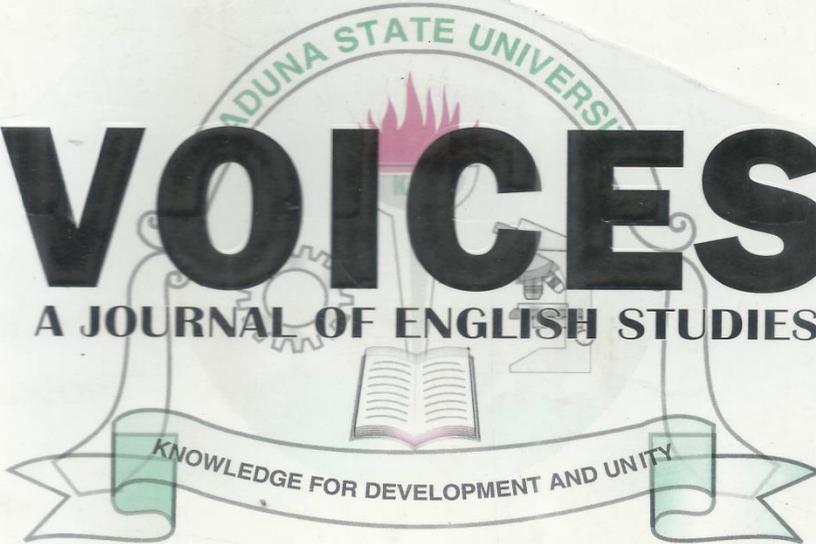


KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY

# VOICES

A JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & DRAMA  
KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY, KADUNA, NIGERIA



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# **WOMEN AND THE PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURE: THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE CASE OF VIOLENCE**

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## **Abstract:**

This paper examines the controversies of femininity and masculinity. It obviously takes the side of situating gender reality and rationality within patriarchal structure and argues that its misinterpretation starting from origin of creation has culminated into building up a distinctive dichotomy between males and females. As a fair way out, the paper balances the schools of thoughts, despite its resonating string attached to women. These strings are visible in the cases of key informants presented for the study which conclude that the deployment of a methodological approach like Theatre for Development (TfD) could well be a strong ground upon which voices can jointly explored, advocated, negotiated and engendered the intervention needed for the (re)humanisation of the “other”.

## **Introduction**

Violence as a concept in gender discourse has always taken the side of “woman-as-victim” and “man-as-problem” and the complex experience of the marginal man (Chant 2000; Cornwall and White 2000; Cornwall 1997, 2011). It has always spoken about the dehumanisation of women despite the recent expression of the complexities of male experience. Many scholars at international, national and local fora have grappled with the problems of violence, outlining issues and elements of its causes, space and resolve. In locating spaces where violence against women has operated, Nawal El- Sadaawi (1980) in her famous work on women in the Arab world writes extensively on the area of religion and violence against women. The thrust is rooted in mishandled religious placement of women in the Holy books which arrogates superiority to men despite women’s seeming intelligence, and men’s weakness in reasoning. Maria Mies expounds a perspective of women issues in her article “Colonization and Housewifization” an explication of division of labor and sexual division of labor (Ana Isla 2001:92).

Taking a critical look at her work, Mies brings to a very close affinity the embodied oppression of the weaker economies under European capitalism as



the same time trying to create new, positive models.” Yet such concerns are yet to translate into a considerable action for women liberation especially at local sphere. It sometimes ends up as academic debate. This is a challenge largely requiring a reconstruction of some ideal strategies to handle even if that means revisiting existing strategies in a new order. Obviously there is a need to engage men to discover the phenomena of their own abuse by women, their created vulnerability of who they are supposed to be, which cocoons them to the chauvinistic images they are coopted to accept. Recently men are also coming out (slowly) to also ask questions about issues of violence against men. Are men not humans? Are there no men that are still viewed as women by their fellow men? These important questions provoked our anchor on nature and nurture discussion of masculinity and femininity.

