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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

Every six months, I write an introduction to the new issue of "The Journal of Gender and Power". Furthermore, always my mind is full of various, often contradictory thoughts. I am always "between". Between my orientation on scientific and research diagnosis and a conviction that universities and researchers should be aimed at changing societies and the world, as well as between a "cold look" at reality and emotional insights. Between my constructivist approach and accepting the important role of "hard research". Between theoretical considerations and social practice. And between my inherent enthusiasm and the surrounding human universe – with pandemics, wars, and deep social problems such as homelessness, starvation and unemployment. I am trying to make a balance in the introductory words.

Every issue of "The Journal of Gender and Power" is now in the vacuum of my academic life. My other activity accompanies it; this time, a book which I have written with Aleksandra Boroń, *The Ukrainian women war refugee. Identity, trauma, hope (Ukraińskie uchodźczynie wojenne. Tożsamość, trauma, nadzieja, Kraków 2022)* and various intercultural activities for small Ukrainian children who emigrated with their mothers to Poland, including *The great power in simple words (W zwykłych słowach wielka moc, Poznań 2022)*. However, every issue of this magazine aims itself as an essential step on the way to understanding femininity and masculinity in the contemporary world and the identity of people living in different parts of the world.

Agnieszka Gromkowska-Melosik
Editor-in-Chief



ARTICLES





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Women and Tax Regime in Ijebu Province of Southwestern Nigeria, 1918–1949

ABSTRACT. A tax regime is a mechanism of tax rates, regulations, and scope that comprise the taxation approach or philosophy of a government. Existing historical studies have engaged the dynamics of women and tax revolts in some parts of Southern Nigeria, with particular emphasis on Aba and Egba women. Historical studies have also robustly recognised the socio-economic significance of Ijebu women to economic growth in Southwestern Nigeria. Despite Ijebu women's contributions, studies have not adequately documented the dynamics of Ijebu women and the tax regime during the period under review. The paucity of historical engagement of Ijebu women's tax regime experience has prevented an understanding of the numerous factors that informed women's taxation, the dimensions of the tax receipt regime against Ijebu women and the attendant gender implications. The study adopts a historical research methodology. It uses primary and secondary sources. For primary data, Archival materials on Ijebu women and taxation during the colonial period were sourced from the National Archives, Ibadan. Archival documentations were complemented with oral interviews. The secondary sources includes published materials on women and taxation in Southern Nigeria in libraries and internet sources. The data were subjected to thematic and descriptive analysis. Findings reveal that the prominence of Ijebu Women in the marketplace, coupled with their unwavering financial exploits in the 19th century, provoked draconian taxation against them. On the dimensions of taxes levied against women, Ijebu women were compelled to pay flat rate alongside their male counterparts. Besides, the women faced harrowing experiences of the tax receipt regime. The tax regime in colonial Ijebu has implications on gender. Apart from inducing physical, economic, and psychological pains on Ijebu women, the tax regime forced some women to stage a revolution against the colonial government and its representatives. This study suggests that subsequent historical interrogations could engage ideologies in Ijebu women's petitions against the colonial government.

KEYWORDS: women, tax regime, Ijebu Province, Southwestern Nigeria

Introduction

Tax regime is a regime established in accordance with the provisions of Articles and which forms an integral part of the system. It elaborates tax rates and tax slabs. Tax regime is the way that something such as an institution, company, or economy is run, especially when it involves tough

or severe action (Collins English Dictionary, 1979). On the other hand, taxes are levy imposed by the government on the income, profit or wealth of the individual, partnership and corporate organization (Soyode & Kajola, 2006). In public finance, taxes have been classified in various ways according to those who pay them, bear the ultimate burden of them, the extent to which the burden can be shifted, and other criteria. The most common is between direct and indirect taxes. Direct taxes are those that cannot be shifted by the taxpayer onto someone else. They are primarily taxes on persons and are aimed at the individual's ability to pay as measured by his income or his net wealth.

Scholarly investigations have established coverage of literature on colonial taxation in West Africa and Southern Nigeria. Bush and Maltby (2004) focused on taxation in West Africa generally. It examined the role of accounting and taxation in colonial/imperial contexts. The work explores taxation in British West Africa from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. It also interrogates the taxation system initiated by Lord Lugard, and followed elsewhere in British West Africa. Bush and Maltby argued that the vigorous resistance of West Africans to colonial taxation casts doubt on some of the claims made for accounting controls as a means of "forming subjectivity". Though the study covered the whole area of West Africa, it would be of immense value to this paper, given its appraisal of the British West Africa policy on taxation. Adebayo (1995) in his work historicises taxation in Northern Nigeria, bringing out the pre-colonial Hausaland and Borno as having a comprehensive system of taxation which were later influenced by orthodox and radical Islam. The paper argued that the issue was no longer the religious question of whether or not the tax was sanctioned by the *Shari'a* and that the heart of the controversy in the colonial period was the balance between economic logic and the political cost of taxing the nomadic pastoralists.

Orewa (1962) in his works states that 'the more a tax system becomes arbitrary and unscientific, the less pleased the taxpayer becomes, even if he is among those favoured as a result of it'. He appraised direct tax system in Western Nigeria in relation to taxation and offered some suggestions for its improvement. Orewa however, discussed taxation as it affected women in Western Nigeria, mentioning Ijebu women among the Yoruba women discussed. Obaro Ikime focused on the anti-tax riots in Warri Province in the Southeastern part of Nigeria. It looked at the impact of the policy of direct taxation on the hitherto untaxed provinces which brought about the imposition of taxation and the machinery for its collection the 'warrant

chiefs' system in the province. Afolabi's second work on colonial taxation examined the British colonial taxation policy which engendered unlimited exploitation and expropriation of capital from the periphery to the metropolis bringing out 'changes' and 'development' in the Yoruba speaking parts of western Nigeria. Byfield (2003) studies on colonial taxation represent pioneering efforts in the field of women and taxation in Yorubaland of Western Nigeria. It examines the pre-colonial period comparable economic roles of women which could be converted into political power. The studies touches women and taxation in Egbaland and not in Ijebuland which this paper is investigating.

Other scholarly works on colonial taxation in Ijebuland by Ogunkoya (1956); Ayandele (1992); Olubomehin (2001); Oduwobi (2004); Mba (1982); Sijuade (1991); Oguntomisin (2002); McIntoch (2009); Okubote (2013); Lawal (2016); Oladejo (2019) though historical, made passing comments on women and tax regime in Ijebu Province of Southwestern Nigeria, 1918–1949. The discourse above revealed various contributions of scholars on colonial taxation in Nigeria and in spite of these contributions, scholarly attention is not adequately paid to women and tax regime in Ijebu Province. However, their discussions and documentations provide a solid background into the interrogation of women and tax regime in Ijebu Province.

This study adopted the historical method, while the interpretive design was used. The research undertakes the examination of available data that were gathered from diverse sources. Specifically, the study makes use of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprise archival materials and oral interviews. Archival materials consisting of colonial ordinances on taxation, intelligence reports on revenue generation, annual reports, district officers' responses/correspondence and other related materials were collected from the National Archives, Ibadan. Oral interviews were also conducted with women and men in some selected major towns in the defunct Ijebu Province. The interviewees comprise of different segments, such as traditional rulers/chiefs, farmers, traders, merchants and educated elite. Oral interviews were conducted with sixty purposively selected key informants and the age range of the interviewees is between fifty and ninety years: five traditional rulers, ten chiefs, thirty-five members of the educated elite (men and women), and ten female traders chosen on the basis of women's position in the various Ijebu towns and their relevance to the study, particularly those considered knowledgeable on the subject matter. Also, men who are knowledgeable about developments in these areas were interviewed.

Secondary materials such as documents, government publications, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, journals and theses relevant to the subject matter were sourced from the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS), Lagos, Chartered Institute of Taxation, Lagos, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Ibadan, Public and Private Libraries such as Ijebu Ode Local Government Library, Ijebu Ode, Sopolu Library, Ikenne; Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan to mention a few. The methodology adopted for the study is qualitative combined with quantitative method. Data collected were subjected to historical analysis.

The enactment of the Native Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance of 1918, which introduced direct taxation into southern provinces, resulted in its implementation in Ijebu Province. The Ordinance required men and women to pay 5s and 2s.6d as tribute, water and capitation taxes, respectively. The implementation of the colonial tax regime was facilitated by public enlightenment carried out by the Awujale of Ijebuland and his chiefs. The colonial government targeted Ijebu women for taxation because of their strong economic power in trading in commodities such as palm oil, palm kernel and cocoa, and their control of markets in Ejinrin, Oru Ijebu, Sagamu and Ikorodu. An increase in the tribute tax paid by the women from 2s.6d to 5s between 1918 and 1949 provoked resistance because the Ijebu women were not represented at any level of the government. Parts of the Province, namely Ago-Iwoye, Ijebu-Ode and Erunwon, experienced the resistance. This took the form of petitions, litigations, tax evasion, use of counterfeit money, violence and the formation of unions, such as Obinrin Ijebu Council of Ijebu-Ode, Ijebu Women's Party and Nigeria Women's Union, Ijebu-Ode Branch. In 1932, political reforms led to the inclusion of women in Ijebu-Ode Town Council and the creation of the institution of Iyalode. In 1949, the women were exempted from payment of tribute tax. However, following the emergence of Western Region Government in 1951, a new tax regime was introduced, which ensured continuous taxation of the women until the attainment of independence in 1960. Colonial taxation created opportunities for women to participate in governance, but it affected gender relations of power in Ijebu Province positively and negatively during the period under review.

In Yorubaland, the British assumed administrative control in a piecemeal fashion, beginning from 1851 with the seizure of Lagos. British influence spread gradually throughout the Yoruba states until the 1890s,

when the imperial government successfully imposed colonial rule through a series of treaties, combined with strategic military expeditions where necessary as in the case of the British expedition of Ijebuland in May 1892. A more contentious issue in Anglo-Ijebu relations was the commercial policy of the Ijebu. The Ijebu insisted on a middleman role in the trade between Lagos and hinterland. This stand was, from the 1860's, formalized through a system of border markets stated by Ayantuga (1965). Olubomihin (2001) reiterated that traders coming from the interior, north of the Ijebu border (the Oyo speaking Yoruba in particular) were barred from trading beyond the Iperu and Oru markets, while the Lagos traders to the South could only trade at the Ikorodu and Ejinrin markets on the lagoon. The exchange of goods coming from the interior and those from Lagos was therefore handled by the Ijebu and at their own price (National Archives, Ibadan, 1882). In view of the fact that Ijebu routes formed the shortest link between Lagos and the Yoruba country up North, the British authorities and merchants in Lagos, considered the Ijebu restrictive commercial policy as an impediment to the economic growth of the Colony (National Archives, Ibadan, 1889). Several appeals were made by the Lagos government to the Ijebu central authorities for direct commercial activities.

However, the frustration of the British in their efforts to penetrate Ijebuland before 1892 was placed at the foot of the *Awujale*. It was assumed that the enormous power wielded by the *Awujale* up till that time was responsible for their failure. They, therefore, resolved to reduce, if not totally abrogate such powers, so that they could enjoy their conquest of Ijebuland. To achieve this, the British actively encouraged the emerging pressure groups: Christians, Muslims and the educated elite to undermine the authority of the *Awujale* by nominating the educated classes to take up their responsibilities so as to change the *Oloritun* system (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938).

Absolutely unyielding, the Ijebu, who believed that no world could be better than their own and that their culture and civilization were the very best for themselves, refused to grant repeated requests of missionaries who were allowed to pay pilgrimage to Ijebu Ode (National Archives, Ibadan, 1890). According to the missionaries like, they were denied the courtesy of seats at meetings and were compelled to pay for the water they drank (Ayandele, 1992). In every village, said the missionaries, the people were horrified by a white skin and they sacrificed fowls, goats and dogs to appease the gods who were believed to be annoyed at the presence of such strange human beings in Ijebuland (National Archives, Ibadan, 1859).

Naturally, the Europeans were incensed at the series of humiliation and disrespect they were receiving at the hands of the Ijebu, an experience that contrasted with the awe and reverence with which they were being regarded by some communities in Yorubaland. The Ijebu became for them, "very dirty, lying, and superstitious to an unusual degree" (National Archives, Ibadan, 1955) and Ijebuland was in "the grossest blindness of heathenism." The refusal of the Ijebu to commit economic suicide by opening their routes to all and sundry was interpreted by the purveyors of British imperialism as nothing more than demonstration of incorrigible selfishness by the Ijebu. Thus, as early as 1863, the British Governor of the Colony of Lagos had informed his bosses in the Colonial Office:

The people of Ijebu Ode are the most retrograde party around us and the greatest check to the spread of civilization. They must be forced to allow white men into their territory (National Archives, Ibadan, 1863).

Other opposition had come from the merchants who wanted good relations with the interior states, and from the missions. The attitudes of the merchants gradually changed, especially with the trade slump of the 1880s which emphasised the need for political intervention. By 1892, the European merchants at least supported the invasion of Ijebu, and a rail link with the interior under British control was now seen as the main hope for the development of commerce (Ayandele, 1992). All these culminated in the British expedition of Ijebu kingdom in 1892 at Imagbon which ended the isolationist policy of Ijebu Kingdom.

With the defeat of the Ijebu army by a British-led expeditionary force at Imagbon in 1892, Ijebuland was incorporated into the British Colony of Nigeria and led to the adoption of the policy of indirect rule for the administration of the area by the colonial government (Olubomehin, 2001). However, in November 1901, Governor William Macgregor enacted the Native Councils Ordinance for the administration of the Lagos Protectorate (Joyce, 1974). The nature of the ordinance was determined by the Lagos government's appraisal of contemporary conditions. From the outset, it was clear to the Lagos government that the vast area that had come under its control could hardly be governed under a system of direct administration of the Crown Colony type, namely, a local government principally based on British personnel and British concepts of administration. It was, therefore, found more economically and politically expedient to adopt

a system of indirect rule whereby traditional authorities and institutions would be officially recognised and utilised for governmental purposes under European supervision. Accordingly, Governor MacGregor enacted the Native Council Ordinance in November 1901, which conferred executive, legislative, and judicial powers on local traditional authorities (National Archives, Ibadan, 1901).

In the early stage of British rule in Southern Nigeria however, the Colonial Administration turned towards taxation to offset the huge debt accrued following the purchase of territories under the control of Royal Niger Company in 1899 (Morel, 1924) Sir Ralph Moor, the Commissioner for Southern Nigeria admitted at a conference held in London on September 20, 1900 that the purchase of the territories under the control of the Niger Company left the British Government with a debt of £860,000 which served as a major hindrance to effective management of the new British Estate in West Africa (National Archives, Ibadan, 1959). Since Nigeria was a part, the British imperialists made efforts to generate income from the Estate that would make it self-sustaining.

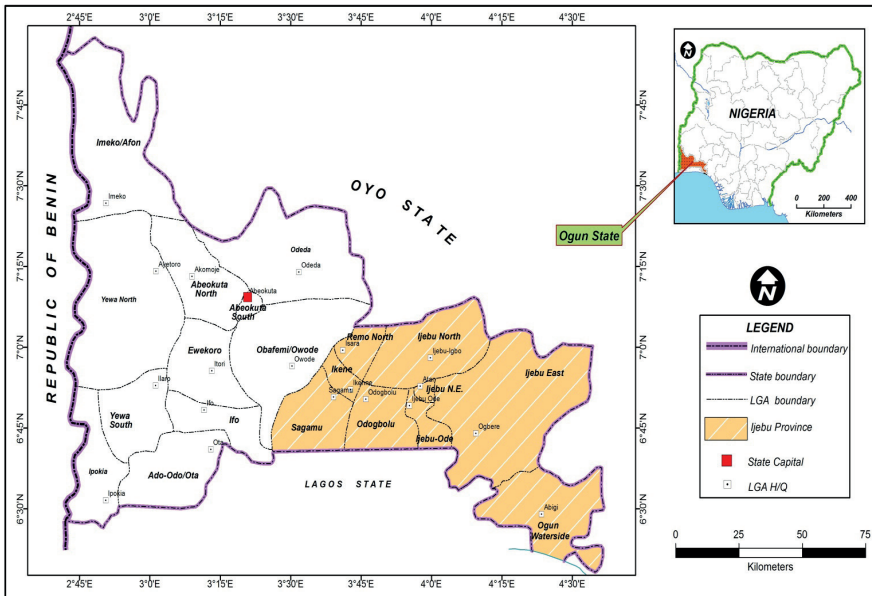


Figure 1. A Map of Ogun State Showing Ijebu Province, 1921–1960

Source: Department of Geography, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

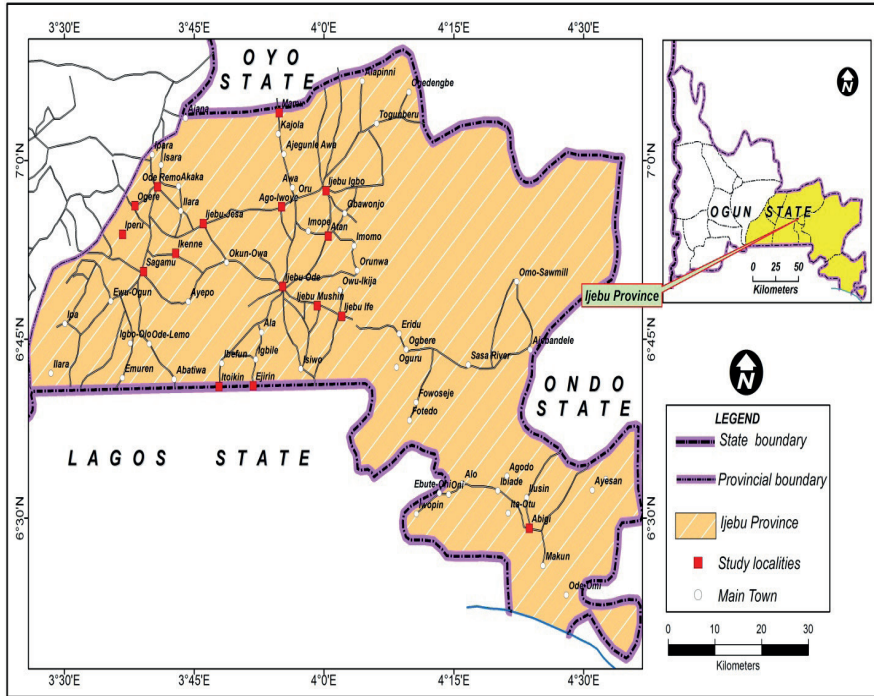


Figure 2. A Map of Ogun State Showing Ijebu Province (as conceptualised in the study area)

Source: Department of Geography, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

However, the financial statement of 1900 showed an expenditure of £176,128 which exceeded the revenue by £12,000 (Morel, 1924). Hence, the running of Southern Nigeria was seen as a burden on British taxpayers (National Archives, Ibadan, 1939). To offset this huge debt as well as manage the Protectorate efficiently, the British Government initially introduced custom duties on both import and export items and between 1906 and 1960 levied series of direct taxes on the whole of Nigeria (Pim, 1945).

By 1917, the *Native Revenue Ordinance No. 1* of 1917 was passed which empowered the Governor to extend the application of the provisions of the *Ordinance* to the whole of Southern Provinces (NNA, 1919). As a result, the *Native Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance No. 29* of 1918 was passed and implemented in Ijebu Division which, at that time was under Abeokuta Province and in 1921, Ijebu Division was constituted as Ijebu Province with its own Resident who continued with the Ijebu Native Administration but modified the system of tax collection that initially rested on the *Olo-*

ritun—Head of Quarter (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938). The Resident attributed this modification to the development of new mode of individualized taxation system where individuals that paid Tribute Tax collected receipt (National Archives, Ibadan, 1935).

The traditional territorial divisions of Ijebu towns and villages allowed the devolution of administrative power to heads of quarters (*Ituns*) and compounds (*Agbo-Ile*). Oral tradition indicates that the origin of this division was based on patterns of migration where the people of a quarter descended from a man who came before or with Obanta. *The Oloritun or Olori-Itun* (Head of Quarter) wielded authority over the head of compound (*Baale*) and settled disputes mobilized the communities for projects and organised their people for security purposes. The *Olorituns* held meetings within their own compounds of all adult men and women in their quarter as well as had general meeting of all *Olorituns* to deliberate on issues that affect the entire Ijebuland.

The British colonial government had wanted a complete transformation of Ijebu constitution into the British type, according to which the Council of *Olorituns* would become the “Lower House” while the *Osugbo* (executives), the *Ilamuren* (the high chiefs) and the *Pampa* (equivalent to chamber of commerce) would form the “Upper House” (National Archives, Ibadan, 1968). The *Olorituns* were the councilors of the wards in Ijebuland and in Ijebu Ode, the headquarters in particular under the leadership of Chief Olisa. The *Olorituns* were the heads of the twenty-five quarters in Ijebu Ode. They had direct contact with the people at the grassroots. They were instrumental in the Sole Native Authority and served as the mouthpiece of the colonial government in educating their quarters about taxes before 1921.

British tax revenue in Southern Nigeria therefore served multiple purposes which among other things became a source of generating income to finance the Colony, maintain domestic order, entrench British legitimacy over human and mineral resources, and encourage export production to the metropolis (Afolabi, 2010). But beyond these functions, taxation became a tool of cohesion for women in Southern Nigeria, particularly in Ijebu and Abeokuta Provinces. This was made possible in these Provinces because, unlike in other parts of Nigeria, Ijebu women paid taxes as flat rate with their male counterparts. Ijebu women resisted being taxed without representation and therefore formed a new collective identity, not as ‘spiritual entities’ or mere farmer or traders, but as a group that can challenge economic exploitation, form political alliances and actively participate in colonial governance.

Taxation of Women in Ijebu Division of Abeokuta Province from 1918

The closeness of Ijebu to Lagos, Ondo, Ibadan and Egba (Smith, 1988) was instrumental in the extensive trade activities of women in Ijebuland who, prior to the introduction of *Native Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance* in 1918, regularly paid tributes and market tolls to the *Pampa Onisowo*, the body in charge of tolls collection (Perham, 1963). The 1918 *Ordinance* led to the institutionalisation of Tribute Tax in Abeokuta Province which comprised of Ijebu, Egba and Ilaro Divisions. Both men and women were required to pay direct tax of 5s per male and 2s. 6d per female, at the introduction of direct taxation in 1918 with the establishment of Native Treasury (National Archives, Ibadan, 1918). These taxes were imposed on a flat rate basis rather than reflecting on individual wealth. As argued by The Resident in Abeokuta Province:

The taxation was first instituted on the basis of a village assessment. Both men and women contributed to the village quota. Therefore, when individual receipt taxation was substituted women were made to pay as a matter of course (National Archives, Ibadan, 1927).

In Ijebu Division, the assessment could be as high as £2175.7.6 in Shagamu as a town and as low as £74.12.6 in Ilara village, both in Remo District (National Archives, Ibadan, 1935). The colonial authorities encouraged the *Olorituns* who collect 5% of the total amount collected to publicise the aim of collecting Tribute Tax which they claim would be used to construct roads, build new schools, establish medical centres, court buildings, develop rural communities; and run the Native Administration (Ausman, 1971). They were also saddled with the responsibility of educating the people in their quarters that the new Tribute Tax was not different from the traditional fees and fines of court, tolls from the roads and the markets, the *Ogbin* (or first fruits), presents for the king, death duties (*Owo Iweku*) and special levies for celebrating sacrifices, which were paid into the State Treasury (*Ehin Aka*) (Ayantuga, 1965). The *Olorituns* were equally responsible for the collection of Tribute Tax in their quarters and were paid by the Native Authority for carrying out this duty.

By implication, Ijebu Ode had its first form of direct taxation in 1918 which demanded that a lump sum was made from each quarter and collected by the *Olorituns* (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938). In this system,

nominal rolls were drawn up for each quarter and tax was calculated per individual. In the end, the *Oloritun* was given a receipt that indicates payment of tax for his quarter. For the first four years of its implementation, Tribute Tax collection in Ijebu Division did not generate strong resistance from women. However, when this nominal system was abolished in 1921 in favour of a supposedly better individualized taxation system under the Native Treasury, the *Oloritun* no longer collect tax on behalf of his quarter; rather, Tribute Tax was collected by Administrative Clerks with the help of Native Administrative Police to enforce the payment of taxes, there arose forms of resistance, mainly from the *Olorituns* and then women groups ranging from petitions to threats of violence as well as tax evasion and avoidance.

From 1922 onward, the *Ajalorun* of Ijebu Ife (the District Head of Ijebu Ife, parts of Iwopin and Ode-Omi Native Court Areas) was the first to be appointed together with Administrative Clerks attached to him played prominent role in the collection of taxes during this period. Unlike the previous system where the *Oloritun* was in charge of tax collection, the *Ajalorun* made use of bellmen to go round the quarters announcing it was time for payment of taxes. Tax payers were directed to pay at the Assessment Office where the administrative clerk issued tax receipts. However, the high number of defaulters made the Ijebu Native Authority to make use of Native Administrative Police to mount road blocks in enforcing the payment of taxes where passers-by were asked to show their receipts as evidence of payment (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938). This method was combined with visitation to market places where women were largely compelled to be taxed by the representatives of the government. The women were in the majority in the market place in Ijebuland and as a result, they were prevented from trading on such visiting days (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938).

The methods adopted by the Administrative Clerk in tax collection were not the same way the *Oloritun* collected tax. The *Ebumawe* of Ago Iwoye noted that the Native Administrative Police would get very early to the gates that led to the main towns when women left early for their farms and markets, preventing them from passing through unless they provide their tax receipt. In some cases, tax defaulters' were embarrassed at social functions by confiscating their attires most especially their *gele* (head tie), bags and shoes (National Archives, Ibadan, 1938).

It should be emphasised that Colonial authorities targeted Ijebu women for taxation due to various reasons. First, the activities of Ijebu women at Ejinrin market, Oru market, Sagamu market and Ikorodu mar-

ket were remarkable which caught the attention of the colonial government. In Ejinrin market for example, out of the attendance of about 6,000 persons that traded in the market on each market day, Ijebu women had largest share in attendance of above 4,000 that traded in palm oil, palm kernel, cocoa and other goods in exchange for European commodities that were in turn sold to other parts of Yorubaland during the pre-colonial period (Olubomehin, 2001). However, the census conducted in 1931 further buttress this fact in Ijebu Province, archival information indicates that 28.5% of female and 19.8% male were counted while non-adult female was 31% and non-adult male was 20.7% respectively (National Archives, Ibadan, 1934).

