure of social organisation which defines power relations in such a way that the woman is left at the margins. This patriarchal structure is entrenched in the folklore of her people. At one point in her novel, the reader finds an embedded narrative in form of a tale which Papa-Nnukwu tells his grandchildren during his stay in Enugu:

> Long ago, when animals talked and lizards were few, there was a big famine in the land of the animals. Farms dried up and the soil cracked. Hunger killed many of the animals and the ones left behind did not even have the strength to dance the mourning dance at funerals. One day *all the male animals* had a meeting to decide what could be done, before hunger wiped out the whole village (Adichie, 2006, p. 165, emphasis, mine).

In the above opening formula of a traditional folktale, only the male animals have met, to the exclusion of the female ones, to determine the future of the community in the face of grave danger. Through these kinds of tales, patriarchy becomes 'ontologized'. Thus, In Igbo folkloric tradition, one finds an archetypal binary construct where animals belong to either side of the divide: strong/weak; intelligent/stupid; fast/slow; good/wicked, etc. Even the gods in the Igbo mythology are either male or female. *Chukwu* or *Chiokike* (creator of the world and other lesser gods) is the male principle and resides above the earth, while *Ani*, the earth goddess is the feminine principle, and thus lesser.

In the Igbo culture therefore, women are stereotyped. They belong to the category of the weak and vulnerable, just like children. And they are considered lower than men in terms of status. Ada Mere (1973, p. 3, quoted by Afam Ebeogu, 2008, p. 149) gives some reasons for the underestimation of the woman among the Igbo:

> Because she is stereotyped as physically weak, fickle-minded, highly emotional and because she, traditionally, is involved in patrilocal marriage and does not perpetuate family name, (the women's) status in the Igbo traditional society is low.

In such a society, wife-battering and child abuse are phallic symbols of male strength and dominance. Women and children are never part of

the decision-making process. So one finds a binary structure where the levers of power and authority tilt to the advantage of the male members of the community.

Thus, one discovers that this binary ordering of things is carried over into the literary works of a majority of the male authors. They created in most of the early works, a binary world order which marginalised the woman. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), one finds a world of oppositions. The protagonist, Okonkwo tells his children stories of warriors and war, whereas his wives tell the children animal stories considered effeminate. Okonkwo's son, Nwoye is considered effeminate, and 'cold impotent ash' because he does not exhibit male traits of valour and violence. And do we need to overemphasize Okonkwo's excessive brutality on his harem?

Today, the advent of western education and Christianity has not diminished the overbearing influence of male dominance, especially among the Igbo. Eugene's Christian faith does not in any way suppress the bestial personality of the *pater familias*. In a flagrant display of patriarchal violence, he beats his daughter for 'eating ten minutes before mass' (Adichie, 2006, p. 109). His wife's pleas fell on deaf ears, and the narrator explains the sordid episode thus:

> He unbuckled his belt slowly. It was a heavy belt made of layers of brown leather with a sedate leather-covered buckle. It landed on Jaja first, across his shoulder. Then Mama raised her hands as it landed on her upper arm (…) I put the bowl down just as the belt landed on my back. Papa was like a Fulani nomad—although he did not have their spare, tall body as he swung the belt at Mama, Jaja, and me (Adichie, 2006, p. 110).

The reader of *Purple hibiscus* is alarmed when Eugene disfigures his son's finger, burns Kambili's feet with hot water, and later beats her to a pulp. The children move to Nsukka to stay with Aunty Ifeoma, where Kambili recuperates after a brief stay at the hospital in Enugu. The physical assault on their mother comes to its climax when she lost her six weeks pregnancy due to excessive loss of blood arising from beatings. The narrator recounts her mother's experience in a dialogue between mother and daughter:

> You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, *nne*? Your father broke it on my belly. (…) My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it (Adichie, 2006, p. 253).

Eugene's attitude is symptomatic of the violence of patriarchy. The violence which the African woman has had to contend with through the ages to the present times is both physical and psychological.

Deconstructing patriarchy and extreme Catholicism

If Flora Nwapa (*Efuru*) and Buchi Emecheta (*The Bride Price*) inaugurated the *belles lettres* of feminist writing in Nigeria, one can say that about forty decades on—from the time of the publication of *Efuru* (1966) to the date of publication of *Purple Hibiscus* (2006), some radical approach to the issue of gender should be expected, naturally. Even though Chimamanda Adichie was not born at the time when the African literary scene witnessed unprecedented effervescence, especially during the anticolonial struggle, she is enlightened enough to understand that women at that time hardly found any strong literary voice to carry out their protest. As far as African literature was concerned, Lloyd W. Brown (quoted by Gikandi, 1991, p. 207) corroborated this fact when he averred that women authors remained 'the other voices, the unheard voices, rarely discussed and seldom accorded space in the repetitive and predictably male-oriented studies in the field'.

The first wave of nationalist writers romanticised and idealised the African woman in such a way as to mask her marginalisation. Gikandi (1991, p. 207) summarises the sordid situation thus:

> Instead of attempting to ascertain the fundamental ways in which African women had been victimised both by colonialism and important aspects of African traditions, these writers felt that evoking an African whole was an important precondition for nationalism. The result was that in many important cultural texts such as Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mt. Kenya*, the desires and identities of women were effaced in order to empower African men. And in important nationalist novels such as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngûgî's *The River Between*, the rehabilitation and legitimacy of African culture could only be achieved by repressing the marginalisation of women in the Igbo and Gîkûyû cultures respectively represented in these novels.

And the representation of women in male-authored novels reveals a power structure clearly dominated by men. For Ramonu Sanusi (2015, p. 30) 'these textual representations reflect social realities and are rooted and implicated in power inequalities in societies that produced them'.

What this implies is that women are never central characters, and thus, are never given the opportunity to unfold. In earlier African works like those of Achebe, Soyinka, Ekwensi, etc., the women are kept at the narrative margins while their male counterparts take centre stage. According to Irène d'Ameilda (1994, p. 137)

> La femme est rarement un personnage principal aussi bien dans la trame narrative que dans la thématique où elle occupe une place tout-à-fait secondaire, se situe à l'arrière-plan et ne se trouve définie que par rapport aux hommes.
> The woman is rarely a protagonist in the narrative works, as well as in their thematic where she occupies a secondary position, relegated to the background and is only defined in relation to the men. (Translation is mine).

Today, if women have adopted new strategies for denouncing and deconstructing patriarchy, Chimamanda Adichie is one of the most erudite vanguards of a postcolonial counter-discourse. For Aduke Adebayo (2000, p. 288) some of these strategies include 'forging a new relationship with the female body, redefining maternity and appropriating language for self-identity'. For Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, characterisation, language, and counter—violence at the root of her rejection of patriarchal cum religious violence.

The central characters in her novel are women: Kambili, Aunty Ifeoma, Amaka , Sisi, and of course the narrator's mother simply referred to as Mama in the novel. Other episodic female characters exist, especially Chiaku who lends her voice as a social commentator. Eugene, one of the male principal characters in the novel, is presented at once as a villain, a despicable personality, but he is also pitiable in his condition as a relic of western civilization. At one point, he refuses to attend mass in Abba, his hometown, simply because he does 'not like to say mass in Igbo' (Adichie, 2006, p. 112). Eugene is a victim of imperialist indoctrination. He places the church above his immediate and extended family; he is cut off from tradition, and considers traditional rites as pagan. Through the character of Eugene, Chimamanda Adichie achieves a major breakthrough in the deconstruction of patriarchy and religious fanaticism. Religion here is seen as an imperialist instrument whose aim is to desecrate age long African way of life.

The author does not create weak female characters. Though some may appear to be weak at the beginning, but as the narrative progresses, they learn to rise to the occasion. This is the case with Beatrice, Kambili's

mother. At a point when she can no longer bear the excesses of patriarchy, she matures from a state of docility and resignation to become the ultimate liberator of her "body" and that of her children. She kills her husband, and tells her children without remorse that she poisoned him: 'I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me; her uncle is a powerful witch doctor' (Adichie, 2006, p. 294). Sisi used to be a maid in the household of Eugene. She also observed the torments of her madam in the hands of the master of the house. It can be said that she agreed to the plan to eliminate Eugene as a show of female solidarity. She understands that Beatrice's predicament could mean her own (Sisi's) potential experience.

Chimamanda Adichie's use of an omniscient narrator is deliberate. The choice of Kambili, the youthful daughter of Eugene is not fortuitous. This innocent adolescent tells her story from the viewpoint of an insider. She is one of the victims of paternal highhandedness. The innocence of youth which she brings to bear on her narrative captures the very essence of verisimilitude. Here is another character that matures with time. Her romance with Father Amadi reveals the author's desire to challenge the myth of celibacy, and return the woman's sexuality back to her. One learns therefore that beyond the cloak of religiosity and imposed inhibitions, it is in the nature of all humans to love. She does not wait for the man to make the first move as she tells Father Amadi 'I love you' (Adichie, 2006, p. 280).

At the beginning, the reader sees Kambili as a young school girl who gives in to the whims of a brutal father. Her brief stay with Aunty Ifeoma helps to stabilise her psychologically. She appropriates her body, soul and sensuality. During an outing with Father Amadi, she recounts: 'He turned to me with an expression that I had never known, his eyes almost sad. He leaned over the gear and pressed his face to mine. I wanted our lips to meet and hold, but he moved his face away' (Adichie, 2006, p. 280). Kambili sustains the narrative of the text, giving minute details and vivid descriptions.

Aunty Ifeoma's role in the novel is epic. The presence of this strong and determined character foregrounds a major flaw in the character of Eugene: the abdication of responsibility. She serves as a counterforce to patriarchy. She takes her father to stay with her in Nsukka when the old man, Papa-Nnukwu took ill. Her elder brother, Eugene refuses to live up to his responsibility on spurious grounds that their father is a pagan. At

the death of the grand patriarch, Eugene wants a catholic funeral. Aunty Ifeoma rejects the idea vehemently, and in a fit of anger she declares:

> I will put my dead husband's grave up for sale, Eugene, before I give our father a catholic funeral. Do you hear me? I said I will sell Ifediora's grave first! Was our father a catholic? I ask you, Eugene, was he a catholic? (Adichie, 2006, p. 195).

Aunty Ifeoma is herself, a catholic, but she does not denigrate traditional mores, besides African traditional religion has existed before the irruption of the West. To her Christianity and African traditional belief systems are two sides of the same coin, so that the issue of hierarchy of religion is at once dissolved. As the narrator puts it, adopting the indirect free speech technique:

> Aunty Ifeoma was silent (…) then she looked up and said Papa-Nnukwu was not a heathen but a traditionalist, that sometimes what was different was just as good as what was familiar , that when Papa-Nnukwu did his itu-nzu, his declaration of innocence, in the morning, it was the same as saying our rosary (Adichie, 2006, p. 173).

Aunty Ifeoma's position, though not anticlerical, serves to negate the very discourse of the ascendancy of one religion over another. We observe that beyond the question of religion all good men are equal. After all, during his daily ritual of declaration of innocence, Papa-Nnukwu also prays for those who despise him: "Chineke! Bless my son, Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him" (Adichie, 2006, p. 175). Thus the extremist stance of Eugene is viewed in traditional circles as a curse.

The ideological thrust of the narrative is located in the character of Aunty Ifeoma. Adichie seems to be telling her reader that the woman does not require being a man's slave in order to survive. She warns her brother's wife of the danger in remaining under Eugene's roof in the name of marriage. She tells her sister in-law that 'when a house is on fire, you run out before the roof collapses on your head' (Adichie, 2006, p. 219).

Aunty Ifeoma also participates in social activism. She vehemently rejects the idea of a sole administrator for the university at Nsukka. Even when she was relieved of her position at the university, she secures another job in America and relocates with her children.

Of the female characters in the novel, one cannot gloss over Amaka, aunty Ifeoma's young daughter. She is a chip of the old block. She has a revolutionary spirit. She is also catholic like her mother, but this does not deter her from querying certain liturgical practices and rituals. One of such Christian rituals which undermine the African onomastic is Confirmation. It is believed in Christian circles that a Christian name is needed during confirmation in order to validate it. But the youthful Amaka thinks otherwise. She refuses a Christian name, saying, 'what's the point, then? Chiamaka says God is beautiful. Chima says God knows best, Chiebuka says God is the greatest. Don't they all glorify God as much as 'Paul' and 'Peter' and 'Simon?' (Adichie, 2006, p. 276).

Earlier in the novel, the reader finds Amaka locked in a philosophical dialogue with Father Amadi over the latter's missionary work in Germany. Her question takes the priest off-balance: 'The white missionaries brought us their god… which was the same colour as them, worshipped in their language and packaged in the boxes they made. Now that we take their god back to them, shouldn't we at least repackage it?' (Adichie, 2006, p. 271). It becomes clear at this point that part of the author's ideological project is the demystification of the Christian epistemology. Through 'authorial voice', the young Amaka tinkers, by asking probing questions, with the very foundation of the Christian faith.

Language and narrative forms

The use of Igbo idiolects and narrative art forms helps to appropriate language for "self-identity". The author understands the violence of imperialism as it affects African cultures. Terry Eagleton (1983, p. 215) recognises this fact when he posits that:

> Imperialism is not only the exploitation of cheap labour power, raw materials and easy markets, but the uprooting of languages and customs (…) It manifests itself not only in company balance sheets and in air-bases, but can be traced to the most intimate roots of speech and signification.