This article illustrates how consistent correlation between gender terms has swung through biological and social circles thus producing detestable ideas that either denigrate the functionalities of the other or produce causal dismissal of the humanity of another. Therefore, the terms, “femininity”, “masculinity”, and “patriarchy” will be examined to buttress their historical meaning and overlap and their connection to the present dilemma. The article takes a step to present Theatre for Development as a tool that can work best in specific situation due to its strength to bring sexes together without prejudice. The study subscribes to Key informants reports as the best way to gain insight into the undocumented incidences around the thrust of the article. Therefore five cases will be presented showing the plight of women, the dysfunctional state it produces, the structure that informed it, and the subversion of an existing order that has become a case of violence against the men by their female “Counterparts”?

Violence in this article is seen as “the application of equitably unjustifiable force, coercion or injury to achieve goals” (Onojobi 2010:132). It is any suppressive, exploitative, repressive, dehumanising, marginalising attitude that affects the physical, psychological, productive and the social, economic, religious, political and professional life of the person it is meted on. It is any behaviour viewed as indicative of hardship, that which informs identity, personality and emotions. While it is true that violence is not linked to a particular gender, it has been enormously domesticated to be an act that women experience as mothers, sisters, wives, professionals, colleagues, and co-worshippers, among others.

### **Femininity, Masculinity and Patriarchy in Perspective**

Femininity is defined “as the fact of being a woman, the qualities that are considered to be typical of women” (Hornby, 2010:545). This invariably implicates masculinity as traits or qualities of man. This term that is primarily understood for what it is as a biological factor is also understood beyond that, linking to the abstraction of an attribute of a particular gender bearing it, the pattern of behavior, thought, emotion, strength that has been constructed over time and is canonized as a

patriarchal domination of weaker countries linking it to the status of women domination. Expressing a similar thought, Jane Parpant and Krielmild Saunders (Parpant and Saunders 2000) have also explored women issues in the Tv Development era respectively especially in the area of empowerment - discourse indicative of a created need in women. To use Eze's (2014:234) expression "to claim to be something is to admit that there is something that could be recognized at a certain point in time. What then is it? Is it something immutable, exclusive or inclusive and/or inequitably sensitive?" (Emphasis is mine). The whole question is what is it that triggered the call to empower women? What creates the gulf that requires empowerment of a group whose gender symbolises productivity to fill? This gesture of benevolence reveals the repression of women due to actual unequal relation with men. This is because to have the ability to be empowered shows that you have been depowered or denied the capability (Sen 1990) of showing power (strength).

There is an issue here for reflection. Why are women reclaiming their space? Who mortgaged or stole it from them? What is the consequence that is stirring the reclaim? Should women be viewed within an endangered group instead of being linked to the larger structure of humanity operating respectability, power and other experiences of the human species in general?

Despite the resentfulness to trace the emergence of inequities based on gender and how it is perpetuated, it will not flaw any wisdom that attributes it to ambiguous relationships that exists between their same species, not animals. However, Scholars like Oyatoye (2002) and Idegu (2009) have indicted women in the cause of their suffering, as culpable factors. To Idegu (2009:74) "ironically... women themselves constitute their own problems as they are simultaneously victims of themselves as well as victims of men and are upholders of society by acting as mirrors to men". Oyatoye (in Iguanre and Windapo, 2010:55) notes that:

in traditional societies, women are (and still are) regarded as ancillary to men.. This traditional idea was thought to be corroborated by nature which makes women to lie (in submission and almost passive) under man in sexual act. Therefore anti-female ideas and taboos were contrived in traditional societies (the women also helping in contrivance and propagation of the conservative ideas) to keep the women folk suppressed, passive, oppressed and deterred.