Women and Tax Regime: Its Implications in Ijebu Province, 1918–1949

Taxation had complex implications for women's activities in Ijebu Province. As a result, the impact of colonial taxation on these women activities was directly and indirectly felt on critical areas. These critical areas are interdependently investigated as they helped to alter the socio-political and economic structure of pre-colonial Ijebuland.

Ijebu Province scenario provided a unique comparison to that of Abeokuta Province on women's colonial taxation during the 1940s. While the usual participatory mode of governance in Ijebuland was adopted by the *Awujale* during the meeting held on 11th October, 1948 at Judicial Council Hall, Ijebu Ode, consultations were made between the Resident, *Awujale* District Officer, District Heads, and Councilors whether: i) women's taxation should be abolished or ii) women's taxation should continue? (National Archives, Ibadan, 1948). The Resident in an advisory capacity informed the meeting that any decision taken on the matter would affect the welfare and future development of the community. In addition, the District Officer also added that if women's taxation were to be abolished, it would mean a reduction of about £11,600 for Ijebu Ode and about £3,000 for Ijebu Igbo. He suggested that to avoid the deficit, an increase in the male tax from 10/s to 15/s per annum should be considered (National Archives, Ibadan, 1948). This decision was adopted and as a result, it made up for the shortfall in revenue generation in Ijebu Province from January, 1949 unlike Abeokuta Province where there was financial crisis after the abolition of women taxation from 1948 (Byfield, 2003).

Although the number of girls enrolment in schools were not to be compared with the boys during the colonial period in Ijebu Province, it however encouraged the women to send their girl-child to school so as to participate in the leadership position of the incoming Regional Government. The women who were not satisfied with the low participation of women in leadership position in the province with the contribution of women to the revenue of the Native Treasury in the Province. This encouraged them to embrace education and send their girls to school which later brought about leading women from Ijebu Province in disciplines in academia as first professors in different disciplines. For example, the first Nigerian Female Professor ever, Prof. (Mrs) Felicia Adetoun Ogunsheye in Library Science, First Nigerian Female Professor in Psychiatry, Prof. (Mrs) Olayinka Omigbodun, First Female Professor in Chemistry in Nigeria, Prof. (Mrs) Modupe Ogunlesi, First Female Professor in English in Nigeria, Prof. (Mrs) Omolara-Ogundipe Leslie (Public Relations Unit, University of Ibadan). Others were not first in their disciplines but were products of early girl-child education in Ijebu Province are Prof. Beatrice Olabimpe Aboyade in Library Studies, Prof. (Mrs) Mojubaola Olufunke Okomo in Political Science, Prof. (Mrs) Olufunke Olagunju in Agricultural Economics and many others in different disciplines.

Women taxation in Ijebu Province brought about the emergence of women in politics of the 1950s. The agitations in the 1940s initiated a development that brought to limelight women in the politics of 1950s in Nigeria. It also led to pressure groups created by the National Women's Union that actively participated in the regional government. It should be noted however, that the idea of women representation as a result of being tax payers led to the emergence of some notable women in Ijebu Province like Mrs Elizabeth Adekogbe and Mrs Ayedun (National Archives, Ibadan, 1948).

With health care, it should be noted that the supply of tropical medicine and medical facilities was one of the most dramatic, significant and conclusive redistribution of tax payers' money generated in Ijebu Province. Although, women benefited from the control of tropical disease epidemics and provision of maternal healthcare; they nevertheless experienced low support from medical officers stationed at Ijebu Ode Hospital which, by 1949 had four doctors and five nursing sisters who worked using a single administrative block, a maternity block, lecture room, store, nurse's hostel and three medical quarters (National Archives, Ibadan, 1956).

In the traditional Ijebu society, however, the concept of a full-time housewife was unknown, and in the colonial period, Ijebu women con-

tinued to operate outside the domestic sphere, as ever before. As a result, women in Abeokuta and Ijebu Provinces were among the first to pay tax in the whole colony of Nigeria as stated earlier. A tribute tax of a flat rate had been imposed on the people of Abeokuta and Ijebu since 1918. While girls were taxed at the age of 15 years, boys started paying tax when they turned to 16 years. Wives were also taxed separately from their husbands. As a result of these, women considered the taxation alien, unfair and excessive. They detested the imposition of taxation on them and their daughters, most especially the mode of collection, and consequently objected most to the methods adopted by tax collectors to enforce its collection. Not only that the homes were invaded, but sometimes, girls were physically assaulted including stripping them half naked in the presence of assessment agents to determine their age and eligibility for taxation. Also, tax defaulters were first put outside the *Ito*ro Town Hall in Ijebu Ode for the sun to scorch them as well as face the shame from the passersby throughout the day before being detained until they paid their taxes and accrued fines.

Taxation also took a toll on the health of women in Ijebu province. The few doctors on ground reported that women formed the highest number of patients who suffered from avitaminosis, especially vitamin B deficiency, malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhea, amoeba and ancillary dysentery, hookworms, ascariasis, and ear infections (National Archives, Ibadan, 1956). These medical health problems are directly linked to stress of extra economic activities so as to meet up with the challenge of taxation and malnutrition. Rather than eat the best of food, many women prefer to go hungry and pay their taxes to avoid public embarrassment and seizure of trading goods. At the General Hospital, Sagamu, most women were reluctant to be admitted as in-patient unless they were seriously ill; the reason being that they often found it difficult to get their relatives to bring in food regularly for them as the hospital was non-catering (National Archives, Ibadan, 1947). In general, the investment in public health by the colonial government was poor when compared to the tax collected from women during the period under study.

Although, Yoruba men commonly blamed the increasing (and in their opinion unfortunate) marital independence of women on the influence of Christianity, Islam, and or Colonial laws, other pressure like taxation were also leading women to assert greater control over their own marriages in Ijebu Province (Shields, 1997). The colonial direct and indirect taxation brought about psychological/emotional and economic independence to

women in Ijebu Province. This could be traced to the relocation of women to neighbouring cities of Ikorodu, Epe and Lagos during the colonial period. The women with the consent of their husbands went to live in places like Ikorodu and Lagos so as to be relieved of the tax burden in Ijebu Province. This in effect made such women psychologically and emotionally independent apart from being economically independent of their husbands. These further led to separation of wives from their husbands as divorce was in suit. The economic independence was one of the greatest factors that led to divorce of some Ijebu women from their husbands during this period. In some cases, a woman seeking a divorce was motivated by economic considerations: she might be trying to gain freedom to move away from a setting with few trading opportunities and tax burdens or hoping to escape from heavy household duties as a junior wife. The movement created problems in gender roles and relations during this period. This also can further be substantiated with the reduction in women population in Ijebu Province who were adolescent with the age of 15 years below in 1934 population and who were within the age of 15 and 50 years by 1952 were reduced from the 94,825, to 87,818 in population respectively (National Archives, Ibadan, 1952). An example was Madam Jarinat Farcus—‘*Omo Seriki*’ from Sagamu to Ikorodu and later Lagos and Madam Salamatu Mati, the princess of *Ewejebe* from Iperu to Ikorodu. Those who relocated to Ikorodu were majorly from Remo District probably because of the nearness to Ikorodu.

Economically, between 1921 and 1951, cash tanks were raised in Ijebu Province by the Resident Officer to construct market stalls in Ijebuland. In *Ita Osu* Market, for instance, the British colonial government gave a loan to build 709 market stalls early in 1950, and was to be repaid annually by those who rented the stalls. Market stalls were only allocated to those who have paid their taxes because of the condition stated in the letter distributed to all the applicants by the Resident. In a general meeting of *Ita-Osu* Market Committee held at Itoro Hall, Ijebu Ode on Saturday, 29th September, 1951, it was unanimously agreed that 1000 copies of letter be printed and distributed to all applicants with the following information:

- a. Readiness of each successful applicant to pay six months fee in advance within 15 days of the receipt of the letter of information about allocation of stalls.
- b. Production of Tribute Tax and/or Water Rate Tax Receipt(s) for verification at the spot of payment of such fees (National Archives, Ibadan, 1951).

Many women who had initially traded in the marketplaces were denied access to trade in the markets on the basis that they could not afford to raise capital to rent the stall and produce their tax receipts. This greatly affected the economic activities of women in Ijebu Ode during this period.

Politically, with the continued women agitations, it brought about the re-constitution of the Ijebu Ode Town Council. With various forms of petitions from the women, the following was the new composition of the Town Council from 1933:

- The Chairman** – The *Olisa* of Ijebu Ode
- Members**
- 21 Members elected by quarter councils in Oke Iwade Ward
 - 21 Members elected by quarter councils in Isale Iwade Ward
 - 21 Members elected by quarter councils in Porogun Ward
 - 1 Erelu and one female chief represent the *Osugbo* in the Council
 - **(Note:** The quarter councils who selected the above members were composed of representatives from age grades and from the women.
 - 3 Iyalodes (Head of Women, one from each of the 3 wards) (National Archives, Ibadan, 1948).

Nonetheless, the various forms of agitations used by women in Ijebu Province brought a distinct tenor to the debate on women and taxation in colonial Nigeria. Its demands were not all together gender-neutral but specifically highlighted women's needs in order for them to advance their participation in the broader society, as independent economic actors and self-control political agent.

Conclusion

The forgoing has examined the introduction of taxation as a source of revenue generation for the British government in Ijebu Province. It also interrogate the history of women in the Ijebu Province as a study of adaptability within a society affected by diverse patriarchal system, negotiation between indigenous patterns and the forces of colonialism, as well as

women's own agency. The paper established the fact that taxation was one of the instruments used by the British colonial government to effectively control and coordinate socio-political and economic activities of women Ijebu Province during the period under review. However, the administration of tax and its structure in Ijebu Province had significant impact on the people especially the womenfolk. While British colonial tax policy was not deliberately meant to punish women or make them poor, tax policies actually made them to become reactionary to colonialism agitating that there should not be taxation without representation. Also, taxation of women in Ijebu, on the surface, created opportunities that women exploited to enhance their status; it nevertheless affected the women positively and negatively in their accessibility to healthcare, formal education, participation in women activism, income generation, and gender relations.

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Adesanya Abdulfatai Adesina Alhaji	Male	78	<i>Oloritun</i> of Ijada Quarters, Ijebu Ode		22 February, 2018
Adetona Sikiru Oba (The <i>Awujale</i> of Ijebuland)	Male	84	Traditional Ruler	Ijebu Ode	10 th May, 2018
Agunbiade Jokotade Mrs	Female	60	Nursing	Ikorodu	20 th March, 2019
Awote Olatunde High Chief (Retd. Col.)	Male	79	<i>Oloritun</i>	Ijebu Ode	26 th August, 2017
Kuforiji Wuraola Alhaja	Female	75	<i>Iyaloja</i> , Ita Aje Market, Ijebu Ode	Ijebu Ode	15 th May, 2018

Lawson Chief (Mrs) Alaba	Female	65	The <i>Iyalode</i> of Egbaland	Abeokuta	26 th December, 2015
Mabogunje Akin Prof.	Male	87	Retired Civil Servant	Ibadan	4 th May, 2018
Ogundipe Leslie Omolara Prof. (Now Late)	Female	79	Retired Civil Servant	Ajebo	30 th November, 2017
Ogunseye Adetoun Prof.	Female	90	Retired Civil Servant	Ibadan	22 December, 2016
Oguntayo Afolorunso	Male	80	(The <i>Ajalorun</i> of Ijebu Ife	Ijebu Ife	10 th September, 2018
Okusaga Alimotu Sadiat Alhaja (Now Late))	Female	90	Business	Ijebu Ode	30 th December, 2015
Osifodunrin Fariat Folabomi Alhaja Chief	Female	79	<i>Iyaloja</i> , Olabisi Onabanjo International Market	Ijebu Ode	20 th June, 2018
Sebiotimo Surakatu Alhaji	Male	75	Babalaja (Olabisi Onabanjo International Market), Ita Osu, Ijebu Ode	Ijebu Ode	11 May, 2018

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Discovery of Racism in the Fantasy Genre. The Dark Elf Motif in *Dungeons & Dragons*

ABSTRACT. The fantasy genre bares some stigmas born from the times of its most formative author, J.R.R. Tolkien. Among them, there is a problem of so-called “fantasy races”, imaginary entities like elves, orcs, or goblins, and their real-world implications, rooted deeply in racial stereotypes. In this article, I study this topic on the example of the fictional race of the drow or dark elves and their portraits in the media related to *Dungeons & Dragons*, a tabletop roleplay game system heavily influenced by classic fantasy motifs. I try to argue that the changes in social and racial sensitivity observed in the young generation of *Dungeons & Dragons* players are correlated with changes in the portrayal of draws from classic monsters to much more nuanced approaches.

KEYWORDS: tabletop games, *Dungeons & Dragons*, diversity, fantasy

The Orc Problem and Tolkien’s Legacy

From time to time, the question of how to approach racial issues contained in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of The Rings*, *The Hobbit*, and *Silmarillion*, comes up in the discourse devoted to his novels. Among others, Anderson Rearick explores this issue in his 2004 article “Why Is The Only Good Orc a Dead Orc” (Rearick, 2004). Rearick observes a stark contrast between two fictional races, the dark, savage and brutal orcs and the beautiful and noble elves but ultimately, he concludes that Tolkien can only be accused, at worst, of being a child of his times, a white, privileged Englishman, born in the late nineteenth century, raised and educated in Oxfordian traditions. Social sensibilities have changed considerably in the decades, separating Tolkien’s life from the early twenty-first century. What was accepted unquestionably then is viewed today from new angles and with an awareness that had not yet developed in Tolkien’s time.

Nevertheless, his work became the springboard for countless successors and epigones. It became the foundation and pillar of an entire sub-genre of fantasy, usually called high fantasy—characterized, in the most

general definition, by the fact that the plot of the story takes place in a fictional, magical world (so-called secondary world), often bearing superficial similarities to medieval Europe, but inhabited not only by humans but also other humanoids, fictional races (elves, dwarves, orcs, hobbits, etc.). The main heroes tend to face adversities on an epic scale, often threatening the entire world. This is the most stereotypical model of a fantasy story and is very clearly a direct inspiration from *The Lord of the Rings*. Of course, I do not mean to imply that all novels based on this model, all high fantasy novels, are fundamentally derivative and devoid of literary value. However, it is worth noting that, because of the source of their inspiration, they often reproduce, without further reflection, certain elements and themes that were not objectionable to readers in Tolkien's time. In contrast, they are now increasingly met with more resistance for political and ideological reasons.

The contemporary fantasy author Nora K. Jemisin, born a year before Tolkien's death, published on her blog in 2013 an essay entitled "The Unbearable Baggage of Orcing" (Jemisin, 2013), in which she takes a firm stance against the Tolkienian racial paradigm that still prevails in fantasy. To put it euphemistically, she raises the issue of the unpleasant associations in presenting fictional races such as orcs and what they evoke in her.

"Think about that," she wrote. "Creatures that look like people, but aren't really. Kinda-sorta-people, who aren't worthy of even the most basic moral considerations, like the right to exist. Only way to deal with them is to control them utterly a la slavery, or wipe them all out. Huh. Sounds familiar" (Jemisin, 2013).

Jemisin points out that orcs in fantasy are described and created using rhetoric dangerously close to the all-too-real racist rhetoric—dehumanizing, depersonalizing, and demonizing them.

In this article, I want to focus on a similar issue, but without using orcs as an example—and without focusing strictly on literature. Without straying too far from the worlds and races of post-Tolkien fantasy, I will examine how the role-playing game system *Dungeons & Dragons* depicts the fictional race of drow, also known as dark elves, how the motifs associated with them are used, and finally, what changes have taken place in these respects over the years and what they say about the broader contexts of cultural change and social sensitivity to specific issues.

I want to stress in advance that by referring to theories and ideas connected with the real world, I do not wish in any way to correlate the

problems affecting living people today and the realm of fiction. However, the way we create stories, even—or perhaps especially—stories of a fantastical nature inevitably reveal much about how we look at the world around us, which serves as a point of reference even in the most imaginative secondary worlds. As Jemisin wrote—orcs are a product of human imagination. However, the way various narratives treat them carries implications about the categories in which we are inclined to think also in the context of the reality around us. Sundar Sarukkai, for example, wrote about the role that fiction could play in academic—in his case anthropological—discourse, reminding us that “fiction stands as the exemplar of subjective construction of the world [...]. Fiction is also a method which allows for subjective orientations in describing the world” (Sarukkai, 1997, p. 1409).

The *Dungeons & Dragons* System and Monster Races

First, a few terms need to be explained.

RPGs (Role Playing Games) are a type of tabletop game that combines strategy, improv, and group storytelling. The players, usually several (there is no specific limit, but the optimal number is considered to be between three to six people), take on the roles of characters they have constructed, that is, their fantasy heroes, play them out, and direct their fates. In addition to the players, one of the participants takes on the role of the Game Master (in the *Dungeons & Dragons* system, often called the Dungeon Master). The Game Master’s task is to coordinate the entire game; to assume the role of the story’s narrator; leading the players’ characters through adventures invented by themselves or based on existing scenarios. They are also responsible for all players’ interactions with the presented world. The core manual for the latest edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* defines the role of the Dungeon Master as “game’s lead storyteller and referee. The DM creates adventures for the characters, who navigate its hazards and decide which paths to explore” (Crawford, Mearls & Perkins, 2018).

The game consists of three main elements—roleplaying, combat, and plot intrigue. Depending on the players’ preferences, these elements may be equal, or one of them may be given more prominence than the others.

RPGs are played entirely orally (which distinguishes them from their cousins LARPS, Live Action Role-Playing, type of games more akin to improvised theatre spectacle). Most of them use special dice, maps with min-

ature figures of characters and their opponents prepared by the Game Master, and paper character sheets. Online RPGs have become increasingly popular in recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are played through communication applications such as Discord or Zoom or through special programs and websites (DnDbeyond, Fantasy Grounds, Roll20, or Foundry Virtual Tabletop).

There are many RPG systems, but to this day the most popular one—and the one that interests me in the context of this article—is the Dungeons & Dragons system. It was created in 1974, designed by Gary Gygax. The author intended it to be a combination of a wargame and a fantasy story. Up to 2021, hundreds of different manuals and compendia of knowledge came out, collected in five official editions. Without going into too much detail, I will mainly be interested in the original first edition (usually referred to as D&D 1e) and the newest, launched in 2014, fifth edition (D&D 5e).

The classic campaigns played in the D&D system take place in a magical world, more or less (often more) similar to Tolkien's Middle-Earth, inhabited by fantastic races. From the very first edition players could choose whether to be a human, elf, dwarf, gnome or halfling (for copyright reasons, D&D could not use the name "hobbit") when creating their characters—and with time, the spectrum of choice has been widened even more, to races such as half-orcs, bird-like aarakocras or fiendish tieflings. During their adventures, the characters encounter many enemies—in the system referred to as monsters.

Monster races, especially humanoid ones, are the perfect Other—something that resembles us in some ways but is completely alien and antagonistic in other ways. They play a role similar to aliens in many science-fiction stories and creatures such as zombies in horror films. As Simone de Beauvoir observed:

the category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality—that of the Self and the Other [...]. Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself [...]. In small-town eyes all persons not belonging to the village are 'strangers' and suspect; to the native of a country all who inhabit other countries are 'foreigners'; Jews are 'different' for the anti-Semite, Negroes are 'inferior' for American racists, aborigines are 'natives' for colonists, proletarians are the 'lower class' for the privileged (de Beauvoir, 2015).

In the *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*, published in 2009, Jean-François Staszak puts it this way:

Placing in opposition notions of Us, Self, Them, and the Other is to choose a criterion that allows humanity to be divided into two groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued, and another that is defined by its faults, devalued, and susceptible to discrimination. Only dominant groups (such as Westerners in the time of colonization) are in a position to impose their categories in the matter. By stigmatizing certain social groups as Others, Barbarians, Savages, or People of Color, dominant groups relegate the peoples that they can dominate or exterminate to the margin of humanity (Staszak, 2009, p. 43).

There is an inherent and primal instinct in human beings that drives us to define ourselves and the collective with which we identify, and for this we also need to identify what is not our own. Usually, however, it does not end with simple identification—the Other all too often entails negative connotations, leading to xenophobia, discrimination, and dehumanization, often resulting in violent actions.

Fantasy—including classic Tolkienian fantasy, on which the D&D system was built—as I already mentioned, is based on more or less symbolic analogies and references to reality. Even the most phantasmagorical adventures in the most colourfully constructed worlds have a core that resonates in some way with readers who can see something familiar in the psyche of the magical characters and can sympathize with their inner conflicts. Authors build fantasy cultures, civilizations, and societies according to rules, principles, and relationships observed in the real world, so familiar mechanisms are also present. In her essay, Jemisin criticized the unreflective portrayal of orcs as the hostile and inhuman Other. A similar problem exists in D&D games, where the mechanical assumptions imply that some races that inhabit the magical world exist on the meta-level only to attack player characters and be slain by them. If players focus more on the tactical and battle aspects of the game, the advancement of their characters to higher levels depends on how many enemies they kill.

A large part of these monsters who have to be defeated are creatures such as giant rats, dragons, or undead wraiths. On the other hand, there is also the monster, as mentioned earlier, races such as orcs, and goblins, and finally, the dark elves, also known as drows—which I will use as a symptomatic example in this article.

The first full description of the drow as a monster race (aka enemies) appeared in one of the earlier first-edition manuals, *The Fiend Folio*. According to the brief description, the drow was a depraved subrace of elves. Many centuries ago, a schism divided the good elves and those who were “selfish and cruel” (Turnbull 1981, p. 33). The schism grew into a series of conflicts that forced elves of darker nature into hiding in the Underdark, where for generations they grew in strength, developing martial and magical abilities. The drow despises their surface-dwelling, sun-walking kin, whom they regard as their sworn enemies to this day.

Traditionally, the main characteristics of drow are their appearance, nature, place of residence, social system and religion. They are similar to elves but shorter and slimmer, with skin in shades of black, dark grey, dark blue, white hair, and red or purple eyes, which can see well in the dark. By nature, they are treacherous, evil, and insidious creatures and are referred to as chaotic evil in the D&D system’s built-in morality scale. They live in the Underdark, a subterranean realm inhabited by various monsters and dangerous creatures. The drow society is equally cruel and brutal, built on ruthless competition and, it should be noted, is matriarchal. This is primarily due to the last characteristic element, religion. Drow is worshippers of the Lolth, the Spider Queen, one of many deities created for the D&D worlds. Lolth is a malicious, vicious, and overall purely evil being. She requires blind obedience from her followers, and her chosen clerics are only female.

Drizzt Do’Urden—An Exceptional Drow

Many fantasy novels are based on the D&D system and set in so-called *Forgotten Realms*. Among the names of their authors especially popular is Robert Anthony Salvatore, an American writer born in 1959. One of his most famous works is *The Dark Elf Trilogy*, and its later continuations. The trilogy includes the books *Homeland* (published in 1990), *Exile* (published in 1990) and *Sojourn* (published in 1991). As the name suggests, their main character is the drow warrior Drizzt Do’Urden. Born in the Underdark, in the drow city of Menzoberranzan as the son of Matron Malice, leader of one of the drow Dens, Drizzt stands apart from the other dark elves. Shortly after his birth, his mother and sisters realize that his eyes are different from those of other drow—they are different in colour and, unlike most, do not react badly to light:

“Fetch the candle” Matron Malice ordered. “Let us see how these eyes appear in the world of light” [...].

The clerics hid their eyes and Matron Malice put a prudent hand over the baby’s face as Briza lit the sacred candle. It produced only a tiny flame, but to drow eyes it came as a brilliant intrusion.

“Bring it” said Matron Malice after several moments of adjusting. Briza moved the candle near Drizzt, and Malice gradually slid her hand away.

“He does not cry” Briza remarked, amazed that the babe could quietly accept such a stinging light. (*Homeland*).

Drizzt grows up, raised first by his older sister, then trained by his biological father, and his many talents soon become apparent—he is exceptionally bright, has a natural gift for magic, and above all, is a skilled and dangerous warrior. As he becomes a young man, he is sent on his first mission to the surface. The mission has one simple task—a drow patrol will hunt down their surface-dwelling elven cousins and shed their blood in the name of the Spider Queen. Indoctrinated since childhood and raised in the cult of Lolth, Drizzt is excited, but something inside him makes him doubt.

Drizzt was not as openly excited as his brother, unsure of the implications of such a mission. At last he would get to view the surface elves and face the truth of his heart and hopes. Something more real to Drizzt, the disappointment he had known for so many years, tempered his elation, re-minded him that while the truth of the elves might bring an excuse to the dark world of his kin, it might instead take away something more important. He was unsure how to feel. (*Homeland*)

During this first mission, Drizzt experiences a turning point and makes a decision that will determine his entire life and fate. During a massacre of elves, unarmed and unprepared for any battle, he decides to spare a terrified child at the last moment.

Only a moment later, another elf, this young girl, broke free of the massacre and rushed in Drizzt’s direction, screaming a single word over and over. Her cry was in the tongue of the surface elves, a dialect foreign to Drizzt, but when he looked upon her fair face, streaked with tears, he understood what she was saying. Her eyes were on the mutilated corpse at his feet; her anguish outweighed the terror of her impending doom. She could only be crying, “Mother!”

Rage, horror, anguish, and a dozen other emotions racked Drizzt at that horrible moment. He wanted to escape his feelings, to lose himself in the blind frenzy of his kin and accept the ugly reality. How easy it would have been to throw away the conscience that pained him.

The elven child rushed up before Drizzt but hardly saw him, her gaze locked upon her dead mother, the back of the child's neck open to a single, clean blow. Drizzt raised his scimitar, unable to distinguish between mercy and murder. [...] He almost did it. In his unfocused outrage, Drizzt Do'Urden almost became as his kin. He almost stole the life from that beautiful child's sparkling eyes.

At the last moment, she looked up at him, her eyes shining as a dark mirror into Drizzt's blackening heart. In that re-flection, that reverse image of the rage that guided his hand, Drizzt Do'Urden found himself.

He brought the scimitar down in a mighty sweep [...]. In the same motion, Drizzt followed with his other hand, catching the girl by the front of her tunic and pulling her face-down to the ground [...].

Drizzt had to work quickly; the battle was almost at its gruesome end. He sliced his scimitars expertly above the huddled child's back, cutting her clothing but not so much as scratching her tender skin. Then he used the blood of the headless corpse to mask the trick, taking grim satisfaction that the elven mother would be pleased to know that, in dying, she had saved her daughter's life.

