

**GENDER MICROAGGRESSION MOTIF
IN FILMS FEATURING STEVEN KANUMBA**

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*A Research Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the
Degree of Master of Arts in the School of Visual and Performing Arts of Kenyatta University.*

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Declaration

This Research Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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Dedication

To my late Mum, with alot of love; my late Dad, for the beautiful memories. To my wife, the angel in my life; and our children, Ellaine, Branson and Frank – much love.

Acknowledgement

This work is the fruit of many generous people, who committed their time and wisdom to keep me on the right path when it was so hard to do so. I first acknowledge my family for their love during all the tough hours that went into the work. It was beautiful to know that you were there for me when it mattered so much. I would also like to appreciate my university Supervisors, Dr. John Mugubi and Dr. Rachael Diang'a, very amazing mentors and academic friends who helped me walk this path successfully. I appreciate especially your timely leadership and availability to guide me every time I needed you. God bless you.

In the course of the analysis, the study has included various photos within its discussions. These photos have been clipped from the actual footage of the films to help foster a more productive discussion about the subject of gender and microaggression discourses within the selected films. Unless otherwise stated, they should be understood as snapshots from the films. Similarly, given that the films initially featured mainly Swahili as the primary language of character dialogues, the researcher has carried out various transcriptions of the dialogue, and provided accompanying translations. All the translations of the character's dialogues from Swahili to English and vice versa are the researchers own work and should not be construed to imply that the films were multi-language. There was no script supplied for any of the films, nor any translation sought from the producers. The researcher had to listen to the dialogue word by word, and carry out transcription, before embarking on translation.

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Operational Definition of Terms

The following terminologies are used as per the stated meaning within the context of this study.

- i. **Bodaboda** – a form of transport in which the client or good is transported with a bicycle.
- ii. **Bongowood** – refers to the Tanzania film industry, christened after America’s *Hollywood*, India’s *Bollywood*, Nigeria’s *Nollywood* and Kenya’s *Riverwood*.
- iii. **Desire conflicts** –mismatch between the desires of female characters and male characters resulting in conative aggressions.
- iv. **Feminine** – refers to those social qualities associated with being female.
- v. **Gender** – used here as per Joan Scott’s (1986, p. 1053) definition of gender as “the social organisation of the relationship between the sexes”.
- vi. **Ghetto** – refers to poor neighbourhood common in urban areas. Also called slum.
- vii. **Jiko** – A metallic stove with ceramic perforated plate that uses charcoal for fuel.
- viii. **Juakali** – an informal term referring to outdoor craft businesses which may involve production of simple equipment, like domestic lanterns.
- ix. **Leso** – A local piece of cloth worn by especially women to cover the lower body from the waist, but also worn by men in some cultures.
- x. **Masculine** - refers to those social qualities associated with being male.
- xi. **Microaggressions** – Sue (2010, p.5) defines microaggressions as “the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group”. This meaning will be adopted for this research.
- xii. **Omena** – Small fish commonly harvested from fresh water lakes in East Africa.
- xiii. **Riverwood** – refers to the segment of Kenya’s film industry thriving along River road, the name of the street where low-cost amateur film production activities take place.
- xiv. **Sukuma** – a kind of vegetable grown and eaten as an accompaniment to meals.

Abstract

This study examines gender archetypes prevalent in purposively selected films featuring Steven Kanumba as the protagonist or antagonist. It also explores the spaces occupied by female characters, articulating the contexts of their social existence and the outcomes of the roles assigned to them within cinema narratives in comparison to those of men. The study further interrogates whether these social mappings engender bias, any form of hegemony or subjugation, and consequently adumbrate aggressive trends between male and female characters in their diegetic world. The research is qualitative, and data analysis focuses on the concentric positioning of male and female characters within the narrative's social framework. It is an evaluation of whether these films edify ascendancy by characters of either gender and how such quasi-conflicts reinforce or confront domination in the social continuum. From this engagement, the study specifically examines through collocation analysis if such social interactions constitute microaggressive tendencies. Theoretically, this study adduces to Masculinity theory whose gender stance is hinged on re-thinking, *inter alia*, male-ascendancy and systems that perpetuate it. It also alludes to Derald Wing Sue's behavioural psychology from which the concept of microaggression is derived. Finally, it invokes the contemplations of postcolonial scholars like Edward Said; and feminist scholars like Simone de Beauvoir, Laura Mulvey, Kate Millett and Judith Butler's feminist strand, whose aesthetic stance evince social suppression of the less powerful members of the society.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Contextualising Gender and Microaggression

Joan Scott (1986, p. 1053) defines gender as “the social organisation of the relationship between the sexes”. Ridgeway & Lynn (1999) too affirms gender as an interactional exploit that must be persistently realised in local relational frameworks to endure as a societal occurrence, an idea embraced by various other gender scholars (West & Zimmerman, 1987; West & Fenstermaker, 1993). Further, in reiterating the uneasy relational dynamics that dictate gender liberties, Ridgeway & Lynn identifies biological sexual orientation as a culturally insurmountable barrier that broadly validate male ascendancy and female subjugation through normalisation of interactional behaviours.

However, the maintenance of these norms requires that people present themselves in interaction in culturally defined ways that allow others to sex-categorise them unequivocally as male or female and hold them accountable for behaving in ways that are normatively appropriate to their sex category (Ridgeway & Lynn, 1999, p. 250)

Odhiambo (2011), while illustrating on the episteme of gender relational fissures, too reflects on the emergent ‘sex-is-destiny prescription’ within Kenya’s popular postcolonial fiction where cultural practices emboldens the biological ridges to eclipse women from power:

Combined with social and cultural practices that clearly defined a woman, a mother or a daughter’s status within the community, and which have been described as the ‘politics of the womb’ (Thomas 2003), the marginal position that women occupied in the decolonisation process dictated their future fate in postcolonial Kenya (Odhiambo, 2011, p. 44).

Both Ridgeway & Lynn and Odhiambo agree that re-membering of women into a society whose cultural framework is enriched with ‘Marxian arrogation’ edifying masculine consumations is a probe into the dynamics of interstitial gender emancipation. Re-cretaion of female identities in the context of these erstwhile male-controlled spaces can thus be viewed, not merely as acts of protest, but as acts of real-isation for the female segment of the society, a drive to assuage the misogynist tendencies which apperceive male aggression against females. This recalls into focus the issue of gender

relations within social spaces and the outcomes resultant thereof. Sue (2010) notes that what could typically pass for 'normal' relations between genders is actually potent with systematised degrading tendencies. Terming them 'microaggressions', Sue intellectualises them as inter-gender momentary and ordinary everyday spoken, interactive, and circumstantial degradations which express hostile and offensive trends, or insult the target person or group on the basis of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion (Sue, Capodilupo, *et al.*, 2008; Sue, 2010-b). Those who engage in microaggressive behaviours may often be unaware that they are actually demeaning the recipients of their communication, and sometimes may even have good intentions in their actions or words (Sue, 2010). Any marginalised group can be exposed to microaggression based on gender, sexual orientation, social class, or physical condition (Sue & Capodilupo, 2008) and these usually culminate in subtle but hurtful tendencies like bias and discrimination that distress the victims. Microaggression is a global problem that afflicts millions around the world, leading to demeaning exposure, inefficiency in society and non-productive social and even professional engagements (Sue, 2010). Gender microaggression, therefore, can be perceived as a product of the behaviours resulting from social relations in which men and women invariably exist in perpetual power conflict. Such behaviours may also involve gender hostilities.

In the social facet of racial interactions within the society, various scholars concur that racism as a tool of subordination to persons or groups based on their skin colour is manifested through attitudes, actions, institutional structures, or social policies (Jones, 1997; Ponterotto, Utsey, & Pederson, 2006). Low-grade residence, lack of access to quality education, poor employment prospects, and inaccessibility to proper health services are all examples of discrimination among races (Sue, 2003). All these are dominant forms of microaggression. Chester Pierce first used the term "racial microaggressions" to refer to the commonplace indirect and instinctive ridicules which insult African Americans (Pierce, *et al.* 1978). Modern studies indicate that this has transmuted into more treacherous forms cleverly tucked in cultural norms, administrative procedures and inner individual attitudes (Dovidio, *et al.* 2002; DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Nelson, 2006; Sue *et al.* 2008). Racial microaggressions have been indoctrinated in unconscious practices, pervading many areas of social interactions, race and class for instance.

Gender prejudice - and its concomitant form which is herein referred to as microaggression - on the other hand is manifested in both overt and covert levels (Swim & Cohen, 1997). Sue (2010, p. 11) points out that sexism as a form of gender microaggression against women abounds in numerous ways; “blatant, unfair, and unequal treatment towards women can be manifested in sexual harassment, physical abuse, discriminatory hiring practices, or in women being subjected to a hostile, predominantly male work environment.”

Although Sue in this argument poses sexism as a behaviour preserved for men, it is significant to point out that this view simply aligns prevailing social arrogated gender prescriptions within cultural spaces which preordain men above women in interactive antagonisms in shared spaces of social interactions. These antagonisms may include degraded social value, sexual gaze, non-recognition of achievements, and curtailed success in social, academic, job market and even specialised careers where the contribution by women is considered inferior to that of men (Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Benokraitis, 1997; Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Sue (2010, p. 12) specifically highlights the subtle nuances which constitute “sexual objectification microaggressions...(a) a woman’s appearance is for the pleasure of a man; (b) women are weak, dependent, and need help; and (c) a woman’s body is not her own”. These innocent-looking acts convey the woman’s desirability as an erotic exercise, thus imbuing her with an objectified gaze decried by Mulvey (1998).

Whereas Sue’s work in psychology reflects upon manifestations of unconscious ideologies in collective spaces, it is possible to extend such reflections to cinema as an art form informed by social realities. For instance, analysis of the way in which male characters impose subversive cultural ideals which curtail freedom and self-assertion of female characters within film’s narrative may help expose any resultant gender microaggressive behaviour articulated in cinema. Pursuant to this realisation, this study examines how cinema mediates, expresses, promotes or negotiates social conjectures along the gender-power praxis by comparing behavioural responses of male and female characters in various social settings. Some of the most poignant questions addressed touch on the modes and dynamics of gender microaggression in the context of cinema language and semiology. Is it possible to embed gender microaggression within

cinema? Where, who and how is it manifested within the cinema's diegesis? These are some of the questions which foreground this exposition of gender debates within the cinema medium, specifically those pertinent to patriarchal subjugation. This study hinges on the endeavour to valorise the nature and context for gender microaggressions specifically the occlusion of feminine selfhood by patriarchal narrative constraints manifested in four films featuring Steven Kanumba: O'prah (2008), The Village Pastor (2009), Offside (2010) and Moses (2011).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Whereas some scholars have studied the manifestation of gender microaggression in social spheres (Astor, C., 1997; Balsam et al, 2005; Sue, 2010), such academic attention is yet to focus on symbols of microaggression in cinema spaces. This deficit has inspired this study, given that cinema, like other cultural products, is rich in gender constructs manifest in the routine spaces and mundane lifestyles in which characters assert themselves. One of the most salient avenue through which cinema can embed microaggressive discourses include character interactions which serve as possible avenues for mitigating gender ethos through exploration of choices and actions; pursuit of liberties and actualisation of individual wants. Gender conflicts within cinema are subject to cultural typification. Repressive tendencies evident in character interactions may permeate the narrative discourse, heralding instances of bias, degrading treatment, demeaning subsistence or even open violence and abuse among characters. How gender relations within cinema conflate feminist philosophies, and the resultant discourse of microaggression, is still an unmapped research niche. This study explores gender representation with reference to social roles of the characters in their diegetic context. The specific lacuna that this study seeks to fill is exploration of gender discourses within Steven Kanumba's cinema's diegesis, and analysis of any embedded microaggressive discourses.

1.3 Objectives of Study

To attend to the stated problem, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To interrogate gender spaces and context in Kanumba's films.
- ii. To examine whether social typecasts of male characters' behaviour in the films constitute gender-based microaggression against female characters.
- iii. To determine if female characters' social roles in film spaces potentially effect microaggression against male characters.

1.4 Research Questions

From the preceding objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- i. What spaces and contexts are appropriated to female and male characters in Kanumba's films?
- ii. How do male characters interact with female characters in these films and does their behaviour entrench gender-based microaggression discourses?
- iii. What is the social locus of female characters within these films and do these engagements with male characters potentially constitute microaggression discourses against male characters?

1.5 Hypothesis

The study hypothesises that narrative discourses in cinema interposes masculine attributes through character interactions, social patterning, and spatial arrogations in ways that potentially constitute gender microaggression against the characters.

1.6 Significance/Justification

Whereas feminist studies have traditionally highlighted intersections of ideologies constituting inter-gender anomalies, this study deviated from this habit by repelling the mere description of 'as-it-is' of the film, and stitching ideologies and behaviours to established social paradigms of human behaviour which explicate 'transgressive' tendencies of characters and the resultant discourse of microaggression. Though many possible approaches to feminist study of cinema have been undertaken, studies on East

Africa cinema are still scarce to date. Even more scarce are studies linking cinematic depictions of the plethoric debates between patriarchal and matriarchal engagements as possible articulations of microaggressive discourse. The premise of this study is that these egalitarian debates, though not representative of the entire spectrum of gender relations, nevertheless affords us a new view of cinematic depictions in which microaggression is not the only discourse, but an important one. While this research is not the first to deal with gender discourses in cinema, it is partly necessitated by the scarcity of studies connecting feminist debates in East African cinema to works in other disciplines. It is in this sense a forerunner on the question of how artistic proscriptions appreciate philosophies from other movements like psychology to address social issues.

Against the backdrop of masculine framework, the study seeks to give comprehensive investigation of manifestations of microaggressive tendencies in gender relations between characters in cinema, with specific focus on the films of Steven Kanumba. Whereas many feminist studies dwell on the unequal representations, spectacle, desire and eroticism as nuclei of male occultation of female liberties, this study investigates whether occurrence of these incidences constitute gender microaggression in cinema, a knowledge gap that it seeks to fill. Consequently, the study holds clear benefits for cinema and gender scholarship community by generating new gender insights about Tanzanian cinema.

Further, given that literature of gender microaggression studies on East African cinema is scarce, information from findings of this research is crucial for scholars of East African cinema, both as a foundation as well as an augment to future scholarly enterprises. It thus enriches social understanding by highlighting subtle facets of genders' diacritical dialogues. An understanding of how men and women react to different circumstances is beneficial to gender scholars, psychologists as well as media and postmodern scholars. Theorists and practitioners can gain in-depth understanding of the various ideological residues imbued in cinematic narratives sampled from East Africa.

1.7 Delimitations/ Scope of the Study

This is a study of movies produced in Tanzania's *Bongowood*, specifically those featuring Steven Kanumba as the protagonist or antagonist. It focuses on four purposively selected films as focus of its analysis, from which it draws its various arguments. In this way, it desists from sampling movies from other film production hubs or making comparison with films of other artists from the region. Precisely, the study is a description of social altercations between female and male characters in the films, explicating how they potentially embed gender microaggressive tendencies as umpired through the character of Steven Kanumba.

1.8 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1.8.1 Contextualising Intersectionality, Matrixial Gaze, and Gender Power in Cinema Spaces

Gender representation in cinema has attracted the attention of many scholars. While some have highlighted the sex-function and 'Otherness' motif pervading especially female characters in cinema (Mulvey, 1998; Kaplan, 1998; Millet, 2000; Beauvoir, 2009), a significant number of other scholars have examined how cinema propagates patriarchal supremacy while demeaning the dignity of female characters (Rousseau, 1974; Suter, 1988; McDonald, 1995; Mututa, 2011). Yet, scholars from other disciplines have described this culturally ingrained susceptibility to subdue women as a form of neo-colonialism that is both oppressive and alienating (Lorde, 1984; Said, 1993). It is the acceptance of this unequal representation that begets normalised, culturally ingrained tendencies which behavioural scholars avow constitute gender bias and ultimately inappropriate depiction of women (Fraiman *et al*, 1995; Ashcroft *et al*, 2003; Sue, 2010). The prevalent concept in these studies is the idea of gender ostracism, misrepresentation and subsequent abuse in both real and virtual spaces where socio-cultural ideologies are replayed, cinema for instance. This study draws its impetus from this plethora of debates, while focusing on providing insights about gender issues within the films of Steven Kanumba, specifically the inherent gender microaggression dialogues. To analyse the fusion of microaggression within socio-cultural discourses, the study leverages on Kimberlé's (1989) 'intersectionality' paradigm which extrapolate transference of ideological phenomena to social practice.

A critical theorist, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) symbolically used the term ‘intersectionality’ to explicate how race and gender repression interrelate in Black women’s lives. Also known as ‘the multiplicity of oppression’ or ‘the privilege/oppression matrix’, intersectionality suggests that conceptualisation of our physio-social identities extends beyond the individual to comprise geographical location, socio-economic status, sexuality, appearance and other human attributes. However, intersectionality has also been deployed as a methodology for deciphering multilayered discrepancies within social frameworks. Association for Women’s Rights in Development (2004, p. 1) proposed that intersectionality can be applied as “an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which gender intersects with other identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege”. Among what can be considered as ‘other identities’ is the discourse of gender microaggression which underlies normalised cultural trends as manifested through social interactions. However, besides this singular focus on gender microaggression, there are other forms of interlocking social operatives which create or reinforce unequal relations, creating a multilayered continuum of oppressions. These have been interrogated in the preceding sections of the study.

Joining this sex-power debate to propitiate the assumed action of monolithic, culturally-imbued male supremacy over women, various gender scholars have decried the nascent operatives of relational rift through exploration of various contexts. While Lorde (1984) is interested in homosexuality, Padgett, Brislin-Slütz, & Neal, (Nov., 1989) focused on erotica and aggression against women; Olkowski (1999) focused on power, negative desire, nomadism and displacement in social spheres; Derby (2000) tackled eroticism and spectacle and Marsh & Nair, (2004) focused on sex, identity, narcissism and pleasure. Attending to the corpus deficit of cultural positioning of the male-female identities, other scholars have examined miscegenation, racial and sexual interactions (Daileader, Johnson, & Shabazz, 2007); and even fantasy and desire (McGowan, 2007). It is however, existentialists and phenomenologists like Michel Foucault (1977) and Jacques Derrida (2002) who showed significant interest in the notion of the gaze.

Foucault (ibid), localised the 'gaze' in society's elaborate manifestations of supremacy in relations and the resultant punitive systems. Jacques Derrida (ibid) joined this debate by exploring gaze in relation to animals and humans. Zizek, (1991) popularised the effect of the distorted gaze by her impressions of centrality of gaze to human experience of pathological narcissism, sorrow and anxiety. Even though these definitions do not provide a panoptical view of the entire scope of the application of this term, they espy a framework within which we can begin to imagine the role, impact and implications of a 'gaze' as a tool of supervision and behavioural control. Social domination as one of the key aspects on which the discourse of masculinity is hinged, is a form of behavioural control in which the gaze plays a key role. Given the centrality of this concept to this study, it is important to analyse its subtleties.

While in practice social diction may dispense dominance to members of any gender, studies have hinted that women are more prone to being victims of oppression than men. As early as 1900, feminist scholars criticised the occlusion of women from social participation in the absence of men. Cl'aviere (1900), writing about the French society, asserted that "a woman was regarded as the subject of her husband and his deputy in case of need; hers was not a personal part. She was only the shadow or the extension of another person - a sort of half-man, or, caustic-folk said, a *homme d'occasion* *mas occasiunnatus* - a man marred in the making" (Cl'aviere, 1900, pp. 3,4). Other feminism and masculinity scholars have diversified debates of representation into contexts and forms, and they seem to agree that symbols of social structures not only continue to propagate gender disengagement, but constitute rich avenues for dispersion of this ideology. There is however, a scholarly basis for discussing gender as a fluid social creation which can be moulded, and poured into the opposite gender. Bourdieu (2002, pp. 12,13) considers these social reconfiguration a form of cognitive skirmish in the proposition that "when the dominated apply to what dominates them schemes that are the product of domination, ... there is always room for a cognitive struggle over the meaning of the things of the world and in particular of sexual realities." By alluding to sexual realities, Bourdieu (ibid) is simply drawing into the picture the tilted social axis which ascribes masculinity to, especially, the male gender.

Cinema is one such symbol of social structure in which various feminist scholars (Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Mulvey, 1998; Kaplan, 1998; Millet, 2000; Beauvoir, 2009; Mututa, 2011) have located this ongoing ‘cognitive’ battle. However, there is diversity of views about what or how cinema has addressed the depiction of its ‘narratological’ characters. Despite that the frameworks of these studies are varied, the resultant dialogues reside in the altercation of perceptions of the female body, and its external corporeity. Film, like literature and theatre, has been key to the exploration of the bodily representation of the female person, birthing a constellation of concepts about feminine ideals. Among the highly contested ideologies is that of inferior representation of women in the creative spaces; literature, cinema and theatre, especially in contexts where it highlights sexual differences as a basis for discrimination. Laura Mulvey (1998) and Cora Kaplan (1998) are notable scholars who have opposed the universalisation of male supremacy and female subjugation in literary and cinematic spaces.

While Laura (ibid) focused on the voyeuristic gaze as a demeaning symbol, Kaplan’s (ibid) highly enduring argument addresses consistent alienation of women propagated by depicting female sexuality as homogenous, monolithic, and opposed to that of men. Kaplan (ibid) observes that “mass market romance tend to represent sexual difference as natural and fixed – a constant, trans-historical femininity in ‘libidinised’ struggle with an equally ‘given’ universal masculinity (Kaplan, 1998, p. 594)”. What Kaplan regards as libidinous ‘struggle’ hinges on Laura Mulvey’s (1998) view that pleasurable spectatorship favours feasting of male fantasies on the female figure necessitating the appearance of erotic women out to reward this attention. Such struggles are in essence sex-drive, so that filmic characters degrade each other by feasting their lustful propensities upon each other. Mulvey (1998) decries how this idealised retrospection in “cinema satisfies a primordial wish for male spectator’s hedonistic indulgences while looking at the eroticised female subject; (and) also goes further developing *scopophilia* in its narcissistic aspect” (Mulvey 1998, p. 450). In this sense, therefore, both scholars’ views intersect thus; what Kaplan views as libidinal tussle based on sexual differences is what Mulvey considers narcissistic erotic hedonism.

In concurrence with Laura Mulvey's (1998) pleasurable gaze, Beauvoir (2009) states that "in bourgeois society, one of woman's assigned roles is *to represent*: her beauty, her charm, her intelligence, and her elegance are outward signs of her husband's fortune, as is the body of his car (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 98)". Odhiambo (2011) reinforces this view in his assertion that in postcolonial Kenyan fiction "women are wanted mainly for non-intimate, sexual and temporary affairs, or to be 'shown off', or as adornments to the men's public personalities (Odhiambo, 2011, p. 52)". Put in social context, this purely male centred view of women within relationships is a nod to what Butler (1990) calls "biology-is-destiny formulation (Butler J. , 1990, p. 8)" in the workplace, family space, private or public arena. Audre Lorde (1989) terms this role of women a futile task to bridge what she calls gap of male ignorance, an oppressive tactic to subjugate and victimise the woman. Lorde considers it a "diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought (Lorde, 1984, p. 113)". How have these hegemonic tendencies been appropriated in cinema? How and where do they transpire within the cinema narrative? The foregoing views advanced by various scholars have guided this study in explicating the affirmation status of these patriarchal discourses within cinema. The overriding focus is how such social constructs have been infused in cinematic spaces.

Some cinema scholars have discussed the existence of these hegemonic gender categories within cinema spaces. Andre Bazin (2005) decried the persistence of eroticist tendencies of Hollywood cinema, citing the extended imagination deployed by filmmakers to depict erotic desires, specifically citing the erotic portrayal of Marilyn Monroe in Billy Wilder's The Seven Year Itch (1955), in the scene where "the air from the subway grating blows up her skirt (Bazin, 2005, p. 172)". This use of the (erotic) gaze as a tactic to sustain voyeuristic status imbues hegemonic discourse with an imperious erotic contemplation, pleasure voyage, and male-focussed sexual awe through which men seek to dominate women and regard them as objects of fulfilling their desires. In patriarchal setup, it seems, men play dumb to women needs, acting unaware or unconscious of any alternative mode of engagement thereby immersing themselves in situations conducive for microaggressive tendencies. In this patriarchal mirror, the wife disarmed in the nuptial space remains a source of man's erotic

contemplation and an insubordinate being, tolerated for man's pleasurable activities (Mulvey, 1998 and Kaplan, 1998).

Jacquelyn Suter (1988) affirms this ambivalence by explicitly conjecturing how films embody the problems of female desire in men-driven societies. Although it is implausible to foist, *post hoc*, that the image of broken female subject *per se* sufficiently problematize the philosophies of mimetic rivalries between female and male characters within cinema spaces, the reality of her narrative triviality hints of such a possibility. After analysing Dorothy Arzner's Christopher Strong (1933), Suter decries the overriding strait of patriarchal ideologies in cinema that dominate the narrative discourses conscripting even female characters into its currents. She further avers that feminine discourse remains feebly interwoven with patriarchal discourse, quietly encrusted below male voice that dominates meta-discourse of the narrative. In retrospect, Suter's contemplations about cinematic depictions of 1933 espy dialectical confrontations between discourse and ideology, where masculinity ideals do not just usurp, but also eclipse feminine ideals in the socio-cultural gender context. This has been espoused in various other films as well. Wang (Fall 2012, p. 972), in her analysis of Stanley Kwan's Centre Stage (aka The Actress, or Ruan Lingyu (1992) and Olivier Assayas' Irma Vep (1996), noted flawed characterisation where brave female characters are deprived of their masculinisation, evolving into what she calls "mute, pulsating superwoman".

A similar view is upheld by (Martin, Spring 2014) who studied South Korean post armistice films, noting that in Han Hyōngmo's The Hand of Destiny (Unmyōng ūi son) produced in 1954, a very brave North Korean female spy (Chōngae) who infiltrates South Korea's military is assigned the role of a prostitute, and despite her bravery and intelligence, dies a merciful death executed by her boyfriend (Yōngch'ōl) whom she has saved from assassination. Just moments before the fatal bullet, the wounded Chōngae pleads with him to kill her, as they lock in what Martin (ibid) terms the first ever instance of film kiss in South Korean cinema. At the end of this dehumanising act, Yōngch'ōl emerges with "a tear in his eye and she a smile on her face... (an act which) restores order and justice through the tragic, but apparently necessary, death of its female character (Martin, Spring 2014, p. 97).

Similarly, in Yi Kangch'ŏn's *Piagol* (1955), the brave female character, Sŏju, is objectified as a worthless person, being raped by her countrymen as she dashed wounded towards their camp. Her contribution is not recognised, but rather, the male characters exploit her sexually, even unto death. That her death is not avenged bespeaks of the shallow resolve of the male-controlled narrative to assuage the female character, imbuing her an identity of a mere accessory for men's use, despite her slow, painful death, and commitment to her duty:

When she collapses in the arms of one of her male comrades, he sexually assaults her rather than either tend to her wounds or carry her vitally important message to the captain. A fellow soldier witnesses the attack, but rather than intervening, he waits for an opportunity to rape her himself. (Martin, Spring 2014, p. 98)

The fate of female characters is no different in Israel cinema. Gertz (Winter/Spring 2002) analysed Avraham Haffner's *Laura Adler's Last Love* (1990) and Eli Cohen's *The Summer of Aviya* (1988), noting the symbolically debilitating fate of the woman as a social object supplanted in a male controlled space where men predate on their excessive womanness. Simone de Beauvoir (2009, p. 15) who advanced gender stratification debates to the arena of bodice spectatorship interpolates this objectification to a debate of significance of bodies: “a man's body has meaning by itself, disregarding the body of the woman, whereas the woman's body seems devoid of meaning without reference to the male”. Such a woman, stripped of all meaning and honour, Edward Said calls ‘submissive being’. Mututa's findings, after interrogating how Kenyan cinema mitigates gender expression, affirm Said's view of women as compelled to submission in that, without man, the woman's range of survival gyrates between damning extremes. In the case of *Riverwood*, Mututa (2011) notes that films “explore the feminine journey to equality as futile and without symmetry. The social order defines her right position as that of submission, rebuking her tries to seek voice or to belong” (Mututa, 2011, p. 125). There seems to be a scholarly correspondence between the scholarly criticisms advanced by Suter, Kaplan, Mututa, Arzner, Beauvoir and Mulvey in that their arguments highlight the sexist representation of the cinema characters by contextualising social duality as the starting point for degradation. Their criticisms are at par in asserting that feminist ideals are substantially degraded by those associated with dominant paternalism, inducting feminine nostalgia in the diegetic

spaces. These altercations make a critical engagement with masculinisation of desire possible within this study, while probing for codified meanings which advance microaggression through sexual expediency. Without terming it sufficient to objectify women on the basis of their anatomical structures or cultural innuendos, this study notes the discursive ripostes which prefer male supremacy as a social facticity. However, it also notes the importance of such debates - otherwise termed as sexist – in inferring the overt chauvinistic tactics to contest their domination of common spaces. This corresponds to what Derrick Wing Sue (2010) considers sexism in his argument that “sexism is any attitude or behaviour of individuals, institutions, or societal norms based on the belief that men are naturally superior to women and should dominate them in all spheres of life: political, economic, and social (Sue D. W., 2010, p. 166)”. In light of this view, the concept of sexism is important in prying apart masculinity and microaggression as concurrent discourses within cinema. These views are crucial to this study, which set out to establish whether categorical essentialism in representations of male-female effect the problematic synergies of occlusion in cinema spaces - naturalising masculine gaze and the resultant desire of women to fulfil this demand. To probe how this interstitial ambivalence has been extended in Steven Kanumba’s films and to demonstrate its complicity in microaggressive discourse is really the core of this study.

Another important paradigm deployed in this study is Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger’s (1995) ‘matrixiality’. Ettinger (ibid) first introduced the term ‘matrixial’ as an alternative for the psycho-social segmentation within social spheres through her creative works and writings. In this concept, the womb as a metaphor of mutual experience contrasts with phallus as a differentiating organ. In this sense, therefore, Ettinger shifted the locus of gender interactions from the prejudices of external spaces, assuaging the preliminary stance in a way that is academically veridical. Ettinger (2006) considers matrixial borderspace as a “sphere of encounter-events where. ... I and non-I are linked in trans-subjectivity on a sub-subjective level in a mental resonance ‘camera obscura’ (Ettinger B. L., 2006, p. 219)”. Her conceptualisation of ideological dynamism pre-empts a possible shift in the masculine-feminine theoretical aporia. Her initially *posteriori* dialogues have afforded a critical merger of masculine-feminine discourse where each can be independently applied to both genders:

As a feminine sexual difference, the matrixial designates ‘woman’ not as the Other but as coemerging self with m/Other, and *link a* rather than *object a* not as lack or a figure of rhythmic scansion of absence/presence but as a *borderlinking* figure of *differentiation in co-emergence*. Relations-without relating and distance-in-proximity preserve the coemerging Other as both a subject and an object without turning the Other into an object only (Ettinger B. L., 2006, p. 218).

Her transformative thinking has been embraced by later transgender theorists like Judith Halberstam (1998) who argues that ‘Tomboy’ trope “describes an extended childhood period of female masculinity (Halberstam, 1998, p. 5)”. Masculine women, therefore, disfigure the traditional theoretical idiosyncrasies appropriated through male-led masculinity through the ‘Tomboy *coemergence*’ in a female body infused with male tendencies. Such tendencies, Ettinger surmises, *borderlink* all aspects of differentiation (social, physical, or even financial) creating new taxonomies of masculinity which pose, as Halberstam concedes, “a queer subject position that can successfully challenge hegemonic models of gender conformity (Halberstam, 1998, p. 9)”. Since masculinity – as discoursed by the various scholars in the preceding section - is an ideological module, transfiguration of sexist ascendancy can be a hallmark in altering the design and flow of gender melees. Microaggression, the normative consequence of these gender conflicts, thus acquires a *transponsive* dimension in which women, just like men, can exercise dominance and its resultant aggression.

Even though studies about gender principally imply discursive considerations of ideals afforded to members of either sex, it is noteworthy that social interactions within any cultural space inevitably results in domination and control of one sex by another. Carrigan et al. (1985) treats gender power, especially from the masculine perspective, as a form of collective male practice that has as its effect the subordination of women, and formulates the concepts of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. In this sense, therefore, studies of gender – whereas not necessarily about ascendancy of just men – fundamentally calls into consideration socio-cultural modal patterns in which men invariably override women. This power to dominate women, Chafetz (1999) opines, is closely associated with the socio-cultural politics of economic participation and control.

The relative economic power of women varies at different societal levels (household, community, social class, and society), with the broader levels controlling (nesting) those below. Coercive, political, and ideological forms of

power, although less important than economic, tend to flow from higher social levels downward and are less accessible to women than economic power. Therefore, males tend to be more dominant at higher levels, which discounts the amount of power women receive based on their economic resources (Chafetz, 1999, p. 12).

Articulating these trends within cinema, Laura Mulvey (1998) observed that women depiction may be constricted by male dominance:

The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extra-diegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle (Mulvey, 1998, p. 452)".

There seems to be a positive correlation between cinema's representation of gender suppression and Said's (1993) colonial domination motif, both of which leans on cultural categorisation for men and women to feast its covert tactics of subordination. For instance, Edward Said (1993) notes that identity (what) and social situations (how) are socially regulated structures;

The capacity to represent, portray, characterise, and depict is not easily available to just any member of just any society; moreover, the 'what' and 'how' in the representation of 'things', while allowing for considerable individual freedom, are circumscribed and socially regulated (Said, 1993, p. 80).

One way of interpreting Said's words is that 'what' people become in their social spaces is pre-determined by 'how' they are allowed to 'become'. To elaborate how this maps onto gender, Said (ibid) further argues that:

We have become very aware in recent years of the constraints upon the cultural representation of women, and the pressures that go into the created representations of inferior classes and races. In all these areas - gender, class, and race - criticism has correctly focussed upon the institutional forces ... that shape and set limits on the representation of what are considered essentially subordinate beings; thus representation itself has been characterised as keeping the subordinate subordinate, the inferior inferior (Said, 1993, p. 80).

Said's contemplations concur with prevailing feminist thoughts that allude to systematic transposition of gendered cultural prescriptions in various facets of social constructs, orchestrated by what Said calls institutional forces'. Thus, Said's concept of 'representations' intersect with Mulvey's cultured gaze at the praxis of subordination and inferior tactics which shape the core of feminist and masculine discourses. Some scholars have often shown how these discourses find their way into cinema's narratives.

Mary Ann Doane (1988) after analysing Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and Ophul's *Caught* (1949), laments about putative spectatorship which prize male voyeurism while female fantasy is persecuted by filial relations motivated by rendering her a desirable object. Doane's view concur with those of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1974) that women

Must be subject all their lives, to the most constant and severe restraint, which is that of decorum: it is therefore necessary to accustom them early to such confinement that it may not afterwards cost them too dear... we must teach them above all things to lay a due restraint on themselves (Rousseau, 1974, p. 332).

In nod to Said's (1993) discourse on colonialism, other gender scholars overtly decry the stereotypically male perspective within cinema where patriarchal culture consider the woman a strange object, symbolically ordained to bear fantasies and obsessions of man who is the preferred maker of meaning (Mulvey, 1998). The impact of this imposition constitutes dilemma of womanhood, where women's identity in a cultural role and symbol gyrates between immoderations of character based on their biological sexual status, spirituality or social functioning (Macdonald, 1995). These categories restrict the female character to extreme spaces, defined by patriarchal judgement and prescription of her ultimate social ideals. In this context, it becomes possible to expose her to microaggressive conditions in guise of cultural normativity. In defying this identity, the female character acquires a new form of power exercised as what Halberstam (1998) calls feminine masculinity; reviled in the male controlled space and ambiguated in negative perceptions, but considered healthy by its exponents.

Sometimes female masculinity coincides with the excesses of male supremacy, and sometimes it codifies a unique form of social rebellion; often female masculinity is the sign of sexual alterity, but occasionally it marks heterosexual variation; sometimes female masculinity marks the place of pathology, and every now and then it represents the healthful alternative to what are considered the histrionics of conventional femininities (Halberstam, 1998, p. 9).

In view of these emerging possibilities, this study closely examines models of visual objectification within cinema as forms of gender microaggression with keen emphasis on dynamics of masculinity exercised by either gender. Sexual objectification, which is a form of gender bias, is considered within the parameters advanced by Sue (2010, p. 36) as

The process by which women are transformed into ‘objects’ or property at the sexual disposal or benefit of men... dehumanis[ing] [them] in this process because [they] are stripped of their humanity and the totality of their human essence (personal attributes, intelligence, emotions, hopes, etc).

In other forms sexual objectification is manifested through portrayal of scantily covered beautiful female bodies, accentuating especially parts of female body that denote sexual appeal, denying women purposeful control of the usage of their bodies, with men feasting on this display to fulfil their sexual fantasies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Out of these vast scholarly engagements, this study highlights representational politics, especially those based on creation of classes in which women are imperilled by men or vice versa, as potentially instituting gender microaggression between characters of either sex.

