

**THE EFFECT OF UJAMAA AND PATRIARCHAL
IDEOLOGIES IN THE (RE) DEFINITION AND (RE)
CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY IN
GAMBA LA NYOKA**

**DR. FELISTAS RICHARD MAHONGE
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND LITERARY STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

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Abstract

This paper examines how Ujamaa and traditional patriarchal ideologies influence the (de)construction and (re)definition of masculinities in Gamba la Nyoka, particularly in the process of the implementation of nationalization and villagization policies. The paper adopts Judith Butler and Robert Connell theories of masculinity as well as Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation to read and understand how Ujamaa and patriarchal ideology influence men's masculinity. Through the portrayal of male characters, the novel reveals that political and cultural ideologies play a significant role in the construction of masculinity. The novel indicates that masculinity is a social construct that is subject to constant changes. Through this novel, Kezilahabi emphasizes that for a society to build a new nation, changes are inevitable. The novel dismantles conventional gender relations and complements them with modern ones; the state that allows emergence of new masculinities. From this emergence, Gamba la Nyoka emphasizes that masculinity is a mutable subject. It changes over time, within contexts, and in response to various changes in the individuals as well as in a wider community.

Key words: masculinity, patriarchal ideology, (de)construction, (re)definition

Introduction

Ujamaa was Julius Nyerere's social-economic and political philosophy rooted in traditional African values and maintained its core on family hood and communalism of traditional African societies (Nyerere, 1968). Nyerere believed in traditional African values and wanted to integrate those values with the demands of Tanzanians' post-colonial setting. Nyerere's *Ujamaa* policy was thus, modelled on the functions and operations of the extended family.

The roles of an extended family included protecting family members from unsafe situations and producing material goods for the family and society. It was the basic unit of production in traditional Africa. With regard to the society's economy, Nyerere described the extended family as "a self-contained economic and social unit" because it depended on its own labour force and on its own resources (Nyerere, 1968: 8). He viewed the extended family as a social and economic independent unit. Nyerere believed that Tanzania could become socially and economically independent by relying on Tanzanians' labour force and resources. Morally, Nyerere (1998) emphasized that a child who is in an extended family is raised and taught the courtesies of his family, the values underpinning the family, and his rights within it.

Sharing, co-operation and communal ownership of property in the extended families of traditional Africa was another essential idea that Nyerere used as a framework in the construction of *Ujamaa*. Tanzanians were expected to practice and apply this idea through *Ujamaa* villages. Nyerere wanted the nation to be the basic unit of production whereby all the villagers become the labour force and own the resources. He emphasized that "*Ujamaa* can only be maintained if all major means of production are controlled and owned by the peasants through the machinery of their government and their co-operatives" (Nyerere, 1968:16). To implement this idea, peasants in *Ujamaa* villages, were encouraged to work together in a communal way and share the profits.

In his *Ujamaa* philosophy, Nyerere pronounced the principles of human equality, state ownership of property, democracy and freedom as essentials in building *Ujamaa* in Tanzania. He believed that "all human beings are equal" (1977: 13). He emphasized that there must be equality, because it was only on that basis that men work cooperatively. He wanted "to see

that the government gives equal opportunity to all men and women irrespective of race, religion or status” (Nyerere, 1977: 15). For him, individuals were supposed to have equal chances and qualifications; equal access to educational opportunities and healthcare services, and equal employment opportunities. In this way, he made his citizens to believe in caring for one another and to consider other family members as brothers or sisters.

The Arusha Declaration of 1967 was a tool used to guide the implementation of *Ujamaa* policy. Among other things, the declaration pronounced a “Leadership Code” as the rules that prevented society members and government leaders from accumulating individual wealth (Nyerere, 1968). Other rules included owning houses for rent or shares in any company and having more than one salary. The nationalization of the major means of production was another leveling device that Nyerere’s *Ujamaa* employed to build a new society. He declared ownership of the major means of production as the nation’s key goal in order to control Tanzanians from accumulating wealth through private acquisition (Nyerere, 1977). He believed that people could make great progress and achieve the set goals through the combined efforts. On this account, *Ujamaa* subverted a traditional patriarchal system since it discouraged people from accumulating wealth, to possess and control their own properties. This means men’s patriarchal power over their families could be limited.