"Stay down" he whispered in the child's ear. (*Homeland*).

Sparing the child's life does not escape Drizzt without consequences. He draws the attention of Lolth and her priestesses, and his actions may bring the wrath of the Spider Queen down on his entire family. His mother, Matron Malice plans to propitiate the goddess by offering Drizzt as a sacrifice, but in the end his place on the altar is taken by his father. Drizzt is faced with a choice. He can stay in the world he knows and take on the honourable position of the family's weapons master. He refuses, however, and decides to leave Menzoberranzan. Born and raised as a drow, Drizzt rejects his people, their traditions and customs, calling them lies. In the next volumes of the series, he will also leave the Underdark and come to the surface, where, after many hardships, he will finally become a famous adventurer and legendary hero.

Drizzt is not like other drows. His uniqueness became apparent shortly after his birth when his mother and sisters noticed the peculiar characteristics of the newborn's eyes, an early harbinger of what was going to grow from him. Though born in Menzoberranzan, raised according to drow traditions and teachings of Lolth, something made him different from his brethren. A conscience that prevented him from killing an elven child and

that allowed him to look at his society and culture differently, to see its hypocrisy and cruelty, and to ultimately reject it of his own free will. It made him an exception among the drow of the Underdark—it made him a “good drow”.

The concept, as mentioned above of the Other sometimes allows for similar exceptions, which, although it may seem like a step in the right direction at first, is in fact a trap that perpetuates stereotypes. In the discourse of feminist thought, Otherness has long been associated with gender. Simone de Beauvoir wrote, “he is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other” (de Beauvoir, 2015). We live in a world and operate on concepts that have been shaped by a culture directly tied to patriarchal values, from the perspective that women and femininity are secondary to the primary and essential masculinity. However, there have always been exceptions in history—honorary males, starting with the Pharaoh Hatshepsut, women who could function on the same terms and levels as men because of their position, talents, conditions, or merits. Joan Kelly-Gadol mentions the problem of viewing women’s history through the prism of such exceptions in her 1976 article *The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women’s History* (Kelly-Gadol, 1976). Also, Allison Heisch, writing about another “exceptional women” in history, Elizabeth I, stated that “right from the start, people working in the area of Women’s Studies have recognized that the restoration of women to their place in history could not be accomplished by focusing attention upon exceptional women” (Heisch, 1980). But what exactly is the harm of this phenomenon? Firstly, it perpetuates the status quo according to which “masculinity” is the norm and “femininity” is the exception. It gives women the right to exist in the public consciousness only when they fit into male roles. Secondly, it creates the illusory impression that “equality”—understood as the possibility to enjoy a privileged position—is in fact potentially available to all. If one woman managed to fit into male roles and shatter the proverbial glass ceiling, the others must be to blame for not doing so as well. This shifts the responsibility from the system to individuals—individuals who are victims of the system

Similar phenomena also occur in other spheres and contexts. Practically every system based on segregation and discrimination of some part of the population has adopted comparable exceptions. In the apartheid era in South Africa, there was the concept of honorary whites, while the Nazis had their *Ehrenarier*, honorary Aryans. This privilege did not have to be limited to individuals but extended to a whole minority—the so-called

model minorities, behaved according to the requirements imposed by the majority.

The solution to prejudice and discrimination is not to identify and appreciate distinctive individuals. While superficially this may be positive, it is actually a harmful mechanism that perpetuates negative perceptions of the stereotyped community.

The Fifth Edition

In 2014, the *Player's Handbook* was released, containing the first set of rules for the fifth edition of *D&D*. Following the tradition of its predecessors, it listed nine playable races—humans, dwarves, elves, half-elves, halflings, dragonborn, gnomes, half-orcs and tieflings (Crawford & Mearls, 2014). The choice was extended to other races in the following books, including those traditionally classified as “monsters”. *Volo's Guide to Monsters* suggests that players take on the role of an orc or a goblin and that this can “offer up some interesting roleplaying possibilities. Whether played for comedy, as a tragic story of betrayal and loss, or as an antihero, a monstrous character gives a player a chance to take on an unusual challenge in the campaign” (Mearls, 2016). *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes*¹ released in 2018 presents among other things, an updated version of the drow and their history, and offers mechanical rules for building a drow player's character. Most of the elements defining drow in the previous editions remained the same—they were still a race living in the Underdark, worshippers of Lolth, a matriarchal society built on “blood and poison” (Crawford, 2018). However, by allowing players to create their own characters as drow, in a way this race was given over to their imagination. Anyone could become a Drizzt—a good drow, a renegade, who deviates from the wicked ways of their kin. As it turns out, it was not enough. Many players were no longer interested in drows only in the context of unique and distinctive individuals but asked themselves what else could be done with the entire race.

¹ It is worth noting that during the time this article have been writing, with the release of the new book *Monsters of the Multiverse* in May 2022 both *Volo's Guide to Monsters* and *Mordekainen's Tome of Foes* became considered not canonical in the official game lore.

***Critical Role* and the Kryn Dynasty**

The last few years have seen the rise of a new form of RPG content—web series, consisting of livestreamed private role-playing sessions and entire campaigns. One of the precursors of this trend, and still by far the most popular, is the *Critical Role*. Created by a group of American professional voice actors, at first only a private game among friends, it debuted on Twitch and Youtube platforms on the Geek&Sundry channel on March 12, 2015. Over the next two years and one hundred and fifteen episodes the series told the adventures of a group of heroes called Vox Machina. It takes place in the fantasy world of Exandria, created for the campaign by the game’s Dungeon Master Matthew Mercer. When the Vox Machina story came to an end, a second season of the series began after a four-month hiatus, this time following the lives and (mis)adventures of another group called the Mighty Nein. Mercer again was the Dungeon Masters, while the other players took on new characters. The Mighty Nein campaign lasted for one hundred and forty-one episodes and ended on June 3, 2021. As this article is being written, the third season, telling a new story with new heroes, has been running for a few months.

Comparing the first two seasons of *Critical Role*, we can observe many differences, both in terms of world-building, narrative construction, and character creation. Although both campaigns are set in Exandria, they take place on two different continents. The one explored in the first campaign—Tal’Dorei—is in many ways a much less complicated and more stereotypical place. Likewise, the plot is similarly straightforward. Vox Machina is a quite standard heroic story, with the heroes facing clear-cut enemies and difficulties that leave little doubt as to who is good and who is evil—whether it is a vampire straight out of a gothic horror movie, a group of greedy and destructive dragons, or an undead wizard trying to ascend godhood.

In comparison, the members of Mighty Nein encounter many more ambiguous choices and moral grey areas along their way. After the first, more stereotypically heroic campaign, Mercer, now knowing his players much better, began to confront them with more complex problems without clear and obvious solutions. One of the manifestations of this deepening of the world and blurring of the black and white divisions inherent in traditional fantasy is also the way Mercer presented in his second campaign the drow.

The Mighty Nein began their adventure on the continent of Wildemount, specifically in the Dwendalian Empire, one of the two dominant political powers there. Early in the first episode players and viewers

learned that the Empire has long been at war with its eastern neighbour, Xhorhas. While a tentative truce is currently in place, there are also circulating rumours of increasing military clashes on the borders (Curious Beginnings, 0:19:01). Xhorhas is described as a hostile land, “overrun with all manner of beasts and terrors, relics from the final battles of the Calamity that ruined that scarred landscape” (Curious Beginnings, 0:17:15). In the following episodes, the heroes, some of whom come from the Dwendalian Empire and others from the Menagerie Coast, an Empire’s political and economical ally, learn more about Xhorhas. They learn that a large part of its population is made up of drow and that the drow dynasty, the Kryn, rules it. They learn that in the Dwendalian Empire, the drow of Xhorhas is often called Cricks because of the peculiar chitinous armour worn by Kryn soldiers (Zemnian Nights, 2:11:35).

It is not long before the heroes directly contact the Kryn Dynasty soldier. Their adventures are abruptly interrupted by a terrorist attack in which two Xhorhasian spies blow up part of one of the towers in one of the biggest imperial cities. The heroes, themselves in the middle of some not-so-legal activity, decide to hide in the city’s sewers in the general chaos—and there they stumble upon one of the spies. At first, there is an aggressive confrontation, but later they try to talk to him. The spy is carrying a mysterious, evidently magical object in the shape of a dodecahedron and as it turns out, this object is the real goal of his mission. It was originally the property of the Kryn Dynasty, stolen by imperial agents. Upon learning this, the heroes decide to give the drow a chance to escape the city. Unfortunately, the city guards eventually kill him, but the Mighty Nein manages to retrieve the artifact—not allowing it to fall back into the hands of imperial mages. Although they do not know its true nature or properties, they keep it for themselves (Lost and Found).

The attack brings immediate consequences and the hitherto dormant conflict between the two countries erupts with renewed force. The Mighty Nein, having no special desire to join the imperial army, decide to remain neutral. Many episodes later, however, fate leads them to Rosohna, the very capital of the Kryn Dynasty. When they finally arrive there, they slowly begin to find out empirically that not everything they have learned so far about the Kryn Dynasty and Xhorhas is necessarily true.

In the fifty-sixth episode of the campaign, the heroes face the ruler of Xhorhas, the drow Bright Queen Leylas Kryn—and they decide that, surprising even the Dungeon Master, will change the trajectory of the entire plot. They give the mysterious dodecahedron to the Bright Queen, not even

knowing its functions and power, but knowing that it was once stolen from her (*The Favor*, 2:51:30). This way, they unwittingly become traitors to the Empire—and heroes to the Dynasty. By getting to know Xhorhas and its inhabitants, and befriending the drow dignitaries, the Mighty Nein gains a new perspective and discovers just how many lies contain imperial propaganda. The truth, however, is not a simple reversal of roles. Neither the Dwendalian Empire nor the Kryn Dynasty is the unequivocally good or bad side, neither of them is morally superior. Ultimately, the heroes find their own truth—no matter what, war brings destruction and death to both sides, and it is not enough to help one or the other. The solution is not victory, but peace.

In creating the Dwendalian Empire and Xhorhas, Matthew Mercer has, probably quite intentionally, used stereotypes existing in fantasy since the times of Tolkien—and he has also intently negated them by nuancing the situation and adding shades of grey. The Dwendalian Empire, though definitely racially heterogeneous, is ruled by a human dynasty and humans are the dominant element there. Xhorhas and the Kryn Dynasty on the other hand are coded as the Other. Humans are a minority there, power is in the hands of the drow, most inhabitants are primarily monster races. In the geographical description of Wildemount in *Explorer's Guide to Wildemount*, Mercer writes specific statistics. Rexxentrum, the capital of the Dwendalian Empire is inhabited 81% by humans, 8% by dwarves, 6% by halflings, and 5% by “other races” (Mercer et al., 2020). The inhabitants of the Kryn capital Rosohna consist of 66% drow, 9% goblins, and 7% duergar (dwarves originating from the Underdark)—the rest are also “other races” (Mercer et al., 2020). At first glance, the division seems very clear and automatically puts the Kryn Dynasty in the position of the enemy in the eyes of players and viewers, the classic “evil and monstrous empire”, another reflection of Tolkien’s Mordor. Only by getting to know Xhorhas and its residents better, the Mighty Nein slowly, in a natural way, get rid of their own prejudices and stereotypes—starting with small but significant moments, like the one when they realize for the first time that the term “Cricks” is in fact as strongly pejorative slur and they stop using it. With time, they even find in Xhorhas what they could not find in the Dwendalian Empire, in many ways a country that is much less tolerant and open for “otherness”—a home, a place they can treat as their own, at least for a while. And while, as I have mentioned before, these changes are not based on a simple reversal of the good vs. evil dichotomy, ultimately the Mighty Nein ends their adventures much closer and more closely tied to the Kryn Dynasty than the Dwendalian Empire.

What All This Tells Us About Society

This narrative, I believe, has much more in common with current trends in creating morality and conflict in fantasy than the two previous examples. The audience today, more sensitive to the delicate issues of stereotypes and harmful clichés than in previous decades, no longer so easily accepts purely evil monster races, finding in them the problems perfectly captured by Jemisin’s quote in the introduction. There is also a trend nowadays to move away from the archetype of the “unique and special” Drizzt-type hero—either for the reasons described above, or because it has already become a boring cliché. It seems that the audience today tends to be more interested in morally nuanced stories, with conflicts presented in shades of grey and with less explicitly heroic protagonists.

It is also worth noting that another prevailing trend in the last decade among the “young generation” of fantasy manifests itself, among others, in the popularity of the “#ownvoices” initiative. It was originally created for children’s and teen literature, but due to the close affinity of the latter with fantasy (the targets of Young Adult Fiction, Young Adult Fantasy and regular fantasy often overlap), it quickly penetrated this genre. It was initiated in 2015 by writer Corinne Duyvis, who started a thread on the Twitter platform in which she proposed the hashtag “ownvoices” to “recommend kidlit about diverse characters written by authors from the same diverse group” (Duyvis n.d.). This is meant to promote work written by and about people of marginalized identities—racial, sexual, gender etc. Under this banner have been published novels such as *The Poppy War* by a Chinese-American writer R.F. Kuang (2018), set in a fantasy world inspired by Chinese history (notably the Opium Wars), and Tomi Adeyemi’s *Children of Blood and Bone* (2019), inspired by Nigerian culture. Both these novels, as well as many others, break with the stereotypical fantasy set in worlds heavily influenced by medieval Europe.

There are many indications that today’s authors and consumers of fantasy differ from their predecessors in what can be called social sensitivity. Although fantasy as a genre bears various stigmas, imprinted by its precursor’s works—created in completely different climates and socio-political mentality—they are more and more often not copied but contested. One example of this is the departure from the concept of monstrous races such as orcs and dark elves. This can be seen in how the image of the latter has changed over the years in D&D-related media. In the beginning, the drow were only enemies, monsters that existed to be defeated by heroes.

With time, however, people started to look for potential nuances—among others Drizzt was born, a good drow who, thanks to his uniqueness and morality unusual among his kin, despite his origin became a hero fighting evil himself. Such a portrayal unfortunately also entails problematic implications. On the other hand, *Critical Role* is one of the most influential and popular narratives associated now with D&D. Its fifth edition departs from both the one-sided portrayal of the drow as a monster race and from doing exactly the same thing with potentially few exceptions. Without completely breaking with traditional drow characterization and playing even with audience expectations, it presents both drow community, culture and individual characters in a nuanced way—both the “human country” and the “drow country” are drawn in varying shades of grey.

These changes attest—as do other phenomena such as the #ownvoices initiative that promotes inclusivity—indicate that fantasy narratives today are moving away from elements that for many years were taken for granted but are now clearly beginning to bother a new generation of genre fans. This is again indicative of a shift in attitudes toward similar issues, a greater public sensitivity to what fictional stories represent and their real-world implications.

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A Critical Analysis of Gender Roles in Marriage in Igbo African Ontology

ABSTRACT. Marriage is one of the fundamental institutions that shape and regulate social life in the Igbo society. The Igbo concept of marriage is unique in Igbo ontology. Among Ndigbo, marriage is not just a conjugal union but an essential social requirement to be fulfilled before admission into the society's rank of respectable adulthood. It is a cross gender ritual. The Igbo marriage is basically between a man and a woman or many women, although there are interesting but rare exceptions. The respective genders have their culturally designated roles in Igbo ontology. There is a complementarity of roles with the male gender clearly dominating. But the female gender cannot really be said to be oppressed in traditional Igbo marriage as it also provides them with many privileges and stronger safeguards. Among Ndigbo, marriage is more of a social responsibility than an individual's conjugal fancy. This work x-rays the traditional Igbo marriage, analyzing and portraying it in philosophical perspectives as it relates to the genders.

KEYWORDS: gender roles, marriage, Igbo society, woman, man

Introduction

Marriage is a universal phenomenon (Crossman, 2019). It is essentially a social regulation of an ontologically biological activity. The will to reproduce is universal to all living nature. Among most animals, reproduction necessarily involves the mating of two members of the opposite sex. For most animals, mating is a function of the availability of an adult male when a female is in heat. For social animals, it involves much more. There are rituals and exclusivity. Man being the apex social animal has a very complicated ritual of mating which unlike most animals, is not necessarily induced by the female heat. Yet unlike other animals, the ownership and care of the young is not the exclusive preserve of female human. Among humans. The male is heavily involved in the ownership and care of the young. Among humans also, mating is not exclusively done for reproduction. It is often done for social and emotional reasons. Therefore, marriage

evolved among humans as a ritual to regulate mating and family making. It is founded on a strong custom of exclusivity.

Since humans copulate for interests other than reproduction (Benagiano, Carrara & Filippi, 2009). There are often clashes of interests in choice of mating partners. These clashes of interests often result in conflicts which sometimes lead to fatalities (Kaplan, 2007). The human society chose to regulate mating by establishing the institution of marriage which publicly sets aside copulating partners as officially exclusive. Marriage often forbids the public from having sexual relations with both or either of the marriage partners. The public nature of marriage abundantly advertises the exclusivity that marriage seeks to confer on a couple. This way, the society takes care of the chaos and conflicts that would have resulted in the struggle for mating partners. Beyond bequeathing exclusivity to couples, marriage also grants rights to couples against each other. The society equally takes care of the young through the institution of marriage as both partners in the marriage are often obligated to care for the offspring of the marriage.

This is a universal practice among humans. There is no culture or human society without the institution of marriage. Ndigbo as part of the human race also evolved their own marriage institution and their own marriage culture. The universality of the marriage institution notwithstanding, Ndigbo had their own conception of marriage and the place of marriage in their own worldview. It is part of their unique history as an unduplicated people maintaining their own existence on their own autochthonous portion of the earth planet. Their institution of marriage like several aspects of their culture is unique to them. But as part and parcel of humanity, the marriage institution among Ndigbo also shares some characteristics evident in marriage institutions as established by several cultures across the globe. But who are Ndigbo?

1. The People: “Ndigbo”

Ndigbo are a subgroup among the Black people that dwell the earth (Ebo, 2021). They are originally found in Africa though as a mercantile people Ndigbo can be found on most corners of the earth engaged in one enterprise or another. Ndigbo do not trace their origin beyond Africa. Since it is generally agreed that man originated in Africa (Tattersall, 2009), Ndigbo must have been among the early groups of humans to people the earth.

Oral traditions and carbon dating of artefacts found among Ndigbo bear credence to this. In Igbo myth of origin, Eri the fabled progenitor of Ndigbo is said to be descended from the heavens at Omambala River (Ebo, 2018a). This is a mythical way of saying that the history of his origin could not be traced beyond Omambala River. Ndigbo as a people have no history of migrating from elsewhere. Of course, there are abundant histories of some subgroups joining Ndigbo, especially at the borderline regions and becoming subsumed within the dominant Igbo culture (Ebo, 2018b). There are instances of such occurrences among the western Igbos where there are notable traces of the Edoid influence in the Igbo culture as evolved in the area. Among the southernmost Igbo who are bounded with the Efiks such cultural subsuming did also occur. The Abriba Igbo clearly have some cultural affinities with the Efiks (Kponkwem, 2015).

Some artefacts found among Ndigbo especially at Igbo-ukwu are among the oldest in the world judging from their carbon dating. Anthropologists generally consider Ndigbo to be an autochthonous people. They have always been known to exist on their portion of the earth. They have no history of migration as a people beyond their present land. Ndigbo occupy majorly the southeastern part of Nigeria. They are mostly in the five states of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo. They are also found as indigenous minorities in Delta, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Rivers, Benue and Kogi states. Ndigbo belong in the Kwa language subgroup of the Niger-Congo languages group (Acholonu & Leguer, 2011). They are a radically egalitarian people. They have a fairly homogenous and significantly indigenously evolved culture; of course, until the advent of Christianity. Lately, some people have tried to allude to a possible Jewish origin of Ndigbo. But the claim is blatantly preposterous and lacks sound scholarly or historical basis (Lidman, 2017). If Christianity never came to Igboland, Ndigbo would never have known that such a people as the Jews ever existed. There are no records of interactions between Ndigbo and the Jews either mythologically or historically. The proponents of this Jewish affinity point to some cultural practices found among the Jews and Ndigbo. But this author is of the view that if there are some cultural diffusions between Ndigbo and the Jews, the diffusions would definitely have been from Ndigbo to the Jews. The reason is that as humans, Ndigbo definitely existed before the Jews. It is a scientifically agreed consensus that humans originated in Black Africa. Jewish civilization is an outcrop of the Egyptian civilization. Egyptian civilization is an outcrop of Ethiopian civilization (James, 1954). Jewish civilization couldn't have preced-

ed Igbo civilization. Any similar cultural practices found between Ndigbo and the Jews could not have possibly existed among the Jews before Ndigbo. Ndigbo, definitely are not related to the Jews. DNA testing bears this out. There is no gainsaying however, that there are strikingly similar cultural practices shared by the Jews and Ndigbo. Perhaps, further scholarship might debate this exhaustively in the future.

2. Igbo Conception of Marriage

The Igbo conception of marriage is tied to the Igbo concept of the being of the human person. For Ndigbo, marriage is much more than the emotional fancies of two adults. It is not regarded as an optional institution but a necessary rite of passage. It is an experience that the Igbo society as a matter of duty demands of every adult. Ndigbo consider marriage to be a rite that must be performed in order to attain the status of complete adulthood. Marriage in Igbo ontology is the fulfilment of the stage of maturity in the individual both as a human person and as a responsible citizen. A man is not considered to have matured in Igbo ontology until he has married. An unmarried ripe adult is more or less considered a failure.

Emotions played little roles in traditional Igbo marriages. The principal theme in traditional Igbo marriages was procreation. A man was supposed to leave a legacy and sustain his lineage by giving birth to male children who would carry on with the family lineage after his death. Failure to marry meant losing a rightful place in the comity of ancestors at death for even the ancestors would consider such a man a failure (Ebo, 2018a). Social considerations also ranked very high in Igbo marriages. The married adult attains instant respectability by the virtue of the marriage per se. There are also practical reasons such as companionship and social security. Among Ndigbo, a man's insurance against old age are his children. Children are expected to care for their parents at old age. Not getting married entails facing the risk of not getting the desired care at old age.

Unlike Western Europe where marriage is purely based on the expression of affection between a man and a woman, Ndigbo conceive marriage primarily as a social duty. The Igbo marriage is strongly communal. The extended family and the clan are prominently involved. Western marriage is more or less a matter for the couple and their individual families. The community has little or no say in the making of the marriage.

3. The Igbo Marriage Process

The conduct of the marriage ceremony among Ndigbo is not a day's event. Igbo marriage ceremony consists of a series of stages. Each stage has its own requirements and its own specific rituals. Some of the stages can be combined and performed in a day while some must be separately done. Traditional Igbo marriage starts with contact with the bride to seek her consent. The prospective groom might not necessarily be the person to make the contact. It could be done by him or a third party. It is always an informal arrangement. The important factor is that the prospective bride gives her consent, whether directly to the prospective groom or through a third party who acts at his behest. Most of the time this is done by the women. A man may ask his mother or an older sister to look for a suitable wife for him. The belief is that being a woman, she is in a better position to understand women. Therefore, she would necessarily choose who is best for her son or brother as the case may be. This informal interaction sets the stage for the commencement of the formal marriage processes.

3.1. Introduction Ceremony

The introduction ceremony is the very first ceremony in the Igbo marriage process. It involves the groom going to the home of the bride's parents to introduce themselves and declare their intention (Dike, 2021). The parents of the bride will inform a few members of their extended family who will witness the event. Usually the groom shall present some drinks and kola nuts. The bride shall be invited by her parents and relatives and asked if she knew the man. On answering yes, she would be informed of the mission of the man and asked if she consented. If she answers in the affirmative, the ceremony shall proceed. Immediately after the prospective bride has given her consent, the prospective groom shall be questioned by members of the bride's family to ascertain his family background and what he did for a living. The bride's family would eventually conduct a background check to determine his eligibility to receive the hand of their daughter in marriage. The marriage process terminates abruptly if the groom is considered unsuitably.

Among the things that are usually checked is the groom's family's reputation. Do they have a good reputation in their community? Are there thieves in their lineage? Are there leprosy or other socially reprehensible diseases in their lineage? The next thing to be checked is longevity. Are

there untimely deaths in their lineage? Is their lineage part of the forbidden caste, the *osu* caste (the *osu* caste system has been outlawed)? These are the inquiries generally made to ascertain the background of the groom. The groom's family of course will also make inquiries concerning the family of the bride as the background checks are traditionally mutual. They would want to know whether wives married from the bride's clan or community generally stay in the marriage. They would also inquire to know whether women married from the bride's clan have a history of waywardness. There are communities that generally discourage marrying from particular areas due to conflicting marriage culture. A community that places high premium of wife fidelity generally discourage marrying from communities where wife infidelity is treated with levity.

The philosophy behind these background checks is the cultural fact that courtship was unknown to traditional Igbo African society. Unlike the West where love played prominent role in choice of mate, love was seldom a decisive factor in the choice of marriage partner among Ndigbo. Character and family background were supreme. The brides were usually young adults dependent on their parents. They were generally considered not to be experienced enough to handle such a weighty matter as the choice of a life partner all by themselves. They necessarily depended on their parents whom naturally would want the best for them. No parent wants his daughter sent packing from her husband's home. So, the parents usually exercised caution in approving whom their daughter got married to. The influence of the bride's parent in choice of a marriage partner is always stronger than that of the groom's parent. The grooms in Igbo traditional marriage are generally older more mature than the brides. They are expected to know what is best for them.

After the background checks have been done, the groom and his people come back once again to the bride's parents to collect the list of items needed for the marriage proper.

3.2. The Three Traditional Weeks Wine Carrying Ceremony

The next stage in Igbo traditional marriage process after the introduction ceremony and the collection of the marriage list is the three traditional weeks wine carrying ceremony. The Igbo traditional week is made up of four days: Eke, Afor, Oye and Nkwo. Three Igbo traditional weeks would translate to twelve days in the Gregorian Calendar. At this stage, the larger extended family traditionally called the house is invited. The ceremony

takes place at the bride's parent's ancestral home. The ceremony cannot take place in another town even if the bride's parents have a home there. They must return to their ancestral or village home to perform the ceremony. The groom shall equally be accompanied by members of his own larger extended family—the house.