1.8.2 Hegemonic Patriarchy Discourses in Cinema

Various scholars have illustrated how society foments aggressive tendencies among its male members. Jordan & Cowan (1995) observed that when growing up, male children engage in plays mimicking common combatant chronicles “where violence is ‘legitimate and justified when it occurs within a struggle between good and evil (Jordan & Cowan 1995, p. 728)”. This is in agreement with earlier ideas advanced by Patricia Sexton who suggested that “male norms stress values such as courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure and considerable amounts of toughness in mind and body (Sexton, 1969, p. 15)”. These social indices interface closely with hegemonic tendencies characteristic of contrapuntal patriarchy, stimulating complex categories of social co-existence between men and women in which sexual control more than misogyny defines the order of power. Donaldson (1993, p. 3) asserts that a “fundamental element of hegemonic masculinity then is that women exist as potential sexual objects for men while men are negated as sexual objects for men. Women provide heterosexual men with sexual validation, and men compete with each other for this”.

Donaldson (1993) concludes that the most effective re-creative agents of masculine powers are, among others, “playwrights, film makers, actors, novelists, musicians, activists ... [as they] regulate and manage gender regimes: articulate experiences,

fantasies, and perspectives; reflect on and interpret gender relations (Donaldson, 1993, p. 4)". Donaldson (ibid) further adds that this form of masculinity is enfranchised as a protagonist within creative art forms like "books, films, television, and in sporting events (ibid, p. 6)". Connell R. (1990) argues that:

To say that a particular form of masculinity is hegemonic means "that its exaltation stabilises a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole. To be culturally exalted, the pattern of masculinity must have exemplars who are celebrated as heroes (Connell R., 1990, pp. 83-84).

These arguments endorse the creation of masculine males to subvert feminine females at an ideological level through inculcation of supremacy ideals. These heroic deeds are not a preserve of the domestic-public spaces duels that men and women re-enact. It is also a matter encrusted within the working environments where for the occasional woman who makes it to the top, a wall of what Donaldson, (1993) considers "men in management positions ... [who] use institutional authority to elicit deference, [through] demonstration [of] the qualities of rationality, resolve, and competitiveness (Collinson & Hearn 1994)" awaits to hinder her professional progress. Such men may occasionally assume patriarchal behaviour acting as compassionate leaders or use degradation and intimidations (Kerfoot & Whitehead 1998). Other men in professional capacities may even show greater capacity over their female colleagues – even if the women are their leaders by accentuating their superior understanding (Haas & Shaffir, 1977).

In this disposition, men hardly seem aware of the need to function in other roles for their women, except mating. Millett (2000) considers this a "notably deficient and a rather tritely masculine attitude; ...the feudal character of patriarchal marriage, and the egotism of male assumptions, [and that man] appears incapable of transcending them (Millett, 2000, p. 139)". These cultural ideologies serve to substantiate men's rule over women by naturalising ascendancy and suppression as natural cultural categories necessary for social synchronicity. Male supremacy, it seems, is deeply sculpted in the flesh of cultural imperialism. Men in modern society seem not to have been spared from these cultural infiltrations either, as even modern marriages are donned in this feudal garb which consider the wife a show-off for man to flaunt his affluence. To understand the complex social complexities which breed alternative masculinities,

one has to adopt the point of view on our own world and our own vision of the world which is that of the anthropologist, capable of showing that the principle of division (*nomos*) which founds the difference between male and female as we (mis)recognize it is simultaneously arbitrary, contingent, and also socio-Logically necessary (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 2)

In this argument, Bourdieu is simply advocating for an alternative assessment of the terms of eligibility into masculine and feminine social categories to which social roles are appended. For Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin (2003), these principles of division seem to be often gendered acting as a limitation in various other facets of social spheres, as noted in their argument that in various societies, “women, like colonised subjects, have been relegated to the position of ‘Other’, ‘colonised’ by various forms of patriarchal domination. They thus share with colonised races and cultures an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2003, p. 249)”. Beauvoir, (2009) terms this colonised ‘Other’ a good wife, “deprived of her magic weapons by nuptial rites, economically and socially dependent on her husband. ...man’s most precious treasure (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 98)”. This motif of the subdued ‘good’ wife pronates into Bourdieu’s (2002) thesis that masculinity is simply premised on subjugation of the passive by the virile;

Manliness, virility, in its ethical aspect, i.e. as the essence of the *vir*, *virtus*, the point of honour (*nif*), the principle of the conservation and increase of honour, remains indissociable, tacitly at least, from physical virility, in particular through the attestations of sexual potency -deflowering of the bride, abundant male offspring, etc. -which are expected of a 'real' man. Hence the phallus, always metaphorically present but very rarely named, concentrates all the collective fantasies of fecundating potency (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 12)

Considerate of these pertinent views, this study has adopted an anthropological approach to definitions of patriarchy as symbolised by the exogenous engagements in cinema surrounding male characters. This is important because it helps trace any patriarchal ideologies reinforced or dismissed in the cinema spaces. Particularly, this study is focused on those behaviours enacted by both masculine characters against feminine characters. Analysis has focused on spatial differences, character relations and language, which are all social nuances evinced through costuming and casting of roles, and any other discernible tendency that is either biased or potentially microaggressive.

1.8.3 Femocratic Matriarchal Discourses in Cinema

Behavioural scholars agree that women perceive the society as undermining and demeaning them in many ways (Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Benokraitis, 1997; Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Such conclusions herald what Cragin & Simonds (1999) perceived as misogyny of representation within cultural spaces where “women’s individual problems are often symptoms of broader social inequality, [and] also that the most mundane and normalised aspects of personal/cultural life perpetuate this inequality (Cragin & Simonds, 1999, p. 199)”. It is what Cragin and Simonds perceive as ‘mundane and normalised’ aspects which Sue (2010, p. 5) refer to as “commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities”. Derald Wing Sue (2010, p. 12) concedes that “gender microaggressions occur frequently and they devalue their [women’s] contributions, objectify them as sex objects, dismiss their accomplishments, and limit their effectiveness in social, educational, employment, and professional settings”. Sexual objectification as a culturally ingrained paradigm, specifically its manifestation in social categories, is a hotly contested aspect in cinematic spaces which has received the attention of such feminist scholars like Mulvey and Kaplan. Kaplan (1998) opines that cultural hierarchies determine “our fantasies of sexual transgression as much as our obedience to sexual regulation (Kaplan, 1998, p. 594)”, an argument that elicits a stance similar to Mulvey’s (1998) gaze. It is however not always the case that women (and female characters in cinema) subscribe to the subjected social class. To afford a more informed discussion about gender categories both within and without cinema spaces, it is therefore crucial to reflect on the mutating meaning of womanhood and manhood within the complex appropriation of social masculinities.

In such an endeavour, Bourdieu (2002) has cautioned that thinking about these gendered social categories may fall prey to the prescriptions by which they are created;

Being included, as man or woman, in the object that we are trying to comprehend, we have embodied the historical structures of the masculine order in the form of unconscious schemes of perception and appreciation. When we try to understand masculine domination we are therefore likely to resort to modes of thought that are the product of domination. (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 5)

This caution does however not undermine the realisation that cinema history is full of masculine women who defy patriarchal prescriptions to assert themselves, despite the

harsh social retributions decreed for their defiance. After analysing the representation of female characters in postwar Spanish and Argentinian cinema upholds that female characters often exercise significant social control over male characters through embodiment of various ideals. After analysing Isabel Coixet's The Secret Life of Words (2005), Slobodian (May 2012, p. 170) notes that Hanna, the key female character who has undergone significant physical violence and torment "at the hands of soldiers during the Balkan Wars, holds power over Josef. She becomes the subject who can decide to speak or not speak—decide to provide Josef with what he desires or remain silent." This cinematic rumination already sets out to create a masculinised female character who uses her bodily control and reversed desire to overrule systemic social perceptions and masculinity's equivocal valences. Moreover, Slobodian (ibid, p. 171) asserts, the use of her auratic abilities as a new source of power over the male character "reverses the standard hierarchy... operat(ing) as an alternative cinema that subverts the clear binaries of perceiver/perceived, masculine/feminine, and allow(ing) for new spaces of contact." Physical privilege is however not the only trope used to create masculinised female characters in cinema.

In her analysis of Egyptian cinema, Sabrina Joseph discusses a Muslim female character who braves religious and social constrictions to seduce the man of her desire, playing out well orchestrated plans until he lands in her marriage grip. Istimam, a symbol of traditional religious Muslim male, falls prey to Shafa'at, the city Muslim woman in Salah Abu Sayf's 1956 epic movie, Youth of a Woman. In this film, Joseph (2009) notes, Shafa'at tricks Istimam character into sex, faking tears and seductive physical gestures, especially when he enters her room "she sits provocatively on the couch with her skirt pulled up above her knees. Such actions prove to be effective until Istimam hears the call to prayer and runs out of her room just as they are about to kiss (Joseph, 2009, p. 79)." These two acts reify the image of a masculinised female character who subjugates the male character within her (public) space. Such acts of dominance may be interpreted to comprise an image of masculinised woman, what Bourdieu (2002, p. 23) calls "somatization of the social relations of domination". Further, these two female characters, Hanna and Shafa'at, decentralise masculinity as a preserve of the male by toppling "the power relations in which they are held, through schemes of thought that are the product of embodiment of those power relations and which are expressed in the

founding oppositions of the symbolic order (Bourdieu, 2002, pp. 33-34).” This has been achieved on two levels; disintegration of the purist notion of masculinity typified by Shafa’at, and possession of alternative symbols of masculinity typified by Hanna, both of which confers masculinity upon female characters based on their “ability to blur boundaries result(ing) in a more fluid conception of gender that resists the binds of heteronormativity (Slobodian, May 2012, p. 160).” Against the backdrop of sexual regulation and gaze as metrics of domination, sex-power - the ability to exercise freewill in sexual decisions - seems to define social positioning of individuals. Some feminist critics have explored how cinema condemn women’s aspirations to exercise their sexual freedom (Marsh & Nair, 2004); while others decry the constraints accorded to women in gender discussions on the basis of sex (Butler J. , 1990). Of significance to this study is the duo concept of sexual transgression and sexual regulation as feminine and masculine respectively, especially in paradigms manifest within the trope of marriage. What happens to women in marriage? Do they live better or worse? Are they sexually fulfilled or do men consider them to be?

Millett’s (2000) conclusion after analysing George Meredith’s The Egoist (1958) captures a constrictive, terminal misery imbued on women in her argument that “there is something poignant in the realisation that Clara’s marriage is rather like a death. Throughout the novel she is a person in the process of ‘becoming’ but by the last page she has not succeeded in becoming anyone but Mrs Whitford, which is to say, no one at all (Millett, 2000, p. 139)”. Beauvoir (2009) shares a similar view as evinced in her argument that, in marriage, a woman loses her freedom and identity to her man and “belongs to him so profoundly that she shares the same nature with him: *‘Ubi tu Gaius, ego Gaia’*; she has his name and his gods, and she is his responsibility: he calls her his other half (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 98)”. Such normativity foreshadow masculine privileges accorded to men within shared spaces, access to which override women’s own rights and restricts their social and professional mobility. Do women aspire towards marriage only to be eclipsed from social participation through its culturally instituted structures? In what ways does cinema reclaim, mitigate or proliferate these enervating tendencies? To understand these questions, it is important to consider a few stereotypical premises upon which gender ideologies feast.

Messner (1992) explained that “while the man is ‘out there’ establishing his name in public, the woman is usually at home caring for the day-to-day and moment-to-moment needs of her family ... Tragically, only in midlife, when the children have already ‘left the nest’ ... do some men discover the importance of connection and intimacy (Messner, 1992, p. 201)”. This facet of social framing occasions a continuous subdual of women through confinement to spaces where they engage in unpaid work. When allowed to participate in public spaces and work as men, Chapman (1988) argues, “...women render themselves incomplete. They must ‘give up’ their femininity in their appropriation of male jobs and power, but men who embrace the feminine become ‘more complete’ (Chapman, 1988, p. 213)”. Chapman’s argument makes it possible to localise regimen synergetic exemplars within cinema by examining the many ways in which it refracts this stereotype or otherwise counter its ideological proliferation. Unlike men, ‘femocratic’ women must give up their innate identity and become more man-like. This reductive regularity, Tennant (2009) postulates, leads women in a path of de-valuation, actuating the educational notion that “the self participates in its own subjugation and domination, whether it is through ‘false consciousness’ produced by membership of a particular social group or the internalisation of social ‘oppression’ through individual ‘repression’ (in the psychoanalytic sense) (Tennant, 2009, p. 159)”. Such ideological reinforcements enunciate the exteriority of gender fixity as a practice – thus making it possible to intellectualise gender within corporeity spaces like cinema.

From earlier studies, scholars seem to agree that cinema constricts a woman’s sexual liberties. Mututa’s (2011) analysis of Riverwood films notes an incremental degree of this ideology, where women are depicted as social misfits determined to ruin their societies through sexual control and manipulation. In the Kikuyu comedies studied, women are perceived as cruel, exploitative and unsupportive within the marriage space. In their position of relative power over men, they are inclined to destroy them. Whereas in some cases sexual freedom ameliorates social profiles of women, incidences of contrary outcome abound. These aphorisms emphasise the centrality of social realities to cinematic depictions, a concept crucial in localising feminist ideologies and the resultant microaggression as a social tendency within cinema narratives.

Matriarchal discourses in this study are deducted through analysis of social representation in cinema spaces, especially liberties and support accorded the masculinised female character to exercise sexual, financial and other freedoms in the diegetic spaces. Ultimately, the research also investigates how character's desire in cinema acclimatises or probes cultural conventions about women's power of expression and the resultant social discourses including those which touch on the interplay of gender and microaggression in answering the question: what do women become in their spaces and at the end of these cinema narratives once they are imbued with masculine liberties? How women respond to sexist depiction, and to male domination ideals in cinema constitute matriarchal discourse – an issue which is central to this study.

1.8.4 Gender in Cinema: A Microaggressive Gaze

Microaggression in real life is a problem that afflicts many people in various societies. As cited in Sue (2010), Sue D. W. (2003) notes that “when microaggressions make their appearance in interpersonal encounters or environmental symbols, they are reflections of marginality and/or a worldview of inclusion/exclusion, superiority/ inferiority, desirability/undesirability, or normality/abnormality (Sue, Sue, & Sue, 2010, p. 14)”. Olkowski (1999) asserts that the end of this binary stratification is inevitable creation of minority classes, based on the ability to reach established fixed standards. Reid & Whitehead (1992) provides a theoretical avenue linking social identity to microaggressive processes in their definition of gender as “a cognitive and symbolic construct that helps individuals develop a sense of self, a sense of identity that is constructed in the process of interacting with others within a given human community (Reid & Whitehead, 1992, p. 2)”.

One such human community where processes of interaction may be applied to determine and reinforce gender in social relationships. Cl'aviere (1900) positions microaggression within marriage – a form of social relationship - in his incursive description of the enslaving role within marriage space where a woman's life of subjugation is propagated. To him, this social institution becomes a terminal misery for the woman while granting the man great social leverage.

To try to import passion into marriage is like trying to pack a cathedral into one's bedroom. And so marriage is to retain its actual character as a simple, natural function of the physical life, like eating and drinking: the husband a domestic animal, presented to the woman by the usages of society, the accident of birth, and the terms of the bargain. The woman's duty to him is to keep house for him, present him with children, nurse him in sickness, and regard his liberty as sacred (Cl'aviere, 1900, p. 23).

What then, is the nexus of masculinity and microaggression, in light of Cl'aviere's poignant dialog? Of this association, Bourdieu (2002, p. 1) notes; "I have also seen masculine domination, and the way it is imposed and suffered, as the prime example of this paradoxical submission, an effect of what I call symbolic violence, a gentle violence imperceptible and invisible even to its victims." What Cl'aviere laments as an excessive overload of the woman through socially arrogated roles of attending to her man passes easily as instances of Bourdieu's (ibid) 'masculine domination', spilling over into what he has referred to as 'a gentle violence imperceptible and invisible even to its victims'. In some instances, "women are excluded from all the public spaces, such as the assembly or the market (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 49)". This however assumes a demeaning angle when viewed against Amy's (April 2005, p. 19) assertion that "there are close links between the space you are in and your perception of your own body", so that a woman's pursuit of social power should be symbolised as an escape through the transitory confinements of what Slobodian (May 2012, p. 165) has labelled "public/private spaces". The space, and its corporeal performativity engendered in the woman's duties can thus be said to alienate, even demean, the woman symbolically. Sue's notion of degrading space in this case can thus be merged with Bourdieu's (2002, pp. 9, 11) view that:

The social order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending to ratify the masculine domination on which it is founded: it is the sexual division of labour, a very strict distribution of the activities assigned to each sex, of their place, time and instruments. It is the structure of space, with the opposition between the place of assembly or the market, reserved for men, and the house, reserved for women, or, within the house, between the male part, the hearth, and the female part -the stable, the water and vegetable stores; it is the structure of time, the day and the farming year, or the cycle of life, with its male moments of rupture and the long female periods of gestation.

From the foregoing dialogues, it is evident that due to this subversive relationship, gender microaggression can be easily appended to the family institution. Within cinema however, symbols of individual engagements and scope of freedom can be envisaged through character profiling in diegetic institutions like marriage. Discussing about politics of gender representations and oppression within marriage, Judith Butler (1990) argues, are precisely about domination. She summed the feminist debate of gender representation as dialogue about the object, “invariably produced through certain exclusionary practices that do not ‘show’ once the juridical structure of politics has been established. In other words, the political construction of the subject proceeds with certain legitimating and exclusionary aims, and these political operations are effectively concealed and naturalised by a political analysis that takes juridical structures as their foundation (Butler J. , 1990, p. 2)”.

Butler’s argument resonates with Sue’s concept of microaggression as the predisposition of both genders to engage in circumstances which result in one gender overriding the interests of the other. The definition of microaggressions as everyday occurrences whether spoken, enacted or simply directed against an individual in order to demean, antagonise, insult or portray negative considerations (Sue, Sue, & Sue, 2010) embodies fervent polemics possibly observable even in cinema spaces. In narrative gender conflicts, there is meaningful expression of gender values embodied not just in the verbal or behavioural relations, but also in the conflation of ideals: the way characters interact and talk; the roles they play, what they do, the spaces of their existence and also, their narrative planes. Upon this basis therefore, and given that cinema imitates as much as it creates reality (Ghatak, 1987; Blaser, 2006; Truffaut, 1975 & Wilshire, 1968), it is arguable that the variance between diegetic and non-diegetic ideologies is null. This diminished space where cinema intersects with reality in a mutually informing way makes it possible to analyse diegetic relations within cinema by applying principles derived from real life studies; microaggression, for instance.

In trying to espouse gender politics, microaggression and stratification in cinema based on normative ideologies, scholars from different disciplines have articulated the prevailing topography of oppression (Butler, 1990; Beauvoir, 2009; Sue, 2010).

Cinema narratives embody a discernible chain of tyranny whose end is the dominion of one gender over another – in other words, the creation of a subject(ed) class. In character relations, for instance, it is possible to discern how evolving conflicts constitute microaggressive behaviour. Such a relation is important to this study in that it forms a basis for interrogating the construction of microaggressive behaviours against the backdrop of gender politics, especially feminist reflections of domination within cinema. This study is grounded on identifying and critiquing manifestation of modesty and control as vital elements of social categories. Modesty in this case is considered on the scale of erotic exposure of the female actors to the desires of male actors within the chosen films. How eroticism is constructed and what its purpose in cinema is are important questions to decipher the totality of its social codes. Bazin (2005) argues, “... it is of the cinema alone that we can say that eroticism is there on purpose and is a basic ingredient (Bazin, 2005, p. 170)”. This assertion permits an intersectional analysis of eroticism in view of the various interlocking symbols within which it is constructed. Socially, such a symbol can be said to connote a specific meaning.

Eroticism portends microaggression in the sense that women’s perception that they are men’s objects extends to conquest of their bodies. On this basis men may abuse the woman by demeaning her or enslaving her for erotic gratification in exchange for validating her social identity and respectability, a fact lamented by Simone de Beauvoir (2009) that “man thinks himself without woman. Woman does not think herself without man (Beauvoir, 2009, p. 15)”. What Bazin and Beauvoir have in common is the concurrence that historically, images of women in cinema have prevalently favoured a female character exposed to and for male spectatorship. Her attributes, spaces and values are imbued with patriarchal musings, either obvious or in many subtle forms; marriage realities for instance. From the foregoing discussions, it is arguable that degradation of women is constituted in innocent sounding banal epithets, an allusion to Sue’s definition of gender microaggression as “commonplace daily verbal or behavioural indignities” (Sue D. W., 2010, p. 5).

But whereas the preceding studies solely describe bigoted ramifications, this study extends beyond examination of antipathies in the filial space, inquiring whether the resultant tendencies are indeed aspects of gender microaggressions. The routine spaces

and mundane lifestyles in which men and women assert themselves and their desires are potential avenues for mitigating gender ethos. Fulfilment and practices that revolve around these are important in a woman's personal development. Her choices – and actions – in pursuit of fulfilment are pillars of contemporary liberation and self-expression. Marriage institutions however may stall a woman's freedom. Social frameworks that uphold such depiction inevitably ratify gender molestation and domination. This is based on the premise advanced by Zastrow (2004), cited in Sue (2010) that “negative attitudes towards women, viewing them as inferior to men, relegating them to lesser or undesirable roles, and attributing gross stereotypes to them seem to be a common phenomena in nearly every society (Sue, 2010, p. 164-165)”.

These representations may be affirmed or negated in filmic spaces, creating avenues which nurture microaggressive tendencies. For this study, understanding of gender microaggression within cinema has been guided by Sue's (2010) intimation of how social roles constrain female characters by decreeing “cultural scripts based upon beliefs and assumptions about appropriate female role behaviours and admonitions never to violate them (Sue, 2010, p. 165)”. Similarly, it inevitably alluded to Mututa's (2011) argument that women in film are oppressed by various forces: wifely, circumstantial, and disposition burdens. These frameworks put into cinematic context of space and social relations afforded a platform to interrogate what Zastrow (2004) calls undesirable outlook on women, what Sue (2010) calls ordinary disgraces, or literally ephemeral pejorative representations in cinema, potentially constituting gender microaggressions, a pertinent aspect of this study. The polysemy of feminine dialogues within cinema which have resulted from the numerous facets of feminism and the resultant gyrating identities edifying a deterministic male spect-actor (both diegetic and non-diegetic) all informed this study by providing locus in which investigation of ‘masculinised’ microaggression discourse is rendered possible.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Being mainly a gender study, the primary theory for this research is masculinity whose primary concern is control and exercise of control, knowledge, and liberties within social clusters. Carrigan et al. (1985) defines masculinity as a structure of practices whose effect is male ascendancy expedited through subordination of women. Connell

(1995, p. 71) concurs that “‘masculinity’. ...is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experiences, personality and culture”. Schrock & Schwalbe (2009) agree that these definitions usefully highlight what men do to maintain dominance. Further, they add, “all humans learn where they are supposed to fit in a set of preexisting cultural categories, some of which are hierarchically arranged (and that examining how gender is ‘interaction-ally’ constructed) is a matter of trying to understand how the system is reproduced, not a matter of leveling moral judgment (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, p. 280)”.

These perceptions can be critically interpreted to denote a cultural system where men and women coexist in rigid social patterns. Yet, quietly tucked in these practices are idiosyncratic behaviours, which result in men overriding the interests of women. Sue (2010) posits that these social systems, especially those which refract the image of subjugated and ambivalent woman; “blatant, unfair, and unequal treatment towards women ... manifested in sexual harassment, physical abuse, discriminatory hiring practices, or in women being exposed to a hostile, predominantly male work environment (Sue D. W., 2010, p. 11)” are the major forms of gender microaggression. In this statement, Sue (2010) marries the concept of microaggression (as a discourse of hostile or derogatory subjugation) to that of masculinity (as a discourse of male ascendancy through female subjugation). The concepts advanced by these scholars (Carrigan et al. (1985); Connell (1995); Schrock & Schwalbe (2009) and Sue (2010) are used in this study to illustrate how the films under study occasions or otherwise mediates each of the main possible forms of microaggression through the fusion of masculine discourses in their narratives. Buccigrossi, Frost, & Robinson (2003, p. 2) suggests that, in order to unearth masculinity’s complex social symbols and impact;

Our work ... (should) focus on the visible and invisible mechanisms of power, privilege, and influence that characterize the dominant–subordinated system of cultural oppression that robs masculinity of its dignity by the overuse/misuse of male privilege and subjects women in our society to the dark shadow of an age-old patriarchal culture.

This idea usefully proposes a framework within which patriarchy and matriarchy as invisible social mechanisms can be understood and analysed.

To this end, the study examines integrally relational symmetries resultant from conflation of patriarchal and matriarchal ideologies within cinema with specific interest in how they engender normalised forms of cultural oppression, or what Sue (2010) and Pierce, Carew, Pierce - Gonzalez, & Willis (1978) refers to as microaggressions. Since such conflicts, occurring in space and time and manifested through language, characterisation, sexual objectification, and social interactions inevitably involves domination of one gender over the other, resultant from such interactions, therefore, are categories of social events which individually, and ultimately cumulatively, constitute the discourse of microaggression as advanced by Sue (2010).

Analysis of the films is based on the ideological transcendence of identities, specifically functional performativity of masculinity through feminisation and masculinisation of bodies with disregard to biological gender strata. Further, analysis of microaggression at interpersonal level is guided by the ideas professed by Sue, Sue & Sue, 2010, cited in Sue (2010) that “gender stereotypes and discrimination against women seem to be prevalent in interpersonal behaviours, institutional practices, and cultural values/beliefs (Sue, 2010, p. 165)” all cultural spheres which are indeed the focus of this study. Within the specific context of film, this study invoked Jacquelyn Suter’s (1988) thesis that patriarchal discourses permeate all spheres of the narrative macro level, a consensual premise key in resolving multiplicity of identities and shifting perceptions of the female character and even more in framing microaggressive judgements of these relationships. Analysis of matriarchal discourses adheres to Suter’s (1988) concession that female characters can expedite male domination in narrative spaces, and the resultant implication that the diminishing spaces that female characters encounter within cinema as their quest for disconnect from patriarchal influence in the end results to inevitable fusion of the two discourses; the latter usurping and naturalising the former. Hence, the study surveys Suter’s contempt with this enigmatic position of female characters within cinema narratives whose liberties are held hostage by either patriarchal order or narrative constrictions, rendering her a nomad in the endless identity circus.

Masculinity theory then, when extended in relation to especially, Suter’s concept of feminist liberation, feeds its appropriation of behavioural contradictions to established order into paradigms that celebrate deflation of status quo. Another way of thinking of

masculinity is thus birthed with the idea that it can be appropriated against bio-sexual dictions. In this study, masculinity has been applied as a key catalyst in depicting socio-cultural conjectures and resistances within spaces in which gender relations occur. Its liberal form which allows embedding into masculinised female body, provides an analytical context for discussing cinema's social spaces. For this study, whose core principle is the dissection and accession of gender ideologies within paradigms, this conception of masculinity has helped to describe patriarchal and matriarchal relations, and to decipher resistance to sexism ideals and other consequent social incarnations of the modern Tanzanian woman and man within Kanumba's social issue films.

1.10 METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Research Design

This research uses case study design of qualitative research model. This is the most appropriate approach since the entire study focuses on the works featuring a specific film artist – Steven Kanumba - in whose films it reads and describes the various gender contrivances, characteristics and theoretical attributes with a specific bias of how they situate, confront or enhance the discourse of gender microaggression.

1.10.2 Population

The population for this study is Tanzania's film industry, christened Bongowood. This is informed by its high turnover of movie production, making it the leading film production hub in East and Central Africa.

1.10.3 Sample Size

Though Bongowood as a film industry has produced many films over time, this study focuses on four purposively sampled films which feature Steven Kanumba as either the protagonist or antagonist. These are O'prah (2008), The Village Pastor (2009), Moses (2011), and Offside (2010). The decision to read the works featuring Steven Kanumba is informed by his popularity in the industry, and the vastness of his film portfolio. His role as a founding member of Bongowood, his international cooperation with filmmakers from other African countries like Nigeria, the many he has won, and the

posthumous credit accorded to him for fostering development in Tanzania's film industry makes him an authority in BongoWood film industry (see Appendix 1).

1.10.4 Sampling Techniques

The sample size is four films selected through purposive sampling technique. The inclusion criteria is the presence of Steven Kanumba as either a protagonist or an antagonist, and their thematic relevance to this study. Purposive sampling, as a form of non-probabilistic sampling is appropriate for this study because the entities under study (films) are selected based on their narrative content, characterisation, narrative discourses, and hence their relevance in aiding to illustrate gender microaggression as a social discourse. The study does not consider any other roles he may have played in the production of the film.

1.10.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity and reliability of the collected data, the researcher read all the four films under study, simultaneously recording the various pertinent observations. Conformity to the study objectives and research design, and logical relation to the theoretical framework are the key parameters considered to determine reliability of the collected data. Since primary data has been derived from reading of the films and keen application of the stipulated theory across all the three objectives, this guarantees validity and reliability of the collected data as a basis for advancing the various arguments in the study.

1.10.6 Data Collection Techniques

This study has used both primary and secondary data sources.

1.10.6.1 Primary Data

Primary data has been collected from reading of the films under study in relation to the concept of gender microaggression and the dynamics of social usurpation and control which herald masculinity theory. This has focused on the various intersections of masculinity and feminist discourses within the various elements of the sampled films: language, actions, and costuming metaphors as key indices of the hierarchical

topography of masculinity. The embedded assertion here is that the actions of Kanumba's character in these films anthropomorphise a perceptibly distinctive scheme of manhood, as well as his role in adjudicating effeminised male-hood. The study has also examined the role of female characters in dispensing not just the feminine discourse, but also how their actions embrace masculine dialogues as well. Schrock & Schwalbe (2009) argues that focussing on actions instead of the bodily agency would "discourage the reification of masculinity and to redirect analytic attention to what males actually do to achieve dominance. All manhood acts, as we define them, are aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, p. 281)". This research therefore focuses only on the character's actions (verbal and mimetic) within the cinema narratives of the specified films to explicate their connivance in propagating gender microaggressions. The films have been read individually to facilitate broad engagement with the subject of masculinity and microaggression, but comparisons are made across the four films where necessary. The observed results are however categorised as per the type of instance, and placed in a corresponding, defined cluster reflective of the various possible forms of gender microaggression.

Reading of the film is relevant here because it enables accurate interpretation of the films as literary art forms based on their intrinsic elements: narrative structure, mise-en-scène, costuming, stage movements, and characterisation for instance. Occasional referencing to other films from East African region where necessary has helped to illustrate various concepts and arguments. No field visits, questionnaires, or interviews have been used as the scope of the study is strictly the description of the nature and characteristics of relations as well as their outcomes within the cinemas' diegetic environment. Since data is derived from the films, observation has been used as the primary data collection method.

1.10.6.2 Secondary Data

The study also uses secondary data from various sources. This includes books accessed from Kenyatta University's Post Modern Library, Margaret Thatcher Library in Moi University, and Jomo Kenyatta Library in University of Nairobi. It has also referred to journals, articles and electronic books obtained from various online academic databases.

1.10.7 Data Analysis

Monaco (2009) indicated that film language – and hence its syntax - differs significantly from that of written / spoken language systems in that whereas in ordinary language syntax is concerned with the syntagmatic category elements, that is “the linear aspect of construction..., the ways in which words are put together in a chain to form phrases and sentences (Monaco, 2009, p. 192)”, in film, on the other hand, syntax “must include both development in time and development in space (Monaco, 2009, p. 193)”. The incursion of films’ textual analysis into the realm of montage and *mise-en-scène* (respectively) forms the basis upon which data for this study has been read.

Analysis of behaviour, character relations, characteristics of places and persons have therefore been expedited in reference to synchronic and diachronic parameters of film. Synchronic analysis focused on frame as the spatial host of *mise-en-scène* while diachronic analysis concentrated on time lapse within the film’s narrative in reference to shot, scene, sequence, acts, and ultimately, the entire narrative. Both approaches are most suitable because, applied together, they explicate attributes associated with the film’s narrative prose in which gender relations – and thus microaggression – becomes manifest, the fundamental focus of this study. Further, analysis of the various gender frameworks within the film’s narrative plane is guided by Smelik’s proclamation that

Telling stories is one of the ways of reproducing subjectivity in any given culture. Each story derives its structure from the subject’s desire (the hero). Narrative structures are defined by an Oedipal desire: the desire to know origin and end. Sexual desire is intimately bound up with the desire for knowledge, that is, the quest for truth. The desire to solve riddles is a male desire *par excellence*. Because the female subject is herself the riddle. ‘Woman’ is the question (what does woman want?) and can hence not ask the question nor make her desire intelligible (Smelik, 1995, pp. 73-74)

An analysis of the dynamics of subjugation (as a performative function of masculinity) and the resultant discourse of microaggression is made possible through exploration of the male and female character’s diegetic trajectory. Smelik’s hint of the restless space that women and effeminate men occupy in their transient roles in cinema and real world is key to this study in that interrogation of Oedipal complexities made it possible to examine transgendered shift of masculine tendencies by exploration of how women react to patriarchal subjugation, hitherto referred to as patriarchal discourse. Further,

the resultant counter discourse of female masculinity has permitted a critical engagement with emerging counter-discourse of female masculinity.

1.11 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter dwells on the background information of the study, introducing the various pertinent concepts, specifically gender and microaggression. It has also traversed the various literary groundings touching on the objectives of this study, and explained how masculinity will be applied as a theoretical basis for the study. Finally it has explored diverse methodological approaches which have been used in collecting, analysing and interpreting the research data.

To fully understand gender as a social paradigm, it is important to analyse spaces and contexts in which gender discourses in cinematic mediums are manifest. Further, an analysis of the various emerging forms of microaggression in the selected films is crucial in explaining the transference of these ideological concepts into cinema. The next chapter surveys the extent to which space and context intersects with the vast array of gender and microaggression discourses as functional metrics of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 GENDER SPACES AND CONTEXT IN KANUMBA'S FILMS

2.0.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the spaces allocated to characters of either sex in the films under study. It also examines the circumstances arrogated to characters of each gender and the narrative outcome at the end of each film. It specially highlights the problematic diffusion of the symbols related to character's universe which he embraces in the film's setting; and context which is really the 'how' appropriated to the character's spine. Among the prevalent nodes of analysis are those touching on psychosexual distinctions in Kanumba's cinema narratives; and the resultant latent construction of manhood and womanhood. This has been achieved through a three stage analysis. The first one focuses on the narrative's general outlay to amplify the narrative spines of the selected films; the second one focuses on the spaces allocated to characters of either sex; and the last one examines the circumstances arrogated to characters of either gender. To fully appreciate the films, let's start off by picking out their major narrative spines.

2.0.2 Synopses

O'prah is a film that advocates for moderation in life by highlighting the emotional deficiencies and excesses of human life as well as consequences of neglecting some aspects of social life. It is set in affluent urban household where a young wealthy couple is experiencing the everyday life in emotional dis-resonance and remorse. The film begins at early morning, when Dominic (Vincent Ray Kigosi) is driving to his rural farm. Poised as a rich business man from the city, he meets Alfred (Steven Kanumba), his high school friend who lives in poverty in a dilapidated village. At the end of this encounter, he decides to host him in the city and help him live a better life by supporting him financially and enrolling him in college. However, two forces thwart this noble idea: Dominic's busy business schedules deprives him of an opportunity to spend time with his wife O'prah (Irene Uwoya) whose sexual craving leads her to seek sexual fulfilment from Alfred. Unknown to Dominic and O'prah, Alfred is a hideous sexual pervert and conman suffering from AIDS who does not even respect his friend's kindness.

Few days after Alfred moves in to live with them, O'prah succumbs to her sexual nostalgia and starts an affair with him. Eventually, when her husband finds out about their continued fornication, he reprimands Alfred and orders him to leave his house. This reels the plot to climax as O'prah leaves with him for Zanzibar, looting her husband's money. After desperately trying to locate his wife, Dominic learns of their whereabouts from his business partner and goes for revenge. Meanwhile, O'prah has been conned out of the cash she swindled from her husband, and is living a demeaning life of humiliation and desperation under Alfred's forbearing ruthlessness. The day she decides to leave and travel back home, she encounters Dominic in the streets of Zanzibar, and secretly follows him back to Alfred's house where after he leaves, she finds Alfred dead, a bullet hole in his head.