In deconstructing the imperialist language of domination, Chimamanda Adichie reinforces what writers before her have done in their respective literary oeuvres. As Akakuru (2009, p. 99) puts it:

> Whether it is in the form of transliteration, use of proverbs or borrowed words from African languages or even outright blend-words or amalgams of foreign-cum-local words, our writers have not been passive consumers of the Foreign languages they use to realise their works… You can see that in Achebe, in Elechi Amadi, in Ahmadou Kourouma, in Massa Makan Diabaté. Even in some earlier novels by Ferdinand Oyono… local African words are used. African sensibility, African culture, is pervasive.

This is to say that there is a deliberate attempt at 'arm-twisting the foreign languages they use to express African realities and sensibilities even if it is at some costs' (Akakuru, 2009, p. 99).

Let us consider the following Igbo words and expressions which confer on *Purple Hibiscus* some kind of Igboness: *Nnne, ngwa*. Go and change (16); Come and help me, *biko* (37); *Ke kwanu* (19); *Onugbu leaves* (20); *Ozugo* (22); *Ofe nsala* (23); *Umunna* (28); *Ogwu* (28); *ngwo-ngwo* (40); *Umu m* (42); *nno* (43), etc.

The pervasiveness of African language forms in the works of African literary artists is explained by Chantal Zabus (2007, p. 2–3 quoted by Akakuru, 2009, p. 161):

> They (the texts of African writers) are indeed palimpsests, in that, behind the scriptural authority of the European language, the earlier imperfectly erased remnants of the African language can still be perceived. When deciphering the palimpsest, what is recovered is the trace in filigree of such African (source)-languages as Wolof, Ndût, Madinka, Fanti, Yoruba, Igbo and Ijo.

Obiechina (1975, p. 27), corroborates this fact when he says of African writers:

> Western-educated, nevertheless, they are quite familiar with their own folklore, have a comprehensive knowledge of the popular proverbs and other traditional speech forms, and can speak their vernaculars competently. They also share the values, attitudes and structures of feelings… which are implicit in oral cultures.

The author of *purple Hibiscus* is not a cultural outcast therefore. Like her predecessors before her, she is very much at home with her culture and makes abundant use of local flavour to season her narrative

The names of her central female characters are derived from traditional Igbo culture. Kambili translates literally as *let me live* which implies freedom. Ifeoma is *a good thing.* And Amaka, as we have seen

earlier, is the shortened form of Chiamaka which signifies *God is beautiful*. Thus, onomastic, including idioms and idiolects, and traditional modes of narration, such as we find in embedded narratives form the basis for the domestication of the English language to apprehend the African world.

Chimamanda Adichie also shows mastery through the uses of rhetorical devices. Humour for example, is achieved through description of events and characters. The reader of the novel can hardly gloss over the vivid description of Eugene's countenance during communion in church. The narrator tells of how "he would hold his eyes shut so hard that his face tightened into a grimace, and then he would stick his tongue out as far as it could go" (Adichie, 2006, p. 21). Humour here helps to expose the hypocrisy of an atrocious father, while serving to douse the charged mood of her narrative.

The dialogic technique is also central to Chimamamda Ngozi Adichie's narrative architecture. The role of dialogues in a text cannot be overemphasised. *Purple Hibiscus* is a story, and the story of any novel is that of characters who act, and interact among themselves in the evolution of the text. Dialogue helps to give voice to a hitherto voiceless species of the society, the woman. Dialogue also enables the reader to penetrate the psychology of individual female characters in their quotidian existence. Through dialogue, Aunty Ifeoma is able to persuade Eugene's wife to take action; Amaka is able to engage Father Amadi in religious discourse, and Kambili succeeds in penetrating most of the characters she describes. For example, she gets first-hand experience about the workings of patriarchy from her interactions with her mother. And her constant dialogue with Jaja, her brother, enables them to maintain the bond which maternal love has infused in them. Dialogue is therefore the author's ploy to give women the language of power within the dynamics of a male-constructed universe.

Thus, moving away from what Aduke Adebayo (2000, p. 293) considers the 'unidimensional and monologist narrative perspective of the classical novel', Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has rendered her narrative to accommodate the complex realities of her time, much as we have seen in the use of dialogue where multiple voices help to expand the reader's angle of vision.

The author also adopts the cataphoric mode of narration to create suspense. In what appears to be a prologue, the author ends the narrative from the beginning. Jaja's defiance is witnessed before the first

chapter. The title of the novel is a metaphor for Jaja's revolt against Eugene's dictatorial impulses. As Kambili, the narrator puts it,

> Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Aunty Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup. A freedom to be, to do (Adichie, 2006, p. 24).

Jaja's defiance of paternal authority is also important to the understanding of Adichie's ideology. She imbues this young boy with a revolutionary spirit reminiscent of the spirit of resistance put up by 19th century King Jaja of Opobo who countered the economic exploitation of the British. Though a boy, Adichie seems to be telling her reader that the efforts of men are needed to compliment the struggle of the woman for total emancipation. At the end of the narrative, Jaja goes to jail for the crime of murder committed by his mother.

Conclusion

Feminist writing of the post-colonial era is a rejection of the image of the woman created through discursive subterfuge. Firstly, imperialism imposed binary oppositions which placed African values at the margin. The church as an agent of imperial colonialist imposition has been at the forefront of the profanation of African religious institutions. Secondly, some cultural practices have also given impetus to the marginalization of the woman. Church and patriarchy are therefore at the root of the commodification of the woman.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a feminist. Her novel, *Purple Hibiscus* is a response to the continued marginalization of the Nigerian, nay African woman. It is an outright condemnation of the brutalities of patriarchy, as well as the spurious claims of ascendancy of the Christian church over African religions. Chimamanda Adichie's characterization, use of Igbo idioms and onomastic and narrative techniques inherited from western literary canons, all conduce to deconstruct male domination, not only on the literary scene, but in society at large.

The author's brand of feminism is not radical, even though Beatrice kills Eugene. For Chimamamda Adichie, the support of the man is needed for the emancipation of the woman. Jaja's role in the novel is quite instructive in this wise.

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Homestead Dictators and Daughters' Revolt in Four African Novels

ABSTRACT. Father and daughter relationship has aroused some research interest especially within the social sciences and psychology in recent times. Researchers argue that fathers have tremendous influence over the cognitive, social and psychological well-being of their daughters. This study contributes to this area of scholarship by extending it to the literary world as it explores father/daughter relationship in Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan*, Ngugi wa Thiong'O's *The River Between*, TsiTsi Dangaremgba's *Nervous Conditions* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. The theory that lends itself to the thrust of this study is masculinity. The aim is to create more awareness of the effect of dictatorial behavior of fathers on the well-being of their daughters. The paper demonstrates that the authoritarianism of fathers in their dealings with their daughters leads to dangerous outcomes such as elopement, mental illness, physical violence and death. The paper submits that paternal masculinity be deconstructed because of its serious implications on the identity construction of both fathers and daughters. This, the paper posits, will facilitate integrated human development.

KEYWORDS: homestead dictator, father, daughter, daughter's revolt, masculinity

Introduction

A considerable body of research argues that fathers have tremendous influence over the cognitive, social and psychological development of their daughters. Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly (2007, p. 1) for instance posit that "father involvement has enormous implications… for their children in terms of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development". Teresa M. Scott, Lynne M. Webb and Patricia Amason (2012, p. 82) on their part examine how communication functions in father-daughter relationships among a sample of middle-aged, professionally accomplished daughters and conclude that daughters' perception of their fathers' conformity-orientation and conversation-orientation were "positively associated with daughters' perception of relational closeness" while "daughters' perception of competing with fathers during

conflicts was negatively associated with reported communication apprehension" (Scott, Webb & Amason, 2012, p. 82). Asbah Zia, Anila Amber Malik and Saima Masoon Ali (2015, p. 315) explore father/daughter relationship and its impact on daughter's self-esteem and academic performance and submit that a father's sensitivity and alertness towards his daughter's feelings, "having time to listen to her, showing interest in her hobbies and verbal approval or praise are very crucial factors for building her positive self-esteem and self-image". Naina Jain (2015, p. 75) investigates the influence of father/daughter attachment pattern on daughter's development from the Indian perspective and concludes that "the presence of secure attachment between daughter and father has positive influence on daughter's development" and that "insecure attachment can negatively influence the development of daughter". Elizabeth L. Barrett and Mark T. Morman (2013, p. 225) examine the transitional moment of change in perceptions of closeness within the father/daughter relationship and "offers an attempt at expanding our understanding of the specific mechanisms through which father/daughter closeness is created, maintained, or dissolved". Amanda La Guardia, Judith A. Nelson, and Ian M. Lertora (2014, p. 344) carry out a research on the impact of father's absence on daughter sexual behavior and submit that "women from father-absent homes experienced earlier onset of menarche than those from father-present homes…". Qiong Xu (2009, p. 13) examines the outcome of father/daughter relationships during girls' adolescence in Urban China and asserts that "fathers are significantly less involved in care-giving tasks with their daughters than sons". Xu argues further that "we cannot conclude that fathers' effects on their daughters' lives are negative, especially in different social and family contexts" (2009, p. 13). This argument provides a compelling gap which this research intends to fill. It will put to test Xu's position. Further, Barrett and Morman (2013, p. 254–255) assert that "…father/daughter relationship has been historically under-studied in relation to other family dyads". Accordingly, this study attempts to make a contribution to this relatively limited area of scholarship because of its social and psychological impact on both fathers and daughters for Barrett and Morman (2013, p. 255) observe that "the relationship between father/daughter is one that spans a lifetime and plays a significant role in shaping both individual's identity".

It is evident from the foregoing brief review of literature that much of the work done in father/daughter relationship comes from a range of

disciplines in the social sciences and psychology. This paper wishes to extend this area of scholarship to the literary world where not much has been done by exploring father/daughter relationship in Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan* (1964), Ngugi wa Thiong'O's *The River Between* (1974), TsiTsi Dangaremgba's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006). The scope of this study is informed by the need to underscore father/daughter conflict and its outcome as a common trend within the African cultures. The aim is to create more awareness of the effect of dictatorial behavior of fathers on the well-being of their daughters.

Theoretical Framework

The conflict in the father/daughter relationship largely centers around masculine pride, male violence and the culture of conformity. Frederika Cronje (1997, p. 1) argues that "a meta-analysis of the trends in the fatherhood literature indicated a close relation between the construct of 'masculinity' and 'fatherhood". Toeing this line of argument, Petteri Eerola and Johanna Mykkänen (2013, p. 2) aver that "as parenthood is a highly gendered area, male parental roles and men's role in their families are bound up with the practices and cultural conceptions of masculinity". Therefore, the theory that lends itself to the thrust of this study is masculinity. There are many strands of masculinity such as hegemonic masculinity, Black masculinity, traditional masculinity and paternal masculinity. However, this study anchors its research on an integrated framework of traditional masculinity and paternal masculinity. Traditional masculinity according to Ander Bergara, Josetxu Riviere and Ritxar Bacete (2010, p. 27) "is a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, myths, stereotypes and behaviours that legitimizes and endows men with power to exercise it". They add that traditional masculinity is "an androcentric vision of the world within a patriarchal social and cultural system based on the idea of male authority and leadership. A system in which there is a predominance of men over women, where the structures of production and reproduction of power is largely grounded in inequality between men and women" (Bergara et al. 2010, p. 27). To Eerola and Mykkänen (2013, p. 3) paternal masculinity is "the social and cultural constructions and practices of male parenting that inform men's descriptions of their roles as male parents and that the men themselves

adopt and follow". They argue further that "paternal masculinity is "a subfield of masculinity that appears in men's family relations" (Eerola & Mykkänen, 2013, p. 4).

The system that maintains and sustains the social and cultural constructions of traditional masculinity and paternal masculinity is patriarchy. Bell Hooks (2010, p. 1) defines patriarchy as "a political-social system that insists males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females and with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence". Bergara et al. (2010, p. 27) define patriarchy as "a form of political, religious and socio- economic organization based on the idea of male authority and leadership, which grants the dominance of men over women. A definition of dictatorship is also pertinent to facilitate the study. *Vocabulary.com Dictionary* defines dictatorship as "government or a social situation where one person makes all the rules and decisions without input from anyone else. It implies absolute power—one person who takes control of a political situation, a family, a classroom…that in dictatorship one person keeps repeating the same command". In other words, dictatorship is synonymous to the absence of individual rights or liberty. It demands maximum and sometimes blind obedience to the rules/laws by members of a given group or community or family. Stiff penalties await any member who rebels against the rules/laws of the system. This study deals with family dyads, that of father and daughter. The homestead dictator therefore is the father whose headship of the family is synonymous with dictatorship.

Analysis of Texts

Nndozie F. Inyama (1996, p. 217) argues that in "patriarchal environments… relationships are male-focused and the father is the most significant member of the family, the source of authority and protector of family interests and well-being". Onyemaechi Udumukwu (2011, p. 194) adds that the father also emphasizes on "ownership, domination and submission". However, fathers' demand for unalloyed submission from their children oftentimes generates conflict. This is evident in the relationship between Babamukuru and his daughter, Nyasha; Jeremiah and his daughter, Tambudzai, in TsiTsi Dangarembgba's *Nervous Condi-*

tions (1988), Joseph Koégbogi and his daughter, Tioumbé, in Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan* (1964) and Eugene and his daughter, Kambili, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006). Others include Joshua and his two daughters, Muthoni and Nyambura in Ngugi wa Thiong'O's *The River Between* (1974).