At this ceremony, the groom is required to presents certain quantities of drinks to the members of the bride's traditional house including: the men's group in the house, the women's group, the wives' group, the girls' group and the young men's group. On satisfactorily providing these items or their cash equivalents, he may pay the bride price if he so wishes. If he pays the bride price at this point, he is deemed to have legally married the bride.

The rationale in inviting the traditional houses of the intending couple's families is the Igbo belief that no one person parents a child alone. A child is parented by all the relatives. In traditional Igbo setting, a relative could discipline an erring child of another relative. Therefore, giving out a daughter's hand in marriage could not be the exclusive preserve of the bride's parents since the entire relatives are deemed to have participated in the upbringing of the bride. At the end of the ceremony, the bride's father prays for the success of the marriage. Afterwards, the groom's party proverbially asks the bride's parents to permit the bride to help the groom in bringing back the groom's emptied calabash of palm wine to his house. This is a proverbial way of asking the bride's parents to permit her to follow the groom to his house.

This is the actual courtship in Igbo ontology. The Igbo worldview does not criminalize but forbids premarital sex. A young man and a young woman are not expected to be in any amorous relationship unless they are husband and wife. At the end of the three traditional weeks wine carrying ceremony, the bride goes to stay at the groom's home for three traditional weeks which are twelve days. During this period, the bride is expected to put up her best behavior. So, is expected of the groom. At this period groom's relatives get the chance to observe the behavior of the bride at a close range to ascertain her character. They are also expected to be kind to the bride. The bride takes her time to observe the attitude of the groom's relative towards her to ascertain whether she can actually spend the rest of her life among them. At the end of the three traditional weeks visitation, the groom returns the bride to her parents' home with assorted gift items.

If the bride is dissatisfied with the groom or his relative's and wishes not to be married to them, she would state thus. That marks the end of

the marriage process. Neither the bride nor her parents would owe the groom any liability. He would not be entitled to any compensation. Likewise, the groom or his people could be dissatisfied at the character exhibited by the bride during the three traditional weeks visit. They could also choose to terminate marriage ceremony by simply discontinuing communications with the bride's family. In turn, they would neither owe the bride nor her parents any liabilities. He would not be required to pay them any compensations.

But if the bride price was paid during the three traditional weeks wine carrying period, it is a different ball game. The bride's parent would have to refund the bride price to the groom if the bride discontinues with the marriage process. On the other hand, the groom would not be entitled to any recompense if he discontinues with the marriage process after the three traditional weeks visit. If he had paid the bride price, he would have to wait until another man marries the bride before he is repaid the bride price. Until another man marries the bride, she is traditionally considered to be the groom's wife, his discontinuation of the marriage process notwithstanding. The bride's parents could repay the bride price even if another man does not marry their daughter if they don't want anything to do with the groom anymore. It is pertinent to note that the bride price is a tiny fraction of the marriage expense. More so, what is returned is the bride price paid to the bride's dad. The one paid to her mum is never returned. This is a testament of Igbo society's distaste for divorce, and an elegant edifice of marriage security of marriage for women in the Igbo society.

3.3. The Final Wine Carrying Ceremony

The final wine carrying is the ceremony at which the entire community is invited to witness the marriage. It is the most expensive ceremony in the Igbo traditional marriage process. The drinks required for the ceremony are always far higher than the quantity demanded at the previous ceremonies. The thinking is that anyone from the community can freely come to the event for a drink. Apart from the drinks, other items are also required most times in larger quantities than were previously demanded at other stages in the marriage process. These items are usually for the four groups in the kindred. When these items have been satisfactorily provided, the bride price may be paid if it had not been paid at the previous ceremony. The climax of the final wine carrying ceremony is when the bride receives

a cup of palm wine from her father, searches the crowd for the groom and hands it over to him on her knees (Bamidele, 2020). It is important to note that the final wine carrying is not a compulsory ceremony in Igbo marriage ontology although it is demanded. The decisive ceremony that designates marriage in Igbo ontology is the payment of bride price. Even if a marriage process progressed to the final wine carrying but crashed without the payment of the bride price, a marriage is not adjudged to have taken place.

3.4. The Symbolism of the Final Wine Carrying Ceremony

The final wine carrying ceremony is essentially the presentation of the bride and groom as a couple to the public. Ideally, the bride price would have been paid before the ceremony. So, the couple are often already legally husband and wife before the final wine carrying ceremony. Therefore, the ceremony is essentially held to demonstrate strength. It is an avenue for the groom to demonstrate that he can more than take good care of the bride. It is also a measure of the social standing of the groom. He is expected to invite his entire kindred, his friends and his well-wishers. The bride's kindred would be present and would be keen in assessing the social strength of the groom. The final wine carrying ceremony is also a ritual to enact affinity between the relatives the groom and the bride. The marriage relation in Igbo ontology surpasses the nuclear and the extended family and flows into the kindreds of both parties. Ndigbo do not see marriage as a contractual relationship existing solely between a man and a woman; the kindreds of the bride and the groom are involved.

Some have argued that the final wine carrying ceremony is a ritual that crept into Igbo marriage ontology at a much later era. It is argued that the marriage process in Igbo ontology originally culminated in the payment of the bride price. The payment of the bride price, among Ndigbo, is actually what makes a couple man and wife. The final wine carrying ceremony is seen in some quarters as a superfluous ceremony that neither adds to nor detracts from the legality of marriage in Igbo ontology. The superfluity of the ceremony varies from clan to clan. Among some clans, it is so exorbitant that it is often seen as a factor militating against marriage in such areas. More often than not these clans demand that the bride price be paid at the final wine carrying ceremony as a way of compelling the groom to perform a marriage ritual that should ordinarily be a matter of choice. Such clans always bypass the three traditional weeks wine carrying ceremony, insisting that items required for the ceremo-

ny be presented at the final wine carrying ceremony. This practice decimates the essence of the three traditional wine carrying ceremony which is the traditional courtship. It eliminates the opportunity for the bride to understudy the groom and his family to ascertain whether she could fit into the family or not. The groom's family equally doesn't get the opportunity to understudy the bride.

In recent times, the final wine carrying ceremony is more or less turning into a commercialization of the marriage process. The items required are in some cases so outrageous. So many superfluous additions have made their way into the ceremony notably, *aso ebi* which was borrowed from Yoruba culture and the cutting of cake at the final wine carrying ceremony which is Western inculturation.

4. Types of Marriage in Igbo Ontology

Among Ndigbo, marriage could be contracted in basically four ways.

- a. **Monogamy:** There is the monogamous marriage which is generally common. This is the marriage between a man and a woman. In the Igbo monogamous marriage, vows are not exchanged but the woman is required to stay exclusively for the man while the man may add another wife if he can afford to. Ndigbo do not conceive monogamy as a permanent state of marriage. No Igbo man is traditionally required to enter into monogamy as an exclusive and permanent state of marriage. It is always a modifiable state of marriage.
- b. **Polygamy:** The Igbo society traditionally welcomed polygamy among the wealthy. The key requirement was the ability of the man to provide for the wives and their kids. It was a traditionally expensive enterprise. Hence, only the wealthy could afford it. A wealthy man could take as many wives as he could maintain. There was literally no limit to the number of wives he could take so long as he has the capacity to maintain them. Each of the wives is expected to be conjugally faithful to the man. The man in turn must discharge his marital responsibilities to each of them fairly. The most senior wife always had a supervisory role over the rest of her co-wives. The marriage ceremonies for a woman being married into a polygamous home are same as those of a monogamous marriage. It is pertinent to note that the wives in Igbo polygamous marriage do not have any marriage contract with one another but individually with

the man. In other words, a wife in an Igbo polygamous marriage does not owe any marital obligation to a co-wife.

- c. **Wife Inheritance:** Among Ndigbo, young wife of a deceased husband could be inherited by the oldest son of the man. Of course, the son must not be begotten of the woman. This applies in a polygamous marriage where the deceased man had wives either younger or in the same age bracket as his first son. The first son takes over the responsibility of being a husband to them. The woman has a choice however. She could refuse if she is not interested. The purpose of the inheritance is to fill the gap created by the demise of the husband. The children begotten in this marriage belongs not to the deceased man but to his son who has inherited the wife. He son who inherits his father's wives does not have to pay another bride price on them or perform any ceremony to mark the inheritance. They are regarded as part of the responsibilities the first son inherits as a result of the demise of his father.

Where the first son of a deceased polygamous man is too young to take up the responsibilities of marriage, the deceased man's brother could inherit the said young wife. But he must perform a certain ceremony over her to mark the transfer of lineage. If he fails to perform the ceremony, he could have conjugal rights to his late brother's young wife but would not lay claim to the ownership of the children that are begotten in that relationship. Such children would be regarded as the bona fide children of his deceased brother. The essence of the ceremony is to transfer the marriage to his own lineage so that he can lay claim to the children he begets with the inherited wife. A brother could also inherit the young wife of his deceased monogamous brother. Same rules apply.

Apparently, the practice of wife inheritance is not peculiar to Ndigbo alone. The Jews also had the same practice. King Solomon inherited his father's youngest wife at the demise of his father, King David (1 Kings 2: 12-46). Onan, Juda's son inherited conjugal rights to his late brother's wife. But unlike among Ndigbo where the lineage could be transferred if the inheriting brother performed the required ceremony, that was not the case among the Jews. Onan was so peeved at the idea of reproducing children for his late brother rather than for himself that he had to resort to coitus interruptus (Genesis 38: 8-9). Among Ndigbo as the case among the Jews, a father cannot inherit his son's wife (Genesis 38: 1-11).

Ndigo sought to curb widowhood through the practice of wife inheritance. A young man who lost his wife could easily remarry. He was only required to mourn his wife. After the mourning period, he could marry another woman. That was fairly easy. But it was not so easy for the woman. First, women generally spent longer time mourning their deceased spouses. Secondly, they would have begotten children in the marriage. Leaving the children to start a new home elsewhere was emotionally and practically difficult. Igbo culture does not permit a woman to transfer the children begotten in a previous marriage to another marriage. If a woman chooses to remarry, she is not expected to move with the children. Besides, getting a man to marry her with the added responsibility of the children was generally difficult. Men generally preferred younger and single women. Igbo culture sought to mitigate the existential consequences of widowhood by the practice of wife inheritance.

- d. Female Husband:** The Igbo female husband marriage is not same as the Western same sex marriage. This is a situation where a wealthy widow without a child marries a woman in the name of the late husband. It is also the case where a wealthy unmarried woman without a child marries a woman in the name of her late father. In either case, the female husband has no sexual relationship whatsoever with the wife. The union exists essentially for the reproduction of children. The wives get impregnated by biological men though.

To understand the female husband marriage, it is pertinent to note that among Ndigo, only marriage makes a father. Impregnating a woman does not make a father among Ndigo. By same logic, a female husband contracts marriage with another woman and gets a man to impregnate her wife. By the logic of the Igbo culture, the children become hers.

The practice was not rampant because it was tedious. The traditional Igbo agrarian economy was dominated by men. Few women acquired significant wealth as women traditionally did not inherit land among Ndigo. Igbo marriage has always been traditionally expensive. To be a female husband was no mean feat, especially for the unmarried woman. She would have her own house or compound. She would also have to provide for the ensuing family.

The practice of female husband marriage also throws light into how Ndigo socially viewed gender. Biology per se did not make a man socially speaking. Biology certainly did not make a father

among Ndigbo. The female husband marriage demonstrates that decisively. It is also a testament of the fact that among Ndigbo, women did not play the dominant roles socially on the basis of biology per se but on the basis of sheer ability. As demonstrated by the female husband, a woman with the requisite ability could socially become a man.

5. Divorce in Igbo Marriage Ontology

Although the Igbo marriage culture spiritedly guards against divorce, it nevertheless does occur. Just as it is not possible for a man to contract marriage without his kinsmen, it is not possible for a man to divorce his wife without involving his kinsmen. No court of arbitration is required for a man or woman to divorce their spouse. The decisive factor is the return of the bride price. If a man sends his wife packing, the marriage does not end. It subsists until another man marries the woman and refunds the bride price paid by the previous husband. If the bride price is not refunded, any child begotten by the woman belongs to the previous husband. The fact that the marriage does not terminate until the bride price is returned gives the woman maximum security in the marriage. It is pertinent to note that the bride price is generally a token. It is insignificant compared to the entire cost of the marriage. Leaving it at the liberty of the wife's family to choose when to return makes the wife the ultimate decider of a divorce. If the wife is no longer interested in the marriage, she can always get her family to refund the bride price whether she is remarrying or not.

In the final analysis, it is the woman that ultimately divorces the man. The man only has the power to initiate separation. No matter how passionately a man demands the refund of the bride price he paid on his wife, it is up to the woman's family to decide whether to refund him or not as long as no other man has come to seek the hand of the woman in marriage. The woman's security in Igbo marriage is unrivalled. A man or a woman can initiate separation but only the woman can divorce! Ndigbo socially did not fashion the woman to become a permanent member of her father's family. Traditionally, women did not inherit land from their parents. They were expected to partake in their husbands' inheritance. Therefore, a divorce would put a woman in a very disadvantageous position. This explains the Igbo stringent measures against divorcing a woman. First, marriage is made a process and not an event. The process is made so long that

it affords the intending couple ample time to notice possible red flags. The marriage process is made so expensive that men generally cannot easily afford it let alone frequently repeating it. The Igbo marriage usually takes many years of savings to afford. It involves the kinsmen of both parties. For a separation to be officially recognized, the man must be accompanied by his kinsmen to the woman's parents' home to announce it, of course with a keg of palm wine.

Conclusion

In these days of wars of values, in today's world where Western values have waged unrelenting wars on the African psyche, it has become imperative for African thinkers to showcase African values. Today, most Africans uncritically regard their culture as mistaken and inferior to Western culture. But the reality is that African culture is rich. Some aspects of the African culture are far higher advanced than the Western counterpart. Besides, it is very much okay to be culturally different. It is very much okay to be an African.

This work dug into marriage practices among Ndigbo. It is neither a sociological description of marriage among Ndigbo nor an anthropological narration of Igbo marriage practices but a philosophical analysis of marriage in the Igbo conception of being in the world. It is a critique. The work has not only said what Ndigbo did in their marriage practices, it said how they did it, why they did it and what it meant to them. It is a loud canon, fired into contemporary Igbo African consciousness in the ongoing war of values in our world which has become a global village. If we cannot globalize our marriage values, we can at least affirm their authenticity. That, this work has done.

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Gender Balance in Church Choir and Choir Leadership: A Study of Selected Churches in Ibadan

ABSTRACT. The struggle for gender equality has been a long and continuous skirmish. The need for gender equality continues to evolve globally and hasn't left a field of study such as music and an institution; church choir vindicated for a no discourse. The imbalance between men and women in choir is a global issue that has garnered attention from researchers, Music educators, and music directors. Some scholars claimed the gender identity of choir singers has shifted dramatically in the past century, from a male only club into an activity for females. The leadership positions; Music Director, Assistant Music Director, Organist, Welfare Director, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Librarian, Public Relation Officer, General Secretary etc. though relative from one church choir to another has some gender struggles. The aim of the study was to propose gender balance in the Church Choir and Choir leadership. In doing this, it analyses the ratio of female choristers and male choristers in selected churches in Ibadan and the gender representations on the different leadership positions in the Choir. It also aimed at identifying leadership roles or responsibilities of female and male in the selected choir. It elucidates aptly on biblical acme as it touches Church choir and gender. The study employed a descriptive survey research design and data were collected through observation and interview and analysed with Pie chart and Percentage error. The study concludes that both males and females gender are fit to be a member of the Church choir and can play any leadership role. Church music directors and Choral music educators must celebrate all elements of music; not only encouraging members to engage in musical experiences during adolescence, but also equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to find success and lifelong engagement with music.

KEYWORDS: gender balance, church choir, choir leadership

Introduction

Several studies on gender equality and its advantages have been well documented. Several frameworks have affirmed its centrality to human rights and sustainable development. The subject of gender cut across all spheres of human life such as education, economy, politics, religion and a lot more and without the exception of human existence since humans were made both male and female. Gender is an integral component of ev-

ery aspect of the economic, social, daily and private lives of individuals and societies, and of the different roles ascribed by society to men and women. The gender viewpoint looks at the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles and interactions, but as this study is concerned, it looks at it from its implication on religious roles and responsibilities. Successful positioning of the subject gender may have some fundamental effect on policy, programme and output of the Church choir.

The Church Choir remains an institution that also demands scholarship belvedere and critical examination to ascertain sustainable development. A Church that consists of both male and female also has different working groups that make it function as expected in performance of religious rites. The choir definitely will have to function by having the mixed sex work together as a group. Some scholars have observed a lack of male participation in choral music activities. This male to female imbalance is often attributed to a perception that singing is a feminine activity and results in a lack of balance in choral music ensembles.

1. Issues on Gender Balance in the Choir

The subject of gender equality in every facade of the society continue to evolve in gender studies. Faseun and Bello (2017) asserts that culturally, women are meant to operate in the background, supporting the male folk. Women, Power and Performance in the Yoruba Public Sphere have viewed the issue of gender discrimination from different directions and expressed their varied views on the need to offer women equal opportunity as their male counterparts. Omojola (2009). The most crucial in the involvement of either men and women in the Choir should be subjected to their abilities and interest. The divergence view consequently will have relative effects on the participation of both men and women in the Choir. A motivating factor for the increase in female involvement was the perceived effeminate nature of singing, which supported the view that women were more suited to vocal music endeavours (Gates, 1989; Szabo, 1999).

As public singing by women became more widely accepted throughout history, their dominating participation began to modify our cultural perception of choral music, leaving many choral ensembles today severely lacking in the balance between the sexes (Gates, 1989). This indicates that when considering the ratio of women participation in the Choir to a large extent more women are represented than men.

Men of all ages strongly perceive that singing is for girls or is strongly believed to be a feminine activity (Hall, 2005; Harrison, 2007; Kennedy, 2002; Sweet, 2010; Szabo, 1999; Warzecha, 2013). Several studies have been conducted on gender stereotyping, noting that many people have preconceived ideas about what instruments and activities are masculine or feminine. In most cases, singing was viewed as a more feminine activity and therefore an unacceptable avenue of pursuit for many men (Hall, 2005; Harrison, 2007; Szabo, 1999). Considering the above assertions, in my own view, it is important to state that the reason for having more women participate in the Choir sometimes might not also be because of perceptions of people that the activities in the Choir are feminine but as a result of the observations of men who have from time to time watch that women are the highly populated in the Choir for quite some time and this alone can form their thoughts. The assertion that the activity is more feminine needs to be debunked or questioned in future studies.

In addition to the gender stereotyping that is associated with choral singing, research also suggests that puberty can be a major deterrent for students and their interest in participating in choral music experiences (Mizener, 1993). Some believe music ability is innate and that they do not possess it (Hallam, 2006) while others do not find enjoyment in the activity (Freer, 2015). Societal obstacles inhibiting male students from participating in the performing arts include pressure from family, friends, and the community (Adler, 2012).

2. Biblical Perspective on Gender and Choir/ Music

Considering the Holy Bible perspectives on Men and women involved in Church Music, we see where the word music first occurred from the Biblical account. Jubal was spoken of as the father of such that handles harp and flute. "His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute" in Genesis 4:21. It is so crystal clear that history shows the involvement or participation of a man in Church Music though the holy Bible was silent about Jubal's involvement in vocal music but specifically pointed out that he was actively involved in playing of instruments. Jubal's leadership role cannot be undermined in the scripture being "the father" of those who play the harp and flute. Jubal's role, responsibilities and contributions must have resulted in the scriptural documentation, which confirms the dynamic participation and leadership role of the male gender back in history in Church music or Choir.

According to Faseun and Bello (2017). Much as the bible is silent on the position of women in music and music leadership in the church, there were references to a few instances where women were involved in musical activities in the church. One of such instances was the activity of Miriam (the sister of Moses) who functioned as somewhat worship leader.

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing, ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. (Exodus, 15: 20–21).

The scripture confirms that Miriam (Female) and other women were part of the Church Choir. The tripartite functions of those women include playing musical instruments (Timbrel), dancing and also sang. To note was also the leadership role Miriam played as recorded in the Holy Bible that when Miriam took the timbrel, other women went after her. Other women were followers who were members of the Choir. The Holy Bible also made reference to Men who were singers among the Levites as put in (1 Chronicles 9: 33–44.) “And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who remaining in the chambers were free: for they were employed in that work day and night.” It’s obvious that those men served freely in the Church Choir both day and night. This shows the dedication and commitment of men in the Choir which went on from one generation to another till verse 44 according to the scriptural account of the Holy Bible went on from one generation to another.

Faseun and Bello (2017) states that both Ecclesiastes 2:8 and 2 Chronicles 35:25 made reference to singing men and women. David appointed men who were skilled singers and used brass cymbals, harps, trumpets, and other instruments to accompany the singing from among the Levites (1 Chronicles 15: 16–24). The Levites who led the music at the dedication of Solomon’s temple were all men (1 Chronicles 5:12–13). When the temple was being rebuilt, the sons of the Levites were appointed to lead the music in the temple service (Ezra 3: 10; Nehemiah 12:24).

The New Testament contains no specific instructions or examples of how worship was, or should be, practised in the Church. The New Testament at no point spoke positively or negatively regarding female music ministers or worship leaders. Though in the epistle of Paul he wrote in 1 Timothy 2:12, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.” The interpretation has a lot of

contentions in many Church denominations but as it were, the focus of the contention is in ministering in words and not in songs. The focus of the contentions or arguments is on the pastoral role of shepherding/teaching than on other forms of leadership. Nothing explicit in Scripture would forbid women from serving in the role of worship leader.

3. Musical Implication of Inequality of a Church Mixed Choir

Basically, in Nigeria Churches, the formation of the Church's central Choir is mixed. (Male and female). Depending on the Church, other Choirs function within groups or societies in the Church. In Freer's 2012 study, he describes the inability to have a mixed choir of the traditional four parts without a substantial and preferably equal number of Males to their Female counterpart. The Male in the Choir is divided into tenors and basses while female students are sopranos and altos (Elpus, 2014). Each of the parts has a voice range below and above to which they can operate or sing. If there is a shortage in a number of a particular voice parts in respect to their abilities to produce the acceptable sound, there will not be part balancing. If there are not an equal or near equal number of male students a Choir Director can forego splitting the men into two parts and have them all sing baritone which can diminish or simplify the music quality compared to having them split into tenors and basses (Harrison, 2007). Considering Harrison's view, in a case where the composition requires both tenor and bass, performing that music will be very difficult.

The imbalance of male and female gender in the mixed choir setting creates problems for the ensemble, and the overall experience of the group (Harrison, 2007). There are cases where gender disparity does not play an important role in the success of the performing ensemble such as an all-female band (Elpus, 2014). Although gender disparity does not affect all performing ensembles, limited or no males participating in a mixed choir would eliminate the feasibility of the choir succeeding or possibly existing (Roulston and Misawa, 2010).

4. Choir Leadership

Today we have many different types of choirs, not only church choirs, but pop choirs, acapella choirs, male choir female choir and mixed choirs,

folk music choirs, adult, children, youth choirs and etc. Most Choirs operate with a board and the board members are responsible for managing the Choir. The choirs often have boards, that together with the leader plans the activity and sometimes also the repertoire (Brink, 2019). Positions are relatively different from one church to another depending on the denomination but basically the most common are Music director, Assistant music director, Organist, Choir secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, Public relation officer, Welfare director, librarian etc. Usually in Nigeria, the position of the Music Director and Organist is done by the appointment of the Church Council or the Pastor/ Bishop/ Reverend in charge of the Parish or Church because those positions require some special expertise and spiritual prowess. Other positions are usually voted for among members of the choir or by the appointment of the music director. The question of gender comes in the kind of offices occupied by each gender and the ones who dominates those offices.

In my study, investigations were made on some selected churches at Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

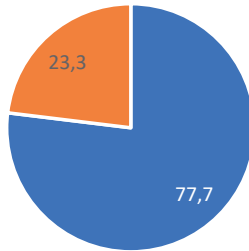
5. Demographic Data

Table 1 revealed leadership role occupied by the female at Praise land Baptist Church, Ologuneru, Ibadan is 77.7% compared to that of Male that is 23.3%. The Population of the female is 68% to 32% of Male in the Choir. It shows there were more female in the Choir and female also dominated the leadership positions in the Choir.

Table 1. Praise land Baptist Church, Ologuneru, Ibadan

S/N	Leadership Roles	Gender
1	Music Director	Female
2	Assistant Music Director	Female
3	General Secretary	Female
4	Librarian	Female
5	Treasurer	Female
6	PRO	Male
7	Organist	Male
8	Financial Secretary	Female
9	Welfare Director	Female

Gender of Leaders



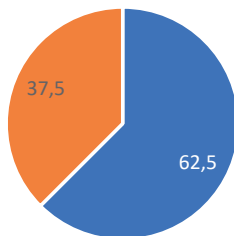
Choir statistics

S/N	Gender	Total	%
1	Male	7	32
2	Female	15	68
3	Grand Total	22	100

Table 2. Comfort Life Mission International, Opposite Wema Bank, Ibadan

S/N	Leadership Roles	Gender
1	Music Director	Female
2	Assistant Music Director	Female
3	General Secretary	Female
4	Treasurer	Female
5	PRO	Male
6	Organist	Male
7	Financial Secretary	Female
8	Welfare Director	Male

Gender of Leaders



■ 1st Qtr ■ 2nd Qtr

Choir statistics

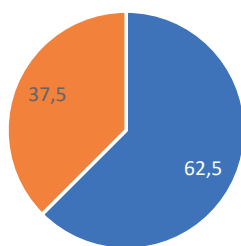
S/N	Gender	Total	%
1	Male	13	27
2	Female	35	73
3	Grand Total	48	100

The data of Comfort Life Mission also shows that female gender dominates both the leadership role and the population of the choir. 62.5% of the female are leaders while 32.5% male are also leaders. Considering the gender representation of members of the Choir, 73% are female while 27% are Male.

Table 3. Cathedral of St' James the great, Oke-Bola, Ibadan

S/N	Leadership Roles	Gender
1	Choir Master/ Organist	Male
2	Associate Organist	Male
3	General Secretary	Male
4	Librarian	Female
5	Treasurer	Female
6	PRO	Female
7	Financial Secretary	Female
8	Welfare Director	Female

Gender of Leaders



■ 1st Qtr ■ 2nd Qtr

Choir statistics

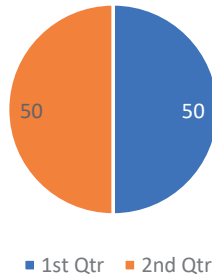
S/N	Gender	Total	%
1	Male	12	33
2	Female	24	67
3	Grand Total	36	100

St' James Cathedral, Oke-Bola, Ibadan has only twelve (12) male members of the choir (33%) and twenty-four (24) female members of the choir (67%). Out of the leadership roles, females occupied five positions while males occupied three positions. The data revealed both gender were represented in the leadership positions.

