
Masculinity and Power in Wole Soyinka's *Death and The King's Horseman*

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Abstract: Wole Soyinka is considered one of the foremost Nigerian literary writers of Yoruba descent. His corpus traverses all the genres of literature and covers a wide range of themes and subject matters. One prominent concern of his work is the juxtaposition of Yoruba tradition and Western notions. This paper uses his play text, *Death and the King's Horseman*, as a case study to examine the injustices of male autocracy that objectify women and men under the Yoruba feudal and British colonial milieu. Masculinity has often been associated with being a breadwinner, being sexually aggressive, unemotional, etcetera; while power is often construed as a tool of authority, superiority, and influence. The consequences of the misconception include intolerance, humiliation, intimidation, and opportunities. The paper is thus a critique of the masculine presumptions that underpin the ruling class in the play. The main argument advanced in this paper is the greedy, dominant, and unprincipled masculinity practiced by characters like Elesin Oba and Simon Pilkings, which is destructive, not only to other people but also ultimately to its practitioners. By portraying abusive characters and their challenges in Nigerian drama, this paper situates the arguments of the masculinist theory within the textual construct of the play with detailed rationalization. One major finding of the paper is that masculinity is largely a defense mechanism used to cover up for the deep sense of inadequacy in the characters who advance it.

Keywords: Masculinity, Power, Hegemonic Masculinity, Soyinka, Drama

1. Introduction

Soyinka's writings, mostly in English, draw from Yoruba myths and traditions alongside western ideologies. His drama and critical writings like *Myth Literature and the African World*, *Art, Dialogue and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture* draw from Yoruba mythology and symbolism to explore the tension between European mores and those of traditional African society. As one of the forerunners of the literary dramatic tradition in Nigeria and by extension Africa, he was highly influenced by the works of D. O. Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola. Soyinka has been considered by Irele, "as the spiritual heir of Fagunwa and spiritual brother of Tutuola". [12] But Soyinka's extreme individuality in his art stands him out and this proceeds from a developed awareness of the multiple meanings that his art achieves. No wonder, he is

Africa's most distinguished dramatist whose art has differed both in content and form from the ones before and after him. His choice and defense of Ogun for his overwhelming role within the cosmic sphere of the Yoruba are enviable and Soyinka has used it to pitch most of his dramas. To Soyinka, Ogun stands different from other gods, deities, and spirits within the African mythology or mystic pantheon. Although Soyinka has written in all three genres of literature this paper focuses on masculinity and power in one of his plays, *Death and the King's Horseman*.

The myopic understanding of masculinity and power is responsible for the actions of political leaders in Nigeria, which have seriously jeopardized the unity, and peaceful co-existence of people in various parts of the country. Hence, there is a need for a critical investigation of masculinity and power. In addition, there is a need for the analysis of some actions taken by men and a need for critical evaluation of the

consequences of the actions on lesser men and women as reflected in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. In what follows, some of the keywords in the paper are examined.

1.1. Masculinity

Historical culture supports adequate research that identifies with the nature and development of masculinity in literature. This-- implies that culture manifests aspects of masculinity. In his work; *The Passion of the Western Mind*, Richard highlights the prevalence of the powers of masculinity and its influence on western contemplation by saying that, "the masculinity of the Western mind has been pervasive and fundamental, in both men and women, affecting every aspect of Western thought, determining its most basic conception of the human being and the human role in the world". [15] From Richard's point of view, masculinity is seen as a dominant hard-to-localize power. It stresses the importance of a universal examination of its applications and effects. Richard also pinpoints the strong impact masculinity has over human thoughts and actions ignoring gender or location. His reason calls for a systematic exploration of the nature of masculinity and power.

