



FRACTURED MASCULINITIES IN SOYINKA'S *THE TRIAL OF BROTHER JERO*

By

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Abstract

*Man is constructed to be strong, macho, emotionless and strong. The notion that a man does not cry, stems from his social construction which is a function of the definition of what it means to be a man in his social milieu. Masculinity is constructed across different strata of life and these include class, race, ethnicity, age and profession. It bothers on the roles assigned to the boy child in a particular social environment and the status he assumes as he grows to become a man according to the dictates of the societal norms. Every member of the society, mothers inclusive, understands these roles and statuses as the minimum standard for which a man is understood to be a man indeed. He is therefore expected to act socially, economically and emotionally even when he lacks the capacity to do so. The construction gambit, however, becomes fractured in the face of realities of existence and challenges to those things that define him as a man. Using constructionist model, this study therefore investigates the fracturing of man's social construction and the challenges of coping with the redefinition of manhood. The study employed qualitative approach which involves literary text analysis of Soyinka's *The Trial of Brother Jero* to reveal subordinated masculinities, social castration and the helplessness of the male characters devoid of economic power and emotional stability to act as real men. Finding reveals that man becomes vulnerable when his construction is contrary to the actual performance as a provider and head of the family. It was therefore suggested that parents, especially mothers, should raise boys and girls the same way as they grow to become adult members of the society.*

Keywords: Construction, Masculinities, Manhood, Enactment, Status.

Introduction

Fractured masculinity in African context refers to the challenges and complexities African men face in enacting traditional masculine form and exhibiting masculine traits which make them vulnerable socially, emotionally and psychologically. The traditional African man is constructed as a bread winner, head of the family, emotionless, macho and strong. In many African socio-cultural contexts, masculinity is associated strength, power, dominance, good fatherhood and provider roles which put a lot of pressure on the male personality because of societal expectations. These societal expectations fused into the construction of masculinity can be damaging with the capacity to lead to some feelings of inadequacy and fear of not being called weak. According to Bell Hooks (2004), the complexities and crisis are not particularly about men but the effects traditional masculinity has on relationship, especially heterosexual relationship and the society that constructs men. Masculinity is, therefore, fractured when the male personality becomes vulnerable as a result of his inability to conform to the definition of who a real man is in a social context or fails to meet up with societal expectations. Part of the social construction of the male gender is that he must not show emotion even when he is overwhelmed. Dan Kindlon (1999) corroborates this when he says that the lives of men are usually defined by the societal expectations that construct him as strong and stoic. Terrence Real (1997) believes that men are socialized not only to be strong but independent and that these socialization can also be a source of sorrow, pain and isolation. However, Ika Fatmawati (2025)



opines that contrary to the notion of “Iron John”, men are discovered to “construct emotional masculinity where men are shown crying, hurting, and openly expressing vulnerability” p.18

Men operate at different levels of hierarchies in role performance and status exhibition in masculinities discourse. Subordinated masculinity is defined by other masculinities that exclude men from the general and homogenous definition of what it takes to be a complete man (Kimmel & Messner 1995:p.xxi). Subordinated masculinity is the lowest in masculinity hierarchy because it is not the standard in which other masculinities are defined in a social setting. Men use different criteria to rank themselves according to the cultural dictates of each society such that anyone who is unable to measure up to acceptable ranking is seen to be emasculated or subordinated. Kimmel in *Theorizing Masculinities* contends that the “definition of manhood continues to remain the standard against which other forms of manhood are measured and evaluated” (p.124). Raewyn Connell (2005) while examining the social construction of masculinity posits that it is a complex concept with multiple forms and different intersections with other social factors. The implication of this is that the outlook of the masculinity of men holding power defined as hegemonic, clearly defines those who do not as subordinated.

Citing “complete”, ‘unblushing’ American male, Goffman (1963) says “he is married, white, urban, northern heterosexual, protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion” (p.128) among other status and traits that validate him as a real man. That is the norm that categorizes others as deviants such that “anyone who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself... as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior” (p.128). These are the men enacting a variant of masculinity at the lowest rung of the ladder. This kind of personality is not made overnight but through a process of development. For instance, some of the factors that emasculate the man are internalized in the process of the child’s growth under the care of the mother. The mother, Kimmel (1994) says, “represents the humiliation of infancy, helplessness dependency” (p.127) and other feminine behavioural orientation considered inconsistent with the traits and behaviour of real men.