Many have had one thing or the other to say concerning these issues including film makers and dramaturges. Cleo Jay (2013:308) attests to this through her statement: "the representation of women on stage, in theatres, and more importantly, on television is a real battleground for a new generation of female artists and writers who are trying to challenge patriarchal and reductive representations of women and at

Genetic factor with theories from the fields of psychology, religion, arts among others, e card it negates the genetic factors that make one a particular sex, but holds unto the constructed pattern of thought in the terrain of social relation. Connel (1995: :68) has noted that “‘Masculinity’ does not exist except in contrast with femininity”, masculinity and femininity are cultural constructs and not universal human essentials’. Both are from ‘bits’ and ‘pieces’ of biological, psychological and social experiences” (Sampart 1997, following Levant and Pollart 1995). The characteristics typically associated with masculinity are not always about being male; females too can possess some of these attributes as shown in this statement: “not all men, then, have power and not all of those who have power are men” (Cornwall 1997:10).

From the above, the ways in which one is to understand these terms are first to understand the social relations that created them. The central issue being explored here is that of the categorization of gender with these two themes. The attributions or femininity and masculinity given their origin to the roots of male/ female - the biological composition that differentiates one sex from another is what comes to mind at their first mention. Femininity and masculinity, however, are not just biological issues. This social construction bears because of the varying standards of behavior found constant in a group or the other. Take for instance the fact that a male child is bom without any knowledge. Social relations instill its impression on the mind of the child, and when maturity sets in, (the baby) man exudes the character he has learned through his primary contact. He comes into full conformity with the principles of patriarchy by holding to the fact that the perfectibility of man is absolutely based on his subjugation of the woman, thus leading him to exercise those traits that create inequities and inequality between them. This is the social formation and functionality of his time- that which is consciously taught by adults and which he irrationally accumulate and begins to stamp it on the members of his community, isolating some individuals while building the universal brotherhood of man. This, then, is the welcome into paternalism from a child who does not possess the intellectual capacity to understand, the effect of his action on the world to a man who is in charge of his environment, women inclusive. He starts to think that he differs from the “other” in that he possesses the strength for protection, so the “other” begins to stand in need of assistance from him spawning the concepts of constructed Femininity and Masculinity. Marilyn Thomson (1997) expressed the need to address messages boys receive in her article in her article: “Boys will be boys: addressing the social construction of gender”. So it is therefore pertinent to adopt a process of re-socializing the society and some of the ideologies embedded in it.

In light of this, the continued rate of violence against women and the underrated plight of men call for a methodological approach to handling. Theatre for Development offers some precedence to the needed re-socialisation with its ability to spark consciousness, engage immediacy and other grounds upon which men and women will come together to play out their reasons, and dissatisfaction without



inhibition, thus finding a way out to create the change that is desired without coercive powers but building up solidarity through interaction with others. Having identified some cultural standards, and embodied profound philosophical mythology that offers some individuals the strength to maintain its veiled obscurity, however achievable due to phenomenal view of their predecessors, it is obvious that this nature verses nurture factor takes the physical composition of females as feminine and that of male as masculine. It also denotes implausible definition of these biological contents as farfetched from the nature that informs them. It becomes a common consciousness that in its behavioral development, social factors like crying, to engage in less energy sapping jobs, to be pregnant and procreate, to observe moral and sexual values, to take the responsibility of living a domesticated life to show care and affection to husbands and children are essentially standards that characterize one as feminine (Saeed &Khan, 2000:12).

On another note, sublimation to certain activities: the ability i.e. invested ability to bringing in a woman as wife, to procreate through her, to safeguard her from the reach of other men and dictate what happens in her life is virtually taken as masculinity. It is also evident that if a female pulls the lever of high production or capitalist powers, just like any man tftat can do things irrespective of respectability but to maximize reputation or any that can maximize a very high degree of economic and, professional freedom is thus labeled masculine. If the feminine term albeit encapsulates nature, to earth due to productivity, to nations due to multiplicities, to things that yield fruit, does this symbolize weakness? Yet these strings of strength are taken as weakness or something that should be cocooned into an object requiring protection as well as disconnected from the same value it creates.