In the view of Chafetz, masculinity in its natural form is often regarded as being "athletic", "breadwinner", "sexually aggressive", "unemotional", "dominating", etcetera. [5] Thompson and Pleck give credit to the above, by urging men to "be mentally, emotionally, and physically tough and self-reliant"; and "antifemininity", "the belief that men should avoid stereotypical feminine activities and occupations". [19] This discourse examines masculinity from purely a gender point of view, and not from a sociological dimension. Thus, the toughness of men, which greatly influences their decisions and actions towards women and their fellow men, is the concern of this paper. A proper understanding of the definitions and discourses surrounding masculinity can help in the analysis of how cultural inequalities are produced and distributed not only between, but also within the genders. This implies that an inquiry into the politics of masculinity offers an opportunity to rethink men's strategic interest in challenging values and practices that create gender hierarchy. Craig et al agree with this when they state that, "an understanding of the 'politics of masculinity' indicates that the values and practices (individual and institutional) that create gender inequality are also intimately involved in the creation of other hierarchies of oppression". [8] Richard highlights more on the prevalence of the powers of masculinity and its influence on the western contemplation by saying that, "the masculinity of the Western mind has been pervasive and fundamental, in both men and women, affecting every aspect of Western thought, determining its most basic conception of the human being and the human role in the world". [15] Richard's point of view stresses the importance of a universal examination of its applications and effects. He also pinpoints the strong impact masculinity has over human thoughts and actions ignoring gender or

location.

Early studies on masculinity started as a natural interrogation of feminism and gender studies. Rather than viewing masculinity as a central part of the male identity, studies on masculinity have focused on the construction of masculinity not as an intrinsic nature of the male gender but as an aspect of a larger structure in gender relations with which both men and women can engage. Masculinity studies allow examining male characters in general and specifically how different characters interact with each other in a framework of power relations which are investigated in the selected play-text as they are depicted as unstable and shifting. Owing to the various perspectives that create and organize masculinity which include anthropology, biology, psychology, and sociology, it becomes complex to want to carve out a single definition of masculinity.

Typically, Connell expresses that making men more conscious of gender as it affects their lives as well as women is a first step towards challenging gender inequalities. Before now, she warns that masculinity is not a property of men, and reminds us to be wary of using the terms 'men', 'male', and 'masculinity' interchangeably. [7] In the same vein, Sedgwick opines "as a woman, I am a consumer of masculinity, but I am not more so than men are; and, like men, I as a woman am also a producer of masculinities and a performer of them". [17] This supports the fact that women possess and demonstrate the attributes of masculinity too. Craig et al also, submit that pluralizing masculinity into masculinities indicates that there is more than one way to explain many ways to be a "man". [8] This review shows that there is still a great deal of investigation yet to be carried out on masculinities. It also signifies the need to redefine masculinity in terms of cultural orientation to rethink the basis on gender-in-equality.

The study of masculinity, therefore, aims to approach male-related discourse from a perspective different from the dominant narrative about most patriarchal countries, according to Adams and Savran, which is that men traditionally possessed more power, wealth, and cultural authority than they should. [1] Thus, this paper offers theoretical premises and tools by which masculinity can be examined, to properly explore the processes and politics that inform masculine systems of power.

1.2. Power

In a bid to enhance order and sanity in society, a man may exhibit the use of power. Power then becomes a tool of dominance, authority, superiority, influence, and governance of the people in a society. A person or group of persons can use power to attain desired goals, which could be beneficial, or not, to the people, who are the beneficiaries of the products of power in a society. Thus, the use of power can generate positive or negative consequences depending on the intended objective(s) of the one exercising the power and the temperament of the recipients. Clegg reiterates that:

Power has to be acquired. Power may only be exercised. Power is a matter of authority. Power belongs to an

individual. Power belongs only to the collective. Power cannot be attributed to anyone; it is a quality of social systems. Power involves conflict. Power does not involve conflict in every case. Power generally involves conflict, but not necessarily. Power presupposes resistance. Power, primarily, has to do with obedience. Power is both resistance and obedience. Power is connected with oppression and rule. Power is productive and makes development possible. Power is evil, good, diabolical, and routine. [6]

To the majority of people, masculinity is equated with power, victory, and competence. It has also, been said, the accumulation of power is one of the defining qualities of the male identity. Scholars of various concerns define power as the capacity to change other people's behavior. Dominance is an outcome of power. In the absence of power, one cannot sustain control over any matter. Though, the presence of power does not necessarily mean that dominance is assured either. This study investigates the kind of power exhibited by some Nigerian men cum African leaders which is hegemonic in nature. The type that produces fear which results from intimidation, as opposed to the power of enlightenment and liberality.

