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Characters' Indications of Patriarchy and Masculinity in Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo Wa Tim*

Yohana Makeja John^{1*} and Felistas Richard Mahonge²

¹Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania.

²Department of Languages and Communication Skills, Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College (TUDARCo), Tanzania.

Tel: +255 713986559/784447464. E-mail: felistas.mahonge@tudarco.ac.tz/kombofelistas@gmail.com.

*Corresponding author. Email: yohana.john@out.ac.tz/yohanajohn122@gmail.com. Tel: +255 785544044/754281895.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how patriarchy and masculinity are constructed and represented in Ebrahim Hussein's plays *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Tim*, with the aim of understanding the interplay between these gendered concepts within the sociocultural contexts of the texts. The central research question guiding the study is: How do Hussein's characters reflect and reinforce patriarchal and masculine ideals, and what implications do these portrayals have on societal norms and individual behaviour? Grounded in Connell's (1995) Gender Order Theory and Butler's (1990) Gender Performativity Theory, the study adopts a qualitative approach under a constructivist paradigm. Primary data were drawn from close textual analysis of the two plays, supported by secondary data from scholarly literature on gender representation in African drama, particularly in Hussein's works. Findings indicate that both patriarchy and masculinity are socially constructed and interdependent, with patriarchal systems often reinforcing hegemonic and toxic forms of masculinity. These manifestations contribute to broader societal harms, including gender-based violence, substance abuse, mental health challenges, and systemic inequalities in inheritance and property ownership. The study recommends critical engagement with gender norms through literature and education, the promotion of alternative masculinities, and policy interventions that challenge patriarchal structures in cultural and legal systems.

Keywords: African Drama, gender, masculinity, patriarchy, social constructs, toxic masculinity.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of gender—broadly defined as the socially and culturally constructed roles, behaviours, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for individuals based on their perceived sex—can be traced back to early theoretical developments such as Robert Stoller's Gender Identity Theory (GIT) in 1964. GIT marked one of the earliest formal attempts to conceptualise masculinity, linking gender identity directly to biological sex (Bonatti *et al.*, 2019). According to

Stoller, a “healthy” and “well-adjusted” individual experiences no divergence between biological sex and gender identity, thereby reinforcing the traditional view that gender is a natural and inevitable extension of one's anatomy (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2019). Consequently, masculinity, often defined as a set of attributes, behaviours, and roles associated with boys and men, has historically been understood as biologically determined and synonymous with manhood across various global

cultures, including those in East Africa, Tanzania, and Kenya (Mlambo-Ngcuka, *ibid.*).

In contrast, contemporary theories in gender studies challenged these biologically essentialist views. In 1990, Judith Butler introduced the Gender Performativity Theory, which posits that gender is not an inherent identity but a repeated performance shaped by social and cultural norms. According to Butler (1990), being born male or female does not inherently dictate one's behaviour; instead, gender is enacted through repeated behaviours and social performances. This idea was expanded upon in 1995 by Raewyn Connell through the Gender Order Theory, which argues that masculinity is a social construct shaped by historical, cultural, and personal contexts rather than by biology (Connell, 1995). Connell further identified multiple forms of masculinity, which evolve over time and across social settings (Connell, *ibid.*).

From these theoretical perspectives, masculinity can be viewed not as a fixed trait but as a social construct—an idea or notion that appears natural or obvious to those who accept it but is actually an invention of a particular culture or society. Masculinity encompasses a range of traits traditionally linked to male identity, such as strength, assertiveness, leadership, and independence (Olali, 2015). However, these expectations differ across cultures and are influenced by shifting socio-political dynamics (Olali, *ibid.*). Connell's theory highlights variations in masculinity, such as hegemonic, progressive, patriarchal, conventional, and toxic masculinity. The latter, toxic masculinity, refers to cultural norms that emphasise aggression, emotional repression, dominance over others, especially women, and resistance to seeking help, leading to harmful behaviours such as sexual violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, and domestic violence (Butler, 1990).

Patriarchy, closely related to masculinity, refers to a social system in which men hold primary power, dominating roles in leadership, moral authority, and control over property and social privilege (Safire, 2022). Patriarchy often supports and is reinforced by hegemonic masculinity, perpetuating gender inequalities and limiting both men's and women's roles in society (Makeja & Kilatu, 2025).

In the realm of literature, particularly African drama, these themes are frequently explored. African drama can be defined as a genre of performance rooted in African oral traditions, colonial and postcolonial histories, and contemporary social experiences (Chabari, 2009). It often functions as a mirror to societal structures, reflecting issues of gender, power, and identity. Despite the rich literary engagement with gender, many works in film, literature, cartoons, and oral storytelling—from Hollywood to Bongo movies, tend to reproduce traditional gender norms, often overlooking the contradictions between

masculinity and patriarchy (Chabari, *ibid.*).

