

IBADAN :
JOURNAL
OF
ENGLISH
STUDIES

Vol. 11, 2015

A publication of the Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

© Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written consent of the copyright owner.

ISSN: 0189-6253

IBADAN Journal of English Studies, Vol. 11, 2015.

IBADAN Journal of English Studies (IBJES) provides a forum for interdisciplinary approaches to theoretical issues and practices in culture, language, literature, and performance studies.

Editor-in-chief: Emmanuel Babatunde Omobowale

Editors: Remy Oriaku
Akin Odebummi

Associate Editors: Adesina Sunday
Ayo Osisanwo
Kazcem Adebisi

Consulting Editors: Ayo Banjo, *University of Ibadan, Nigeria*
Peter Auer, *University of Freiburg, Germany*
Dan Izevbaye, *Bowen University Iwo, Nigeria*
Abiola Irele, *Kwara State University, Nigeria*
Isidore Okpewho, *SUNY, USA*
Kwesi Yankah, *University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana*
Helga Kothhoff, *University of Freiburg, Germany*
Nicholas Akwanya, *University of Nigeria*
Harry Garuba, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*
Dele Layiwola, *University of Ibadan, Nigeria*
Carolyn Cooper, *University of the West Indies*
Tejumola Olaniyan, *University of Wisconsin, USA*
Pius Adesanmi, *Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada*

For Contributors

IBJES is published once a year. Submissions should comply with the MLA Reference Style (for literature) and APA Reference Style (for language-oriented works). Our review process is anonymous. Contributors are therefore advised to avoid self-referencing and disclosures of their identities in the papers. The use of first person pronouns and sexist/racist expressions are not welcome. Names, designations and contact addresses of contributors are to be indicated on a detachable cover page with the title of the paper reflected on the first page of the paper. Two hard copies of manuscripts for submission and a disk copy (MS Word) should be sent to: The Editor, *IBADAN Journal of English Studies (IBJES)*, Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

E-mail: english@mail.ui.edu.ng, copy <ibjes.editor@gmail.com>

- Halliday, M.A.K. and Hasan, R. (1985/9). *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social Semiotic Perspective*, Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Hornby, A.S. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ladapo, F.O. (2007). "The Language and Style of Grassroots Administration in Selected Local Governments of Osun State". Ph.D Thesis, the Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Longe, V.U. (1995). *Studies in the Varieties of Language*. Benin City: Headmark.
- Ogunsiji, Ayo (1999) "Aspects of the Lexical Designs of the Language of the Nigeria Police". *Context: Journal of Social and Cultural Studies*. 3 (2) Pp.34 – 46.
- Osisanwo, W. (2005). *Introduction to Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics*. Lagos: Femolus – Fetop Publishers.
- Oyeleye, A.L. (2005) "The New Linguistic Order: A Critical Examination of the Impact of Globalisation on the English Language in Nigeria". In Olateju, M.A and Oyeleye L. (eds). *Perspectives on Language and Literature*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited. Pp. 3 – 14.

Dance of Attrition and Resistance: Semiotics of Gender Stratification in *Three Suitors, One Husband, and Untill Further Notice*

Edith Abisola AWOGU-MADUAGWU, Tuesday S. OWOEYE & Eugenia ABIODUN-ENIAYEKAN
Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

Abstract

This study is an assessment of African social structures through the lens of structuralist ideology by examining the opposing binaries of gender conflict which are evident in the literature of colonised societies because the intersection of gender and power structure in societies is often reflected in fictional literature of the region. The mythic establishment of patriarchal systems dominated the writings that predated the evolution of feminism and portrayed female subjugation as the status quo; a position which in retrospect reveals the rift underlying the controversy of gender relations in contemporary African societies; especially in trado-western marriage systems. This article draws attention to the initializing symbols of dominance which are celebrated during marriage ceremonies and how these act as endorsement for the gender subjugation of the woman within the marriage itself. The tripartite semiotic system of the sign; the index; and the symbol of Peircian philosophy are employed for the purpose of analysis in this regard. The work focuses on the importance of gestural signifiers of inequality and reveals the potential danger of female attrition that lies in downplaying the unspoken and intrinsic power which subjugation practices in marriage ceremonies symbolize. The choice of the play is informed by the playwright's unique fusion of satiric irony and gestural dynamics to portray gender stratification

The work should bridge the gap in the dearth of literature that aims to deconstruct gender characterization in African dramaturgy.