TsiTsi Dangarembgba's *Nervous Conditions*

Nyasha's father, Babamukuru does not approve of anything she does. He loathes the words she speaks, the books she reads, the clothes she wears, the way she eats and forces her to conform to his notions of how she should live her life. At the slightest shift, he flares up and demands unquestioned obedience from her. He warns: "You must respect me. I am your father. And in that capacity I am telling you, I am-telling-you…" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 113). He reiterates that "not even her brother dares to challenge my authority…We cannot have two men in this house" (p. 115). Babamukuru's egocentric streak gives credence to Carol Ijeoma Njoku's argument that "the traditional avenues for men to gain honor include "exercising control over their wives and children" (2012, p. 350). Babamukuru relates with his daughter with such strictness that a big communication gap sets in between father and daughter. His despotic stance exacerbates Nyasha's adamance in negotiating her identity. She refuses to transform "you are" utterances *from her father* into "I am" utterances in constructing a self-narrative" (Godrej, 2013, p. 113 *addition mine*). Chinyelu Ojukwu (1999, p. 118) observes that "Babamukuru asserts his authority and power over his daughter while Nyasha asserts her individuality…" .

On one occasion, she returns home late from school and Babamukuru demands an explanation from her. She apologizes saying "I'm sorry, Daddy…I was talking to friends" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 112). He refuses to take her word for it because he has already drawn his conclusion: "You are lying… You were talking to that Baker boy… What were you doing?" (p. 113). She reiterates: "I was only talking. And dancing… He was teaching me a new dance… I wasn't doing anything wrong" (p. 113). Babamukuru as a harsh judge of his daughter's ways, retorts "…but you did it. I saw you. Do you think I am lying, that these eyes of mine lie?" (p. 113). Irritated, Nyasha rails at him: "What do you want me to say? You want me to admit I'm guilty, don't you? All right then. I was doing it,

whatever you're talking about. There I've confessed" (p. 113). Babamukuru queries his son, Chido, for letting his "sister behave like a whore without saying anything" (p. 114). At the mention of 'whore', Nyasha looks at her father "with murder in her eyes" (p. 114). She says: "should I worry about what people say when my father calls me a whore?" (p. 114). This war of words between father and daughter unfortunately culminates into a fight. "Both father/daughter went down on the floor, Babamukuru alternately punching Nyasha's head and banging it against the floor screaming "How can you go about disgracing me? Me! Like that! No, you cannot do it. I am respected at this mission. I cannot have a daughter who behaves like a whore" (p. 114-15). Nyasha too was "screaming and wriggling and doing what damage she could…" (p. 115).

Evidently, Babamukuru aims at Nyasha's femaleness by branding her a 'whore'. This recalls Christopher Babatunde Ogunyemi's argument that "crude words like 'prostitute' 'harlot' are freely used by male chauvinists to denote the image of the women folks in polarized African societies" (2014, p. 51). Tambu, her cousin's remark about the incidence is to the point: "…what I didn't like was the way all the conflicts came back to this question of femaleness. Femaleness as opposed and inferior to maleness" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 116). Filled with disdain, Nyasha from this point forward detests anything Babamukuru does. "Nyasha had a way of looking at things that made it difficult for her to be impressed by Babamukuru" (p. 158). For instance, she criticizes the Christian wedding he organizes for his brother, Jeremiah and his wife. She gets quite upset with it. Again, when Maiguru, Lucia and Ma'Shingayi pour crescendos of praise on Babamukuru for offering Lucia a job, Tambu longs to join the adoring women "to extol Babamukuru's magnanimity" (p. 159) but Nyasha, hissing, warns her: "Don't you dare" (p. 159). She tells Tambu that she "misjudged the situation. It was the obligation of decent people in positions like Babamukuru's to do so" (p. 159).

Babamukuru's image as a homestead dictator is accentuated through the food battle he engages with his daughter. He forces Nyasha to eat all her food whether she is hungry or not, full or not. She stands up to this battle by quietly gobbling up the food and thereafter going straight to the bathroom to force a vomit. Tambu disturbed, asks her if she is ill. She answers: "no… I did it myself. With my toothbrush" (p. 190). She intimates Tambu: "Imagine all the fuss over a plateful of food. But it's more than that really, more than just food. That's how it comes out, but really it's all the things about boys and men and being decent and indecent and

good and bad. He goes on and on with the accusations and threats, and I'm just not coping very well" (p. 190). Rosemary Moyana (1994, p. 32) confirms that "Nyasha's problem is compounded by the fact that she is a girl whom her parents expect miraculously and automatically to conform to their traditional ways". Nyasha feels so entrapped in the home with her father's severe presence that she wastes away gradually and finally comes down with a psychiatric problem. This is reminiscent of Scott, et al.'s argument that "when a father feels and displays mixed emotions toward an adult child, the adult child's health may worsen" (2012, p. 71). Babamukuru's brash egotism makes it difficult for him to notice his daughter's physical and mental depreciation. To Odoi et al. (2014, p. 157), Nyasha's mental illness "…is also a state where the individual is free from influences outside herself". Odoi et al's argument corroborates Charles Sugnet's submission that Nyasha's bulimia/anorexia is a form of resistance (1997, p. 45).

Tambudzai is denied the opportunity of continuing with her education because she is a girl. Her father, Jeremiah's preference to train his son, Nhamo, is influenced by a cultural assumption which considers education as a male preserve. Tambudzai bemoans her situation: "Yes, I did understand why I could not go back to school, but I loved going to school and I was good at it. Therefore, my circumstances affected me badly" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 15). Her strong desire to go back to school is received with Jeremiah's sarcastic remark: "can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables" (p. 15). This recalls Taiwo Ajala's argument that "the education of a girl is traditionally believed to be a waste of resources or a loss to the family of origin of a girl child" (2016, p. 7). Jeremiah tries to socialize his daughter into the expected gender roles of a girl-child with relish but Tambu refuses to be compartmentalized into the gender politics. She wonders if Maiguru, holder of a Masters' degree serves her husband, "Babamukuru books for dinner. I discovered to my unhappy relief that my father was not sensible" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 16). She resists the patriarchal definition of her identity as a girl-child and resolves to reap the full benefits of education. She announces to her father: "I shall go to school again" (p. 16). The battle line is drawn between father and daughter. She struggles to get money at a tender age of eight by growing and selling maize in order to pay her tuition fees: "I worked on the homestead in the family fields and on my plot" (p. 17). Onyeamaechi Udumukwu (2007, p. 105) posits that by sending herself

back to school "Tambu breaks the glass of tradition by demythicizing and therefore illuminating her father's construction of her". She is not ready to please her father because "there was no way of pleasing my father, nor was there any reason to. Relieved I set about pleasing myself which antagonized him even further" (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 33). Tambu also complains that her father "…did not like to see me over-absorbed in intellectual pursuits. He became very agitated after he had found me several times reading the sheets of newspaper... He taught I was emulating my brother. …he threatened to take me out of school again" (p. 34). She confesses that her "father's idea of what was natural had begun to irritate me a long time ago, at the time that I had to leave school" (p. 33). So, both father and daughter "co-existed in peaceful detachment" (p. 34).

Despite the discouragement from her father who continually drums into her ear that "her sharpness with her books is no use because in the end it would only benefit strangers" (p. 56), Tambu relentlessly continues with her primary education. Through the help of her uncle, Babamukuru, she furthers her education to the secondary level. Tambu's success in disengaging herself from her father's dictatorial web is facilitated by her conscious emulation of Maiguru, an educated married woman with a Masters' degree. This gives credence to Farah Godrej's assertion that "the ability to scrutinize and reject dominant narratives while refashioning one's understanding may not simply arise ex nihilo: it may require hearing the voices of others to consciously emulate them in constructing certain kinds of voices within myself" (2011, p. 123).

Ousmane Sembène's *L'Harmattan*

In Tioumbé's patriarchal milieu, man is granted absolute authority over wives and daughters. Her father, Joseph Koéboghi, affirms this when he declares: "Ici, c'est chez moi, on me obéit" (This is my house. I must be obeyed) (Sembène, 1964, p. 239). Again, in this milieu, women are not allowed to exercise their franchise "…dans beaucoup de familles, seules les hommes voteront" (…in many families, only the men would vote) (p. 284). Intoxicated by this, Joseph Koéboghi, seizes the voters' card of his wife, Ouhigoué and his daughter, Tioumbé. While the mother succumbs, Tioumbé's revolutionist consciousness rises to fight against this oppression. She boldly asks for her voter's card from her father saying: "Père, tu n'as pas le droit de me traiter ainsi" (Father, you have

no right to treat me like this) (p. 245). The father seeing this as a challenge to his authority, resorts to violence by hitting her and Tioumbé retaliates by giving him "un coupe de tête" (a knock on the head) (p. 285). Joseph Koéboghi's assault on his daughter gives credence to Cronje's assertion that "violence provides a relatively easily accessible means of asserting and maintaining a masculine identity" (Ajala, 2016, p. 6). Joseph Koégbogi's exercise of dictatorship creates resentment in his daughter. Consequently, she packs out of her father's house informing her mother: "Je quitte la maison. Je n'ai rien ici. J'ai besoin d'être libre" (I am leaving this house. I don't have anything here. I desire to be free) (Sembène, 1964, p. 250).

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

At the beginning of the novel, Kambili is seen as a daughter that has great admiration for her father, Papa Eugene, in spite of his assault on her and the rest of the family. Her love for him sometimes makes her to defend his brutality. For instance, when Papa Eugene threw the figurines at her mother and they got broken, what she intended to say to her mother was "I am sorry papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, "I'm sorry your figurines broke, Mama" (Adichie, 2006, p. 18). In short, Papa Eugene occupies her world. She judges things from his point of view to earn his praise. For instance, she sees her grandfather, Papa-Nnukwu, through the eyes of Papa Eugene who labels the old man a pagan. She says to Aunty Ifeoma, "Papa-Nnukwu is a pagan. Papa would be proud that I had said that" (p. 89).

However, with Kambili's first visit to Aunty Ifeoma's house in Nsukka, her perception and admiration of her father begins to wane. Introduced to a life of freedom, she begins to see her father's attitude towards his family in a different light and questions his extremism. She sees her home as a prison and the occupants, prisoners. She compares the joy and freedom in Aunty Ifeoma's home, her cordial relationship with her children in spite of their poverty to the suffocation in her home of plenty where Eugene, the benevolent provider, is a dictator. Kambili begins to assert her individuality by the end of her second visit to Nsukka. Her contact with Papa-Nnukwu during this visit makes her question her father's judgment against Papa-Nnukwu. The offshoot is her defiance and

rejection of all that her father stands for including labeling Papa-Nnukwu a pagan. She "begins to discover her father's deficiencies in what she had previously deified as heroism and sacrosanct" (Njoku, 2012, p. 345). Again, while in Nsukka, she falls in love with Father Amadi, a Catholic priest, and expresses her sexuality openly. This is also a form of defiance against her father and his religious extremism. From this point forward, her attention shifts from Papa Eugene to Father Amadi who now occupies her world. She confesses: "Father Amadi's musical voice echoed in my ears until I fell asleep" (Adichie, 2006, p. 147). While Papa Eugene's voice elicits fear in her, Father Amadi's voice pulls her because it is melodious. She confesses: "…hearing my name in his voice, in that melody, made me feel taut inside" (p. 156). Father Amadi represents a symbol of care and love which is missing in her relationship with her father. She eventually proclaims her love for Father Amadi saying "I love you" (p. 280). Such an open declaration of love coming from a girl with a strict family background is ironic. It dramatizes the extent of Kambili's rebellion against her father. Her declaration of love to Father Amadi as Udumukwu (2011, p. 200) avers is also "in contrast to the traditional patriarchal constructs that subtly prohibit female expression for male attraction and desire for sex". Udumukwu (2011, p. 201) argues further that Kambili's meeting with Father Amadi "…is like partings of the eyelids to enable Kambili see herself as she truly is". Indeed, Kambili has changed. She becomes more and more aware of her father's dictatorship and consciously rebels against it.

Further, Kambili dramatizes her defiance against her father by carrying Amaka's painting of Papa-Nnukwu to her home, the consequences notwithstanding. Incidentally, Papa Eugene stumbles over this painting and Kambili is ready for war. She puts to test her resolution that "things were destined to not be the same, to not be in their original order" (Adichie, 2006, p. 215) any more. To Papa Eugene's question: "Who brought this painting into this house?" (p. 216), she answers crossly "Me…" (p. 216). As Papa Eugene tears the drawing into pieces, she "dashed to the pieces on the floor as if to save them, as if saving them would mean saving Papa-Nnukwu" (p. 216). He commanded her to get up but she "still did not move" (p. 216) to his amazement. He kicks her mercilessly while she lies on the floor, "curled tight like the picture of a child in the uterus…" (p. 216). This paper identifies with Daria Tunca's submission that "Kambili's retreat to the maternal womb may be perceived as a break away from patriarchal authority, (…) her willingness

to escape not only patriarchal violence, but trauma at large." (2009, p. 12–14). Tunca adds that "this act of resistance is probably her most overt challenge to her father in the entire novel" (Adichie, 2006, p. 12). After the beating, she closes her eyes "and slipped away into quiet" (p. 217). This could be interpreted as Kambili's withdrawal from Papa Eugene into a new life, a life of freedom. A new Kambili is born; free from paternal dictatorship. Akunwumi Olutola Olafisayo (2011, p. 127) affirms that "Papa's repressive rule has left her with a mind of her own". While in Nsukka after the last brutal beating, she refuses to pick up her father's calls. She does not want to see him anymore. She says "I did not want to talk to Papa, to hear his voice… I did not want to talk to him; I wanted to leave with Father Amadi, or with Aunty Ifeoma, and never come back" (Adichie, 2006, p. 272).

Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *The River Between*

Joshua forbids his daughter, Muthoni, from participating in the circumcision rite because of his faith in the Christian religion. But Muthoni does not want to function in her father's image. She resolves to participate in the circumcision rites. When her sister, Nyambura, pleads with her to drop the idea, she says: "I want to be a woman; I want to be a real girl, a real woman, knowing all the ways of the hills and ridges… Are we fools?... father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood" (Wa Thiong'O, 1974, p. 26). Muthoni is resolved to assert her personhood. So she runs to her Aunt in Kamene in order to participate in the circumcision rite. When Waiyaki questions her intrepidity, she explains "I want to be a woman… How could I be outside the tribe, when all the girls born with me at the same time have left me? I want to be a woman made beautiful in the tribe…" (p. 44). However, the desire of Muthoni is completely defeated at the resolution of the conflict because she does not survive the circumcision. Be that as it may, she dies a fulfilled woman. She says to Waiyaki before she gives up the ghost: "Tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman beautiful in the tribe" (p. 53). Sophia O. Ogwude (2011, p. 112) posits that Muthoni, "not even on her sickbed did she ever doubt her vision of a truly fulfilling synthesis of the African ideology of initiation into the ways of the tribe and, the Christian religion". Waiyaki's remark is signifi-

cant: "Muthoni has tried. Hers was a search for salvation for herself. She had the courage to attempt a reconciliation of the many forces that wanted to control her. She had realized her need" (Wa Thiong'O, 1974, p. 142).

Nyambura, Muthoni's sister is portrayed at the beginning of the novel as a victim of paternal dictatorship. "She was content to follow whatever her father said was right" (p. 26). Thus, when Waiyaki proposes marriage to her, she rejects the offer even though she loves him in order to sidestep inevitable conflict with her father, Joshua, "…for it was difficult for her to rebel against her father" (p. 114). However, her patience runs out when on a fateful day Joshua treats Waiyaki with disrespect by commanding him to leave his house. Her "inner forces" to use Maduka's words propel her into action. She bolts out of her father's house and holding Waiyaki's hands, declares her love to him: "You are brave and I love you" (p. 136). Her father is shocked. "He would never have thought this meek, quiet and obedient daughter could be capable of such an action" (p. 136). Meanwhile, her sister Muthoni, had earlier told her that she "too will make a choice one day" (p. 50). Nyambura does make a choice and elopes with Waiyaki. By so doing, Nyambura successfully debunks the myth that father's authority is supreme.

Nyasha, Tambudzai, Tioumbé, Kambili, Muthoni and Nyambura in their various encounter with homestead dictatorship evokes Chukwuma's observation that "the struggle for self-realization is carved out within the oppressive situation, be it marriage, the home or in the work place" (1994, p. xvii).

Conclusion

The paper delineates the causes of conflict in the father/daughter relationship and their effect on the psychological and social well-being of the daughters through the analysis of the texts under study. The paper demonstrates that the dictatorial behavior of fathers towards their daughters especially in matters relating to choice is the cause of daughters' revolt and the outcomes are devastating. Muthoni's struggle against paternal dictatorship leads to death while that of Nyasha leads to mental illness. Nyambura elopes with her lover while Nyasha and Tioumbé go the extreme by engaging in a physical combat with their fathers. These dangerous outcomes call to question Xu's assertion that "we cannot con-

clude that fathers' effects on their daughters' lives are negative, especially in different social and family contexts" (2009, p. 13). Daughters delineated in this study cut across different social and family contexts and the negative outcomes of their relationship with their fathers are graphically dramatized. The extremist stance of Nyasha and Tioumbé in their fight against paternal dictatorship is a sad reflection on the society. It does not serve a role-model function**.** It calls for flexibility and tolerance on fathers who maximize their paternal authority in their dealings with their daughters especially in matters relating to choice. Absence of this is the root cause of the father/daughter conflict as articulated by Nyasha:

> Sometimes I look at things from his point of view, you know what I mean, traditions and expectations and authority… and I try to be considerate and patient and obedient, really I do. But then I start thinking that he ought to look at things from my point of view and be considerate and patient with me, so I start fighting back and off we go again (Dangaremgba, 1988, p. 190).

There should be room for negotiation and mutual understanding between fathers and daughters especially in matters relating to identity construction. Babamukuru, Jeremiah, Joseph Koégbogi, Papa Eugene and Joshua therefore serve as cautionary models whose authoritarianism should be avoided by fathers in their relationship with their daughters. Another dangerous outcome of the father/daughter conflict is that in the face of this drama, fathers are seen helpless, gradually losing their filial tie with their daughters. There is therefore the need for the deconstruction of paternal masculinity because of its dangerous outcomes as highlighted in this study. There is the need for fathers who have been caged by power and masculine pride to snap the chains and begin to see the need to respect their daughters' right to personhood. This invariably will advance an integrated human development.

Finally, there are remarkable similarities in the handling of the father/daughter conflict by the novelists under study in spite of the differences in their linguistic and geographical locations. Sembène, a Francophone, Ngugi and Adichie, Anglohones, employ the going-away motif to intensify the self-definition of the daughters. Sembène's Tioumbé in *L'Harmattan*, and Ngugi's Muthoni and Nyambura in *The River Between* flee the restricted space of their fathers' houses in search of self-fulfillment. Adichie's Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus* literally jumps out of her father's life and never wishes to see him again. Also, there are parallels between the

male-authored texts and the female-authored texts. Tioumbé, the protagonist of a male-authored text, *L'Harmattan* and Nyasha, one of the main characters of a female-authored text, *Nervous Conditions*, engage in a physical combat with their fathers to assert their personhood. Not only that, death is the outcome of the conflict between Muthoni and her father in *The River Between,* a male-authored text, and Nyasha and her father in *Nervous Conditions*, a female-authored text: Muthoni's is physical while that of Nyasha is psychological. Both male and female novelists' fascination with the nature of father's authority over daughters shows the extent of its significance. What Nyasha, Tambudzai, Tioumbé, Kambili, Muthoni and Nyambura have in common is the construction of an identity that is not based on the dictates of patriarchy but informed by the need to struggle against silence and passivity which are conceived as ornaments of the African woman.

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Exploring the subversive Indian: Sexual dissidence and the "Queer" in Indian popular culture

ABSTRACT. In this paper, the author primarily engages with the cultural tropes existing around the notions of gender, sex, sexuality and its alternatives within the Indian context, specifically to locate and explore the "subversive" expressions. The influences and interpretations put forward in this paper are based in a broader doctoral research, wherein personal narratives of "queer" individuals provide the qualitative basis for the projected discourse. The principal objective of this paper has been to explore the conceptual space the "queer" identity locates itself in, and thereby the cultural outlets of its expression. The paper trails various literary and academic sources, alongside field notes and narratives, to present a critical discourse of existing social tropes regarding the "queer" identity. The context of the entire engagement is positioned in a reexamination of the Indian cultural scope today, as a methodological approach to study the "queer" category in a postcolonial dialog.

KEYWORDS: alternative sexuality, sexual marginality, sexual subaltern, Indian queer culture, queer expression

Introduction

Following a conceptual trajectory, this paper (within its broader research scope) establishes the concept of alternative sexuality through its history in social theory, locating it in society and politics, and in the crevasses of everyday-life that mostly goes unnoticed. However, the one space where the everyday lives matter the most is in the representation of society through art, literature and cinema. In fact, when speaking of India as a cultural consolidate, it is crucial to include the rich history of mythologies and folklores, which have encompassed both our great and little traditions. The narratives that have been used in this research explore the experiential aspects of marginal identities of our society,

specifically the LGBTQI everyday life in an urban space. They are personal accounts of the "queer"[1] in Kolkata, individuals who shared their experience of social interaction and the element of cultural pedagogy, which ultimately determines identity.

However, there are volumes of narrative histories depicting life as a marginal individual from other aspect of life in India. The works[2] of academics and thinkers like Sudhir Kakar, Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, Nivedita Menon, Dayanita Singh and Mona Ahmed, Arvind Narrain, Gautam Bhan, Sanjay Srivastav, Gayatri Gopinath, Suparna Bhaskaran, Brinda Bose, Devdutt Pattanaik, et al. in the area of experiential sexuality and its relationship with the everyday state. Apart from that, there are many literary publications that explore relationships existing in difficult situations, between individuals, and in between the individual and society. It becomes necessary to thus take into consideration the narrative histories explored through these avenues, personal stories, artistic representations, and its forms in literature and cinema in India today.

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[1] The double quotation marks with the term *queer*, has been used contextually throughout this paper, with the deliberated attempt to explore, critique and reexamine the category signified by the term *queer*. Moving away from established definitions, this term has been used in this research to identify the socially marginalized on gendered and sexual markers. This provided for a wider field access, as well as a more inclusive approach to understanding the marginalized, without bracketing identities. A similar specification is attempted with the term *subversive* also, following the idea of not relegating a cultural expression as subversive based on its subaltern location.

[2] List of books by cited authors: M. Ahmed (2001) *Myself, Mona Ahmed*. Zurich: Scalo Verlag; G. Bhan & A. Narrain (eds.) (2005) *Because I Have a Voice: Queer Politics in India*. New Delhi: Yoda Press; S. Bhaskaran (2004) *Made in India: Decolonizations, Queer Sexualities, Trans/National Projects*. New York: Palgrave; B. Bose (ed.) (2002) *Translating Desire: The Politics of Gender and Culture in India*. Delhi: Katha (see also B. Bose & S. Bhattacharya (eds.) (2007) *The Phobic and the Erotic: Politics of Sexualities in India*. Oxford: Berg Publishers); G. Gopinath (2005) *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; S. Kakar (2007) *The Indians: Portrait of a People*. New Delhi: Pearson; N. Menon (2001) *Gender and Politics in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; A. Narrain (2004) *Queer: Despised Sexuality, Law, and Social Change*. Bangalore: Books for Change; D. Pattanaik (2002) *The Man who was a Woman and Other Queer Tales from Hindu Lore*, New York: Haworth Press; R. Vanita & S. Kidwai (eds.) (2008) *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History*. New Delhi: Penguin Books (and also see R. Vanita (2001) *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture*, New York: Routledge).

Who is the Indian Queer?

It is not a difficult question to answer, however, if described as a category, it is different than its Western understanding and counterpart. In the West, the movement toward individualism gave rise to "queer" identity, however in India it was always persisting in a cultural niche, where they were contained to ensure the sanctity of the larger social whole. Indian society, in fact, does make a space for the queer identity, and it is needless to say as a marginal identity the Indian queer has never been allowed into the mainstream, at least in the recent historical modernity. In the pre-modern era, however, the attitude towards the so-called was more functional and not as contriving.

To understand the "queer" as a category in India, we have to first look into the compositional character of the formation of the same. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson[3] speaks of the nation as an imagined political space. He argues, that it is *imagined* because the feeling of 'nationhood' in the citizens itself creates this political category. Although there is no possibility of a completely homogenous nation-state emerging out of this, it is the feeling of commonality in belonging that gives the category its formative premise. Similarly, the "queer" in India are also an imagined community; despite some effort at representation through census policy updates and referendums passed in the Upper House at the Parliament, only the transgender and to an extent the intersex fraction has received support. The LGB and Q (in LGBTQI) have yet to receive any mainstream state sponsored encouragement, so to speak. And this attitude prevails despite the fact that sexual orientation is largely a private matter. It is due to extreme discrimination and abuse in such cases that the sexual minority has become more vocal about the apparent homophobia, transphobia, and other issues faced by the community.

The category is imagined in its political aspect, as well as in its compositional quality. Being "queer" is essentially a choice, in which it means to be a part of this collective consciousness of belonging to a specific category—with structural hierarchies, functions, roles and expectations—one has to make a decision to be "queer". Now, this sense of being queer may arise from an apparent deviation from the mainstream in the gender-sexuality spectrum, or it may emerge from a deep awareness of

[3] See Anderson 1991.

fluidity in the experience of gender and sexuality. In either way, it is an intensely personal aspect of an individual's existence, and it is brought out into the public domain by politicizing it. This process is invasively coerced into the psyche of the person who is different by engaging with that *difference* to locate the identity within it. It is a deliberate attempt to categorize any non-heteronormative orientation as redundant.

To further that argument, let us take a very archaic parochial sub continental approach to locating gender and sexuality in the social structure: in patriarchy, the men are the providers and leaders, and women are the caregivers and child bearers, and by this binary understanding the society is perfectly balanced by these structural functional aspects of human identity. Therefore, in such a scenario the "queer" would actually be located outside this structure because they do not categorize as such. However, the reality of the matter is diversely different, a) this is not entirely an archaic parochial society, because there are progressive liberal elements within the society who stand up against such patriarchal stereotypes, b) again, the "queer" maybe apparently different, but their desires are quite similar to the heteronormative ideal. For example, most transgender individuals are trapped inside of opposite gendered bodies, and they aspire their true gender identities, which is either male or female. But that does not universalize the experience, because there are others who do not conform to the binary and seek a separate gender identity altogether. Therefore, it is not a homogenous understanding of a category by its experience alone, it is the politics that unites the community.

There are many online literary portals, and blogs, that present an entire inventory of opinions and perspectives on the issue of "queer" marginalization in India. Especially since the Delhi High Court issued the ruling of criminalizing homosexuality in India, the public opinion has seen an outpour on social media, and generally on the Internet[4]. This disproves the idea that India is principally a parochial nation, and pushes forth the argument that there is a healthy political aggression from the margins, supported by independent organizations and individuals who want to educate the vast population who still abide by provincial traditionalism, about the progressive ethics of postmodern global life choices. Thus, Anderson's discourse on *imagination* is crucial to the un-

[4] See: [Online] Available from: http://www.countercurrents.org/sonia171213.htm. [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

derstanding of the category of the Indian queer, and so it can be argued here that, the categorical politicization of the queer in India begins with the manifest marginalization of the community[5].