In Tanzania, writers have explored masculinity in varying ways, though few have explicitly analysed its intersection with patriarchy. For instance, Euphrase Kezilahabi's *Rosa Mistika* (1971) depicts a traditional man who exercises masculine dominance by mistreating his wife and family, yet fails to meet the basic expectations of a patriarch, such as providing for the household. Other Tanzanian works that address masculinity and patriarchy include Ibrahim Ngozi's *Machosi ya Mwanamke* (1977), Emmanuel Mbogo's *Tone la Mwisho* (1981), Penina Muhando's *Nguzo Mama* (1982) and *Heshima Yangu* (1974), Elieshi Lema's *Parched Earth* (2001), and Said Mohamed's *Babu Alipofufuka* (2001), *Dunia Yao* (Mohamed, 2006), and *Nyuso za Mwanamke* (Mohamed, 2010). These texts often portray men and women through a traditional lens, illustrating how cultural expectations of masculinity and patriarchy influence personal and social behaviour. However, Ebrahim Hussein's plays *Kinjeketile* (1969) and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* (1988) stand out by presenting a nuanced exploration of both masculinity and patriarchy, showing how these identities are performed by characters in both traditional and modern contexts. Hussein's work critically examines how certain patriarchal norms are contested by modernist perspectives, allowing for a broader interpretation of gender roles.

Given this background, it becomes essential to investigate how male and female characters in Hussein's plays embody and challenge the constructs of masculinity and patriarchy. This study, therefore, analyses the representation of patriarchy and masculinity in *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* to explore how the two concepts intersect and influence individual behaviour and societal structures within the plays.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sources of Data

Ebrahim Hussein has authored ten plays, which are *Kinjeketile* (1969a), *Alikiona* (1969b), *Wakati Ukuta* (Hussein, 1969c), *Michezo ya Kuigiza* (Hussein, 1970), *Mashetani* (Hussein, 1971), *Arusi* (Hussein, 1980), *Jambo la Maana* (Hussein, 1982), *Jogoo Kijijini*, *Ngao ya Jaji* (Hussein, 1987), *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* (Hussein, 1988), and *Ujamaa* (unpublished). This study focuses specifically on two of his plays, *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*, which were selected purposefully. The selection of *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* for this study was guided by several considerations. First, the plays offer a rich opportunity to explore the representation of patriarchy and masculinity, key aspects of gender, through the lens of a single author. Ebrahim

Hussein was selected as the primary literary figure for this investigation due to his significant contribution to the discourse on gender and social structures through drama. Second, although Cyprian (2017), focused primarily on language use in *Kinjeketile*, his work provided an academic entry point for further examination of the plays. This study therefore, extends the scope by shifting attention from linguistic analysis to gender representation, particularly the depiction of patriarchy and masculinity in political, social, and economic contexts. Third, the two plays remain under-examined in scholarly discourse, specifically in relation to how characters, regardless of their sex, perform masculinity in diverse situations. This gap in critical attention further justifies the selection of these texts for focused analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed a descriptive case study design on *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Tim*, from whose primary data was collected. The selection of this design was a result of the nature of this study in the field of literature, as it needs detailed descriptions, elaborations, explanations and definitions of the performances and traits of characters. From each of the two plays, all words, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs that describe characters' appearances, themes, actions, images, symbols used in the plays, or interpretations related to patriarchy and masculinity were collected and analysed. A close reading method was employed to collect data from the two plays. The content analysis method and the selected tenets of Connell's Gender Order Theory and Butler's Gender Performativity Theory were jointly used in the data analysis process.

In doing the content analysis, the researcher started by choosing the texts that he analysed based on his research objectives. In this case, *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Tim* by Hussein were chosen. The categories of analysis were in two sets. The first set consisted of the stereotypical masculine attributes, which included independence, aggression, strength, competitiveness, courage, bravery, sexual aggressiveness, emotionless, leadership, dominance, decisiveness, adventurous, egotistical and assertiveness. The second set of categories of analysis consisted of the types of masculinity, which included positive, heterosexual, progressive, negative/toxic, retrogressive, messianic, patriarchal, traditional, and hegemonic masculinity. Thirdly, the researcher developed a set of rules for coding. Under this step each category of analysis was assigned a distinct colour, and all the units of analysis that fell under that category were given that same colour as their code. In the fourth stage, the researcher used the coded texts to present the results in tables of ordinal

numbers and descriptively analysed them in line with the selected tenets of Connell's Gender Order Theory and Butler's Gender Performativity Theory while drawing conclusions. In this process, the results are presented in tables of ordinal numbers, and explanations, elaborations, and descriptions are used to interpret and analyse the themes, actions of characters, images, symbols, pictorial illustrations, words or speeches, and interpretations related to gender and masculinity, in particular, that were obtained in the data collected from the two plays.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Characters' indications of patriarchy and masculinity performance in Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Tim*

In examining characters' indications of patriarchy and masculinity performance in the plays, the study considered the different types of masculinity performed by both male and female characters, as presented in Table 1.