Subordinated men are confronted with the reality of how the privileges of the hegemonic masculinities continue in many respects to subordinate them. As a result of this reality, it becomes imperative for these men to begin to depart from the traditional view of masculinity. Kimmel argues that:

enacting ‘problematic’ or ‘deviant’ versions of masculinity...a theoretical assertion...reproduced precisely the power relationship that keep men in subordinate positions in our society (p.xix)

Masculinity is constructed in different ways according to the social dictates of the cultural environment where the man is raised or socialized. Masculinities can, therefore, be fractured along the following lines of divides; the heterosexual men, against gay/lesbian, the hegemonic men against the marginalized, the hegemonic against the subordinated, white against the men of color. Although these masculinities are constructed differently, they represent a binary fixture of those that fit in against those who do not.

O’Neil and Nadeau 1999 citing Kahn 1994 conclude that

Giving up power and control would appear unmanly, feminine, and pose threats to their masculine gender role identity. Some men traditionally equate loss of power and control with a loss of masculinity. It is well known that when men lose power, they are more likely to use abuse and violence to compensate for the loss. p.103

No doubt, loss of control translates to loss of masculinity, which in turn defines the experiences of a fractured construction of male characters. It suggests failure in the performance of roles ascribed to him as a provider who supposed to be in charge. This, no doubt, makes the man vulnerable with a feeling of inadequacy and it is a recipe for disaster which often leads to violence (Jackson Katz,



2006). It is one of the challenges man faces in the process of becoming the true definition of his socio-cultural construction and this traditional masculine role according to Herb Goldberg (1976) makes masculine role not only very tight but narrow, limiting and crippling.

Method and Framework for the Study

This study employs qualitative approach which involves textual and critical analyses with particular focus on the utilization of subordinated masculinity and performativity as tools to explore power relationships and emotional performance among characters in Soyinka's *The Trial of Brother Jero*. This is in agreement with Judith Butler (1990) who posits that masculinity is a performance that requires constant effort to maintain. The foregrounding of fractured construction of masculinities in a modern setting and representation of vulnerable male character in a heterosexual relationship informed the choice of *The Trial of Brother Jero*. Therefore, the major data here is *The Trial of Brother Jero* interpreted based on the social context of the Yoruba, Nigerian people of West Africa and taking into consideration changes in economic status of men to establish a fracturing of their social construction. The approach was adopted to explore the social, symbolic and psychological representation of identified male characters on the one hand and to establish the symbiotic relationship between literary text and social structure. The analysis was carried out by identifying characters central to the fracturing of male construction using relevant excerpts from the text.

Social Constructionist Model for the Study

This research relies on Social Constructionist Model for the identification and understanding of male characters made subservient to female character in the play to underscore the psychological trauma the man suffers contrary to his masculine social construction. The Social Constructionist Model posits that masculinity varies from one culture to another and with any culture at a given time, and not universal culturally and historically. This presupposes that what makes male gender men in a particular cultural environment is significantly different from what makes male different in other climes because of cultural, historical and social differences over a period of time. In China, what makes males men in early 16th Century is different from what makes them men in Ghana in the same period of time. So the meaning of masculinity is culturally defined and it differs from one culture to this other. Even within a culture, masculinity assumes different meaning in the process of time because it is a changing phenomenon (Jegade 2024).

Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner (1995) opine that Social Constructionist Model also differs in the way masculinity is enacted along historical divide within a culture. This means that even within a culture so many factors can be identified as differing events that define masculinity in that culture. Social Constructionist Model establishes that masculinity is constructed differently by race, culture, ethnicity, class and age. In America, for instance, White masculinity is different from Black masculinity. WEB DU Bois believes the masculinity of the Black man is that which is burdened by double yoke—race and class. By recognizing the matrix of masculinities, the social constructionists identify different shades of masculinity hierarchies among men across different culture, class, age and ethnicity.