Despite the significance of *Ujamaa* and its principles to Tanzanian, there were fundamental problems that became more evident as the nationalization process progressed. For instance, James Scott (1999) in Ibhawoh and Dibua (2003) indicates that some of the peasant farmers were not willing to move to the *Ujamaa* villages because its manner of implementation did not match the social and cultural realities of the rural economy. This suggests that men feared to lose their properties and autonomy.

Conversely, the villagization scheme was substantial in social welfare development despite a number of limitations. The *Ujamaa* villages were the main centers for the provision of social resources like water, electricity and health services. The villages became very important centers for the promotion of literacy (Ibhawoh and Dibua, 2003). In addition, through villagization policy, *Ujamaa* managed to unite Tanzanians and to create a strong sense of

national identity among them. Nyerere's policies promoted the legacy of stability that has made the country remain one of the most stable countries in Africa (Lal, 2010; Rodney, 1972).

Ujamaa as an Ideology

In tandem with Althusser's (1971) view of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), the Arusha Declaration became the ISA that established the subject of *Ujamaa*. The Declaration had principles, objectives and intentions that sought to transform people in *Ujamaa* in a form of interpellation. Moreover, *Ujamaa* government functioned as a Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) when it used forceful methods on those who were reluctant to move to the *Ujamaa* villages. Pressure and violence by means of regulations, economic measures, threats, burning down of houses and physical violence occurred on a large scale in moving people to *Ujamaa* villages (Shivji and Tenga, 1985: 18). Anchored on Althusser's theory of ideology, we may argue that during the implementation of *Ujamaa*, Tanzanians became subjects themselves by accepting the state order, which was instilled by the *Ujamaa* ideology. Nyerere, the head of Tanzania state and the government leader, appeared as the subject of the ideology and used state apparatus as an instrument, to call upon Tanzanians to become subjects of the ideology.

Furthermore, from Connell's (1995) view of masculinity, we may argue that during the implementation process of *Ujamaa* ideology, Nyerere as the head of a gendered state and the father of the *Ujamaa* nation replaced other father-figures in the country. In *Ujamaa* village, for example, the village leaders became the father-figure as well. They became the head of a village family (extended family) and their properties.

Theoretical Framework

The discussion and interpretation of (de)construction and (re)definition of masculinities in connection to *Ujamaa* and traditional patriarchal ideologies in *Gamba la Nyoka*, is anchored on Butler's (1990) and Connell's (1995) definitions of masculinity and patriarchal ideology. The two scholars recognize masculinity as a social construct that is molded through performances and relationships with others. It is not a natural state but socially constructed and fluid in nature. Butler and Connell are against the essentialists' perception of patriarchal

ideology because, for them, the essentialists perceive the construction of male gender requiring one's molding into a masculine role which presupposes autonomy, competition, and aggressiveness, and the domination of the innate human needs for connectedness, intimacy, and self-disclosure.

To understand the effect of *Ujamaa* and patriarchal ideologies in the definition and construction of masculinity in *Gamba la Nyoka*, this paper adopts Althusser's concept of interpellation as well. According to Althusser, the hailing or interpellation of individual creates a subject who is, without necessarily knowing it, acceding to the ideology of state authority, its laws, and the systems that support and generate it. Ideology transforms us into subjects that think and behave in socially acceptable ways. Although ideology is understood to subject individuals to the needs and interests of the ruling classes, it is not, according to Althusser, fixed and unchangeable. Rather, ideology always contains contradictions and logical inconsistencies, which are discoverable. This means that the interpellated subject has at least some room to undo or destabilize the ideological process. In this case, change or revolution is possible. Thus, the analysis of men in this paper does not look into men's lives and performances in a stereotypical perspective but considers how *Ujamaa* and patriarchal ideologies influence the (re)construction and re(definition) of their masculinity in *Gamba la Nyoka*.