In Table 1, the findings show different types of masculinity, like positive, negative/toxic, heterosexual, progressive, hegemonic, retrogressive, messianic, patriarchal, and traditional masculinity. There were also incidences of intra-gender masculinity, which fell under the above main types. These different types of masculinity refer to the different ways through which one may perform masculinity. The characters that were portrayed to perform masculinity in both of the plays were thirty-two (as listed in Table 1) out of thirty-nine. Each of the thirty-two male and female characters listed in Table 1 was portrayed to perform one or more types of masculinity. Positive masculinity was performed twenty-three times by twenty-three characters: nineteen males and four females. Heterosexual masculinity was performed five times by five male characters only. Progressive masculinity was performed seven times by seven characters: three males and four females. Negative and toxic masculinity were performed five times by five male characters only. Hegemonic masculinity was performed eleven times by eleven male characters only. Retrogressive masculinity was performed four times by four male characters only. Messianic masculinity was performed once by only one male character. Patriarchal masculinity was performed nine times by six male characters only. Traditional masculinity was performed twenty-three times by twenty characters; twenty-one male and two female characters. Patriarchal masculinity was performed by male characters only, and no female character was portrayed to perform negative/toxic masculinity. All four female characters were portrayed to

Table 1. Different types of masculinity performed by both male and female characters.

Character	Sex	Play	Type of masculinity and number of times the character performed								
			Positive	Heterosexual	Progressive	Negative & Toxic	Hegemonic	Retrogressive	Messianic	Patriarchal	Traditional
Men of the People's Army	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1	1	1		1			1	1
Mnyapala	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>		1		1	1				
Representative of Zaramo	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1		1						1
Kitunda	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Ngulumbalyo	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1				1				1
Mkichi	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Mngindo	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Askari	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>		1		1	1	1			1
Kinjeketile	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>					1		1	2	1
Kitunda's son	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
First Old Man	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Second Old Man	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Third Old Man	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
First Soldier	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Second Soldier	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Third Soldier	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
Kibasila	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1								1
German Officer	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>				1	1				1
Chausiku	F	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1		1						1
Bibi Kitunda	F	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1		1						1
Third Man	M	<i>Kinjeketile</i>		1							1
Herbert	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1		1					1	
George	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>				1	1	1		3	1
Mzee	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>				1	1	1		1	
Mwanakijiji	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>		1							
Mfanyakazi I	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1								
Mfanyakazi II	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1								
D.C	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1				1				1
P.S	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1				1				1
Martha	F	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1		1						
Jean	F	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1		1						
Uncle Ben	M	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>					1	1		1	
TOTAL	32	2 PLAYS	23	05	07	05	11	04	01	09	23

Source: Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*.

perform positive and progressive masculinity, and two of them were portrayed to perform traditional masculinity. The two characters that indicated the practice of patriarchal masculinity also indicated the performance of

other types of masculinity, revealing that patriarchy and other types of masculinity are closely related.

The study also considered the sex of the characters, their marital status, age, and the number of times a

character indicated both patriarchal and other types of masculinity, as presented in Table 2. According to Aggarwal (2016) and Archana (2016), the indicators of patriarchy and patriarchal masculinity are mainly three: active discrimination of women, the marriage system, and the economic value of women. On the other hand, the indicative traits of masculinity include being independent, aggressive, strong, competitive, courageous, brave, sexually aggressive, being less emotional, demonstrating leadership behaviour, being dominant, decisive, adventurous, egotistical, and assertive (Harris, 2021; Olali, 2015). Table 2 shows clearly how patriarchy and masculinity were indicated by the male and female characters in Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*.

The findings in Table 2 reveal that all five characters that indicated patriarchal masculinity also indicated other types of masculinity, like heterosexual, hegemonic, and traditional masculinities that are mainly socially constructed, giving a clue to the idea that patriarchy is also a result of social constructs. The findings also reveal that the five characters that indicated patriarchal masculinity were all male and married. No female character was portrayed to perform patriarchal masculinity, giving a clue to the idea that patriarchy is pre-dominated by men, and mostly married men. Age was also considered, and the findings reveal that all five characters portrayed to perform patriarchal and other types of masculinity were either mature or old. This finding also leads to the idea that the practice of patriarchy is championed by the matured or old men. Patriarchal masculinity was generally indicated eight times by the five characters, as shown in Table 2, while the other types of masculinity were, in total, indicated seventeen times by the same.