Verbal Abuse as Sign of Fractured Masculinities in Soyinka's *The Trial of Brother Jero*

Verbal abuse, castration anxiety and diminishing self-esteem usually activate violence as defence mechanism in effete men who struggle with the validation of their manhood. The question has always been what social dynamic will make a man lose his self-worth and struggle to do what will validate his manhood even before his own wife? For Chume, many factors such as religious manipulation, his gullibility, economic disability and socio-cultural construct subordinate him to Amope who spares no word to demean and castrate him. Castration in this context refers to male characters created but devoid of masculine traits and sex roles that validate them as men. Like a castrated animal, the male character is psychologically injured either by the weakness of his economic and political power or demeaned by verbal assault that strips him of his manhood. The



religious dimension to the issue of emasculation stems from Jero's selfish manipulation of Chume, his disciple, in order to keep him permanently as a member. Jero takes advantage of Chume's gullibility to indoctrinate him. His faith in the prophet's ability to ensure for him career success makes Chume a faithful follower of the prophet.

Again, because of Amope's tendency to make Chume subservient and subordinated, he has several times sought permission to beat her. This request is not granted by the prophet who for selfish reason thinks that any time Chume beats his wife, he might lose him as a member and faithful disciple. Added to this is Jero's promise that Chume will succeed him in the church. Jero says:

This is the son whom you appointed to follow in
my foot step. Soften his heart. Brother Chume, this
woman whom you so desire to beat is your cross-bear it
well. She is your heaven-sent trial-lay not your hands on
her. I command you to speak no harsh word to her. Pray,
Brother Chume, for strength in this hour of your trial.
Pray for strength and fortitude. p. 24

Jero tactically reminds him of his promise that Chume will be his successor in order to sustain his faithfulness and loyalty. Above all, the promise is for the selfish motive of keeping Chume emotionally dependent on him. With all these indoctrination and attachment to Jero, Chume becomes emasculated through religious instrument. This is why he will not beat his wife because she is his cross and trial from heaven. Chume remains subservient to his wife who sends him on errand like a small boy because of 'spiritual abstinence.'

Chume's vulnerability makes him a victim of Amope's socio-cultural emasculation. His masculinity becomes fractured as a result of religious and emotional manipulation by Jero. Chume's manipulation and indoctrination arise from spiritual counsel from Jero who uses his complaint about Amope's verbal assault as a bait to keep him perpetually loyal.

Chume enacts hypo-masculinity traits because of his inability to live up to his masculine construction as a provider and head of his family. Hypo-masculinity is the masculinity enactment of men who are weak, helpless, effete and incapable of supporting a family (Kimmel 2005). This is the reality which a victim of fractured masculinity struggles with that predisposes him to certain dysfunctional behaviours like battering and violence. Chume is not only conscious of this but is constantly reminded by Amope, in her usual refrain. "I do my best for you..."

Chume epitomises the character portraiture of a man enacting his masculinity at the lowest rung of the social ladder. His description says little about him until Amope begins her verbal abuse without any provocation because of sudden application of the brake that causes a jolt:

(....The rider is a shortish man; his feet hardly touch the pedals.
On the crossbar is a woman; the cross bar itself is wound round
with a mat, and on the carrier is a large travelling sack, with a
woman's household stool hanging from a corner of it). p.11-12

This vivid description is important as it helps to locate Chume and his wife Amope on the social ladder such that their economic status leaves no one in doubt. His social status is equally very low. Even Jero attests to the fact that Chume is 'crude' p.22. Again, the picture of a man and his wife on a bicycle with "household stool hanging from a corner of it" p.22, going to lay a siege on a customer who owes a paltry one pound, eight shillings and nine pence gives credence to their poor lifestyle.

Chume presents the image of not just an effete man but a thoroughly domesticated husband in spite of the fact that he works in a local government office. Amope gets offended as he applies the brake rather suddenly. She takes it on him, in a way that suggests that the man is a failure. Chume's helplessness is obvious when Amope says



(her tone of martyrdom is easy,
accustomed to use) I suppose we all do our
best, but after all these years one would think
you could set me down a little more gently
p.12.

Chume's attempt to explain that he is never given enough notice only aggravates the issue and gives Amope an opportunity to tongue-lash him like a little boy. This is evidence of a fractured masculinity as Chume is not better than an errand boy in the circumstance where his wife combines verbal assault with the abuse of his manhood.