The (re)construction and re(definition) of Men in *Ujamaa* villages

This paper regards the Tanzania state through the implementation of *Ujamaa* as a gendered institution that performs masculinity over its people during the construction of *Ujamaa* villages. In a gendered institution, key positions of power in the state are mostly held by men who determine the state's masculinity and its outcome. Such a state includes different organizational systems that inevitably lead to internal contradictions and historical change (Connell, 1995).

Through the possibilities of the novelistic form, Kezilahabi demonstrates how *Ujamaa* ideology was implemented in Tanzania. From the portrayal of his characters, Kezilahabi

enables us to learn that the intention of *Ujamaa* villages was to enforce equality, enhance economic development and provide social resources like water, electricity, hospitals, schools and agricultural equipment to the majority easily. However, the novel demonstrates that despite the good intentions of *Ujamaa* ideology, some Tanzanians did not accept it because, apart from their unawareness of *Ujamaa* ideology, people doubted the government's intentions about their land and feared the nationalization of their land. Kezilahabi shows how the doubt and fear created tensions and misunderstandings between the government and men, specifically the elders who did not want to abandon their traditional patriarchal system. From his portrayal, we learn that while the government works to construct *Ujamaa* villages, men struggle to maintain their traditional patriarchal ideologies.

Kezilahabi illustrates this situation through the depiction of Kisole men conducting a secret meeting in the forest with the main agenda being to resist the government's order that was intended to make them leave their homesteads and move to the *Ujamaa* villages (Kezilahabi, 1979: 15). Kezilahabi's description of the men in this meeting helps us to understand different perceptions by Kisole men and attitudes towards the government's order. We see men confronting one another and expressing mixed feelings about *Ujamaa* villages. Through their discussion, we discern the two conflicting sides of these men: those who think *Ujamaa* is essential and should be practiced and those who do not want it because they fear its disruption of traditional patriarchal structures and systems. Kezilahabi's depiction reveals that most of the elders in the meeting think that the government decision of moving people into *Ujamaa* villages by force is illogical because they are already living a communal life. They describe *Ujamaa* ideology as a temporal and dangerous phenomenon. They think young men are not wise enough to lead the country.

Contrary to the majority of old men's views of *Ujamaa*, the young men view *Ujamaa* as an essential ideology that is meant for people's development. They caution old men not to underrate them. The young men's opinions however, provoke old men who continue to ridicule them. One of the old men insists that young men should not be trusted because they are not wise enough to make right decisions for the society. He encourages people to fight if

the government forces them to move to *Ujamaa* villages. He declares: “*Ndugu mwenyekiti, hatuhami. Kama wanataka kutuhamisha kwa nguvu, tutapigana!*”(Kezilahabi, 1979: 19). (Dear chairman, we are not moving (to *Ujamaa* villages). If they force us to move, we will fight). The old men’s assertions clearly reveal the rigidity of the people in accepting the *Ujamaa* villages.

From the above representation, *Gamba la Nyoka* reveals the tension that exists between the old men and young men who hold different ideologies. Through their confrontation we also realize how the old men express their masculinity over the young men; they feel superior to them. They think the young men are weak, unwise, irrational and irresponsible. Kezilahabi’s portrayal of the old men reveals that their masculinity is influenced by their age, background and fear of the disruption of their traditional patriarchal structures.

Through the secret meeting scenario, *Gamba la Nyoka* shows also how the process of constructing *Ujamaa* villages has created anxiety and nervousness among people. This is aptly depicted through the character of another old man who expresses his fears and anxieties towards the government’s (re)action and power over them. This old man reminds the meeting that the order does not come from the young men, but the government leaders whom they elected. They therefore have to obey government orders. He cautions the villagers about the overwhelming government power over them. He reminds them about what happened to their neighbours (Bucho men) when they resisted the government’s order. They were terrorized, brutalized and injured by government soldiers. Their arrogance did not help as they eventually moved to the *Ujamaa* villages. The old man persuades his colleagues not to wait for what would make them regret (19).