Femininity and masculinity in general become varied and complex human constructions that account for neither the biological facts nor social reality but seek to maintain the position it arrogates from historical patriarchal supremacy. A significant advancement of this idea could be gleaned from the field of religion in Nawal El Saadawi's interaction with her father in what is seen as a natural concept of God:

Nawal: ... men have a protruding sex organ. Does God possess a male sexual organ?

Father: God is Masculine but has no sexual organ... He is only a spirit.

Nawal: How can a spirit be masculine? Are there masculine spirits and feminine spirits?

Father: A spirit is a spirit and is neither male nor female.

Nawal: Why did you say God is Masculine?

Father: God is a spirit and is neither male nor female.

Nawal Why.... Koran uses the male gender when speaking about God.

Father: Because it is not appropriate to speak about him in the female gender.

Nawal: Then you mean that female or feminine gender is unworthy and suffers from some fault or failing of stigma...?

Father: Yes, the superiority of males over female is the real reason behind the fact that prophets have always used the male gender when addressing Allah or speaking about him (1980: 103 - 104).

Masculinity and femininity are created by enabling conditions and terms necessary for the individual housing those traits to exercise them but under an acceptable and often dichotomous condition. These conditions are that of women and patriarchy, the woman here refers to the adult female, the teenage or child wife (not measured by age or maturation) but by social age precluding the notion of numerical age. This opinion accepts “that under Sharia law a girl is considered an adult once she reaches puberty” even if puberty sets in at 6 years old due to modern life styles. “A 10-year old girl can be categorized an adult if she has begun to menstruate, while a 16 year old boy is considered a minor under the majority Act”(Saeed &Khan, 2000). This, again, provides an irritable partial implication grounded in religiosity and sociality which complicates the biological legality of maturation and abnormalities in the maturational process and this is tied to the ways it is able to recuperate the ego and desire of their violator.

Patriarchy as a concept is linked to the male head of the family. According to Mara Mies (2000:37) “Patriarchy literally means the rule of fathers. But today’s male dominance goes beyond the ‘rule of fathers’. It includes the rule of husbands, male bosses; male heads most social institutions, politics and economies...” Mies statement elucidates the background of femininity/ masculinity twist as well as the sense that they are opposite conditions that find coalescences in a male dominated system. This system arrogates femininity to a male that shows the constructed tenderness of a woman but not the natural tendency of productivity, while the woman is seen in reference as masculine when she increases her prowess. Using these terms in this way is actually derogatory for men and on the part of the woman not complimentary because it presents the fact that women can scarcely be commended outside the limits of the patriarchal world. I pour this disdain on the almost repressive domain of primitive and contemporary patriarchy, not a state where the man is the head of the family but the condition that makes every man a head even when they lack the individualized economic, moral, intellectual capacity to be covered under such umbrella. The result of this system is the long standing subjugation by men over women.

It is clear and unambiguous that this patriarchal concept which roots masculinity in all its angles places primary emphasis on the difference between functions and timing - the idea of biological reproduction- pregnancy, childbirth, lactation which decreases the economic production of women (Ramas, 2000:26) and objectifies them. Whereas nature (biology) makes sexes distinct to match and meet their genetic essences, cultural values (nurture) make them a distinction of this biological purity to conceive the presence of the other in somewhat repressive way in the society. A noticeable aspect of this gendered construct is the configuration of the woman's body and function into a despised model control - to be precise violence.

### **Pangs of the Patriarchal Structure**

There have been a lot of engagements and debates over the issue of violence, its cases and ways to overcome it, especially in the area of women. More often than not, the dualistic splitting of gender and trait one of which is biological and the other culturally or socially constructed have been articulated as one of the conductors linked to violence. This splitting provides ground for a powerful side through the patriarchal system-a system contemporarily marked with negative characteristics that nurture violence. The other significant side is seen as the weak side; weak because of the side's fill of offensive and dehumanising treatment - an oath of allegiance bestowed on it, which origin dates back to traditional patriarchal dominance.