Table 4. Christ Power Evangelical Church Celica, Ibadan

S/N	Leadership Roles	Gender
1	Music Director	Male
2	Assistant Music Director	Female
3	General Secretary	Female
4	Treasurer	Female
5	PRO	Male
6	Organist	Male
7	Financial Secretary	Female
8	Welfare Director	Male

Gender of Leaders



Choir statistics

S/N	Gender	Total	%
1	Male	14	40
2	Female	21	60
3	Grand Total	35	100

Table 4 revealed that at Christ Power Evangelical Church Celica, Ibadan, the Choir has fourteen 14 (40%) male members and twenty-one 21 (60%) female members. The leadership positions were evenly shared as four of each (50%) gender occupied leadership position.

6. Discussion of Findings

Table 1 revealed the population of both male and female members of the Choir and the leadership role occupied by the female and male members of the choir at Praise land Baptist Church, Ologuneru, Ibadan. Female population 77.7% compared to that of Male that is 23.3%. The Population of the female is 68% to 32% of Male in the Choir. This clearly shows that the female gender dominates both the leadership role and the entire population of the Choir. Having the female as the Music director also indicates that the role of a Music director can be either a female or male in as much the person has the quality required to be a music director. The data of Comfort Life Mission also shows that female gender dominates both the leadership role and the population of the choir. 62.5% of the female are leaders while 32.5% male are also leaders. Considering the gender representation in the Choir, 73% are female while 27% are Male. The low population of Males in the choir also affects the percentage of males playing a leadership role. Cathedral of St' James the great, Oke-Bola, Ibadan choir data representation of gender playing a leadership role is same as that of Comfort Life Mission while the population of females in the choir is 67% and Male is 33%. At Christ Power Evangelical Church Celica, Ibadan, the data shows that 50% of female and male members of the choir holds a leadership role. The data revealed 60% are females in the choir while 40% are Male. This data also revealed that in two of the churches the female is the Music director and Male also are music director but in all of the selected churches, no female is an organist. In an interview with the Music Director and Organist of St' James Cathedral, Mr. Sunday Ajayi, the researcher enquired if there is any rule that states a male must be the Organist but he asserts that the office of the Church organist has always been opened to both male and female who applies for the job and selection wouldn't have been done out of merit if there exists a female application.

In the study, it was reported that leadership is not a position and power; it is a way of getting people forward in the same way to share vision and wisdom, to delegate information and tasks, to be the person to lean on and to trust in and that why both female and male can play leadership roles. Mr. Ajayi Sunday, the choir master of Cathedral of St' James the great, Oke-Bola, Ibadan also reported that a leader is the person who knows how to share knowledge and how to work together towards the best result. Leaders are one step ahead, that is why they are called leaders. Leaders aim for progress, knowledge and development not only in them but in the company/team as well. (Maxwell, 1998) A leader should not believe that their team is fully

learned nor let the leader position go to their own heads. Leadership is not built by power nor by knowledge alone, leadership is more an activity than a position (Bolman and Deal, 2013). If you want to be a trustworthy leader you cannot use your position to gain power and think people will willingly follow your vision and strategies. As a leader you earn the power by having influence, being charismatic, sharing your vision and having respect for the people you work with (Maxwell, 1998) Mr. Adeyeye Adetoyese, the organist of Praise land Baptist Church, Ologuneru, Ibadan, also state that a choir leader is more than someone who waves her hands to the beat of the music. Most of the work the choir leader does happen before the performance. A big part of the work even happens before the actual rehearsals start.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is crystal clear that both male and female gender are fit to be a member of the Church choir and can play any leadership role. The imbalance between men and women in a choir is a global issue that erupts as a result of the personal thoughts and decisions of people. In much the same way that researchers cannot agree on the biological and psychological influences on the development of gender, music scholars find themselves in a difficult position to balance effectively the traditionally viewed masculine and feminine elements of choral music. The church has great power to influence people during all stages of development, which in turn, can have a positive effect on their participation in the choir. Although many may view singing as a feminine activity because of its connection to the affective domain, there is also great power and strength exhibited within the realm of choral music. However, it is imperative that choral music educators and Church Music directors continue to encourage all aspects of music, both feminine and masculine, to create a holistic art form. Church music directors and Choral music educators must celebrate all elements of music, encouraging members to engage in musical experiences during adolescence and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to find success and lifelong engagement with music.

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Subverting Women's Subjugation in West African Society: The Roles of Popular Music

ABSTRACT. Women's subjugation is a common phenomenon especially in African society. This is due to numerous factors which including religion, culture among others. This has facilitated scholars to document literature relating to gender equality in African society. Within the framework of Feminist theory, this paper discusses the issue of women's subjugation in West African societies and the roles played by popular musicians and their music in subverting this phenomenon. The methodology includes oral interviews, the textual analysis of the selected discography and the review of relevant literature. Findings reveals that text of the selected songs campaign against misconception and intimidation of women by the society, gender equality to social life, regard for women, motivation for gender equality, financial empowerment and better life for women and gender equality for Political leadership role. This paper concludes that apart from the fact that music is an ubiquitous phenomenon which covers every aspect of lives of the African people, popular music, being an integral part of popular culture of a society, has been used as an impactful medium through which women's subjugation in different West African societies have been subverted to an extent. This is because of its high rate of patronage and ability to reach larger number of audience through the mass media. The paper therefore recommends that government through the Federal Ministry for Women's Affairs and other corporate organizations for women's liberation should partner with popular musicians in creating awareness and promoting the campaign against women's subrogation the West African society.

KEYWORDS: women, subjugation, African society, equality, music

Introduction

Women, especially in African society are found to be the major contributor to the growth and development of the society. The integration of the societal traditions, cultural values and norms are informally transmitted into a child by the mother and other women in the society. Apart from this, women play significant role in building, sustaining and management

of home in every family. Therefore, it is important to note that well-being or welfare of a woman will invariably promote peace and development of the family and the society at large.

However, since the primitive period, women subjugation either by the society or men, has been recorded to be a universal phenomenon. This has manifested in form of restriction of women from some part of social life, domestic violence against women by men, underemployment of women for jobs, which has deprived most women from being financially independent. Some religions like Christianity and Islam through the doctrine in their Holy Scriptures, subjugate women in favour of men, thereby serves as spiritual basis for gender inequality in the society. This explains why women are not allowed to occupy some spiritual positions in these two religious worship places.

In Africa, culture has being one of the major factor militating against women's liberation and empowerment. Most cultures in Africa have little regards or placement for women especially when it comes to decision/policy making in the society. Most tradition in West Africa does not give equal liberty to women as men. Due to this factor, most Africans perceives woman as less superior being to men. Until about five decades ago, Hausa and Fulani women in the Northern part of Nigeria, are neither given privilege to have access to school education nor allowed to work. Similarly, the culture of the Igbo people from, Eastern part of Nigeria prohibits women or a girl child from benefitting from family inheritance because it regards women as less significant to the family due to the fact that a girl child will get married to a man outside their own family; and form part of another family within the same or different society.

According to Moodley et al. (2019) Africa lags behind other regions on progress towards gender equality in society, which we define using three elements: essential services and enablers of economic opportunity; legal protection and political voice; and physical security and autonomy Africa has not done a good job of providing essential services such as healthcare and education. According to them:

The continent has the highest average rates of maternal mortality and unmet need for family planning in the world. One key to unlocking economic opportunities for women is ensuring that they have access to finance, but that access has actually declined over the past four years. Some African countries have made some progress on getting women into influential positions in politics, but even here gender inequality remains extremely high as it is around the world. (Moodley et al., 2019)

In concordance with the above assertion. It is realized that despite the western education which brought about modern civilization to many African countries, women are still marginalized especially by men in the society. Some men believe that they are the 'bread-winner' in the family and therefore men should be the ones going out to source for income for the family; while the women's business is to stay back at home taking care of the children. This situation makes women to be financially dependent on their husbands and this sometimes resulted into social restriction and maltreatment of the women by their husbands. This explains the major cause of all domestic violence between couples or spouses.

Despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor, illiterate and unemployed. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely not to be in groups which will offer them the opportunity to be economically sound and politically active (State of World Population, 2005). The obsession of this paper therefore, is to examine and discuss the various issues of women's subjugation and its pretext in African societies as well as to identify and highlight the roles played by popular musicians through the text content of their music and their impact in subverting this phenomenon among the people of Africa.

Theoretical Framework

Based on the nature of this research work, Feminist theory shall be the premise for discourse in this study. The feminist theories speak against women oppression and inequality and projects women liberation and self-empowerment. Feminist theorists have argued and are still arguing that Western feminism derived much of its inspiration from Africa. Women in Africa have suffered severe conditions such as growing and harvesting crops on farmlands during pregnancy, as well as fetching water and logs of wood with children strapped to their backs during nursing with little or no help from their husbands or guardians.

Women, in general, have endured emphatic stigmatization and oppression in their homes and elsewhere. Education had been the male child's birth-right, with the enforcement of domestic duties on the girl child growing into womanhood with the conception of being the weaker sex not only in physical strength but also in the psyche. In many societies, especially in Africa, man's acknowledgement of the input and contributions of

women on the growth of the economy, family, and nation as a whole is still farfetched.

Brereton (2001) argued that feminism refers to the recognition of the misrepresentation of females, both in actual public life and within, media representations and uses their writings to articulate and respond to such ideological effects. According to her, this ideology refers to the public opinion perpetuated by the powerful in the society and sustained by a public structure that seems normal and cultural in essence. Essentially most deep-seated patriarchal societies strive on this kind of attitude where tradition and identity are constructed based on erroneously enthroned myths in private cultures. (Brereton, 2001). It is therefore it is worthy to note that what feminism does for popular music like any other performing arts is, to interrogate the quality of representation of women's right through the text or lyric content of the music produced.

Uwah et al. (2016) theorized that feminism is a liberating movement that upholds the fundamental rights of women as global citizens not merely left at the back and call of men folk. Uwah et al. stated further that 'since all persons are grouped male and female genders and most society have the tendency to treat women as second class citizens after men, this ideology advocates for equality and equity between men and women in the society. This calls for the reappraisal of some of the political, socio-religious and the traditional cultural concepts about women's position especially in the African society.

According to Gloria Fwangyil (2012) women are subjected to male oppression and suppression at various stages of life. Unfortunately, female oppression is deeply ingrained in the culture of the societies which ensures the continuation of patriarchal control. This situation makes it impossible for women to seek ways of liberating themselves because doing so will be tantamount to challenging the age long tradition and customs of the people.

In concordant with Fwangyil's assertion, Ezenwanebe (2005) Feminist consciousness is the awareness of the social and cultural oppression of women and their consequent struggle for liberation. Feminism is the political label for this consciousness. The history of feminism is the history of women resistance and opposition to patriarchy. It is an ideology in art and life that resists "patriarchy" and challenges "the female essence". Ezenwanebe stated further that, Womanism is feminism in African context. It is a political ideology that sums up the African women's quest for emancipation within the framework of non-oppressive African culture. According to her:

It not only fight against all forms of crimes against womanhood but also seeks for ways to empower women to break through the socio-cultural walls erected to suppress and marginalize women. Womanism calls for a re-examination and a deconstruction of some African cultural histories, traditional practices and social values and norms in the light of the realities of modern time (Ezenwanebe, 2005).

The application and implication of feminist theory in musicological study implies that in the study of music, which is the most common form of art that covers day to day activities of people, it is imperative to be conscious of its effects on, and the activities of both genders in musical practices in the society. Therefore, musicians especially the popular musicians are part of, and the most patronized by the popular society. The popular musicians through their music, reflects the situation of the societal situation because they serves as the mirror of the society. Since music have been identify as one of the most powerful and effective means for communication and transformation, It is therefore necessary to investigate and highlight the activities and roles of their popular musicians in campaign against gender inequality and efforts in subverting women's subjugation in order to buoy up women emancipation in the African society.

Common Issues of Women's Subjugation in West Africa

Women's subjugation are perpetrated in many ways in West Africa. This is largely due to the influence of varied socio-religious, cultural beliefs and norms that governs each society. In regards to gender roles, Adinkrah (2015) observed among the Ghanaians that the traditional roles played by women are majorly domestic. These includes activities such as cooking, raising children, catering for family guests, laundering and performing other household chores. On the other hand, men's roles are predicated on their responsibilities as heads of the household, security providers, and primary economic sources of the family.

In sequel to the above observation, Boateng (2016) stressed that as children, girls are taught to regard men and boys as stronger, wiser, and more responsible, while boys are accordingly taught to lead, exert control, and be assertive in their social encounters. Similarly, boys are advised against fighting girls, because the average girl is considered to be physically weaker than the average boy; however, a boy who loses a fight to a girl is considered to be less of a man, or a "weak" boy. Any deviation from these

gender perceptions is met with varying degrees of confrontation from the community such as name-calling, stigmatization, and physical violence. According to him Boateng:

A boy whose lifestyle deviates from these expectations is given derogatory names such as “kojo-basia,” meaning ‘man-woman,’ and a “weak boy is often called “obaa-ba” meaning ‘a woman’s child’. Similarly, a woman who veers from the expected feminine roles into domains prescribed for men is branded “obaa-kokonin,” (a female cock), “obaa-barima” (tom boy) or “obaa gengen” (a wild woman) (Boateng, 2016, p. 25).

Other common forms of women’s subjugation among the Igbo people of Nigeria, according to Ibemere (an informant), is when a woman give birth to only female child without a male child, such woman and her daughters have nothing to inherit from the man’s property after the death of her husband. This situation have subjected many widow into serious hardship that had led some to their early death. Also, women who had lost her husband has no right to collect items brought, and the dowry paid on her female child (ren) by her in-laws. Everything belongs to the male family members of her husband.

According to Ofagbe (oral interview), culturally, among the Isoko people of Delta State Nigeria, while the grooms are exempted, brides are subjected to take an oath before the gods of the land as part of the marriage rites, never to engage in an extra-marital affair after marriage. It is believed that doing such will afflict spiritual calamity upon the woman. Also, Among the Hausa-speaking people Northern Ghana, while men move freely and interact with other women in the society, Musa (an informant) explain that man can divorce his wife just verbally and it is uphold in the society. He also stressed that women’s movement are restricted on the street. Their tradition doesn’t permit them to have free interaction with their husband’s male visitors unless they are invited by their husbands.

Mgbo (Oral interview) explained that among the Ogu people of Republic of Benin, Women are subjected to do harder work than men. Ogu women are more engaged in more tedious and risky jobs than men. They are subjected by their husbands to do businesses like smuggling, farming, sales of cooked foods and retail sales of petroleum. Ogu women are saddled with financial responsibilities of taking care of their husband and children. Only few men engaged in motor and motorcycle transportation, while many others lazy ones depends on their wives for survival.

Another is the religious doctrines and practices in West Africa. There are three major religions embraced by the people of West Africa. These includes, Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion. Since the advent of Christianity and the establishment of the first Church by the Christian Missionary Mission (CMS) in Nigeria in 1842, no female Bishop have been ordained by any Church denomination in Nigeria. Also the position of Imam and Sheik in Islam are mainly for men only in all West African countries. Equally when Islamic religion permits men to marry up to four wives, women are not allowed to marry more than one husband. The traditional African religion also subjugate women in different African society in different ways. One of them, according to Aileru (an informant) is that apart from few ritual worship and dance, Yoruba women in Nigeria are allowed to wear *Egungun's* (masquerade) mask during *Egungun* festival or take part in *Oro* cultism because women are forbidden from witnessing *Oro*.

Other forms of women's subjugation in West Africa includes, girl-child's deprivation form having education, which is common among the Hausa people of different countries in West Africa. Also, the issue of rape and domestic violence against women by their husband is another form of violence against women, which women are usually at the disadvantage because they are culturally victimized by the society. While some men only allow their wives to do petty trading around their homes and communities, others do not allow their wives to engage in any employment or business, thereby making them to be financially dependent on their husbands. All these and so many other factors contributed to the reason for women's subjugation in African society.

Popular Songs for Subverting Women's Subjugation in West Africa

Popular music in West Africa could be described as music recorded on tapes, CDs or VCDs for commercial purposes. They include music performed for all social and entertainment purposes which is the performance and dance is open to everyone irrespective of social class, age, race and religion. Similarly, Ekwueme (2008) described popular music as music that is enjoyed and appreciated by many people. It is social dance music for people across age, sex, class, and ethnic barriers. Similarly, Okafor (2005) in a sharp contrary, describes popular music as socially entertaining and dance music oriented music with broad, immediate and implicitly transient appeal,

which draws its core clientele from urban dwellers, adding that 'It is understood and accepted by a lot of people not as a final solution to their problems, but as a tropical of their sentiments and current worldview.

It is significantly necessary if one want to adequately assess and investigate the representations and subversion of women's subjugation in popular music to pay close attention to the text content and theme of the songs by popular musicians. The popular musicians that are conscious of issues of gender inequality and the women's subjugation plays social roles in subverting the phenomenon through their song lyrics of music which addresses and condemn the different areas and form of women's subjugation in West African society which shall be discussed subsequently.

Misconception and Intimidation of Women by the Society

The misconception of female child as weak and less important gender by the people, especially in African society have resulted into women being intimidated with insults and condemnation by everybody in the society. When there is inability of a family to produce children or the family becomes poor due to many factors, the women are blamed by the family to be responsible. Even when the family produce a child with unruly behaviour or with low intellectual capacity, the family always conceive such child as true replica of his or her mother. At time, such child is regarded to be a bastard. This serves as insults and intimidation to women. Some popular music were produced to create awareness and correct this misconceptions and intimidation. Songs in this category include the song titled 'Woman' by Simi in the album titled TBA. The song goes thus:

Pidgin English

Woman don suffer oh

L'owo everybody

Suffer suffer for world (amen)

Enjoy for heaven

Man no like woman

Woman no like woman

She no be like water (water, e no get enemy)

Translation

Women have suffered

in the hands of everybody

Subjected to suffering while alive

with the hopes to enjoy in heaven

Men don't respect women

Women too don't respect women

She is not like water that has no enemy

<i>If woman never marry oh (then she no be woman)</i>	A single lady is not being respected
<i>If woman never carry omo (she no be woman)</i>	No regard for a woman yet to have a child
<i>If she no get man for side oh</i>	If she is not known with any spouse.
<i>Dem go dey push woman aside oh</i>	She will be disregarded by the people
<i>And eventually oh</i>	and eventually
<i>Dem go suffer suffer woman</i>	Women will be maltreated by people.

In the song above, Simi, the female Nigerian musician highlighted the different ways in which the Nigerian women are being subjugated in the society which calls for need for change and women liberation and empowerment in the society.

Gender Equality to Social Life

One of the most common forms of women's subjugation addressed by popular music in West Africa is the issue gender equality to social life. It is a common practice to condemn women found drinking and dancing in night-clubs, hotels, beer shops and other places of relaxation without their husband present with them. Any woman found in such places for relaxation are tagged as 'Asewo' (prostitutes) whereas, men patronizes dance clubs and beer shops without their wives present with them. Some men are also in the habit of attending those places with their girlfriends or mistresses. A Nigerian popular juju musician, Sunny Ade addressed this in his song title 'E Mase Bu Awon Sisi Omoge' in the album titled 'Ja Funmi' where he sang thus:

Yoruba Language	Translation
<i>E mase bu awon sisi omoge</i>	Stop condemning the socialite ladies
<i>E mase bu awon sisi omoge</i>	Stop condemning the socialite ladies
<i>Sisi l'amuludun, Omoge lo l'ariya</i>	Ladies are the spice of all social merriments

In the song above, the musician tries to subvert women's subjugation by advocating for equal gender right to social life. The music explains the essence of women in social life of men in the society. Therefore, the society

needs to be sensitized about the fact women that are socialites, found in relaxation centers during their leisure time are not necessarily a slot or a prostitute.

Regard for Women

Women disrespect by men is another way in which women have been subjugated in the West African society. Many cultures have little or no regard for women and they are regarded as second class citizens or weaker sex. Therefore, the view of women in societal issues and discussions are less required and regarded. The disrespect for women in West African society have thereby contributed to women's abuse sexually, physically or emotionally by men.

However, some popular musicians made effort in subverting this women's type of subjugation by releasing album with song lyrics to create the awareness on the situation and to encourage women to be courageous to repel disrespect from men and the society. A Republic of Benin born Afro-pop musician, Angelica Kidjo in collaboration with Yemi Alade in her song, titled 'Dignity' advocates for respect for women by singing thus:

Dignity, can save you or kill you
 Dignity, I wanna hold on to you
 Dignity, can hurt you or heal you
 Dignity, I wanna hold on to you
 Were you dey yesterday?

When the gunman shoot men down?
 No retreat, no surrender
 If them push you, no fall down
 Many come, many go
 We no dey sleep, we dey for road
 We come in peace
 Not in pieces

O yeah, yeah, Oga
 Respect is reciprocal, is reciprocal
 Respect is reciprocal
 My Oga, oh-oh-oh
 Respect is reciprocal, is reciprocal
 Respect is reciprocal.

The song is used in conveying the message to men in the society that women deserves some level of respect from men because respect beget respect. Respect for women is expected to reciprocate some respect from women to men in return. Therefore, mutual respect between all genders in the society will lead to smooth and peaceful co-existence of people in the society.

Motivation for Gender Equality

Since the awareness and commencement of campaign against women's subjugation in the world society by government, different world organizations, corporate bodies and institutions, effort have been made to sensitize, remind and motivate women for quest for gender equality in any community they find themselves. The need for motivation is that many women in some part of the world especially in Africa are still being subjected and afraid of their traditions and religious conception about women which placed men as a superior gender ahead of women. One example of songs for motivation for gender equality is the song titled 'Strong Girl' by eight top female artists from across Africa, Victoria Kimani, from Kenya, Vanessa Mdee, from Tanzania, Arielle T, from Gabon, Gabriela, from Mozambique, Judith Sephuma, from South Africa, Waje, from Nigeria, Selmor Mtukudzi, from Zimbabwe, Yemi Alade, from Nigeria and 14-year-old South African rapper called Blessing. The following is a lyrics excerpt from the song:

English translation

African baby, American lady
 It doesn't matter where you're from, you're a strong lady
 Chai, Asian baby, Australian *Sisi* (ladies)
 The time has come to take our place as strong ladies
 Coz we are strong, ayo
 If we come together we can rule the world, yeah yeah
 If you hit a woman, ayo
 You hit a rock
 Together we are stronger

Chorus

Anywhere you are
 Show the world that you're a strong girl
 Say you're a strong girl
 Strong girl

We face different situations and different problems
 But we are resilient, I refuse to give in
 It's now time to empower the woman,
 because when you empower a woman,
 you have empowered the nation.
 We are the future
 The hope of a blessed world
 Here and everywhere
 We are the bearers of life
 Let's say it out loud, it's time to express ourselves
 Let's uplift women around the world.

The lyrics of the music contains words that sensitized, remind and motivate and encourage the ladies and women around the world to be strong and confident in themselves in order to get themselves liberated from being subjugated by other gender.

Empowerment and Better Life for Women

Zahidi (2005) in his study on Women's empowerment in relations to measuring the global gender assert that in the light of heightened international awareness on gender issues, it is a disturbing reality that no country has yet managed to eliminate the increasing gender gap. Several countries that do not capitalize on the full potential of one half of their societies are misallocating their human resources and undermining their competitive potential in their developmental quest.

In this regards, some musicians through their song lyrics sang to enlighten the society on the need to subvert women's subjugation by giving the women, especially widows the opportunity to gain access to employment or empowering them financially for economic independence in order to foster general development of the society. Popular songs that that lyrics that represent and support women's empowerment for better life of the women includes Ebenezer Obey's song titled 'Better life for Women' in the album titles 'Womanhood' where he sings thus:

Pidgin English

*If you see a woman,
 make you treat am betta o
 If you treat am betta,
 e go betta for you*

Translation

If you have women around,
 try to treat them well
 If you treat them well,
 it will be well with you

<i>I support better life</i>	I support women's empowerment
<i>for my mama na woman</i>	because my mother is a woman
<i>I support better life</i>	I support women's empowerment
<i>for my wife na woman</i>	because my wife is a woman
<i>Softly, softly make you treat am betta</i>	handle them with care and treat them well

The song above was recorded by Ebenezer Obey to advocate for support of the Better Life for Rural Women Programme initiated by the Nigerian government in 1987. The programme was set up to empower widows and other single parents in Nigeria for them to be economically and financially independent and self-reliant.

Gender Equality in Political Leadership Roles

Generally in Africa, men dominate politics and this is evident in number of political positions occupied by men in governance especially in West Africa. This is as result of the African's conception that female gender are weaker sex and should be dominated by men. This is because they believe the leadership roles in homes, communities, state and country is solely the responsibility of men. Also, it has been observed that most women in politics are single ladies who are believed to have limitless freedom and access to other men in politics.

There is a popular notion in West Africa that women in politics are financially desperate and liable to being lured into extra-marital sexual engagements with rich politicians due to financial gains, political relevance and other opportunities. This is corroborated by a popular statement among the Igbo people of Nigeria that says: '*Onye nachoghi olulu nwunye-wa ozo, Gwa nwunyeya banye ndoro ochichi*'. Meaning 'He who is not interested in marrying his wife again should allow her to join politics.'

Shina Peters, a popular juju musician in Nigeria released a song track 'Give Our Women Chance' in the Album titled 'Shinamania' to advocate for gender equality in political leadership roles. The lyrics of the song says thus:

English/Pidgin English

Na wah ooooo Na wah for Nigerian men (Nigerian men are too fond of dominating women)

Give our women chance to talk o

Give our women chance to rule

Go to India, na women dey rule

Go to England woman ruled them before
 Great Britain, Philippine, Nicaragua na woman dey rule
 Na wah ooooo, ooooo, ooooo
 African women get knowledge
 African women are sensible
 They are beautiful, ooooo, ooooo (and so on)

The song above serves as an awareness and appeal to men in Africa not to subjugate but rather, to create rooms for women's participation in political affairs of their country and gender equality in political leadership roles. This is because political knowledge and intelligence as well as leadership responsibilities has no gender barrier.