1.3. Hegemonic Masculinity

Carrigan et al define hegemonic masculinity as a version of masculinity that is dominant in society. It is a form that acts as a yardstick for measuring other masculinities. [4]. Hanke also describes hegemonic masculinity as:

The social ascendancy of a particular version or model of masculinity operates on the terrain of common sense and conventional morality that defines "what it means to be a man", thus securing the dominance of some men and the subordination of women within the sex/gender system. [10]

From the above description, the need for domination and claim of identity stimulates the expression of masculinity as a system of coercion by its practitioners, mostly males.

Again, Roberts et al see hegemonic masculinity "as an act of acknowledging the power that men had over women". [16] They identify its connection with oppressive attitudes and practices. At this level of literary production, the leading male characters are no more gratified with having their traits and interests promoted but tend to apply hegemonic practices over females as a way of improving masculinity. Masculinity has overtly developed and migrated from the 20th Century to situate itself in Nigerian literature after proving existence in other cultures. Jeff submits that:

What is the issue here is the persistent presence of accumulations of power and powerful resources by certain men, the doing of power and dominance in many men's practices, and the pervasive association of the social category of men with power. Men's power and dominance can be structured and interpersonal, public and /or private, accepted and taken-for-granted and/or recognized and resisted, obvious or subtle. It also includes violations and violence of various kinds. [11]

The notion that men are by their gender more powerful than women and should therefore be dominant is further entrenched by the structures of power relations, economic, cultural, social, and political, which exist in society and which institutionalize patriarchal principles thus establishing masculinity as normal and acceptable. In this paper, versions of masculine display of power are considered in the text under review.

2. The Synopsis of the Text

This is the story of the last days of the king's horseman, Elesin Oba. As the horseman to the recently departed monarch, Elesin must perform his final and most important task for the king by undergoing a ritual suicide. Forming the metaphysical basis of the Yoruba world, the ritual suicide allows the horseman to escort his master into the afterlife and to protect the ruler in the next realm where the inhabitants of that sphere await to welcome the king into their fold. This way, the cycle of life is not altered. However, the story is thwarted by the arrival of Simon Pilkings, a British district officer arriving in the kingdom as part of the imperial project of colonial expansion. When Pilkings restrains Elesin from completing the ritual suicide because of Elesin's delay. Elesin's son Olunde steps up to fill in for his father. The young man commits suicide and many inhabitants of the village appear pleased to know that a new leader has come forward to protect the spirit of the late king in the afterlife and also prevent the Yoruba race from going into extinction, so to speak. Elesin then falls out of favor and is humiliated and ostracized by his people who depended solely on him to keep the peace between the different factions of Yoruba life. Elesin, now a disgraced outcast, finds that there is no other alternative for him but to kill himself without the posthumous honors of the king's horseman. Ifatimehin reports the historical events thus,

History confirms that the real event occurred during the reign of Ladigbolu 1, after being on the throne for some 33 years. His horseman, Elesin-Oba (Jinadu) had all along been given some preferential treatment because of the belief that such favors were necessary as a pay-off for the personal sacrifice to be made by the horseman who would be expected to follow the king on his death through suicide. On the death of King Ladigbolu, the horseman made some visits here and there, dressed in white, and began dancing through the streets towards the house of Bashorun Ladokun. All those who saw the event knew he was preparing to commit suicide. Rather than be allowed to complete the process of dancing to the Bashorun's house and eventually poisoning himself, the British Colonial Officer at Oyo ordered his apprehension and he was detained. As soon as the town's people got to know about the arrest, the horseman's youngest son (Murana) killed himself because he could not stand the stigma of being the son of a coward, a betrayer of tradition, and a butcher. This is the story that birthed *Death and the King's Horseman*. [9]

2.1. *Masculinity and Power in Death and The King's Horseman*

The text published in 1975 as a reflection of the dramatist can be described as a cultural essay that analyses the cultural and political activities of men in Yoruba society. Wole Soyinka's play, *Death and the King's Horseman* is chosen for this investigation because it provides that juxtaposition of the traditional African man and the Colonial western man thus serving as a harvest field for hegemonic masculinities both rooted in cultural worldviews. Adetunji and Adetunji assert that:

Soyinka, as a writer, deserves to be taken seriously because of his high intellectual position among African writers. He describes Soyinka as a writer that possesses an inner light that is unavailable to the mass of his people, and one who uses his inspiration and insight to guide his society toward a beautiful future. Thus, educating others about his noble ideologies for Yoruba society makes Soyinka's texts appealing to scholars. [2]

In the Yoruba contexts addressed in the text, for example, the expected attributes of a man are power, possession, ambition, command, strength, pride, and virility. The 'manliness' of a person is measured according to how many of these qualities he exhibits and according to the degree to which he exhibits them. Thus, a 'real' man is expected to wield incontestable power and command over his family, domain, and all the women and lesser men who come under his realm of control.