Gender and Sexuality

The passing of the Transgender Persons Rights Bill has paved the way for representation and reservation for only a section of the queer community of the country[6]. At the same time, the persecution and criminalization of homosexuality and homosexuals are increasingly becoming state-sponsored. With the new NDA-led rightwing government proposes more laws to ensure a *Hindu Nation* is propagated in every sphere of life, the political aspect of the queer identity becomes more and more cornered. The state level governance differs, but serves a common referendum of moralistic outlook towards the social aspects. The civil society to an extent upholds this view, which is why we don't see too many representatives in the queer movement and equal rights debate, other than academics, artists and independent social workers, organizations and individuals. On this note, one respondent reflects:

> Until the day we have doctors, engineers, corporate sectors, and the larger media join the cause, we will never find acceptance or even empathy from society. And for that we need to spread awareness, hold meetings and marches, walk for our pride and keep shouting; because we have been silent for so long that even in this day and age we need to *demand* our rights and we have to turn up the volume as society has resolved to deaf ears when it comes to us. Why, are we not human beings? Are we not capable of all those things that they are? Actually, as long as it is *us* and *them*, this fight will carry on.

Therefore, if the queer identity is manifest in one's *gender* then they may be considered to become a legitimate part of society with that different category identification; but the queer identity embedded in *sexual*

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[5] This link follows a detailed event history of the development of the queer movement in India: [Online] Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2014/12/11/lgbt-movement-india_n_6307500.html [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[6] See also [Online] Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rajya-sabha-passes-private-bill-on-transgenders/article7138056.ece [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

orientation has not been considered to be *natural* or as an equally legitimate section of society. In West Bengal, a new body was formed to ensure rights of transgenders in the state, under the TMC-led governance[7]. This has been a huge step in the recognition and rehabilitation of transgenders in the state, but it is not the first to recognize a "third gender" in this country, in fact, Tamil Nadu was the first state in India to recognize transgender and intersex persons and introduced the *hijra/aravani* welfare policy[8], followed by Kerala recently[9]. Also, in West Bengal, we also recently witnessed the appointment of the first transgender college Principal[10]. These have all been historic steps in a process that is yet in its nascent phase, and it requires a more holistic representation of the entire queer community in India.

Here, I would like to share a story I came across on Facebook and Instagram[11], because every source of reference is valuable here as every one of these are autobiographical accounts of the queer experience as manifested in our society.

> *Why is everyone so afraid of men in dresses?*[12]
> A confession. Every time I have a photo shoot, interview, or performance—I shave. I shave because later when I look at photos of me wearing a beard and lipstick or beard and dress I feel like I look disgusting. I shave because I know that people won't believe that I'm trans if I don't.
>
> I've been thinking a lot about what it means to be hairy and to be trans. How the days when I do not shave are actually the days that I experience the most harassment. Shaving is about the distance between, "You look like garbage", and "Hey baby." I've been thinking about how almost all of our

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[7] [Online] Available from: http://www.gaylaxymag.com/latest-news/west-bengal-becomes-1st-indian-state-to-form-a-transgender-development-board/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[8] [Online] Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender_rights_in_Tamil_Nadu [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[9] [Online] Available from: http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Transgender-Rights-New-Policy-Coming/2015/07/10/article2911808.ece [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[10] [Online] Available from: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/india-transgender-college-principal-150527080214140.html [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[11] See Source: [Online] Available from: https://www.instagram.com/darkmatterpoetry/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[12] See source: [Online] Available from: https://www.facebook.com/darkmatterpoetry/photos/a.450619138352342.1073741831.440542966026626/966479143433003/?type=3 [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

models of transfemininity are hairless—how when I post photos of myself online people tell me that if I want to be recognized as "real woman", I should AT LEAST shave, otherwise I look like a "beast", or "a monster." Sometimes when I look at photos of myself I see a monster.

So I've been thinking a lot about monsters. How the monster in the closet of so many of our feminist, queer, and trans politics continues to be the figure of the "man in a dress." I am not, in fact, a man in a dress. I am non-binary person, which means I do not identify as a man nor a woman. But "man in a dress", seems to be the only way that this particular culture recognizes me. So as someone who is so often read and treated as such I've developed a particular sense of empathy and awareness about how revolted our world is by the idea of gender non-conformity.

What is absent from so many discussions of body hair between cis women is why so many of them are offended from being read as "men in dresses", aka gender non-conforming people like me. What is absent from so many discussions of "passing", in trans communities is why should we have to be gender conforming in order to be regarded as beautiful (let alone safe?). And certainly not everyone should have to be gender non-conforming, but I wonder who is left to rage, to fight, to love, to find beauty in us when everyone is trying to run away from us.

Why do we think men in dresses are ugly? Why do we think gender non-conformity is suspicious, dirty, uncouth, unprofessional, tacky, wrong? Why do people spit at me, laugh at me, throw things at me, or shove me when I wear a beard and dress?

My experience and so many of the experiences of gender non-conforming people are a testament to the world that it's not just femininity that's being policed, it's the gender binary. Gender binarism teaches us that "masculinity" and "femininity", must always exist in opposition. So when we see people that have what society regards as "masculine" and "feminine", coexist in tandem we are motivated to disgust, rage, and sometimes even violence. Sometimes I can't tell if I've been harassed because of my perceived femininity, my perceived masculinity, both, or neither.

I earnestly wish we can imagine and build friendships and ideas and movements that challenge the deep and ingrained aversion to gender non-conformity we have been taught. But sometimes that project feels too daunting and naive. So this year I'm going to make a small commitment to not always shaving my beard. To looking at my photos and not seeing ugly or beauty, or masculinity or femininity, but just seeing me.

What a simple gesture, what an impossible task."

The alternative sexualities are, however, not only undermined socially and politically they are also legally misunderstood: the IPC section 377[13] clearly denotes the *unnaturalness* of "alternative sexualities" and thereby criminalizes the offence, even under private circumstances[14], and is punishable by incarceration. "In queer circles today, it is almost absurd to question the idea that each person simply has a sexuality—one that is somehow within the person, that is repressed by society and that needs to be expressed. In other words, the idea of 'sexuality' has come to be naturalized, that is, the relationship between the idea and 'reality' has been placed beyond question. In turn this has meant that we now imagine our sexual universes in terms of people, who have different types of sexuality. This also means that we are driven to translate diverse sexual behaviours, desires and politics into language that finds its base in the idea of sexuality as personhood." (Bhan & Narrain, 2005, p. 93). This idea assumes that the personhood is located in the sexuality of the individual, which is justifiably a postmodern approach to identity. However, the language with which it has to be described is bound in binaries and thus makes the whole space of defining sexualities a teleological labyrinth. "A recent protest against Section 377 in Delhi, which was widely covered by the Hindi media, was the first time that the framework of identity came to be articulated in Hindi, in a positive manner[15]. We are in the process of setting out the terms within which we shall be able to address the politics of sex. This places a responsibility on us to pause, historicize and recognize the potential and limitations of our discursive moves." (Bhan & Narrain, 2005, p. 93).

The idea that homosexuality has come from the West and is a threat to the 'Indian culture' is a theory very similar to that of the causal history of women's repression in the country as well. The feminist movement in India has been precursory in formulating a historical sense of gender

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[13] See: [Online] Available from: http://iglhrc.org/sites/default/files/15-1.pdf [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[14] [Online] Available from: http://judis.nic.in/supremecourt/imgs1.aspx?filename=41070 [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[15] Previous coverage of 'sexuality'-related issues revolved around the famous Lucknow case, where the term "gay" was used to describe a certain Western phenomenon polluting the purity of Indian culture. Similarly, the coverage during protests against *Fire* (a film by Mira Nair, with homosexual references) and *Girlfriend* (a mainstream Bollywood film depicting a lesbian relationship) controversy revolved around such an exclusionary framing of sexual identities, placing their existence outside 'Indian culture'.

and gender roles in India. The Hindu traditions, however, have always been repressive of women[16] and their rights, but the larger Indian context is not composed of merely Hindu traditions. It not only has spiritual inspirations, the context is also time specific because studying society always necessitates a historical reference. And urbanity is deeply invested in modern social structures, where women are considered inferior in all apparent perspectives, other than feminism perhaps. The position of women in our society can provide insights into gendered and sexual exclusion, which id often based in religious values. Prof. Renuka Singh writes, in her 1990s feminist exploration of class and women in urban Delhi, "In this fifth decade of development since the country acquired independence, India is undergoing a tremendously paradoxical transformation. The acceleration of the modernization process is prompting people towards the twenty first century, while religion, despite technological ethos, ecological awareness and socio-economic changes, remains a constant consolation in people's life. Religion has encountered secularism and, if modernity has eroded some of the religious beliefs and forms, it has also triggered a reaction to the notions of rationality, thereby, preserving religion albeit precariously (…) Our study reveals that when religion is internalized at a purely ritualistic level, i.e., when women live according to specific religious practices or adopt the ideology, then religion most often oppresses the believer." (Singh, 1990, p. 113.) The ritualistic aspect thus surfaces as the superficial level of religious expression, as opposed to a more holistic spiritual experience; the abject admiration of ritualistic religion by the proponents has alienated the natural instinct for spiritualism while fuelling the materialistic ritual-dependent aspect of religion. This view not only puts hierarchies into the structure, it also associates powers to certain higher levels while taking the power away completely from those placed lower on the structure. However, we will not digress into that debate at this time, instead we will engage with the literature that rose from these social cycles of power as viewed through religion.

Despite being the most influential in the subcontinent, other than the Aryan Hindu Gangetic influences there have been Dravidian traditions, tribal laws, Buddhist and Islamic components to the formation of how the category of women in this country was created. And engaging with

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[16] See: [Online] Available from: http://nirmukta.com/2011/08/27/the-status-of-women-as-depicted-by-manu-in-the-manusmriti/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

the mythologies and folklores of the geographical nation would yield aspects of occurrence and subsequent inclusion of any or all dissidence, regardless of the identity being manifested on gender or sexual orientation. In fact, in this perspective the two are not separate, instead a fluid understanding of personhood incorporating both.

Mythology of the Indian Queer

"In Hindu mythology, the world goes through cycles of birth and death. Each lifetime or 'kalpa' is made up of four eras or 'yuga'. In the first, Satya yuga, categories exist with clear boundaries. Boundaries become increasingly weak and categories get increasingly contaminated in the Treta and Dvapara yugas, before the structure collapses in the Kali yuga, the fourth and final yuga. Then comes 'pralaya', the flood of doom, when nothing exists and then the world starts anew. This makes fixed categories the hallmark of purity and fluidity the hallmark of pollution and collapse. A common reading of Hindu mythology in western academia tends to be literal and so locates patriarchy in Satya yuga when structure is respected, and queerness in Kali yuga, when structure collapses. (…) A deeper Indian reading would locate the problem to the mind. The shift of yuga marks a mind that is increasingly losing faith, hence getting increasingly insecure, hence grabbing more and more power. When this happens, categories are no longer appreciated for their uniqueness. They are located in a hierarchy. Domination and oppression follows, resulting in calls for revolutions. Duties are enforced and rights are demanded in order to shift power" (Pattanaik, 2014, p. 5–6).

This excerpt from Indian mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik's book 'Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You', essentially ties up the entire premise of the debate into gender-sexuality categorization and its location in society, from a historical point of view, with social and political aspects intertwined. The mythology represents a general consensus of perception. It also provides the backdrop of locating gender-sexuality as categories, first as historical, then social and lastly political—in such as: binary categories of gender incorporates sexuality within the structure based on its functionality, then the category is disrupted by the individual identity that removes itself from strict structure by defying the binary model and its functions, and finally it seeks to express its desire to exist independently of the structure as well as the functions. It is

quite evident that the perception of alternative sexualities in our society incurs the fear of an unknown category (outside the binary code), and hence the approach is always that of fear and the association of this category with chaos is a tendency.

In the introduction to their work, *Gender and Narrative in the Mahabharata*, Simon Brodbeck and Brian Black (2007) propose a realistic connection between studying gender in mythological narratives: "One of the reasons why we have chosen to examine gender in conjunction with narrative is to shift focus away from attempts to reconstruct a historical reality. This is not to deny that the Mahabharata is historically situated and that its production as a text is indelibly connected to real social and political events that took place in ancient India. Indeed, as a number of Gender Studies scholars have argued, gender cannot be discussed in a social vacuum, but needs to be considered in tandem with political, economic, and religious structures. However, due to the complexity of the Mahabharata and the probability that it contains material composed in different historical periods—not to mention a variety of regions and political regimes – it is very difficult to establish concrete connections between the text and the social worlds from which it might have emerged, particularly since those social worlds are not directly accessible and must be reconstructed in the first place largely on the basis of texts. Thus, while discussing gender as it intersects with social factors such as dharma, varna, marriage practices, family relations, and soteriological paths, it is important to emphasize that the world of the Mahabharata is a literary world, and not a direct reflection or representation of the ever-evasive 'reality' of ancient India. Furthermore, any discussion about gender in a literary product like the Mahabharata must necessarily address much more than the degree to which the text represents real life. Gender roles in narrative literature are not merely reflections of or instructions for the real world; they are always also artistic and metaphorical literary devices, and sometimes gendered symbolism in the text gives added meaning at a textual level without necessarily referring to a social reality."[17] (See Broadbeck & Black, 2007, p. 13–14) It is quite clear that engagement with India's past cultural history is manifest in delving into its religious history, and mythological traditions.