Through the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data findings in Table 2, the researcher found that Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* dramatise a society that is truly patriarchal. Men are heads of families and have predominant power over all the affairs of their homes and families. Women are forced to listen to men in everything they want to do or whatever they want to be done. Women have to stay at home and do all the activities related to family care and children's upbringing, while men have to do outdoor activities. When wives make mistakes, their husbands can punish them in several ways they deem appropriate, even beating them. In contrast, when husbands make mistakes, their wives cannot punish them by any means. They have to tolerate and forgive them. Wives are also told to avoid peering into their husbands' affairs too closely as a sign of being a good-mannered woman. As a result, a man who tolerates mistreatment is referred to as a woman, as Mkichi says to *Kinjeketile*:

Udongo mwekundu bado yupo nchini kwetu. Bado zaidi amechukua nchi yetu. Ameichukua kwa nguvu. Sisi kama wanawake tunantazama tu. Anatulimisha kwa nguvu. Sisi tunantazama tu. Anatudai kodi. Sisi tunantazama tu. Anatudai sisi kodi? Ilikuwa sisi tumdai yeye kodi, lakini apana! Sisi kama wanawake tumekaa tunantazama....

The Red Earth is still in our country. What's more, he has taken our country from us by force. And we, like women, just stare at him. Now he has forced us to cultivate his cotton plantation for him. We just stare at him. He has got us paying him taxes. We just stare at him. Is it for him to demand taxes from us? He should be paying us taxes, but oh no! We, like women, just meekly sit, watching him do what he wants with us... (Hussein, 1969a: 5).

The above short speech by Mkichi indicates patriarchal masculinity and affirms Connell and Butler's notions that patriarchal masculinity emphasises the superiority of masculinity over femininity and the supremacy of men over women. Mkichi complains that men are just looking at the wrong deeds of the Red Earth (the Germans) as if they are women. This means that in a patriarchal society, reacting violently against mistreatment does not befit a woman; it befits a man. Non-involvement of women in the fight against the Red Earth is an indication of patriarchal masculinities and ideologies. In addition, the response of men to Mngindo's speech affirms the predominance of patriarchal ideologies when he calls his fellow men to stand for war against the Red Earth, disinvolving women, and a large group of only men is proud and call themselves "men of war," as briefly stated below:

Mngindo: *Tumuondoe – Tukate shauli sasa hivi – Vita. Akuna jingine.*

Wanaume: (Wanaitikia kwa pamoja) *Maji! Maji! Maji! Ua! Ua! Ua! Sisi ni wanaume halisi! Wanaume wa vita!*

Mngindo: Let us kick him out! Let us decide now. There is only one way-any armed struggle-a war! There is no other way.

Men: (They respond in unison) *Maji! Maji! Maji! Kill! Kill! Kill! We are real men! Men of war! (Hussein, 1969a: 5).*

In a patriarchal system like the one exemplified in the above quotation, women do not go to war because they are perceived not to be better fitted for it. Men are the ones to wage physical fights. Hussein reveals the same in *Kinjeketile*. As portrayed in the above quotation, women did not participate in physical fights during the Maji Maji War. Only men fought the war as part of necessarily performing patriarchal masculinity, leaving their wives and children at home.

Table 2. Indications of patriarchal and other types of masculinity in Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*.

S/N.	Character	Sex	Marital status (Married/ Single/ Unknown)	Age (Old/ Matured/ Young)	Name of Play	Number of times he/she indicated patriarchal and other types of masculinity performance).	
						Patriarchal masculinity	Other types of masculinity
1.	Men of the People's Army	Male	Married	Matured	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	1	5
2.	Kinjeketile	Male	Married	Matured	<i>Kinjeketile</i>	2	3
3.	George	Male	Married	Matured	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	3	4
4.	Mzee	Male	Married	Old	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1	3
5.	Uncle Ben	Male	Married	Matured	<i>Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim</i>	1	2
TOTAL	05				02	8 times	17 times

Source: Hussein's *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*.

Furthermore, patriarchy advocates for men to protect women and not for women to protect men. Bibi Kitunda expressed this notion in her speech to the villagers who did not help her when Bibi Kitunda, Kitunda, and Chausiku fought against Mnyapala and the Askari when they wanted to forcefully take Chausiku for sexual pleasure. The villagers did not help them; instead, they just watched the fight from a distance and slowly came around to help after the fight was over (Hussein, 1969a). To rebuke them, Bibi Kitunda says:

Tokeni! Tokeni, wanawake wakubwa nyie! Vijitu viwili vinawatisheni nyinyi nyote. Mmetawaliwa miili mpaka mioyo. Eti nyinyi wanaume kweli. Kweli Wamatumbi. Hata kidogo. Wanawake tu, nyinyi! Mnalimishwa-ndiyo. Wake zenu wanachukuliwa-ndiyo. Watoto wenu wanachukuliwa-ndiyo. Watu wa ndiyo...

Get out! Get out of here, you women, you. Two little men were enough to scare the whole lot of you. You have been enslaved body and spirit. Do you still regard yourselves as men? Do you call yourselves Wamatumbi? Oh, not at all. You are mere women, you! You're forced to dig-yes. Your children are seized-yes. You are 'yes' men...(Hussein, 1969a: 10).