The anxiety of the old man reflects the men’s fear of violence from the government, displayed through powerful weapons, guns in particular, in the process of implementing *Ujamaa* ideology. Kezilahabi depicts government soldiers using guns to coerce men who are reluctant to move to *Ujamaa* villages (19). Guns, in this circumstance, have a phallic association as they embody power and become significant in the construction of state

masculinity as well as emasculation of other men. They humiliate and intimidate men in *Gamba la Nyoka*. These men become inferior and weak.

This situation also affirms Connell's view of a state being a gendered institution. According to Connell (1995), state is gendered since the key positions of power in the state are mostly held by men who determine the state's masculinity and its outcome. Connell argues also that patriarchal ideology legitimizes violence towards women and subordinated forms of masculinity as a result of the hegemonic masculinity's superiority over them. From Connell's perspective, we may argue that some of the state leaders in Tanzania held masculine position that legitimized violence in the process of implementing *Ujamaa* ideology.

However, despite the fact that Bucho men were brutalized and coerced by the government leaders, the novel reveals that the Kisole patriarchal-oriented male have refused to be intimidated by the government leaders. They remain adamant as they resist its order: refusing to move to *Ujamaa* villages. The Kisole old men regard Bucho men who were tortured and moved to *Ujamaa* villages by force as women and decide to resist moving to *Ujamaa* villages (20). To accomplish their mission, they ambush Bucho men and government soldiers (23). Kezilahabi illustrates this performance of masculinity through the forest scene where Bucho men and women, militantly dressed, and in three trucks are ambushed by Kisole men. It is a sudden and brutal attack on them. Many are shot and become confused and disorganized (25). The Kisole leader cuts the ears of three men who survived the attack and orders them to tell their husbands (government leaders), that they do not want *Ujamaa* ideology: "*Nendeni mkawaambie waume zenu hatutaki kuhama! Nendeni mkawaambie hatutaki Ujamaa wao! Nendeni! Waambieni ...*" (Kezilahabi, 1979: 26) (Go and tell your husbands that we are not moving to the *Ujamaa* villages! Go and tell them that we do not want their *Ujamaa*! Go! Tell them...!). After torturing and killing them, they go back to the forest singing victorious songs. This (retrogressive) masculine performance, leads to the death of eighty seven people and injury to fifty people who are later taken to hospital (27).

Kisole men, in this context, perform their masculinity over Bucho men and government soldiers in a violent manner to express their overt antipathy and rejection of *Ujamaa* villages'

policy. The act of ambushing demonstrates their determination, confidence and strength. In this scene, Kisole men portray themselves as men who are courageous and fear no one. According to them, Bucho villagers are women who obey government ('..Wanaume zenu..'), without questioning. The killing and chasing away of the Bucho people signify their potent masculinity. They equate themselves to their traditional heroes. Kezilahabi illustrates the way the Kisole men describe themselves through a traditional heroic song that they sing to praise their heroic performance after winning the battle:

Sisi ni simba, tunaruka na kuvamia, Tunakula nyama mbichi yenye damu, Nyama za watu na za wanyama, Lete ini nami nile nyongo, Nile ushujaa wa babu zangu, tunaruka na kuvamia, tunaruka na kurarua,

Sisi ni simba ogopeni milio yetu,

Tukilenga, makucha hayarudi matupu (Kezilahabi, 1979: 26).

We are lions, we jump and invade, we eat bloodied raw meat,
Both human and animal flesh, bring liver and I will eat the bile,
I eat the heroism of my grandfathers, we jump and invade, we jump and rupture,
We are the lions, beware of our noises,
When we target, we never miss it.

The above heroic song demonstrates Kisole men's pride while defending their patriarchal ideology and structures. They equate themselves to lions that roar, threaten and kill people and other animals. This performance of (retrogressive) masculinity signifies Kisole men's resentment of *Ujamaa* villages' constructions and their fear of losing their masculinity if they allow the deconstruction of patriarchal ideology. Kisole men's (re)action against the government implies that hegemonic masculinity can also be challenged by the marginalized. The issue of hegemonic masculinity being challenged by the marginalized is also pointed out by Connell. According to Connell (1995), the violence of minority men is the rebellion of masculinities which were marginalized by hegemonic masculinity.