A show of physical strength is central to the process. Towards the opposite gender, this strength is manifested in presumed virility, the urge to sexually exploit women at every opportunity. The man must desire and fight to broaden that scope of impact and to vehemently, even brutally resist any contest or obstruction to it. In this quest, pride of rank, descent, class, and race are the driving forces. These presumptions of masculinity are, however, subject to several complications, many of which are addressed or suggested in the text. Three related complications that are highlighted in the play may be labeled as distortion, oppression, and confrontation. Distortion refers to the misperception and misunderstanding of the attributes of masculinity, whereas oppression is the negative impact of the exercise of the misconceived attributes and the challenge that comes, often in unexpected ways, from the victims of that exercise. The main argument advanced in this paper is the greedy, dominant, and unprincipled masculinity practiced by characters like Elesin Oba and Simon Pilkings which sees being male and masculine as a transcendent position that connects to superior power; Elesin to the overarching essence of life and death and Pilkings to the colonial might and authority of the queen of England.

The misunderstanding, confusion, and twisting of Yoruba masculinity presented in the text seem to stem from a basic problem inherent in all masculinities; the assumption that being male is being superior. This leads to the observation that masculinity is not only improbable but also inconsiderate.

Bukenya advances it further by saying:

Unlike a systematic revolutionary approach to gender relations (for example, feminism) or masculinism when it finds its feet, masculinity is generally not a set of rational concepts but a vague assumption of conceits generated, sustained, and propagated by cultural hegemonies for the convenience of their survival. [3]

Thus, in Yoruba society, the attributes of masculinity mentioned above are generated by its patriarchal structures as contributions to their perpetuation. But these attributes, though frequently reiterated and constantly reinforced through speech and practice, are hardly ever defined with clarity and precision. This renders and exposes them to misconstruction, misunderstanding, and indeed obstinate and unscrupulous alteration. In *Death and the King's Horseman*, for instance, it is easy to see that the masculine assumptions are constantly perverted and distorted by the leading characters, especially Elesin and Pilkings, for what they consider to be their benefit but turns out to be their destruction by not paying serious attention to the counsel of women in order not to undermine their sense of superiority. Power, for example, is taken as a license to oppress and ride roughshod over the powerless.

2.2. *Consequences and the Misuse of Power in the Text*

One of the most disgusting instances of the misuse of power in the text is when Elesin Oba, the king's Horseman, refuses to fulfill his duty to be buried with the king. Instead, he demands that a bride that is already betrothed to a young man be given to him for his pleasure stating that he deserves to be honored before joining the world of the ancestors. "Then honor me. I deserve a bed of honor to lie upon" Soyinka. [18] This incident, in fact, ingeniously pulls all the ropes of perverted masculinity into a tight condemnatory knot. In Elesin's outrageous demand, we see not only a macho man's abuse of power but also the use of feudal possession to degrade the powerless by asserting his 'strength' over them in imposing his rapacious virility/sexuality on the most defenseless among them.

Elesin's behavior suggests that he is a controlling and possessive individual who believes that a woman is a man's property, born at his feet to serve him, and should therefore be subdued and objectified. This is an illustration of hegemonic masculinity, a socially constructed concept that holds an authoritative position over women and less powerful men. Why does Bride so easily give in to Elesin's demand? It is not because she is a young woman with loose morals. She is forced into this unfortunate situation by sociocultural factors and on the other part, is the result of an institutionalized gender order that privileges men over women.