The above quotation affirms Butler and Connell's views of the supremacy of masculinity over femininity. Cowardice, which is manifested by saying 'yes' to everything, is stated as the quality of femininity, and it is discredited in a patriarchal society like Hussein's as exemplified by Bibi Kitunda's words above. On the contrary, reacting against the mistreatment of any kind is regarded as masculinity and is appreciated. In the context of the above speech by

Bibi Kitunda, masculinity is stated to be superior to femininity. The researcher, therefore, agrees with Archana (2016), Butler (1990), and Connell's (1995) view that the supremacy of masculinity over femininity; the inferiority of femininity to masculinity, is a necessary indicator of a society that embraces patriarchal masculinity as performed in *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*.

Similar to *Kinjeketile*'s dramatisation, Hussein's *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* also dramatises a society that is typically patriarchal. Families are headed by men and they have predominant power over all the affairs of their homes and families. Married women are culturally and traditionally obliged to listen to their husbands in everything they want to do or whatever they want to be done. This is reflected in the play when Martha rebukes her son, Chris, as follows:

Lakini utakuwa kweli wewe, ukawa mtu hasa wa kukutegemea? Baba zima. Litazame. Utaweza kushika madaraka ya aina yoyote wewe? Utaweza kusimama mahali pa baba yako? Kuo na kumtiisha mwanamke chini ya kauli yako?

Will you really grow, to become a really dependable man? A grown-up man. Look at him. Will you be able to hold any authoritative position? Will you be able to stand your father's position? To marry and keep a woman under your say? (Hussein, 1988: 24-25).

The above Martha's questions to Chris show that in her society, women depend on men. As a result of such a cultural construct, Chris is expected to grow into a dependable man who can take his father's position and

hold an authoritative position as well. Since Martha speaks in line with the cultural constructs of her society, this argument, therefore, keeps in line with one of the key ideas of Connell's (1995) Gender Order Theory, which states that masculinity is socially constructed through performances or roles. Donald (2015), along with Makeja and Kilatu (2025), reinforces the notion of socially and culturally prescribed male roles by asserting that "there are no more important roles for a man than the roles of husband and father. As men seek to righteously fulfil these roles, they become more like their Father in Heaven." However, the researcher holds an opposing view, arguing that there are no justifiable circumstances under which a woman or a man should be treated differently based on their gender. The researcher maintains that, because men and women are inherently equal, they should be treated as such in all spheres of life, including both the public and domestic domains. For instance, within the home, men and women should share family and household responsibilities equally, and neither should exercise control or dominance over the other.

Furthermore, women in both *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* and *Kinjeketile* are portrayed as people who have to stay at home and do all the activities related to family care and children's upbringing, while men have to do outdoor activities. Due to this patriarchal division of labour, men are free to move anywhere under the umbrella of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, while women have very limited freedom of movement. In *Kinjeketile*, Bibi Kinjeketile, Bibi Kitunda, Chausiku and the rest of the women are portrayed as people who mainly stay at home and do all the activities related to family care and children's upbringing. They do not go outside their village to do any outdoor business, while men freely move outside their villages, districts, and regions for outdoor activities and even go to nightclubs. As an expression of their discontentment with this unhealthy patriarchal practice, Martha in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* is portrayed lamenting to Pastor:

...Kwa mwanamume ni rahisi. Anakwenda klabu, na mwanamke mwingine. Anacheka, anajipumbaza. Anafurahi na wenziwe, rafiki zake. Mwanamke kufanya hivyo hawezi. Ndiyo mwanzo kupewa jina baya....

For men it is simple. ... He goes to nightclubs with a different woman. He laughs, he fools himself. He enjoys being with his fellows, his friends. A woman cannot do so. It's the beginning of being given a bad name. (Hussein, 1988: 30).

The above portrayal reveals the real situation in Hussein's society: how men are free at the expense of women's lack of freedom and are highly restricted in several ways. It also shows how women are not

comfortable with the above-described situation. In describing the relationship between wives and husbands in most African countries, Donald (2015) and John (2023a) comment that African cultural constructs determine masculinity and femininity, as also stated in Connell's Gender Order Theory. These constructs result in greater freedom for men, limited freedom for women, and the violation of women's rights. To show the magnitude of the problem, he adds that in most African countries, it is acceptable for men to cheat on their wives or have as many wives as they wish, but completely unacceptable for women, as also portrayed in the above Martha's lamentations. Hussein uses Martha to show women's dissatisfaction and discontentment towards such men's unhealthy behaviours. The researcher also joins hands with Hussein as he critiques the cultural constructs and norms that lead to treating men and women unequally. The researcher uses this study to suggest that both genders should not be treated differently on the sole basis of their gender, and this applies to all fields of life.