Many fingers including the present article point at violence against women by men. According to Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen (aftermath) "men believe they have to dominate women to feel unambiguously male-cultures with that ideal demonstrate high violence against women". In 1997, the Sistren Theater Collective in Kingston, Jamaica based on the "feeling of sisterhood among women (Mies, 2000:7) engaged a protest drama. The women stated "we want to do plays about how we suffer as women, we want to do plays about how men treat us badly" (STC, 1983:44). Helen Yitah gave an account of how women in Kasem community in North Ghana subverted their proverbs as a way of protest. To Yitah (2012:11) "it is plausible to interpret this behavior as a conscious effort on the part of the women to make proverbs reveal the reality of their lives rather than the ideals of traditional patriarchal society.

The sense of indebtedness given to the discussion of violence against women is due to its effect on the society, most of which causes a lot of dysfunctional families, dysfunctional marriages, dysfunctional groups, dysfunctional youths and dysfunctional acts- a situation that is menacing the world at large, exemplified by various rebellions that the world is experiencing today. One of the causes of this is that women have been left alone to suffer for their children and yet, their contributions are unrecognized, undervalued and punitively rationalized. According to Oniemayin quoting Morgan (1980:58)

Women are an oppressed class, our oppression is total, and affecting every facet of our lives we are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants and cheap labour. We are considered as inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance men's lives. We identify the agents of our oppression as men.

Many women are exposed to violence and often times do not know that what they are experiencing is violence because cultural and religious ministrations have instigated this (culture of silence) on them. This has left them helpless often times not aware that they are anchors in the perpetuation of their sufferings.

Traditional patriarchy has eroded the contemporary form of patriarchy in the areas of labor and profession and this has functioned well because of the patriarchal tradition which keeps building unequal histories and unequal relationships with the class it sought to defend. Because violence is universal, it seeks to extend its exclusionary bites on the subjects concerned about the questions of taking responsibility of everyone. The following reports reveal the continuum of treatment of the women folk.

#### **Faces of Violence**

The ongoing will be treated through the prism of informants' reports of cases of violence. It unveils few but very recent issues that women are facing despite the amount of ongoing sensitisation on this issue.

**Informant one:** a woman was being examined at the Gynecology Clinic of ABUTH. Her condition was battered vagina. The vagina area including the labia minora was badly injured. The doctor had to ask her of the cause of the injury:

My husband had to hit me with the hard sole of his shoe multiple times holding me down. Why there? I was undressed to meet his sexual demands, he saw my response to his fore play as unusual, that means I have been having sex with other men in his absence because this is unusual, so he had to hit me and threatened me with his first pronouncement of divorce (Saki daya).

This type of violence reported above could be referred to as sexual or marital violence, but is more of oppression. The foremost question one would like to ask is if there is any justification for such a treatment? In the understanding of this study, this is a behavioral incompetence and act of deviance on the man. However, he is not to be blamed because there is a system that has structured the objectification of the woman even though the system might not have suggested such precarious treatment. It is doubtful if this was the case presented when Pillay (2001: 43) asked "what is happening in society that allows men to perpetrate terrible crimes against women

especially the women of their own families? Why do women's bodies become the battleground, the tool, and the weapon of war and violence?" According to Schwalbe, Godwin, Holden, Schrock, Thompson, and Wolkomir, (2000), thus in the case of laceration, if not treated well could lead to infection. To treat this wound well, will take at least one week, under this one week, she is faced with pain and anguish and the memory that she is domiciled in the weighed world of being ordered by men and serenaded by their chauvinistic aura. It is also incontrovertibly true that there will be an innate bitterness. It is also true that one of the most pertinent strength availed the man is a structure that backs him up. This has left a mark that can create culpability in the woman because, one, the wound can affect the woman's gait therefore sell her out to outside world as having an issue related to women. Two, psychologically, she may be scared to respond to her husband's sexual advances in future which also comes with its own problem of being usurped by another woman or being less satisfying to her husband.