Chume's servile nature makes him an instrument in Amope's hands. She seems to enjoy sending him about. The following conversational dialogue give Chume out as a subdued man. Amope says, "The way you complain – anybody who didn't see what happened would think you were the one that broke an ankle" p. 12. (*she has already begun to limp*). Chume replies, "Don't tell me that was enough to break your ankle". Amope becomes abusive: "Break. You didn't hear me complain. You did your best, but if my toes are to be broken one by one just because I have to monkey on your bicycle, you must admit it's a tough life for a woman" p.12

Amope's deliberate use of words, of course is meant to demean her husband. This is what Bagshaw (2000a) refers to as emotional and verbal abuse chief of which is "put downs". Put down is a psychological violence which means to "disparage, belittle, criticize, disapprove of a person, to make that person ineffective" (O'Neil, J.M and Egan, J. 1992:77). Amope's substitution of the word "climb" or "ride on" for "monkey" *on your bicycle* in the dialogue above is a biting invective meant to demean Chume as a poor, wretched man. Again for effect, she says such act (that is poverty-stricken lifestyle) is a "tough life for a woman". Reminding Chume of his weak economic and social condition is not better than a woman's act of taunting a castrated man. She mocks his financial weakness. She provokes in the man sense of failure that reminds him of his numerous struggles and helplessness. Chume has hardly uttered a word when Amope tells him: "Yes, you did your best. I know. Didn't I admit it? Please Give me that stool..." p.12

Amope leaves no one in doubt that between him and Chume, the table has turned as regards who plays the breadwinner role. All attempts by Chume to show some affection and care are not appreciated rather Amope demonstrates that she is the one in charge. When asked whether she should be taken home because of her ankle, she replies as one talking to her subordinate: "I can look after myself. I've always done, and looked after you too. Just help me unload the things and place them against the wall..... You know I wouldn't ask if it wasn't for the ankle." p.13

Amope's revelation above confirms the shift of sex role from the husband to the wife. The implication is that Chume has not been opportune to take up such a noble responsibility of being a breadwinner, a role cherished by every man. Rather, it is Amope that has always done it. The implication is that Chume is worthless as a man in this context. Her assumption of the provider role naturally provides ground for Chume's fractured masculinity experience. Consequently, he becomes the one in charge of the domestic affairs as dictated by his wife.

By engaging him at the domestic sphere, Amope is sending a signal, subtle though, by her action that power resides with her. This is a sign of subordination and helplessness that manifests in the way Amope orders him around: "Please give me that stool. p.12, just help me unload the things and place them against the wall, p.13; You haven't let the soup pour out, have you?" p.13; "careful...careful now ... the cork nearly come off that bottle p.13; Do, I beg you, take better care of that Jar p.13.

When masculinity is fractured, the male victim loses control and by extension sense of worth. There is no doubting the fact that Chume has lost power and control in the relationship, the very basis of his gender role identity. Such experience of vulnerability is dangerous for both the male and female characters in a heterogeneous relationship because in the event of loss of control, the man is likely to resort to violence. For instance, Chume throws a wrapper on the floor to show some exasperation for Amope's debasing treatment of him like a little boy. After all, in a typical



African setting, the woman is to idolize her husband. Of course, the demeaned man remembers with nostalgia how he loses control and bemoans his helpless condition. Just a little resentment and Amope begins her verbal humiliation that reminds him of his frustration and dejection. She says:

Abuse me. All right go on, begin to abuse me.
You know that all I asked was if the soup had poured away, and it isn't as if that was something no one ever asked before. I would do it all myself if it wasn't for my ankle. Anyone would think it was my fault.... careful Careful now.... The cork nearly come off that bottle. You know how difficult it is to get any water in this place. p.13

The male victim of fractured masculinity is never appreciated largely because of his effete, weak and unmanly disposition. Chume fights his shame and humiliation internally because his sense of enervation is not a matter for the physical exercise of power, although his physiology, as a shortish man, may be a disadvantage. However, what subjects him to the debasing condition is a combination of so many psychosocial factors such as poor economic power, religious manipulation and low social status.