Furthermore, the above Martha's speech also reveals that in a patriarchal way of living, women are expected to conform to traditional standards of patriarchy. Those who try to act like men, moving around like men, are regarded to have broken the patriarchal codes of society and considered irresponsible mothers because they spend less time taking care of their children and husbands. As a result, such women are given bad names.

In *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*, Hussein also expressed that women are denied the right to inherit land and property they acquired with their husbands. This is clearly portrayed by the decision by George and the Umma Clan to go to Martha's house with the intention to take all the property therein since her husband, who was George's brother, has died. Martha, however, did not agree with them and decided to fight for herself with the help of her bulldog, Elsa (Hussein, 1988: 29).

The researcher, therefore, noted that most of the portrayals in both *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* reveal how women are badly treated in a typical patriarchal and masculine world, a context or a culture that is dominated by a masculine worldview, including traditional masculine values. As Donald (2015), Jones (2018), and Acosta (2019) state that traditionally perceived masculine values are assertiveness, materialism, and less concern for others, Hussein also uses Martha and Lydia in the above two portrayals to show how women are involved in the accumulation of the family's wealth but are denied the right to inherit such wealth since their husbands embrace masculine values of being assertive, materialistic, and giving less concern for women. Women are, therefore, portrayed as sufferers in a masculine world. The masculine world thinks that women just deserve to be given fragrance, clothes, good

things, and sweet words, and not property like houses and land. These are women with a room, not a house (Hussein, 1988: 36). On the other hand, few women are luckily given a name, children, and wealth, defined as women with a house (Hussein, 1988: 36). Their fortune depends on the new awareness of their husbands or the relatives of their husbands. However, Hussein uses Martha, a woman who is aware that it is her right to inherit her husband's property, who decides to fight for her own rights with the use of a gun and her bulldog – Elsa. The researcher finds it important to note that Martha's determination to fight for her own rights is, therefore, a clear message to all women living in a masculine world to rise up and fight against all the socio-cultural constructs and values that undermine them and lead to giving less concern for them.

The obtained data also reveals the common practices of a society that is typically patriarchal, with a widespread conventional knowledge that masculinity is superior to femininity. Men inherit land and property from their biological fathers, but women are socially alienated from inheritance because they are expected to get married and move to their husbands' families. Briefly, Martha and Lydia's speeches in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* (Hussein, 1988: 30 & 36) are a manifestation of how masculinity in the traditional setup is performed. However, Hussein implies the interrogated masculinity in a traditional setup through the portrayal of a few formally educated women like Martha, who challenge the patriarchal codes and fight for themselves against the unfair patriarchal norms, a manifestation of how patriarchal masculinity is imagined by the modern generation of educated women and men. Hussein presents the two generations, the old and the new, as having different perceptions of the performance of patriarchal masculinity. The old generation of mostly uneducated women, represented by Lydia in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* and Bibi Kinjeketile and Bibi Kitunda in *Kinjeketile*, is portrayed to be unsatisfied by the performances of patriarchal masculinity but tolerates it, while the new generation of mostly educated women, represented by Martha in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*, is unsatisfied and not ready to tolerate the unhealthy performances of patriarchal masculinity, like denying women their right to own properties like land and houses, and all other performances that manifest lack of equality between men and women as directly associated with masculinity and femininity, respectively. This generation opts to fight for themselves to eliminate the effects of the performance of patriarchal masculinity. The new generation of educated men is also portrayed to be in support of the new generation of educated women, as Hussein portrays Hubert in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*, who is very comfortable seeing his wife (Martha) intending to buy and possess a plot of land in Mombasa and goes to see it as family property. Hussein portrays Herbert saying:

...*Martha anataka kununua kiwanja Mombasa. Itabidi nikakiangalie....*

...Martha wants to buy a plot in Mombasa. I'll have to see it... (Hussein, 1988:4).

Inequality in ownership and inheritance of land and property also indicates the performance of patriarchal masculinity, which also leads to the inherent inequality faced by women within households, communities, and society. In most parts of the world, patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage. In such patriarchal settings, the role is vested in the older male members of a community. In this way, ownership and control of land and property constitute essential validation of social, economic, and political autonomy for individuals as well as communities (Connell, 2005; Zajdow, 2011; Safire, 2022). Hussein's *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* portrays how patriarchal masculinity manifests itself through property ownership and inheritance in patriarchal societies. Hussein portrays George, who believes that women have no right to inherit their husbands' property. With such a belief, he takes the gun left by his dead brother (Herbert) and gives it to Chris (Herbert's stepson), meaning that Martha cannot inherit her husband's gun. The gun is, however, used as a symbol of power and protection of property. This gun belonged to Herbert's father, who also inherited it from his father. It was then inherited by Herbert, and now it is given to Chris, meaning that property and power inheritance in this patriarchal society is only a man's right. The following is George's speech to Stella, followed by Stella's speech to Chris, affirms the above description:

George: ...*baba alipewa bunduki hii na babu...* (Hussein, 1988:6).