Conclusion

Since the inception of campaign against gender equality and women subjugation, government, different world organizations and corporate bodies around the world have for several decades been making financial commitment towards rehabilitating, empowering and supporting women especially the widows, internally displaced women (IDW) due to war or domestic violence or social rejection. The effort towards subverting women's subjugation in Africa has achieve remarkable success especially in West African countries despite western education and civilization. This is as a result of religious and concepts of women in the society. However, the impact of postmodernism on both popular culture and popular music in West Africa has contributed tremendously to the women's liberation from gender inequality and women's subjugation.

This paper concludes that apart from the fact that music is an ubiquitous phenomenon which covers every aspect of lives of the African people, popular music, being a genre that is widely accepted and patronized by popular culture in the society, has been used as an impactful medium through which women's subjugation in different West African societies have been subverted to an extent. This is because of its high rate of patronage and ability to reach larger number of audience through the mass media. The paper therefore recommends that government through the Federal Ministry for Women's Affairs and other corporate organizations for women's liberation should form partnership with popular musicians, in creating awareness and promoting the campaign against gender inequal-

ity and the subversion of women's subrogation the African society. This is inevitable for national economic growth and human development among the West African countries.

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DISCOGRAPHY

Angelique Kidjo (2019) "Shekere" in Yemi Alade's album "Woman of Steel".

Ebenezer Obey (1991) "Better life for women" in the Album 'Womanhood'.

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Shina Peters (1994) 'Give Our Women Chance to Rule' in the Album "Shinamania".

Simi (2021) 'Woman' in album titled TBA, Studio Brat.

Sunny Ade (1982) 'Ema Se Bu Awon Sisi Omoge' in album "Ja Funmi". Island Records.

ORAL INTERVIEWS

S/N	Name	Age	Occupation/ Position	Address	Date of Interview
1	Chief (Dr) Gbeminiyi Aileru	55	Traditional Doctor/ Chief priest	Itun-Idesun's Compound, Egbe	January 6, 2022
2	Mallam Musa	65	Security officer	Bankale Estate, Ijebu Ode, Nigeria	January 6, 2022
3	Mrs Comfort Ofagbe	50	Trader	Flat 45, Jakande Estate Isolo, Lagos	February 14, 2022
4	Kortin Mgbo	52	Trader	Agboku marche, Republic of Benin	February 15, 2022
5	Miss Loveline Ibemere	46	Teacher	No. 76, Oweh Street Awoyaya Lagos	March 5, 2022



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Traumatic Memories, Histories and Sexual Exploitation of Women in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*

ABSTRACT. This study examines the traumatic effects of violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation of young women. The intent is to discover the extent and complexity of the problems of human trafficking, sexploitation, violence and the resultant trauma; and how literature as imitation of life has captured the phenomena in form of fiction. Therefore attention is paid to Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* (2008) and Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* (2015) as canonical novels that have portrayed the issues from a unique Nigerian perspective. The paper is qualitative in approach and adopts Cathy Caruth's and Kali Tal's strand of trauma theory as its framework. The reason for the framework is to enable the researcher, on the one hand, to probe the emotional and psychological states of the characters and on the other hand, to relate the experiences of the characters to those of real human situations, in the societies that gave birth to the novels; to identify how fiction and reality come together, literarily, to hold conversations. In that case the paper pays very close attention to the subject matters that are associated with human trafficking and violence such as: sexploitation, slavery, trauma, healing, psycho-social problems, genocide, ethnic cleansing and others. The significance of this paper is its ability to identify the therapeutic essences of art, especially the literary art; the power of storytelling in healing emotional injuries. It discovers that trauma is a wound of the mind which requires greater attention than it receives in postcolonial Nigerian literature.

KEYWORDS: injury, sexploitation, slavery, trafficking, trauma, therapeutic essences

Introduction

One of the distinguishing features of humans is the ability to recollect and transmit a recollected experience into history. Most times, people pass through grievous experiences like natural or man-made crises, illnesses, wars, sexploitation, slavery etc. that wound them psychologically. The

memories of those events seem to, presumably, send shock waves down the spines of the people who survived it or others who merely witnessed such events. The scars of such psychological or emotional injuries seem to haunt the memories of the victims or the witnesses each time they remember or come in contact with a symbol or are at the site of such events.

As a form of therapy, most times, victims and witnesses tell and retell their stories (or histories) so as to purge themselves of emotions that are chaotically bottled-up in their memories. This is where literature comes in as an art form which is capable of relieving (through stories) the burdened victims; of the tensions that trauma had induced in them. Accordingly, "literature, in other words, because of its sensible and representational character, because of its figurative language, is a channel and a medium for a transmission of trauma which does not need to be apprehended in order to be present in a text..." (Ramadanovic, 2001, p. 1). Literature is imaginatively culled from the mind, which is the site of trauma, therefore, what Ramadanovic (2001) seems to imply is that literary art is in a privileged position to be a medium for the expression of trauma.

A Synopsis of Trauma Theory

Sequel to the publication of Cathy Caruth's and Kali Tal's seminal books entitled: *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996) and *World of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* (1996) respectively, trauma theory has progressively become topical in literary studies. No doubt, trauma studies had been ongoing especially in the works of Sigmund Freud, but it is in the works of Caruth (1996) and Tal (1996) that it is brought down to literary criticism and perhaps postcolonial studies. Concerning the introduction of trauma theory to literary studies, Balaev (2014, p. 1) has this to say: "a theoretical trend was introduced by scholars like Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytic poststructural approach that suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language." Thus, it is in Caruth (1996) that a theoretical approach was given to the study of trauma especially in literature.

However, Caruth (1996), Tal (1996), LaCapra (2001) and others like them agree that the wound of trauma is one that affects only the subconscious sphere, not physical and quite unlike the physical wound, may not be noticed until it manifests itself spontaneously in dreams and in muted

expressions. Caruth (1996, p. 3) avers that “in its later usage, particularly in the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud’s text, the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind.” It could be in the mind of an individual, like that in the minds of the victims of Hiroshima atomic bomb; in the mind of a race like the Jews after the holocaust or the Igbos after the genocides of Nigeria civil war.

In spite of its obvious universality, trauma theory has faced a lot of criticisms from scholars who only think of “...exposing the Eurocentric blind spots that trauma theory will have to confront if it is to have any hope of delivering on its promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement” (Craps & Buelens, 2008, p. 10). The Eurocentric blind spot, Craps and Buelens (2008) refer to, is an alleged belief that trauma theory focuses more on Euro-American or Western models without fully incorporating indigenous practices that deny subjectification. For instance, whereas in Western thoughts, mass death may be seen as being traumatic to those who witness it, in certain indigenous customs, it might be propitiatory and soothing when considered from its ritual stance. An inference in literary study of trauma could be drawn from the conversation between Olunde and Mrs. Pilkins in Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman*. In the play, the Colonialist Mrs. Pilkins is traumatized by the impending death of the Elesin Oba which she sees from Euro-American understanding as being suicidal, whereas Olunde sees it from its traditional dimension as being propitiatory and welcoming. Thus, the custom specific implications of traumatic events have not been fully considered in trauma studies.

Hence Craps and Buelens (2008, pp. 3–4) aver that “routinely ignored or dismissed in trauma research, the chronic psychic suffering produced by the structural violence of racial, gender, sexual, class, and other inequities has yet to be fully accounted for.” No doubt, they seem not to be accounted for yet, but that does not mean that trauma studies has failed altogether in bringing to limelight, how traumatic experiences shape and re-shape people’s perceptions of life. That perhaps is why Visser (2014, p. 111) argues that “postcolonial literature is a major contributor to the trauma process” because at the moment, there is an ongoing “socio-cultural construction of trauma in the post-colony.” Postcolonial literature contributes to trauma studies by highlighting the various colonially-induced psychological complications that plague most postcolonial societies.

What the critics of trauma theory fail to understand is that in the words of Visser (2014, p. 111) “trauma defies the construction of a single theoretical framework to address and interpret its multifarious complexities in

postcolonial literary studies." For instance, while Caruth (1996) advocates for punctual trauma which arises from an unclaimed experience that repeatedly comes back to haunt the victim; Brown (1995) advocates for what she calls insidious trauma which describes the experiences of women who live in traumatic situations; while Gibbs (2014) campaigns for another kind of trauma which is culled from a traumatic colonial experience and can only be studied via a postcolonial trauma theory. There is still another approach to trauma theory which looks at trans-generational transmission of trauma in form of collective cultural memory. This refers to the traumas that are experienced by generations who did not witness the traumatic event but whose ancestors passed through those traumatic events. Styvendale (2008, p. 203) enunciates what she calls "trans/historic trauma" which is "cumulative, collective, intergenerational" and are derived from "historically specific atrocities." Trans-generational trauma differs from trans-historic trauma in that the former is the trauma that new generations pass through as a result of the experiences of the ancestors that had ended, like the traumas of the already ended Nigeria civil war in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* which are still livid in the memories of the new generation; whereas the latter refers to the traumatic experiences that have continued from the ancestors to the new generation unabated like "ongoing domestic colonization" or "neo-colonial oppression" (Styvendale, 2008, p. 208). However, in all the approaches to trauma theory, one central concept is that trauma is a wound that cannot be touched. It haunts the memories and histories of those who witness it or those whose ancestors experienced it. It affects the individual's perception of the world around him/her.

This study subscribes to the philosophy that trauma is universal. It is an approach that Balaev (2014, p. 7) refers to as a more "contemporary pluralistic approaches in literary trauma theory..." which takes cognisance of the different modes of manifestations of trauma in the actions of an average postcolonial man. This strand of trauma theory accommodates both the punctual trauma of postcolonial violence and the insidious trauma which arises from experiences such as post-apartheid dispossessions.

The Literature of Trauma in Africa

The evolution of trauma literature in Africa has been slower than it is supposed to be. African countries have had civil wars, religious and ethnic cleansings, coup d'état, genocides and even apartheid traumatic experiences

that ought to have aided the spontaneous emergence of a body of trauma literatures. However, all hope is not lost, because in recent years, with works produced by some African novelists like J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, Kain Agary's *Yellow Yellow*, etc. African authors could be said to be standing up, literarily, to expose not just the physical situations of Africa but the psychological aspect of the African life that has defied representation for some time. Eaglestone (2008, p. 75) corroborates this by asserting that "in recent years, there has been a sudden burst—almost like the eruption of a guilty conscience—of distressing and traumatic narratives from Africa. And, of course, this is an eruption of a guilty Western conscience that has too often passed over the particular and complex problems and difficulties in Africa." Those narratives of traumatic experiences seek to bring to limelight the psychological sufferings of Africans.

No matter the country of its source and the nature of the trauma: the decimations in Darfur—Sudan, the pogrom of Nigeria civil war, bloodbath in Rwanda (1994), the massacre during Great African War in Democratic Republic of Congo, etc. there are traces of colonial failures which either initiated the traumatic crises or catalyzed it. For Eaglestone (2008, p. 76) "it could easily be argued that nearly the whole range of African literature in the second half of the twentieth century is traumatic, from Achebe's description of the colonial encounter, to Fanon's case studies from the Algerian War, to Ngugi's political propaganda in *Matigari* and *A Grain of Wheat*, to Bessie Head's agonized prose in *A Question of Power*." In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the events that surround Okonkwo and the implication of his death could be seen as drawing richly from his neurological disposition and the condition which the colonial project put him. The experiences of Kenyans which Ngugi captures in *A Grain of Wheat* is also traumatic especially when seen from the perspectives of the natives whose sources of livelihood (the land) were violently stolen from them by the settlers. What Eaglestone (2008) suggests is the possible existence of traces of trauma in almost all African literature(s). Hence, the presence of trauma in African literature cannot be avoided.

Traumatic Effects of Sexploitation in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*

There is a definition of literature, as a slice of life or mirror held up to the socio-economic realities of the world, which has become a little cliché

in twenty-first century, but adequately captures the essence of literature as a potent and viable scion that carries the social conditions of the world or a glass that reflects it. It is in the light of that definition that we see Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* as a reflection of the realities and psycho-social effects of sexual exploitation of woman. Adimora-Ezeigbo (1990, p. 163) emphasizes on the role of a writer to be that of helping "her society to come to moral awareness." This, one might add, she attempts to do in her novel under study: helping the world to see the trends and effects of sexual exploitation of women, through the characters she selected from the southern parts of Nigeria where female trafficking for the purpose of sex is greater in the country.

Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* becomes, as the title may suggest, a reflection of the life of the trafficked, an exposé on the intercontinental syndicates who engage in the illegal transactions of human beings, the ways they exploit their victims sexually and a journey into the psyche of the victims of such sexual exploitation, as they make their journey towards recovery and healing. So in the novel, she creates female protagonists: Nneoma and Efe who are victims of sexual exploitation and with the stories of their pasts, revisits the stories of numerous other victims of sexual exploitation across Nigeria. By narrating two similar sexual experiences, the characters attempt to certify the preponderance of their stories among the sexually exploited Nigerians in the Diaspora. From their slightly similar stories it becomes obvious that their exploiters target, mostly females from poor family background, who are keen at helping to alleviate their family problems by immigrating to foreign countries where they aim to work and make money quickly without knowing the realities of such engagements. The above is equally the concern of Kaine Agary in *Yellow Yellow* because for her, the male exploiters target the poor and innocent girls who wish to live above the crippling poverty or lack in their families.

One of the things that surprise the reader is the similarity between Nneoma's story and Efe's story of exploitation, since they come from different states, and were trafficked in different countries. The sameness in their stories may be said to be Adimora-Ezeigbo's way of popularizing the encounters of the female folk who are hoodwinked into life of servitude and/or sexploitation in foreign territories, mostly Europe and America. In these foreign territories, Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel *Trafficked* (2008) goes on, through her plausible Nneoma and Efe, (plausible because they embody the tendencies of exploited women in southern parts of Nigeria) to reveal the life of harlotry lived by trafficked women in Europe.

On the Efe subplot, she narrates thus: “well, to cut a long story short, we were taken to Italy and ended up in Palermo. It was terrible. I was sold to a woman called Madam Gold, a Nigerian. She was vicious. She used us shamelessly, made us walk the streets every night...” (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008, p. 99). They work as prostitutes and sell their bodies to European clients for money. At this point, the narrator remarks the height of the physical and psychological wound that the characters have experienced in this manner: “Nneoma saw that Efe’s story was very similar to hers—they had both been forced to sell their bodies to all comers. Tears ran down her face and she took Efe’s hand” (p. 100). The tears are hurtful memories of the past. It symbolizes her helplessness, the angst, her throes and more importantly, her inability to control her emotions. The similarity in the traumatic experiences of Efe and Nneoma, the sameness of their stories, we will recall, also bears testimony to Adimora-Ezeigbo’s subscription to the notion of the stereotypical lives of the trafficked in Europe.

As Efe continues, she recalls that she was sold to Madam Gold and later “Madam Gold sold me to a pimp—a white man—after four years of slaving for her. I worked for my ‘new owner’ for four years before I escaped,” (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008, p. 100). Nneoma on the other hand, reveals that she too was sold to one Madam Dollar by different trafficking syndicates but as she goes on: “in Italy I discover I am trafficked. I have no say in the matter” (p. 28) and concerning Madam Dollar she says “nothing comes between her and money. She owns us... she keeps us prison in her flat. Life is hell in Rome—we are always walking the night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners...” (pp. 128–129) before she (Nneoma) was sold to another pimp called Baron. To this she adds, “...in actual fact, he [Baron] has bought me from Madam Dollar...” (p. 132) and further sexually exploited her like Efe’s pimp did to Efe.

Our attention is drawn to the lexicology of their narrations in the novel *Trafficked*. In both instances, the victims make recourse to the words: “sold” (p. 100), “pimp” (p. 100), “owner/owns” (pp. 100–128), “trafficked” (p. 128), “assaulted” (pp. 129–132), “rapes” (p. 132), “bought” (p. 132), “sex” (p. 129) etc. which bear testimony to the events that characterize life of sexual exploitation. They are sold and bought and owned and trafficked at different intervals for sex and are frequently raped, assaulted, bartered because as Nneoma may suggest “[they] have no say in the matter” (p. 128). So their alleged owners or pimps could afford to exploit them sexually.

Clearly it would be seen that Adimora-Ezeigbo is bent on revealing the methods of female sexual exploitation through her characters. Nneoma re-

marks that, after she was bought by her last pimp Baron, “Baron sends the other girls to brothels and keeps me in the flat. Instead of putting me on the street, he brings me to the flat. Baron is a sadist. He rapes and beats me. I refuse when customers demand oral or anal sex and insist that they use condoms and I’m sometimes assaulted for this,” (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008, p. 132). With the recurrence of sexual innuendoes that are associated with the circumstances of their life in servitude, the reading audience comes to the realization that they were used as sexual items and it was their (poor) background like Aku’s background in Okpewho’s *The Last Duty* that led them to it.

Through the ugly experiences of sexual exploitation of the two major characters Nneoma and Efe, Adimora-Ezeigbo seems to point out that victims of such exploitation develop traumatic and psychological problems that hinder most of them like Nneoma from associating freely with the human community they assume exploited and dehumanized them over the years. In this case, the victims tend to be reserved, isolated and distanced from the world around them. This is made explicit in the life of Nneoma after her arrival to Nigeria in the novel. She refuses to associate with anyone—male or female—and prefers to keep everyone at arm’s length; even when Efe extends the hands of friendship to her, she recoils and the narrator quickly records that “Nneoma withdrew her hand” (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008, p. 97). As a result of this reason, Efe opens up saying: “I know we’ve both been hurt. Terribly hurt. I see it in your movement, in your silences. I’m sure you also see it in me, however much I pretend all is well. Nneoma, you brood too much. You must let go and move on. I don’t know what happened to you but it’s not healthy to be so bitter, to punish yourself like this” (p. 97). Efe, as one of those who refuse to allow ugly situations of life weigh them down, continues with her therapy saying: “I just want to be your friend in the real sense, to carry some of your burden, if you allow me and also get you to share some of mine, if you are willing. Nneoma, we’re all broken inside. Look, why don’t we just tell each other what happened to us? Perhaps finding our voices will help us heal” (p. 97). At this juncture, Efe identifies the therapeutic power of storytelling, which taken into larger scale is imaginative literature. So like Aku in Okpewho’s *The Last Duty*, Efe is aware of the healing power of storytelling, but unlike Aku, she is given the chance to tell her story and it leads to her psychological healing.

So, in the course of their storytelling (Nneoma and Efe), which forms the bulk of the novel, they re-live their lives; identify their mistakes and

how to take corrective measures. At the end, they become satisfied that they shared their experiences. Hence Nneoma, after listening to Efe's stories, testifies saying: "Efe, your story is so like mine. Thank you for telling it; I feel as if a load has been lifted off my own shoulders" (Adimora-Ezeigbo, 2008, p. 100). At another instance, after Nneoma has shared her own experience with Efe her final testimony becomes "yes, I think I've actually been healed" (p. 136). Remarkably, for Adimora-Ezeigbo storytelling is a powerful therapy for victims of emotional breakdown especially those who were involved in one form of exploitation or another.

Given the situation above, one realizes that literature and the human society are intertwined; both affect and shape the other. The problems of the society are mirrored and analyzed by literature so as to offer solutions. Hence, the traumatic effects of sexual exploitation are captured by the novels that emerge in twentieth and twenty-first century Africa to fictionalize the situation thereby providing a platform for the negotiation of remedial measures that will adequately take care of the problems. So in *Trafficked* Adimora-Ezeigbo identifies sexual exploitation as inhuman, as something that causes psychological injuries then proffers the solution of the establishment of Skill Acquisition Centres and renewed interests in the affairs of humanity.

The Horrors of Trauma in Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms*

Caruth (1996, p. 11) recognizes that there is no single clear-cut definition of trauma, but for pedagogy sake, she defines trauma further as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena." This definition describes the situation in which after one witnesses a shocking event, it comes back later, perhaps, after some days or even years in clear unhindered outlines to torment one. In the novel, this definition underscores the hallucinations or what the novelist calls "the haunting memories" (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 14) of Fa'iza many years after she saw the brutal murder, of her father Mu'azu and her brother Jamilu, in cold blood, during one the "incessant turbulence of Jos" (p. 14).

Fa'iza from the narrator's account, was a toddler when after a council election result-gone-wrong, an irate mob, led by her maths teacher

and some of their most trusted friends, came to their house in Jos and butchered her father and her brother in full glare of the entire family. She watched, as her maths teacher, raises his “machete and brought it down” on his family and “bright, red blood, warm and sticky, splashed across [her] face and dotted, in a fine spray, the shell-pink nightdress that her father had bought her” (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 84). She watched as her father was butchered in the most horrific way that one can ever imagine. The terrible event begins to hunt her even in her sleep. In her later life, it is discovered that when she sleeps, the sound of machete and blood spurting and flowing “echo in her head. Cracking femurs. Splitting skulls. The first agonised screams. The moans and grunts. And the thunderous silence of disbelief that followed” (p. 84) jerk her up. The disbelief comes from her not ever thinking that “the people with whom they have eaten from the same bowl, mourned alongside and shared laughter, people with whom they have nurtured the verdant canopy of a friendship that was on occasions closer to kinship” (p. 84) will ever hurt her family, let alone kill them.

The pattern of the violence correlates with the ones in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*. In Adichie’s account, at the onset of the civil war, Uncle Mbaezi was murdered by his closest friends, including Abdulmalik, in the North. The act is gory, “Uncle Mbaezi lay face down in an ungainly twist, legs splayed. Something creamy-white oozed through the large gash on the back of his head. Auntie Ifeka lay on the veranda. The cuts on her naked body were smaller, dotting her arms and legs like slightly parted red lips” (Adichie, 2014, pp. 183–184). The resultant trauma on Olanna, the witness, is unimaginable.

The killing of Fa’iza’s father in Jos somehow corresponds with the method of killing Binta’s husband Zubairu in the same Jos, a decade ago. In Zubairu’s case, Binta tells Fa’iza, he was “butchered and burnt in the street” (Ibrahim, 2015, p. 86) during one of the religious and ethnic cleansings. Unlike Binta, Fa’iza develops the attitude of writing down her traumatic memories and nightmares, the “roaring shadows that prowled her dreams and which were now manifesting in her wakefulness” (p. 78), in an effort to retell them and heal. She validates the therapeutic essence of storytelling. In her wakefulness, her traumatic condition causes her to dissociate. It makes her moody and sometimes throws her off her world. At times, it is Sadiya that shakes her off her reveries or hallucinations, at other times it is Binta that draws her out of her shroud of disturbing calmness, “a serenity that made her uneasy and afraid” (p. 295).

However, it happens that after Abida found Fa'iza's account of the murder of her father and stories of her nightmares and reads them, it gives Fa'iza the courage to speak up, (to speak with Binta about her fears and about Yaro) to come out of her shell, to gradually heal. Afterwards, she discovers that she finds it difficult to remember her dead brother vividly. It borders her though, but it bears testimony that speaking, is healing. She screams in frustrated anger: "I have forgotten what Jamilu's face looked like. ...they killed him, right in front of me"(Ibrahim, 2015, p. 263). Her forgetfulness is her first step towards healing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Adimora-Ezaigbo's *Trafficked* is a didactic trauma novel that teaches moral to young women, by exposing the traumatic effects and ugly sides of sexual exploitation. So from the novel, subject matters such as sexploitation, trauma, feminism, etc., can be deduced. For the purpose of this study, our attention is on the traumatic effects of violence and sexual exploitation of women and children in Nigerian literature. Thematically in the novels, violence and sexual exploitation is inhuman and devastates the psyche of the victims, but through adequate consciousness raising platforms, like the like counselling, sharing, government and non-governmental organizations in the novels, the victims may well find their feet back into their societies and live normal lives. Though finding one's feet after such traumatic experience maybe difficult, through encouragements from family and friends, and through self-determination, the victims will, the novels seem to suggest, overcome their psychological burdens. For Efe and Nneoma, in *Trafficked*, through friendship, sharing of emotions and experiences, bonding with the human community afresh, and the enabling environment offered by Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development they become healed and re-integrated into the society and finally speak against human trafficking when Baron in the guise of Fynface comes back to lure Efe into prostitution again. In her final analysis, the novelist emphasizes on the need for victims to be among the people who will protect them and make them see their perfections in the midst of their imperfections for it is a major step towards healing. For Fa'iza and Binta, in *Season of Crimson Blossoms*, by writing and sharing their sorrows and encouraging each other, they are able to confront the plague of trauma and its devastating effects.

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Women and African Land Tenure

ABSTRACT. In most societies of the world just like Africa, women constitute about 50% of the population. Therefore, any action that ignores their contribution to development or alienates them in the development process cannot be valid or reliable. The omission and alienation of women from the African land tenure distorts the perception of historical records of past events. This article interrogates the persecution and violations of their human rights in African land tenure system which has largely been responsible for their suffering and poverty over the years. The article examines the marginalization of women in African land Tenure and how this impacts on the women and the society at large. By asking the how and why questions like the historians do in historical research and interpretation through the multidisciplinary approach, this article will reiterate the fact that any development plan that excludes the women is an exercise in futility.

KEYWORDS: Africa, land tenure, women

Introduction

Land as one of the factors or agents of production is simply a free gift of nature and it is not just limited to the hard earth surface we walk on but also comprises of forests, mountains, and rivers, and it plays a vital role in the development of the society.

The essence of this work is to examine the alienation of women in land tenure in Africa. The significant question this paper tries to address is how women have been relegated to the background when it comes to land ownership or access to land in Africa, in comparison with their male counterparts and how it has constituted hindrances to women's efforts in respect to the development of the African continent.

This to a large extent is as a result of the existing social structures embedded or put in place in the African society. So, even when the African

women are educated and civilized, they still abide and remain surreptitiously tied to this existing social structure.

Against this backdrop, the point of emphasis here is that we need to be conscious of the ultimate relevance of these social structures to the practical concerns of our reality in the twenty-first century. Maintaining the status-quo is a clear indication of our lack of critical mindset. It is imperative to pay equal or adequate attention to the issues that concern both male and female in the society.

Thus, seen from this perspective, this article is a contribution to the unending development debate which is still relevant to historical analysis. It is not exhaustive, but it is a contribution nonetheless.