The reunion at their house in mainland Tanzania is both shameful and tearful for O'prah as Dominic informs her that she has contracted HIV, just moments before police arrive to seize her as the key suspect in Alfred's murder. The movie resolves in a tearful, pitiful end of their marriage and relationship. Her husband informs her that she has contracted the virus from Alfred, and so they cannot reunite. The film ends with a sobbing O'prah being escorted by police out of their house to face a gloomy future as an HIV positive murder convict. In the final sequence, the tearful O'prah whispers to her husband that she is aware he is the murderer, but that she will gladly bear the burden for him. Meanwhile, Dominic's life is cast in gloom and sadness as he faces a lonely life without the wife he dearly loved. None is fulfilled or rewarded as the final scene fades out.

In The Village Pastor, Isaya (Steven Kanumba) is a preacher in a rural township where his passion for gospel has earned him friendship and respect among his followers. An orphan, he lives with his aging grandfather (Ahmed Olotu). The day he goes to meet Sarah (Aunt Ezekiel) - his girlfriend - coming from college, he is determined to marry her and change his life for the better. Living a life of poverty, Isaya spends his time within the village, extant on meagre offerings and earnings from transporting goods with his bicycle to support his wife. His life changes when preachers from neighbouring churches visit his new family with gifts of money, offering to support his church grow. Pastor Pascal (Nurdin Mohammed) and Pastor Phillip Daniel Magulu (Norvatus Mayenja), appointed by their church leader Bishop Ezekiel (Charles Magali), through

this seemingly noble act, and conspires to destroy Isaya's family and church. Even though Pascal is introduced as a good person, he manifests his contemptible individuality through repeated fornication with Sarah, Isaya's new wife, in an attempt to destroy Isaya's family and derail his faith. Isaya's ignorance nurtures this vice, as he disregards the cautions given to him by his friends Chadamu (Hesron E. Oshosen) and Chalewa (Hamisi Changale) that his wife is adulterating with Pastor Pascal. The deeply religious Isaya defends his marriage and wife, until the day he witnesses his wife coming from a lodge with Pastor Pascal. On confronting them, Pascal hits Isaya with his car crippling him. Humiliated, Isaya moves to a distant township leaving his wife with Pascal and starts another church.

However, the reappearance of his wife pleading for forgiveness and the consequent reunion in the new township marks the beginning of his misery as a pastor and family man. Pastor Pascal's pursuit of Sarah to the new town and subsequent resumption of their affair again thwarts Isaya's dream of a happy marriage and pastoral career. His love unfulfilled and his church destroyed, he wanders in the demoralised township bursting with gloom, and returns to his house only to find a suicide note from his wife who, with her lover, have committed suicide in a nearby forest. Full of sadness, he departs – a leper – to find solace for his problems in the ruins of his despicable church. At the end of this film, Isaya cuts the image of a forlorn man, limping with his guitar in hand in a scene perceptibly his old rural home, and slowly enters his former church building, now in ruins. The film ends as he is singing a song of hope, alone, plucking his guitar in a sorrowful tune. The resolution of this film is melancholy in its depiction of the village pastor's life as utterly miserable. The film does not redeem his suffering but accords him fortitude and humility to elicit sympathy.

Moses is set in rural and semi-urban spaces. Moses (Steven Kanumba) is a well-educated man who vehemently hates women and exploits them sexually with equal fervour. Traumatized since childhood when he witnessed the cold-blood murder of his father and the subsequent cruelty meted upon him and his young sister Rose by his mother, he lives a haunted adult life. In workplace, he taunts Judith, his female boss who heads his department, and aggressively pursues the matter with their male boss until she is dismissed from the job. At his house, he indulges in sex with numerous

women insulting each as he deems fit. He has no feelings for women, and does not pretend otherwise. From his sister Rose to his numerous girlfriends he regards women as intellectually inferior, useful to him in the fleeting moment of his desire for sexual gratification. When his best friend - and colleague in the workplace - Lucky tries to introduce him to his sister-in-law, Joyce, aiming to get him interested in marrying her, he refuses and lives a bachelor's life until the end of the film when he decides to take her to his house after impregnating her. Even then, he confesses that he does not love her, but values the unborn child growing in her womb. In the midst of this subtle change in personality, the film uses flashbacks to expose his childhood trauma about the murder incident and subsequent hatred for women explaining to the viewer the source of his misogynistic behaviour. At the end of the film, Moses is portrayed unchanged in his hateful stance against women. He is however given a chance to build a better generation in his unborn baby – through whom he may rejuvenate better gender relations.

Offside is a flashback narrated in a fragmented structure, and happens in the past tense. Richard Nira (Jacob Stephen) is a man whose past is muddled with crime. Having killed his second wife and swindled his former crime colleague from money they had robbed together, he is living with his two grown sons, Stewart (Steven Kanumba) and Alvin (Vincent Kigosi) from his first marriage in a life of abundance. Meanwhile, his first wife, Flora, is languishing in poverty prostituting in a 'ghetto' neighbourhood. While Mr Nira's first born is a hardworking and obedient son, the second born is a crook who has absconded his college studies and spends time drinking and fornicating. A day after their mother's tragic death while travelling back home, Mr Nira shows up with his third wife (Irene Uwoya), a young urban professional prostitute who transforms his home to a harlots den and a death trap. The new bride – out on a revenge mission – starts by engaging in sex with his last born son, before murdering Mr Nira and Stewart. It is when she tries to kill Alvin, the first born that she is arrested together with her aunt who planned and recruited her for the mission. In the final sequence, she is holding the pictures of her family, fully aware that she has been having sex with and has murdered her biological father and blood brother. As she is being arrested by police, she is in great distress after realising that the man she lived with as husband is actually her father, and the son she enjoyed sex with and killed is her brother. This Oedipal twist apperceives abominable sex as a primary punishment prior to destroying all lusty

characters with death. But while Nira's death is portrayed as necessary, Stewart's death is eulogised as the film's way of punishing Alice once she discovers the truth of her real identity. The film ends with Alvin miserably facing a migrant future.

All these narratives are hinged on one key issue: sex as a tool for defining, controlling and structuring character's lives within the film's diegesis. There is a recurring setup of very distinct social patterns revolving around the family as the hub of social formation. Both male and female characters occupy very specific spaces across the films, with interconnected arcs of social possibilities and outcomes prescribed for both sexes. To fully appreciate these social formations, their detailed analysis has been split into two segments: spaces allocated to male and female characters on the basis of their gender; and resultant contexts within which they exercise their lives on a day to day basis. Each is discussed in a detailed manner to allow a deeper understanding of their interplay within the selected films.

2.0.3 Gender Spaces

In seeking to understand how spaces reflect upon gender specific identities, there is need to especially focus on the prevalent narrative gaze as a segregative and ideologically potent practice in which gender is reinforced, questioned or mediated. In order to understand the role of the gaze from which spatial and contextual arrogations ensue, it is thus essential to sample some scholarly thoughts which have touched on the social influence of the gaze. Among the most notable canonical feminist theorists include Maggie Humm (1997) and Laura Mulvey (1998) who decried pleasurable viewership as an embodiment of Lacan's patronising gaze by effectively localising voyeuristic discourse to camera and narrative techniques which engage in what Rey Chow, cited by Bowman (2013) terms as stimulated, stroking rubs which ideologically persuade viewers. Against Chow's view, it can be said that Laura's greatest contribution to the debate on gendered (social) spaces as mediated by cinema is her disquiet with the patronizing look, albeit along the sexual axis. She has extensively explored how such a gaze signifies derogatory distinctions between male and female. Even though her lamentations about cinema's replication of this tendency is not precisely a misogynistic cry, still, she adumbrates an ideological imagination of a diegetic world in which feminine characters are aggregated to a homogenous unit of

lesser beings through cinematic signification. This study extends the concept of the feminine beyond the biological female, to include the effeminate male as well who still suffers the same fate as evinced in the various ongoing queer debates. The most peculiar sign - that of eroticised female displayed to encourage as well as embolden male gaze - is a point of ideological contention that many artists, including filmmakers, have tried to articulate in various platforms. In order to understand the various discourses on gender spaces and contexts, it is important to review some pertinent scholarly views on gender. In abridging the teleological ambiguities associated with gender studies, Davis & Schleifer (1998) argues that “gender is not simply an “object” of study, but a way of critiquing and understanding an array of traditional and conventional ideas (Davis & Schleifer, 1998, p. 567)”. This can be extended to imply that social strata, and the idea that people co-exist in culturally transposed spaces and contexts, occasion social formations which reinforce gender categorisations. A similar view has been advanced by McCormick (1995);

This identification, aside from any positive symbolic value it might have had, nonetheless meant in real terms the confinement of women within this private realm (upon which the public sphere depended) and the denial of any public agency to women, fully in accordance with the new conceptions of "natural" gender roles that also were being consolidated with the rise of the bourgeoisie and the hegemony of its particular "public" (McCormick , 1995, p. 3)

This argument also introduces the concept of the sacred space to which men are the self-appointed guardians, and women are the excluded ‘other’. Within cinema, such categories may be communicated through camera imagery, characterisation, settings and roles, and aspects of *mise en scène*; “set design, costume, the arrangement and movement of figures, the spatial relations (who is obscure, who looks dominant, and so on), and the placement of objects which have become important in the narrative (Turner, 1988, p. 59)”. All these parameters, especially their role in articulating the gaze, are significant as metrics of enquiry for this study’s exposition of cinematic use of spatial and contextual symbols to define inherent gender formations. To understand this relationship, it is however crucial to survey the narrative subject and patterns of the four films under study.

Donna Haraway (1985) refutes the possibility of androgynous relations between men and women, spatially and ideologically, by drawing attention to various social formations which are permeated and controlled by class sediments in her argument that:

If it was ever possible ideologically to characterize women's lives by the distinction of public and private domains – suggested by the images of division of working-class life into factory and home, of bourgeoisie life into market and home, and of gender existence into personal and political realms – it is now a totally misleading ideology, even to show how both terms of these dichotomies construct each other in practice and in theory (Haraway, 1985, p. 711).

This argument enshrines the controversies surrounding gender definitions, conceptions and practices in a more liberal sense by acknowledging the looming defiance that any attempt to mitigate these inevitably contrasting social formations. But at the same time, Haraway opens up possibilities within which gender can be at least acknowledged, whether in real social life or in reflective discourses like literature and cinema. In resonance with this view, Trujillo (2000) and Pringle (2005) too, affirms that hegemonic masculinity may be represented via occupations (e.g. career vs. housework) and dominations (e.g. subordination of women). Extended to cinema context, masculinity as a possible outcome of multiple forms of subtle oppressions can thus be manifested through character roles and differentiated through narrative spaces. Space is crucial in exploring masculinity because it situates roles and activities, occupational engagements for instance. To understand how a specific society perceives its male and female members, or the sociodicy of gender, is to understand where they situate their experiences. Men have usually been privileged with outdoor spaces while women dominate domestic spaces. Bourdieu (2002) has captured the woman's struggle to overcome this cognitive demarcation, characterized by profusion of debilitations;

Being symbolically condemned to resignation and discretion, women can exercise some degree of power only by turning the strength of the strong against them or by accepting the need to efface themselves and, in any case, to deny a power that they can only exercise vicariously, as '*eminences grises*' (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 32)

The enigmatic characterization of women based on their spatial and social positioning and the resultant interpretative ambiguities also fail to connect her contrasting existence with mutually causative social ideals which hint of a chthonic hierarchic formation. Cl'aviere's (1900) description of the grotesque spatial filament that women had been

accorded in the French society hints of the cause of these gendered characterisations symbolised through spaces. The deputation of women's social contribution, designating them to a position inferior to that of men - it can be argued - metonymically foregrounds spatial and contextual apartheid within and without the cinema's diegetic context conferring upon women an anaclitic disposition. Each of the Kanumba's films studied has singularly, and ultimately collectively, depicted a similar social setup in which femininity correlate with masculine psychosexual cathexis in a skewed social plexus.

From a masculine perspective, Kanumba's films sense and intellectualise the woes of dialectical materialism within a post-modern society in which given masculinity unremittingly prods a twiddling feminism. Within these films, this contest has been enacted through various narrative impressions and tropes: locale, language, circumstances and characterisation. Cl'aviere's (1900) narration of the woman as a man's deputy in case of need provides a categorical basis to rethink spaces and contexts as symbolic parts of cinematic lingua, and also as extensions of prevailing ideological structures. Consequently, spatial differentiation along gender lines can be appraised as the basis of social classifications, defining the position of each member of the society in a range of operative ideologies. Fredric Jameson's (1992, p. 51) observed that:

...we have here repeatedly stressed the dependence of a narrative figuration of class consciousness on the historical situation. We have stressed both the dichotomous nature of the class structure, and the dependence of class consciousness itself on the logic of the social and historical conjuncture. Marx's dictum, that consciousness is determined by social being, holds for class consciousness itself no less than for any other form.

This argument foregrounds the figurability of gender classes within contexts by validating motive through result. It is notable that irrespective of the spaces within which men and women exist, there is clear disparity in their homogenous depiction. Whereas male superiority has been edified in many social contexts, women are depicted as estranged and resistive, derided by cultural conventions which prefer them as passive entities superimposed in a world so fully created and controlled by men. Such conflictive gender depictions breeds a plethora of narcissist ideologies within the various narrative contexts hinged on such universal social units as family in which romantic relationships are richly codified with implantations of gender anarchism. This study has established that, overall, Kanumba's films consistently confer upon women

essentialist qualities occasioning within the narrative a legitimation of pre-ordained social classes. Broadly, the films have apportioned two distinct types of spaces to the characters, herein identified as public and domestic spaces. Domestic spaces are those related to the home environment, like house and the immediate compound. Public spaces, on the other hand, are those set away from the home environment, urban office, for instance. Kanumba's films portray consistent spatial dualism for male and female characters. This differentiation is consistent across the four films. The Village Pastor and O'prah have dwelled heavily on domestic spaces as the locus of their social discourses. Moses and Offside on the other hand have a rich blend of domestic and public spaces. Irrespective of the space he occupies, Kanumba's character within the four films has helped narrate diverse symbolic perceptions of the meanings and limits of gender within the film's diegesis. His fluidity in effecting symbolism within diverse spaces has made him an important character in all the four narratives. He embodies, *inter alia*, the ideals of the film's narrative spine and other attendant discourses including those touching on gender and microaggression.

In especially Offside, his character hybridises pre-Oedipal anxieties through deliberate exploitation of the female characters in his reach, often pushing them across the narrative plane in a furore akin to cultic passion. A similar chaotic furore is deployed in Moses. Through the incongruous dichotomy of mutual co-existence in shared spaces and human profanity evidenced through the characters' pacificity within the social space, as well as the figurative anarchism articulated through persistence of bodily images, Kanumba dares the moral ethos fundamentally admonished by the proponents of *écriture féminine*. The inveterate identification of the subject/object gender binaries in these films clearly elucidate stereotypical conceptions within social formations in which ideological fractals permeate the films' narratives, symbolically embedding - within spaces - events and physical presentation of characters within the intransitive gender barriers.

Nevertheless, the crosscutting meta-discourse within these films illustrate an overflowing concern with dual antagonisms of patriarchal and matriarchal susceptibilities in a male society pervaded by female ambiguities. In a way, therefore, these films critique not just the socioeconomic ambivalence imbued upon especially the

female characters, but also ridicule masculinity as a social trend which ironically pays obeisance to the very force it seeks to usurp. Even more, the movies depict rare boldness in their construction of feminine sexual renaissance (O'prah, Moses and Offside) and subdual of masculine mediocrities (The Village Pastor). It is quite evident that subordination of any gender is clearly figured in these films. First, spatial demarcation of gender economically and socially textualise ideological classes, while on the other hand, resilience of character groupings who encounter resistance in their aspirations and desires is espied through various narrative figments. Some of the most salient examples include the battle for precedence between Dominic and Alfred, Alfred and O'prah (O'prah); Isaya and Pascal, and Sarah and Isaya (The Village Pastor); Alvin and Stewart, Stewart and Alice (Offside); Moses and Judith, Joyce and Moses (Moses) is all waged at characterological level, the play of power and vulnerability between the characters specify a certain class for each.

In O'prah male and female characters occupy distinctly dissimilar spaces both physically and socially. Female characters are mostly confined to domestic spaces where they exist under men's control. Outside this social enclave, the films depict female characters in situations of hopeless survival. O'prah, the leading female character, spends her entire narrative life confined inside the walls of her home. At the beginning of the film, she is introduced as a beautiful wife coming home early to prepare a meal for her husband. While the director does not indicate where she is coming from, it is clear from the narrative outcome that she is not employed anywhere, nor does she work at her husband's business. Emphasis is however on the depiction of her life around the house where she spends time either idling just watching television, chatting with her sister whenever she visits, sometimes watering flowers in the walled compound, and, centrally, chasing sex from Alfred.

But even then, the narrative does not give her absolute control of the domestic space. Her husband, Dominic, routinely makes decisions affecting her in the domestic space without consulting her, like hosting Alfred. This hints of the possibility that she has no absolute control even over this space. Towards the end of the movie, when O'prah ventures out of the domestic space, it is in a moment of crisis for her, coming shortly after her husband discovers her sexual expeditions. Her foray into the public space is

used to highlight her incompetence and vulnerability. She moves out in the guidance of another man, only to be abandoned in another walled compound where she spends her time restlessly waiting for him as he enjoys himself in the public space. This transition from her domestic space where she relies on her husband for subsistence, to a distant lodge in Zanzibar where she is under the mercy of Alfred does not relieve her venture into public spaces as hinted at the start of her otherwise contemptible odyssey. Instead, it worsens her life by making her submit to a ruthless conman who after infecting her with HIV and conning her of all loot turns against her with ridicule. This scene further replenishes masculine ideologies of female enslavement by building a male character who quickly – despite his initial position as a hopeless village man - gets transformed to a high powered master, while the town woman, Oprah, remains so gullible, naive and dependent on men throughout the entire narrative.

The narrative also illustrates the film's reluctance to free the female character from domestic space. Despite her spatial shift from domestic to public, the film narrative effaces Oprah's potential for ascendancy to meaningful existence. Away from her domestic life, the narrative confers temporalities upon her life through embodiment of ideological praxis that crystallises her deficits in the public spaces. This shift in spatial existence, though initially displayed as a beautiful time for the woman, turns out to be her end, both literally and metaphorically. Literally in the sense that she discovers that Alfred is a ruthless conman and metaphorically because it signifies the end of her relationship with Alfred, for whom she has sacrificed her marriage and the beginning of her marriage's irredeemable failure. After blatant ridicule and intimidation, Oprah's decision to step back and reclaim her domestic space is met with terminal rejection from her husband who informs her that she is already HIV positive, depriving her of any hope of future together as a family. The director cements this definitive separation by having her arrested, to be charged with the murder of a lover who duped her into destroying herself. Such a terminal separation, it seems, holds no promise for her in either of the two male-dominated spaces.

Milka, the other woman in this movie, is also confined to domestic space as a house help. For her, the space is further shrunk by limiting her to the kitchen where, initially, she is introduced washing dishes, a chore she repeats severally throughout the entire movie. When she ventures outside the kitchen in subsequent sequences, she is depicted

as a panicky young woman infringing on territories where she is clearly unwelcome. One of the highlights of her fragile freedom from the entrapment of her kitchen space is when she ventures to O'prah's and later Alfred's door to eavesdrop and peep as O'prah and Alfred indulged in their frequent illicit sexual brawls – an act that she performs discreetly and with much fear. Consequent to this infringement, her job is terminated and she is sent back to her rural home without any opportunity to redeem herself after she is caught by O'prah. Up to the end of the film, she is abandoned in the village, and is never reinstated to her previous job despite the narrative proposition through Dominic that she was wrongfully sacked for her effort to save the male character from possibly contracting HIV from his wife. Instead of rewarding her with better job prospects, she is totally cut off from the narrative and irredeemably abandoned in the village to wallow in poverty.

Other minor female characters in this film live pathetic lives in their spaces. The restaurant waitress and female prostitute in Zanzibar who hints to O'prah that Alfred is a dangerous con-man; just like the woman who visits her lounge desperately crying for Alfred casts a desolate image of desperate womanhood outside the domestic spaces. The waitress is doing minimal wage job in the public space, the prostitute is a desperate hooker relying on men's tokens for her upkeep, while that desperate woman crying outside Alfred's house is depicted as a forlorn character, thrashed and thrust in pitiless ridicule by the mal character she pursued to the public space. This image of O'prah as a wasted woman, suffering in a home that her husband has built for her, renders a fertile distinction on the appropriation of spaces in this movie. Spatial separation, the narrative suggests, is seriously considered a social norm, the violation of which the movie proscribes self-denigration especially for the female characters. From this observation, it is possible to suggest that cinema spaces have been symbolically used to designate social power and other pertinent privileges in an otherwise male-tilted manner.

Consequently, contrary to female characters, male characters in this film dominate public spaces. Exemplified through Dominic who has a thriving business in the city, he spends most of his time tending to his trade. His aversion to domestic space is highlighted through the brief moments he spends at home where his initially wife desperately awaits his return with passion and submissive complicity before drifting towards Alfred for what becomes an endless surge of sexual indulgences for her. At the beginning of the film, he is introduced driving in a rural village on the way to his farm

in contrast to O'prah's initial entry into the film, where she is introduced coming home. This foregrounds the spatial position of the female and male characters as diverse and opposed, a motif that prevails to the end of the film. Another point of divergence is the perception that characters of either sex are suited to different spaces. Dominic, for instance, only appreciates the necessity of O'prah his wife after she has deserted their matrimonial home and fled with Alfred, his friend, on a doomed pleasure voyage to Zanzibar. He is seen looking for her all over the city, finally spending the night outside with the watchman to cure his solitude. In this sequence, he embodies masculine misery in a space that is so unfamiliar and uncomfortable for him as a man, having to face life in a domestic space where a woman character no longer exists to validate his masculinity. Without his wife, Dominic is unwilling to enter his palatial house. He prefers staying outside even at night in defiance of the overwhelming urge to occupy the domestic space. The film also deliberately vindicates Dominic from domestic grief by edging away from showing his domestic side, preferring instead to show him looking for his wife in a moment that symbolizes his great affection for O'prah. Even when the narrative places him inside his house at the final sequence, he restlessly occupies the seating room, loafing in anxiety at the grief of his irredeemably ruined marriage. This is the image the film upholds to the end.

Alfred too is introduced in an external space – a poor village man on his way to the dispensary. To save him from the woes of the public spaces, Dominic invites him to the city where he can live better life with him. Even he could have afforded more time to , spend in the house, Dominic whisks him out of the domestic space by enrolling him in college so that he can spend his days away from the domestic space. He even takes him out for social drinks occasionally. On the other hand, this film does not show Dominic at any point taking his wife out for even a casual meal. This symbolic absence can be interpreted as the film's strategy to emphasise spatial separation along the gender divide. Regardless of their social class, men can enjoy public spaces; while women, no matter how affluent, must always remain within the family space. Alfred's attempt to venture back to the domestic space, owing to his college schedule which could afford him alot of free time, is narratologically eulogised as the start of his own end. In order to dislodge him out of domestic setup, the narrative leads him to destroy the female characters that inhabit it, and consequently deprive him of all friendship and respect imbued upon him by Dominic. By so doing, the film expresses its preference for an

absent Alfred who can find his own means to explore public spaces away from Dominic than an Alfred who is confined behind the domestic walls. For the brief moment he occupies this highly contested space, he causes a lot of trouble to the female characters, symbolizing an agitated and debased manhood very unaccustomed to the routine complacency that the film decrees for the female characters. Further, the narrative makes his exit from domestic space irredeemable. This is most evident in the way he deliberately infects O'prah with HIV, and ridicules her about it in the third act in the brutal dismissal from Zanzibar even after dismissing Milkah from her job just so they can enjoy undisrupted sex. From the foregoing arguments then, it is evident that there is distinct spatial distinction shown in O'prah.

The Village Pastor on the other hand appropriates similar household duties to characters of both genders – fetching water, for instance – it nevertheless draws a distinction between dominant social spaces of the characters. In most of the narrative, the male characters have access to public spaces whereas female characters subsist in domestic spaces. Isaya, the leading male character usually spends time with his male friends out of the domestic settings engaging in various social activities. His occupation as a pastor also takes him to many places around the village. At the beginning of the film, he spends significant time at home, while occasionally preaching at the village square. Even when his marriage is ruined and he has to start life in a new place, he is positioned as a church leader, a dominant space that he occupies until the end of the film. In the later stages of the movie, Isaya's fraying lifestyle as a bachelor is also symbolised through locale. He is accorded feminine roles like cooking and fetching water, but even then he is pushed from the confines of the domestic walls by situating his domestic chores outside at the corridor of his house, especially whenever he is cooking. His participation in other feminine household chores like fetching water is mitigated by assigning women to help him. His foray into domestic spaces is thus lusted with social validation as he helps to broker agreement between fighting women. The social relevance of this incident is further highlighted through montage of scenes where women praise his rare ability to bring understanding between people and restore broken marriages. In this sense, therefore, his domestic life is justified as a necessary contribution to social good, enabling him to reach to women in domestic spaces and help them live better lives.

Chadama and Chalewa, Isaya's two male friends in the market place, too occupy public spaces. Their job as *bodaboda* operators involve travelling between towns transporting goods and customers. Throughout the film, they are depicted in various exterior locations going about their businesses, just as Isaya. They portray ordinary man's ability to withstand the challenges of public spaces irrespective of his social status. Isaya's grandfather on the other hand, embodies a man's discontent with the domestic space which is for him as a transient site. In the film, his activities in the domestic spaces are fleeting. He is seen once coming home to tend to goats before heading to graze in the fields. He is dominantly portrayed as an outdoor person who dwells in the fields. The only moment he spends at home is when they are having supper with Isaya and Sarah.

Pastor Pascal is another prominent male character in this film. He is portrayed is mainly in the public spaces where he is depicted as an evil man. Even his evil activities are committed way from the domestic space. His fornication with Sarah, starting at the rural village and eventually following her to the city, takes him away from his own domestic space while for Sarah it leads her from public spaces to her own matrimonial bed. In the beginning, they use the township lodge, which taints their entry into public space with an act of self-defilement. Similarly, the narrative situates their reunion in the city by the roadside where Pascal confronts Sarah on her way to the church. In the final sequence, however, when Isaya finds them having sex in his bed, both men are quite pained even though the narrative still redeems them from domestic humiliation – leaving Sarah to incur guilt alone. For Isaya, he is absent from the house when his wife cheats on him this last time, while Pascal is just a visitor to the house. However, Sarah suffers massive humiliation as she is caught having extra-marital sex in her own marital bed, just days after Isaya's forgiveness which saw her reinstated his wife. Just like O'prah, the film redeems the male characters from domestic woes by heaping a multitude of blame on the gullible female character, who is overwhelmed by her unbearable humiliation as implied through the narrative's outcome – she prefers to commit suicide than to live with the shame of this encounter.

In contrast to male characters, the film narratives locate female characters within domestic spaces. Sarah, the only major female character in The Village Pastor, spends

her time in a despicable home as a submissive wife in her early stages of marriage. In the later stages of the film, when she stealthily goes out with Pastor Pascal for illicit sex, the narrative punishes her with suicide, making her venture into the outside world uneventful. There is no gain dispensed to her, through either social occupation (she is adjudged as a prostitute) or affiliation (her association with male characters does not offer her any positive social position). Her materialistic disposition deprives her happiness when she gets married to a poor husband; while her association with Pascal makes her a prostitute, not a woman of honour. By exploring female characters' nascent infidelity, Kanumba de-specificates morality as a signifying agent within The Village Pastor's narrative formation.

Even though Moses aggregates spaces to both genders in a relatively inclusive manner, there is clear preference for female characters in domestic spaces than in public spaces. Judith, the female chairperson of the board of directors in a corporate company represents the unwelcome feminine incursion into public spaces. In her role, she is responsible for fixing financial performance of an economically ailing company. At the start of the film, she is leading the employees' board, the outcome of which is outright ridicule by the male members of staff. Moses, the leading male character, exhibits high intellectual capacity and philosophical knowledge which he applies to corporate processes. Judith on the other hand exhibits no academic competence. After being insulted, she chooses to leave the boardroom rather than offer informed solution. Other female characters in the room mildly chuckles as she suffers under the vindictive male gaze, stumbling her way from the leadership pedestal to forced leave and eventual termination from her position. Linda, in her position as Moses' secretary exists with significant unease in the corporate space. She, too, is timid and complacent in the public (corporate) space. Confined between two male bosses, she exudes subdued attitude, nervously heeding to the demands of her bosses, and even availing her body as a sexual tool in her effort to please Moses. Rose on the other hand is predominantly confined to domestic spaces where she spends her time following the 'O'phraian' route of sexual predation. She shifts undecidedly between various men seeking out a possible marriage partner. Throughout the narrative she is in the process of becoming a wife, a desire that begets much suffering for her. In the end she is denied the opportunity to enjoy marriage as she is portrayed as a quarrelsome wife. Not even his brother supports her, thus

alienating her ideologically as an abandoned 'other'. Jane on her part dwells at a restive periphery in the public domain hardly paying attention to her job as a supermarket attendant. Even in this professional capacity, she is infused with lustful passion that she exerts upon Moses. The film narrative denies her access to her desire as her marriage ambition is symbolically trashed by Moses.

Male characters on the other hand are accorded dominance within the public spaces. Moses, the lead male character, occupies a dominant position in the office. He is the trusted corporate intellectual trusted by his boss to steer the company towards financial recovery. In this capacity, he exudes tough masculine authority that drags other characters to his call. Imbued with this authority, Moses exhibits unrestrained freedom and consistent trail of intellectually motivated manipulation. Similarly, his boss typifies the unassailable masculine authority that pervades corporate – hence public – spaces. In this role, the boss overrules Judith's plea for continued service, threatening her with salary withdrawal if she contests the forced leave he decrees her. It is important to note that Judith's forced leave is eventually depicted as her silent exit from corporate space from her point of forced exit to the end of the narrative. She never regains her job.

Male power is further legitimised through narrative negotiations, which favour rational males. For instance, when the film portrays a heartbroken male employee who has received a letter terminating his services, there is deliberate emphasis on his vulnerability as a feminized male under the mercy of a powerful masculinized female, an analogy the narrative exploits to simultaneously create a motif of irrational womanhood. Even the revelation that he is the sole bread-winner in his family draws sympathy to his situation, while simultaneously illuminating Judith's hideous ruthlessness and accentuating the extent of her inhumane attributes. It is thus the narrative's way of validating male dominance in corporate space when Moses saves the embattled employee from recursion to domestic spaces by overturning Judith's decision and retaining him in the job – in the public spaces. Similarly, all the other men in this film occupy public spaces, showing consistent disinterest with domestic spaces. For instance, Rose's lovers clash with her due to her demands that they should spend more time at home. Even after getting married to her third lover, her husband seeks Moses' counsel about her confrontations and demands that he should be coming home early, to

which Moses informs him that he should be in charge and that if he ever agrees to his sister's demands, it would be conclusive evidence that he has been infected with mental parasites. That the two men whom Rose considers her only family can uphold an ideological stance contrary to her desires is the film's way of symbolizing the society's collective stance against rewarding women's desires. The act also reifies the film's proposition that men are not to occupy subjugated spaces like domestic setup, which are symbolized as a preserve of the women.

Spatial separation in Offside, just like in O'prah, arrogates public spaces to male characters while restricting female characters to domestic spaces. Nira is portrayed as an affluent albeit insidious entrepreneur who spends most of his time in the office tending to his business. In the initial scenes before marrying Alice, he is a committed family man who takes time to be with his children. However, away from home, he is a successful executive who spends significant time in his office working. In both public and domestic spaces, Nira is depicted as an authoritative person who enjoys significant freedom. Alvin his son, is a university graduate. In this film, he is his father's favourite son who is being groomed to run the business as well as to run the family. In a confidence, his father shares with him his deepest secrets, and consults with him on important business and family matters. His life in the public space is seen as a stepping-stone, some sort of a landing to spring into a future corporate career.

Besides spending some time with his father at their business office, he is also a social person who enjoys social drinks and sometimes exercises with his younger brother Stewart. He is depicted as a hardworking person whose good behaviour has won praises from his father. One way the film upholds a public space trajectory for him is through consistent grooming as a future heir to his father's business empire. The film narrative accords him overseas business trips as a way of supporting his rise in the corporate world. Stewart similarly has been apportioned significant time to engage in social activities outside their home. Even though in the initial flashback scenes, his father is always complaining of his financial extravagance, he is nevertheless accorded means and support to exist successfully outside the domestic arena. His elder brother encourages him to spend more time away from home to avoid the wrath of their quarrelsome stepmother.

Besides the paternal lamentations, it is evident that Alfred has time to go out and enjoy himself. Even as a college student in Kenya, Stewart is granted many liberties to travel out of the domestic space, from his time in an international college, to his fun-filled evenings with friends. In this film, Stewart spends most of his time outdoors: exercising, enjoying social drinks with his brother and sometimes entertaining women. Thrilled with college bravado, he enjoys support from his elder brother and father. For him, the family space represents two things: filiations with his illicit passions, and demise of his emotional intellect. In the first instance, he converts his hatred for Alice into revengeful sexual affair in which he uses sex to avenge his father's act of marrying Alice as well as to punish her for her arrogance. On the second level, these involvements dull his emancipator instincts making him susceptible to Alice's trickery, which culminate in his death. This film uses Stewart's ignorance as a college student to highlight Alice's wickedness. That she lures him with sex and eventually murders him denotes her inhumanness as well as her decaying sense of moral goodwill.

Female characters on the contrary, are assigned domestic spaces. In the opening scene at the burial site in Offside, there are three female characters surrounded by a significantly higher number of male characters. At this point in the narrative time, though the setting is sorrowful, a close examination of the character behaviour reveals that only female characters are openly mourning and shedding tears as the male characters meekly look on listening to the preacher's sermon. At the end of this scene, Alvin and Stewart (the only surviving members of the male-only family) are left to listen to the final consolations of the preacher (Pastor Myamba), while their bereaved step-mother is nowhere in sight. In a symbolic retreat evidenced in the other films, Alice is hastily whisked away from the public sphere into the house, where she is deemed safe and fit to exist. Any other place outside the house, the narrative suggests, is a man's space and women should shy away from it. In the remainder of the film, Alice is assigned roles and activities occurring in the domestic spaces and every time she leaves the house, her exit is overshadowed by symbolic nuances that she is up to no good.

A poignant example of this is the scene when she leaves pretending to go visiting a distant relative only to reappear and murder Nira, her husband *cum* father. This exit, so shrouded in controversy – even becoming a source of criminal enquiry by the police

denies the woman any positive outcome in the public space. This echoes O'prah's narrative arc where the life of the leading female character in the domestic space is celebrated as a fanciful occupation for her as she is provided with luxury. However, when she delves out to the public space, she is engulfed in misery, which culminates in her arrest upon return to her home to be prosecuted as a murder suspect. Moreover, this film still adheres to the trend witnessed in O'prah where co-existence between characters of both gender in one space breeds multifarious conflicts, the female character emerging as the loser in the end. Even when the female character is free from domestic space, she remains in perpetual flight circling in restless mutability as evinced through the desolate woman who haunts Nira's home to the end of the movie. As the film ends, her freedom is rewarded with an embarrassing arrest as she is caught in her spurious web of malice. Exposed together with Alice, both are depicted cowering in the face of law, and led away in a teary unceremonious convoy, timorously peering at a despicable life ahead: two psychopathic twerps. Furthermore, her restlessness in the public space categorically reinforces the film's suggestion that female characters are not fully admissible to male-controlled public spaces. Their entry and survival in the space is mired with agony.

An analogous motif is presented through Flora, who is allocated space in the public domain. Away from her home, she lives a miserable life in a dilapidated shack where her only financial activity is prostitution. Whenever she is not prostituting, she is drinking *bongo*, a native brand of cheap alcohol. Misery too haunts her in this environment. When Stewart goes to visit her the first time, she emerges from her squalor shack as a rogue person: cornered by life, drunk, degraded beyond shame. Through spatial positioning, this film implies that the result of a woman's continued exposure to harsh life in the public spaces is emotional degradation and social reclusion. In this state, Flora possesses no love and is equally overwhelmed by an inimical antagonism for good life. Such a destiny, it seems, is terminally decreed for her as illustrated in the manner in which she dies when she tries to come back home: on the back seat of a bus, alone, isolated, a non-entity. To deny her even a terminal right to be buried with dignity at her husband's home, the movie anchors on an exclusionary stance against female characters who foray away from the domestic confinement by 'Othering' her in a decidedly terminal manner. Mr Nira does not bother to reclaim and burry

her honourably as his wife, nor do the two male children make any effort to claim her body and bury her at home. She is unceremoniously buried in a council yard by nondescript strangers.

From the foregoing arguments, these movies can be said to foster images of differentiated spatial existence for male and female characters. They prefer complacent female characters existing in domestic spaces and aggressive male characters existing in public spaces. Such differentiation manifests masculine tendency to subjugate women through spatial confinement in non-progressive roles. The depiction of the dominant female characters existing in walled territories, contrasted to the open spaces arrogated to male characters symbolically pacify masculine control with sexist filiations, echoing Obura's (1991) sentiment that such portrayal "demonstrate the ineptitude of women for the world of leadership and work; and establish a social hierarchy with men dominating and women in a subordinate position (Obura, 1991, p. 7)". It is quite poignant that these films embolden exclusive masculinisation of the biological male in all spaces, to the exclusion of the female, at least in regard to positive narrative outcomes.