Stella: *George amenipa bunduki hii. Ameniambia nikupe. (Anampa Chris. Ni bunduki ile ile ya ukoo...).* (Hussein, 1988:39).

George: ... my father was given this gun by my grandfather.... (Hussein, 1988:6).

Stella: George has given me this gun. He has told me to give you. (*She gives it to Chris. It's the same clan's gun*). (Hussein, 1988:39).

In most societies and literature, a gun is a symbol or icon of power. In this study, therefore, possessing a gun is an indication of powerful masculinity, and the inheritance of the gun among the male lineage only indicates male-dominated patriarchal masculinity. Through the above-given data, Hussein implies that patriarchal ideology is hegemonic and therefore determines the structure of the lineage. Women cannot inherit power in a society that is dominated by patriarchal ideology. In the above

representation, the men whom Herbert represents, George and Chris, still occupy the hegemonic patriarchal position. They still occupy this dominating position in this society and the families therein. They are still the occupant, the patriarch. In this sense, therefore, patriarchal masculinity is performed by men. Women usually suffer from the effects of patriarchal masculinity, such as the perpetuation of toxic masculinity, which leads to sexual assault, sexual aggression, substance abuse, negative mental health, domestic violence, and negative parenting techniques and expectations (Butler, 1990; Connell, 2005; John, 2023b).

Denial of women's possession and inheritance of property also indicates patriarchal masculinity. Hussein portrays women who lament society's tendency to rob them of their rights to possess land, children, and wealth. They disapprove of men's tendency to just give them sweet words, clothes, fragrances, and other small things but deny them their basic rights to possess land, children, and wealth. This shows that they are not even satisfied by the patriarchal tendency of naming children on a patrilineal basis. Through Lydia's speech in Hussein (1988: 36), the playwright identifies two types of women: the fortunate ones who are given names, children, and wealth, and the unfortunate ones who are given sweet words, clothes, fragrances, and other small things. Lydia is among the second group of women, those who own just a room, not a house. She sets herself as an example since she owns golden bracelets, golden earrings, and a golden necklace, but she does not count herself as a co-owner of their family's most expensive property—the house. Lydia is, therefore, a good example of how women suffer from the practices of patriarchal masculinity. Lydia's lamentations as portrayed in Hussein (1988: 36) are affirmed by Isis *et al.* (2018) and the World Bank (2018), who state that a released World Bank working paper named Gender gaps in property ownership in sub-Saharan Africa explores female property ownership across the African continent, uses data from 28 sub-Saharan African countries, and finds that, as a result of practising hegemonic patriarchal masculinity, women are significantly less likely to own property (land and houses), and women with higher levels of education are more likely to be property owners as a result of their deliberate attempts at dismantling the strict patriarchal codes. Hussein reveals to the public of Tanzanians and Kenyans the fact that women's ownership, use, and control over property matter for their well-being and agency and can influence outcomes for the second generation—women's daughters and sons—as exemplified by Martha in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim*. However, the researcher is of the view that women cannot easily break out of these existing patriarchal codes unless they take the initiative to free themselves from such unhealthy bondage, and the society at large

(including men) supports such women's struggles.

Another indicator of patriarchy is the continued dominance and authority of a husband's relatives over the married woman and her family, as stated in Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity and Connell's Gender Order Theory. Hussein portrays a patriarchal society in which the husband's male relatives exercise dominance and authority over their relative's wife and children even after the death of their relative. Hussein's *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* dramatises such a patriarchal norm through George (Herbert's brother), who wants to control Martha (his dead brother's wife) even after Herbert's death. This is portrayed through the following dialogue between Martha and George:

George: *Nimekuja kuchukua hati...*

Martha: *Sina hati....*

George: *Utamzika wapi?*

Martha: *Hapa! Pale.*

George: *Hakikisha.*

Martha: *Usinifokee. Kama unataka kufoka nenda nyumbani kwako.*

George: *Bado hujaelewa. Nyinyi muko ndani ya madaraka yangu.*

Martha: *Katika nyumba hii wewe huna madaraka yoyote! Tena tafadhali ondoka.*

George: I've come to take the burial permit...

Martha: I don't have ...

George: Where do you want to bury him?

Martha: Here! There.

George: Prove.

Martha: Don't shout at me! If you want to shout, go to your home.

George: You still don't understand. You are under my authority.