This influences on her children as the girls will be nurtured to be able to take rather than to confront the pangs of patriarchy. It projects a breakdown in the family setting, with attendant consequence of creating a trans-generational issue on children who will bear the inherent dangers of the type of experiences within which they are nurtured. Women all over the world face this type of treatment not only when they yearn 'overtly' or 'unusually' during sexual intercourse, or when they refuse to have sex with their partner out of one good reason, but also when they are seen talking to other men on the street, and when they are suspected of sexual infidelity when the man falls into alcoholic hallucination.

**Another Informant Report:** The reporter was privileged to get this information as counselor. A boy who started suddenly to hang around the church premises was taken to the guidance and counseling Unit of the church. He narrates:

My mother is always alone and depressed, my father never returns home to her, when he eventually does, he does not bring food and is always too tired to touch mother, all that he brings is trouble. My mother often resorts to alcohol to make her happy. In one of the occasions, I drank with her and started feeling for her then had sex with her.

This dysfunctional situation will be attributed to the inhibitory nature of alcoholism. An abused woman retreats into alcoholism to fill the spaces of lack in her life. Rationally this is correct but the argument here is that there is a primary action that necessitated the resolve to find solace in alcohol. From this boy's story, the attitude of the father exhibits callousness, although not returning home could also be argued as a reaction to another negative act possibly by the wife or children. However, it has been stated that he does not provide for the family, which means that he spends

his money on alcohol and with the conforming act of extra-marital sex which is why in his stupor he cannot go to his wife. So the woman's only comforting mechanism is alcoholism which invariably destroys her and possibly her family.

The act narrated above can only happen because of the man's vested power in the household. It could be permitted to repeat itself many times and the woman may not want to leave the house because of the fear that her children will suffer if she leaves but it is "normal for men to sustain double standard. Female refusal to submit to sexual demands is interpreted by men as sign that they have sexual partners and are 'worn out'. The man feels that he can go out of the mutual obligation to get satisfaction and the woman is left to die in silence in his house. However, another patriarchal pang that befell her is the remedy her own son gave her which is incest. This shows how family violence and dysfunction co-exist to spawn miscreants for the larger society.

The third and fourth cases revolve around what others call lesser violence, while some do not see it as violence yet the women feel dehumanised.

**1st woman:** my husband maltreats me in front of his mother and sisters most of whom I am older than like a slave girl in order to show them he is in charge. He shouts at me, commands me to cook for them and, carry their babies. When I come home and try to tell him where am offended, he asks if I lack anything in his house.

**2nd woman:** my partner dictates my hair do even when I suffer migraine due to such complex hair do, all he tells me is - but that's what I want. Whom do you live for? If it's me, you have to do what I like and want. They make women feel loved. The women taking pride in the oppressive possession of male partners are made to internalize the fact of their culpability- what Freire (2005) described as culture of silence.

However, a fifth case is that which seems to draw a balance line with this discussion as violence against men, nevertheless the woman has her share of the oppression.

A man reports to his mother how his wife broke his head with a pestle." She hits me at any slightest shake; this is obvious so I decided to let you know before she kills me." Upon inquiry, his mother discovered from her grandson that the man who is an alcoholic steals his wife's savings from her ginger farm to drink and have fun with prostitutes. In the end the woman and her children resort to begging, managing or starve.

From this fifth case, it is seen that men also suffer some form of violence which could lead to instant death from their wives. The fact of being a man-the qualities which have been constructed to be supreme will not allow them to discuss the

issue. One, they will suffer insolence from their fellow men. Secondly, they will be seen as frail by women or turned into objects of mockery, labeled woman. However on a very important note, the woman's reaction is a way of subverting the repressive system that enslaved her. These stories can continue on and on. The cases of marital abuse, for example: -coercive sex relations, marital rape, wife battery among others are often seen as a husband wife thing and people seldom come to correct these ills. The fact is that the people who are involved have not always been involved in the analysis and assessment of these realities.