2.0.4 Gender Contexts

In the preceding section, this study discussed how the interplay of spatial and gender politics advance exclusionary tendencies at the base of which lies masculinised struggles for dominance and the resultant discourse of subjection. This section sets out to explore what male and female characters actually do once situated in those spaces. It will specifically focus on the manifestations of usurpation as a precursor to gender-based microaggression as mediated through character identities, experiences and social circumstances within the sampled films. O'prah is an overtly feminist film in its depictions of gendered sex, gender-power and its appropriation of control and indulgence. The subject of sex is highly emphasised as a central theme, and in fact is elevated as the narrative spine of the entire film. O'prah as a woman denied sexual satisfaction but granted material opulence gyrates between aggravated emotional distress as she seduces her husband to a point of despair on the one hand; and severe tribulations when she seeks sexual satisfaction elsewhere. Sex in this film strongly remains a man's tool to dispense at will. The woman, whenever she gets it, comes at a

price, sometimes fatal as coded in the character of O'prah who, it seems, is destined to either persevere her otherwise desperate sexual hunger or pay with her life for any semblance of sexual satisfaction.

In tune with Kanumba's other films, O'prah is contextually rich in social symbols and metaphors of gender co-habitation. In its narrative form and content as well as camera lingua, it hosts a detailed ingathering of ideological sputters through which matrixial border-spaces and gaze intersect intermittently. Border-spaces here entail the evolving contexts in which characters exist collectively, while the gaze is the shifting presentation of self (viewed from the persona's perspective). Within this film, the female character tries to re-appropriate herself as an enlightened entity in a domain so tightly clasped in the hand of man. This film presents the leading female character, O'prah, as a woman totally uneasy with herself. Existing within the world that her man has created and defined for her, she poses a despondent image trying to find meaning within her while fleeing her natural motivation - a battle she loses, with disparaging results. It is worthy noting that the leading female character in this film exists on the threshold of 'sinful' desires, afraid to face her own emotions without guilt or self-doubt.

In nod to Bazin's (2005) observation about erotic symbolism in cinema, this film narrative grants the female character unabated prowess in pursuit of her sexual desires; but such fantasies, though fuelled by self-vindication, nevertheless restraint her into a cowering being. O'prah is perpetually frightful of her husband, the secret of her clandestine love affair wisping as a dark smoke behind her unbearable passions. This juxtaposition between joy and fright constitutes a debasing context for her as she is never free to be, either when she pursues her passions, or when she does not. This is the intersectional outcome which deprives her fulfilment in life. In the later stages of the film, the director completely refrains from depicting any form of sexual bliss between O'prah and Alfred in their illicit relationship. While her initial intimate contact with Alfred is purely sexual, she is deprived of sexual fulfilment within the narrative after their escape to Zanzibar. As opposed to the initial context where the film depicts their frantic sexual melees within Dominic's house as romantic and fulfilling, there is outstanding ridicule about their life in Zanzibar where the film does not show them making love, even once. Instead, the film narrates their simmering pleasure and their changing perceptions of each other through sequential escalation of their emotional rift.

In this emotional anticlimax, their first outings in the new city can be interpreted as Alfred's final gesture of kindness, his way of saying goodbye to a woman he has conquered, destroyed and fleeced – one more just like many others. O'prah's ignorance in this unfolding context does not help in redeeming her emotionally, socially, or intellectually. Rather it highlights her ignorance as a city woman who has been outwitted by a drab, village man. Her shift from Dominic's house to Alfred's compound only escalates her experience of enslavement. To exchange her healthy, rich husband for a sickly con man, the film suggests, is the actual trajectory that she has undertaken and not the romantic and fulfilling sexual affair she desires. The result is frightening regret and loss as the film shows not even one sexual activity between them in Zanzibar. Similarly, Milkah lives with fright, afraid of her employers. After witnessing O'prah's plunge into her sexual melees, she is afraid to inform her husband Dominic. She also lives in continuous fear that O'prah will discover her eavesdropping on her affairs, and act she performs with great fear and caution. It can thus be argued that the motif of restlessness pervades this film both thematically and narratologically. Thematically because the entire film centers on unfulfilled desires for the female characters; and narratologically because its premise is transcendence of personal desires which are not expressly articulated, but infiltrate the film's spine nevertheless. Even the camera in its voyeuristic distress highlights how the female characters hide behind walls, look sideways, speak in muted sounds and use signs to voice their words in an effort not to disturb their unseen master. Alice in Offside, for instance, lives a double life. As a prostitute, she marries Nira for the money. But her aunt assigns her an assassin role. This denies her liberty to enjoy lavishness in her home. Further, she is enslaved by sexual perversions which deprive her support from all male characters surrounding her in the domestic space.

Male characters on the other hand enjoy significant freedom and choice. Dominic, the lead male character in this film, has control of his time and engages in meaningful activities that advance his socio-economic progress and accord him social liberty. He is in control of his space, his life, his desires and his affairs. As the owner of a successful business, he commands respect and has authority in his space. Alfred on the other hand - while not explicitly dominant in his role from the outset - still enjoys significant progress in his life especially in the last part of the second act and the whole of third

act. From the time he decides to be sexually involved with O'prah, he gains significant control over her decisions and body. In her new self, O'prah completely submits to Alfred both physically and ideologically, so that her body is held as Alfred's own instrument of pleasure; and her life has no other purpose but to fulfil herself through Alfred's fleeting, deceitful validation. In seeking to become fulfilled, she migrates from her initial 'self-world' to a new 'other-world' where Alfred could grab her, wildly pull her to his bed, and proceed to have voracious sex with her without seeking her consent. O'prah's weak will implied through her mild protests do not culminate in any success to reclaim her dignity through confrontation with Alfred. On the contrary - coupled with her subsequent complicity to foster their adultery - denies her any reclaim to respect and propagates Alfred's influence over her to the extent that she deserts her marriage and elopes with him to Zanzibar. This exit from her home on one side affirms her annulled identity, and strengthens Alfred's role as her new master. It also validates his resolve to abuse her by making her a dormant attendant to his demands, and finally, exploitation and ridicule.

Despite the gyrating contexts within which characters exist in this film, both male and female characters exhibit transcendental haziness, with their social lives superimposed with utopian desires. Whereas for the lead female character it is an uncontrollable desire for sex, for the lead male character it is the desire to tend to his business. The supporting characters on their part exhibit a blend of anxiety and ignorance that eclipse their sense of morality. Alfred's hesitation to reward O'prah sexually only served to heighten her utopian sexual urge, illuminated through her desperate cries a banal sense of desperation and lack of control. Through the act of compulsive self-giving, she submits to the film's discourse of feminine ignorance. Her ignorance as a married woman effaces her dignity as a person, and costs her both marriage and health. At the end of the film, she is neither happy in her extramarital affair nor able to regain her status as a married woman. The narrative condemns her to a bleak future; a sickly jailbird. This attribute is amplified through other female characters in this film. Milkah's ignorance too cost her job, culminating in a hurried exit. While she desired to help her brother save his marriage, she is not rewarded as even after Dominic reads her letter, he neither brings her back nor acknowledges her in anyway. In fact, when he is confronting Alice ad Alfred, he proudly claims that he has been gathering information about their affair

himself. That Milkah's effort causes her misery is the film's way of expressing discontent with female characters who stray from their assigned spaces.

The use of repetitive images and lyrical language in The Village Pastor dichotomises the suppression of post-modern masculinity crisis in which conflicting duality of emancipation and control is central to the narrative progress. In this film, the lead female character is granted academic potential but denied the instinct to use her knowledge and skills for progress, inculcating within her essence a stalled impetus for dignified life. Sarah, a college graduate, is made to surrender to the control of her unschooled husband, Isaya, the village pastor, whose life is framed within the village locale. In her position as a wife, she is imbued with self-denigrating attributes. Her petty perspective on life is amplified as a cue to her escalating degradation bred of her seemingly innocuous domesticity. Her potential is further trashed through representational bio-politics that demean her social demure. Typecast as an unambitious woman, Sarah transgresses her own abilities by engaging in self-destructing activities. Prostitution as her primary attribute weakens her social position within this film, extending through the entire narrative up to the end where it begets her death through suicide. Similarly, all other female characters in this film are either located in subdued spaces like the church or engaging in domestic activities like fetching water or gossiping. In this sense, therefore, it is critically arguable that The Village Pastor adjudicates female frivolity as an inalienable organon to transcend female ability by locating ambiguities that destabilise the woman's credibility within various social spheres.

This film, unlike O'prah, projects an isomorphic imagery of male characters. The contrast between Pastor Isaya and Pastor Pascal expropriates the linear strand of evil associated with female characters. By transposing social discontinuities, the film creates a masculine view that confines male characters in panoply of good and evil. But even more significant is the narrative effort to redeem the male character from justifying his transgressions against 'similar' through guilt. For instance, when Pastor Pascal realises the destruction he has caused Isaya, his guilty is downplayed as an obsessive habit bred of forced actuation, and his innocence seems properly redeemed through his consensual choice to commit suicide alongside Sarah, the married woman he has been

fornicating with. He is also poised as a messenger of the evil Reverend Ezekiel sends to derail Isaya's spiritual progress, hence his preference of death over life is presented as a just atonement for his evil role in causing suffering to fellow man (Isaya) and an irrevocable decisive refusal to be used again in committing evil against fellow male. When in the third act Reverend Ezekiel is arrested to be charged with conspiracy to murder Isaya, the film is seen to be atoning all evil committed by other male characters to save the leading male character from irredeemable self-destruction. This effacement interiorises masculine transgressions by decreeing suffering and punishment for the evil male characters, a prophylactic stance that symbolises masculine moral isomorphism prevalent across all Kanumba's films.

In Moses, the film narrative casts images of the deliberate harassment of women in the spaces where they situate their energies. Judith, the leading female character is besmirched in a fortuitous intersection of her corporate life and pernicious fury of the male characters who not only oppose her, but also edge her to the periphery of the corporate space. As the heroine, she represents complacent intelligentsia typified in this film by women existing precariously in the corporate (public) world: unhappy and reflexive to dictates of the male characters. That neither Moses nor Judith's boss supports her, and given the narrative outcome that makes her lose her position as the chairlady of the board, the film categorically edifies an imperial man-led society in which females are subjugated both intellectually and emotionally. In this sense therefore, it can be argued that the narrative outcome of this film also repudiates feminine authority by substituting it with a masculine one.

Linda, the only other woman kept in the corporate space, is perpetually frightened, seeking to legitimise her position through sexual liaison with Moses who evidently portrays optimal detachment from her. For instance, despite her sexual submission, when she asks for a birthday gift, he terms it wastage of money and ridicules her. The film further heightens this detachment in the sequence where she loses her father. The day Moses finds her mourning in his house, he traverses her emotions with ruthless philosophical citations that enrage her even more. For instance, he asks her who she would have preferred to die so she can be happy; a cruel misjoinder that Moses has perfected against the ever-encircling, amative females. Her meekness sustains her

against male aggression, and is repaid with animalistic sex deprived even of the most basic human emotions. In the final stages of the film, she is absent altogether. When the narrative space shifts from public to private, only the male character matters. All female characters go missing from the narrative space, except those which Moses must encounter to highlight his growing disinterest with women.

Jane, the female supermarket attendant in scene sixteen closely typifies O'prah and Alice (female characters in O'prah and Offside respectively) by coercing the male character for sexual indulgence, all to her own chagrin. By placing women at the periphery of men's immediate needs, Moses hybrids misogynistic tendencies with sexual desire, deriding men's encapsulation in their chauvinistic slates. The narrative however maintains a microaggressive stance in sneering female characters by admonishing their social identities. Rose on her part, represents the never-ceasing dependence syndrome, a symbolic abrogation of female liberties. The narrative depicts Moses' mother as incapable of sustaining herself after she caused the murder of her husband; and the consequent reliance on a man for her fulfilment. Rose who even at maturity is dependent on her brother for accommodation and upkeep is denied freedom and accorded dependence on men for her livelihood and direction. It is this dependence that breeds disempowerment on her part, occasioning a cyclic trend of emotional distress as she clings to men, pursuing one after another in pursuit of their ideological endorsement and care. She seeks her brother's approval whenever she gets a lover, and most of the time, she is rewarded with ridicule. In consideration of the narrative fate of these two female characters, it is evident that the narrative spine in this film is intrinsically anti-feminine, interspersed with contrapuntal inserts within the narrative's meta-discourses that reify masculine transgressions.

In contrast, male characters are represented as sensible and knowledgeable, with innate ability to lead. Whereas female characters seem reliant on male character's approval to survive, male characters exhibit independence and freedom in their lives. The film not only derogates female ascendancy, but hinders it as well. In actualising this, the film creates powerful male characters who dispense social and professional anxieties in all spaces of their existence. Moses, as the epitome of this masculine prowess, is presented as an avid intellectual with passion for excellence. He is granted emotional detachment

as a prerequisite for his unperturbed wisdom which he exercises in his relationships with female characters without cathecting them. Instead of degrading him socially, this emotional detachment empowers him as a character to dispense masculine ideals without libidinal fog that could otherwise cloud his attitude. The film further rewards his insights by granting him support from his employer, eventually replacing the most powerful female character in the corporate space. Besides his iconoclastic stance, Moses still exudes compassion and scholarly restiveness that is celebrated as a sign of intellectual superiority. His sense of independence and freedom supersedes his emotive drive, and seems to appropriate to him an authentication of character not present in the highly emotional female characters.

Offside encapsulates pre-oedipal anxieties manifested through the lead female character whose life is demented through emotional apocalypse. Alice, a beautiful young woman ends up marrying her father and sleeping with her brother – eventually shooting both dead. Her life, it seems, is preordained for destruction, just like all the female characters who exist in turmoil throughout the film narrative. Alice lives in restlessness, sacrificing her dignity by submitting her body as a tool to exert revenge on Nira's family. Despite the life of abundance surrounding her in her new marriage, the towering burden of exterminating her enemies does not grant her ability to enjoy her status. Instead, the film collocates sexual indulgence and murder instinct within her life, rendering her prey to restiveness. Similarly, her aunt lives anxiously on the *borderspace* as an agitated woman. She is always on the run, trying to hide herself while prodding Alice forward to implement her evil plans. Even Flora, who should have settled with her wealthy husband to enjoy life in a more socially fulfilling setting is denounced. She lives in poor neighbourhood as an alcoholic and prostitute. Despite her son's good intention and effort to bring her back home and accord her more dignified life, the film celebrates her inability to live better life by making her refuse Stewart's assistance, extending her hate for his father to him. It is noteworthy that female characters do not assuage their instincts in their diverse capacities. This, it can be argued, is the narrative's way of implanting restlessness aura as a homogenous trait manifest in all female characters. All the male and female characters whose persona embodies the masculinised character seem to obey to post-war historic curve in cinema's politics of gender portrayal. For instance, O'prah, Genevieve, Sarah, Jane and Alive are all

comparable to Shafa'at in Salah Abu Sayf's 1956 epic movie, Youth of a Woman and Amalia in Lucrecia Martel's La nina santa (2004), described by Slobodian (May 2012, p. 172) as a character "who embodies the traditional voyeuristic look as she follows Jano and observes him from afar." Even though these female characters are drawn from diverse historic times, they nevertheless convey stoic resolve to affirm their alternative identities as masculinised females through use of ideological defiance. Their bodies are especially constructed into what Slobodian (ibid, p. 172) describes as "a site of various kinds of intimate love and sexual acts in the film, which effectively deconstruct heteronormative depictions in favour of a fluid conception of gender and eroticism." This is a social positioning which makes them neither affable nor outcasts, preferring to create narrative trajectories which imply ruin through physical hexes.

Male characters in this film are represented as liberal and unequivocally socially affable. Whereas Nira's character is questioned, the murder of his wife is passed off as an act of self-preservation on his part. He had to do it to conceal his robbery and retain his wealth. Nevertheless, this film still transposes bliss upon his anxieties, redeeming his social life by rejuvenating his marriage. In this way, the film celebrates the social axiom which decrees restoration of the male character from the contingencies of subliminal existence. Yet, while it is evident, especially through the character of Alvin that the film argues enthusiastically for the emancipation of masculine imperialism, it equally impedes the participation of female characters in these usurpations, invoking what can be perceived as Foucault's bio-politics.

2.1 Emergent Forms of Gender Microaggression

Sue D. W., (2010), regards microaggressions as

constant and continuing experiences ...(that) assail the self - esteem of recipients, produce anger and frustration, deplete psychic energy, lower feelings of subjective well-being and worthiness... and deny ...(the recipients) equal access and opportunity in education, employment, and health care Sue D. W., (ibid), p. 6).

Whereas linking these effects to their causes as a means of ascertaining microaggressive tendencies runs a teleological risk, it nevertheless provides a framework within which this study expounds on the various forms of microaggression inherent in the films under

study. As a starting point, this study has noted that these ‘experiences’ occur in diverse planes of the film’s narratives. The most pronounced are those that touch on character dialogues, interactions, circumstances and finally, sexual objectification. It is these demeaning experiences which embed instantiations of subtle bias and degradation within the film’s narratives, or what Sue (2010) considers instances of microaggression. In light of this connection between the discourses, this study has ascertained that microaggression discourse has taken four distinct forms within Kanumba’s films: verbal, interactive, circumstantial and erotic. These broad categories encapsulate the lamentations of Sue D. W., (2010, p. 11), and other scholars (Butler & Geis, 1990; Fiske, 1993; Swim & Cohen, 1997) that “the conscious, intentional, and deliberate forms of gender bias have seemingly decreased, but also continue in the form of subtle and unintentional expressions”. Verbal aggressions are manifest through dialogue between characters while interactive microaggressions manifest themselves through character engagements. Circumstantial microaggressions expose the damning experiences which characters encounter within the diegetic spaces. Finally, erotic microaggressions are based on sexual depiction and appropriation of voyeuristic gaze as a subjugation tool.

Within film narratives, these practices have been coded as subtle symbols which communicate the meaning of the relative positions of either sex in social frameworks. To effect a fruitful analysis of these four forms of microaggression and their manifestations within cinema, it is important at this point to briefly elaborate how they feed into cinema’s signification process. One of the key guidelines towards this nexus is the realisation that cinematic signification is comprised by a number of elements, including language, characterisation, costuming, and social interactions. The idea of gender relations – which evince the dual dimension of social constructs of the masculine and the feminine – is therefore conferred through these signifying elements. Some scholars have tried to discuss microaggression as a social discourse epitomised within cinematic systematicity. In their quest to trace the locus of microaggression within cinema, Lapsley & Westlake (1993) argued that:

The corollary of narcissism is ... aggression; either against any Otherness that comes between the subject and his desired image of unity, or against the Other as affording unity at the cost of division. It is no accident therefore that films centred on such figures are replete with violence. (Lapsley & Westlake, 1993, p. 186)

This centring on fetishist affectation seems constantly replayed in Kanumba's films where anamorphosis of gender microaggression co-exists with the characters' inner legitimate desires although it is often suppressed. Characters therefore demean and oppress each other in pursuit of their stronger inner forces which are culturally inscribed on the basis of both their sex and gender. In this light, microaggression dialogues can be conceptualised within the dynamics of characters' individual actions and are relative to social space and context in which they occur. It is significant to also note that all the four films studied sexualised microaggression by exploiting the character's libidinal motivations as a genesis for microaggressive tendencies. In all incidences, one can trace the seemingly lone mistreatment to sexual motivation inherent within the microaggressive character. Specifically, male characters win or lose social power on sexual basis. This is achieved in two dimensions: either succumbing to sexual urge or refusing to participate. For instance, O'prah represents Dominic as a man who loses his wife to his poor friend because Alfred could fulfil O'prah's wanton sexual urge; just like in The Village Pastor where Isaya loses Sarah's affection because Pascal could sexually satisfy her more. Similarly, Moses in Moses wields vast control over women by dominating them sexually while in Offside Alvin sustains his power over Alice by refusing her sexual advances. Female characters on the other hand demean or are demeaned because of their reaction to sexual desires. O'prah, Alice, Sarah, and Genevieve are all examples of female characters who are degraded through sexually motivated aggressions. Rose in Moses, for instance, elicits a different variance of social hostilities within the cinema's diegesis. Her narrative trajectory, serve one critical function; that of articulating how the different facets of resistance and expression within cinema narratives, especially those moored on the manifestation of desire and fulfilment as universal attributes of human beings mimic social paradigms on manipulation and control in the various diegetic spaces, a concept that is extensively covered in Chapter Three and Chapter Four.

There are various scholarly precedents which dwells on the cinema's role in adumbrating microaggression processes through its narratives. Laura Mulvey (1993, p. 126) lamented unequal appropriation of pleasure in cinema by critiquing "films in which a woman central protagonist is shown to be unable to achieve a stable sexual identity, torn between the deep blue sea of passive femininity and the devil of regressive masculinity". Kanumba's personality wittily passes microaggression as a consequence

of socially (especially sexually) motivated circumstances. His microaggressive tendencies are paraded as ego-syntonic *actants*. Thus, in *Moses*, when Rose emerges as an irresolute adult with excessive emotional torque and a narcissistic crave for attention, the narrative quickly fills in to justify her action. The historicity of her character, by virtue of the visible gap dented on her in childhood trauma – the narrative opines - reflects what, as quoted by Bell & Offen (1983) Sigmund Freud considered bi-polarity turbulence from the residual early masculine period. Thus, Rose's constant obsessive wish to associate with and govern a man represents her subconscious degeneration to the pre-Oedipus phase, seeking to regain her masculinity so far lost in her crumbing emergence as a woman.

Microaggression as a discourse may also find its manifestation in the conflicting gender duality. Sometimes it can be enshrined in fatalism, desire and other interactive nuances that question the ever-changing gender liberties and their influence on the nature of engagement with chauvinistic trends - a confrontation inevitably ripe with conflicting gender tendencies. This study beyond ascertaining the various facets of gender microaggression inherent in Steven Kanumba's films, also critiques microaggressive trends on the basis of language; character relations, codified social nuances evinced through casting of roles, and symbolic eroticism within the various roles. These have potency for biased depiction and social domination and correspond to the various microaggressive facets identified earlier in this chapter: verbal articulations, interactive hostilities, circumstantial degradation, and erotic metaphors. To understand the four microaggressive segments, and thus embolden a more incisive engagement with their manifestations within cinema, it is important to explore their nature and manifestations.

2.1.1 Verbal Articulations

Vissing *et al* (1991, p. 224) defined verbal aggression as

A communication intended to cause psychological pain to another person, or a communication perceived as having that intent. The communicative act may be active or passive, and verbal or nonverbal. Examples include name-calling or nasty remarks (active, verbal), slamming a door or smashing something (active, nonverbal), and stony silence or sulking (passive, nonverbal).

Analysis of microaggressive tendencies in this study focuses on active verbal and active non-verbal communication expressed through dialogue between characters, specifically where use of words demean the recipient character. It also calls into focus gender interplay in exercising verbal microaggression by alluding to ‘psychological pain’ which is what Sue (2010) implied in his reference to microaggression as that form of communication which seeks to demean, antagonize or insult. While analysing Kenya’s fiction works, Odhiambo (2011) realised that:

The everyday language of public social transactions and interaction in Kenya constantly places ‘women’ where they presumably belong, not necessarily in the home and kitchen as gender activists have generally assumed, but under the influence of men (Odhiambo, 2011, p. 46)

To use language in a way that puts ‘women’ where they ‘presumably belong... under the influence of men’ echo Chester Pierce’s concept of ‘put – downs and insults’ as indices of microaggression against those of ostracised social classes. It is important to note how Odhiambo (2011) uses the term ‘woman’, symbolically denoting its gender aspect. By enclosing it in the marks, he is simply desisting from applying it in its everyday usage, instead extending it to include the effeminate males who are also considered ‘women’. On the other hand, by leaving the term MEN open without the marks, he is simply propagating the prevailing notion that men prefects all forms of what he calls ‘social transactions’. This distinction is important as discussed in chapters three and four, which dwell on these disparities in depth.

Sue (2010) argues that language that denote intimidating, offensive, or negativity (to the characters in the film) therefore can be termed aggressive. In Kanumba’s films, characters use abusive language to emphasise their relative prominence and power within the film spaces. Dialogue is also used to signify gender, status, intellectual or social differences. The films have dedicated significant time in emphasising alienating contexts where language plays a key role in defining social indifferences and the accompanying discourse of subjugation. Typically, this study has noted that both male and female characters engage in vituperative discourses against each other. However, verbal aggressions are mostly committed by male characters against female characters by using bigoted epithets when referring to female characters. Only those female characters who usurp their social spaces, meaning they ascend to acquire masculine attributes, have shown significant use of verbal aggressions against male characters. In

this sense therefore, Kanumba's symbolic use of language has positioned him as an important social iconoclast, illuminating his effete respectability of effeminate discourses. This study found that verbal microaggression has been highly deployed in Offside, Moses and The Village Pastor; and minimally used in O'prah. By identifying both denotative and connotative language metaphors, this study has ascribed specific ways of language use which in some way communicate degradation of feminine characters by masculine characters on gender-sex basis – and especially, the more prominent verbal battering occurring through character dialogues.

2.1.2 Interactive Antipathies

After analysing the problematic depiction of female characters in King Vidor's Stella Dallas (1937), Mulvey (1993, p. 132), laments the film's strangling narrative arc which predisposes women to inescapable temptation. Mulvey observes that "Stella, as a central character, is flanked on each side by a male personification of her instability, her inability to accept correct, married 'femininity' on the one hand, or find a place in a macho world on the other". Such a masculine encapsulation allows the female character only a chance to fidget with indecision as her desires and aspirations tear her between two opposed male-controlled options, embodied by contrasting male characters each of whom possesses only one of her preferences. In this otherwise enigmatic predicament, she must pursue her desire by identifying with one man, or her aspirations by affiliation to another man – but never both. Such a juxtaposition pre-judges the female character as evil, irrespective of her choices.

Another way in which the films have created interactive microaggressions is by creating male characters engulfed in what McCormick (1995) and Silverman (1992) calls calamity of male prejudice. Their primary argument is that men feel threatened whenever female characters assume social positions previously veiled from them, such as working in public spaces and its socio-cultural appendages. McCormick (ibid) notes that access to public participation is achieved

...by the effective exclusion of the interests of those marginalized because of gender, class, ethnic, and sexual identities. From the beginning, gender exclusion especially played a formative (if invisible) role in the constitution of that sphere, since it was defined in relation to a "private" realm of subjectivity, intimacy, and domesticity identified with women (McCormick, 1995, p. 3).

Within cinema, this opens up interactive problems in which both masculine and feminine characters are vulnerable to the narrative's forked terrain of interactive microaggression, given that interactive hostilities arising out of those situations in which characters belittle or otherwise relate to other characters in a way that casts them as comparatively lesser beings arise from the interplay of social powers – or simply the stiling of the masculinity scale. All forms and contexts of representational alienation and tactical voicelessness for both masculine and feminine characters through the use of masculine gaze, or the outcome of social situations in which cinema subjugates a character's socio-physical liberties or constitute ambivalence in the character's avowal in the society forms viable basis inquiry about interactive microaggressions. In analysing the various emerging interacting suppressions, this study focuses on enigmatic portrayals that favour demeaning depictions for characters of either gender by the cinema narratives.

2.1.3 Circumstantial Degradations

Demeaning and marginalizing circumstances can occur in a variety of shared social aspects, but they are often most evident through familiar actions and activities which exist in a given social structure. In the analysis of marginalisation within Chinese Martial arts, Cai (Fall 2005) notes that the practice

often marginalizes, or makes inadequate or irrelevant, the loci in which many feminist readings contest the inscriptions of the female and difference—namely, romance, home, maternity, family, sexuality, sexual preference, class, race, and age (Cai, Fall 2005, p. 443).

This study takes particular note of Cai's (ibid) use of the terms 'inscriptions of the female' which is a very strong critical currency for discussing how circumstances can be used to degrade a character of any gender. The concept of the 'female' in this case is allied to the broader axis of masculinity in the context proposed by Stets & Burke (2000), such that it engulfs the derivative concepts of both male masculinity (in the manner discussed by Carrigan (1985)) and female masculinity (in the sense advanced by Halberstam (1998)). The various metrics of interactive facets identified by Cai (ibid) also touch on the various cinematic setups in which characters exist either as 'social males' or 'social females' (Lynn 1976, and Pleck 1981), and in which their experiences (circumstances) are thus manifest. In what ways, then, does cinema embed

microaggression in its role as an arbiter of character experiences, especially in the emerging incursion into contexts and spaces hitherto unavailable to characters of either gender? In her quest to explain the dynamics of women disempowerment through elusive equality, Mary Wollstonecraft, (1891, p. 64) posits;

that woman is naturally weak, or degraded by a concurrence of circumstances, is, I think, clear....Women, I argue from analogy, are degraded by the same propensity to enjoy the present moment; and, at last, despise the freedom which they have not sufficient virtue to struggle to attain.

Wollstonecraft's reference to 'concurrence of circumstances' alludes to naturalised tendencies controlling and affecting a woman's social life, a continuing social norm that has birthed myriad social challenges for women. Arts - literature and cinema included - have nurtured this ideological norm in various ways. Odhiambo, (2011, p. 47) argued that most postcolonial fictions in Kenya, especially those placed in 1970s emboldens men to 'articulate their sense of manhood or masculinity through the characterisation of 'women as goods' women as sources of pleasure for men or women as 'consumables'. Sue (2010), in his discourse about microaggression holds a similar view through his argument that among other things, exposing a woman to a predominantly male environment, whether in the workplace or social spheres constitute a form of gender microaggression.

It is however not just male characters who, charged by their idealistic masculine ideals, submits female characters to circumstantial degradation. In her analysis of Paradise Kiss (2011), a popular Japanese film, Barber (Summer 2014, p. 145) notes that "the fictional male protagonists ... reflect changing models of masculinity ... (for) social success." But even as men trade off their stiff traditional models of masculinity for more modern forms of what Katrina (2013, p. 24) calls "glocal subjectivities"), female characters on the other hand are stepping up to reclaim masculinity as their new way of social expression. In order to effect circumstantial microaggression against male characters, masculinity in this case is decoupled from maleness, and rendered as a package of attributes which even a female character can engender. The masculine female should however only defy those phallogentric configurations which limit her identity through policing of her social location and experience of her diegetic world (Butler J. , 2004), in order to achieve social acceptance and thus social power over the male characters. In this stature;

Masculinized and consequently legitimized, the woman's outstanding ability, though miraculous, upsets none of the gender distinctions that stabilize the traditional social system. Positioned strategically outside the context of family, the manly woman ... is able to reclaim her (his) masculinity in a woman's garb (Cai, Fall 2005, p. 445).

This performativity, in its microaggressive stance, transmutes to what Jeffreys (1989) termed as butch typecasts. Within the cinemas' diegesis, this study established that male characters are equally exposed to multiple instances of circumstantial degradation by the female characters, birthing a narrative consensus to Halberstam's (2001, p. 436) assertion that once masculine ideals crumple, "the male hero must accept economic and emotional disappointment and learn to live with the consequences of a shift of power that has subtly but completely removed him from the center of the universe." While these typologies of disappointment may take other forms of gender microaggression, the terminal exclusion from the 'center of the universe' by the female character if necessity constitutes circumstantial debasing for him, and thus his subtle degradation. In mapping out the discourse of circumstantial microaggression in cinema, the views of the fore-mentioned scholars play a crucial role in the analysis of cinematic characters as symbolic signifiers. In this light, examination of circumstantial degradations in this study involves deduction of depictive discourses of feminised and masculinised characters in (environmental) situations that are demeaning, whether on the level of dignity, self-image or experiences.

2.1.4 Erotic Metaphors

Within cultural context, the boundary between social co-existence and gender usurpation is very imprecise, an ideological vacuum that enlists many cultural semiologies to entrench especially, patriarchal privileges. Among the most emasculating cultural symbol is that of eroticism, which has been at the core of various feminist and patriarchal discourses. Haraway (1985, pp. 703-704) singles out sexual objectification as a key cause of estrangement for females in her argument that "perversely, sexual appropriation in... feminism still has the epistemological status of labour... but sexual objectification, not alienation, is the consequence of the structure of sex/gender coding". For this study, analysis of eroticism as a symbol of sexual objectification within cinema involves analysis of costumes and the various forms of erotic exposure of the male and female characters to the desires of a dominant

masculinised gaze mediated through voyeuristic camera techniques. The term ‘woman’ is extended to submerge its corporeous equivalent, the feminine male; in the same way that ‘man’ is stretched to comprise the masculine female.

Among the most significant findings about erotic metaphors and how the sex symbol is used as an alienating as well as degrading tool in these films is that the erotic gaze is not controlled by the males, but by all characters upon whose persona is imbued qualities of ‘manliness’ or masculinity. Even female characters have shown keen emphasis to propel male characters through a demeaning erotic gaze. The examination of the leitmotif that sex and desire are often dominated by ‘males’ (masculine characters) who control ‘terms for fulfilment’ is key in evaluating how sex, and consequently erotic metaphors have defined scope of individual liberties and by extension the life of characters based on the thesis that masculine characters – irrespective of whether they achieved their ‘maleness’ through culturally prescribed gender endorsement or deliberate ascendancy into masculine womanhood - wield significant power over feminine characters, more so in sexual issues.

2.2 Conclusion

Steven Kanumba’s character in the sampled films has created a labyrinth of diverse social perspectives through which a discussion of the discourse of microaggression is possible. Throughout the movies, he emboldens gender disengagement as a reality that defines the co-existence between characters of both gender. In O’prah, Moses and Offside, he espouses arrogant masculinity, denouncing equality with female characters. In both space and context, his behavior reinforces what Schrock & Schwalbe (2009) call ‘gendered being’ differentiated through the assertive powers in intimate relations and work. Confining women characters to domestic spaces or punishing them when they exist in the public space reinforces the idea that they are not to leave the domestic spaces ordained for them by patriarchal culture. However, these films further deprive female characters of any positive role by violating their existence within domestic spaces. For instance, O’prah in O’prah, who could have transformed herself into a good homemaker, is deprived of her good characteristics through association with displaced man (Alfred) in an act of sexual desire. Alice too, in Offside, through association with Stewart who depose himself from public space, is wrecked through romantic

association. Moses takes this symbolic patterning further by creating a male character who exists and controls his own domestic space. Moses is surrounded by many women willing to have sex with him, on his own terms. However, his encounter with them in his home ends with misery for the female characters. Whenever he interacts with a woman, even if she comes of her own volition, the resultant relationship is depicted as hurtful to the female character. Considering that female characters abandon their homes to go to Moses' house, their presence in his space can be likened to their entry into public spaces. Their misery in his hands therefore reify a prevailing notion that female characters are not welcome in public spaces as they encounter numerous microaggressive experiences. Moreover, this notion is reinforced through the narrative premise that they suffer pain away from their familiar territories.

In The Village Pastor, Kanumba epitomises complicit masculinity in which – overrun by more hegemonic characters - he reclaims his dignity through complicity in an effeminate way. Subdued by a ferocious female character, he appeals to the viewer's sense of humaneness by emerging as a noble loser suffering without cause. In the end, the film narrative condemns the errant female character to death through hanging. Based on the narrative outcomes, it can be argued that these films depict a diametric co-existence between male and female characters within the social milieu, often appropriating power and authority to the male characters. Hence, through Steven Kanumba's gaze, we espy the restless disposition with which female characters occupy their spaces, whether public or domestic. Moreover, it is in these spaces that the discourse of microaggression finds its habitat.

This study has also elicited a cross-cutting motif of destruction of feminised male characters. Especially on the basis of their spatial occupation, the films denounce the recursion of male characters into domestic spaces, often stripping errant characters of their masculine privileges as a punishment upon their entry. In O'prah, when Alfred chooses to spend his time in the domestic space, the narrative propels him to start fornicating with his friend's wife, an act that leads to his expulsion from the domestic space and eventual murder in Zanzibar. In the Village Pastor, Pascal's habit of fornicating with Sarah goes unpunished for as long they keep their affairs away from the domestic space. But when they venture into Isaya's home, the narrative decrees

death for him through consensual hanging alongside Sarah. In Offside, Stewart's repeated incursion into the domestic space is at first met with stern warning from his elder brother, Alvin, who advises him not to spend too much time at home. His refusal to heed the advice is however punished by making him a sexual object for his step-mother, Alice, leading to his eventual murder. It is only in Moses where the film does not destroy the male characters physically. This, the narrative hints, is because the characters desist from spending time in the domestic spaces throughout the entire narrative. For those who show great potential for domestic cooperation like Lucky are punished in the corporate spaces as they are overlooked for promotions in favour of the more public-oriented men, epitomised by the character of Moses. These examples clearly show the film's firm stance on spatial differentiation between characters as a symbol of subjugation, and especially the role of this arrogation in mediating microaggression at various levels.