He has lost his dignity, honour and respect in the process. It must be noted, that Chume has not forgotten that he is a man – although without the compliments of manliness. There lies the danger in fractured masculinity – the man has not forgotten that he is born male and has been trained to be a 'man' in the socio-cultural environment where he grows to become a man, only that he lacks what it takes to exercise that gender-role. Therefore "when there is a threat to a man's power or control from a woman, specific defense mechanisms may be activated." (O'Neil and Nadeau 1999:103). No wonder, Chume continues to pester Prophet Jero to allow him to beat his wife "just once". This request as a matter of fact, remains for Chume the only hope, psychologically, for him to salvage his battered manhood and reassert his masculinity. Even Jero is not unaware of this great desire. After the humiliation at her debtors' (Jero) house where he takes her, Chume quickly returns to the church to ask for permission to beat his wife: *Chume, silent for a while, then bursts out suddenly.* Brother Jero, you must let me beat her! Jero says 'What?' but "Chume (*desperate*) Just once, Prophet, Just once." Jero retorts: Apostate. Have I not told you the will of God in this matter? Chume insists "But I've got to beat her, Prophet. You must save me from madness." p.22

To the effect that he might go "mad" further shows the danger inherent in bottled emotion which is usually at the root of fractured masculinity always waiting to explode. Beating Amope to Chume promises freedom and restoration of lost masculinity and its attendant privileges. Despite Jero's caution and name-calling – apostate, Lucifer - he continues to mount pressure that he may be allowed to beat his wife. He says "I no go beat 'am too hard. Just once, small small p. 23. Just one time. I no go ask again. Just do me this one favour, make a beat 'am today" p.23. Assaulting his wife, is Chume's own defence mechanism not only to protect his gender-role identity but to "help him with his feelings of loss, vulnerability, shame, anger and/or inadequacy as a man." p.103 Chume's subordinating condition is unpleasant and agonizing such that when Jero will not grant his permission, he resigns to fate in emotion-laden voice characteristics of an effeminate fellow "My life is hell" p.23

Of course, life will have the similitude of hell when rehearsal is quite different from performance. This is the point of conflict in the psychological frame of mind of the man socially and economically rendered enervated by the contradictions between his social construct as a man and the actual performance of his masculine gender role. This gender-role conflict drives a man to a psychological state in which the gender-role that he is socialized begins to have negative consequences not only on him but on others. This usually occurs when "rigid, sexist or restricted gender-role" causes devaluation or self-violation or the violation of others (O'Neil and Nadeau 1999: 99.)



One of the consequences of gender-role conflict is heterosexual antagonism which results from “crude and critical comments from the (females) girls about one’s “masculine physique, intelligence or personality” p. 99. Women who critically comment on a man’s lack of strength, sexual potency or skill can threaten a man’s gender-role identity and stimulate gender-role conflict. A man’s personal experience with gender-role conflict can also be psychologically painful. p. 99

Amope’s use of words is deliberately targeted at Chume’s soul and usually a sad reminder of his social and economic disabilities. She knows how to make those words painful by comparing Chume as a failure to a known successful man like the minister or the sanitary inspector. Most times, the psychological pain resulting from uncomplimentary, crude and critical comment by one’s wife or any woman for that matter has debilitating effect on the man’s psyche. It usually stimulates low self-esteem, depression; unassertiveness and psychological castration that make a man feel empty and worthless. This is a fracturing that predisposes men to violence against women or self-violation such as abuse of drug or suicide.

Fracturing of male masculinity suggests social impotence, castration, lack of virility and socio-economic vitality comparable to a medical condition called erectile dysfunction. Castration by its very nature is the removal of the testicles medically while enervation is the result of castration, a psychological deprivation, lack of virility and self-worth. A socially and psychologically castrated man sees himself as a failure and may activate strong, negative emotions such as fear, guilt, anger, shame, loss, self-protective defences against women or other men.

Amope has made unpleasant comments about Chume in the past, especially about his forgetfulness and the fact that she is performing the breadwinner role but the most demeaning are those directed at his person, poor lifestyle and low occupational prestige. She says:

You’ve forgotten the mat. I know it’s not much, but I would like something to sleep on. There are women who sleep in beds of course, but I’m not complaining.... They are just lucky with their husband, and we can’t all be lucky I suppose. p.14

Chume replies: “You’ve got a bed at home” to which Amope thundered “And so I’m to leave my work undone. My trade is to suffer because I have a bed at home? Thank God I am not the kind of women who....” p.14

Amope seizes every opportunity to demean Chume with her words that not only put him down but humiliate him. The mat is just another opportunity to remind him that he is poor and unlucky. She uses the bed in this circumstance as a signifier of affluence while the mat symbolizes poverty. This is heterosexual antagonism that makes a man feel empty and inadequate. She is about reminding him again, that she does not complain like other women, of course, that she is the bread winner.