However, the analogy of mythological traditions with social perceptions isn't restricted to Hinduism or the Indian subcontinent. "The Inuit

[17] See Broadbeck & Black (2007, p. 13, 14).

of Arctic regions tell the story that the first couple on earth were two men but when they made love, the child conceived could not come out and so one of them was turned into a woman. North American tribes refer to 'two-spirits', people who express both male and female qualities, hence constitute a third gender, and who often serve as shamans as they are considered to be closer to the spirit world. Aztec mythology speaks of the effeminate flower prince Xochipilli, god of art, beauty, maize, dance, song and patron of pleasure and same-sex eroticism. (…) Japanese Shinto mythology speaks of the androgynous Inari, who is sometimes male and sometimes female. Chinese Taoist mythology has amongst its eight immortals Lan Caihe of ambiguous sexuality, dressed sometimes as male and sometimes as female: this places queerness firmly in the realm of nature. (…) In the ancient Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, there is a story of the king's intense relationship with the savage warrior, Enkidu. On the latter's death, he weeps like a lover weeps for the beloved. Similar sentiments are seen in the words uttered by David at the death of Jonathan in the Bible and in the reaction of Achilles to the death of Patroclus, described in Homer's Greek Epic Iliad" (Pattanaik, 2014, p. 13–19).

There are many more of such mythological examples from all over the world, that can provide a strong argument for the fact that queerness is neither restricted to the West, nor is a strict sexual binary followed as the model for all societies. In fact, these examples give us an idea that every society has its own history that is deeply embedded in an ancient cultural liberalism, and thus the argument that segregated and categorized marginal identities based on gender and sexual dissidence is primarily a *modern* phenomenon[18].

In Pattanaik's queer reading of Indian mythology, he lists the chapters according to the popular tales of queer identities, experiences and folklores. He begins with *Shikhandi*, a princess who became a man to satisfy her wife; *Mahadeva*, who became a woman to deliver his devotees child; *Chudala*, who became a man to enlighten her husband; *Vishnu*, who became a woman to enchant gods, demons and a hermit, *Kali*, who became a man to enchant milkmaids, *Gopeshwar*, who became a woman

[18] The onset of orthodoxy can be historically determined to have begun with imperial colonialism. As the West began to expand into the rest of the world, the Catholic Orthodoxy is evidently transferred into regional cultures in the form of colonial traditions growing out of more native forms of social narratives.

to dance; *Samavan*, who became the wife of his male friend; *Ratnavali*, who became the companion of her female friend; *Mandhata*, whose mother was a man; *Bhangashvana*, who was a mother, and a man; *Urvashi*, who was born of no woman; *Bhagirath*, who was born of two women; *Skanda*, whose mothers were not all women; *Aravan*, whose wife was the complete man; *Bahuchara*, whose husband was an incomplete man; *Arjuna*, who was temporarily castrated for showing restraint; *Indra*, who was temporarily castrated for not showing restraint; *Aruna*, who became a woman when the sun paused; *Ila*, who became a woman when the moon waned; *Bhima*, who wore women' clothes to punish; *Vijaya*, who wore women's clothes to conquer; *Krishna*, who wore women's clothes in love; *Samba*, who wore women's clothes as a prank; *Alli*, the queen who did not want a man in her bed; *Kopperumcholam*, the king who wanted a man in the adjacent tomb; *Narada*, who forgot he was a man; *Pramila*, who knew no man; *Rishyashringa*, who knew no woman; *Shiva*, who included the female in his male body; and, *Ram*, who included all in his kingdom (Pattanaik, 2014).

Publications that further elaborate on the space of Indian sexuality experiences and its connections with the history of the landmass are not always moored on academic bonds, often arising out of cultural and historical critique, as well as postmodern, queer and feminist reading of earlier literatures. Sadashiv Dange compiled the *Encyclopaedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*, which provides access to a certain perspective of reading of Indian mythological traditions (Dange, 1990). A.K. Ramanujan's collected essays (Dharwerker & Blackburn, 2004) are also crucial in creating this strain of arguments based on Indian culture and Hindu history. Johann Meyer's *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (1989), and Subash Mazumdar's *Who is Who in the Mahabharata* (1988) are both queer readings of Indian mythological tales and lores, and presents a very unique perspective to further interpret and research this particular area, which has not yet been entirely tapped in its interpretative capacity. Also, Kamala Subramaniam's texts on *Ramayana* (1981), *Mahabharata* (1988), and *Srimad Bhagavatam* (1987); Benjamin Walker's expose on Indian and Hindu traditions over two volumes (Walker, 1983); and Heinrich Zimmer's interpretations of Hindu symbols and myths (Zimmer, 1963 [2015]), all encourage the reinterpretation and reimagination of the ancient literatures and theories, so as to enable an understanding of the diverse and rich sexual history of the subcontinent, contrary to the present right-wing political representation of the Hindu culture.

Queer Literature

To embrace Indian literature through a queer reading is to first acknowledge the contributions within the academic disciplines of history, political science, sociology and the languages. In 2009, Wendy Doniger published *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, in which she explores the history of Hindu India if it were told by the otherwise considered marginal—women, dogs and horses, and outcastes—in a playfully controversial retelling. This is a very exciting turn in narrative research, as it accounts for the voices that are largely overshadowed by more politically powerful narrative paradigms. It also allows the space for a discourse to be generated where there is presently none, supporting the *sexual subaltern* argument into further departures.

Ruth Vanita's work on Indian sexuality is paramount in the understanding of it both as a category, and at the same time as a metaphysical entity: *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History* maps the trajectory of the concept in terms of its narrative presence. The work is divided into four main sections, denoting ach section with a specific narrative timeframe—a) ancient Indian materials, b) medieval materials in the Sanskritik traditions, c) medieval materials in the Perso-Urdu traditions, and d) modern Indian materials. Her work collates literature with research, fiction with fact and myths with their traditional manifest forms; thereby creating a conclusive and comprehensive work detailing the interpretations and normative location of sexualities in the Indian context, in a space and time continuity. It also compiles a range of individualistic narratives, letters, teachings, personal stories, cultural critiques and poetry to draw inferences on the historical and cultural traditions. In the preface to the new edition (Vanita & Kidwai, 2008), the editors claim, "*It is not possible to list here all the fiction that depicts same-sex relations either as a major or minor theme. Some examples are R. Raj Rao's 'The Boyfriend', Manju Kapur's 'A Married Woman', Abha Dawesar's 'Babyji', Suniti Namjoshi's 'Sycorax: New Fables and Poems, and Amruta Patil's 'Kari'.*"[19]

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[19] See: R. Raj Rao (2003) *The Boyfriend*. New Delhi: Penguin; M. Kapur (2004) *A Married Woman*. London: Faber; A. DAWESAR (2005) *Babyji*. New York: Anchor Books; S. Namjoshi (2006) *Sycorax: New Fables and Poems*. New Delhi: Penguin; A. Patil (2008) *Kari*. New Delhi: HaperCollins.

One literary work currently (2015) finding footing in Bengali language, on the subject of experiential gender and sexualities, at the same time persisting a progressive mode of breaking stigma and prejudice around the community, is *Holdey Golaap* (Yellow Rose) by author Swapnamoy Chakraborty[20]. It is a compilation of personal and biographical works, revolving around marginal identities and their everyday lives, relationships with others and society, and the degree of exploitation and abuse faced by them. The compilation had previously been published in the format of a continuous series in the magazine *Robbar* (*Sunday*) of *Sangbad Pratidin*, under the editorial reign of acclaimed Bengali director and actor Rituparno Ghosh[21]. The book is in Bengali, but may be soon translated in other Indian languages so that there is increased communication of experiences between the marginalized identities and communities.

In the introduction to another edited publication of compiled Indian queer interviews, the editors state the argument: "*Heterosexism is the fallacious belief that the prerequisite for sexual attraction is that the partners invariably be of opposite sexes, that is male and female. However, heterosexism serves the interests of homoerotically inclined men in most Eastern cultures, including India, by allowing them to establish an alibi: it guarantees that a homosexual liaison arouses no suspicion in the minds of one's immediate kith and kin, and indeed, society at large, by making the association seem like friendship, or, to use a more resonant word, 'yaari'. Two people of the same gender can never be lovers—they can only be friends. Conversely, two people of the opposite sex, when seen together, must inevitably be in a sexual relationship.*" (Rao & Sarma 2009, p. xix.) Thus, in the contextual background with this high degree of social pressure on pursuing "normal" lives, the queer literature that has emerged in this country reflects this sentiment and experiential scope.

Much has been written about and discussed about the growing trend of queer literature in the country, especially on the Internet, in the social media platforms and blogs. "*With more authors choosing homosexual themes for their work, a same-sex story no longer remains taboo for Indian writers. Earlier, novels on same-sex relationships were rare in Indian writ-*

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[20] See: [Online] Available from: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150426/jsp/calcutta/story_16710.jsp#.VcTt13iDTdk [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[21] See: [Online] Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rituparno_Ghosh [Accessed: 18th July 2017] and also http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0315916/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

ing in English. But in the past couple of years, this scenario is undergoing a change. Valsad-based interior designer Mayur Patel's novel, 'Vivek and I', is about a teacher who fancies a student in his school. The book was released in December 2010. In July last year (2010), R Raj Rao, a professor of literature in Pune, wrote 'Hostel Room 131' —a novel tracing a budding love story in the hostel of an engineering college. Incidentally, his novel, 'The Boyfriend' (2003) is among the first gay novels written in English in India. Also published last year was Rahul Mehta's 'Quarantine', a collection of short stories. Continuing the trend, this year will see the release of Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla's novel 'The Exiles', about a homosexual man's extramarital relationship."[22] Another similar popular blog for queer discourse also published articles with the claim that India was increasingly becoming tolerant of the unabashed literary explorations of alternative sexualities. "*Gay literature found another champion in the works of Hoshang Merchant, who has, since the 1990s, created a vast body of work. The most significant are the anthologies he has edited, viz., Yaraana: Gay Writing from India (2000), and Forbidden Sex, Forbidden Texts: New India's Gay Poets (2008), as also The Man Who Would be Queen: Autobiographical Fictions (2011). Bindumadhav Khire, a gay rights and AIDS activist, is trying to carry a similar mantle in the realm of contemporary gay Marathi literature. His self-published novels Partner (2005), Indradhanu (2009) and Antarang (2013) were received with much enthusiasm by the queer community as significant firsts in regional literature.*"[23]

Another popular online media portal, places testaments from various publishers dealing with queer subjects, to exemplify the trend that is currently on the rise in India, albeit with its own set of difficulties and opposition from religious and right wing political organizations. "*Kartika VK, publisher and chief editor at Harper Collins, admits that there are gaps in the queer literature market "but writers are more willing to experiment" and "are less averse of being seen as queer writers". Priya, the chief editor of Gaysi Zine, testifies to this. "We have moved ahead of just writing about our identity and sexuality. We have many straight writers too and a lot of content that straight people would be interested in," says Priya,*

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[22] See: Kim Arora's article in the Times of India, link: [Online] Available from: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Authors-get-bold-as-gay-literature-picks-up-in-India/articleshow/7440562.cms [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[23] See for more information: [Online] Available from: http://scroll.in/article/742057/gay-literature-is-firmly-out-of-the-closet-in-india-and-winning-readers-over [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

adding that 600 copies of the magazine have been printed this year. Most of the little that we do have in queer literature is in English, which is translated into hindi and Marathi to satisfy regional demand. "Our Hindi and Marathi books are mostly out of stock", says Shobhna, who is inundated with manuscripts and proposals and sees a promising trend of rising queer writers and acceptance by readers."[24]

Khushwant Singh is considered one of the most prolific modern writers of India, and he has been a vocal advocate of liberal thought that reflects in his stories and characters: sexuality and sexual freedom is an established theme of his work, and he has often brought to the front subjects that remain customarily disregarded in everyday life. *Delhi* (1990) is one such publication, which delves into the dark and unknown crevasses of human psyche revolving around sexualities. In this book, Singh explores the experience of having a transgender lover, and by the virtue of daring to go where no one goes openly he challenged the existing shackles of portraying non-normative relationships in popular literature. He is also largely considered a controversial author, for the same reason that he approached life with open eyes and open arms, which would often be at opposites with the social norms or ideal types.

Thus, we may conclude here: India is at the cusp of breaking through to liberal literature in queer reading and writing. Some regional literature has existed on the subject of same-sex love and/or transsexual romance, or stories of transgender lives; but this was mostly underground and considered pornographic to an extent. It was never considered a part of mainstream literary scoped, until now, when increasingly queer stories are becoming part of the mainstream publishing structure. People are not only reading them, they are replacing prejudice with curiosity. In a lot of ways, this is a progressive step in holistic awareness of the queer community and individual aspects.

Queer Cinema

Coming to the context of the film industry, popular cinema in India is engaged in a multilateral dialogue with sexualities; being overtly dominated by heteronormative sensibilities, mainstream commercial cinema has very rarely delved with the subject of alternative sexuality directly,

[24] See more at: [Online] Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/report-the-rise-and-rise-of-queer-literature-2035552 [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

except for a few departures in the last two decades. And this is primarily because cinema in India is directly dependent on the cultural norms and restrictions, where the edicts of sensibilities are curated by traditions and heteropatriarchy. However, this is not to say that Indian cinema is devoid of sexual titillation or references, in fact, the queer also feature in some way in this aspect but largely as comical interjections or misunderstood character portrayals. "*Therefore, transformations in film narratives are shaped, among other factors, by cinema's reciprocal relationship to its audience who, on their part, accept some images while rejecting others.*" (Bose & Bhattacharya, 2007, p. 417.) Therefore, to read into the queer sub-narratives in commercial cinema, one needs to accommodate the subversion within the space of what is "accepted".