Key words: structuralism, semiotics, patriarchal structures, dance, attrition, resistance

1. Introduction

This paper interrogates the interactive gender dynamics of the play *Three Suitors, One husband* by examining the author's use of gesture to project the themes of the play. The analysis employs the semiotic, an offshoot of Structuralism which gives equal recognition to the various sign systems that govern the socialized meanings of all cultures as language systems. Language being the fundamental sign system for human beings, non-verbal signs in drama/theatre such as dress codes, movement/gesture, speech and in fact, all conventions of human activities can be considered to be forms of language in that they are made up of signs which take on meaning and communicate by virtue of the relations between signs. Semiotic analysis enables the reader of drama/theatre translator not only to identify the signs and situate them within the sign systems of the play but also to explain the interdependence of sub-systems and their role in drama/theatre communication. According to Culler (1982), ideally, conventional literary appreciation demands that

the critic and the reader of literature treat as signs what the writer is creating as a concept. Reading literature as signs is reading it as a cultural production constructed according to various preconceptions, routines, and traditions of that culture and treats them as mediated by signs which are not directly encountered in a text. This means questioning and interpreting the contradictions inherent in gender relations. (pg 64)

Thus textual interpretation should reveal the conventions that govern the narrative, and this can only be achieved through the familiarity and understanding of the interconnections between the plot, the discourse and thematic structure. The critic and the reader of literature treat as signs what the writer is creating as a concept. Reading literature as signs is reading it as a cultural production constructed according to various preconceptions, routines, and traditions of that culture and approaches them through the cultural routes which are not directly encountered in the text.

2. Gender Attrition, Resistance and Alternative Realities

The cultural philosophy of patriarchal societies and the gender ideology which favoured the male sex established an 'approved' custom of female subjugation and led to the reactionary fervencies which subsequently birthed the movement of Feminism as an ideology that sought to correct this imbalance through the rewriting of the woman's history. Gender is socially constructed; not natural and thus attributing the cause of the disadvantaged position of the woman in society to the male centered laws of society (2008). Patriarchy is an ideology of established, endorsed authority and control by men over women for centuries and remained unquestioned until the late 20th century. According to Awe (1977) the pre-colonial social construction of gender roles and relations in many African societies was based on the philosophy of complementary role play, (as among the Yoruba people) and gender rules of subordination did not apply, as age was a basis for authority rather than gender, especially among the Yoruba where equal importance was adduced to the duties of both gender in a marital relationship (Awe, 1992). The same obtained in Igbo culture where women could marry fellow women as wives (for economic enterprise not sexual relations), since gender roles were interchangeable and factors such as wealth and age largely determined social status, rather than gender (Amadiume 1985; Achebe, 2005; Maduagwu, 2012). With the coming of colonialism, however, the existing order was redesigned to fit the European model of gender construction, which featured extreme stratification of women. Consequently,

following independence, the portrayal of women in the fictional works of early post-colonial fiction by male African authors portrayed gender discrimination against the female as a norm, rather than as an aberration, reflecting the inherited colonial pattern. Notably, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) features two instances where Okonkwo beats his second wife for cooking his lunch late and for teasing him about a 'gun that never shoots' This work portrays gender discrimination more as a standard rather than an ill, a view which the author corrects in his later work, *Anthills of the Savannah* (1988), which portrays the protagonist as an emancipated female. Following the birth of Feminism in the West, African writers and theorists adopted sub categories of feminist sub categories that reflected their social realities. Some of these sub-categories of gender concepts are Ogunyemi's *Womanism* and Ogundipe-Leslie's *Stiwanism*, which she describes as "humanistic feminism" (1994). Some new grafts of feminism continues to emerge, reflecting the robust interest in this area of ideology but the general consensus is that marginalization exists in society against women.

The attrition of women in patriarchies involves the control and dehumanization of their sex, implicit in established normative profiles of the cultures. Hence, the young female is prospectively expectant of 'abuse' in the hands of men, lined up for her in each life cycle as father, brother, husband and sometimes, boss; all to sustain the program of mental and physical submission to the cultural values. Therefore, while it may be perceived that women partake in the process of inflicting pain on members of their own gender, it is invariably the need to gain social approval of what is after all, the norm. What has been ignored until recent investigation into gender relations is that the so called cultural norm of intra female abuse is man-made - literarily, and in favour of the makers. For instance, commenting on gender violence in Henry Kuret's *Blossoms of the Savannah* (2008), Muriungi and Muriiki (2013) deplore the fact that the practice of female circumcision originated from the Maasai women in the novel. Conversely, they state that '*Patriarchy is a system in which the male acts as the leading authority figure in a*

social organization' which implies the authors' awareness that the Maasai women's actions are governed by the social expectations of their men; in this case, the preference of men of the culture of the docile, sexually unresponsive woman as an ideal. Schipper (1987) posits that in all cultural contexts, gender behavioral argues that in any given cultural context, behavior patterns are determined by cultural norms with sanctions in place for offenders and the rulers are invariably the men.