Looking at the continued rate of violence against woman and the underrated plight of men, a methodological approach to handling these issues is urgent. What this article suggests is the deployment of the methodology that can create a forum whereby individuals enter into active engagement in the articulation of issues significant to them. It is obvious that it is not the acts that gratifies the oppressors most times, but the constructed consciousness and capacity to show that they are in charge- that attitude that portrays them heroic of being men. Therefore there is need to deregulate what has stood unaltered. Taking Connel's (2000) statement, an approach which opposes "women and men" as static categorization actually creates and sustains differences should be avoided. Thus a discursive dissemination of issues through inclusive means is needed to capture the differences or bring it to a minimal point. Or let us reflect on Ogunleye (2015:1) the big question: "If modern drama is that powerful (referring to Emma Goldman's position) why can't we use it to accomplish great exploits on behalf of women?" This is exactly what is needed, the possible avenue that can spark consciousness, encourage intervention, and other grounds upon which men and women will come together to play out their reasons, and dissatisfaction without inhibition, thus finding a way out to create the change that is desired.

### **Advocating Change through Tfd**

Having looked at the plight of women and the issues both inherent and behavioral that brought about these issues, one of the critical ways out is a process of re-socializing the individuals and society at large. In some ways, many strategies have been put in place to tackle these issues. Examples are the many international conferences on woman right and violence against women, works of many NGOs, and academia through such medium as television, print media, posters, billboards, jingles to name a few-all these have and are making impacts. It is obvious that they may have almost reached exhaustion, but it's still as proactive as it is just setting in. However, methodological difference is thus needed with the intent to shift the emphasis away from the forum where only women issues are addressed, but to allow both the oppressed and oppressor to come together to actively participate in the discussion of improving the humanity of all. If we may consider Cornwall's (1997) statement



By disregarding the complexities of male experience, by characterizing men as ‘the problem’, and by continuing to focus on initiatives that aim to be ‘gender-aware’ can fail to address effectively the Issues of equity and empowerment that are crucial in bringing about positive change. What is needed is a process of collective agency where groups shared beliefs and their conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required producing given levels of attainment (Bandura: 1997:477).

Why do we need this? The fact still remains that women all over the world are still viewed within the bi-function of erotic objects and lactating vessels all linked to male possession despite their resourcefulness. Globally traditions have cocooned this sex under the limits of male fantasy. Therefore, there is need for a transgression-a frontier tearing engagement that will field the capability for personal expression which will enable women to transverse the unaltered boundaries, exploring other worlds, and trying out their desired identities. My interest is in verbal combat using jokes, drama or theatre, what Ogunleye describes as “Theatre of reciprocal violence. The articulation of the wants of women and the freedom to exists in their own nature.” Tfd becomes the best approach for this theatre that creates the arena which redefines performance and real life. \*

Tfd chooses people whose concerns are being studied to do the study themselves, knowing where to resolve controversies and provide an agreeable base of information upon which each party can proceed towards deliberation (Okam, 149- 150). This brings about critical thematic investigation as Freire (2005) notes: a situation where the people speak about their views or issues- affording them opportunity as stakeholders to discover and generate their themes. This is engendered through community research- “the kind of research that diminishes between the researcher as a collector of information and the researched as the supplier of it. As a collaborative experience between the two, it becomes an occasion for giving and creating knowledge” (Okwori, 2015:161-162). It means that people express their issues in a balanced forum where the hearer recognises the intention of the speaker and the speaker equally knows that she/he is being given audience as a subject. The immediacy of this technique gives people the confidence and strength to handle their matters. Imagine a ground where the oppressor and the oppressed come together to lay bare the issues topical to them, at the heart of these, exploring alternative options for action. This thus is the first step towards a good intervention. People try to understand the happenings around them in their own culture and choose a way to reflect on the challenges by taking action. This only happens when the opportunity to be heard is available. Abah (2011:140) aptly captures this when he notes “...people’s voices are



always ignored and not heard when they cry against injustice, against oppression and suppression of freedom”.