This chapter has analysed how spaces conjure up alienating discourses and the resultant meta-text of microaggression. It has also analysed the various emerging forms of microaggression within the films under study. To understand how these forms of microaggression crosscut gender strata, the next chapter specifically discusses their emergence, forms and practice from a masculine perspective. Analysis of these male-centred cultural systems will make it possible to highlight social discordance, and consequently critically appraise any emerging microaggressive tendencies.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 MASCULINE MICROAGGRESSION DISCOURSES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter interrogates roles appropriated to male characters in the films by collocation analysis of the diegetic relations of characters with the aim of highlighting the various forms of microaggressions within the sampled films. Analysis of the various facets of masculine microaggression within the films focuses on language, social interactions, social disposition, and eroticism. Moreover, it examines any form of microaggressive tendencies perpetrated against female characters as well as feminine males by surveying instances and contexts from which they are resultant. The scholarly rationale underlying this approach is widely anchored on various thoughts advanced by masculinity theorists. Macia, Maharaj, & Gresh (2011), just like Groes-Green (2009) and Morrell (2001), acknowledge various philosophies of masculinity ensuing from diverse historical and cultural contexts: dominant, subordinate and marginalised. In resonance, this chapter analyses the representation of emerging masculinities in the context of subordination and marginalisation of male and female characters within social domains especially the male's patronising domination.

While it is possible to think of these socio-ideological prejudices as non-gender - meaning both male and female characters can practice them – an isolated discussion of their appropriation to male characters has made it possible to explore the dynamics and vastness of their practice from a masculine perspective. To say a specific male character is dominating, subordinating or marginalising a specific female character, for instance, involves illustration of how the masculine tendencies are effected through a performative male. In this sense, consolidation of masculine tendencies from a microaggressive perspective is more of fraternisation of the films' infinitesimal degradation instances to Zastrow's (2004) observation, cited in Sue (2010, p. 164-165) that "negative attitudes towards women, viewing them as inferior to men, relegating them to lesser or undesirable roles, and (sic) attributing gross stereotypes to them seem to be a common phenomena in nearly every society". This study, after analysing the various facets of microaggression in cognisance of Sue's framework established that Kanumba's films perpetuate masculine affinities in which male characters either inhibit female character's social progress or are complicit in its exercise. Yet, even between

male characters, there are traces of hegemonic tendencies when male characters usurp each other in power duels.

The contexts within which gender domination and suppression is exercised are differentiated and multiple. Donna Haraway - after exploring the institutionalisation of patriarchal domination within technology spaces - argued that “it is crucial to remember that what is lost [from women through patriarchal domination], perhaps especially from women’s points of view, is often virulent forms of oppression, nostalgically naturalised in the face of current violation (Haraway, 1985, p. 713)”. It is what Haraway refers to as ‘nostalgic naturalisation’ that Sue terms ordinary, incidental and unconscious; and what other scholars have termed as cleverly tucked in cultural norms (Sue et al. 2008; Nelson, 2006; DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson 2002). In a similar sense, Haraway’s ‘current violation’ is what Sue calls ‘microaggressions, or treacherous norms’. These diverse scholars express a vast gamut of social stratifications along the gender axis, which, as per the findings of this study, promulgate microaggressive tendencies against women. What exactly, then, can be considered masculine forms of microaggression within Kanumba’s films? This chapter appraises masculinity problematic by interrogating the binaries of masculinity and microaggression with specific reference to verbal, circumstantial, interactive, and erotic facets of its manifestation.

3.2 Verbal Gender Microaggressions

There is persistent use of verbal microaggression evidenced in Kanumba’s films. Male characters use dialogue in a way that occludes female characters in two of the four films studied. The Village Pastor however substantially desists from this form of microaggression. In O’prah, both the protagonist and antagonist engage in tactful duel to pervert the female character, while, on her part, the female character sinks from hatred to helplessness and finally to despair in pursuit of her sexual urge. It is notable that male characters in this film desist from verbally abusing female characters, up to the end of the film where Alfred deliberately uses language that demeans O’prah, the female character. In the final sequence when they are parting, Alfred rudely gives her boat fare to travel back to mainland, informing her that she will never be the same again as her life has been ruined through their relationship. Especially when he tells her that

“Uamuzi wako ushachelewa (Your decision is already late)” he is rudely informing her that her decision to go back to her husband is both futile and late. He also adds that *“Huyu O’prah sio yule aliyetoka Dar siku chache zilizopita. Huyu O’prah kabadilika (This is no longer the same O’prah who came from Dar es Salaam a few days ago. This Oprah is different)”* as a way of hinting to her that she has already contracted HIV.

The Village Pastor moderately deploys verbal microaggression within its narrative. Especially Sarah and Pastor Pascal, the two of the most prominent characters in this film, exhibit deliberate verbal onslaught on the leading male character, Isaya. Offside is however very rich in this form of microaggression. Both Alice and Stewart engage in hostile altercations which demean each other while negotiating diminishing moral authority in the domestic arena. Offside expresses persistent impatience from the first scenes, and escalates this through other forms of microaggression in an effort to deface the female character. In the opening scene after the burial masses disperse, Alvin tells Stewart that they cannot go back home with Alice, their widowed step-mother whom he refers to as a concubine. These altercations are emphasised through a montage of long shots and medium close-ups, blended with furious energy implicit in the fast phase of the cuts. This infusion of the various shots with hostile dialogue and the camera agitation imbues this scene with anxious restlessness in which the two men argue whether to let Alice stay in the family or not.

While Alvin wants Alice to go on moral grounds, it is significant that Stewart’s strong wish for Alice to stay is informed by their sexual affair. The talk between the two brothers hastily regenerates into a debate about Alice’s sexual wantonness which is posed both as immoral and repugnant to the family’s moral standing. This fact is alluded to through Alvin’s hatred for her because, while she avails and offers herself for his sexual conquest, he refuses to give in to her advances. Coupled with his awareness that she is also sexually involved with his young brother, the narrative in the final act justifies his misogynistic stance. For instance, Alvin differentiates Alice as the ‘other’ through his declaration that “She has never been part of our family. She was just a concubine”. Though uttered in her absence, Alvin’s words demean Alice as a woman and person through association to a prostitute, implying she is unworthy of any respect. The use of these terms clearly degrade the social position she had been accorded by her late husband, Nira, peeling off all honour due to her as she is downgraded from a ‘wife’

to a ‘concubine’ and a prostitute. In this position, she is considered a source of shame and embarrassment even to Alvin and Stewart’s late father. Keeping her in the family is viewed not only as a dishonour, but also as an embarrassment to the family. Consequently, this degradation on her character makes it easy for Alvin to disown her as a family member, justifying his increasing hostility which is evident in the film’s narrative from the beginning to the end. From the outset, the film situates gender antagonisms as a central theme. It however locates male characters in positions of dominance while depicting female characters as objects, a tendency which informs their belligerent verbal inferences to them. For a detailed understanding of how Alvin and Stewart effect verbal microaggression against Alice in Offside, let us sample selected portions of their dialogues which have been transcript below. The event is set as the opening scene, at the graveyard, which gives it some urgency. It occurs just after Nira’s funeral when Alvin is denouncing Alice from the family through verbal altercations with his brother Stewart:

Alvin: Tumebaki tu wawili katika nyumba hii. Alice wa nini katika nyumba hii? Hatumhitaji, hatumtaki.

(There are only two of us left in this family. What is Alice for? We don’t need her, we don’t want her).

Hatambuliki Alice katika familia hii. Hatumjui ni nani. Mzee alishafariki, Alice hatumtaki katika nyumba hii, aondoke.

(Alice is nobody in this family. We do not know her. Dad is dead, we do not need Alice in this house anymore. She should leave).

Whereas Stewart’s disagreement with his brother on this matter is passed off as a continuity of their sibling disagreements, the context of their dialogue at the graveside – coming immediately after the burial of their late father – denigrates a cultural encroachment on Alice’s individual liberties through Alvins’ deliberate hostilities and insults. It is aimed at appropriating demeaning perceptions on the woman their father married. It also hints of a decline in respect for her, upholding a representational difference and exclusionary epistemologies which privilege masochistic tendencies and perpetuate domination and control by male characters over female characters.

In continuance of this incidental degradation of female characters, there are other instances in the film where verbal abuse is directed at absent characters. One salient example occurs in the scene where he receives the news of their mother’s death, the

film positions this important message in a pub: Stewart, is a bit tipsy while his brother Alvin is enjoying himself with rounds of beer. When Alvin tells Stewart that they should leave the bar because he has something important to tell him about their mother, to which Stewart hastily retorts:

Stewart: I know if it is about mother lazima atakuwa ameshakamatwa na unywaji wa magongo yake kule. Si tufanyeje wakati yeye mwenyewe hayo ndiyo maisha ameshachagua?

(Najua kama inahusu mama she must have been arrested due to her drunkenness. What are we to do when it is the life she has chosen for herself?)

These remarks about their mother devalue her as a woman. Stewart's words reveal the social identity he has accorded his own mother whom he regards as a pathetic drunkard and prostitute. To show open disrespect for his mother transgresses both taboo and human social dictions. Situating the revelation about their mother's death in a bar is the film's symbolic way to trivialises her importance as a woman and mother. Stewart's mean retort only highlights a meta-discourse of social neglect and dismissal of female characters from society, which reinforces the severe gendered hostility already prevalent in the entire narrative. Yet within the film, when Stewart reveals that it was not Flora's choice to live a desperate life of poverty, but that Mr. Nira compelled her to live such a low life, the film makes no attempt to assuage her misery. It instead celebrates her posthumously after Nira, the male figure who dominated her, dies. The gender dimension of this verbal microaggression is further evident at the gym where Alvin vehemently defends their father against Stewart's verbal onslaught arguing that no matter what he had done before in his life, Nira is still their father and should be respected as such. This difference in perception conjecture an ideological metamorphoses with altering awareness of the two brothers who condemn their mother – while she was alive, and similarly praises their dad. However, these two perceptions seem to interchange with death when Flora is cherished more by her son, Stewart, who despises Nira even more.

In other instances, verbal microaggressions occurs when the film narrative ridicules the female character's sexual assertiveness. The male characters reinterpret female character's overt sexual self-expression as a sinful act that bedevils them socially. Despite the contextual motive that saw Alice seek sexual satisfaction from Alvin, there

is no precedent in the film's narrative to justify his insults which aggravate the encounter from a mere sexual circumstance, to an ethical question, and finally to a duel of wills. A case in point is when Alice offers sexual intimacy to Alvin, who retorts "*Wewe ni shetani. Hauna nafasi katika moyo wangu huu* (You are a devil. You have no place in my life)". Likening her to devil is the narrative's declaration that she is extremely wicked, and an onslaught on her character as a woman, lover, and potential sexual partner. This verbal onslaught compares positively to the circumstantial microaggression evidenced in O'prah. In the scene where O'prah is begging for sex, the film depicts her as a miserable, emotionally trashed being. She hungrily hangs to Alfred, flailing her feet desperately, wailing with desperation, on the verge of unbearable emotional expunge. Her animalistic groans compliment her physical reactions to form an image of uncontrollable wantonness. The licentiousness motif in Offside is further coded in Alices' dressing which cast an erotic figure displayed for Alvin's pleasure. Where O'prah gives expurgated hints without necessarily voicing her desires, Alice in her boldness makes no pretense whenever she want sex. From these engagements, this study notes that male characters easily give in to the sexual desires of female characters when it is not voiced, but rather implied. Alfred gives in to O'prah's sexual cajoling when she leads him between her legs and invites him to take her, but Alice's attempt to sexually excite Alvin with a revealing dress flops, while her bold sexual stance wins her instant insults.

Offside also seem to vindicate verbal microaggression against female characters in some instances. Especially where the female character is depicted as disrespectful, the film emboldens the male character to verbally assault her without any form of reproach. For instance, after Alice is introduced into Nira's family, her first attempt to assert her authority in the house is met with resistance and insults. Her disrespect for Stewart, shown through her attempt to disrupt his television watching session, results in harsh altercations which malign her character. Her boldness and physical assault on Stewart, when considered in the context of the incident deny her any sympathy. As a new bride in the house, this confrontation is her first appearance after being introduced to the family. The metanarrative metaphors evident in her obviously dominating sexual stance compliment Stewarts' insult. Alice does not contest when he calls her a prostitute, but steps on the revelation to stamp her degrading authority in the house. This film sums up Stewart's and Alice's verbal altercation as acts coded with

microaggressive discourses, a notion dispensed through the following dialogue which take place on Alice's first evening at Nira's home, hours after her controversial entry. When she finds Stewart watching television, she attempts to snatch the remote and disrupt him, to which Stewart retorts:

Stewart: Nisikize we kahaba. Kila kitu unachokiona ndani ya hii nyumba, hakikuhusu. Kwa hivyo mwambie huyu malaya mwenzako akununulie vyako halafu uvitumie the way unavyotaka wewe. Lakini kila unachokiona humu kiache vile kilivyo. Nataka ukome kuwa unaniulizia vitu vya humu ndani, na kutaka kuvitumia bila kujua vimetoka wapi.

(Listen to me you prostitute. Everything you see in this house does not concern you. So, tell your fellow prostitute to buy you your own property so you can use the way you wish. But everything else you see here, leave it alone. I want you to stop asking me about the things you see in this house, and stop trying to use them as you please without knowing how they came to be here).

In response, Alice retorts that she is the queen of the house, brought to rule and dominate everything and everyone in the house – including Alvin and Stewart. She also calls Stewart stupid and openly dares him, hinting her willingness to conquer him sexually. Their confrontations only change in the third act when Alice and Stewart are portrayed as friends. However their amity is adjudged as wicked through the film's revelation of their illicit, immoral sexual affair. Contrasting Stewart's earlier behavior towards Alice and his abrupt change which is introduced as a dual metaphor of self-development and self-degradation, captures the enigma of gender relations within this film. Whereas from the outset it looks like Stewart accepts Alice out of good intentions, it turns out his closeness to her is an act portent with gender microaggression for the two of them. On one side, Alice believes she has conquered Stewart as part of her strategy to destroy Nira's family, whereas on the other hand Stewart's acceptance to be sexually involved with Alice is an act of ridicule as he perceives her as a prostitute and thus deprives her any respect due to her as his step-mother. In this light, therefore, these verbal exchanges can be interpreted as acts of gross degradation of the two characters, but even more, of the female character who is heavily insulted by the male character.

Even though *Offside* is told in flashback, situating Alice in the midst of changing male characters, coupled with her emotional burden to avenge her mother's death serves to alleviate her willful participation in determining the course of her life, making her a helpless victim in the events surrounding her. The elation with which Stewart and Alvin

uses demeaning words to describe her alludes to his nostalgic euphoria bred of his pervasive sexual involvement with her. The film captures this perception in the form of dialogue where Alvin is briefing his young brother about how to co-exist with Alice on the eve of his departure to Kampala on a business trip:

Alvin: Eh, Stewart, mzee amenipangia safari ya kwenda Kampala kikazi, kwa hivyo nimekuita hapa nataka nikwambie jinsi gani ya kuishi baada ya mimi kuondoka. Cha kwanza kabisa cha msingi, unatakiwa ujifanye mjinga kwa yule mwanamke, mmh, msishindane. Yeye akizingumza hii na wewe wazungumza hii, jifanye mjinga ili we uweze kuishi kwa amani hapa. Pili, usipende sana kukaakaa nyumbani, usikaekae nyumbani hapa, unajaribu kutokatoka tu ili mradi msiweze kukutanakutana na Alice. Sijui tunaelewana?

(Stewart, dad has planned a business trip for me to Kampala so I have called you here to advice you how to live in my absence. First, pretend to be a fool when relating with that woman, do not argue with her so you can live with peace here. Two, do not spend alot of time here in the house, try and spend more time outdoors to avoid meeting Alice, do you understand me?)

Stewart: How long are you gonna stay there?

Alvin: Kama wiki mbili hivi, kwani vipi?

(About two weeks, what's up?)

Stewart: Cool. I'm okay with that. I've learnt how to live with that chic, bitch, snitch, witch... I'm cool.

Stewart's arrogance as he describes Alice as witch and bitch are emphasised through his somatic attitude (Picture 3.1 and Picture 3.2). At the end of this scene, as Stewart and Alvin walk out of the room, Stewart is singing a rap song that ridicules Alice, calling her chic, bitch, snitch, and witch.



Picture 3.1 Alvin solemnly addresses his younger brother about how to live with Alice in his absence.



Picture 3.2 Stewart arrogantly assures him that he has found a way of living with the 'bitch'.

In this situation, then, it is arguable that even though the dialogue occurs in Alice's absence, it nevertheless spells out the ridicule and degradation that the two brothers, and especially Stewart, has apportioned to her. For Stewart, likening her to a bitch, witch and snitch tarnishes her image as a woman and a stepmother; while for Alvin, regarding her as perpetually quarrelsome spells out his subtle hostility towards her social position as their step-mother.

However, verbal microaggression in this movie is not limited to men addressing women, but also extends to men addressing each other. For instance, the ensuing disagreement between Alvin and his brother Stewart has some dimensions that can be categorised as acts of verbal microaggression on their part. This is especially manifest in the verbal duels between Stewart and Alvin; and between Mr. Nira and Stewart. In the latter case, Nira prefers and appreciates Alvin while chastising Stewart whom he sees as a failure in the family. Whereas Alvin is silently obedient to his father, Stewart is more expressive, sometimes clashing with his father and brother over especially ideological perceptions. These ideological variances often escalate to conflicts between the two brothers who disagree on almost anything. In the former case, Alvin's composure and respect for his younger brother is met with Stewart's ridiculous verbal onslaught. He takes on the various aspects of his brother and scorns him. One aspect that is highly emphasised as a source of verbal microaggression against Alvin is his dressing style which Stewart disapproves. For instance, when Alvin asks him to dress in official attire so they can visit their father's office, Stewart retorts:

Stewart: You want me to dress like you? You want me to dress like a grandfather? Never in my life. I'm cool, I'm okay, if you are ready call me I'm in my room.

Stewart uses the grandfather motif later in the movie after his mother's death when his father comes home with Alice, his younger wife. After differing with Alvin in a heated quarrel, Stewart voices his regret about having him for a brother, comparing his reasoning to that of an old man, a grandfather. Such a comparison bifurcates their ideological paths; Alvin a conservatist with clear grasp on modernist organon and Stewart a child of chaotic postmodernism. Stewart also puts significant effort to repute his brother's conservatism, using it as a reference point when alluding to his brother's 'old' ways which revere orderliness and professional outlook. Stewart's discontent with

Alvin's tidiness is clearly captured in his arrogance when he confronts his elder brother and asks: 'Why are you always like that? You dress like a grandfather, you reason like a grandfather... hey men.' These words are intended to insult Alvin whose behaviour his younger brother considers aged. It is recourse to their earlier discussion at the gym where Stewart tells Alvin that he is more like their father Nira and if he had been born earlier than their father, he would be their father's father – or Stewart's grandfather. This repetition symbolically adduces to the differences in perceptions between the two brothers while demeaning Alvin's ideological stance and trashing his orderliness and discipline. Where Alvin is reserved and a conformist, Stewart is rebellious and a reformist. In their endless social duels, one can espy a contest between modern and postmodern perceptions superimposed between microaggressive masculine aberrations. His words are meant to deface and demean his elder brother's disciplined life by branding it outdated. Alvin would thus, in this case, be deprived of his modesty and passed off as a grumbling, senile, old man.

Besides the brother's ideological contests, Stewart takes the hegemonic ideological conflict to his father through his thoughtless verbal confrontation. In their various verbal arguments, both father and son exhibit considerable verbal degradation which besides amounting to profanity, scold, insult and communicate hostility between the two. The most outstanding of these is the scene where his father introduces Alice as their stepmother and Stewart dismisses his father's action as bullshit, ridiculing him in front of his new bride before walking away from him into the house. In the same scene, he accentuates his demeaning words with physical actions by refusing to shake the hand of his father's new wife. To justify Stewart's microaggressive stance towards his father, the film interposes this scene with a hotly contested verbal confrontation when Alvin informs Nira that their mother has died. When Nira learns about Flora's death, he expresses superficial sadness, something that Stewart attacks vehemently:

Nira: Maskini Flora...

(Poor Flora...)

Stewart: What are you doing? Unasikitika?

(Unafanya nini? You are sad?)

Nira: We mshenzi nini, unataka nifanye nini?

(Bastard, what do you want me to do?)

Stewart: Dad you are fake. You are very fake. Unajifanya unasikitika wakati...wewe umesahau wewe ndiwe uliyesababisha matatizo haya

mpaka akafukuzwa shule... hausikitiki kwa sababu wewe ndiye uliyemfanya aingie katika unywaji wa bongo. You are very fake dad. (Baba wewe ni bure. Wewe ni bure kabisa. You pretend to be sad while you caused her to be expelled from school... you are not feeling sorry for her because you caused her to become a drunkard. Wewe ni bure kabisa Baba)

Nira on his part does not spare Stewart from verbal assault. But instead of brazen insults, he infantilises him demeaning his thoughts and contributions as equivocally childish, telling Alvin who intervenes trying to calm Stewart down;

Alvin, mwache aendelee kutoa dukuduku lake, kwa sababau akiliacha hilo dukuduku atapata kiungulia. Go on my son.

(Alvin, let him continue his sputtering, because if he desists, he will get heartburn... endelea mwanangu.)

This ridicule hints to the viewer that Nira considers his son's words useless, metaphorically dismissing Stewart as suffering from stomach upset and therefore following his urge to belch. Stewart's continued insults, and his father's aggravated responses constitute even more languid excursion into verbal microaggression:

Stewart: Dad you are a dog, you are a snake, you are a killer. Umehatarisha maisha ya mtu ambaye asiyekuwa na hatia... kwa sababau ya tamaa zako za mwili amezikwa kama mzungu... unakaa hapo unatuletea yule mwanamke, she is just like a prostitute, she is just like a bitch... you are a killer.

(Baba wewe ni mbwa, nyoka, muuaji. You have endangered the life of an innocent person ...because of your bodily desires she has been buried like a corpse... and then you sit there and bring us that woman, yeye ni kama Malaya, yeye ni kama mshenzi ... wewe ni muuaji).

Nira: Mshenzi mkubwa wewe. Unakula hapa unakunywa na unasema mimi ni muuaji? ... shenzi wewe, wewe nani? We kunguru tu, we ni panya kama tu panya wengine: mara kwenye sanduku, mara kwenye kabati. Una kitu gani? Toka hapa. Nguruwe wewe.

(You are even a bigger idiot. You eat and drink in this house and you say I am a killer? ...Idiot, who are you? You are a crow, a rat like all others: sometimes in the box, other times in the cupboard. What do you have? Go away. You are a pig).

In this confrontation, masculine pedagogies transcend the gender divide into hegemony. In the confrontation between the two male characters, the idea of socio-cultural hegemonic transcendence is poised as gender unspecific. The film narrative suggests that verbal microaggression can occur between characters of different sexes, or of the

same sex. The resultant gender indifference thus posits the process of masculine exasperation, or hegemonic usurpation as a social process that disregards biological affiliations. One way to think of this usurpation battle is that characters who verbally abuse others within this film pose a form of ideological authority. Stewart attacks his father verbally because he feels morally superior to him – thus more human and socially validated to confront his father whom he considers evil. Mr Nira on the other hand verbally abuses his son based on what he considers weaker social power as he is still a dependant. From this point, he counters Stewart’s verbal assaults by pointing out that he is being ungrateful as his son because he is under his upkeep.

Whereas Offside is more egregious in its deployment of verbal microaggression compared to Moses, the latter still harbours verbally microaggressive dialogue through its use of demeaning language. However, unlike Offside, it only features patriarchal perpetrations of verbal microaggression against submissive femininity. In Moses there is profusion of verbal insults, a clear indication that the film edifies abusive male characters such as Moses the protagonist, who maintains a consistent verbally microaggressive stance against female characters. One of the most vocalised metaphors is that of intellectual deficiency and emotionalism as indices of powerlessness. Throughout this film, Moses challenges all female characters within his space. The narrative too validates his contentions that women are inherently weak by the mere biological fact of being women through spatial juxtapositions. Moses’ mantra that ‘all women are stupid and should be treated as such’ is seen in the way he makes keen effort to discredit them intellectually, and to excel where they fail. In scene nine, for instance, the film elides women’s social integrity through Moses’ use of radical language. When his friend Lucky asks him why he has been so harsh to Judith at the boarding meeting, he offers highly microaggressive anti-feminine verbal sentiments:

Moses: Mimi nilikuwa natetea kampuni kwa sababu I know women; nawajua wasichana. Hawana fikra ya kufikiria njia badala katika kutatua jambo lakini wenyewe wanapenda shortcut. Unaweza katazama hata visichana vya siku hizi, vishenzi vipumbafu vinapenda shortcut hawataki kufikiria maisha. Msichana yuko radhi akatembee na mzee mwenye umri kama baba yake au babu yake, sababu at the end anajua atapata pesa – they love shortcuts. Msichana wa siku hizi anatongozwa asubuhi jioni ameshalala na yule mwanamume, wanajirahisisha sababu wanataka pesa, washenzi wapumbavu wakubwa. Lakini sisi wanaume, sisi tunajua maisha, tunajua nini cha kufanya, na ndio maana mi nilikuwa natetea

kampuni... by the way, do not believe a limping dog, or the cry of a woman!

(I was defending the company because I know women, I know girls. They don't think of alternative ways of solving any issue because they love shortcuts. You can even see today's spoiled girls, stupid idiots who love shortcuts and do not want to think about life. A girl prefers to have an affair with an old man the age of his father or grandfather, because she knows that at the end she will get money – they love shortcuts. Today's girl can be seduced in the morning, and in the evening she is having sex with that man, they are loose because they love money, very stupid idiots. However, we men, we understand life, we know what to do, and that is why I was defending the company... hata hivyo usiwahi kuwa na imani na mbwa mwenye mwendo wa kujilegeza, ama kilio cha mwanamke!)

From these verbal articulations and within the context of the film, it is evident that Moses considers women inferior in both thought and social stature. From his philosophical standpoint, and as accentuated through the metaphorical comparison of women, limping dogs and frogs, the boundary between Moses' realistic intervention on company matters and misogyny is theoretically imprecise. Moreover, whether speaking of women face to face or in absentia, he seems to derive a form of cathartic satisfaction from his arrogance. Being a film deprived of masculine modesty, Moses offers intellect as a way of preserving a hierarchical status quo which demeans women and empowers men to clinch social dominance.

The image of ignorant women – or women presumed ignorant based on just being women runs across the entire film. To validate Moses' use of this demeaning comparison, the narrative, through Joyce posits the witlessness of female characters by depicting them as apathetic to all possible intellectual extents. After so many hostile encounters, Joyce exhibits ignorance as she proposed marriage to Moses towards the end of the film, which irks him resulting in verbal assaults. He uses abusive language that demeans her person as a woman by attacking her self-perception and intellect while Joyce on her part symbolises aborted feminine liberation especially in relationship issues:

Joyce: Moses, ni zaidi ya miezi mitatu sasa tumekuwa na uhusiano mimi na wewe.... Mpaka sasa hivi sijaelewa mstakabadhi wa maisha yetu.

(Moses, it has been more than three months since we started this relationship...up to now I do not know the plans for our life.)

Moses: Mimi mustakabadhi wa maisha yangu naufahamu, sijui wewe mustakabadhi wa maisha yako.

(I know the plans I have for my life, as for you, I do not about your plans.)

Joyce: Namaanisha maisha yetu pamoja, mimi na wewe.

(I meant our life together, you and me.)

Moses: Mhh. Unajua nyinyi wanawake ni watu wa ajabu sana. Kila mwanadamu inabidi afikirie mustakabadhi wa maisha yake yeye mwenyewe. Sasa nyinyi mnataka mwanamume ndio akufikirie maisha yako? Hiyo akili kweli hiyo?

(Mhh. You know you women are very funny. Every human being should plan their own life. So you want a man to think and plan your life for you. Do you really have a mind?)

Joyce: Nazungumzia maisha ya ndoa mimi Moses. Hivi kweli tutaishi hivi mpaka lini?

(I am talking about marriage Moses. For how long will we stay like this?)

Moses: Mmhh, wow. Sasa mama, asante sana kwa chai yako. Nisikilize vizuri, kwa nia njema na tulivu kabisa, taratibu, nyanyuka, tena bila kuamsha mende wa humu ndani, kafungue kile kitasa toka nenda kwenu. Nikikuhitaji nitakupigia simu.

(Mhh, wow. Thank you mum for your tea. Now listen good, with good intention, stand slowly, without disturbing any cockroach in my house, go unlock that door, get out and go home. If I need you, I will call you.)

Joyce: Moses, utanifukuzaji ... ina maana ulipoanzisha uhusiano na mimi ulikuwa unatengemea nini haswa, ama nia yako ilikuwa kunitumia tu halafu basi? Maanake nimeitaja ndoa tu basi hali ya hewa imebadilika humu ndani kabisa.

(Moses, how can you chase me away... does it mean when you started this relationship you only wanted to use me and then that is the end? Because when I mentioned marriage, the environment here has changed completely.)

Moses: Ah, jamani. Tena mimi ndio nilioanzisha uhusiano? Ushasahau kwamba wewe ndiwe ulianzisha uhusiano? Ama kweli nyinyi wanawake mna vichwa vya kuku. Tayari ushasahau maskini ya mungu... bila kusumbua mende humu kabatini, fungua kitasa uende ulikokuwa, nikikuhitaji nitakupigia simu... maskini ya mungu wanasahau upesi hawa, vichwa vyao kama kuku... vichwa vya kuku tu, hakuna kitu. Women, chicken!

(Ah, so now I started this relationship. You have forgotten that you are the one who started this relationship? For sure you women have a chicken's head. Already you have forgotten, poor Lord... without disturbing cockroaches here, open that door and go to where you came from, if I need you I will call you... poor God, they forget so fast, their heads just like chicken's... chicken heads, with nothing else. Wanawake, kuku!)

This dialogue captures Moses' growing discontent with women. Even though Joyce enjoys some positive consideration from him, her ignorance irks him. In this scene, his words exhibit his characteristic impatience with women whose intelligence he holds in contempt. However, his allusion that women's heads are like chickens' cast an imagery of despondency among the female fraternity. This disposition can be likened to similar occurrences in Offside, as both films advances the idea that women are denied and abused, especially those who are bold enough to ask for what they want verbally. In Offside, Alvin considers Alice's sexual overtness bedevilling while Moses in Moses counters Joyce's request for marriage plan with arrogant insults that depict her as needy, with retarded sense of self-dependency. This dialogue also illustrates female characters as stupid. Joyce exhibits extreme ignorance in insinuating that Moses started the relationship, yet the narrative suggests it is her own initiative to submit sexually to Moses. Her assertion that Moses started the relationship therefore portrays her as both a con and insincere.

The Village Pastor does not dwell on verbal insults as a primary medium of microaggression. Except in occasional instances, the film features mostly interactional and circumstantial forms of masculine microaggression. However, towards the end of the movie, there is significant hint of verbal degradation of the female characters when three members of Isaya's sub-urban congregation visit to advice about his life. Their dialogue pre-empts the stereotypical depiction of woman as the bearer of burden within the family space. For his friend, Chamada, it is the third time he is telling Isaya to marry to relieve himself from the labours of household tasks.

Man: Tumefikiria sana baba mtumishi na tukaona kwa nini tusije kukushauri juu ya hili.

(We have thought alot pastor and decided to come and give you some advice.)

Woman: Ni kweli kabisa.

(Yeah, it is true.)

Chamada: Bwana mtumishi, halafu kitu kingine unateseka sana: mara uchote maji, mara upike, mara ufue na usafi. Sasa ukioa, utapata muda mzuri wa kupumzika.

(Pastor, you are suffering alot: you have to fetch water, cook, wash and do cleaning. If you marry, you will have time to rest.)

Woman: Ni kweli kabisa na tutahakikisha kwa kila hali na mali tumefanikisha harusi yako. Tatalihimiza kanisa kwa michango zaidi.

(It is true and we shall ensure that we make your wedding succeed. We shall encourage the congregation to raise funds for this.)

This ordinary sounding dialogue is full of microaggressive imagery. Primarily, the main reason given to Isaya why he should marry is to transfer all his burdening duties to the wife. The connotation is therefore that women ought to do all hard domestic work so that men can rest as they go about their outdoor (public) activities. Such an attitude undermines women's social role as it bestialises their contribution by assigning them hard, demeaning tasks within the domestic space for the benefit of their male counterparts.

Of the four films studied, verbal microaggression is least evident in O'prah. In this film, both male and female characters retranslate their differences into actions which avenge their dissatisfactions and disagreements. The only sole incidence of verbal microaggression occurs in act three, where Alfred ridicules O'prah after conning her of all the money. As she is begging for sea fare for her journey back to mainland, he retorts: "Huyu O'prah sio yule aliyetoka Dar siku chache zilizopita. Huyu O'prah kabadilika. (This is not the same O'prah who came from Dar a few days ago. This Oprah is different.)" Though this is passed off as normal talk, in the context of the movie, Alfred's words expose O'prah to masculine ridicule, drawing a nexus with deliberate microaggression. Happening when Alfred derides O'prah after conning her, his words reassemble the narrative typification of males as superior controlling female characters in their vacillating subjectivities. It is also Alfred's way of dismissing O'prah from his life, informing her that their life together has ended. He accentuates this impression by informing her that the loot is at this point 'their' money, not 'her' money; and that as the man in this case, his decision to invest the money does not require any consultation or approval from her. Demeaning her role by denying her participation in a decision that affects her life opens up an ideological space in which his verbal articulations become microaggressive. When he gives her fare, choosing the minimum possible while laughing at her as he rudely mocks her in a solemn goodbye, he disowns her and makes her re-entry to her previous life both shameful and uncertain.

In conclusion, this study has established that the films feature vast and diverse incidences of verbal microaggression committed by especially al masculinised characters against feminised characters. On the forefront of these verbal hostilities are male characters who have shown great aversion to female characters in their shard spaces, often deploying verbal assaults to mitigate their growing uneasiness with masculinised female. To build onto these findings, the next section explores how interactions between cinematic characters embed microaggressive discourses.

3.3 Interactive Antipathies as Gender Microaggressions

Class antagonism within visual art forms has been found to masquerade as, especially, narcissistic voyeuristic tendencies (Mulvey, 1998). Specifically in the films studied, the images of social subjugation and gendered tyranny perpetrated through male-centered interactional hierarchy is a prevalent motif. Whereas unlike verbal articulations interactive antipathies may not be voiced, cinema often edify bifurcated gender continuum biased in favour for patriarchal privileges. In the cinema spaces, degradation of women may at times be symbolised through character interactions, or even elicited through somatic feminisation. To think of interactional hostilities as forms of microaggression is therefore to espy how they demean the trounced characters within the context of the specific narrative.

Laden with insularity in their depiction of a female character dispossessed from her otherwise appropriate spaces, the meta-text discourses of Kanumba's film narratives have hardly escaped the stereotypical enactment of a debased woman, disparaged in her mute soliloquies so clearly etched on the symbolic hints of her bodily physiognomy. Particularly in Moses and O'prah, the female character is almost stifled as man stampedes within her spaces depriving her of any positive recourse. Arguably, her participation in social discourses has to be redeemed by a man's voice whose opinion may indigenise her to the male-focal social locus. Offside and The Village Pastor reverses this trend by privileging female characters whose influence defy and usurp the wits of male characters in their spaces. One way that Offside features interactive hostilities between the characters is the exclusion of female characters from social participation – even in matters that touch on their lives. This is evidenced in the manner in which male characters dismiss female presence as unnecessary. Through these social

nuances, it is evident that a voiceless woman displaced through interactional exclusion in matters where both genders should otherwise participate is both preferred and enforced. There are many instances of circumstantial microaggression evidenced in these films. At the beginning of the movie Alvin easily ‘pushes’ Alice away from the scene dismissing her presence in a scene where she should otherwise be privy:

Alvin: Alice unaweza kutupisha kidogo, tuna mazungumzo
(Alice just excuse us, we need to talk.)

Alvin’s statement hints of his microaggressive stance towards Alice. Coming at the graveside after the last visitor has left, it marks the start of avid confrontation between the two brothers as they fight to assign Alice an alternative position in their home and lives. This instance isolates her from participating in family talk as she is considered an outsider by the two brothers, and especially Alvin, despite the fact that she is the wife of their late father. In this scene, Alice’s exclusion from participating in matters that concern her echoes the scene in O’prah where Dominic decides to bring Alfred to live in their house without consulting his wife. A similar exclusive stance is also the scene where Alfred informs O’prah that he has already spent her money without even consulting her. In O’prah’s case, Alfred justifies his lack of consultation by pointing that as the man he didn’t think it necessary to consult her since he could plan what he want to do with the money.