However, we discover that *Ujamaa* government is more masculine than Kisole men through the delineation of its leader's masculine performance. Kezilahabi illustrates the government's masculine role through the portrayal of the District Commissioner (DC), Bucho soldiers and young men who follow the DC's orders in the village. Kezilahabi depicts two Bucho young men, Mambosasa and Mamboleo instructing and threatening villagers to move to the designated *Ujamaa* villages:

Na kama msipohama mtakiona cha mtema kuni. Kwaheri. Hatuna muda wa kukaa...Waliondoka kuelekea kwenye miji mingine wakitoa ujumbe huohuo (Kezilahabi, 1979: 12).

If you do not move, you will suffer the consequences. Good bye. We have no time to waste... They left and went to other homesteads in the village to give the same message.

The two young men's Kiswahili names, Mamboleo and Mambosasa symbolically mean contemporary/current or modern issues. 'Mamboleo' in particular, means today's issues and 'Mambosasa' current issues. Linking these names and masculinity in *Gamba la Nyoka*, the two young men represent a young generation that is influenced by modernity and privileged with education and power. Their education gives them an opportunity of leadership positions during *Ujamaa* era. Being in the *Ujamaa* leadership hierarchy, Mambosasa and Mamboleo display their masculine traits during the moving of people to the *Ujamaa* villages.

Kezilahabi demonstrates further the strength and power of the *Ujamaa* government and its dominant masculine role through the scene where the government attacks Kisole men and punishing them because of their arrogance. We see Bucho men and soldiers attacking Kisole men, threatening them with guns, and making them surrender their weapons (42). This threatening situation confuses and disorganizes the Kisole men. Mzee Chilongo, one of the old men, tries to challenge the government by attempting to fight back but the soldiers' leader does not allow him to do so. He shoots him in the thighs and kicks him. The old man loses his strength and faints.

Mzee Chilongo, in this instance, symbolizes a traditional patriarchal system that is not ready for change. His stability and determination are however neutered as he fails to free himself from the government authority that appears to be more powerful than him and his people. The power of government is signified by modern weapons (guns) that empower soldiers to humiliate and defeat Mzee Chilongo and the Kisole men. Kezilahabi's description of the government's masculinity over Kisole men is revealed further through the portrayal of the DC and government soldiers harassing Kisole men at the DC's office grounds (43). He depicts Kisole men submitting their weapons (spears and arrows) to the government soldiers. The DC and his soldiers drill and ridicule them, calling them murderers because they killed their kinsmen. He describes their bodies as filled with rust and must therefore sweat in order to take the rust from their bodies. After four hours of drilling, torture and sweating, the DC calls in a political teacher to teach them about Tanzanian politics, the effect of colonization and make them sing the national anthem (44).

The above description shows how the government used its leaders and soldiers to emasculate men who do not want to conform to national ideology- *Ujamaa*. In Althusser's (1971) view government institutions can function as a repressive apparatus to intervene and act in favour of the ruling class by repressing the ruled class through violent and coercive means. In addition, Althusser argues that nation and masculinity are both ideologically constructed; the nation is constructed in and through discourse and especially in political discourse (speeches, government documents, civics textbooks, etc.). In tandem with Althusser, *Ujamaa* system in *Gamba la Nyoka* is ideologically constructed through political leaders' speeches and education programs: history, civics classes and national anthem in adult education programs. In the above depiction, the DC and soldiers are working to defend the *Ujamaa* as the national ideology.

In addition to the above analysis, we can argue further that the masculinity of the military and *Ujamaa* system are inscribed in the body of the nation through the use of guns, spears and arrows that may be considered as phallic symbols of the state's power. These phallic symbols distinguish the degree of power the two groups (ruling and ruled) possess and mark

their status of masculinity, supremacy and subordination. The government's possession and use of strong weapons like guns characterizes its strength and power, which imposes on Kisole men whose weapons - spear and arrows characterize their weakness.