African literature in addressing these inequalities has been enriched by not only the voices of women but also of men within patriarchies to express women's concern about their plight in society. From 1966 to the present, women's quest and plea have found expression in fictions of feministic sympathy, carving the experience of women and their reaction to the subsuming life they lead as a step towards the creation of alternative realities in gender relations.

3. Plot Analyses of *Three Suitors, One Husband*

Three Suitors One Husband and Until Further Notice is a social satiric comedy set in the French colonized town of Bulu in West Africa. Oyono Mbia's immediate target audience is Cameroonian culture and people and his strategic style has been dictated in ways that would enable the effective transmission of his messages.

The play opens in front of the house of Juliette's parents in the village. As the stage direction states, it is a quiet afternoon in Mvoutessi, the Bulu village setting. Atangana, the heroine's father is busy weaving a basket as he awaits his wife's return from the farm with growing annoyance. His father, Abessolo, is busy sculpting an ebony figurine while Atangana's brother Ondua is playing a game with his son Oyono. There is a calabash of palm wine to which all male characters are helping themselves at intervals, but the women who are forbidden to drink are shelling peanuts. This stage direction is the first indicator of gender inequality in the play. In addition to the exemption of the females from the merriment, Atangana opens the discussion with a lament about his wife's lateness from the farm and this sets the theme of

discussion. Mbia draws our attention to the topic of discussion which "is the pollution of traditional values and, in particular, the excessive liberties granted to women of the modern times". Through these comments, the practice of female subjugation within the culture is brought to the fore and the dance entertainment is a vehicle that conveys the more serious issues. Gestural symbolism utilizing dance sequences are employed as theme markers to project the different levels of dramatic denouement of the plot. The dance scenes in the play may be categorized under three distinct forms. The first of these is characterized by an unequal gender balance in the participation of the dance; the second is characterized by an air of dramatic intrigue and suspense, while the third dance kinesics reveals the balance in communal participation and thematic resolution. In the first dance, staged during the visit of the civil-servant suitor, Mbia, we have what may be tagged the 'dance of conflict'. As a thematic projector of events, (at least within the first two acts of the play) this dance reflects the ongoing conflict at the different levels of interaction in the plot; for instance, at the family level, there is conflict of interest resulting from Juliette's objection to her parents' choice of a suitor. The conflict is later extended to the communal levels as Atangana and Oko, Juliette's first and second suitors respectively, become involved in a confrontation as a result of the lost bride price. Eventually, the conflict degenerates into an inter-communal feud as the outraged Mbia also demands a return of his bride price. All these levels of conflict are signified in the first dance via a combination of codes which are collectively delivered in dance kinesics. As a reinforcement of the theme of conflict, the dance displays specific highlighting elements and the first element is to be found in the one-sided participation of the dance. No member of the female sex is present at this dance act, not even Juliette the heroine. Rather, the scene is solely dominated by the menfolk who conduct the bargain for the bride price with Mbia, much in the manner of a negotiation for an inanimate object.

This imbalance is conveyed in both musical and kinesic codes. In the first instance, the dance opens in the middle of an

argument as to whether Juliette should marry Mbia (to whom she is related) or not. Then again, the dances display drunken gestures which reflect mild temperamental imbalance. Significantly, it is Ondua, the drunk who re-initiates the turn of events in favour of Mbia. His drunken state is a symbolic indication that his opinion cannot be mentally sound. Furthermore, their rendition of the songs is amateurish and uncoordinated (according to the stage direction). As a musical code, this further emphasises the disharmony which is evident in the dramatic action at this stage. As a projector of other sub codes, this dance provides a background for the dispute over Juliette's relationship to Mbia, and provides a forum for the articulation of the conflict suggested in verbal, musical and gestural codes. This sums up the function of this particular dance.