"*Although art house cinema in India has so far failed to treat the subject of alternative sexuality with sensitivity, mainstream cinema, ironically enough, especially the cinema of the 1970s and 1980s, featuring superstar Amitabh Bachchan, who disrupted the running-around-trees romantic flick of the 1960s through his sheer presence, is increasingly beginning to lend itself to queer interpretations. These films cash in on the idea of both male single-sex space and 'yaari', and were mostly scripted by male writer duo Salim-Javed. Queer readings are possible not just of the films themselves, but also of the songs. The 1975 blockbuster "Sholay", set in the wilderness of the imaginary Ramgarh with two tramps and former jailbirds, Jai and Veeru, for protagonists, is one such film that finds an excellent parallel in the overtly gay, 2007 film 'Brokeback Mountain' featuring two Wyoming cowboys, Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist. Brokeback Mountain is in fact the other side of Sholay, its off-screen side. The "Yeh Dosti…" number sung by Jai and Veeru on a motorbike emerges as a queer song when one scrutinizes its lyrics and imagery. If audiences are resistant to queer interpretations of the song, it is merely because heterosexism interferes: there is nothing latent in the song to prove that it is not queer.*" (Rao & Sarma, 2009, p. xxi, xxii) Clearly, in the absence of queer representation, the normative would be cast into ambiguously incorporating queer elements, or through suggestive subtext. It became something of a trend, to feature this male bonding in the form of brotherhood and/or friendship in mainstream commercial cinema in India during the later half of the last century; in films like *Deewar* (bond between brothers), *Zanjeer* (bond between two aggressive opposites), and *Anand* (bond between a doctor and his terminal patient) in the 70s; and followed by the likes of: *Ram Lakhan* (bond between brothers), *The Burning Train* (bond be-

tween friends); in the 90s came films like *Karan Arjun* (bond between brothers), and *Andaz Apna Apna* (Bond between friends), all filmed with the biggest film-stars of India in their early days; and more recently *Dil Chahta Hai* (bond between friends) and *Zindagi na Milegi Dobara* (bond between friends). In all these films we see protagonists and their friends compose of an almost *sacred* bond of alliance and trust, giving rise to the narrative plots, but the subtext remains queer in its basis.

Interestingly, films with narratives revolving around women who form close bonds of friendship are viewed and accepted differently. It reflects on the highly gendered and often deeply sexist prejudices around films with female protagonists being closely bonded, and anytime that it has been attempted to be portrayed on film, has inevitably encouraged sexual representation, which has been entirely absent in the male counterpart narratives. "*It became something of a rite of passage for the rebellious kids of the 1980s and 1990s. Watching Deepa Mehta's highly controversial film, 'Fire', felt like breaking a law and becoming a grown-up. It was, in fact, more exciting than watching one's first blue film, because what did good middle class Indian kids know anything about two women kissing? And if the stalwarts of Indie films like Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das were in it, the premise MUST be true. For many like me, this landmark film was a portal to a reality neatly kept under wraps by our society. Fire also seemed to have opened artistic doors for many. Take 'Facing the Mirror: Lesbian Writing from India' edited by Ashwini Sukthankar, which was published in 1999: it was among the first anthologies dedicated to stories about lesbian relationships.*"[25] When the general masses reject cinema representing same-sex love or transgender romance, they argue with the life-imitating-art clause, fearing inspiration to experience one's gender and sexuality freely. It is a direct threat to the political functioning of a state, which is, in the first place, built upon structures revolving around a myopic vision of human sexuality.

The Desire of Dissidence

The queer identity is a hazard to the structural composition of social norms standardized around heterosexuality, which resultantly affects the order of the market economy, also standardized around heteronor-

[25] See more at [Online] Available from: http://scroll.in/article/742057/gay-literature-is-firmly-out-of-the-closet-in-india-and-winning-readers-over [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

mative life-goals; and when the economy is jeopardized with change it disturbs the political state of matters and power structures. This would mean that, if the individual is allowed to be completely independent of the social restraints to freely evolve into their associative gender and sexual identities, it would definitely upset the social order of things; and it is inevitable since this order of social structure and functions is also based upon modernity's obsession with controlling sexuality through state and church[26]. And despite the fact that India has its own intensely spiritual historical tradition of experiential sexuality, the postcolonial global expectations in the Western new-world order has created rifts between schools of thought: at one hand, there is a vast section of the Indian population who do not oppose sexual freedom because they recall India's true history, which not only deems sexuality a spiritual experience, but also holds a venerable position in the social order for the gender non-binary as well; on the other hand, we have the religious extremist sections of the society, who insist on restricting and negating sexuality to control the *body* as much as it can be[27]. While the first category of Indians, resides mostly in urban areas and the latter in rural, there is no strict demarcation of the parochial and the liberal, as they intersect each other through expressions of homophobia and transphobia in both urban and rural spaces. In fact, the degree of abuse and exploitation is higher in the cities because of the higher density of population in such areas. As an urban space, it attracts all marginalities, as it holds possibilities that are absent outside the scope of a city.

Now, according to findings and conceptual explorations, one can argue that the "queer" as a category manifest in identity expressions, only

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[26] This is a reference to the understanding in its Western conceptualization, in the modern era.

[27] The reflection of this control is also felt in the anti-abortion laws, while it is arguably the most preemptive policy reform against the massive statistics of female foeticide in this country, it also translates to the loss of rights of the woman over her own reproductive rights in other contexts. The clubbing of the diverse contexts into one policy reform, negates the idea of the control itself, however, the conceptual modern nation state has historically maintained firm control over the female body, to control in turn the politics of citizenship and economic parlance of population growth. However, very much like the idea discussed above, the control bases its politics in the rudiments of cultural notions of the social reality being ordered: while a ban on abortion would mean the immediate loss of control of the woman over her own body, but the cultural backwardness also translates to the fact that female foeticide and misogyny would be carried on through other methods (perhaps through the categorical subjugation of women throughout their lives?).

exist in urban spaces: this is to clarify that the agency of the "queer" identity dissipates outside the urban realms. Although, some of my respondents came from suburban Kolkata, the social characteristics of these areas are identical in many ways to the more urban psyche. On maneuvering this postcolonial multicultural character of Kolkata, Ananya Roy writes, "*At the fringes of the city, where its concrete density faded into verdant fields of paddy, I found the rural landless seeking to stake a claim to urban livelihood and shelter. On the teeming trains that ran restlessly between southern villages and middle-class urban neighborhoods, I found desperate women carving out a grueling commute against hunger and deprivation. If the city was urbanizing at a frantic pace, engulfing large swathes of agricultural land, then the villages of the southern delta were becoming ruralized, surviving as impoverished labor hinterlands of the metropolis. This rural-urban interface belonged to more than simply migrants, squatters, and commuters. It was here, in the historicized niches of the city, that the Left Front was seeking to implement liberalization, what I came to call a communism for the new millennium. What is striking about the New Communism is its territorialized flexibility, a volatile remaking of the city in and through which the hegemony of poverty is quietly reproduced*." (Roy, 2003, p. ix) And although Roy's work is a few years behind, and the new state government of west Bengal arose from the Left Front opposition, the policies of urban development have remained the same, if not increased.

So, in the amalgamated urban space of Kolkata, the queer rise as a community who subsist on the agency of urbanity itself: outside of the city's fringes, the queer either deny themselves their true identity or dream of migrating to the urban space which is more accommodative of their true identities. However, that does not imply that the queer are *accepted* in the mainstream urban life, but merely tolerated. This tolerance, despite increasing voices for equal rights, is shadowed by abuse and prejudice.

During the fieldwork, I spoke to both normative and non-normative subjects, with the aim to deconstruct conceptually every aspect of the inquiry from both perspectives. Amongst the normative subjects, I finally chose only specific contextual narratives, while keeping others to exemplify or further arguments in the discourse. One of the normative respondents I spoke to was the domestic help of a close family relative, who knew a few boys who lived in her *jhuggi* (slum area) in the suburbs of the city, who work at a massage parlour for men. The following is an excerpt from our conversation.

How do you know these boys are homosexual?
They told my daughter. They told her they massage men in that parlour, and sometimes for extra money they also have sex with them.

So they are like prostitutes?
No not like that, it's just in the parlour. They don't have sex with men outside.

Did they say so?
I don't know, but I think they only do it for the money. Why would a man have sex with another man? All these gay and lesbian people, how do they do *it* with each other! It is unnatural. At the end of the day a man needs a woman, and a woman needs a man!

But have you never heard of homosexuals before?
Yes, once, when we were children, living in the village, there was a man who used to get drunk and get physical with other men. One day, the men of the village gave him a good beating. They made him understand that all this gay-lesbian nonsense is only for the city people, and if he had to live in the village he had to mend his ways. I remember that, we went to watch him get slapped by everyone.

What happened to that man, did he mend his ways?
I think he came to Kolkata a few months after that. Never heard of him again.

So, that's why you think those boys are just doing it for the money?
Yes, what else. In the cities, everybody is perverted. There is too much sex, in everything. In the village, we live like normal people: we work, we eat, we sleep, and we take care of our family. Here, there is too much happening, too many options, too much to experience, and people are going insane with bizarre thoughts. Its no wonder, everybody these days needs to go to psychiatrists. I work in so many homes, I see it everyday. Mother and father both work, never have time for their children, then they spoil them with money, and ten years later they become gay. These are things only rich people have time or energy for. Me? I have to work in six different homes to earn enough money so that my son can keep going to college next year.

But what if your son or daughter told you they are homosexual, or transgender?[28]
I will beat it out of them. I'll take them to a doctor; even a psychiatrist if that will make them realize how life works for us. People like us don't have the

[28] Here, I had already explained to her who or how a person is identified as homosexual or transgender.

> luxury to do all this nonsense. Our lives are based on opportunities. If that doesn't work, I'll pray to god to show my family reason and mercy.

This notion, that alternative sexualities only occur in urban spaces, is neither rare nor new. The city has always been associated with absurdities and excesses: with anonymity and high population density provides for variety to coexist. However, this mutual agreement to exist co-dependently but separately also makes it a highly spatially segregated space, embedded in hierarchies. These hierarchies then create unequal distribution of rights and opportunities among those who have to remain in the fringes of the social order. Thus, the marginalized categories experience their subaltern trauma on a common platform. Thus, even the pattern of migration into the urban space reflects that desire to form dissidence together in a space that allows an extent of self-expression. That is why one has to study the queer as a *community*, to justify its parlance in conceptual exploration.

*

Thus, we may conclude this paper with the following arguments: a) the category of queer is based upon the political imagination of an alternative social structure; b) it is composed of identity associations embedded in *both* gender and sexuality, c) the queer identity manifests through the knowledge of its own actuality; d) this knowledge in turn is largely dependent on ambiguity and postmodern liberalism, that hides more than it exposes; and finally, e) there are two primary perspectives of studying the queer: subjective and objective, and while both have their analytical parlance, only the subjective provides in-depth exploration into the everyday of queer existence. The Indian context, however, requires some more reflection, since the theoretical paradigms of studying Indian sexuality prerequisites perspectives contextual to the cultural and political history of the subcontinent.

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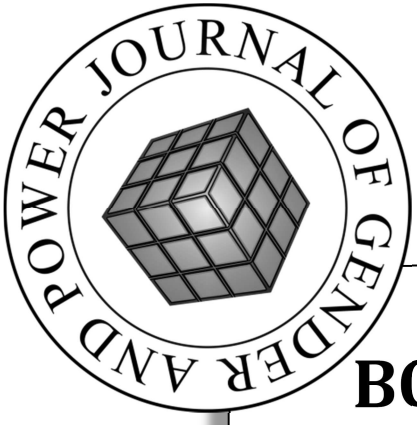

BOOK AND JOURNAL REVIEWS

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Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik (ed.). *Elitist Secondary Education Systems in Western European Countries: Studies in Comparative Education*. Poznań 2015: Adam Mickiewicz University Press. Pp. 243.

Recently, higher education has been more and more accessible or the masses. It seems that it is desired that everyone should graduate from a university, which increases higher education metrics. On one hand this presents equal chances for everyone, but at the same time it may lead to a phenomenon of diploma inflation. This poses a question of elitism and egalitarianism in education.

What is an elitist school? What makes a school an elitist one? How can we confront the dynamics of tensions between elitism and egalitarianism in education, which arouse in various European countries? How is the elite identity created in schools which are considered to be elitist? Presented in this review one of the newest publications in this field edited by Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik will give you a complex answer for those questions. Based on the latest research and written by the specialists in comparative education, the collection of texts deals with the issue of social functions of elitist secondary education system.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik's book concentrates on the socialization and selection functions of elitist education systems. The author is a Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University (Faculty of Educational Studies) in Poznań. Her research focuses on the problem of equality/inequality of access to education, sociology of education and culture, comparative education and gender studies. She heads the Multicultural Education and Social Inequality Research Department at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań also is a of Committee for Educational Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik published her numerous articles in Polish and foreign academic journals. She is an author and co-author of following books: *Cribs, plagiarism, fake diplomas. Study in sociopathology of education* (GWP, Gdańsk 2007), *Popular culture and (re)constructions of identity (editor)* (Haf-druk, Poznań—Leszno 2007), *Education and Social (In)equality of Women. Dynamics of Access Study* (Impuls Publishing House, Cracow 2011), *Identity in contemporary society. Popcultural (re)interpretations* (editor jointly with Zbyszko Melosik) (Impuls Publishing House, Cracow 2012) and over sixty scientific papers devoted to her research interests. Co-author of introduction, and author of the Polish translation of the fundamental US work on gender studies—*Women, Men and Society* (C. Renzetti, D. Curran—multiple editions in the USA, two editions by PWN in

Poland, p. 692). Presented in this review title is surely based on long term experience in comparative education studies, which only makes it more congeneric.