However, the challenges that the government face from Kisole men and Mzee Chilongo, in particular implies that the dominant ideology can also be challenged by the ruled. Kezilahabi's portrayal of the Kisole men resisting government orders through fighting back confirms Althusser's (1971) views on how the ruling class can be challenged by individuals who are assumed to be interpellated by the dominant ideology. According to Althusser, although ideology is understood to subject individuals to the needs and interests of the ruling classes, it is not fixed and unchangeable. It always contains contradictions and logical inconsistencies, which are discoverable. This means there is a possibility of the interpellated subject to undo or destabilize the ideological process. In this case, change or revolution is possible. We witness several instances in *Gamba la Nyoka* where the elders confront the government because they do not want to accept *Ujamaa*.

In this portrayal *Gamba la Nyoka* reveals also that *Ujamaa* has given power to young men and made them lose faith in elders' leadership and abilities. Through the DC and soldiers' performance, the novel demonstrates how young men disrespect the will and power of the old generation. It also implies that education and government positions are major factors in the performance of masculinity in *Gamba la Nyoka*; age seems to be virtually on insignificant factor in this context. Kezilahabi illustrates the way men are totally emasculated by the government leaders through the depiction of the departure of the Kisole men after being punished by the DC. The narrator states:

Wakati wanaenda nyumbani njiani mvua ilianza, si muda mrefu kukawa na gharika. Walihangaika hawakuona nyumba zao. Hawakukuta familia zao pale walipoziacha...Wanyama walitetemeka kwa baridi. Ilikuwa giza, hamna vitanda, viti, wala chochote. Ilikuwa giza nene na kimya, upweke! (Kezilahabi, 1979: 46).

On their way home the heavy rain started and caused floods. They were confused because they did not find their houses and families... Their animals shivered from cold. It was dark, no beds, chairs, nothing available. It was total darkness, silence and loneliness!

The depiction above implicates itself in the feminization of Kisole men as we see them being humiliated, ruined and their lives shattered. The DC's performance of masculinity over the Kisole men affirms Connell's (2005) idea of masculinities being operated within a power differential, where certain traits and types of men are privileged and dominant over other men. The DC uses the advantage of his position to control Kisole men and their properties. He takes away their authority to be in charge of their children, wives and properties; they do not find their families at home and they do not know where they are. Through the portrayal of the DC and other government leaders, Kezilahabi reveals how the state can perform negative masculinity that intimidates and emasculates men by disrupting and rupturing their traditional roles and positioning.

In *Gamba la Nyoka*, we have also learned that the leaders use their position and power to control others through their unruly emotions. This is revealed by the author through the portrayal of the president when giving his speech to the villagers. Kezilahabi depicts the DC feeling ashamed of his disruptive masculine performances when the president tells the villagers that the intention of *Ujamaa* villages was not to coerce and brutalize people (134).

Kezilahabi illustrates further how *Ujamaa* has disrupted homesteads and traditional patriarchal structures through the conversation of patients in hospital beds. In their conversation, the male patients who are hospitalized after being brutalized by Kisole men discuss, while lamenting, how the new structures (*Ujamaa* villages) have caused the breakdown of their homesteads and social networks. These male patients claim that *Ujamaa* system has created classes in villages because rich people's houses are left untouched while the rest are forced to build new houses around them. Kezilahabi exemplifies this situation through the image of Mr Kibila's house that is not destroyed because it is big, strong and beautiful, and Mzee Milambo whose house is destroyed because of his poor status in favour of a rich person (33).

The above depiction contradicts Nyerere's principles of *Ujamaa*. Nyerere believes that human equality, state ownership of property, democracy and freedom are essentials in building *Ujamaa*, and that "all human beings are equal" (1977: 13). Contrary to these principles, the novel shows that, the act of moving men and their families from their original homesteads and mixing the two different economic clusters; rich and poor, destabilizes the social network among the vulnerable as the situation introduces superiority and inferiority complexes within *Ujamaa* villages. Men who are forced to build their houses around the rich are likely to feel inferior and intimidated by the wealthy. This situation gives rich men the opportunity to perform their masculinity over the poor. It has transferred power and strength to the rich men and made vulnerable their poor counterparts in the village. This description depicts how different levels of *Ujamaa* system has masculinized the rich men and feminized the poor men. In this case wealth has become an index of masculinity in the novel.