Next in line is the second dance symbolising intrigue. This is represented in the act of Sangatiti the magician and his men in Act Four. To enhance the air of intrigue, various codes are once more brought together as they all contribute to this content of the dance. The setting, for instance, is night and this heightens the element of dramatic mystery and intrigue which Sangatiti conveys as the atmosphere is decidedly charged with suspense. In consonance with the suspended mood of expectation, the dance of the magician's apprentices complements that of the by audience which grows progressively frenzied and this conveys the air of expectation already infused by the night setting. As a symbolic index, the dance of this act affects the audience as strongly as if it were a verbalisation of the spiritual presence in the setting. Atangana and his family members are confused and their confusion envelopes the rest of villagers. In the end, nothing is gained from the consultation with the magician. Rather, Atangana and his kinsmen, in addition to the lost money, also lose their domestic livestock to the magician's criminal wiles.

This brings us to the third dance form. In this last dance act, we have a unification of the other levels of dance kinesics. As a symbolic dance of thematic resolution this highlights the general air of relative peace and happiness which marks the end of the p'

discussion. Mbia draws our attention to the topic of discussion which "is the pollution of traditional values and, in particular, the excessive liberties granted to women of the modern times". Through these comments, the practice of female subjugation within the culture is brought to the fore and the dance entertainment is a vehicle that conveys the more serious issues. Gestural symbolism utilizing dance sequences are employed as theme markers to project the different levels of dramatic denouement of the plot. The dance scenes in the play may be categorized under three distinct forms. The first of these is characterized by an unequal gender balance in the participation of the dance; the second is characterized by an air of dramatic intrigue and suspense, while the third dance kinesics reveals the balance in communal participation and thematic resolution. In the first dance, staged during the visit of the civil-servant suitor, Mbia, we have what may be tagged the 'dance of conflict'. As a thematic projector of events, (at least within the first two acts of the play) this dance reflects the ongoing conflict at the different levels of interaction in the plot; for instance, at the family level, there is conflict of interest resulting from Juliette's objection to her parents' choice of a suitor. The conflict is later extended to the communal levels as Atangana and Oko, Juliette's first and second suitors respectively, become involved in a confrontation as a result of the lost bride price. Eventually, the conflict degenerates into an inter-communal feud as the outraged Mbia also demands a return of his bride price. All these levels of conflict are signified in the first dance via a combination of codes which are collectively delivered in dance kinesics. As a reinforcement of the theme of conflict, the dance displays specific highlighting elements and the first element is to be found in the one-sided participation of the dance. No member of the female sex is present at this dance act, not even Juliette the heroine. Rather, the scene is solely dominated by the menfolk who conduct the bargain for the bride price with Mbia, much in the manner of a negotiation for an inanimate object.

This imbalance is conveyed in both musical and kinesic codes. In the first instance, the dance opens in the middle of an

argument as to whether Juliette should marry Mbia (to whom she is related) or not. Then again, the dances display drunken gestures which reflect mild temperamental imbalance. Significantly, it is Ondua, the drunk who re-initiates the turn of events in favour of Mbia. His drunken state is a symbolic indication that his opinion cannot be mentally sound. Furthermore, their rendition of the songs is amateurish and uncoordinated (according to the stage direction). As a musical code, this further emphasises the disharmony which is evident in the dramatic action at this stage. As a projector of other sub-codes, this dance provides a background for the dispute over Juliette's relationship to Mbia, and provides a forum for the articulation of the conflict suggested in verbal, musical and gestural codes. This sums up the function of this particular dance.

Next in line is the second dance symbolising intrigue. This is represented in the act of Sangatiti the magician and his men in Act Four. To enhance the air of intrigue, various codes are once more brought together as they all contribute to this content of the dance. The setting, for instance, is night and this heightens the element of dramatic mystery and intrigue which Sangatiti conveys as the atmosphere is decidedly charged with suspense. In consonance with the suspended mood of expectation, the dance of the magician's apprentices complements that of the by audience which grows progressively frenzied and this conveys the air of expectation 'already infused by the night setting. As a symbolic index, the dance of this act affects the audience as strongly as if it were a verbalisation of the spiritual presence in the setting. Atangana and his family members are confused and their confusion envelopes the rest of villagers. In the end, nothing is gained from the consultation with the magician. Rather, Atangana and his kinsmen, in addition to the lost money, also lose their domestic livestock to the magician's criminal wiles.

This brings us to the third dance form. In this last dance act, we have a unification of the other levels of dance kinesics. As a symbolic dance of thematic resolution this highlights the general air of relative peace and happiness which marks the end of the play

in contrast to the conflict and anxiety which mark the first dance. Whereas in first dance, Juliette as the prospective bride is not included in the celebration dance, in third dance, she occupies a major position as she sits beside her husband in center-stage.