The District Officer, Simon Pilkings, is blinded by his sense of masculine self-assertiveness to realize the depth of his traditional and ritual desecration and abomination in his use of the Egungun mask as his fancy dress costume. He argues that the masks "belong to a death cult, not for human beings". Soyinka. [18] He fails to realize the significance of

these rituals and masks. He is insensitive to the fear of Amusa and Joseph. Although they have been converted to Christianity, they still harbor beliefs from their 'old' world upbringing; the fear of offending their ancestors. Quite unaware of the sanctity with which Egungun masks are handled by the natives, the Pilkings wear them as a costume for the dance to demonstrate their importance. Their residence is designed not only for comfort but also to tease the native servants. This can be seen when Simon Pilkings abuses Joseph and calls him a "sly, devious bastard", Soyinka. [18]

The manly command (being in charge) that he craves repeatedly manifests itself as an independent and overbearing tyrant which, in Pilkings' career in the text, culminates in his insistent and most disastrous order, despite his wife's objections. Jane Pilkings has more respect for traditional values than her husband, and Ogunde testifies to this by saying: "Mrs. Pilkings, I've always found you something more understanding than your husband", Soyinka. [18] And as a woman, she wants to prevent impending danger which is the immediate result of Pilkings' masculine arrogance.

But as will be seen later, the whole family, including Simon Pilkings himself is about to be engulfed in devastating scandal and misery because of this exaggerated presumption of command. Indeed, the perverted display of masculinity by characters such as Pilkings and Elesin leaves victims along the line until it finally catches up with the perpetrators. Transgressing or overstepping the bounds of tradition is always frowned upon. In Olunde's speech with Jane, he says "... and that is a good cause for which you desecrate an ancestral mask", Soyinka. [18] Soyinka presents everything in such a way that the non-performance of masculinity by Elesin lies in the sacrilege of the District Officer's intervention as well as in Elesin's longing for worldly pleasures. Just as Osofisan puts it, "Elesin's concupiscence, his tenacious love of the earth and flesh". [13] This corroborates Elesin's confession to his young bride: "for I confess to you my daughter, my weakness came not merely from the abomination of the white man, who came violently into my fading presence; there was also a weight of longing on my earth-held limbs", Soyinka. [18]

The above implies that the Bride is not more than a mere desire of the flesh. She, being the final gift of the living to their emissary to the land of ancestors turns his feet, now laden with her warmth and youth. Elesin and Pilkings are so engulfed in and blinded by patriarchal norms and hegemonic masculinity that they believe nothing or no one can challenge them. They hang on to patriarchal tradition because it gives them power and control over both men and women. Indeed, the system, both feudal and colonial, run by the likes of Elesin and Pilkings, is quietly but roundly lambasted in the text for its victimization of the powerless.

Elesin delays his responsibility of ritual suicide, even when pressed to do so and this condemns him to a life of misery and destitution in the Pilkings' guardroom where he dies. This implies that a sense of duty/responsibility is regarded as one of the masculine markers in Yoruba

(Nigerian) society. In the text for instance, it is the decisive act of Olunde, the eldest son of Elesin to redeem his community from shame and restore her pride, honor, and dignity by committing ritual suicide in place of his father's disappointed mission that shows this. That is why Peteet declares that "... masculinity is required... in... expressions of fearlessness and assertiveness. It is attained by... willingness to defend honor, face, kin... and protect cultural definitions of gender-specific propriety". [14]

The above line means that to be a man is tantamount to absolute commitment, dedication, and defense of one's cultural heritage. For the sake of honor, Olunde throws away all his academic accomplishments for the beliefs of his people and accepts to commit the 'ritual suicide' in place of his father and to avoid the curse of the village on his family. This is supported by the following excerpt, where Jane Pilkings is begging Olunde not to do anything that may derail his goal of becoming a doctor:

Jane Pilkings: Olunde, please promise me something. Whatever you do, don't throw away what you have started to do. You want to be a doctor. My husband and I believe you will make an excellent one, sympathetic and competent. Don't let anything make you throw away your training. Soyinka. [18]

Olunde's character is a significant one in the play. His nobility, heroism, and loyalty are compelling character traits of a real man. One can state that the magnitude of obligation and revolution in the play is mainly depicted through the character of Elesin's son, Olunde.