Furthermore, the issue of men moving from their original homesteads to *Ujamaa* villages has caused a greater loss of their livestock and land and affected their livelihoods and masculinity. Through the conversation between Mamboleo and Mambosasa, Kezilahabi explains that in the process of moving people to the *Ujamaa* villages, men are forced to leave their livestock and fertile land behind. They lament that there is no village cattle ranch whereby all men can keep their livestock (106). Apart from inadequate space for individual cattle grazing, men seem to be restricted from keeping and obtaining more livestock through purchase, trade, marriage or even counter-raiding because the *Ujamaa* system emphasizes a collective economy.

From this conversation we learn that the issue of men leaving their livestock and fertile land behind has seriously affected their economy. This situation also suggests that the customary methods that allowed men to provide for their families, consolidate wealth and acquire social status through livestock and land are phenomenally diminished. Only a few people such as the village leaders, the educated and rich men, are in a position to keep livestock because they

have access to big land holdings and have the means to exploit other villagers in their own society. Mamboleo explains:

Wengi kati ya viongozi ni wazee ambao watoto wao ni wasomi. Na wengi ndio ambao wana mashamba makubwa kuliko wengine, na ndio waliooa Wanawake wengi ambao wanawatumia kwa kulima mashamba na kuendesha maduka. (Kezilahabi, 1979: 108).

Many of the leaders are elders whose children are educated. Those are the ones who have bigger farms, and many wives who they use to work in their farms and shops.

The above quotation demonstrates further the contradictions of *Ujamaa* principles. *Ujamaa* was meant to enhance the practices of co-operation and participation, as well as communal ownership of property and to annihilate class differences (conflicts) in the society but paradoxically, the implementation entrenched the social class disparities.

Furthermore, *Gamba la Nyoka* demonstrates how poor leadership and improper procedures have led to negative effects of the construction of *Ujamaa* villages. It is through the DC's unruly masculine performances that destroy most men's personality and autonomy in the novel. The depiction of a man who intends to take revenge on the Kisole men despite his poor health condition in the hospital validates this argument. This man, who is brutalized, tormented and intimidated by the government soldiers, explains that the government strategy of making one village to harass their neighbours creates anger and hatred; and since they cannot retaliate against the government, they will continue to take revenge on their neighbours:

Hatuwezi kulipiza kisasi kwa Serikali! Tatalipiza kisasi kwa wana-Kisole! Baadae nao wakipata nafasi ya kuhamisha wengine, watalipiza nao hukohuko! (Kezilahabi, 1979: 34).

We cannot retaliate against the government! We can only do it to

Kisole men! When they have an opportunity to move others (to *Ujamaa* villages), it will be their turn to take revenge.

This argument helps us to understand, that the Bucho men's memories of humiliation and torture influence the performance of their masculinity over their neighbours. Implicitly, men's retrogressive masculine performance over other men suggests that the government's

orders and improper implementation of building *Ujamaa* villages have made men to dehumanize and emasculate one another.

***Ujamaa*: Transcending Patriarchal Ideology**

The introduction of *Ujamaa* and modernity have also changed the social and economic patterns of men in *Gamba la Nyoka* as we notice people using water tanks and bathing in bathrooms instead of going to the river (156). However, this change seems to threaten some of the old men, like Mzee Chilongo, who perceive modernity as an unwelcome interference with the traditional patriarchal way of life and men's way of happiness. He refuses to bathe at home because he believes that a river is a place where men perform their social and cultural rituals. It is a place where acts of testing manhood such as fighting snakes and crocodiles, wrestling and bull fighting are performed (156). From Mzee Chilongo's depiction, we realize that the river participates in the construction of men's masculinity.