1. Definition and Clarification of Concepts

1.1. Gender

Gender is simply the identification as a man, a woman or something else, and association with a (social) role or set of behavioral and cultural traits, clothing, and a category to which a person belongs on this basis (English Dictionary). Apart from promoting the understanding of our history, gender-based research also has the potential of enhancing national unity (Okorobia, in: Ejituwu and Gabriel, 2003). Gender discrimination is therefore the unequal treatment between men and women in the society. In other words, it is a situation whereby there is bias in the relationship between men and women in the society. According to Jev, Owei and Oruwari cited in: Alagoa and Derefaka (2002) gender is the social relationship between men and women in which women have been systematically subordinated. In other words, this relationship is lopsided and seems to be more favourable or advantageous to the men in the society. This became very pronounced during the colonial period. It should at this point be noted that, before the coming of the Europeans, gender division of labour was limited or restricted to farm and household activities. Colonialism led to the rise of urban centers, new pattern of work, as well as new gender divisions of labour.

At the initial stage of the colonial work system, two major factors helped to absorb more of men in the colonial work-force. Firstly, the uncertainty in the new urban system necessitated the cautious migrations in which the men, as the accredited family breadwinners had to go in first into the urban work camps. In this case, the women and children remained

in the villages to look after the homes and farms. This opportunity of being absorbed into the new colonial work system put the men in an advantageous position to acquire all the necessary skills before the women.

Secondly, there were existing cultural beliefs that the responsibilities of the woman do not extend beyond the house, farm and market. Women who looked forward to or made efforts to go beyond these sectors were suspected to have easy virtue tendencies and were therefore despised in the communities. The effect of these factors was that, the skills necessary to function in the colonial urban system and probably in subsequent era were acquired initially only by men.

1.2. Land Tenure

Land tenure is a concept that looks at how people gain access to land and how they make use of it. It has to do with the relationship of men in the occupancy and use of land. It defines the conditions under which land can be occupied, held or managed, by whom and for how long. It could also be described as the various ways by which individuals gain access to, and acquire rights of use over land either on temporary or permanent basis. According to Girigiri, cited in: Anikpo and Atemie (1999), land tenure differs from one society to the other and this is simply because, land tenure practices are dependent on the existing social structures and these existing social structures had led to the alienation of women in owning and as well as having access to land in the African society. In the world today, there are four general categories of land tenure institutions in operation. They are customary land tenure, private ownership, tenancy, and state ownership. These categories exist in at least four general contexts: feudal, traditional communal, market economy, and socialist economy.

2. Land Tenure in Africa

This segment of the work is aimed at considering land tenure in Africa. Land in this context could be described as a natural resource and one of the factors or agents of production. It is simply a free gift of nature and not just limited to the hard surface of the earth we walk on but also include: forest, mountains, and rivers. Land could be explained ecologically. In other words, it is an ecological entity that is having mathematical dimension. That is to say, land is measurable. Land tenure in most of Africa is either customary/traditional, or state/statutory. Customary land

tenure is characterized by its unwritten nature, is based on local practices and norms, and is flexible, negotiable and location specific. Furthermore, it could be seen as an economic resource which man uses for his survival. Economic resource here simply refers to natural resources such as fishes and crops. In many African regions, land ownership by women is complicated because of the gender ideology which forbids women from owning landed property. Also, land could be seen as a socio-political entity, associated with a particular group of people. For example, when you talk about Yoruba land, Kalabari land, you are trying to identify land with a group of people.

So, land tenure has to do with a body of rights and relationships between men that govern their behaviour in the use and control of land and its resources in a given society. In other words, it defines how people have land or get access to land. Put differently, it is the right to own or have access to land. This right could be property or usufructuary right. Property rights could also be called property tenure. It is a system whereby land is owned privately by individuals while usufructuary right is the right of the members of a given society to use land temporarily after which land reverts to its original status as a common property. Basically, land here is communally owned and this was the type of land ownership that dominated the pre-colonial era in Africa, although western scholars like F.J. Pelder condemned it on the basis that it worked against economic development (Hopkins, 1973). To some of these western scholars, African land laws and customs to a very large extent had prevented land, which is one of the factors of production to be influenced by economic forces, which are the forces of demand and supply. It is pertinent to state here that, this is not the case in all African societies. African land laws vary and this is based on the existing social structure of the society (Girigiri, in: Anikpo and Atemie, 1999).

In some African societies, land laws varied from communally owned land to individual freehold while in some societies the two forms of land ownership co-existed simultaneously. For instance, communal land ownership predominated among the people of Bemba of Zambia, Tonga of South Africa, Igbo and Ogoni in Nigeria. Among the Ogoni in Nigeria, all members of the male line of the original grantee of land have perpetual and exclusive usufructuary rights of hunting and gathering. The community here acts corporately in defense of its rights to its land in the event of challenge from another community. Property right or individual freehold predominated among the people of Talense of Ghana. The extent to

which, any of these forms of land ownership is practised in the African society depends on the availability of land in comparison to the population density and vice versa. In pre-colonial Africa, the major factors of production were mobilized from within the family sources. Similarly, capital and land were communally mobilized, leading sometimes to the socialization of both production and appropriation (Muojama, in: Ogbogbo and Okpoh, 2021). In the pre-colonial era, the position of women in Africa differed among the various ethnic groups and regions. A woman's position varied in two major ways, first, kinship structure of the group and secondly, the role of women within the economic structure of the society (Aboki, in: Mangut and Wuam, 2012). Common factors among women of different ethnic groups, however, included the domestically oriented jobs and the range of economic activities that the societies reserved for them (Gabriel, 2010; Azikiwe, 2010). However, the fact remains that some societies of pre-colonial Africa believed that men were superior to women and, to some extent, in control of women (Aboki, in: Mangut and Wuam, 2012). The system of land tenure institutionalized the economic subordination of women. Women could not own land. They were also precluded from inheriting land (Unumen, in: Mangut and Wuam, 2012) The pre-colonial patriarchal arrangement in most parts of Africa reduced women to second class citizens. Male supremacy was not only acknowledged but accepted as a 'fiat accompli' by the women. This clearly explains the alienation of women in African land tenure system. During colonialism, women were recruited as cheap wage labour in some parts of Africa on tea, sugar, tobacco and rubber plantations and in processing factories. At the village level, colonial regimes strengthened the male position as head of the household and 'reformed' customary laws that had given women considerable autonomy in some parts of Africa (Mgbako, 2010; Powers, 2002). The creation of the colonial economy thus tended to marginalize the position of the majority of women (Rojas, 1994). It must be noted that the changes colonialism brought to African societies as it concerns women differed from society to society and negative or positive in some cases. This is because African societies in the pre-colonial period differed very significantly in organizations, role structures, socio-political systems, customs and traditions (Unumen, in: Mangut and Wuam, 2012).

Nevertheless, Ruth Meena (1992, p. 15) has argued that "women's oppression has been located in the traditional African society, in the colonial system, in the neo-colonial nature of the African states, and in the patriar-

chal ideologies of post-colonial African states.” Many African women, she continued, “do not enjoy equal rights to access and control over resources, including land.” The “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (CEDAW) adopted at the United Nations (UN) in 1979 was a landmark in the campaign for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. It stated that all practices that harm women, no matter how deeply they are embedded in culture, must be eradicated. Although 51 out of 53 African Union (AU) member countries had ratified CEDAW by 2004, in practice, the constitutional rights of women are violated still in the name of cultural, traditional and religious practices (Okoh, in: Ejituwu and Gabriel, 2003).

Furthermore, (Girigiri, in: Anikpo and Atemie, 1999), stated that, three types of land tenure are found in traditional Nigerian societies. These include; family land tenure, lineage and public land tenure.

2.1. Family Land Tenure

This simply refers to the land tenure practice whereby typically, a man, his brothers and children own a particular piece of land allocated them as a family. Here the family has the unilateral right to put the land to whatever use they deem necessary. Right over such land is permanent as soon as the head of the family has allocated land to members of the family in accordance with their needs. The man, to whom the land has been allocated to under this system of land tenure, has to put it under cultivation and can return to it after a fallow period. That is to say, a piece of land allocated under this system is not taken back, whether it is in use or not, as long as they can indicate its occupation.

It should at this point be noted that, land under the family land tenure is inherited from previous ancestors and any person who is not a family member cannot make use of a family’s land or alienate it without the permission of the head of the family.

2.2. Lineage Land Tenure

This refers to a group that has a common ancestor and common property ownership. Here the lineage land is a territory unit distinctly marked from those of other lineages. This land was originally allocated to an immigrant ancestor by the head chiefs of a community. Again, the ancestor of a lineage could have originally cultivated such land as its first cultivator and therefore, laid claim of ownership to it.

2.3. Public Land Tenure

This may be reserved forest where animals are conserved and where members of the community may cut trees for building purposes, the staking of yam vines and other uses. It could as well be used for public utilities like markets, schools, village play grounds and so on. Also, some public lands were previously owned by lineage or families just as it could be reserved forests as stated earlier. In a situation where such lands previously belonged to a lineage before its conversion to public use, it could have been acquired compulsorily or through amicable discussion with the group that formerly owned it. In whichever way or method the land is acquired the original owners are compensated in one way or the other for their loss and deprivation. So, once compensated, a group that previously own public land can no longer claim right of ownership to it. The land and whatever durable crops and trees on it become public property. Control over public land is vested in the community head and his advisers who alone can grant permission for the cultivation of public lands. But they are not allowed to grow durable crops or trees, since the land can be recalled at short notice for community use.

However, despite the listed categories, customary laws in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, help in the process of marginalizing women. In some parts of Nigeria like the Igbo and the Niger Delta region, women generally have no customary rights to land, just for simply being female. The statutory 'Married Women's Property Act' allows a woman rights to own and dispose of land and property and to a share of her husband's property after his death or upon divorce. However, she is expected to produce documentary evidence of her contribution throughout the marriage before she can seek redress in court. Furthermore, the Land Use Decree of 1978 which guarantees all access to land use, management and disposal is another major constraint because in practice, women are still denied the rights of possession of, and decision making on family land. Women are only allowed to use land with the permission of the men of course, and nothing more. They cannot even use the land as collateral to acquire a bank loan like the men do. All these reduce women's access to economic opportunities and deepen their poverty, thereby widening the gender gap. Maybe that is the plan.

3. The Alienation of Women in African Land Tenure

This section examined the alienation of women in land tenure in Africa. In other words, it considered how women have been sidelined in the al-

location of land in the African society. According to Ake (1981), land is the essential means of production during the peasant mode of production and it tends to be communally owned but usually privately “exploited” subject to certain obligations.

This to a large extent was corroborated by (Orugbani, 2005) who stated that “Everyone was his brother’s keeper as individualism was practically unknown in the Nigerian territory and that land, the major means of production for farming communities, was still communally owned.”

So, the social structure of the African society should be in a way that laws put in place, would not alienate, rather accommodate women in the ownership as well as access to land, just like their male counterparts, so that they will also contribute their own quota to continental development in general and national development in particular. But in a situation where this is said to be the contrary, then it could simply be described or called the alienation of women in land tenure and it is a notable feature in the social structure of the African society.

According to Owei and Oruwari, in: Alagoa and Derefaka (2002), “under the *Lekiriya* form of marriage, a woman and her issues remain status-less in the man’s life, they cannot own landed interest through him.” It should also be stated clearly here that, female members of a family are generally regarded as “temporary members” and so do not have permanent and inheritable rights, in family land; since being females they are expected to get married. Although, the Okrika customary land law allows women only the right to use family land while physically in the family.

In fact, it is an established fact that among the *Esan* of modern day Nigeria, a woman could not own landed property in classical customary law in her personal capacity except the purchase of household utensil and other domestic appliances (Okougbo, 2001).

Among the Ogoni, succession to land is patrilineal and a man’s married daughters cannot inherit their father’s land. However, this does not come into full practice in a polygamous family where one of the wives had only a female child, that daughter gets her share of land on the condition that, she will not marry. If she decided to marry, she will marry a female to replace her and to bear children who will sustain her father’s name (Owei and Oruwari, in: Alagoa and Derefaka, 2002).

Similarly, (Wordu, in: Wika and Ifeanacho, 1998), stated that “among the Yoruba people, a female offspring who happens to be the only child of her father is entitled to his personal properties.” In this society, women are alienated in land tenure except on rare occasion where these women

happen to be the only child of their father, which will now create room or avenue for them to be accommodated in the land tenure system of that society.

For the people of the Ikwerre ethnic nationality in Nigeria, women did not own land originally but this is changing as certain women have come to own land by personal purchases (Owei and Oruwari, in: Alagoa and Derefaka, 2002). It is clear from the above analysis that even when a woman is culturally allowed to own land, she is given near impossible conditions, but a man is not given any condition except just being a male. Such double standards will only create confusion and it is a contributory factor to underdevelopment in Africa.

Furthermore, the Tiv in Nigeria have a system of land ownership and allocation where women do not inherit land but are allocated farm plots by their husbands or brothers in case of divorce or separation (Wordu, in: Wika and Ifeanacho, 1998).

The colonial state in Kenya alienated a lot of women due to the policies that were put in place. These policies further legitimized racial boundaries on land by appropriating a place for the white settlers called white Highlands while the area inhabited by the indigenous people was called the native reserves. These obnoxious policies over land, resulted to bitterness among the indigenes of Kenya, especially the Kikuyu and Luo who were mostly affected. And this led to the formation of unions like the Kenya African Union (KAU) and the "MauMau" which the indigenous people refer to as the Land Freedom Army (LFA).

Recently, a top Muslim cleric in Nigeria called on Law makers to reject a bill under debate in the National Assembly that would allow women the right to inherit family land and property, claiming it goes against the teachings of the Quran. Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar 111, said the bill before the Senate seeking equality in inheritance was against Islamic religion and therefore unacceptable to Muslims. Islam and Christianity do not disregard women in terms of property rights. The prevailing discrimination against women has no religious backing, but a misguided exploitation of the low educational status and ignorance of women in Nigeria.

Despite the growing global concerns for the plight of women and the efforts to protect the rights of women to land and assets, various studies reveal that women still encounter challenges with respect to these rights (Adekunle, 2010; Aluko, 2015; Anyogu and Okpalobi, 2016; Akinola, 2018; Chaves, 2018). Globally, land and other forms of real property are essential for the economic empowerment of women across different cultural contexts (Got-

tlieb et al., 2018). Land in particular serves as a crucial element for cultural identity especially in decision making, political power and protection against domestic violence. The experiences of women in regards to acquiring or inheriting land and other property in Nigeria and by extension Africa are filled with narratives of denial and marginalization (Ajayi and Olotuah, 2005). Thus, even today, in the third decade of the twenty-first century, women still constitute the majority of the poor and illiterate in both urban and rural areas. Many women still lack access to land, credit, and do not own property due to discriminatory institutions that overtly or covertly deny their rights (Bawa, in: Fwatshak, 2019). These factors interact to unfavourably influence economic, social and political opportunities for women and girls.

Among the 70% of the population living below the poverty line, over 65% are projected to be women (Bawa, in: Fwatshak, 2019). African women perform complex multiple roles as mothers, workers, and managers of their households, while also caring for their extended families. They perform the majority of the work in food processing and dominate the informal sector in the rural and urban areas. Yet, less than 20% of women own their own farm lands, fewer than 10% have access to agricultural inputs and less than 5% have access to agricultural credits to enhance their productivity and incomes (Bawa, in: Fwatshak, 2019).

So, the analysis in this section of the work shows that, women to a large extent are alienated from land tenure system in Africa unlike their male counterparts who in most cases own or have access to land freely in some of these African societies as stated in this work. Gender studies of this nature, like our understanding of the dynamics of class or race relations, simplify our understanding of the dynamics of women in society (Okorobia, in: Ejituwu and Gabriel, 2003).

4. The Impact of Women Alienation in African Land Tenure

Land is one of the factors of production and it tends to be communally owned but usually privately “exploited” subject to certain obligations (Ake, 1981). This was corroborated by Orugbani (2005, p. 3). Since, it is communally owned, and women also happen to be part of the said communities, women in Africa should not be alienated from land tenure if the plan is to fully utilize it for the society to experience the needed development.

The alienation of women in land tenure system in Africa could lead to under- utilization of land, which in turn would bring about shortage of

food supply, especially agricultural commodities. In some farming communities such as among the Ogoni and the Igbo, women are by custom, the cultivators of food crops grown for home consumption. In the case of the Yoruba people in the west, farm work is done by the men. The women assist in preparing cassava, pepper, maize and vegetables. Women also assist in the processes of harvesting and transporting farm products. Women in Africa are actively involved in agricultural activities, especially in the rural areas. The importance of land in such agricultural activities cannot be over emphasized. So if they are denied access to land, it would, to a large extent affect food supply, basically agricultural products or commodities.

Furthermore, it would affect development. Development is all inclusive, and so, if women are alienated from land, development would be hampered. Any development that excludes more than half of the population (women), is an exercise in futility. For many African women, despite the Beijing conference and the conferences before and after it, they remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy, with poor access to land, credit, health and education. The conferences include the first one in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. Others are Bellagio in 1997, Abuja in 1999 and Helsinki in 2000 (Ejituwu and Gabriel, in: Ejituwu and Gabriel, 2003), just to name a few. They have been meeting at these conferences and discussing issues of common interest, yet, they are still at the same place they were-that is, trying to sensitize the world to the unwarranted and unacceptable marginalization of women, which deprives them of their fundamental human rights, while men, in this same period, have literally "gone to the moon and back" (Mgbako, 2010). At this stage, "we are no longer seeking promises, but demanding accountability" said Ms. Hassan (Mgbako, 2010) While some of the agreements that African governments have ratified enshrined property and inheritance rights, the women are still denied those very rights in most of these countries. As a result, poverty in Africa continues to wear a woman's face, as acknowledged by Ms. Gladys Mutukwa of the Zimbabwe-based non-governmental organization. A UN Food and Agricultural Organization Study on Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe shows that women rarely own land. And when they do, their holdings tend to be smaller and less fertile than those of the men. Studies have also shown that if women farmers had the same access to inputs and training as the men, overall yields could be raised by between 10 and 20% and the society will be better for it. A lack of equal access under the law to land and property is detrimental to sustainable development.

Finally, the issue of women alienation in land tenure system would also affect economic growth. In other words, the GDP of African countries would be affected. It would also affect the infrastructural development of the continent. Actually, all these things are already happening.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this work had in its various segments highlighted and as well analyzed how women in the African society have been alienated in land tenure when compared with their male folk as a result of the social structure of the African society. This alienation of women in land tenure, which in most cases, is legalized by the customary land laws of the society has hindered women from optimally contributing their own quota to the development of the African society in all ramifications. Although, these laws and policies must have been put in place at the time they were enacted to probably achieve certain objectives they deemed necessary, they are now obsolete and outdated.

And so, it is high time these laws and policies are revisited or probably amended, to give African women the enabling environment to contribute their own quota to the growth and development of the African society based on the current realities in the continent where you see a lot of women playing the role of breadwinners in their various families. If this is done, the African society would be evenly developed as compared to the lopsided development we have today. Indeed, no one should shy away from discussing such matters because they constitute the foundation of our humanity. However, we need to move from just talking to purposeful actions and implementation.

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A Critique of Domestic Violence in Julie Okoh's Plays: *Our Wife Forever* and *Closed Doors*

ABSTRACT. The situation of women in most countries should have been tackled by the efforts of some female scholars and their male counterparts who have claimed in the past and still claiming to have fought and still fighting for the betterment of the female folks. The expression 'domestic violence' as used in this paper includes violence against women by an intimate partner and by other family members. Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. During childhood, violence against girls may include; enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and attention, lack of access to education, incest, female genital mutilation, early marriages and forced prostitution and even bounded labour. This paper reassesses the effects of domestic violence on women using Julie Okoh's plays: *Closed Doors* and *Our Wife Forever* as moral critique of the unwholesome state of affairs in Nigeria and applies Abraham Maslow's theory of Need. It adopts the qualitative research methodology. This paper discovers there are no stringent and effective punishments of culprits who unleash violence on women in Nigeria. And therefore, recommends severe punishment for people adjudged guilty of domestic violence and abuse on women, while encouraging them to speak out against this anomaly.

KEYWORDS: domestic violence, violence, dramatic interventions, women, feminism, *Our Wife Forever*, *Closed Doors*

Introduction

It is no longer news that the president of the federal of Nigeria, President Mohamadu Buhari acerbically responded to his wife's BBC radio interview in such a way that one would want to ask what is the fate of the women folk in a country such as ours, where her president directly or indirectly states in an interview that the women folk belong to "the kitchen, the living room and the other room" alone? (p. 2). The family is often equated with sanctuary—a place where individuals seek love, peace, safety, security, and shelter, etc; however, this false idea is unhurriedly fading out as it has also become a place that breeds some of the most drastic forms of

violence perpetrated against the women. Domestic violence and abuse against the women continue to be a global epidemic that tortures, maims, and even kills: physically, psychologically, sexually, mentally and even economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violence, denying women equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and the right to enjoy fundamental freedom. Although violence against women is omnipresent, cutting across all boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity, and age. Domestic violence is the most prevalent; yet, it is relatively hidden and deliberately ignored form of violence against women.

Violence in the domestic sphere in most cases is usually perpetrated by the male folks who are, or who have been in positions of trust, intimacy, and power, such as husbands, boyfriends, fathers, father-in-law, step fathers, brothers, uncles, sons, and even other relatives. Domestic violence may include but not limited to violence against women by an close partner, a sharing partner, and by other family members, whether this violence occurs within or beyond the confines of the home. Violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. Even at the very beginning of her life, a girl may be the target of sex, selective abortion, or female infanticide especially in cultures where son preferences are prevalent. During childhood, violence against girls may include; enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and attention, lack of access to education, incest, female genital mutilation, early marriages and forced prostitution and even bounded labour. Some go on to suffer throughout their adult lives and old age: battered, bruised and even murdered at the hands of an intimate partner, as well as being inherited by her in-laws. (WHO)

Most women who leave their homes as a result of incessant assault often return. This is because, apart from the stress and suffering arising from the violence itself, many women had also experienced stress and problems in seeking help. Most of those who cry for help from mostly relatives and friends are in most cases disappointed, because of their intention to stay out of the couple's domestic violence, this however destroys the women both psychologically and physically. Many women who are battered loath the battering but find it difficult to leave a terrifying situation. Shame is an important factor according to (Owen, 2016, p. 551) the battered wife feels ashamed to let other people know about her situation as she might be regarded as a woman who cannot manage her home properly. One young woman who married at the age of seventeen against her parent's desire did not tell them of her abuse because "she made her bed and had to lie on it" (Owen, 2016, p. 560). This goes to show that some women feel they are

somehow responsible for or deserves the beating and maltreatment they get for one reason or the other. Others even feel that there is something wrong with them.

Due to the patriarchy system that pervades the society, women are not often guaranteed a place in their family of origin. Even though most societies proscribe violence against women, the reality is that violations against women's rights are often sanctioned under the garb of cultural practices and norms, although misinterpretation of religious tenets abound. When the violation of women's right takes place within the home, as is often the case, the abuse is effectively condoned by the tacit silence and the passivity displayed by the state and law enforcement machineries. Violence or at least the fear of violence has become a part of every woman's life. Each woman knows someone who has been a victim of violence or in herself been involved in one. Domestic violence against women deprives them of their right to participate in societal life as a whole and holds them as prisoners under the "special" conditions set by the immediate social setting such as family, kinship, social norms and values shared by the majority. The major impact domestic violence has on women is therefore hindering their full inclusion and participation in social life.

Literature abounds on the seriousness of this hydra-headed enigma. Even at that, debate regarding the magnitude of the problem is clouded by the fact that domestic violence is a crime that is under-reported and under-recorded. When women are likewise frustrated, as such, when they file reports or pursue treatment, in most cases, they contend with police or health care officials who have not been trained to respond adequately or to keep consistent records. On the other hand, shame, fear of reprisal, lack of information about legal rights, lack of confidence in, or fear of the legal system and the legal costs involved make it very reluctant to report the incidence of violence. Most of the cases reported are mainly done informally, to relatives and friends who do not have formal documentation of the incidence. Therefore, this work is put together to elaborate on this issue of domestic violence against women, using the dramatic piece "Sounds of Silence" to highlight the causes of domestic violence and abuse against women, its effect, and to proffer possible solutions on how best to curb the menace. The idea of this work is on domestic violence and abuse against women and this erupted from the researchers experience on domestic violence on the society and its consequences.

The mystique of the family as a private, peaceful cradle of safety and emotional support has influenced the lack of attention given to the vio-

lence that does occur, especially to women. And in many societies, paddling a wife for misbehaviour by the husband has become the norm. Violence against women in such societies is thus, condoned and has become institutionalized. Battering is viewed as a private family affair, and beating one's wife is considered to be a marital prerogative. A battered woman finds it difficult to take action against her husband. She often finds herself in a financial bind. Living with a violent husband is thus seen as better than trying to make it alone. As a result of abuse, the victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, and poor ability to create healthy relationships, post-traumatic stress order, and even death. In recent years, concern for the battered women has mushroomed so that legislation and services have grown to deal with the issue. An international consensus has also been developed but progress has been slow because attitudes are deeply entrenched and, to some extent, because effective strategies to address violence against women are still being defined. Law enforcement and judicial system condone or do not recognize domestic violence as a crime; instead, it is tagged "family matter" which should be settled in the home. The bane of this study therefore is that the appalling toll on this issue will not be eased until families, government, institutions, civic society and organizations address the issue directly. It was Hirsch who volunteered, thus "victims of violence we are; but perhaps continuing to publicly acclaim our indignation will help to ameliorate the injustice perpetrated against one half of the human race women".

1. The Purpose of This Paper

This paper geared towards enlightening women on how they can influence the behaviour of their male spouses and prevent the abuse of women physically and psychologically, thereby curbing violence. In stressing the need for a coordinated and integrated policy response in enhancing partnership among stakeholders, setting up mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating programs and policies, implementing existing legislation, ensuring greater transparency and accountability from government in order to eliminate violence against women. It will show the extent of damage caused by domestic violence, and the role played by women in curbing it. It will equally contribute to the existing literature on Nigerian dramas that addresses the issue of domestic violence and abuse against women,

much as it will raise consciousness and curiosity among Nigerian scholars and researchers on the need to make domestic violence and abuse against women a priority in their research interest. Though it is claimed that much has been done to create awareness in the area of domestic violence, it is baffling to know that the problem is still not solved or curbed. It is hoped that this study will give fresh impetus to the campaign against women's violence in the society, since most of them are illiterate and, or are ill-educated on the rights and protection of women in the constitution of the state. This study is expected to be beneficial to members of the society and professionals e.g. housewives, psychologists, gender and counseling experts, social welfare workers, health workers, family planning experts, playwrights, sociologists, critics, feminists, social welfare policy makers, judicial officers, law enforcement agencies, traditional rulers, religious leaders, etc. who have come in contact with those assaulted to enable them understand gender based violence, appreciate the trauma of those suffering it and stress on the need for attitude change.