The book contains an introduction written by Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik about various theoretical contexts of the titular issue, along with manifold kinds of classifications along with seven comprehensive chapters. Each of them is presented with a list of sources that can be useful to learn more about the subject matters. The first and the second chapter are focused on theoretical perspective of the contemporary elitist secondary education. The information is enriched with the nature of alternative education systems. Other chapters are concentrated on various examples from Western European Countries such as the UK, Spain, the Russian Federation, Sweden, The Netherlands, Germany and Norway. The articles describe solutions that are used in these states.

The main aim of the book is to present results of the National Science Centre research project conducted by the director Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik. The monograph *Elite secondary schooling. Between sociocultural reproduction and contest mobility* (Adam Mickiewicz University Press, Poznan 2015) is a complementary part of this programme. In this publication, however, thanks to Tomasz Gmerek, Jarema Drozdowicz, Dobrochna Hildebrandt-Wypych, Daria Hejwosz-Gromkowska and Karolina Domagalska-Nowak, all the theoretical background is fulfilled with specific inspirations from chosen European countries. The purpose of the study is stated and briefly explained to the reader in the introduction, where the language is very clear and at the same time scientifically precise and original. The author depicted both the historical and present situation of elitist education and marked a detailed description of their alumnus profiles. The character of a present-day elite is much more complex than in the past as more and more social groups (celebrities, sportsmen etc.) have achieved this status. Subsequently, the writer is describing this relation as *fluidized* by presenting common beliefs about social success. It is worth to mention that all the research conducted from the conflict theory perspective has proven that the popular belief that equal access to the general education and career success exists is to a great extent an illusion. The elite category is still socially strong which is explicitly illustrated by the present elitist secondary education. What is more, it is easier for alumni of those schools to be successful in the professional career. The author compares this situation to the *oil pipeline* when these people are automatically transported to the top of the social ladder with high-class a diploma and certain personality traits. Their parents as well as children are known for having very high educational aspirations because of the elite affiliation. All of those statements are covered in the first chapter and the following ones present a comparative approach.

The main idea of the first chapter is to continue thoughts and questions included in the opening. The author describes elitist secondary education systems in many aspects: historical, social and contemporaneous. Despite the fact that those specific systems around the world are different, there is always a stratifi-

cational element which is shared. The most important criterion when talking about the quality education should be high educational standards supported by positive results in national exams achieved by their students not the social position. The institutions in which the position is more important are characterised by the stratificational potential which makes such schools able to position their alumni up on the social ladder. The research shows that those people have higher aspirations to apply to the best Universities in comparison to other groups with lower scores achieved in the national tests. The author specifically highlights the importance of controlling the level of aspiration in terms of future educational decisions. It is also one of the most important factors forming interpretive and societal inequalities. This chapter is complemented with writer's personal experience about educational systems from around the world (the UK, the USA, France, Japan, Switzerland). Additionally, it contains quotations and concepts of P.W. Kingston, L.S. Lewis, D. Vidaver-Cohen, J.W. Meyer and R.A. Gaztambide-Fernandez. To summarize: the elitist secondary education is related to the several features of presented school systems, which are described in detail and categorised by author's criteria.

The Elitism of alternative schools is the topic of the next chapter written by Bogusław Śliwerski. He presents the essence of a social role of this kind of schools in the society. The main idea of an alternative education system is to give freedom to its creator—the teacher. This type of schooling allows teachers to be different, but at the same time stay true to themselves and be able to integrate their ideas to the educational system. There is a need in XXI century to let the public schools be more autonomous, which will improve the development of the society. Śliwerski emphasizes that every alternative school which opposes to the ordinariness can be called an elitist school. This part is nicely illustrated by many practical examples and the key terminology is clearly explained.

The third section is focused on elite secondary schools in the UK, Spain and Russia. In this part by Tomasz Gmerek, the author presents a critical analysis of this way of schooling in the above-mentioned countries. He concentrated on how elitist secondary education functions and its role in the proces of creating social structures. Three precisely presented case studies are devoted to those distinct countries in terms of pattering, economic and cultural conditioning. The writer tries to picture the reality of elite secondary schools mechanism from social stratification perspective. The chapter identifies and analyses the crucial issues for elite secondary schools in leading countries in Europe in a comprehensive and attractive way.

The same problem but from the perspective of Swedish reality is portrayed in chapter four. Jarema Drozdowicz describes the present concerns about multiculturalism and violence in Swedish schools, accession to the European Union and decentralisation of the school system. The primary doubt is if the elite secondary education can coexists with the ideal of equality. The greatest value of

this section is that it gives the general panorama of the past-to-present literature which has been chosen with great care.

The next part of this collection of texts is Dobrochna Hilderbrandt-Wypych's article about elite and egalitarian tendencies in the Dutch secondary education. According to the author, it is essential to fully understand changes in the particular system by learning the historical-religious reality which created the educational system in the Netherlands in the first place. The Dutch solution is an example of a very rare but effective form of secondary education. The author has revised subsequent and more recent literature which gives this component a quite unique position.

Problems of schooling and social inequity in Germany are presented in Daria Hejwosz-Gromkowska in chapter six. Its aim is to present secondary education as well as controversies and challenges in the contemporary German education. The author explains the reasons for its poor condition and together with Hartmann suggests three solutions to improve the functionality of this system. Apart from the elite education in Germany, the author marks also other problems of education for immigrants. That makes this part even more attractive. She highlighted significant results and achievements and explained their role in the formation of the German elite secondary school system.

Last section written by Karolina Domagalska-Nowak raises the question of the secondary schooling in Norway, which is believed to be the best country to live in. The Norwegian educational system was created in early XX century. Its major role was to link the urban and rural methods of education, in order to be able to have a strong and consistent formation for everyone. The idea of a Norwegian school has been to be equal for every child regardless of their background. Profound research and numerous notes make this part incredibly interesting and full of positive ideas which helped Norway to achieve one of the best educational results. Referring to the earliest and the most recent moments in the history of Norway, the author provides an extremely deep insight in their educational system achievements.

The book has a clear structure. Each section of the publication is comprehensive and diversified by its language and content. Studies are presented in a lucid way and the choice of the countries makes the book coherent. Indeed, the reader can be impressed by the authors' educational know-how. Education to a greater extent is a factor of social inequalities rather than „equalizing opportunities". The topic of the book is a part of discussion regarding the abovementioned statements. On the whole the book gives an opportunity to compare the role of elitist secondary education system in terms of forming biographies and a social structure.

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Katarzyna Szumlewicz. *Love and economics in literary biographies of women*. Warsaw 2017: Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Pp. 206.

The author analyses and compares the fate of heroines of selected novels and theatrical plays from Europe, the United States, Canada and India throughout nineteenth and twentieth century. According to Szumlewicz, literature under cover of fiction (often disclosing the fates and experiences of the creators themselves) best reflects the reality of the social mechanisms that crushed the subjectivity of a woman in a human, economic and psychological dimension. The author helps the reader in the emancipatory understanding of the fate of heroines showing them through an interdisciplinary approach, that is, in literature, sociology, philosophy and pedagogy context. She understands emancipation as breaking up with subjugation and inequality, which leads to the enslavement and suffering of women, albeit differently perceived according to their social position. Szumlewicz critically analyses love of higher class women, servants, black women and prostitutes, their dreams of great affection, social responsibilities and marriage as a financial agreement. All these women are patriarchal hostages without being able to make subjective decisions in the sphere of their life, body, economy, work or divorce. She draws attention to the heroines' childhood, their upbringing and their development of the concept of love and femininity, the experience of motherhood in various socio-economic contexts, also in the setting of social changes at that time.

The subject of love and economy seems to be conventional and many times processed, but this time the author, in addition to the analysis of women's adjustment and conformity, seeks the manifestations of their resistance strategies, rebellions, and factors enabling nonconformity in future generations of women. Although female characters in literature are stifled and subordinated in a socially sanctioned manner, they show their revolt against the Victorian era women's role. They express emancipatory aspirations depending on their social affiliation, skin colour and geographical context. All women in the analysed novels desire the right to pursue their ambition, subjectivity, ability, self-fulfilment, free choice, decision-making, open feeling and interpretation of the world, security, the right to exercise their sexuality in the way they choose. The rebellion and the desire to fight are not marginal to the nineteenth and twentieth-century of literary fiction created by female and male writers. It is worth to look at this monograph precisely from this context.

The book consists of ten chapters preceded by the introduction.

In the first chapter, Jane Austen's novels characters are subject to the analysis. The unfavourable financial situation and the threat of declassification are the underlying motives for the pursuit of a marriage of well-educated women from the higher spheres. Only beautiful maidens, with a dowry or noble origin,

are expressing their opinions. Conversely, those with a lost sense of economic security usually present the conservative submission attitude. The punishment for 'disobedient' women is social ostracism, communal and matrimonial exclusion.

In Chapter Two, the analysis of the governess' biography in the novel by Charlotte Brontë, leads to the conclusion that a woman who finds in herself an adequate self-esteem can take on the pursuit of her ambition. Her character went beyond psychological and social boundaries at the time. But not all women benefit from the liberated energy of emancipatory aspirations in the constructive direction, for example, the characters from Wuthering Heights.

The third chapter reveals the heroines of the Victorian period in Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Sarah Waters, Michel Faber novels, which show examples of woman's mental incapacitation in the light of existing law. Wives who didn't want to subdue to iron rules of Victorian marriage, i.e. the misappropriation of the wife's property by her husband, the different standards of sexual behaviour, the inability to divorce, were diagnosed with mental illness and were deprived of their freedom. Women who were mentally healthy and emotionally resilient that is who had male characteristics at the time, could persist in exclusion, plan to escape, take revenge and fight for the abolition of the Victorian ideal of femininity.

Chapter Four deals with the subject of prostitutes' lives in the light of the novels of Alexander Dumas and Emilie Zola. The prostitute decides about her own life, about her body and finances, unlike patriarchally accepted, but without sexual experience, asexual, obedient and reduced to the maternal role wife. Ranks of prostitutes swell with working women, whose wages are substantially lower than men's, and are not high enough to sustain themselves and their children. Prostitution was the rebellion of women against social inequalities which was reducing their emancipatory energy. It was a challenge to the adopted vision of women's allegiances. Prostitution was punished by depriving a woman of her dignity in a hospital or prison and was accompanied by a vision of premature biological death. When at the funeral, the solidarity of women (then the niche) was a prelude to the collective strength of women.

The fifth chapter presents the women in the view of Henry Ibsen. The role of a show-and-idle wife or sacrificing mother was not enough. Literary heroines possess the necessary skills and are successful in culture and entrepreneurship, but the effects of their activities are given away and attributed to men. Ibsen notes that there is an impulse for emancipation in these spheres, they begin to reveal their ambition and self-fulfilment, which in turn strengthens their sense of dignity.

The sixth chapter analyses the fate of women called 'invisible', in the light of selected novels by Gabriela Zapolska and Zofia Nałkowska. The servants are the subject of instrumental treatment, including sexual ones, and are consequently condemned to professional and economic exclusion. There is no hope for emancipation for these women, except for the conscious, voluntary acceptance of the role of a prostitute.

Chapter seven touches the topic of the relationship of women from higher socioeconomic status with men of a lower rank. Characters of the novel 'Lady Chatterley's Lovers' and 'The God of Small Things' do not enjoy their existing sex life, therefore are seeking satisfaction with men from a lower class, while risking the loss of identity and economic security. This behaviour can be interpreted as the expression of women's rebellion against the different standard of sexual behaviour, as an expression of emancipatory aspirations in the pursuit of sexuality, in an individually chosen way.

In the eighth chapter, heroines from Alice Munro and Marilyn French novels, show the origin of the sense of defeat of emancipated women. The causes of mental failures are pointed out in socially instilled expectations of conformity, a sense of lesser value and life and erotic passivity. The dream of emancipated women of equality in their relationship, the right to their own lives, in the light of social mechanisms, sexual discrimination, often ends with reconcilement of heroines with reality. Reflection on the factors of failure of women's emancipation is an opportunity that can be seen to their constructive changes.

Chapter nine is an analysis of the fate of black women in novels 'Beloved' and 'Purple'. There is a stereotype of a sexual assault consent, but also women's role is being reduced to the housewife only. Black women were charismatic and had a group power and were not perceived as weak or incapable of undertaking difficult life challenges, unlike white women.

The final chapter of the book includes heroines from novels by Elfriede Jelinek and Marlene Streeruwitz. Women who are aware of their abilities choose emancipation in a professional activity, but the expected independence takes the form of fiction due to vocational abuse, power disparities and women's occupational discrimination. Socially expected to finish a professional episode by becoming a wife and taking up work at home. The success of literary heroines is to break the tradition of anti-female propaganda and to toughen up their daughters.

After this selective review in the context of the emancipatory struggle of literary heroines across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is worth verbalising, what is added value of this writing, in addition to its evident cognitive qualities. A semblance of happiness and fulfilment of women together with social recipes for them existed and still exist. Reading can stimulate a critical reflection on the individual sense of complete self-fulfilment of a woman and the degree to which she uses the subjectivity, which previous generations of women have won incurring the enormous psychological, social and economic costs. The challenge of this book may be to look for our emancipatory demands because we have an exceptional courage for it today.

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