Further, a similar stance is replayed in Offside. In the bar scene where Alvin and Stewart have gone for an evening outing for a drink. When Alvin desires to talk with Stewart, he dismisses his (Stewart’s) female friend curtly by declaring “Naomba watupishe kidogo nina mazungumzo mimi na wewe. (Pointing at the woman) Hawa. (Let them give us some space, I want to talk to you... these.)” Stewart reinforces this perception by curtly dismissing the lady. By referring to her using plural term ‘them’ instead of ‘her’, Alvin seems to be advancing his long held perception that women are all the same: wicked. His dislike for women is also heavily emphasised in this narrative. When referring to their mother, he blames her for the low life she lives, while defending his father against Stewart’s accusation. Similarly, when faced with Alice’s sexual advances, he demonises her by calling her Satan. Extended to the present instance when he refers to Stewart’s girlfriend as ‘them’ he is simply alluding to his continuing degradation for the female characters. This is also comparable to other incidences in

Offside where Alice is excluded from participating in Alvin and Stewart's discussions about her, suggesting that she is not to be trusted or kept privy to men's decisions. These instances trivialise woman's worth in shared spaces by posing the male character as the 'social standard', and the female character as the 'objectified' other, or a social accessory to be dispensed for man's gratification.

While it is significant to note that interactive hostilities in this film do not necessarily occur across the gender strata, it intermittently rebalances towards single gender where it pervades the social dialogues between male characters. The most poignant example of this exclusion is illustrated when Mr. Nira comes home with his new wife and kisses her at the parking lot as his two grown sons watch. This embarrasses his children prompting them to retreat into the house; the respectful Alvin openly embarrassed, while his rebellious young brother Stewart fumes with fury. This act by Nira infantilises his grown sons by acting as if they are still children who are undisturbed by his open kissing spree. The incidence is also used to show his position as the heir of the scene's ultimate masculinity, thus displaying the finality of his decision to marry a new bride as a symbol of social power. Coupled with the narrative hint that he did not consult his sons before re-marrying, the scene augments the ongoing discourse of interactive usurpation and subjugation, which is in tandem with masculinity as a discourse hinged on domination. It is however his overt show of intimacy that borders on arrogance which makes his sons the recipients of their father's microaggressive forbearance, an act that serves as a libidinal launch pad for later onslaughts between Stewart and Alice. Consequently, when Alice extends her hand to greet Stewart, he snubs her, refusing to greet her. This incident, being their first encounter as mother and son, isolates her as a victim of his hostility so far exhibited against his dad. For instance, the film upholds a microaggressive stance by repetitively constructing images of alienation and degradation. In the first flashback scene where Nira is addressing his two sons, Stewart demeans his authority as a father by walking out on him midway his address. Moreover, even for the period when he is there, he has plugged earpieces in his ears while his father is addressing them. Correspondingly in the preceding scene where the two brothers are arguing at the graveside, Stewart walks out on Alvin, his elder brother while he is still addressing him.

Nira also exposes Stewart to demeaning circumstances. Whenever he needs something from his father, he has to request through his elder brother who acts as the proxy between him and their father. When Mr. Nira decides to travel, he only informs Alvin which angers Stewart as he keeps lamenting about his father's snub. In this instance, as in many others afterwards, inter-gender aggressions are subtly evinced in tandem with cross-gender aggressions.

One of the most memorable scenes illustrating interactive microaggression in this film takes place outside the slum brothel; a sad and hostile confrontation between mother and son who has gone to beseech her to return home. Stewart's entry is narrated as insulting and emotionally humiliating for both him and his desolate mother. The elder lady who answers his call at the door, upon learning that he is looking for Flora, asks him if he is seeking sexual services from her, rudely informing him to wait outside because his mother is already inside with another man. The shock on Moses' face hints of his emotional turmoil the moment he comes face to face with his mother's humiliating life. When Flora eventually comes out from her prostituting session with an unidentified customer, she defamiliarises herself as a sign of social differentiation, responding to her son's greeting with a gloomy 'Nikusaidie nini? (How can I help you?)' Stewart's surprise and despair is implied in his miserable posture as he re-introduces himself to his mother: 'Mama, mimi ni mwanao, Stewart. (Mum, I am your son, Stewart)'; to which she replies:

Flora: Wewe unajua babako namchukia. Halafu wewe jinsi ulivyo, macho yako hayo, unafanana sana na babako. Yaani nawachukia nyinyi, nawachukia. Sitaki kuzungmza na wewe, na sitaki kusikia tena umekanyanga hapa katika eneo hili. Naomba uende.

(You know I hate your father. And the way you look, especially your eyes, you resemble your father alot. I really hate you all. I do not want to talk with you, and I don't ever want to hear you have been here. Please leave.)

This symbolic duel represents the incessant motif of interactive degradation which permeates even blood bonds, leaving no vestige of parental love. Stewart's pain and misery is evidenced in his sorrowful stance as his mother arrogantly disowns him (Picture 3.3 and Picture 3.4 below).



Picture 3.3 Flora as she reprimands and dismisses her son harshly.



Picture 3.4 Stewart reacts to his mother's ruthlessness.

Exposing Stewart to his mother's hostility when he has gone to seek paternal love significantly demeans him. He is being disowned by a mother whom the narrative suggests he loves deeply. Given their incessant affronts with his father, Stewart's journey to look for his mother is his way of seeking the only love he can trust. Yet he is denied even this love, in a harsh confrontation that degrades him enormously. Such a rude and embarrassing interaction constitutes an act of microaggression in that while Flora dismisses her son based on her genuine dislike for him and his father, Stewart is an innocent victim in this case. She may have been trying to save him from further embarrassment of witnessing her pathetic life but it nevertheless excludes her son from her life, who feels unloved. This may explain her last journey home which ended with her death in the rear seat of bus. She may have been coming to make things up for her son, an opportunity denied by the narrative which preferred her wretched and unloving, and decreed death if she tried to be good.

Similarly, Moses exemplifies exclusionary tendencies when Moses and his boss are meeting to decide Judith's fate in her absence. Even though the boss affirms that Judith has been to his office to report Moses' abuses, he nevertheless maintains that he is not satisfied with her explanations. In this film, Judith is presented as a dumb corporate executive who cannot make the right choices and decisions, is not intelligent and does not understand the dynamics of her job. It is on the same pre-supposition that Moses disrupts the meeting which she is chairing and mobilises his colleagues to deride her until she leaves the room in anguish. At one point he explicitly ridicules her intelligence by bluntly pointing out that she is mentally exhausted: "My point is this, you have reached your thinking limit, let others think and rescue the situation... Judith I can never

blame you. You are a woman, you cannot think properly... nonsense. (Hoja yangu ni hii, fikira zako zimefika mwisho, waachie wengine wafikirie waokoe hali... Judith siwezi kukulaumu. Wewe ni mwanamke, huwezi kufikiria vizuri... upuzi.)”

In this meeting, the male characters somatically and later verbally endorse Moses’s confrontation and assault on their female boss, while female characters remain complacent and voiceless throughout Moses’ assault and even after their boss leaves the room in fury. The compliments given to Moses by the male characters within the room symbolise their collective approval for his hostility towards Judith. But even more, the silence of female characters is a sign of their collective complicity in the ongoing restrained aggression. The film narrative reinforces this tendency by bringing together Moses and the overall boss of the company to discuss Judith’s fate. In this setup, the woman character is excluded from participating in the discussion where her fate in the future in the corporate space is discussed. To justify his verbal humiliation of Judith, Moses argues that Judith urgently requires time to rest— away from the office — because she is a woman. Her performance in the workplace is closely linked to her sex, and not her mental ability, which Moses has already expressed discontent. To signify men’s collective consensus in this perception, his boss explicitly casts doubt about Judith’s ability to perform in her senior role within the corporate space, augmenting Moses’ assertion that women should not be given senior positions in the company because whenever they are opposed they feel mocked.

The meeting in which Judith is discussed in absentia disregards her leadership aspirations on the basis of her sex, since the reason that Moses insists is that she is a woman, and therefore should go to rest and be relieved of her leadership responsibilities. That the company’s top boss would discuss her — a middle level manager — with junior staff, even asking for his opinions about how to handle Judith exit alienates her within the corporate space. Such a discussion, therefore, amounts to degradation in that it overlooks Judith’s contribution and dignity by propelling her through male-controlled decisions which she does not partake. That the boss’s decision to replace Judith with Moses is the film’s way to affirm that she is considered a ‘nobody’ within the corporate world, and that even a male junior staff member is more intelligent and valuable to the company than she is. At the end of this scene, Moses

promises to hand to the boss a report for positive financial transformation in the company. Where Judith saw retrenchment as a solution for the company's survival, Moses sees another alternative that not only preserves the company's employees in their job positions, but also revives the company's financial performance. Such a gendered comparison whose outcome is usurpation of women's intelligence by men symbolically undermines the female character's competence, a fact that male characters clearly attributes to women's sex. In the end, when Moses succeeds where Judith has failed, it signifies the narrative's way to highlight the social inequalities prevalent in social spaces. Such a juxtaposition also emphasises the humiliating interactions which the female character must endure in a world defined and controlled by men.

The narrative discourse in Moses, just like in O'prah, explicitly contest control in the cinematic spaces by realigning characters' attitudes and behaviour to what Sue Derrick Wing (2010, p. 166) refers to as social "belief that men are naturally superior to women and should dominate them in all spheres of life" - a vast niche for chauvinist demeanor. Through the character of Kanumba, we see the image of over-buffed masculinity in an aggressive foray to debase female presence in any sphere of their social existence, whether in the domestic or public domain. In Moses, when asked by his friend Lucky why he has used such harsh language against Judith, Moses reveals his dissatisfaction with her gender as a woman. The narrative repeatedly hints that he universally objectifies all women to his homogeneous fascism based on his conviction of their collective ignorance. To him, there is no other language he can use when addressing a woman if he wishes to be understood – only arrogance and humiliation gives him his desired results. Even though Lucky - symbolising the feminised masculinity in this film - defends Judith from men's demeaning verbal onslaught, the film however still favours a male-led society by granting Moses an ultimate authority to maintain his demeaning stance. And he has a justification for it too: *'Kwa maana wanawake ni wepesi wa kucheza na hisia za mwanaume lakini hawapendi kuambiwa ukweli.* (Because women are quick to play with men's feeling but they do not want to be told the truth.)'

Another poignant incidence of interactive microaggression is when Moses ignores Linda as she enters his office to inform him that he is needed by his boss, a further signification of his anti-feminine tendencies,. This scene deploys both verbal and

nonverbal expressions which reflects on the creation of a submissive woman, who is not only timid but also defeated in her social existence. The voiceless Linda does not even have the confidence to tell Moses about his message, but fidgets with subdued shame and complacent uncertainty as she passes the message just moments before Moses curtly summons her to his house after work for his sexual indulgence. Their restrained conversation helps to re-create a conquered woman meekly exposed to reviling masculinity. Without bothering to look at her, or in any other way acknowledge her presence in his space, Moses curtly asks ‘*Una shida gani?* (What is your problem?),’ to which Linda meekly informs him that the boss wishes to see him. To express his authority and highlight her subjugated social stature, frailty and confidence, Moses retorts back:

‘Sasa hicho ndicho kilikuwa kinakufanya usimame hapo bila kuongea chochote? Okay, sawa nakuja. Halafu sikia, kesho jioni nakuhitaji.

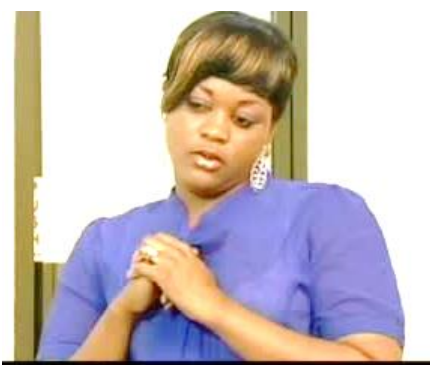
(So that is what was making you stand there without talking? Sawa, I’m coming. Hey, I will be requiring you tomorrow evening.)’

And Linda’s only reply is a barely audible, timid acceptance: ‘*Sawa.* (Okay.)’

Combined with his rude remarks, the scene mortifies womanhood through hierarchical corporate participation, which assigns the female characters status subservient to that of the male character. Her humbled body posture (Picture 3.6), and her slow restrained voice are indicative of the lowly disposition with which she is regarded in this scene. It is also noteworthy in this scene that Moses does not even care to look up from his work or face Linda when addressing her, but his gaze remains focused on the opposite direction, at his paperwork as he curtly addresses her and summons her to his house for sex the following evening (Picture 3.5). From the time of her entry to his office, Moses only looks at her briefly and resumes his work ignoring her presence, an image repeated severally. Ignoring her in this manner delineates power appropriation in share corporate space, apportioning a controlling share to the male character while the female character exist on the periphery scavenging for recognition and inclusion. To understand the significance of attention, this scene can be contrasted with the one where Moses is discussing Judith’s fate with his male boss. He is attentive and humbled with no trace of arrogance, maintaining a respectable eye contact and body posture.



Picture 3.5 Moses is addressing Linda without even bothering to face her or lift his eyes from his work.



Picture 3.6 Linda meekly submits to his degradation as she delivers the message from their boss.

Linda's dismissal, compared to the first scene where Moses rudely jeers Judith, maps out a curious corporate pattern of normalised corporate subjugation. The curt way in which Moses summons Linda for sex, and her complacency as a human being signifies his absolute control over her (including her body) and the enslaving submissiveness that she exercises in her relations with him. Such a comparison bestows power on the male character to command the female character at his behest thus nullifying the idea of gender equality. One astounding observation in Moses is that the narrative creates a queue of ignorant women streaming to Moses' life in random encounters. From Judith, to his sister Rose; to Joyce, Genevieve and even Linda, they all endure his interactional animosities. There is also clear reliance on sexual indulgence as a means of explicating his masculine arrogance. Consequently, of all the female characters, it is Genevieve and Joyce who most experience his ferocious fury. Through intersecting dispositions of ignorance and gullibility, the film not only portrays female characters as lazy and satisfied with the domestic spaces, but also severely dependent. To understand how verbal interactions aggregate interactive degradations between characters, it is important to analyse the following conversation which takes place at Moses' home the morning after the night he spent with Genevieve.

The dialogue is situated in the morning after their encounter at the hotel the previous evening. Moses is about to leave his house for his morning exercises while Genevieve is still asleep in the bed. In the first instance, when Moses asks her '*Bado wee haujaamka eeh, au ndio umeanza?*' (You are still asleep, mmh, or you have just started

your sleeping session?), she responds by asking if he is going out. Still sleepy in the bed, this image suggests her laziness. Moses is already awake and is ready to go for his exercises at a time that she is still rolling under the blankets. This precedes an even more offensive exchange where Moses declares that she should wake up and leave his house. This scene creates an exposé that imagines the female character as untrustworthy besides being gullible and spooky. Despite a night together, Moses makes it clear to Genevieve that he cannot leave her in his house as he prefers to lock it when he is going out. He reiterates his distrust by maintaining that since he lives alone, he does not accept her suggestion to wait for him in the house: *'No, I live alone. It is better when I am out, niache nyumba yangu nikiwa nimefunga. So get up and leave. (Hapana, naishi peke yangu. Hivyo ni vyema wakati nipo nje, I lock my house. Hivyo nyanyuka na uondoke.)'*

The narrative premise at this point is that female characters should not be trusted. Genevieve, despite spending the night with Moses, should leave him alone to carry on with his life on by himself. Such distrust is no different from that which Judith endures, as she is seen as an undesirable impediment to men's authority in the corporate space. Like Genevieve, she is too forced to leave so that men can have their way.

There is also significant attempt to undermine the intelligence of female characters in this scene. The perverted way in which Genevieve proposes to Moses makes her an object of ridicule by denying her wit and honour despite her learned disposition.

Genevieve: Mi nilifikiria tumeanza ukurasa mpya wa mapenzi na sasa sikuelewi unachokiongea, kwani una tatizo gani hasa?

(I thought we are already lovers but I don't seem to understand the way you talk, what exactly is your problem?)

Moses: Wow. Tumekuwa restaurant tukaongea tukaona bora tuje nyumbani kumalizia maongezi yetu na tukaishia kulala pamoja. Kwani tulikuwa tuna miadi ya mimi na wewe kuwa wapenzi?

(Aha. We just met in the restaurant and chatted a little, and agreed to come to my house to continue with our discussion then ended up sleeping together. Did we have any agreement between us to become lovers?)

Genevieve: Ndio. Hivi Moses, unafikiria mimi ningeweza kubali kufanya mapenzi na wewe bila kufikiria kuanza uhusiano na wewe?

(Yes. Moses, do you really think I would have agreed to have sex with you if I did not think we will be lovers?)

Moses: Pengine uliamua kunitunu kama zawadi kutokana na maswali yako uliyonikera kuniulizauliza kule. No time to waste, get up and leave. Finish.

(Maybe you decided to reward me for withstanding your ignorant questions which you were asking me there. Hakuna muda wa kupoteza, nyanyuka uondoke. Tamati.)

By terming her questions ‘stupid’ and ‘irritating’, Moses ridicules the woman character’s intelligence. Like O’prah and Alice, Genevieve’s sexual bliss is transient, leaving in its wake a devastated heart. Genevieve’s marriage proposal to Moses can also be interpreted as a form of interactive microaggression in that it makes her an object of ridicule. Despite her liberal mind-set as a modern educated woman, her desire to openly approach a man is met with embarrassment. Moses trashes her intellect and social literacy reducing her to an object of shame.

Another character who incurs Moses’ wrath is Jane. When she comes to visit, he informs her that they will go out together – to his sister’s house - and come back together; an allusion to the fact that he does not trust her with his house in his absence. The narrative also points out that any attempt to violate this diktat is met with instant abuse, as seen when Moses’ girlfriend comes on a surprise visit. He abandons her in the house and comes back very late at night. There is a prevailing tendency for female characters in this film to rely on men for emotional validation. Submitting sexually to men, it seems, is their ultimate way of expressing love, whereas for men sex is perceived just as an instantaneous incidence bereft of any emotional connexion. Linda learns this in a moment of exceeding misery and provocation. After a night together, she is seen reminding Moses about her birthday. On his part, Moses brushes it off and scorns her request for a birthday gift, emphasising that he does not see any reason why he should waste money on celebration of a day that she has no recollection of. His arrogance and disdain recapture the misery espied in the preceding scenes, and fits in the continuum of social debilitation of the female character within the cinema’s diegetic confinement. But even more significant in the film’s masculine re-enactments is the extremity of Moses’ emotional detachment even with women who have submitted to him completely like Linda, Genevieve, and Jane. The only woman rewarded with Moses’ patience and

attention at the end of the film is Joyce. However, it cost her humiliation and excessive self-giving while Moses' attitude remains unchanged. Their eventual decision to live together does not result from love, but rather from tolerance. Her extent of self-giving is so much so that it is clear that Moses does not accommodate her in his life, but assimilates her to his own way of life. To participate in his space, Joyce must endure an unloving relationship and conditional marriage a requirement to append herself to Moses as his wife. This juxtaposition, which transfers the husband's love to the unborn baby while denying it to the woman 'other' commoditises the womans' love into a product that can be negotiated. Subjecting her committed love to his terms, and her subsequent acceptance of these terms spells out that her entire persona, including her love, emotions, feelings, thoughts and body, are the property of her man which she willingly surrender to his own will.

Linda misses out an opportunity to remain in Moses's pace by portraying excess emotional vulnerability. After learning that her father has died, Moses infantilises her by asking her: '*Wow. Sasa wewe ulitaka afe nani kusudi wewe usilie?* (Wow. So who did you wish to die so that you will not cry?)' Considering the meekness with which she submitted to him sexually, and because of her emotional reliance on him, Moses seems to cause her extreme humiliation and pain by distancing himself from her emotional woes. Instead of offering her comfort, he rudely retorts:

'Old folks have to die in order to give way for a new generation. Hata kama ungekaa naye miaka mia moja, mia mbili lazima ingefika mahali lazima angefariki sababu yeye ni mwanadamu. Sasa wewe ulitaka ukae naye miaka mingapi, mia tano?

(Hayo ni maisha tu. Wazee lazima wafe ili kupisha kizazi kipya. Even if you lived with him for hundred years, two hundred years, he would have eventually died because he is human. How many years did you wish to stay with him, five hundred?)'.

To accentuate her emotional turmoil, the film narrative shows Linda protesting to Moses how much she had counted on him for emotional consolation. As she rushes out of his house in devastation, Moses does not let her ease away from is taunting rudeness. He interjects her at the door, and nastily adds;

Kuna kitu nataka nikushauri. Hakikisha umemzika upesi kwa sababu mtu akishafariki anakuwa hana dhamana tena duniani, anaachia nafasi kwa wengine. Now stop talking nonsense.

(There is something I want to advise you. Ensure you burry him fast because once a person dies he has no more importance in this world, he leaves his space for others. Sasa wacha kuongea kijinga.)

Moses' rudeness to Linda at this moment in her life is an act of extreme interactive antagonism. In context, she – his complacent sexual partner, submissive to him without complains – has come to seek consolation from him. By disregarding her emotional situation, he entraps her conscience with prickly words that articulate his insensitivity to her disposition, worsening her emotional turmoil. He therefore not only transgress against her human expectations by denying her comfort in her hour of need, but also diminishes her hope for any form of compassionate attention from him. Linda at the end of this scene becomes a symbol of abandonment, despite her subservient service to his sexual needs. Like his girlfriend who had visited incognito, she is denied consolation and scolded for coming to his house without his consent.

She is also exposed to ridicule over a matter that is significant to her. To chide her about her father's death is the film's way of trivialising her feelings as a woman, and expressing the marginality of women in male controlled societies. Throughout the film, Moses is always dismissing female characters with the promise that he will call them if he needs them. This repetition is a significant indicator of his abusive outlook on women whom he considers his inferiors, subservient to his call. He reinforces the notion that whereas women should heed to his needs, he has no specified obligation to grant them any solace even when they need him most, despite their genuine effort to submit to his otherwise outrageous masculine demands.

In The Village Pastor, the film narrative also arrogates demeaning characteristics to women, who are ostracised through character interactions. There is an invariable materialist discourse evident in the film, which locate the uncertainties of female characters within her social locale. Isaya's first encounter with female characters is when he meets Joan - Sarah's (approximately six-year old) younger sister as he cycles home from preaching. The young girl demands money from him before she can hand him Sarah's letter. Despite her young age, Joan is depicted as materialistic. To reinforce this material strand, Sarah, Joan's elder sister voices her concerns about Isaya's ability

to fulfil her materially – during their first date - despite the obvious love that he has for her. Posed as a condition to agree to his marriage proposal, Sarah’s attitude towards Isaya demean him based on his socio-economic status, frustrating his noble effort to love and provide for her. To understand the extent of Isaya’s torment, it is important to review Isaya’s marriage proposal to Sarah:

Isaya: Ile jambo ambalo tulikuwa tukilisubiria kwa hamu mi naona limeshafika. Kwa nini tusifungue ukurasa mpya wa mapenzi, wa maisha yetu mi na wewe?

(That which we have been waiting so anxiously for is finally here. Why don’t we turn a new leaf in our love life, me and you?)

Sarah: Unataka kusema nini haswa?

(What exactly do you wish to say?)

Isaya: Sarah, mi naona watoto wazuri walionawiri wametuzunguka mezani. Na meza naona imejaa vyakula vilivyonawiri kemkem vya kila aina, na vinywaji vyenye ladha zuri. Hakika tumependeza sana. Mmh, Sarah, nataka nikuo. Tafadhali Sarah itikia mwito wangu, tafadhali nakuomba.

(Sara, I see beautiful children happily surrounding us on a table. And the table is full of various types of delicious meals, and tasty drinks. No doubt we are all full of splendour. Mhh, Sara, I want to marry you. Please Sarah accept my request, please, I am pleading.)

Sarah: Isaya, hivi unatengemea katika hilo, tutakula nini, tutafaa nini; tutaishi vipi yaani?

(Isaya, if we get married, how will we get food, clothing; how will we really live?)

Isaya: Hebu tanzama hii ardhi, Mungu ameibariki kwa utukufu wake na mamlaka yake yamewachwa juu yetu. Sasa kwa nini tusiitumie hiyo vizuri pamoja mimi na wewe? Hakika hatutoshinda njaa. Tutakula maana tunafanya kazi. Tafadhali Sarah, sawa?

(Look at this land, God has blessed it in his holiness and given us mandate over it. Why can’t we use it well, you and me? I am confident we will not starve. We shall eat because we will work. Please Sarah, okay?)

This brief dialogue raises potentially microaggressive issues. This scene is situated in the bush in what can be interpreted as the narrative’s way to give prominence to Isaya’s social status and space as a herder and villager pastor. This placement therefore accords him the lowest social rank possible. To have Sarah, an educated modern woman fall in love with him sets up insurmountable class antagonisms. In addition, placing Isaya’s special moment of marriage proposal in the bush, besides heightening the aura of romance, also dilutes its significance, especially for Sarah, reducing it to almost a joke.

The film expresses this diminished importance later on by substituting a respectful marriage with elope. She arrives at the village market a denounced woman – homeless, vulnerable. The only ceremony she is accorded is Isaya’s attention as he climbs down from his improvised dais and leads her to his home – henceforth a wife. Secondly, her concern about material providence during the moment of Isaya’s proposal casts an image of a greedy woman, insensitive to her man’s social position. The film further highlights her material gullibility by having her fornicate repeatedly with Pascal, who drives her around in his car. So greedy is she so that even when Pascal hits her husband with his car, crippling him, she does not bother to support him. While Isaya is hopeful and self-dependent, Sarah – despite her better education – is portrayed as a weakling and a pessimist who prefers shortcut to meet her material and bodily needs. Just like O’prah whose pursuit of better life through what Moses in Moses would consider ‘shortcut’ led her to annihilation. Sarah’s life at the end of this film ends tragically as she is destroyed through suicide.

It is however, not only female characters whose interaction with male characters breed hostility, incidences of male characters aggressing against fellow male characters are also prevalent. After engaging in repeated adultery with Sarah, and even after her declaration that she is no longer a willing participant, Pascal pursues her to the city where he haunts her until she submits to him sexually. However, their guilty, like an unforgiving shadow that has refused to dissipate haunts them until they commit suicide. In this regard, Pascal’s continued sexual pursuit of Sarah is doubly an act of microaggression. First, he objectifies Sarah on the basis of her sexual appeal to him, pursuing her for bodily pleasures hence refusing to heed her warning to keep off in a manner that denies her any control over her own body. He perceives her body as his legitimate source of pleasure, and that she has neither control nor right to refuse him whenever he desires to have sex with her. Secondly, to make Isaya’s low social status a key factor of consideration in his marriage proposal demeans him as a man. Whereas he depicts deep religious conviction and hope, he is nevertheless forced to face Sarah not merely as a lover, but too, as a girl from upper class to which he must aspire to access. To understand this objectification, it is crucial to co verbal confrontation between Sarah and Pascal when he met her by the roadside in the city, seeking to revive their sexual liaison after Isaya’s forgiveness and Sarah’s reinstatement as Isaya’s wife.

After Pascal intercepts Sarah on her way to church, Sarah's determination to usurp her immoral past is implied in her confident confrontation to Pascal, who after pleading to be with her in a secluded place she retorts: "Sema nini unataka kuniambia, mi nina haraka naenda kanisani na wapendwa wanasubiri. (Say whatever it is you want to tell me, I am hurrying to church and my brethren are waiting for me)". However, he appeals to Sarah's sense of righteousness by implying that both of them are God's people, and therefore belong together. Leaning on her religious reasoning is his logical strategy to subdue her before quickly telling Sarah that she obviously knows what he wanted from her. This is met with prompt reprimand:

"Okay. Ni kweli najua na ndio maana nakujibu hivi: mimi ni mke wa Isaya, nampenda Isaya na ananipenda. Upuuzi tulioufanya kati yangu mimi na wewe ulishapita. Siwezi rudia matapishi, naomba unielewe. Siwezi rudia dhambi, na kuanzia sasa nakwambia, sikutaki, niache.

(Sawa. It is true I know and that is why I am telling you this: I am Isaya's wife, I love him, and he loves me. All the stupid things we did together are now gone. I cannot re-eat my vomit, and you better get it. I cannot go back to sin, and from now, I tell you, I do not want you, leave me alone.)"

In this scene, Sarah condemns Pascal calling him demon and daring him not to follow her again. While Pascal leverages on Isaya's social framing to snatch his wife from him, the film in the final act also hints that what seems like Sarah's legitimate desire to live a respectable life is indeed the narrative's way to set her up for more humiliating circumstances. This scene - which poses significant embarrassment to Pascal after being denied sexual favours, and Sarah, for being treated as an irredeemable harlot - is a precursor to Sarah's ultimate humiliation. After this exchange, Sarah leaves him on the roadside and hurries to church. But Pascal, fuelled by his typical unrelenting masculine desire to conquer her sexually, follows her to church where he disrupts the women's session which she is leading. His entry violates her integrity, and also exposes her to an awkward, distractive situation during the service. Secondly, considering that Isaya has just forgiven him for wrecking his family through fornication with his wife, he too represents masculine arrogance that demeans Isaya's effort to create a cohesive society through truthful forgiveness. His openly hypocritical behaviour annuls the goodwill bestowed upon him through Isaya's forgiveness. He transgresses both Isaya and Sarah through his devaluation of their marriage and persistent effort to ruin it. While Sarah has a chance to save her marriage, she nevertheless succumbs to Pascal in

the final scene. However, at the end of this sequence, she not only gives in to Pascal's sexual urge, but also happily commits adultery in her own matrimonial bed. While in the first instance of her adultery with Pascal they visited the lodge, this sequence shows a deeper erosion of her morals by locating the sinful act in her own marriage bed. Contrasted with her earlier claims that she will never revert to their licentious sexual indulgences, this shameless show of adultery ridicules her, posing her claims to salvation as sham.

There are however, other direct forms of interactive microaggressions committed in this film. Among other things, Sue (2010) points out that touching someone without their approval constitutes an act of microaggression against their body. In this light, Pascal's deliberate albeit unwelcome touch on Sarah's palm can be interpreted as a form of microaggressive acts committed against Sarah. When he visits her home after Isaya has left for a pastoral mission, he touches her in a sensual way despite her declaration that she does not want him. As they stand at the door in a duel of will, he insists on touching Sarah, who responds with an awkward absorbed stare, at once unable to repel the sensations he gives her, while indecisively submitting to his bodily conquest.

This significant act occurs as Pascal is leaving Isaya's house where he has gone to push Sarah into reviving their sexual affair, he deliberately puts his palm on hers in an attempt to seduce her. The brief moment when this touch persists, Sarah is shown as a sexually - therefore morally - weak character whose indecision and delay to remove Pascal's palm from hers (Picture 3.7 and Picture 3.8 below) signals her silent submission to Pascal's will. In this sequence, Pascal's assumed ownership of Sarah's body and feelings arrogates social power to the male character while denying the female character any decisive right to think and act in matters concerning her own sexuality. Whereas the film does not show how Sarah and Pascal initially started their sexual affair, thus denying the audience an opportunity to discern who actually started it; these final encounters nevertheless hint of Pascal's overbearing force over Sarah even at the first point of contact. In the silent moment of Pascal's touch, Sarah only stares down; gradually raising her eyes to look away from him in a shameful sign of utter submission as Pascal's hand suggestively cuddles her own. In this scene, Sarah is made to persevere Pascal's sexual molestation with meek compliance, just like Linda who submits to

Moses and O'prah when she submits to Alfred. This homogenous depiction of sexually weak female characters dispossess of their bodies by gullible males designates a universal microaggressive stance prevalent across all Kanumba's films.



Picture 3.7 Sarah simply stares away as Pascal's palm massage hers holding the door knob.



Picture 3.8 She is slowly tilting towards him, her sexual anticipation building on her face as her resolve to chase him out of the room dissipates. After this encounter, she gives in to his sexual demands and helplessly grants him sex.

3.4 Circumstantial Degradations as Gender Microaggressions

Among other things, Sue (2010) identified spatial segregation as a potential form of gender microaggression. Kanumba's films feature many instances in which male characters expose female characters to patronising situations where the objectified character is compelled to endure circumstances that are clearly against their will. In Offside, there is deliberate effort to surround female characters with overwhelming number of male characters in a way that subdues the feminine presence while elevating masculine presence. In the opening scene for instance, there are many friends who come to console the family of the late Mr. Nira's family, but males form a noticeable majority in the congregation. None of those who remain to console the family is a woman. This scene also nurtures the imagery of isolated woman especially in the actual burial sermon where there are only three women compared to a multitude of men who have attended the funeral. Similarly, after this sequence, the flashback scene isolates Alice as the only woman in the family setting, overwhelmed by the men in her life. Even when her husband was alive, her life drifted between her elderly husband and his two grown sons. While the men are engaged in socially productive affairs, her life is clouded in perversity accentuated through her sexual innuendos and entanglement in a love triangle anchored on the polar ends by father and son. This anchoring alone illustrates

the masculine attempt to bereave her of all sympathy from the viewer, as she is isolated as the 'Other' who does 'unusual' things. By engaging in sex with her hubby Nira and Stewart his son, Alice is disposed of her social dignity and passes to a degraded position paving way for Alvin and Stewart to eventually label her a concubine, slut, bitch, witch, snitch and an outsider. Correspondingly, the female receptionist at Nira's office casts a figure of solitude in an office space where she is surrounded by men. At no particular point are there female characters in her vicinity.

An identical reference to the motif of hierarchical social existence, this woman who survives outside the domestic space has no female company and is overwhelmingly occluded on the social front simply by her forlorn placement. Offside, through Alice, the leading female character, also engulfs the female character in a male infested environment even in her domestic spaces just like O'prah. In a trait so analogous to O'prah's, the woman in the domestic space just engages in intemperate sex with the male partners. But whereas in O'prah O'prah fornicates with her husband's friend who infects her with a deadly disease, and because of whose death she is arrested in the last scene and condemned to a life in jail; in Offside the director takes this trend further by letting Alice fornicate with her father and brother. This taboo-breaking action demeans her as a person. Even though in this case she is the one who kills her male sexual partner, in the end she is still arrested besides suffering the indignity of discovering that she has fulfilled an inverted Oedipal curve by sleeping with her biological father as a wife, and her half-brother (in the previous context her son). Sarah in The Village Pastor fornicates with her husband's foes who have planned to crush his pastoral ambition by destroying his church and family. This fornication motif which crosscuts the film's narratives besides symbolising sexual freedom, also *frivolises* the women's sexual discipline conjuring a space for ridicule. Both sexual ridicule and spatial forbearance as inalienable attributes of female characters expose them to degrading circumstances in which they cannot exercise social liberties due to male character's ideological constriction.

Another form of circumstantial degradation against women in this film is the depiction of female characters horded around one man, unmindful of their individual dignities as they stroll in his material providence. In Stewart's church confession after the death of their mother, the director fades to this flashback in the bar where Stewart is entertaining

three ladies in a pub, and they mill around him: subdued, subservient beings freed by a lone man from their collective melancholies. Towards the end of this scene, Stewart hints that they are headed for an orgy through his declaration: “Ah twende mapumziko tena. Kukamuana. Tunaenda kutoleana mayonnaise. (Let us go to rest again. To suck each other. We are going to ooze each other’s mayonnaise)”. To this, the ladies laugh with eagerness and meek compliance. All this time, he is symbolically raising his hand to indicate a bodily, sexual engagement to which the ladies laugh hysterically. Such a tableau depicts female characters as morally submissive in their decadent dispositions to appease men as the idea of an orgy seems to create a lot of excitement among the ladies. Yet the act itself potentially degrades the female characters by branding them as prostitutes or otherwise morally lacking.

This stereotyping cast a crosscutting image of female characters sexually available to male characters. Such a perception is reinforced in the scene located in the bar where after his mother walks out Stewart approaches a lone lady seated in the bar. In a motif that acmes feminine debauchery, she quickly agrees to go for a ‘pleasurable’ outing with him. Deliberate use of language that signifies ease of availability for sex, and the actual action of accepting an invitation for sexual engagement contextually weaken her resolve to keep off men. In this particular case, the female character has come to the bar because she has quarreled with her boyfriend, but she is made to submit to another man - a total stranger - to help her regain her happiness. This can be construed to illustrate her incapacity as a woman to independently seek and find contentment within herself without man. To place her in a circumstance where she suffers woes and relief in the hands of men inimically degrades her essence as a woman. Her circumstances do not only ridicule her as a person, they also highlight her weakness and deficiency to live without a man.

Further, Offside in its exploration of desires also creates circumstantial ambivalence ripe with moral degradation. This is especially espied through the character of Stewart when he goes to look for Flora, his mother, in a prostitute’s den. The woman who responds to his presence tells him to the face that if he wants to have sex with her (Flora), then he should wait because she is already busy having sex with another man. In this moment of intense emotions after exposing his own mother’s shameful life – the film

deprives Flora of all motherly dignity due to her from her son, transposing her heinous engagements in a harsh, sorrowful and shameful encounter with her own son. Presented as both incapable of receiving love as well as giving love, Flora is depicted as a character who has been wrecked and shattered by life. She is poised as a tough woman, a survivor thrown into life's shameful situations by her determination to live a life independent from her husband. Her portrayal can also be interpreted as the film's way of ridiculing women's pursuit of independence through incursion into public spaces where they can enjoy substantial liberation from men. While Flora might have run away from her ruthless husband, she still survives on token gifts earned through her prostitution with other men. She is no different from O'prah, Sarah and Rose, whose escape from their men ended in the hands of men: enslaved by new circumstances, reliant on men's mercy for survival.