2. The Thoughts of Feminism: an Overview

The current downgraded situation of women in most countries, especially in Africa should have been tackled by the efforts of some female scholars and their likes who have claimed in the past and still claiming to have fought and still fighting for the betterment of the female folks. Feminism is one of the self-claimed processes. Feminism therefore is an ideology or theory, backed up by social movement that women should be equal politically, economically, and socially with the men. Sometimes, this definition is also referred to as "core feminism" or "core feminist theory". Though this theory does not subscribe to differences or similarities between men and women, nor does it refer to excluding men or only furthering women's causes. A feminist however, is one who believes that men and women should be equal politically, socially and economically. Feminism means different things to different people depending on race, culture and historical experience. In Nigeria for example, many people understand feminism to simply mean women's struggle to gain equality with men, or to obtain access to positions of power. Feminism is more than that. It is first and foremost a collective term for systems of belief and theories that pay special attention to women's right and women's position in culture and society. On personal level, it is a state of mind, a way of thinking, and

an alternative perspective for which to understand the world. It means a woman becoming aware of a distortion in her social status as a woman. Seeking to correct this distortion, the woman moves in a new direction in search of autonomy, self-assertion and empowerment (Okoh, 2007, p. 7) Barbara submits that:

It is freedom (for a woman) to decide her own destiny: freedom from sex determined role; freedom from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to convert them freely into action. Feminism demands the acceptance of woman's right to individual conscience and judgment. It postulates that women's essential worth stems from their common humanity and does not depend on the relationships of her life (1984).

However, African feminists do recognize the fact that Africa has produced great women, women that have done great things for their communities. But they emphasize that those women with recognized laudable achievements are just too few compared to the huge population of women in, for example, Nigeria. Those women achievers may have been the few exceptional women referred to by Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics* when she submits that:

Throughout history a few exceptional women have indeed managed to resist the full pressure of patriarchal ideology, becoming conscious of their own oppression and voicing their opposition to male power (Moi, 1986, p. 26).

Moreover, the fact that these few women succeeded in distinguishing themselves does not preclude the fact that gender discrimination existed and still exists in Africa, including Nigeria. For example, in Nigeria, women seemed to have had more rights and power in traditional Yoruba society than they had in Igbo society. Moreover, women in Yoruba land can inherit land and properties from their families but this is contrary to what is obtainable in most other parts of the country. In Hausa/Fulani culture, men's ideal of a woman has been and continues to be as it was in ancient Greeks and Roman societies. The woman is expected to be docile, faithful, and subservient wife, whereas the man is rarely faithful. Anderson and Zinsser (1990) explain that in the spirit of revolution and bringing all these to an end, De Gouges summoned all women to overturn unjust traditions.

Woman, wake up, the tocsin of reason is being heard throughout the whole universe, discover your rights. The powerful empire of nature is no longer

surrounded by prejudice, fanaticism, superstition, and lies. The flame of truth has dispersed all the folly and usurpation (Anderson & Zinsser, 1990, p. 351).

3. Feminist Theories and Conceptual Framework

Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical, fictional or philosophical discourse and it aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. Abraham Maslow's theory of Need is apt at expanding our horizon.

Abraham Maslow's theory hovers around human motivation, Maslow attempts to portray a total picture of human behaviour, Maslow's theory holds that we all have a need hierarchy, in which our inborn needs are arranged in a sequence of stages from most "primitive to most human" (William, 2007, p. 307).

He identified the following needs:

- a. Physiological need: this include need to satisfy hunger, sex, sleep oxygen and maintain the internal state of the body.
- b. Safety needs: The need to feel secured and safe, to avoid problems and seek for pleasure.
- c. Love and belonging needs: The need for belonging is affectionate with others to be accepted, give and receive attention.
- d. Self Esteem needs: This is a need for self-esteem, to activate, to excel.
- e. Self-actualization: This is a need for self-fulfillment the need to attain one's goal in life.
- f. Cognitive needs: This is the need to acquire more knowledge.
- g. Aesthetic needs: this is love for beauty.
- h. Transcendence needs: Desire to help people in need. From the above theory, it can be deduced that human beings have needs within them.

4. Application of Abraham's Theory to This Paper

4.1. Safety Needs

According to Abraham Maslow's theory, human needs to feel secured and safe. Every human especially women are entitled to some level of security in their homes and families domestic violence cause emotional in-

security to its victims. Therefore, there is need for domestic violence to be stopped so that safety and security needs in the family can be restored.

4.2. Love and Belonging Needs

One of the most important needs of life according to this theory is love and the feeling of sense of belongings. Women love to be cared for, they love affections, acceptance by significant other in a relationship and they love to be given attention. Domestic violence takes away this feeling of love and belonging from its victims, it is therefore necessary that individual who are were victims of domestic violence to receive more love, attention, acceptance and respect from family members and health workers.

Below are types of feminism as they apply to Okoh's plays.

4.3. Cultural Feminism

This theory holds that there are fundamental personality differences between men and women, and that women's difference are special and should be celebrated. This theory of feminism supports the notion that there are biological differences between men and women. For example, "women are kinder and gentler than men," leading to the mentality that if women ruled the world, there would be no wars. Cultural feminism is the theory that wants to overcome sexism by celebrating women's special qualities, women's ways, and women's experiences, often believing that the "woman's way" is the better way.

4.4. Eco Feminism

Eco feminism is the theory that rests on the basic principle that patriarchal philosophies are harmful to women, children and other living things. Parallels are drawn between society's treatment of the environment, animals or resources and its treatment of women. In resisting patriarchal culture, eco-feminists believe that they are also resisting plundering and destroying of the earth. They feel that the patriarchal philosophy emphasizes the need to dominate and control unruly and the unruly wilderness. Eco-feminism views patriarchal societies to be a structure which has developed over last 5,000 years, while considering matriarchal societies (A society in which females are centre of the societal roles and structures, to be the original hierarchy. Eco-feminism draws from and links together both the women's movement and the environmental movement. However,

Nigerian feminist critics have in one way or the other identified with each of the feminist movement consciously and unconsciously. Among these critics especially in Africa includes, Ama Ata Aidoo, Nawal El Saadawi, Flora Nwapa, Lauretta Ngcobo, Buchi Emecheta, Carole Boyce Davies, Obioma Nnaemeka, Uzo Esonwanne, Zulu Sofolá, Tess Onueme, Irene Salami, Julie Okoh, Barclays Ayakoroma, and Tracy Utoh amongst others.

5. Domestic Violence/Human Abuse: An Expository Avowal

Domestic violence also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, intimate partner violence, battery or family violence is a pattern of behavior which involves violence or other abuse by one person in a domestic context against another such as in marriage or cohabitation. Intimate partner violence is violence by a spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other. Domestic violence can take place in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Domestic violence can take a number of forms including physical, emotional, verbal, economic and sexual abuse, which can range from subtle, coercive forms to marital rape and to violent physical abuse that result in disfigurement or death. Globally, a wife or female partner is more commonly the victim of domestic violence, though the victim can also be the male partner, or both partners may engage in abusive or violent behavior, or the victim may act in self-defense or retaliation. Whereas women in developed world who experience domestic violence are openly encouraged to report it to the authorities, it has been argued that domestic violence against men is most often unreported because of social stigma regarding their perceived lack of machismo and other denigrations of their masculinity.

Domestic violence often occurs because the abuser believes that abuse is justified and acceptable and may produce intergenerational cycle of abuse that condones violence. Awareness, perception, definition and documentation of domestic violence differ widely from country to country. There may be a cycle of abuse during which tension rise and an act of violence is committed, followed by a period of reconciliation and calm. Victims of domestic violence may be trapped in domestic violent situations through isolation, power and control, insufficient financial resources, and poor ability to create healthy relations. Victims may experience post-traumatic stress disorder, children who live in a household of violence show deregulated aggression from an early age and stage that may later con-

tribute to continuing the legacy of abuse when they reach adulthood. Fear, shame or desire to protect the children can also be one of the causes of domestic violence. As a result of abuse, victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, poor ability to create healthy relationships.

The term intimate partner violence (IPV) is often used synonymously with domestic violence or abuse, but it usually refers to abuse occurring within a couple relationship (marriage, cohabitation, though they do not have to live together for it to be considered domestic abuse).

The World Health Organization defined intimate partner violence as: "Any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship." To these forms of abuse, WHO adds controlling behaviours as a form of abuse. Traditionally, domestic violence (DV) was mostly associated with physical activity i.e. violence. For instance, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* definition, domestic violence is: "the inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another."

6. Review on Domestic Violence

Traditionally, domestic violence (DV) was mostly associated with physical activity i.e. violence. For example, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition, domestic violence is "The inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another", also a repeated/habitual pattern of such behavior, domestic violence is now more broadly defined often but not always including all acts of physical, sexual psychological or economic violence that maybe committed by a person who is a family member or a person who has been an intimate partner or spouse, irrespective of whether they live together.

In 1993, the United Nations declaration on the elimination of violence against women identified domestic violence as one of the three contexts in which violence against women occurs, describing it as:

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other conditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, 1999, p. 48).

7. Abuses

Domestic violence can take any forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects, battery) or threats thereof; sexual abuse, controlling of domineering, intimidation, stalking passive/covert abuse (e.g. Neglect) and economic deprivation. It can also mean endangerment, criminal coercion, kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment, trespassing and harassment.

8. Forms of Abuse

Physical Abuse: This is abuse involving contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or body harm. It includes hitting, slapping, punching and choking etc.

Sexual Abuse: Percentages of women who say they have been subjected to sexual assault or attempted sexual assault by an intimate partner has greatly increased.

Sexual abuse by WHO is defined as any sexual act, attempting to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim. It also includes obligatory inspections for virginity and female genital mutilation.

The WHO includes the customary forms of sexual violence, such as forced marriage or cohabitation and wife inheritance within its definition of sexual violence as well as forced pregnancy.

Verbal Abuse: this is a form of emotionally abusive behavior involving the use of the language, which can involve threat, name calling, blaming, ridicule, disrespect and criticism.

Economic Abuse: is a form of abuse when one partner (intimate) has control over the other partner's access to economic resource. Economic abuse involves preventing a spouse from resource acquisition, limiting the amount of resource to be used by the victim, or by exploiting economic resource of the victim.

9. Domestic Violence and Pregnancy

During pregnancy a woman begin to be abused or long-standing abuse may change in severity, which has negative health effects on the baby and

the mother. The risk of domestic violence for women who have been pregnant is greatest immediately after child birth.

10. Predisposing Factors to Domestic Violence

Social views: the social views on domestic violence vary from person to person, and from region to region but in many places outside, the west, the concept is very poorly understood. This is because in most of these countries, the relationship between the husband and the wife must submit herself to the husband. This is codified in the laws of some countries for example, in Yemen, marriage regulations states that a wife must obey her husband and must not leave home without his permission.

10.1. Religion

There is controversy regarding the influence of religion on domestic violence. According to domestic violence cross cultural perspective no religion sanctions violence against women, but there are some religious scriptures that have been taken out of contexts to support discrimination against women within a community e.g. Judaism and Islam have traditionally supported male dominant household and socially sanctioned violence against women has been persistent since ancient times. Even Christianity sanctions misquote the bible—that the wife should be submissive does not mean she should become a slave to you.

10.2. Customs and Tradition

Local customs and tradition are often responsible for maintaining certain foods and also certain forms of domestic violence. Such customs and tradition; include son preferences (the desire of a family to have a boy and not a girl), which can lead to abuse and neglect of girl children by disappointed family members; child and forced marriages, dowry, the hierarchic castes. And the untouchables, leading to discrimination and restricted opportunity of female and thus making them more vulnerable to abuse, taboos about menstruation leading to female being isolated and shunned during the time of menstruation, female genital mutilation and so many others. In the Northern part of Nigeria, forced marriages is predominant.

10.3. In Relation to HIV/AIDS

The world health organization (WHO) has stated that women in abusive relations are not significantly higher risk of HIV/AIDS. WHO states that women in violent relations have difficulty negotiating safer sex with their partners, they are often forced to have sex, and find it difficult to ask for appropriate testing when they think they may be infected with HIV.

10.4. Legislation

Lack of adequate legislation which criminalizes domestic violence or alternatively legislation which prohibits consensual behaviors may hinder the progress in regard to reducing the incidence of domestic violence. According to WHO one of the most common forms of violence against women is that by a husband or male partner. The WHO notes that such violence is often ignored because often legal systems and cultural norms do not treat it as a crime, but rather as a private family matter or normal part of life.

10.5. Ability to Leave an Abusive Relation

The ability of victims of domestic violence to leave the violent relation is crucial for preventing further abuse. In traditional communities, divorced women often feel rejected and ostracized. In order to avoid this stigma, many women prefer to remain in the marriage and endure abuse. Discriminatory marriages and divorce laws can also play a role in the proliferation of domestic violence.

According to Rashia Manjoo, special reporter on violence against women; in many countries, a woman's access to property hinges on her relationship to a man when she separates from her husband or when he dies, she risks losing her home, land, household goods and property. Failure to ensure equal property rights upon separation or divorce discourages women from leaving violent marriages, as women will be forced to choose violent at home or destitution in the street.

10.6. Individual versus Family Rights

The way the individual rights of a family member versus the rights of the family as a whole or unit are balanced significantly in different societies. This may influence the degree to which a government may be willing to investigate family incidents. In some cultures, individual members of

the family are expected to sacrifice almost completely their own interest in favor of the interest of the family as a whole, what is view as an undue expression of personal autonomy is condemned as unacceptable. In these cultures, the predominant over the individual, and where this interacts with cultures of honor, individualistic choice that may damage the family reputation in the community may result in extreme punishment such as honor killings.

10.7. Intergenerational Cycle of Violence

A common aspect among abuses is that they witnessed abuse in their childhood, in other words they were participants in a chain of intergenerational cycle of domestic violence. That does not mean, conversely, that if a child witnessed or is a subject to violence that they will become abusers, people who observe their parents abusing each other, or who were themselves abused may incorporate abuse into their behavior within relationship that they establish as adults. Understanding and breaking the intergenerational abuse patterns may do more to reduce domestic violence than other remedies of managing the abuse.

10.8. Biological and Psychological

The factors include genetics and brain dysfunction and are studied by neurosciences. Psychological theories focus on personality traits and mental characteristics of the offender. Personality traits include sudden burst of anger, poor impulse controls and poor self-esteem. Various theories suggest that psychology and other personality disorder are factors and that abuse experienced as a child leads some people to be more violent as an adult. Correlation has been found between Juvenile delinquency and domestic violence in adulthood. Studies have found high incidence of psychopath among abusers. Psychiatric disorders are sometimes associated with domestic violence such as borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, drug abuse and alcoholism. It is estimated that at least one-third of all abusers have some type of mental illness. Many causes of domestic violence arises from the jealousy felt by one partner that they suspect their partner of being unfaithful or is planning to leave the relationship. Besides, the jealousy, the other partner may feel insulted by the rejection, which impacts on their self-esteem.

11. Causes of Domestic Violence

The causes of domestic violence are not made clear through research, but there are several factors that can result in violence. One of the most important is a belief that abuse, whether physical or verbal is acceptable related to that, growing up in a violent home or living within a culture that accepts domestic violence are factors. Other factors are substance abuse, unemployment, psychological problems, poor coping skills, isolation and excessive dependence.

12. Effects of Domestic Violence

12.1. Physical Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Children who are victims of domestic violence suffer the following:

- malnutrition;
- infection;
- bruises;
- head injuries;
- broken bones;
- starvation.

12.2. On Mothers

- chronic miscarriage;
- arthritis;
- pelvic pain;
- ulcer;
- internal bleeding;
- head injuries etc.

12.3. Psychological Effect on Children

- aggressiveness;
- anxiety;
- withdrawal;
- suppression;
- emotional insecurity;
- mental health disorder;

- shyness;
- irritability;
- guilt.

12.4. On Mothers

- stress;
- fear;
- anxiety;
- depression;
- suicidal tendency;
- long term anxiety and panic;
- post-traumatic stress disorder (e.g., flash backs, intrusive images, exaggerated stifle response, night mares, avoidance of triggers that are associated with the abuse).

12.5. Health Consequences

Intimate partner and sexual violence have serious short- and long-term physical mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for the survivors and for their children and lead to high social and economic costs. Intimate partner violence in pregnancy also increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies.

- These forms of violence can lead to depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, sleep difficulties, eating disorder and emotional distress and suicide attempts. The same study found that women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to experience non partner sexual violence.
- Health effects can also include headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disorder, limited mobility and poor overall health.
- Sexual violence particularly during childhood can lead to increased smoking drug and alcohol misuse and risky sexual behavior in later life. It is also associated with perpetration of violence (for males) and being a victim of violence (for females).

12.6. Impact on Children

- Children who grew up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioral and emotional disturbances. These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life.

- Intimate partner violence has also been associated with higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity (e.g. diarrhea, disease, malnutrition).

12.7. Social and Economic Costs

The social and economic costs of intimate partner and sexual violence are enormous and have ripple effects throughout society. Women may suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.

13. Signs of Domestic Violence

1. Destructive criticism and verbal abuse: Shouting, mocking, accusing name calling, verbal threatening.
2. Pressure tactics: sulking, threatening to withhold money, lying to your friends about you, take the children away.
3. Disrespect: persistently putting you down in front of other people, not listening or responding when you talk.
4. Breaking trust: lying to you, withholding information from you, being jealous, having other relationships, breaking promises and shared agreement.
5. Isolation: monitoring or blocking your telephone calls, telling you where you are.
6. Harassment: following you, embarrassing you in the public.
7. Threat: making angry gestures, using physical size to intimidate, shouting you down, destroying your possessions, breaking things, punching walls, wielding a knife or gun, threatening to kill or harm you and the children.
8. Sexual Violence: Using force, threats or intimidations to make you perform sexual acts, having sex with you when you do not want to have sex, any degrading treatment based on your sexual orientation.
9. Physical violence: punching, slapping, hitting, pinching, kicking and pulling your hair.
10. Denial: saying the abuse doesn't happen, saying you caused the abusive behavior, being publicly gentle and patient, crying and begging for forgiveness, saying it will never happen again.

14. Management

Management of domestic violence may take place through:

- Medical services: participants in domestic violence may require medical treatment, such as examination by a family physician, other primary care provider or emergency room physicians.
- Law enforcement: This may be called in response to intimate partner violence.
- Counseling and other forms of prevention and intervention: This is another means of managing the effects of domestic violence. For the victim of abuse, counseling may include an assessment of the presented, extent and types of abuse.

15. Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women

The present work deals with preventive measure which should be taken to combat male violence against women in intimate relationship and any form of male violence against female. The purpose of this is to provide information but also to offer practical advice on how to implement proved preventive strategies effectively.

15.1. Prevention

There exist several strategies that are being used to attempt to prevent or reduce domestic violence. It is better to assess the effectiveness of a service that is being implemented.

15.2. Reforming Legislation

Reforming the legislation in order to ensure that domestic violence falls under the scope of law is important. This may imply repealing existing laws which discriminating against women: According to WHO, when the law allows husbands to physically discipline wives, implementing a program to prevent intimate partner violence may have little impact. Marriage laws are also important, "they (women) should also be able to enter freely into a marriage or to leave it, to obtain financial credit, and to own and administer property.

Abolishing or restricting the offering of and receiving of dowry and bride price and scrutinizing the impact of these transactions on the legis-

lative decisions regarding domestic violence is also important. UN women has stated that the legislation should ensure that “a perpetrator of domestic violence including marital rape cannot use the fact that he paid bride price as a defense to a domestic violence charge”.

15.3. Changing Gender Norms

Gender norms that promote the inferiority of women may lead to the abuse of women by intimate partners the WHO writes that dismantling hierarchical construction of masculinity and femininity predicated on the control of women and eliminating the structural factors that supports inequalities are likely to make a significant contribution to prevent intimate partner and sexual violence.

16. The Issue of Women's Human Rights Abuse in Nigerian Drama

The patriarchal structure of traditional society enables men to dominate women. Through the patriarchal system, Nigerian women are socialized in to a culture of female subordination. A Nigerian woman is born into a culture of male supremacy in which there is a general preference for a “male child” while girls leave home at the time of marriage to become their husband's property.

17. Julie Okoh's *Closed Doors*

The play is about a group of girls; Belema, Bola, Amina, Tracy, and Eki who are all in one way or another victim of abuse and violence by the men in their lives or around them. Bola was constrained to having sex with her boss all in a bid to secure her job, which she still lost because she got pregnant for him. Belema also gave in to her school teacher on account on his love promises to her but once she got pregnant; she became piece of garbage to him since he had many other girl students in the school to frolics with.

Belema: How do I take care of both of us? I have not yet finished my schooling. But here I am in a strange land, far away from home, friends and relatives. And this hard chair is biting into my flesh as hunger is biting into my stomach. Poor

baby! You deserve more than this. But the person who put us in this condition is out there enjoying life.

Bola: What stops you from enjoying life with him?

Belema: How can? He told me he loved me. Foolish me, I believed him completely. It was only when I got pregnant that I discovered that he had played the same game on many other girls in the school (Okoh, 2007, p. 25).

From the above dialogue, it is obvious that the man who impregnated Belema did not give a hoot about her, rather his concern was the pleasure he was going to derive from sleeping with her. This also applied to every other girl he slept with. Eki was a young girl and first child of eight children who went to secure a cleaning job in a hotel to cater for her family since her mother couldn't cope anymore. But then, in order for the men to help her, they had to sleep with her first and on a particular occasion where she was arrested, she was raped severally by different policemen on duty, place where at least she would have escaped the harsh reality of other men. Amina, a young girl of thirteen was raped by a priest in her community and she had to run away when she conceived because she will be severely punished for getting pregnant and the priest will be found innocent. While on the run, other mallams had to sleep with her before giving her food. Then Tracy was jilted by the love of her life and fell into the hands of a deadly politician who deceived her that he was single and that he loved her. But once she told him that she was pregnant, the story changed and his evil part was revealed as he had to send men to assassinate her just to protect his political career. But then, the silence of Tracy made it difficult for anyone to help her and this was affecting her psychologically. This is seen in Bola's statement of her.

Bola: She is certainly passing through a very, very difficult time. If only she would open out a little to diffuse some of the tension! But, she has locked up everything inside her and its affecting her psyche badly (Okoh, 2007, p. 22).

And what about the nursing home that these girls are living in? "Abortion or adoption?" It is then very obvious that there is nowhere for women to be safe. Not at home, in the church, mosque, court, or even in a police station. Violence is meted upon them anywhere they go, the best thing therefore is for these women not to give up and to overcome their self-esteem and fight for their rights.

18. Julie Okoh's *Our Wife Forever*

At the death of Victoria's husband, Victoria is subjected to ill kinds of barbaric maltreatment all in a bid to exonerate herself from being her husband's killer; she was made to shave her hair, not take her bath for several months and was asked to drink the water used in washing Hector's body. Thomas the brother in-law lays claim on Victoria as his inheritance from his late brother, Hector. Many attempts by Victoria to refute the inordinate advances of Thomas towards her led to a lot of chaos as Thomas threatens to deal with her decisively and bars her from receiving male visitors because Felix the family friend comes to console her over her loss. This can be seen in the dialogue between Victoria and Thomas.

Thomas: alright. Be warned. The next time I see him in this house, he will regret ever knowing you...

Victoria: what gave you the privilege to have control over me?

Thomas: as long as you continue to answer Imodu, you are our wife.

Victoria: if it will make you feel better, I'll change to my maiden name.

Thomas: will you also pay back the bride price paid on you? Don't forget to include the interest and inflation variations. You were married for about twelve years. If that money was invested in some business, it would have accrued to millions of naira by now. Besides, in case you have forgotten, let me remind you. According to our custom, when a widow decides to remarry, she forfeits every entitlement to her late husband's property (Okoh, 2007, p. 36-37).

This shows that in our society, a woman's marriage is like taking away all her rights and what makes her a woman and giving it to her husband and his people. Thomas relegates Victoria to a mere property and also backs his actions with the traditional custom and norms. However, it takes the goodly intervention of Felix Tanka, a friend of the family to put Thomas in his rightful place with accusations and counter accusations. Felix Tanka stood his ground to call a spade a spade and finally won the heart of Victoria.

The question from these cases treated above clearly demands an answer. Why should girls not wear masquerade, why should it be the woman that will shave and drink the water of a dead person when the husband dies, why do men not perform the same act when they lose their wives? Why punish girls for being raped and pregnant and spare the men who put them in that condition? Why shouldn't women climb palm trees? Why is it an abomination for women to do some of the exact thing men do? Why?

Why? Why? Is tradition and custom the only answer to these questions? Who made these traditions if not men themselves? Only when these question and other questions bothering on women violence are answered can the society be a better place. But until then, women just have to learn how to survive and fight to be significant.

However, since 1960s and 1970s, the status of women has greatly improved. People's concept also has changed dramatically. The meaning of women's role is a part of function assumed in life.

Conclusion

Family is the first point of contact to the society, therefore when the home front is not stable; it definitely affects the society at large as every individual that makes up a society comes from the family. A successful marriage contributes to both the growth of the society and God's kingdom. God created the institution of marriage which makes His relationship with man marital; therefore, couples should learn to consult the originator and the Head for solutions in the family. In all, the researcher admonishes couples and couples to be to take up their responsibilities and make their marriages work, play your part and leave the rest for God. Violence can only disorientate the children. Help them by making the right choices and soliciting for help when you might have made the wrong choice. But then, women can only emancipate themselves from the clutches of violence and patriarchy when they learn to pull themselves out of the circle of inferiority which subjugates them by appreciating the totality of humanity as declared by human rights article that proclaims that all human being are created equal with the same alienable rights to life and, property and occupation. It is therefore not enough to write plays that celebrates women freedom but for readers or viewers as the case may be to put into practice the views of the playwrights because a lot can be achieved by arousing the consciousness of not just women but Nigerian men who have become 'windmills of custodian of patriarchy to exploit women at will.

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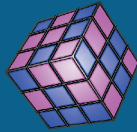
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