Additionally, the role of this methodology is its ability to operate within a group’s cultural milieu thus guaranteeing massive shift of communication to the marginalised through social and linguistic frontier-tearing achieved by the use of drama. This, in turn, activates a path of moving away from the normative understanding of phenomena and transcend to the complex yet real situation of the subject of investigation that may eventually change their situations in future. What happens here is that a ground is made available to removing power inequities among members of the society to express their perceptions and priorities and also seek their views on the way forward to make improvements on issues/problems. Boeren (1992:262) notes that theatre itself cannot solve problems, it can only illustrate and expose them, it is up to the people to take up the challenge and use their indigenous ways of communication and decision making to shape their issues. What is required here is the application of the traditional methods of resolving issues that have helped man to live together with the other. Slachmuisder (2006:8) states: “If change in a community was going to occur, it...would happen only when the community was given a forum for sharing their own ideas, understanding one another and developing ways of affecting change”. ..This change is the imperative of participatory theatre- a process which tends to be synonymous with empowering people to be independent in a more human and experiential way.

#### **Guidelines for Intervention with Tfd**

**Entry Points-** There is need to secure the buy-in of key stakeholders and community of operation. This will ensure taking control and ownership of whatever intervention you wish to engender. It enables the agenda of the people involved to be synchronized. So instead of being an outside invasion, it becomes a community project to which everyone owes contribution (Okam, 2014:143). Why this suggestion? This paper is meant to be presented in a conference where a majority of the target of this intervention might never get to be, so the suggestion is for those that will take the lead for this course. As mentioned earlier, Tfd does not answer or provide cure but it is a strategy that if well implemented can secure the required objectives. The need for buy-in is to also get the ethical issues pertaining informed consent especially in areas to exercise restraint. What is needed is an entry point that can have an in-depth impact on the intervention and how it will be accepted, often known as preliminary stage.

**Participation-** to make this a reality, men and women should be gathered or form a group. They should be people of same and/or near same cultural background, who understand same language and share same ethics and norms. It should also be people of variant economic/professional strength. (In this cause, all are seen as



patients in a hospital since sickness doesn't respect any status). In this way all individuals are encouraged to share their issues because they are now a community.

**Flexibility/Creativity-** It is good to use creative methodologies to match various status, skills and needs of participants. For instance, drama is one of the essential elements of TfD, a group's peculiarity will suggest if outside team possibly organized by them could come to perform their reality. You deploy cultural tools, meaningful energizers as icebreakers where necessary. Music with themes that speak to their plights could be used as icebreakers. This is a way of engaging another voice into the psychological space of their issues. Tools that will make even the lowest and the high ranking in the groups should be encouraged, in this way, they feel in control. With creativity women could be provided with axes that can help them, raise their voices in the way they should be heard even within cultural contexts addressing gender inequities and injustice. This point accounts to a larger extent the unassailable and formidable position that TfD has in creating a common ground for women issues.

**Liveability-** It is common place for participants to gain practical experience and knowledge through collaborative effort with others especially when they get involved in discussing, analysing, planning and decision making. This has capacity of building attitudinal and behavioral change and increasing their capacity for reflection. Therefore action plan anti structures that will ensure the long term liveability or sustainability of this knowledge should be put in place. For example: follow-up and activities like engaging the index group in such activities in other areas can further develop and sustain the practicality of what have been learnt. This is necessary because, it is one of the ways that TfD can spread quickly to other groups and areas just the way mass media does though not within its meteoric speed. It becomes a platform for subverting the oppressive patriarchal power structure waiting precariously for the unborn woman.

## **Conclusion**

This study has illustrated how femininity and masculinity are social constructions within the ambit of patriarchy and how the nature versus nurture controversy of these terms is linked to patriarchal structures. The article highlighted the various distorts that is produced by that, using violence especially against women as an example. However, it drew a slim line of balance by showcasing that violence is not necessary a thing against women, but affects men too. It identified the strength in the TfD methodology and how it could be applied in the course of intervention. Justifying why the strategy is formidable among which is its ability to flow with the dexterity of the user. It has also taken a step to suggest ways TfD as a strategy could be deployed in the intervention on the cause of violence against women. Therefore, it modeled five cases of violence.

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