Mzee Chilongo's refusal to bathe at home implies his rejection of feminization by the modern life style that seems to be altering traditional ways of life. For Mzee Chilongo, bathing at home undermines the aggressive nature of hegemonic masculinity. However, his persistent determination is challenged by the skin of a stretched snake that shocks him and forces him to run away naked (157). He later laughs at himself when he realizes that is not a real snake. From this portrayal, we discover contradicting aspects of his masculinity and the instability of traditional patriarchal ideology. His fears of encountering a snake's skin which makes him to run back home while naked, contradicts his notion of a real man in a conventional patriarchal situation. The fear signifies weakness. He also forgets his walking stick; an act that symbolizes his loss of his traditional patriarchal power and masculinity. This situation presents a challenge to Mzee Chilongo and his hegemonic masculine status. It also, in a way, suggests that masculinity is an unstable subject because of its very fluid nature.

From the image of a snake's skin, Kezilahabi provides a powerful symbol embedded in the title of the novel *Gamba la Nyoka* in respect to masculinity as dramatized through the depiction of Mzee Chilongo and the other men's perception of *Ujamaa*. The image of the snake's skin (*Gamba la Nyoka*) symbolically expresses the inevitable change that is brought by *Ujamaa* ideology as a national policy in Tanzania. The depiction of Mzee Chilongo

fighting a harmless snake may symbolize the old generation's rigidity in refusing to abandon their traditional patriarchal ideology and accept *Ujamaa* ideology. It may also suggest ironically, a mindset of people who take time to realize that something new might be useful to their lives. Mzee Chilongo's delay and late realization is reflected in several incidents where he deliberately refuses to accommodate *Ujamaa* ideology in his life. His confrontation with Bucho soldiers, the DC, the nurse, the adult education teacher and his refusal to shower at home all indicate this rigidity and reluctance to accept changes.

We may also argue that the metaphor of the snake's skin expresses the illusive, fluid and complex construction of men's masculinity in *Gamba la Nyoka*. A stretching of a harmless snake's skin may signify the need for the traditional patriarchal society to untie itself from its rigidity and accept a modern ideology such as *Ujamaa*. Consequently, the image suggests that masculinity is expected to embrace the changes inevitably taking place in a society; as a society changes, masculinity changes as well. Kezilahabi highlights this reality when he concludes that:

Hivyo ndivyo ilivyokuwa kwa Mzee Chilongo na wengine wa namna yake. Jamii ilikuwa imemwacha nyuma. Jamii ilikuwa imejinyambua na sasa haikuwa pale ilipokua. Jamii ilikuwa tofauti sasa na zamani. Ukale una wakati wake. Ukale unastahili kuchunguzwa; lakini haudumu milele (Kezilahabi, 1979: 158).

This was the way it was for Mzee Chilongo and others of his kind. Society had left him behind. Society had stretched itself and now it was no longer where he was. The past has its time. The past is worth being studied; but it does not last forever.

The change in *Gamba la Nyoka* affirms Connell's (1995) views that highlight the inevitability of changes in masculinity. For Connell, masculinity includes different systems that inevitably lead to internal contradictions and historical change. Connell argues that masculinity is a social pattern that must be viewed as a product of history as well as a producer of history.

From the above quotation, Kezilahabi suggests that every ideology is meaningful and significant to people who believe in it. What is needed is mutual understanding in the society for the ideology that suits the particular society.

Conclusion

In this paper, Kezilahabi, through the portrayal characters, has demonstrated that masculinity is a social construct that is subject to constant changes. The novel seems to suggest that the performance and construction of masculinity is influenced by political and cultural ideologies. The novel indicates that power is the key attribute in (de)constructing and (re)defining men's masculinity. It highlights that hierarchies are structures within which masculinity is constructed and consolidated in the society. These hierarchies and structures of power are socially maintained within and by state institutions such as schools and the armed forces. The state is thus, another factor that (de)constructs and (re)defines masculinity. The novel highlights also that conventional gender relations have to be dismantled and complemented by modern ones. This emphasizes that, for a society to build a new nation, changes are inevitable. The change underlines the mutable state of masculinity. It changes over time, within contexts, and in response to various changes in the individuals as well as in a wider community.

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