Again in comparison to the dance of the fourth act, that is, the dance of intrigue, characterised by anxiety and suspense, this last dance is free of intrigue. Unlike the dance of intrigue which is set in the night, this last is set in the daytime. Again, while Sanga-titi's dance which for all its display of virtuosity turns out to be a ruse for his tricks, the dance here symbolises genuine joy and reflects a true spirit of celebration. The musicians are professionals as their rendition prove. It is a complete contrast to the drunken delivery by Ondua and Mezoe in the second act.

4. Dance as Theatrical Device

An important area which features the utilisation of dance kinesics is that of background action for absurd dialogue and dramatic interludes or punctuation. Both functions of dance are randomly distributed in the play. Specifically, the dance in the fourth act, featuring the consultation with Sanga-titi, the witch-doctor, functions in the capacity of an interlude which enliven the dull moments of dramatic dialogue. However, our first example of this use of dance is located in the second act during the celebration of Mbia's visit to Atangana's house.

The setting at this ceremony does not show any indication of the scene of a marriage celebration until the dance sequence introduced by Mezoe and Ondua. The atmosphere is devoid of the characteristic merriment of marriage celebration until the dance is introduced. As Mezoe questions:

Are we going to drink like dumb people? (pg. 23)

His question indicates that a celebration without dance is indeed devoid of any meaning. His question highlights the importance of dance as the spirit of any celebration in traditional society. It is in fact popular to represent the scene of a celebration in traditional drama, with just dance displays as an index of a celebration. Dance

kinesics therefore infuses the setting with electrifying effects where other codes in combination may not be as effective. The celebration in the second act is thus invigorated by the introduction of the dance sequence and it immediately suggests the scene of a celebration, despite the second rate musical rendition and drunken dance steps of Ondua.

This role of dance for the purpose of scenic foregrounding is also used in the fourth act of *Three Suitors One Husband*. When Sanga-titi had indicated his desire to save the people of Bulu from the scourge of death, he follows his action with his usual method of extortion. (He sits down)

*You show me whether you're
really anxious to save your own
village*

This request is immediately followed by a frantic rush to obtain gifts, mostly livestock to humour *Sanga-titi*. This scene is best represented through action rather than dialogue because the dancing interlude helps to fill in the silent moments in the Act. As the stage direction states:

*(Sanga-titi begins playing a theme on
his Mvet. Singing and dancing begin
as indicated at the beginning of the act.
Those villagers who are not dancing or singing
gather round MBARGA for a consultation.
Mezoe comes back with the cockerel
MBARGA takes it, speaks softly to Mezoe
who hurries out again. The WITCH-DOCTOR
signals to the musicians to stop. He
sits down and MBARGA takes the cockerel to him)*

This stage direction aptly highlights the role of dance as a background especially for dull dramatic moments. As a further complement, the involvement of both audience cast in the dance

increases audience enjoyment. The auditorium is thus enclosed in an atmosphere of choric involvement.

We must emphasize, however, that the role of dance as interludes and/or as a punctuation (theatrical) device especially relieves dull moments within the action. In addition, dance also functions as a punctuation which separates semantic units. In a play like the one under discussion where all the action takes place in a single setting, it becomes difficult to indicate the beginning and the end of scenic units. *Three Suitors One Husband* features the use of dance as interludes in a manner which fits into the fabric of the play. As a punctuation code, dance functions in two major ways. These are as a punctuation device between units of discussion within the same act and secondly as a punctuation between acts.

Once more, our example of the interactive function, we must add, is taken from Act Two which represents the first dance scene and which we consider relevant here. For example, during the celebration of Mbia's visit, the activities and discussions present a picture of two distinct talk sessions. The first part of the discussions begins from the introduction of Mbia to his prospective family-in-law led by Atangana, his prospective bride's father. From this point on to the discovery of blood ties between the two families, Atangana dominates the procedure. However, as soon as conflict is introduced into the proceedings, Mbarga, the village headman dominates the discussions. The uncomfortable atmosphere created during the ensuing confusion caused by Abessolo's stance is filled with dancing activities.

While Atangana and Abessolo are busy ruminating over the issues at hand, Ondua and Mezoe take to the dance floor and entertain the audience while the villagers, aided by Juliette's relatives, are busy trying to influence Abessolo's decision in the suitor's favour.