In encapsulating annulled freedom within female characters, this film further reinforces negative aspects of the female character. Revelation about Flora's prostitution, dread for her children and the past with her former husband, her addiction to beer; her poor, dilapidated living conditions, and finally a demeaning exposure through the shameful confrontation with her son, can be construed to symbolise the end of her worth as a mother, as a woman, as a human being. Such a motif is reinforced in the montage within the same sequence where Stewart thinks back to the day he went looking for her in the police cells, bailed her out and took her to a high end bar so he can buy her drinks as he persuades her to come back home. Even then, Flora's open hostility towards her son constitutes an incidental assault against her own worth as a person (by demeaning her humaneness) and against her son (whose yearn for his mother's love is rewarded with traumatic and dehumanizing rebuff). She not only refuses to talk to her son, but also refuses the beer he has bought for her – and finally walks out on him. After narrating these shameful depictions, the film reveals her despicable death and subsequent undignified burial. This is the film's way of saying that Flora as a character only lived long enough to show how shameful and incomplete a woman's life is without man. Her circumstances only served to highlight her weakness and deficiency as a woman – an expose rich in microaggressions.

Additionally, Offside narrates the anguish of the forsaken male character through Stewart who in the church sequence signifies a man at the thrall of emerging a new

from himself, but whose sadness has refused to die. On one hand, he feels unloved by his father, and even when he seeks his mother's love and attention, he is shamefully chased away. His persistence leads him to further alienation in that the more he desires the love of his mother, the more he suffers anguish and forlornness. In this narrative twist, Stewart casts the image of a man exploited by his circumstances. The film places him in a degrading situation in which he emerges crestfallen, doleful and destroyed as a person. Such a circumstance, in nod to Sue's microaggressive stance, constitutes an act of humiliation and ruin as a child sexposed to parental hatred in a tussle he did not instigate.

But while Stewart's love for his mother symbolises a hybrid form of flexible masculinity, Alvin, his elder brother reinforces radical masculinity which denounces women irrespective of any intervening affiliation. After their mother's death, Alvin tells Stewart not to mourn, even suggesting that they go out and enjoy drinks with friends. This defaces any sympathy due to their late mother by pushing her off their memories as if she is not worthy to be mourned. Contrasted with the initial scene where they are mourning their father's death, there is clear discrepancy in the social positioning of the two parents, with the narrative favoring the male character as superior to the female character. To highlight Flora's significance, her death coincides with Nira's marriage to Alice. Nira therefore does not 'feel' Flora's death given that Flora's death gives way to his return with a new, younger, wife, this montage stylistics positioning the two incidences spatially adjacent downplays Flora's death by immediate substitution with a younger, more beautiful and youthful wife. He starts afresh as Flora decays unmourned.

Through the personality of Alice, the film entices the viewer to perceive the uselessness of the female character outside the home. This film, unlike O'prah, emphasises the female character as perpetually undesirable whether at home or outside. As seen in the bar scene where Alice has trailed Stewart and Alvin, she lustfully succumbs Stewart's kissing, the camera severally crosscutting to her wanton smiles amid his endless tickles. Through Alvin, peeping from the partially opened door, the scene persuades the viewer to perceive the shamelessness of women's foray into moral decay in the public spaces – just as it has been witnessed in the domestic spaces. This is accentuated through

montage and positioning of Alice's immorality in the public space – just hours after her husband's burial. Comparing this scene to the previous ones where Alice is enjoying intimacy with Stewart's father, it is evident that the film persuades the viewer to hate, even detest female characters who in this narrative are dismissed as heartless and shameless harlots. This collocation of wayward romance (Picture 3.9 and Picture 3.10) annuls Alice's social verity as it emboldens the symbolic construction of her identity as a relentless prostitute, or to Stewart, 'bitch' who has undergone a full-cycle degradation.



Picture 3.9 Stewart and Alice kissing furiously in the bar where she has followed him.



Picture 3.10 Alice sensually caresses Nira in front of his two grown children as he introduces her as their step-mother.

A higher level of circumstantially degrading thematic symmetry between Offside and O'prah is evident in the restlessness with which female characters pursue illicit sex. In the former, Alice is repeatedly portrayed wearing very short dresses, her thighs exposed. In especially the scene where she has come home late in the evening from a dinner with her husband Mr. Nira, the narrative heightens her immorality by retaining her at the sofa as her husband went upstairs to their bedroom, and quickly dozes off. At the start of the scene, Alice remains downstairs at the sitting room as her husband goes upstairs to sleep. Seated on the *sofa set*, she is wearing a very short dress which she has pulled up past her thighs, waiting for Stewart. When Stewart enters the scene. In this moment, she not only lies in a sensually arousing pose, but her costumes decrees that her thighs remain abundantly exposed, as she leans invitingly and provocatively pulling back her otherwise skimpy dress as she waits for Stewart who races to her and smothers her thighs with intimate caresses and kisses. His prolonged moment heightens the narrative tension as he advances to Alice's inner thighs, easing himself up as if in anticipation for a very sensual penetration. The process of degradation is symbolically

inducted from the moment Stewart enters the scene and she hastily guides him between her thighs where he starts kissing her moving all the way to her lips before they are disrupted by Nira who comes downstairs looking for her. Even though Nira never gets to see his son who hastily flees the scene, Alvin does, and he casts him a knowing look which inscribes an immediate sense of realisation in his mind that the woman she once defended is actually a shameless harlot.

To actualize this shameful identity, Alice joins her husband to the bedroom and waits only long enough for the drunk Nira to fall asleep before tiptoeing to Stewart's bedroom where she wakes him up in the middle of the night for wild, hungry sex. By having her sneak repeatedly to seek Stewart for sex and eventually tiptoeing to his room in the middle of the night. The ferocity with which she partakes of Stewart's kiss (Picture 3.11) hints of her overwhelming bodily desire for sex. The urgency in her voice, and the way she hungrily kisses Stewart is symbolic of an addict deprived of her addictive substance. Her unrestrained urges, so freely conjoined with her impatient appetite for wild sex mimic O'prah's the day she took Alfred to her bed and clung to him howling with animalistic desire as she impatiently guided him to penetrate her, her fleshly ache irrefutably overwhelming. The film also highlights Alice's unbearable sexual urge through the urgent desperation imbued upon her voice as she wakes Stewart up:

“(Shaking Stewart) *Amka. Nimeshindwa kabisa kulala, nahitaji penzi lako.* (Wake up. I am unable to sleep, I just want to have sex with you)”.



Picture 3.11 Alice clinging to Stewart as she ravenously urges him to make love to her.

In this shot, Alice casts an image of a woman who is not only addicted to evil, but who indeed seeks it actively and enjoys it too. In this scene, the camera keeps shifting focus from Stewart's room where Alice is moaning with pleasure, to her restless husband sleeping alone in their matrimonial bed. Through this comparison, the camera is persuading the viewer through montage shift to comprehend the deeper implications of the sequence by conceptualising Alice as a woman who actually does not 'prefer' sex with her husband, but seeks it from her 'son' cum brother. This metaphor is analogous to that occasioned in O'prah where O'prah's desire and urgency for sexual intercourse with Alfred is so fierce, and vividly encompassed in the camera narration to enable the viewer witness her near-hysterical sexual infatuation.

This is also analogous to the narrative plane in Moses where female characters are not only relegated to the role of disparaged predators, but are also heavily denigrated due to their sexual prowess. In its narrative kernel, Moses articulates masculinity as the rightful heir to social supremacy. Intellectual ascendancy, it seems, overrides all other forms of social power. Through the character of Genevieve, this film compares the intelligence competence of male and female characters in a way that favours intellectual supremacy in male characters while ridiculing female characters. Though from her entry Genevieve is poised as a symbol of the film's attempt to placate the woman character and rescue her from the surging infirmities so far unveiled by the male characters, use of dialogue and shot perspective still renders her task of self-pacification an arduous one. To reach the object of her desire – so conveniently placed at the foreground of the shot, she has to slink with defiance in front of the seeking camera which captures her uncertainty, her planning, and her varying emotions as she approaches Moses – busy reading his book. This montage stylistic can be viewed as the film's attempt to create through Genevieve a female character equal in intelligence and knowledge to Moses, the knowledgeable male personification of intellectual superiority. Moses affirms this through his approval of Genevieve's intelligence who is presented as a well-learned woman. But this approval is short lived as she is easily outwitted by Moses:

“Unajua nimefurahi sana kujua kwamba wewe unasoma vitabu. Umenifurahisha sana. Je umewahi soma hivi vitabu vya falsafa kama...
(You know I am very happy to know that you read books. You have made me very happy. So, have you ever read any philosophy books like...).”

The revelation that Genevieve's knowledge is restricted to novels and not philosophy or self-improvement books erodes her intellectual competence in relation to Moses' vast knowledge arc. In this gesture of relative intellectual equipoise, the woman is still deposed from attaining a status commensurate to that of man by confining her readings to novels and entertainment books - as Genevieve confesses. In this duel, her hitherto brittle equanimity disintegrates in the face of mental tussle with the highly intelligent male. Bemused by the male's scope of knowledge, the female character shifts to a more social topic, rapidly cutting from the intelligence debate to a discussion about relationships, and specifically about whether Moses is married. This stumbling from intellectual topic to social discussion ideally replenishes the film's ideological stance that women are rationally inferior to men. Genevieve confesses her interest in starting a relationship with Moses through her assertion that it is in her interest to do so.

But even in the social sphere, the female character is again overruled by the male character. When Genevieve drifts to the social issue of relationships, Moses calls the discussion off and orders a drink for her. It is imperative at this point to posit the question: in what sense can these two situations be termed as constituting circumstantial microaggression? First, the cinematic semiologies imbued in Genevieve's approach to Moses is typically self-demeaning. In this scene, Moses is placed at the left foreground as a prominent figure, and Genevieve has to walk from background right - the point furthest from Moses - with the camera trailing her nervous steps as she walks down the long staircase to join him. Meanwhile Moses is busy reading his book and enjoying his drink. To make the woman approach the man in this context, only to change the intellectual discussion of books so rapidly into a conversation about Moses' social life grants her lesser importance and an easily gullible character. Making her the seducer in this case brands her a morally loose woman, and even granting her will to Moses' patriarchal trappings in a curtly way disassembles her dignity. As evidenced at the end of this scene, she forfeits her declared principle that she prefers to spend the nights at her own house, and submits to Moses's curt declaration that they are going to spend the night at his house. The morning after, she is made to realise that her submission is vain because Moses does not consider their sexual liaison a basis for continued relationship.

Secondly, to make Genevieve look educated only to confer her limited knowledge is the film's attempt to ridicule women who try to match men in any social set-up. This is

based on the observation that Genevieve is not as intelligent as she appears. She easily bends to Moses' will and has sex with him barely an hour after their chance encounter. This symbolises not just her weak moral resolve, but also the easy surrender of her body and will to a man she barely knows. It seems justified that she ends up disappointed the morning after. If Moses has consented to her suggestion to live together, he would have ratified his own moral decadence as well.

Another poignant instance of circumstantial microaggression is epitomised in Moses' sadistic encounter with her beautiful girlfriend who has come to visit him incognito. After the girlfriend explains that she wanted to surprise him, he dismisses her by pointing out that

...the only surprise in this world is birth. We have been born by surprise while we know there is a day we will die and disappear. There is no surprise after birth.

(...jambo pekee la surprise humu duniani ni kuzaliwa. Tumezaliwa kwa surprise ila tunajua kuna siku tutakufa na tupotee. Hakuna surprise yeyote baada ya kuzaliwa).

To aggregate his mockery, he leaves her in the house alone and goes to his sister's house. While on one face it is clear that Moses is trying to ridicule his girlfriend by bashing her romantic expression, it is also apparent that the scene edifies supremacy of a masculine personality not confined to domestic spaces but who dwells in the outside world unbound by the meagre duties of the house. In this domestic setup the woman character, as seen through his girlfriend, is torn between intense anxieties of her existence, unsure of herself as she exists in a space so controlled and constricted by Moses in his masculine travesties. To accentuate the enraging hostilities, the camera uses facial close-ups (Picture 3.12 and Picture 3.13) which highlight Moses' mockery and his girlfriend's jittery composure.



Picture 3.12 Moses stern look as he tells his girlfriend that he abandoned her in order to surprise her.



Picture 3.13 The girlfriend's sad look full of frustration over his arrogance.

This conflict purposely heightens Moses' disengagement from the interactive primacy attached to his girlfriend. After leaving her in his house, and in tune with his narrative splurge into the emblematic gender-problematic signified in his compulsive deterrence of feminine progress, Moses further aggrieves the female character by staying until late night at the bar before coming back home. In this scene the camera shifts between the calm Moses reading as he enjoys his drink at the bar, and the restless girlfriend pacing alone in his house waiting for him. His return late at night is the narrative's way of augmenting his cynical view of women as both useless and irrelevant in the men-controlled social spaces. The enormity of his underlying gender reproaches is appreciable from their dialogue:

Girlfriend: Hivi Moses, wewe unanichukulia vipi? Yaani unajua kabisa mimi nimekuja hapa nyumbani kwako, lakini wewe unaondoka na unarudi mda huu?

(Moses, what do you take me for? You know very well I have come to visit you, and then you leave and come back at this hour?)

Moses: Kwa hivyo kuna sheria mpya nyumbani kwangu?

(So there is a new rule in my house?)

Girlfriend: Simaanishi hivyo, namaanisha wewe umeondoka ukijua kabisa kuna mtu umemuacha hapa nyumbani. Au ulikuwa haujui?

(I do not mean that, I mean you left knowing very well there is someone you have left in your house. Or you did not know that?)

Moses: Wewe vile umekuja hapa umesema unakuja kunisurprise. Na mimi nimeamua kukusurprise tena. Mbona mimi sijashangaa?

(When you came here you told me you had come to surprise me. I have also decided to surprise you too. How come I am not surprised?)

Girlfriend: Surprise gani? Wewe si umesema hakuna surprise hapa duniani? Hiyo surprise yako itakuwa imetokea wapi?

(What surprise? Is it not you who has said that there is no surprise in this world? Where have you got your surprise from?)

Moses: When I was alone, it was me, myself and I. But when you came, the atmosphere is no longer the same. You work so hard to change this terminology 'me' and let it become 'us', something that will never happen.

(Nilipokuwa peke yangu, yote yalihusu mimi, mimi binafsi, na mimi pekee. Ila baada ya wewe kuja, anga kabadilika ghafla. Watia bidii ya ziada kubadilisha neno 'mimi' iwe 'sisi', na hilo halitawahi tokea.)

Girlfriend: Kwa hivyo ina maana kuwa hiyo time nimekuwa na wewe mimi nilikuwa napoteza muda wangu?

(So does it mean all along, for all the period I have been with you I was wasting my time?)

Moses: No time to waste, when we don't control it. Sisi siku zote tuko nyuma ya muda, na saa zingine hasa nyinyi wanawake mnakuwa nyuma ya muda zaidi.

(Hakuna muda wa kupoteza, wakati hauna uwezo wa kuudhibiti. We are all behind time, and other times, especially you women, you are very far behind time.)

Girlfriend: Asante sana Moses. Nashukuru nimekufahamu jinsi ulivyo. Ukinihitaji utanifuata nyumbani. Byee.

(Thank you Moses. I appreciate knowing the real you. If you need me, follow me to my house. Byee.)

Moses: Women feel so powerful when you say babe I am sorry. Lakini sio kwangu Moses (clicks.)

(Wanawake hujihisi wenye nguvu kweli wakati ukiwaambia, mpenzi nisamehe. Not me Moses.)

Through this dialogue, Moses devalues womanhood by exposing the female character to humiliating circumstances that demean her. The director makes the female character wait at the door after her exit, waiting for Moses to follow her so she can at least reclaim her worthy. But Moses, on his part maintains a non-apologetic stance by refusing to go after her, or even peep to see her off, thus locating himself (and hence men) in a social realm above women whose worthy is articulated through their attachment to men. His girlfriend's dash into the dark night - alone - is symbolic of the social abandonment of female characters so rampant in Moses narrative. The humiliation suffered by Moses' girlfriend in this scene degrades her in two ways. First, her romantic idea to surprise her boyfriend ends in devastating ridicule. Secondly, she is portrayed as needy and unappreciated as Moses does not bother to see her off, or accommodate her at least for the remainder of the night. He arrogantly remains inside the house as she darts out into the darkness alone – reiterating that he does not care – her final appeal carried in her words that “*Ukinihitaji utanifuata nyumbani*. (If you need me, follow me to my house)”, still ringing in the scene.

Additionally, this film also narrates how men ridicule women emancipation in various spheres of their existence. From corporate incompetence – where female leadership is ridiculed as inefficient; to relationships – where the girlfriend whose surprise visit to her boyfriend is ridiculed; to indecisiveness – depicted through the character of Rose, a mature woman who must seek permission from her elder brother in order to get married, and Genevieve – a learned woman who is so naive she can't say no when

Moses declares they are going to spend the night together in his house. Patriarchal conceptions are seen to breach even family ties, humiliating women characters through infantilisation of their abilities and actions. For instance, when Moses visits his younger sister, he reprimands her in a manner that not only nullifies her individual liberties but also ridicules her inability to make independent decisions even in issues regarding her life. This degradation is exacerbated through their dialogue, occurring after Rose informs Moses that she wants to get married. To comprehend the microaggressive dimension of this encounter, let's evaluate this dialogue below which occurs at her house when she calls Moses to inform him that she wants to get married:

Moses: Hivi, Rose, haya maneno unayoniambia una uhakika kabisa na haya mambo na umeyachunguza au unakurupuka tu unaanza kuniambia kitu kama hiyo? We unataka kuolewa, we umetafakari hili jambo kwa kina kabisa?

(So Rose, have you wisely considered these things you are telling me or you just hurriedly decided to tell me such things? You say you want to get married, have you really considered this matter?)

Rose: Kaka, kwa kweli ninachooona sasa hivi hapa ni... ninataka nianzishe familia yangu. Niwe na mume wangu, nizae watoto, nilee familia yangu.

(Brother, honestly what I really want now is to start my own family. I want to have my own husband, give birth to my own children, bring them up and build my own family)

Moses: Hebu jisikilize mwenyewe unavyoongea (teases her)... wewe unajua misingi ya ndoa wewe? Au unakurupuka tu na kuniita hapa kuniambia mambo ya kijinga?

(Listen to yourself; the way you talk... do you know the foundations of marriage? Or you are just rambling and telling me stupid things?)

Rose: Kaka, mimi naomba uniruhusu tu niolewe.

(My brother, please allow me to get married)

Moses: Eeh, kwa sababu serikali ya mtu ni kichwa chake yeye mwenyewe. Nambie nani anataka kukuo?

(Eeh, because one's own government is his own head. Tell me, who wants to marry you?)

Rose: Asante sana kaka, nilikuwa nikilisubiria hilo. Usijali, mtu mwenyewe nitakuletea siku moja umuone, usijali.

(Thank you brother, I was waiting for that question. Do not worry, I will bring him to you so you can see him, do not worry)

Moses: You see, rubbish, takataka...

(Waona sasa, takataka)

Rose: Kaka, samahani sana kama nitakuwa nimekuudhi, lakini ni lazima mimi niolewe, full stop.

(Brother, I am sorry if I hurt you, but I must get married.)

Moses: Kwa sababu akili yako ya kufikiria hapo ndipo imefikia mwisho. Hapo ndipo umemaliza mambo. Wakati wote mi najua nakupa falsafa za kukujenga wewe uwe msichana imara, kumbe pumbavu kabisa wewe... rubbish, mwanamke wewe. Washenzi wakubwa tu.

(Because that is where your thinking ability ends. You have now exhausted everything. All this time I believed I am giving you positive philosophies to make you a good lady, but you are just stupid... takataka, just a woman. Big idiots).

At the end of this dialogue, Rose is devastated – Moses' third woman in a row: first Judith, the female chairman of the board, then the girlfriend in his house. In this context, Moses – an epitome of masculine intelligence and knowledge, heavily cites from philosophical writings, enlightening female characters on every aspect of their lives. In his presence, the camera depicts Rose as shy and unsure, a placement which prohibits social emancipation through effacement of female freedoms on personal decisions and individual ability to exercise free-will. Placing Rose in a situation where she must seek his brother's approval when she wants to get married undermines her as a person, and collectively all women. Moses' final comment in this dialogue is that she is stupid, and a woman – who, within the collectivity of his patriarchal mindset, are all stupid.

Efforts by female characters to usurp the stiff social framework in these films is represented as a psychedelic duel in which they invoke a psychic tussle with their resisting egos. Microaggression in this context takes a redemptive aura as, even though ostensibly profane, it redeems the female character by apportioning her sufficient courage to face her adversary in an equal, if not excessive clash. Nevertheless, films like Moses which attempt to mitigate male microaggression within the filmic discourse use their narrative spline to edify a society in which men are – on the aggregate – aggressive against female characters, male characters like Lucky and his friend who try to entice Moses to recant his initial animosity against Judith, are proved futile as even in those temporary moments of hope for non-abrasive gender cohesion, the cinematic montage effectively interjects this possibility of equitable gender frameworks by bringing to the viewer's attention the ceaseless bawls so deeply ingrained in the female characters that they cannot reform to a point that permits peaceful social coexistence with male characters. As typified through Rose, women characters have endless affinity for conflicts with their men, whether within or without the marriage setup.

Moreover, Moses, just like O'prah, perorates the decadent sense of life that women hold so dear, masquerading within the narrative as ignorant, belligerent performers presented to a full and condemning glare of men. Such attempts, therefore, highlighted in the typical moments where men meet to 'sharpen' each other, represent delusive straits that persuade the viewer that substantial attempt is being made to bridge the microaggressive social mesa. In this sense, Rose's marriage woes are seen to reinforce her ignorance. The notion that she is a quarrelsome woman is emphasised in the narrative as she hops from one man to the other in a series of delusive courtships. While it is Rose who summons her brother to their house to mediate her quarrel with her husband, Henry emerges the main beneficiary when he is taken to the bar by Moses to be introduced to the dynamics of marriage 'democracy'. A facsimile of the corporate space where Judith's fate is decided and sealed by Moses and his boss - a fellow man - , Rose's fate is also decided in the bar, between mugs of beer, by the two men who matter most to him. None of them acknowledges the validity of her request that Henry should be coming home early from work. Instead, when both men are deciding her fate, she is left out as the inconsequential participant. Her fate is sealed in a pub, away from her, in a symbolic stance that sustains the stereotypical nuance that women's voices are irrelevant, even in matters as dear to them as marriage.

And the outcome is not surprising –her brother admonishes any consultative approach which could give her voice to express herself within her own marriage. Through the allegory of a desert wanderer and a camel, Moses reiterates that a woman's pursuit for self-expression is not a step towards social equality, but is indeed the initial strategy to oust man from his culturally-awarded space as the head of the family. Leadership and power must flow from man to the woman – full stop: this is the treatment Moses prescribes to his sister's husband. About democracy in the family space, he maintains that the male perspective in the African sense is that the woman should not be allowed to have a voice as this amounts to insubordination of the man. Moses even cites the bible to support this stance:

Binadamu wa kwanza kuumbwa alikuwa mwanamume, Adamu... Aliyefuata ni mwanamke, tena yeye hakuumbwa kama vile mwanamume alivyoumbwa – katolewa ubafuni mwa mwanamume... sasa hii mambo yenu ya kipumbavu haki sawa yanatoka wapi? Amka wewe, ah!

(The first human being to be created was a man, Adam... Then woman followed, and furthermore she was not created like man – but was formed from the man's rib... so where are your stupid ideas of equality coming from? Wake up!)

Henry's argument that men and women are the same under the law, grants him flexible masculinity, just like Lucky. However, through Moses' assertion that the issue at hand has nothing to do with justice, but reality, nullifies this attempt by conclusively substituting with radical masculinity that disregard women in all possible social extents. Moses cautions Henry that if he ever does anything contrary, then it would be clear proof that he is infested by brain parasites.

Another key motif prevalent in Moses is corporate alienation and secrecy surrounding men's participation and control of corporate affairs as highlighted through Linda. Moses' report, taken to his boss by Linda, is enclosed in a sealed envelope to exclude her from knowing the contents of the package she is delivering. Moreover, when the boss summons Judith, the contents of Moses' report are not divulged to her – excluding her from participating in the decision-making process. Instead, the boss decrees a compulsory leave for her to pave way for Moses to implement the recommendations of his report. In this scene, Judith is depicted as an arrogant woman when she protests the leave conditions tabled by her boss. Her passion for the company's excellence is misjudged as signs of her inefficiency in running of the company. In lieu of outright termination from her job, the boss dismisses her thus:

Judith nataka upumzike, nataka uchukue likizo uende upumzike. Na kama ukikaidi Judith, nitakupa likizo bila malipo.

(Judith I want you to rest, I want you to take leave and go rest. And if you protest, I will grant you compulsory, unpaid leave.)

In this encounter – her last appearance in the corporate world – she is given extreme options none of which is favourable to her. This dismissal is significant in highlighting how her predicament in the corporate space is secretively sealed in an all-male leadership forum to which she is not welcome. Her compulsory leave transmutes to dismissal when Moses is endorsed to take over her position.

Another female character who suffers circumstantial degradation in this movie is Jane. To curtail feminine social aspirations, this film also exposes Jane to circumstances which may be regarded microaggressive. At Rose's house, the film narrative creates a situation in which Jane's hope for marriage to Moses is deposed through Moses' ridiculous declaration of his universal hatred for women. He unequivocally explains to Rose that in his mind there is no plan whatsoever to marry, and Jane's somatic reactions construed through interjecting close-ups depict her shock and despair as she endures Moses' tirade of misogynistic remarks, until she excuses herself and walks out leaving the two siblings to continue their agitated argument: broken hearted. From this encounter, it is evident that while she has been considering Moses as a potential husband, she is deeply disappointed by his confession that he has no plans to marry anyone, any time.

Joyce, too, faces a similar disposition. When Lucky invites Moses to a meal at his house, Moses rudely rejects Joyce, who has been invited as a potential match for him. After formal introductions, when she asks Moses about his marriage status, he retorts that he prefers not to talk about his personal issues with strangers. In the context of the film narrative at this point, this remark demeans Joyce by exposing her to Moses' hostility, leaving her openly embarrassed from his rejection of her obvious advances. It is also a form of rebuke towards her in a moment when she is most vulnerable. Moses uses social rebuff to demean her, creating for her a restless situation in which she is declared the 'other'. Yet, still, this same scene can be interpreted differently. Moses' mannerism - the egotistical way in which he eats his meal clearly discouraging formal conversation with his hosts and Joyce - not only belittle Joyce as a potential lover, but also disparages his hosts (Lucky and his wife Esther) whose hospitality and kindness in looking for a woman to socialise with Moses are clearly unappreciated. His denial of Joyce is therefore, by extension, a denial of the hospitality accorded to him by Lucky and Esther and an act of self-humiliation for him. However, the narrative seems not to favour this interpretation as it creates through Joyce a socially ineptitude woman. Moses is thus spared from further humiliation in the film as he is depicted as a victim of child abuse. Joyce is however made to endure repeated disgrace up to the end of the film – emerging accepted, but unloved. Throughout her narrative life, she endures Moses' rudeness hoping to win his love, but only wind his tolerance.

Circumstantial microaggressions are also poised as hindrances to women's social progress and as instruments to annul women's efforts to please men. When Joyce visits Moses to propose to him, he denounces her intentions by explaining that his faith in women is unpredictable, because women themselves are unpredictable. This declaration exposes Moses' pessimistic view of Joyce as a woman, ridiculing her intentions long before she even has a chance to prove herself a good woman. His categorical rejection is intended to stop her advances through circumstantial ridicule. But Joyce, not discouraged, tries another tactic. As a symbol of her love for Moses, she brings him flowers in her first visit to his office. Just like in their dinner encounter, Moses ridicules her vehemently. He arrogantly dismisses her romantic attempt as an act of malice and stupidity. His demeaning insolence is evident in the way he counters her humble actions with sneering reprimands. The dialogue below, which occurs in Moses' office, is helpful in exposing the nature and extent of ridicule that Joyce is made to endure:

Joyce: Unafanya nini kama uko busy hivyo? I need some attention.

(You look very busy, what are you doing? Nahitaji muda wako.)

Moses: Ok

Joyce: (Giving flowers) This is what I've brought you. Fresh from the garden. You like them?

(Hii ndio nimekuletea. Mpya kabisa kutoka kwenye bustani. Unayapenda?)

Moses: You cut the flowers?

(Uliyakata maua?)

Joyce: Yy..yes

(Ndio)

Moses: Why?

(Mbona?)

Joyce: Honey, I was trying to be romantic. Flowers mean you care.

(Mpenzi, nilikusudia kukuonyesha mapenzi. Maua yamaanisha unajali)

Moses: So you cut the flowers in order to be romantic?

(Hivyo ulikata maua ili upendeze?)

Joyce: Yeah. Au kuna ubaya kumuonyesha mtu umpendaye upendo?

(Ndio. Or is it wrong to show love to someone you love?)

Moses: Sasa hiki kitendo cha wewe kukata maua kwa misingi ya kuwa romantic, hii ni uuaji, ni ukatili... ni unyama.

(This act of cutting flowers in order to be romantic, it is murder, cruelty... beastly.)

Joyce: Kwa hiyo sasa Moses, maua kazi yake ni nini... what are flowers for?

(So Moses, what are flowers for?)

Moses: Killing is killing, no justification. Flowers have to remain where they are in order to decorate the world and give us fresh air... Joyce, do you know how many people are dying because of lack of pure oxygen, because you want to be romantic? Do you know how many insects are suffering in their quest to fertilise plants... huu ni unyama gani huu?

(Uuaji ni uuaji, hakuna sababu mwafaka. Maua lazima yasalie pale yalipo ili yarembeshe ulimwengu na yatupatie hewa safi... Joyce, kweli wajua ni watu wangapi wanakufa kwa kukosa hewa safi, kwa sababu wewe wataka kuwa wapendeza? Wajua ni wadudu wangapi wanateseka wakiangaika kupandilia mimea... what cruelty is this?)

Joyce: Samahani Moses, mi sikuwa nalitambua hilo.

(I am sorry Moses, I did not consider that.)

Moses: Ignorance of law is no defence against the rule of law. So please, leave my office now, and collect your rubbish out of here.

(Kutozingatia sheria sio kinga kwa udhabiti wa sheria. Hivyo tafadhali, ondoka ofisini mwangu sasa, na uokote takataka zako.)

As this scene ends, Joyce leaves Moses' office a dejected woman whose effort to express love has been subdued through arrogance and analytical internment reproving her symbolic act as malicious murder. This exposure to criticism seeks to reduce Joyce's romantic gesture to an idiotic act, in tandem with Moses' paranoiac belief that women cannot do anything right. He rebuffs her romantic sign as an act of stupidity, murder, and cruelty – of thoughtlessness that is more destructive than useful. The effect of his mean reprimand to Joyce is quite disturbing. Forced to halt midway her romantic journey, she is not only hurt, but also intellectually aggregated, emerges as an idiot.

To accentuate the extent of her suffering, the film narrative shows Joyce later that evening in Moses house where she has gone to apologise. He ridicules her even more, asserting that the very act of apology implies she knowingly committed the offense and should therefore not be forgiven. In these two consecutive instances, Moses uses his knowledge and intelligence to subdue and manipulate the female character who fall prey to his philosophical attritions. Joyce in this scene is portrayed begging for forgiveness – yet she has not committed any mistake. A subdued woman, she relegates herself to humiliation, subjugation and docile obedience to Moses' ruthless commands: leave, come, and sit – a meek imperilled woman in distress. Correspondingly, Rose is

bashed by her brother Moses when she visits with Henry, her fiancée. Moses labels her initiative to seek a marriage partner as a contradiction of African cultural norms. Rose is made to endure a situation that socially incriminates her, branding her as loose, uncultured and therefore ill-mannered woman. Her confession that she is the one who approached her fiancée irks Moses who informs her that she has transcended the existing patriarchal-centred boundaries which decree that men, not women, should make the initial step in matters of love. At the end of this scene, Rose is seen looking down in shame, as Joyce silently reckons with her conscience about the ensuing condemnation of the social trajectory she herself has already embraced. To bring women together in a situation where both are there to profess their love – and then to trample on their efforts in a way that makes fool of them already mimics various feminist cries, and significantly attrite credibility of female characters within this film. Such circumstances clearly override feminine liberties through circumstantial degradations, depictions that ideally fit in the corpus of microaggressive discourses.

In The Village Pastor, circumstantial antagonisms are between characters of the same gender; male characters ridicule other male characters while female characters scorn other female characters. In the market place, for instance, Chadamu and Chalewa mock Isaya when he confesses that he has never had sex all his life. His closest friends, they out rightly laugh at him despite knowing that he is a Christian. In addition, when he informs his grandfather that he wants to get married to Sarah, he refutes his decision, anchoring his verdict on social class differences between their two families. In this context, Sarah, who is an educated college graduate represents an upper class in her village whereas Isaya, whose only occupation beside herding and guitar talent is preaching in the village shopping centre, represents the village low class. Such stratification, the film posits, is a basis of social incoherence – begetting an atrophied equality framework. Isaya in this case is forced to bear demeaning circumstances by his male friends who are his only closest friends. Just like his grandfather, they ridicule him over his decisions.

Sarah on her part is heavily ridiculed by her mother and threatened with excommunication from the family when she informs her mother that she wanted to get married to Isaya. Her mother – referring to Moses as the guitarist – asserts that he is not

welcome to introduce his progeny into the family lineage. The emotional turmoil occasioned by these two denials is evident in the way the involved characters react: Isaya openly defies his grandfather's admonitions while Sarah weeps sadly. However, despite this initial depiction of their commitment, the film isolates Sarah within marriage as a weak character, granting her weaker personal resolve unable to support her integrity within marriage space. Notwithstanding her determination to be married to Isaya, it turns out that her resolve is superficial, as she is made prone to other men with whom she fornicates shamelessly, wasting her marriage to a man who – the narrative emphasises – is in all aspects a committed husband. In this sense therefore, Sarah's marriage to Isaya is eulogised as a highly traumatic event for both of them. More so to her, it is like (and literally ends in) death.

From the outset, this film poses demeaning images upon their marriage. Even their wedding is ridiculed as a farce by depriving it of any elation or festivity, making it just a plain walk home. The narrative situates this important event in the market place where Sarah arrives bowed down as Isaya is preaching on top of an improvised dais. All her belongings in a blue paper bag, he joins her for their first trip together, to her new home as a melancholy bride: uncelebrated. Their arrival at Isaya's home is even more distressing because his grandfather does not bother to welcome them home, but irks Isaya by reiterating that he is attaching problems to himself. Sarah in this sense arrives as a displaced person to a home where she is hardly welcome. Such a collocation embodies intersectional metaphor in which their new marriage is blemished with social sanctions. To reiterate this narrative premise, the film deterministically propels Sarah to self-destruction through adultery, denying her any recourse to a fulfilling life. Throughout the film, despite her education, Sarah lives in a rural domestic environment where she cannot exploit her professional abilities. In this situation, Sarah fulfils Millett's (2000) argument - after analyses of George Meredith's The Egoist, (1958) which illuminates the constrictive, terminal wretchedness infused to women within marriage:

There is something poignant in the realisation that Clara's marriage is rather like a death. Throughout the novel she is a person in the process of *becoming* but by the last page she has not succeeded in becoming anyone but Mrs. Whitford, which is to say, no one at all (Millett, 2000, p. 139).

Despite her hope for a better life as Isaya's wife, Sarah becomes nobody throughout the course of her narrative life – as incessant fornication deprives her of the joy of marriage. At the end of this film, mortified by her dispiriting life, she commits suicide in the forest with her lover – dying shamefully and painfully. She has lived an empty life, leaving the world uncelebrated. The film appropriates all sympathy to Isaya who is depicted as a victim of Sarah's ruthlessness.