Martha: You don't have any authority in this house! And please leave. (Hussein 1988:28)

As portrayed in the above dialogue between Martha and George, contrary to George's expectations, Martha refused to be controlled by her brother-in-law, knowing that he had no authority over his dead brother's home. This is an indication that some women who are self-conscious, including formally educated women like Martha, do not accept and follow some of the bad norms practised in patriarchal societies. Martha disagreed with being under the control of George after Herbert's death, and her speech demonstrated the knowledge that she had full authority in her home after the death of her husband. Through the portrayal of this performance of masculinity between a man (George) and a woman (Martha), which is typically a masculine contest, Hussein attempted to make a statement that both men and women have masculine traits of protectiveness, competitiveness, aggressiveness and assertiveness,

which are demonstrated when necessary. This manifestation is respectively in line with two of the main tenets of both Connell's Gender Order Theory and Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity, which state that masculinity is socially constructed through performances and that there is an obvious difference between gender and sex, and one does not depend on the other since gender is just performative.

In addition, Hussein portrays Bibi Kitunda in *Kinjeketile* and Martha in *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* as self-conscious women who strongly fought for their rights. However, Martha could not overcome the whole of the Umma Klan by herself. She tried her best to fight for her right to inherit her own family's property after the death of her husband but failed because the rest of the society supported patriarchal traditions. She was disappointed and desperate because nobody supported her. In the end, she angrily and desperately gave a long speech to her son (Chris), which portrayed how women (and their children) in some patriarchal traditions lose everything after the death of their husbands. She says:

...Unajua maana ya kuachiwa kichwa cha tembo? Haujui. Basi baba yako katuachia kichwa cha tembo. Tumewinda pamoja. Jamaa zake amewapa meno na usinga. Na sisi ametuachia kichwa cha tembo. Sasa naelewa kwanini hakutia saini hati. Mwenyekiti sasa hivi anatayarisha mazishi ya Herbert.... Anataka kumzika Herbert na kuandikisha kila kitu katika jina la Umma Klan. Kila kitu. Nyumba, viwanja, gari, fanicha, kila kitu. Unavyotuona sisi hapa ni maskini. Ndiyo maisha ya mwanamke. Unapoteza mume. Unapoteza maisha. Unapoteza kila kitu.

...Do you know what it means to be left with the elephant's head? You don't. Your father has, therefore, left us with the elephant's head. We've hunted together. He has given the ivory teeth and tail tuft to his relatives. And he has left us with the elephant's head. Now I know why he didn't sign the title deed. The chairman is now getting everything ready for Herbert's burial.... He wants to bury Herbert and write everything in the name of the Umma Klan. Everything. House, plots, car, furniture, everything. As you see us here, we're poor. That's a woman's life. You lose husband. You lose life. You lose everything. (Hussein, 1988: 25).

The above Martha's speech also suggested that Herbert had betrayed his family at the expense of fulfilling patriarchal norms. The family members all worked hard and acquired all the possessions, but Herbert intentionally did not sign the title deed nor write the family possessions in the name of his family in order to give room for the patriarchal traditions to decide. This was a betrayal to his wife and the rest of his family members. Such hegemonic masculinity is unhealthy and awful and

demotivates married African women because it portrays expectations of loss in every possession, especially houses and landed properties, at the death or divorce of their husbands. This study, therefore, makes a call for both men and women to wake up from the cultural sleep, in which inequality between men and women is maintained through patriarchal norms, to a new system of life in which there is equality between men and women.

CONCLUSIONS

In examining characters' indications of patriarchy and masculinity in the plays, the findings show that both patriarchy and masculinity are social constructs. There is no single society in the world that originally, out of creation, started life with masculinity and patriarchy as ways of affecting life performances. Therefore, patriarchy and masculinity have their roots in socially constructed traditional values and norms that necessarily shape the behaviours of people. Patriarchy fosters men's legitimacy to hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and property control, both publicly and privately. Some of the traditional patriarchal practices are good, and some are bad. The analysis of data from both *Kinjeketile* and *Kwenye Ukingo wa Thim* revealed that societies that are patriarchal are also patrilineal. Patriarchal masculinity is normally manifested as a performance by men. Women are, on the other hand, sufferers of some negative patriarchal performances and practices. The analysis of the data also revealed that some patriarchal masculinity performances affect many aspects of life, including political leadership, management of the business, religious institutions, economic systems and ownership of property, right down to the family home where men are considered to be the heads of the households and women as part of men's ownership, not as men's co-partners. Patriarchy is, therefore, the source of gender inequality. It is opposed to modernity, which fosters gender equality and harmony between wife and husband. The analysis shows that society is divided into two sides: the patriarchs, who live in accordance with traditional patriarchal norms and values, and the modernists, who foster modern practices that embrace equality and harmony between men and women. From the above findings, the researchers affirm Connell and Butler's views that patriarchy benefits no one and that society should change its perception on the definition of men and women. The society should work to dismantle the unfriendly patriarchal norms and values and replace them with norms and values that will increase understanding of human well-being throughout the entire community. The society should discourage individualism, materialism, and status-seeking that result from unhealthy patriarchal

practices. The researchers are of the view that families, communities and societies that are truly peaceful, united, and harmonious can be made if disruptive patriarchy is dismantled.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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