The two central male characters in the text have an unwavering sense of duty concerning the role of the son. Elesin believes the son must take his place as the next King's Horseman. Pilkings, in his vainglorious masculinist complex to pull a native up to his "western" standards, sends Olunde to London to get a medical degree so he can return to help the natives. Pilkings believes giving Olunde this privilege fills one of the greatest duties he can as a District Officer. However, Elesin sees it differently and disowns his son for not fulfilling his cultural duty. Olunde is enmeshed in the quagmire of a revolutionary puzzle that ends gravely in an absolute squabble. He ultimately fulfills two roles of masculine duty to his people and custom and shuns the duty bequeathed upon him by the Pilkings. He begs Jane Pilkings to tell her husband this, "since he has been so helpful to me, I don't want him to incur the enmity of our people; especially over nothing", Soyinka. [18]

To achieve his goal, Olunde tries to convince Jane not to interfere in the ritual sacrifice. "But at least have the humility to let others survive in their way", Soyinka [18] Thus, Olunde leaves bare the gap between the world of the existing and that of the departed progenitors. It is seen that Olunde's contact with Europe does not stop him from performing his masculine role. Iyaloja provides a credible argument in support of this undeniable reality:

Iyaloja: There lies honor of your household and our race. Because he could not bear to let honor fly out of doors, he stopped it with his life. The son has proved the father

Elesin, and there is nothing left in your mouth to gnash but infant gums. Soyinka. [18]

Nearly all the expressions of Elesin's misconceived masculinity pose or express some kind of challenge to him. The challenge ranges from verbal warning through uncooperative or rebellious responses to direct attacks on his personality. Verbal warnings run through the play. In the opening scene, for example, we see Iyaloja boldly warning Elesin:

Iyaloja: (*With sudden anger*). I warned you if you must leave a seed behind, be sure it is not tainted with the curses of the world. Who are you -to open a new life when you dared not open the door to a new existence? I say who are you to make so bold? Soyinka. [18]

Amusa had already told the Pilkings about the importance given by the natives to their law and custom. But Pilkings knows how much power/force he has to use to prevent the ritual suicide of Elesin. This deceptive act of rebellion against Pilkings, which in turn leads to the assault on his person and family, is by an unnatural reversal of roles, with the child taking the role of the father. Olunde heroically takes the place of his father to accompany the king ignoring all efforts made by Pilkings to send him to the Medical School in London. According to Pilkings, "I had to help the boy escape from that confinement and load him onto the next boat", Soyinka. [18]

Although Jane's assessment of Olunde may not be accurate, its importance is a hint towards an alternative form of masculinity that can hardly be over-emphasized. Indeed, it is revealing that the qualities that Elesin admires in Olunde are nothing like what we see of Elesin at the height of his powers. Elesin's over-concentration of power, strength, and virility aggravates his predicament when these qualities desert him. Olunde, however, is a curious mixture of gentleness and charm on the one hand, and ruthless and voracious opportunism on the other hand. Jane, in her conversation with Olunde, attests to this: "how can you be so callous? So unfeeling! You 're just a savage like all the rest", Soyinka [18] Indeed, the more Pilkings tries to assert his predatory power, the more he provokes resistance and rebellion from the victims. There is the case of Iyaloja, who gate-crashes Pilkings' house and roundly tells him off over his mistreatment of the natives' custom and tradition:

Iyaloja: To prevent one death you will make other deaths.

All great is the wisdom of the white race but have no fear. Your Prince will sleep peacefully. So, at long last will ours..... Just let Elesin fulfill his oath and we will retire home and pay homage to our king, Soyinka. [18]

Perhaps this final ugly twist in the story gives the best clue for Olunde's role in the thematic framework of the play. It seems that in Yoruba's moral story, Olunde's death is payback for both Elesin and Pilkings for their transgressions.

3. Conclusion

Masculinity is complex and encompasses many other concepts. Indeed, no one pattern of masculinity is found in all places and times. The characters of Pilkings, Olunde, and Elesin Oba reveal the variegated dimensions of masculinity.

While Olunde is somewhat accommodating of female opinion, Pilkings and Elesin are deluded in their notions of masculine superiority which is evident in their subjective interpretations of their duty to a higher force they represent. The real face of power is thus revealed most clearly at those moments in the text when what is at stake is the juncture between political life and politicized death; and it is this juncture (spatial and temporal) that Soyinka, opens up to thorough inquiry in the text.

It is, however, observed in the course of this paper, that there still exist criticisms on the subject of masculinity and power in Nigerian literature; hence, researchers can undertake research on the concept of masculinity and power, using the works of many upcoming and mainstream writers, to address some of these criticisms. Scholars can also write about the portrayals of masculinity and power in Nigerian folklore or its representation in Nigerian children's literature. The researcher plans to undertake further research on the subject shortly.

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