Having produced two dance sequences, the antagonised parties are considerably placated into a more receptive frame of mind. The role of dance in this scene is that it simultaneously provides entertainment on the one hand and also serves as a

punctuation separating the Atangana dominated discussion from the Mbarga dominated one on the other hand. While the first part of the discussion symbolises the dismissal of Mbia as prospective suitor, the second half represents his reinstatement through the intervention of the village headman Mbarga. Again in Act Four dance acts as interludes between the different 'revelations' of Sanga-titi. Each pause is punctuated by dance as Sanga-titi arbitrarily changes the direction of his visions and succeeds only on confusing the villagers still further. By introducing dancing interludes between each pause, audience boredom is eased as alternative entertainment is provided in the interim.

The other area in which dance finds relevance is on a more coordinated level as punctuation between acts. At this level, the gaps are expanded to embrace a whole act. As the stage direction states at the opening of Act four, 'the whole act is primarily meant to be a dancing interlude. (pg. 51). This use of dance as an interlude on the scale of an entire act is a clever improvisation.

5. Findings and conclusion

Three suitors, One Husband ostensibly projects the story of suitors seeking the hand of a young girl in marriage but sends the more important message of the absence of the bride from a greater part of the proceedings and especially her yawning silence in the absence of an opinion on the issue of choice in the matter of her own marriage. The fact that she married the man of her choice does not translate into freedom or equality in the marriage, but rather that she has made her own choice of an alternative master to whom she would be subordinate. This draws our attention to the general tendency in society to ignore the initializing symbols of female attrition such as the change of name; the practice, for instance of the bride kneeling before the groom during marriage ceremonies all of which symbolize the expected subjugation of the woman within the marriage. These symbolic acts give 'culturally legal' authority to the man over the

woman and naturally set the tone for the master-slave dynamics which define the marital association.

Juliette, the bride has her way in the end in what may be termed a resistance against the choice of her parents, has only chosen a more 'desirable' master. Resistance against female attrition in the marriage relationship should therefore be defined by the symbolic gestures of the ceremony as these leave an indelible impression on the audience of the expected role play.

From the surface, the plot explores the theme of cultural conflict, but the play's deeper significance lies in the portrayal of gender subjugation of women in this culture, an issue which continues to find relevance in present day post-colonial society. Though the cultural tensions have somewhat lessened and traditional lifestyles have merged with the European and evolved into cosmopolitan entities, successfully merging the old and the new; the new battlefield seems to have been drawn between the universal world of women and the men as the latter struggles for emancipation from the shackles of rules engendered by Patriarchies.

Symbols and their meaning determine social interaction and the self is a fundamental phenomenon which translates into symbolic interactionism. Hence, the self is expressed as a symbol of cultural construct. The human attribute of self-reflection the basis for the craving of acceptance of other humans.

When a woman actively accepts her socially constructed roles, it is on the assumption that the man would do the same. Where this is not the case, the logical behavior of exiting from the relationship is considered deviant, while little or no attention is given to the offending partner. Today, a perceive incongruity between an imposed role and valued self-conception may distance a woman from a socially constructed role arising from financial gender empowerment, a subject which has dominated inequalities in contemporary literature.

References

- Achebe, C. 1988 *Anthills of the Savannah*, London: Heinemann.
- Achebe, N. 2005 *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern*
- Achebe, C. 1958 *Things Fall Apart*, London: Heinemann.
- Awe, B. 1992 "Development, women and History in Nigeria, *Unpublished paper* presented at the 37th Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria
- Kammanpoal, B. (2013) A "Critical Review of African Social Constructs as Seen Through the Paradigmatic Lens of Literary Structuralism" *Research Scholar Vol*" (1) Issue (iv)
- Kolawole, M. E. 1997 *Womanism and African Consciousness*, New Jersey: Africa World Press Inc
- Kulet, H. O. (2008). *Blossoms of the Savannah* Nairobi: Longhorn.
- Literature and the Politics of Gender*, London: Routledge,
- Oyono-Mbia, Guillaume, O. 1968 *Three Suitors: One Husband / Until further notice*. Methuen, London,
- Maduagwu, E.A. (2012) Umuada and the Phenomenon of Dual Identity in Igboland *Afrev Laligens* Vol.1 (3), 133-154
- Mosadomi, T. "Marriage, Women and Tradition in Guillaume Oyômô Mbia's *Three Suitors*:"
- Ogundipe-Leslie, M. (1994), "Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformation" *West Africa Review*: 2, 1 A
- Schipper, M. (1987) *Mother Africa on a Pedestal: The Male Heritage in African Literature and*
- Suh, J.C. 2005 *Study of Translation Strategies of Oyono Mbia's plays*; Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of South Africa