Chume’s low occupational prestige as a chief messenger in the local government receives his wife’s comment at the slight mention of “my office” or “I am going to my office”. She devalues him and his work in a way that inflicts in him psychological injury that makes him feel ashamed of his low occupational prestige. After settling her down in front of her debtor’s house, Chume says he will be late for work and Amope says:

I know you can’t wait to get away. You only use your work as an excuse. A Chief Messenger in the local government office – do you call that work? Your old school friends are now ministers, riding in long cars p.14.

Heterosexual antagonism can be traumatizing for a man, especially when he does not have the capacity to change the situation. She says his position as a chief messenger is no work, makes him psychologically impotent, as much as being reminded that his school mates are riding in long cars. This assault on his manhood leaves Chume with no option than to *get on his bike and flee* p.14. As he flees from her, she hollers, like a man will call after a messenger; “Don’t forget to bring some more water when you are returning from work.” pp.14-15. Talking to herself while he has gone,



Amope reveals her resentment for his job as the Chief Messenger. This she blames on Chume's complacency:

...(she relapses and sighs heavily) He doesn't realize it is for his own good. He's no worse than other men but he won't make the effort to become something in life. A Chief Messenger. Am I to go to my grave as the wife of a Chief Messenger? p.15

The demeaning of a man's self-worth, especially the one that cherishes his gender-role identity is a fall out of a masculinity that has been fractured in a social milieu. Her uncomplimentary comments set Chume on edge that he seeks Prophet Jero's permission to beat her. So when Jero says he may not beat her, ostensibly for selfish reason, he becomes more frustrated with such emotional outbursts as *My life is a hell* p.23 and *This woman will kill me* p. 24. Emotional trauma such as this predisposes a man to violence and dysfunctional behaviours which are direct results of fractured masculinity. Chume carries the stigma of devaluation about even to the church when the responsibility of continuing the prayer abandoned midstream by Jero falls on him:

Yes Father, make you forgive us all. Make you save us from palaver. Save us from trouble at home. Tell our wives not to give us trouble Tell our wives not to give us trouble. And give us money to have a happy home. Give us money to satisfy our daily necessities. Make you no forget those of us who de struggle daily. Those who be Clerk today, make them Chief clerk tomorrow. Those who are messengers today, make them Senior service tomorrow. Those who have bicycles today, they will ride their own car tomorrow. I say those who de push bicycle, give them big car tomorrow. p.24

Chume and Fractured Gender-Role Schemas in *The Trial of Brother Jero*

When gender-role is fractured it is said to be distorted. So, one of the distorted gender-role schemas, according to Pleck (1995) is that "a man is superior to a woman, so a man's self-esteem is debased when his manhood is invalidated." Chume reminds Amope "you are talking to a man", after he has been granted permission to beat his wife. Amope makes a huge joke of his manliness when she says "A fine man you are, when you can't remember, a simple thing like a bottle of clean water" p.33. She is surprised at Chume's authoritative, liberated and assertive personality believing that only alcohol could have caused his de-emasculated status. He says "Pack up your things; you heard what I said" p.33. Her attempt to re-invent the psychological tools of debasing comments and verbal abuse to put him down as usual fails: "You may say what suits you. You know. I never touch any liquor." Amope taunts him the more "You needn't say it as if it was a virtue. You don't drink only because you cannot afford to. That is all the reason there is." p.33

She reminds him about his wretchedness to further destroy what is left of his manhood reminding him spitefully once again that his poverty is as a result of his low occupational prestige. "A messenger's pay isn't that much, you know – just in case you have forgotten, you're not drawing a minister's pay." p.33. One of the sex roles that differentiate men from women is being a provider. The provider role defines a man's masculinity in many African socio-cultural settings. Anyone who is unable to meet this specification is not only seen as unmanly but irresponsible. Amope queries why a responsible man will allow his wife stay out in the open:

Just think, only this morning while I sat here, a Sanitary Inspector came along. He looked me all over and he made some notes in his book. Then he said, I suppose, women, you realize that this place is



marked down for slum clearance. This to me, as if I live here. But you sit down and let your wife be exposed to such insults. And the sanitary inspector had a motor-cycle too, which is one better than a bicycle. p.34

She continues:

A Sanitary Inspector is a better job anyway. You can make something of yourself one way or another. They all do. A little here, and a little there, call it bribery if you like, but see where you've got even though you don't drink or smoke or take bribes. He's got a motor-bike ... anyway, who would want to offer kola to a Chief Messenger? p.34

Her humiliating words compare strongly with the surgeon's surgical blade with which the castration of the man is painfully done, leaving in its wake, erectile dysfunction, impotence, shame, low self-esteem, unassertiveness, and a possible activation of violence as psychotherapy. "Shut up your big mouth!" Chume barks at Amope with a determination to reassert his masculinity and to the consternation of Amope who asks "To me"? Although Chume may be criticized for insufficient problem-solving skill, in this circumstance what comes handy is battering, more so that Jero has sanctioned it. He says:

Shut your big mouth before I shut it for you
(*ties the mat round the cross bar*) And you'd better start to watch your step from now on. My period of abstinence is over. My cross has been lifted off my shoulders by the prophet. p.35

Genuinely distressed, Amope concludes that he is mad while Chume (*viciously tying up the mat*) replies "My period of trial is over (*practically strangling the mat*) If you so much as open your mouth now...(*gives a further twist to the string*). Chume would have dealt Amope a deadly blow but that he has been instructed by Jero to do that in his own house. He demonstrates what awaits her at home when he warns "(*setting her down*) if you shout just once more, I'll (*He raises a huge fist*)." p.35. All these are efforts to reclaim lost self-worth and diminished self-esteem as direct effects of fractured masculinity.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

Findings confirm that when a man is rendered socially impotent his manhood is redefined and social construction fractured. Like Chume, he feels devalued by the lack of those things that categories him as a real man therefore becoming vulnerable in the social setting he has been constructed to be strong, macho and independent. It was also discovered that his dilemma is taken for granted because everyone believes that as a man, he must be a bread winner, emotionless and a responsible husband as well as a caring father. The same society that constructs him also gives the impression that all men operate on this same masculinity hierarchy forgetting that this construction can be fractured by constant shift in masculinity values. His case is further complicated by the presence of men who operate at the peak of the masculinity hierarchy called hegemonic. These men are super rich. If not super rich, they are normative, socially and emotionally stable with capacity to overcome social, economic and psychological challenges thrown at them in the process of enacting their masculinity. These are the character portraits of men Amope compares Chume with that activates aggression in him to salvage his self image.

In conclusion, the study focuses so much on social and psychological dynamics of the identified characters, especially Chume, Amope and Jero for the portrayal of diminishing self-esteem and loss of social virility. Many tools are employed by the characters concerned to demean Chume in the play. These tools include manipulation in its different dimensions, poverty, gullibility, insatiable



want and religious indoctrination, among others. Contrary to the masculine social construction of the male character, his masculinity can be fractured as represented in Chume's trauma when he breaks down emotionally, socially crippled and therefore becomes predisposed to violence. The public opprobrium arising from exceedingly shameful treatment he gets in front of Jero's house, drives him to the extreme. His masculinity defence mechanism breaks down when he resorts to violence and this is in perfect agreement with O' Neil and Nadeau who believe that in human psychology, the man who is a victim of fractured masculinity feels powerless and becomes desperate to regain his power and masculine self-image. It is, therefore a test of psychological stamina when the man's self-image is demeaned as a result of incapacitation in the demand by social construction on him to meet up with what makes him a real man.

The study establishes that men, as represented by Chume can be hurt, feel insecure, emotional and vulnerable when faced with the realities of life. Fractured masculinity also points to an indisputable fact that sexuality is no more understood through the prism of biology or sex orientation alone but a corollary of socio-cultural construction that constantly changes in relation to change in economic and social contexts. It was suggested that since changes and shifts in societal values that define masculinity are inevitable, there should be social advocacy both in schools, religious centers and National television for the erasure of toxic and traditional masculinity orientation. Social realities, change in global economic opportunities and value orientation are suggestions to the possibility of a constant fracturing of masculinities.

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