The female characters' weakened spirit has also been exploited through the film narrative to demean female characters. In her new role as Isaya's wife, Sarah is stripped of rational thoughts, and lives a life of hopelessness. In the scene where she is crying because neighbours have mocked her that she only eats vegetables because her husband cannot afford any meat for her ridicules her character as a wife. When Isaya comes home to find her weeping, she tells him that neighbours have told her she will grow thin because he only buys her vegetables. To contrast her impatience and ridicule her personality, the film shows Isaya as a caring husband who on this day has brought home sardine fish so they can supplement their diet. This interaction highly emphasises the woman's weakness, despite her education. Contrasted with her husband, Sarah is seen as a weakling who has no confidence in herself or her husband. Attaching importance to people's comments about her life infant her as petty and immature. The film emphasises these attributes in the subsequent scene where Isaya comes home with a goat so they can eat with his wife. His commitment to provide as a basic ingredient of his personality embodies - by extension – his ability to fulfil his wife's wishes. The depiction of Isaya as a caring husband sits oddly with the assertion that the woman character - with all her education and upper class upbringing – whines over non-essential social issues, thereby making her comparatively weaker intellectually and emotionally. Sarah bears social humiliation as a woman given insatiable material and sexual desire, and no legitimate means for fulfilment. She therefore has to endure ridicule from snooping villagers over her dismal life despite her education and from other men who exploit her sexually.

The Village Pastor also narrates the nebulous nature of women within, especially, the marriage space. When Isaya proposes to Sarah and they face resistance from their guardians, she assures him that she would never leave him. Upon those terms he marries

her despite the harsh criticism from his grandfather. Yet within the first act, she forgets her promises and start fornicating with Pascal without any remorse or self-reprimand. Such a motif is repeated in the third act where she and Pascal go to the city to seek forgiveness from Isaya. For the second time, she promises Isaya that she will never betray him again, will never leave him, and will break all ties with Pascal. Yet at the end of this act, she reverts to her initial affair with Pascal. Like O'prah in O'prah who contracts HIV/AIDS and is incarcerated; and Alice in Offside, whose end is full of emotional turmoil on realising she has been having sex with her father and brother, as she is being led to jail; Sarah is condemned to a painful end: death by suicide in the forest. Her inability to keep promises brands Sarah as a social outcast, living without values. She is chased from her home because of her love to Isaya, yet she does not respect even her decision to get married to him but lives her life in deceit and misery.

By committing adultery, her effort to love is annulled, as is her dignity and social respectability. Despite being a pastor's wife, she openly derides her husband's authority depriving her of any sense of goodness. She emerges – at the end of the narrative – a mean, cruel woman whose ambition in life is dismal despite her education. The narrative deliberately highlights the wretchedness of her heart by posing her as unforgiving, undecided, and innately immoral. In this state, her weak will to do good as well as her inability to reclaim her dignity in the course of her narrative are significant pointers of her feminised weakness. While Isaya's act of inviting Pascal to his house after reconciling with his wife attracts strong contest from Sarah, her resolve is superficial. Whereas Isaya's forgiveness is an act of kindness, to Sarah it is an act of microaggression because it tempts her resolve and effectiveness in reclaiming her dignity as a preacher's wife.

To fortify this fact, the narrative at the end emboldens Pascal to seduce Sarah into sex with him, the consequence of which is self- deprecation, and ultimately, a shameful death relinquishing her of all values through suicide. Her death signifies the woman's irredeemable misery, denying her any chance to amend her ways and live a better life. Just like Flora who dies when she tries to revert to her family, Sarah dies at a moment when her change to be a good wife should have been absolute. To accentuate Sarah's evil meekness, The Village Pastor explores her addiction to sex as an inherent part of

her character. Just like O'prah in O'prah whose pursuit of sexual desire culminates in death of her dreams as a wife, liberties as a citizen and good health as a human being, Sarah's addiction leads her to terminal physical extinction through guilt-fed suicide. Pascal's persistent pursuit of sex with Sarah is the film's way of authenticating sexual objectification. She is well aware that Pascal does not want to marry her or make her life better. Still she gives in to his sexual pleas. His declaration that Isaya cannot satisfy her sexually is merely his way of testing her moral resolve. That she relives his words even when she is with her husband later that evening reinforces the motion that women not only seek sexual and ideological objectification from men, but also demand and validate it.

This, the narrative affirms, is her primary motivation to seek sexual fulfilment from Pascal. However, viewed within the context in which they are spoken, it is clear that Pascal is ridiculing Sarah's intellect as a way of forcing her to give in to his sexual approaches. This is most clear in his reprimand:

Hivi umepewa hekima za nini? Hukai hata kufikiria. Mwanamume ambaye amewahi kufumaniwa lakini bado tu anaendelea kukung'ang'ania kwa hali na mali. Huwezi kuona nina mapenzi ya aina gani mazito kutoka kwako?

(Surely, what have you been given brains for? You do not even look bright. A man who has been caught having sext with you and still persists fighting for you in all ways. You cannot see how much love I have for you?)

Like Moses use of logic to overrule women's rejection, Pascal too appeals to his sense of superior intellect to subjugate the female character. Sarah's protest that she loves her husband and that he loves him too is met with another, final, more subduing logic:

Sarah, nani kakwambia kwamba Isaya anakupenda? Isaya hakupendi. Isaya anakupenda wewe kwa sababu yeye ni kilema... anajua hata akiachana na wewe, hawezi kapata msichana mwingine. Na hata akufumanie vipi Isaya, niamini mimi, hawezi kukuacha... Sarah najua upo na Isaya lakini inatakikana uwe na mtu mwingine wa pembeni ambaye anaweza akakutumizia mahitaji yako. Bila shaka kuna baadhi ya maenoeo ambayao hawezi kukufikisha.

(Sarah, who told you Isaya loves you? Isaya does not love you. He loves you only because he is crippled... he knows even if he divorces you, he can never find another woman. Even if he finds you having sex with me, he can never leave you... Sarah, I know you and Isaya are back together, but you need another man on the side to fulfil you sexually. It is factual that he cannot fulfil you sexually.)

Her fixation with sexual indulgence and absurd submissiveness to Pascal tips her in favour of Pascal's exploitative persuasion. Revelation of how dearly she clings to his ideological rant even when with her husband sufficiently strips her of any sympathy from the viewer, as she is the inhumane lover who caused her husband's crippling, yet she still uses his physical challenge as an excuse to cheat on him some more. While she remains physically with her husband, she secretly submits emotionally and sexually to Pascal - a shameless hypocrite. Her duality constitutes an act of demeaning aggression against her husband as she denies him access to her true emotions as she pursues both men for different selfish ambitions: Isaya validates her socially by assigning her the status of a wife, while Pascal validates her emotionally by fulfilling her sexual desires. At the same time, this narrative imposition disgraces her as a woman, denying her peace by creating circumstances that trouble her emotionally. She is forced to exist in the midst of two men who represent different desirable values for her. She cannot choose one and forego the other: Pascal's ability to satisfy her sexually enslaves her emotionally, while Isaya's role in providing her with social validation remains an indispensable link of her life. In this disposition, Sarah symbolises the restless spaces assigned to women in male-controlled societies. They do not remain happy in their marriage, yet their extramarital affairs do not offer any lasting or credible alternative to this unhappiness.

In especially The Village Pastor, microaggression also targets a particular occupation through stereotypical staging. Isaya's confinement to rural setting where he cycles around the village preaching is a stereotypical mockery of the pastoral work as an occupation for beggars and the poor. Isaya reiterates this point through the readings in his sermon held at the village square where he preaches on the biblical beatitudes. Later on in the city, when he squeezes the empty toothpaste tube while peering around uneasily to see whether anyone has noticed him, this further highlights his financial lack – a continuation of the stereotypical narrative plane. The film's portrayal of Isaya living in scanty situations – both in his rural home and in the city does not redeem his image. His rural house is mud-walled, he cooks outside in an open fireplace; a trend replicated in the city where he cooks with a *jiko* (Pictures 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16).



Picture 3.14 Isaya standing outside his dilapidated rural home.



Picture 3.15 The cooking place at Isaya's rural home.



Picture 3.16 his cooking jiko in the suburban residence in the city.

These images symbolically advance the notion that poverty is an unassailable part of the village pastors' life, whether in the village or in the city. From a microaggressive stance, the film articulates Isaya's inability to be civilised, appropriating retrogressive circumstances as an inalienable part of his destiny. At the same time, it advances degrading situations as prerequisite beacons to highlight Isaya's humbleness, his meekness, and virtuous life as a village pastor. The film leverages on the various humbling experiences to build his character as a man of integrity, a pastor whose heart is at peace without affiliation to material opulence. Circumstantial gender microaggression within professional setting is also evidenced in the form of curtailed career progress and privileged division of labour. Where Isaya is hospitalised after the accident, we see women occupying what Sue (2010, p. 211) referred to as 'lower rungs of the occupational ladder' where they are typecast as nurses or secretaries. Like Jane who is a supermarket sales assistant and Linda the office secretary in *Moses*; and the unnamed secretary in *Offside* and *O'prah*, the unnamed nurse in this hospital exist on the lower levels of her profession. Throughout this film, women remain in non-progressive professional occupations with male bosses hovering above them in a supreme stance. Their circumstances as sexual objects of the male gaze and as low-level employees under supervision of men create socio-spatial ambivalence, whose end is usurpation and degradation.

Circumstantial microaggression is least prevalent in *O'prah*. The luxurious sea escape scene when Alfred and O'prah are leaving for Zanzibar is the most poignant example of circumstantial microaggression, especially when viewed against the backdrop of its preliminary context. The enigmatic solitude on O'prah's face, captured through an interchange of medium long shots and medium close-ups displays her anxious trust and hope of a better life ahead. There is deliberate emphasis on her vulnerability in realising

the finality of her decision to follow Alfred and abandon her husband. Her figure sturdy on the deck of the beautiful vessel with morning sun angled off the sunny blue water and the slow melodious pulsations for a soundtrack, the film narrative puts O'prah and Alfred on a journey that promises a fulfilling life ahead. The narrative at this point suggests that all they have fancied for in their lives is ahead beyond the lulling horizon. Their lives seem destined for rebirth— enriched, repurposed. But at the end of this act, O'prah returns back a dilapidated woman - embroiled in her shame – to a husband who cannot receive her back, the police waiting to arrest her and take her to prison; she, a HIV positive victim. This apposition of hope and ridicule exemplifies O'prah's isolation and domination to circumstantial prejudice. In the larger gender context, it also shows how women have been socially maligned through filmic discourses.

3.5 Erotic Metaphors as Gender Microaggression

Among other forms of masculine microaggressions against female characters, this study established that erotic exposure has been widely deployed to ridicule and make the female characters subservient to the male characters. Eroticism is prevalent across all the four films analysed. At the introduction scene in O'prah, the director hints of the existence of moral dilemma as in social relations. Further, the film starts with a premise of non-uniform patriarchal and matriarchal perception of marriage fulfillment through a flashback scene in which the female character is morally indicted. Set on a couch on the sitting room, Dominic's first wife is caught having sex with his husband's younger brother. Both the setting and the narrative confinement isolate the woman as a shameless person, unheeding of social dictums on matrimonial obligations. In this first scene, the female character is offered as a weakling, easily submitting sexually to men who are otherwise stupefied by her blatant desire to be niggled. Viewed in isolation, this sequence can hardly be considered sufficient depiction of an immoral outlook on women, but as it turns out, O'prah narrates the woes of licentious female passions as a precaution against women's sexual liberation.

Character introduction, for instance, takes a sexual stance as the director clearly isolates sexually stimulating shots of O'prah, the leading female character, to introduce her. The introduction of male characters is however captured in long shots. Men are shown actively engaged in productive outdoor activities. Alfred, is established cycling along a

dusty village road on his way to the dispensary. Dominic on the other hand is introduced driving his luxury car along the same road, on the way to his rural farm. The lead female character, O'prah, is however introduced through a montage of close-ups and medium close-up shots, which accentuate her sexual appeal. Her movements, costume and shot framing all connote her objectified status as a social symbol paraded to reward a predominantly male gaze. She enters the scene provocatively swaying her buttocks in a rear shot framed to emphasise her stocky passing across the shot frame severally before heading back to the car to pick her handbag (Pictures 3.17 and 3.18) in manner that highlights her thighs and hips as seductive tools. In the framing of her third entry in this continuous camera shot (Picture 3.19), it is noteworthy how the director emphasises the sexiness of her legs in a medium close-up shot framed to reward men's voyeurism. In this sequence, passes across the frame three times; two of which are framed from the rear while the third shot shows her front view, highlighting the sexiness of her physique. And even then, the film defines her space as home where she spends most of her narrative life. Milka, the other female character in the film is a house girl. She is introduced cleaning dishes in preparation for cooking. Like O'prah, she is also framed from the rear to emphasise her shapely hips and accentuate her appeal as a sexual object. In these introductory sequences, the role of the gaze as a tool of control seems effectively deployed against the female characters who are constantly paraded for admiration, approval and relish by the generally masculine eye. The combination of these sexual cues in deliberately patronising shots conveys the director's wish to accentuate feminine appeal as a central metaphor in this film narrative.



Picture 3.17 In this shot, the director fortifies his lexical discourse edifying the spectacle of female sexuality.



Picture 3.18 There is deliberate emphasis on O'prah's rear view, an invitation to 'gaze' at her pleasurable endowments.



Picture 3.19 MCU of O’prah’s Legs as she emerges from her car. It is the first sequence in which she is introduced as a character in the movie.

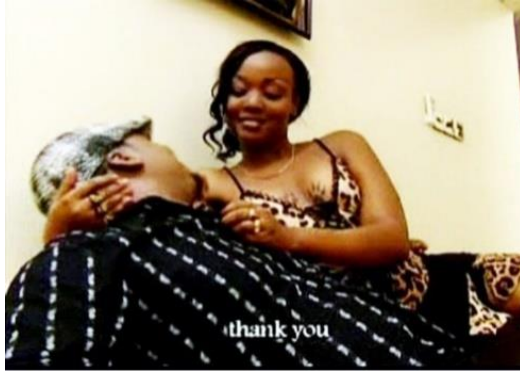
In what sense can this framing be considered a form of erotic microaggression? Is it even possible to ratify if the gaze is masculine? These answers are evident in the preceding sequence, when O’prah’s husband comes home. O’prah’s preparation in anticipation for his return is rich in sexual symbolism. When she arrives home, O’prah tells Milkah not to cook the evening meal as she would like to cook something tasty for her husband. She has already changed her formal clothes for a more explicit evening wear when Dominic enters the house. While her enthusiasm for sex is depicted as overwhelming and wholehearted, her husband is aloof, inveigling her with praises while offering minimal physical participation. The director parades O’prah to her husband as a woman on the peak of sexual mesa. She has cooked a delicious meal and is clad in a seductive dress when her husband returns. The viewer is invited to ‘see’ (gaze) at her sensuous body, ready and at the disposal of male contemplation. Even her movements ratify her erotic reverberations as her sensuous demeanour escalates in full gaze of the otherwise restrained husband (Pictures 3.20, 3.21, 3.22 and 3.23).



Picture 3.20 O’prah coming to meet her husband at the seating room when he comes home from the farm.



Picture 3.21 O’prah admiring her husband. Note the reluctance in her husband’s physical posture.



Picture 3.22 O’prah still admiring her husband whose only responses are scanty words and a mere gaze.



Picture 3.23 Even as O’prah kisses him, Dominic still maintains minimal physical contact with her.

In the preceding scenes, the film is further coded with strong sexual symbols, especially towards the end of the second act, and extending through the third act: nudity, inner apparel, and sexual gestures. In nod to Foucault’s (2012) notion of demeaning gaze, the woman is disempowered sexually as she is made to reveal her sexual desire in a way that demeans her person: she yearns, she begs, she *kinda* grabs it in one hungry maul in the stern gaze of a disinterested man. The preceding sequence comprises of interjecting shots whose montage appraise her ‘uncontrolled’ or ‘uncontrollable’ longing for sex. But despite her overwhelming sexual urge, her husband maintains an aloof attitude implying his controlled feelings in contrast to hers. As his wife goes all over him ferociously kissing and cuddling him, caressing him lustfully in a sequence that packages her sexual tensions to a vivid, unbearable ache, Dominic keeps an indifferent calmness somatically defiant of her explicit sexual display, neither reciprocating her emotionally nor openly refusing her advances. This culminates in sexual frustration as the narrative skips showing any form of sexual activity between the two.

Through the final seduction scene where Dominic has come home early from work to an obviously sexually starved wife, the narrative reiterates that Dominic’s emotional distance from his wife is bred of indifference. Codified to validate women’s sexual weakness, this scene ends as Dominic quickly abandons O’prah on the bed, despite the obvious hint that she desperately want to have sex with him. There is deliberate emphasis on her sexual desperation espied as she pulls her husband back to the bed and guides him to penetrate her. Her third desperate attempt is disrupted when Dominic pushes her to the bed and quickly leaves the room, her flailing legs and pleading eyes

begging for - at least – one moment sexual intimacy. His departure from the bedroom is also cast as a trip to the background of O’prah’s life – symbolically and literally. Symbolically, the camera places O’prah in the foreground as she lies on the bed, begging for sex from her husband while Dominic walks from the foreground to the background of the shot. Literally, she decides to seek sexual fulfilment from Alfred after this moment. O’prah’s sexual desperation is codified in her seductive stance as evidenced in Pictures 3.24, 3.25, 3.26 and 3.27 below.



Picture 3.24 O’prah is slowly undressing her husband in anticipation for sex.



3.25 Even as he receives the disruptive phone call, she nibbles him begging for sex.



Picture 3.26 Throughout the call she is holding him and caressing him, overwhelmed by her unbearable sexual desire.



Picture 3.27 A prolonged pleading session as her husband thrice throws her back to the bed and rushes out leaving her in distress.

Dominic’s sexual disinterest in his wife is accorded two functions in this scene. First, it is the film’s way of frustrating female characters’ sexual liberation. Secondly, it ridicules a woman’s erotic liberation by accentuating her lack of self-control and gullible vulnerabilities. Her sexual greed is immediately given prominence in the preceding scene where she decides to pursue sexual indulgence with Alfred.

At the beginning of the scene, O'prah is seen caressing a hosepipe suggestively (Picture 3.28). Seen as her moral turning point, the film infantilises her sexual initiative by denying her courage to ask Alfred for sex. Instead, she screams and howls saying that she has been bitten by a frog. But when Alfred comes to her rescue, she asks him to take her to the bed. Asked where the frog has bitten her, she points to her thighs and pulls her legs up begging Alfred to penetrate her (Picture 3.31). In a moment of brief indecisiveness, Alfred only stares at her beautiful exposed thighs, lavishing his gaze all the way to her exposed sexual organ (Picture 3.30). In this sequence, the uncontrollable pour of her sexual frustrations is more pronounced as she wrestles him, moaning like a wounded animal. Her gasps, her raw savage grab and the desperate manner in which she engulfs him in her wide open legs (see Picture 3.29, Picture 3.32) demean her right to dignified sex. Her easy abandonment and display of irrational sexual desire to Alfred is sensationally elevated to a point of wantonness in which O'prah loses herself once on the bed, confessing 'she is in pain', while begging Alfred not to leave her in bed. This image can be interpreted to assign urgency to her sexual distress, to which Alfred is the medicine she seeks to get.

To contextualise O'prah's eroticism as a form of gender microaggression, it is helpful to appraise it against the backdrop of Bazin's observation of the erotic depiction of Marilyn Monroe in The Seven Year Itch. In the scene where 'the air from the subway grating blows up her skirt' (Bazin, 2005, p. 172) parallels similar creative tendencies in O'prah, in the scene where O'prah's skirt drifts up her thighs as she opens up her legs begging Alfred to penetrate her. Both overt depictions of sex as a tool for contestation of domination spaces, and the resultant ridicule of explicit feminine sexual expression allude to what Sue Derrick Wing (2010) considers a sexist blast as well as microaggressive stance. To have O'prah engulfed in misery due to sex despite that she is an attractive, married woman connotatively ridicules her erotic distress. Offside's bed scene where Alice's underwear is visible through her sleeping gown as she seduces Alvin to have sex with her is also semantically similar. Such exposition of uncontrolled sexual desire and deliberate emphasis on overt sexuality overshadows other relevant competencies of the female characters.



Picture 3.28 O'prah sensually caressing a horse pipes she waters flowers.



Picture 3.29 Inviting Alfred to make love to her.



Picture 3.30 Alfred looking at her as she directs him towards her bosom.



Picture 3.31 O'prah surrendering her body to Alfred.



Picture 3.32 Dragging him between her legs as she is overwhelmed by her sexual desire.

And just as Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) reflected in intersectionality, O'prah remains fixed and degraded in a sexual roundabout, her sexual skid-marks only crystallised into one huge emotional accident – all the while without clear narrative recourse whether it is her emotional turmoil which causes her degradation, or her husband's emotional abandonment. At the end of this sequence, she emerges from the

bed slowly, alone, realising herself as if for the first time (Picture 3.33), a re-emergence as if from a womb unto a new birth, drifting in what, according to Pollock (2009, p. 46), is “a transformation beyond the blocked *presentness* of an unknown absence-presence”. Her lascivious sexual indulgence, it seems, opens for her new emotional frontiers hitherto unexplored. However, the film also denies her sexual fulfillment at this point by infusing guilty into her immediate context.



Picture 3.33 After this sexual encounter, O’prah is left desolate on the bed, savoring her emerging self. At this point, the inner conflict is yet to start.

Even though liberal feminists might affirm O’prah’s sexual assertion as an act of brevity and a step towards liberation and equality, but, in spite of these ideological sensations, it is certain that this mode of assertion amends a pre-established social prerogative that denounces female erotic expression as primitive. Exposure to ridicule (demeaning gaze) bred of uncertainty, it seems, is a metaphor that derides equal social participation in this narrative. On the first instance, she pejorates her human predicament by denouncing her respectable locus within the social institution of marriage. This dehisces many emotional frictions between feminine and masculine ideals within this film. Emerging forsaken out of this activity to which she aspires desperately, O’prah as a woman is denied both satisfaction and fulfilment as she transfigures between a pleasurable ache and heart ache.

The director casts a gloom spell on her life at the end of her numerous sexual activities, granting her sadness, misery, anguish and emotional lacerations (Pictures 3.34, 3.35). From a matrixial perspective, O’prah can be said to have entered back into herself by pursuing what she thought would be a fulfilling experience. But emerging at the end of her secretive enterprise, she is irked and burrows in self-pity and anguish as the man

she has submitted sexually to contemplates how to disgrace her even more. As it turns out, she not only contracts temporary anguish, but life-long peril as revealed at the end of the film when she discovers she contracted HIV from Alfred. These juxtapositions hint of the multiplicity of suffering which dissipate through the various facets of her life creating an image of inescapable solitude. Giffney, Mulhall, & O'Rourke (2009, p. 8) argue that "this recurring image does not belong to the economy of either/or but, rather, is a movement of the between, of borderspacing and borderlinking" which represents her increasing fusion of oppressions from which she cannot escape either by abstaining from sex or getting sex. This is clearly captured through shot framing. Through similarity of her posture, O'prah hints of the ambiguities and distress appropriated to the female character. In both images; when her husband abandons her at the bed without having sex despite her obviously intense interest (Picture 3.36) and when Alfred walked out of her bedroom after having se with her (Picture 3.37); she casts a symbol of solitude and desperation.



Picture 3.34 and 3.35 O'prah as she suffers in turmoil and emotional anguish after sexual intercourse with Alfred.



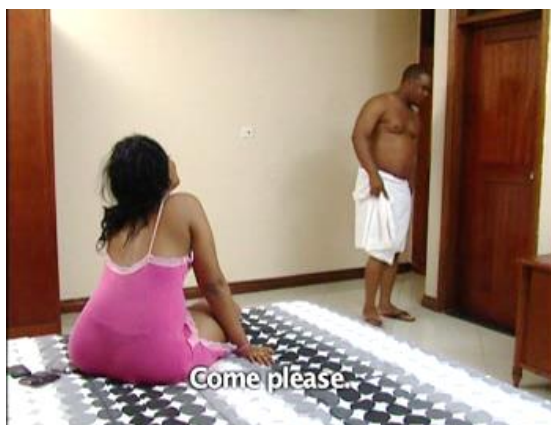
Picture 3.36 O'prah miserably laying on the bed as her husband leaves the room abandoning her begging for sex. In this image she is in immense emotional distress.



Picture 3.37 O'prah cuts a forlorn figure laying on the same bed, in a similar posture, immediately after having sex with Alfred. In this moment, too, she is still distressed even after having sex.

In the preceding shots, it is arguable that the narrative not only denies woman the opportunity to wholly participate in intimate engagements as a human being, but condemns her to misery by appropriating sexual fulfilment as a function of the male who in this film seem emotionally detached from the female character. Neither Dominic nor Alfred validates O'prah's sexual desire. In her insatiable distress, she oscillates between sexual frustrations and regret, her sexual indulgence reduced to an avenue of enslavement and manipulation.

In Offside, there is a tendency to dwell on the sexual plenitude of women characters, usually in a sexually debilitating way. However, unlike O'prah, the voyeuristic gaze in this movie is more pronounced, revealing the woman's body as an open tableau annexed by near-offensive male look. Especially in the seductive scene where Alice has gone to Alvin's bed, the director offers the viewer a rear shot of Alice dressed in a semi-transparent dress, her lacy, black underwear clearly visible through her sleeping gown (Picture 3.38). This display of the female sexuality fetishises her womanhood, denigrating her worth in the face of the man's scopophilic stare. Considering that, in this case, the male character is covered as he comes from the bathroom, while the female character on the other hand reveals to the viewer (not actually the male character in the scene with her) a clear view of her lingerie, this framing can be said to advance a sexual view of the female character deliberately. In this scene, the overhead camera perspective fecundates the viewer's cognisance with the implied pleasure if he (the viewer) ever embraces Alice's aquiline curves so well-articulated by the camera's gaze hovering longingly over her body (Picture 3.39.)



Picture 3.38 Rear Medium close-up shot of Alice's revealing her inner wear through the night dress to the viewer as Alvin enters the room.



Picture 3.39 Alice rubs herself against Alvin, dragging him to the bed where they fall: Alvin on top, while Alice tries to push him between her parted legs.

To further accentuate her sexual appeal, the camera restlessly projects front view images showing Alice's exposed thighs and sensuous breasts as she enters Alvin's room (Picture 3.40 and 3.41), culminating in an overhead medium close-up shot that displays the sensuous lines of her buttocks (Picture 3.42). Her face is also given prominence as the camera cuts into a close-up of her pleading sexy eyes, her head cocked as she invites Alvin to have sex with her (Picture 3.43). This symbol mirrors that in O'prah where O'prah pleads with her husband to have sex with her. However, it is tinged with a malicious dare which heightens Alice's evil by extending degradation to her body which she surrenders as an accessory to aid her perpetuate her evil murder plot.



Picture 3.40 and Picture 3.41 Alice enters Alvin's room and slowly surveys it as she anticipates Alvin's return form bathroom. There is deliberate emphasis on the erotic value of her exposed thighs and sensuous breasts.



Picture 3.42 Alice positions herself in Alvin's bed seductively sucking her finger as the camera gaze feasts on her arousing butt.

Picture 3.43 Alice's seductive gaze as she seduces Alvin to have sex with her.

In nod to O'prah's O'prah, Alice in this movie surrenders her body to the male character to plunder and enjoy as he wishes. Her determination to get laid is explicitly emphasised through the camera framing which seduces the viewer to identify with the voyeuristic

stance inflicted upon the female character by projecting seductive shots of what Alvin stands to lose if he refuses to have sex with Alice. This incursion into the sexual privacy of the female character, again, displayed for the benefit of both the male characters and the viewers constitute a demeaning erotic metaphor, which degrades the female character by branding her as sexually cheap and obsessed. Similarly, Alice's emergence just a few minutes after her husband's burial further disinters the superficial scope of female sympathy by depriving Alice, a widow who has just come from her husband's grave, any form of sadness. Even as Stewart and Alvin are quarrelling about whether to let her stay in the house or not, she enters the scene clad in sexy dress in place of the black mourning dress she had worn just a few minutes before. The camera first depicts a long shot of her sexy figure framed from the rear to accentuate her sexy hips and buttocks (Picture 3.44). Almost irresistibly, between a series of montage shots, the camera cuts to medium close-ups in which it seems, there is deliberate emphasis on Alice's bra-less tits partially exposed to the lustful lens (Pictures 3.45).



Picture 3.44 A long shot of Alice from the rear, placed in the foreground for emphasis as she summons Stewart to take her out.



Picture 3.45 Medium close-up shot from the front showing her exposed tits as she stares at the two brothers.

In this scene, both the camera and character placement delimits the viewer's focus to the sexual accentuations inherent in the shots. This cinematic tendency to engage camera language in a way that emphasises the sexual potential of the female character's body as a source of man's erotic contemplation invites the viewer to follow the camera in its pleasure voyage. The camera's anxious exploration of Alice's sexual debauchery in this scene compares to that of the bar scene when Stewart's girlfriend is clad in an attire that reveals her body contours to the voyeuristic viewer in a way that edifies the proximity to her sexual space with a near-narcissistic gaze (Picture 3.46).



Picture 3.46 Stewart at the club with his girlfriend. The use of conspicuous costumes, selective lighting and voyeuristic camera accentuates the woman's sexuality by symbolically drawing attention to her exposed thighs and cleavage.

Offside, in its exploration of the female body as a sexual symbol, reinforces Mulvey's (1998) and Kaplan's (1998) argument that men try to control women as objects whose role is to fulfil their (men's) desires. Certainly, in this film all the three male characters (Nira, Alvin and Stewart) play dumb to Alice's needs within the family, engaging her only as an insubordinate being whose bodily eroticism is sustained to fulfil the man's pleasurable endeavours. In the first instance, Stewart's energetic defence for Alice to remain in the family after their father's death leans on his sexual involvement with her, which started even when his father was alive. He defends Alice as a sexual object at his disposal, a prostitute with no value outside their illicit adultery.

This is proved when he finds Alvin on top of Alice. While Alice argues that Alvin has kissed her and has been trying to penetrate her, Stewart curtly tells her to shut up, calling her a prostitute. The narrative at this point affords the male characters a chance to change their perception and attitude towards the female character. Alvin in this instance, still denounces Alice and expresses harsh sentiments towards her, she too hates him because he has refused to have sex with her. This scene serves to authenticate the film's premise that Alice is sexually perverted, an awareness that begets much hatred and degradation for her. At the end of the scene, both male characters come to the realisation that Alice is indeed an immoral woman determined to ruin their family. Even Stewart, from this point onwards, refrains from further sexual engagement with her. His change is proposed as conclusive and enduring when he shows up with a pistol in the next scene, intending to shoot her. However, Alice outwits and shoots him dead in the final sequence just moments before Alvin and the police storm into the house.

The film postpones Alice’s realisation of her true relationship with the Nira family until she commits the two murders. Just like O’prah who realised too late that Alfred was a conman and Sarah whose discovery Pascal only wanted to use her to ruin Isaya; Alice discovers the family photo in which she is posing with Alvin, Stewart and Nira rather late, and the film depicts her crying with anguish as her aunt stands toweringly over her. When Alice asks her why she deceived her to kill her own family, her aunt only retorts that she had to revenge to Nira, and only Alice could implement her murderous act. Police arrest both Alice and her aunt at this moment.

Moses too edifies the image of sexually obsessed females. Moses first encounter with Jane in scene sixteen is painted as a seductive duel. At the beginning, Jane is seen peeping restlessly at Moses as he wanders across the shelves until they meet at the exit (see pictures 3.47 – 3.50).



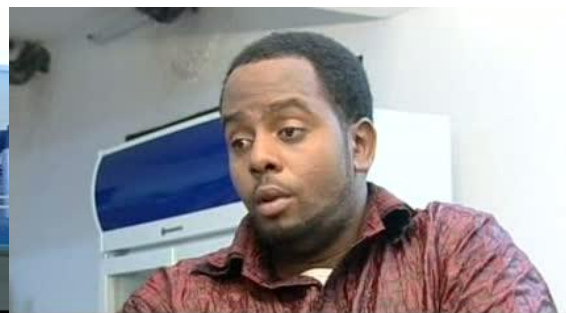
Picture 3.47 Jane peeps at Moses as he moves around the supermarket shelves.



Picture 3.48 She stops him at the exit as he is moving out of the shop, coyly seducing him.



Picture 3.49 A medium close-up of her face highlighting her seductive stare and look.



Picture 3.50 Moses’ expressionless face as he listens to her seductive rhetoric.

Overpowered by her desire to seduce him, she boldly enquires: “Kaka, yaani hujaona chochote kile ambacho unakihitaji? (Brother, you mean you have not seen anything interesting to you?)”, to which Moses promptly responds: “Kweli kwa leo sijakiona

chochote kile amabacho ninakihitaji, labda siku nyingine. (Yea, I have not seen anything that interests me today, maybe another day)”. While superficially Jane’s words designates an ordinary customer care prose, her facial expressions imply a casual customer service routine, it is clear from her seductive smile (Picture 3.51 below) and the preceding dialogue that she is actually inviting Moses to notice her. In this sense, she is the ‘interesting’ thing that he has failed to notice.



Picture 3.51 Jane looks at Moses seductively after interjecting him at the supermarket exit.

While it is evident from Moses’ indifference that he is not interested in her, Jane pursues him with a lot of determination. Enthusiastically, she prods on with her seduction in a more overt hint: “Jamani, supermarket yetu ina kila kitu kizuri, kwa hilo haujaona chochote kile ambacho kinaweza kukutosheleza? (Come on, our supermarket has the every good thing, really you have not seen anything that can fulfil you?)” Playing dumb to her seduction, Moses’ calm look prompts a more courageous, direct response from her. Overcome by her desire and longing, she faces him one last time, metaphorically inviting him to take her:

Inawezekana sasa hivi hujaona ila ukifika nyumbani ukifikiria utajua ni nini ambacho unakitaka. Naomba uchukue namba yangu, halafu utanipigia... please, take my number.

(It is possible for now you have not seen, but when you get home and think about it, you will realise what you really need. Please take my number, and then you call me... tafadhali chukua namba yangu.)

This brief dialogue portends female sexual prowess in the face of a desired male. Through both verbal and nonverbal language, the female character is portrayed as someone overwhelmed by sexual desires, making her socially weaker in comparison to

the ‘undesiring’ man. Jane’s open admiration for Moses edges on obsession, as she cannot even concentrate on her job. She is shown peering restlessly at the edge of the shelves to catch a glimpse of Moses as he moves along the shelves, without even noticing her.

Like O’prah who sexually submits to Alfred, and Alice, who pursues Stewart for sexual gratification, Jane’s erotic invitation is her way of submitting to Moses sexually. The emotive sexual nuances inherent in her last words and overt sensual facial expressions hint to Moses of her compulsive sexual desire. Later on that evening, Moses makes a curtly call which she heeds immediately and goes to his house. This epitomises a female who is always at a man’s call, seeking not her own self but to abridge her deficits through sexual association with the all-powerful male. In this context, the female character is relegated to domestic occupations despite the public space of her existence. At the end of her day, she goes back to Moses’ house to perform ‘the domestic’ diktat of sexual digression for which she feels decreed. In consensus with all the other movies studied, Moses too enshrines sexual proclivity in the female characters. Jane, Linda, Rose and Genevieve are all sexually comparable to O’prah and Alice. Their hasty sexual engagement with men is more pronounced through Jane who, when summoned by Moses to his house, shows up dressed in very seductive evening dress (Picture 3.52), an indication that she has been waiting for Moses’ call, and is prepared for sexual involvement. Her erotic demeanour is further signified in her haphazard sitting mannerisms a depiction which further vitiates her dignity as a woman (Pictures 3.53.)



Picture 3.52 Jane arrives at Moses house dressed seductively after he summons her.



Picture 3.53 She is wantonly seated at Moses’ house where they have gone with Moses. It is here where she learns about Moses’ attitude towards women.

From the trends observed in O'prah, where female characters are admonished for being sexually assertive; to the sad melee inscribed for female characters in Offside, where self-degradation is arbitrated through social demonisation of the female characters; Moses' depiction of decisive derision for female characters based on their sexuality is simply another tar layer on the dispersive gender tarmac. All these films, without exception, resound a canonical pelage to a hierarchical society in which women are degraded, ridiculed and controlled through demeaning erotic display, voyeuristic costuming, subjective characterisation, and social placement. Resultant from these engagements are rich mazes of masculine microaggression against the female characters, the most pronounced of which is erotic ridicule.

3.6 Conclusion

Mann, (1986, p. 14) argues that:

[a] patriarchal society is one in which power is held by male heads of households. There is also clear separation between the 'public' and the 'private' spheres of life. In the private sphere of the household, the patriarch enjoys arbitrary power over all junior males, all females and all children. In the 'public' sphere power is shared between male patriarchs.

In light of these arguments, and within the context of Kanumba's films, patriarchy, masculinity is seen as a key pillar in appropriating social dominance. Through spatial differentiation into public and private and the resultant constriction of liberties within both, these films encompass various gendered conflicts. This study concludes that Kanumba's use of symbolic semiology is portent with microaggressive tendencies. Narrated from a hegemonic perspective, these films fetishise women as objects of male desire. O'prah, Sarah, Alice and Linda are all key female characters exposed to the films' peculiar erotic contemplations which demean them through voyeuristic objectification.

However, although in many instances Kanumba's films have edified a masculine-led microaggressive stance against various characters, some have also mitigated microaggression and advocated for a freer society. In The Village Pastor, when Isaya relocates to a distant town after the death of his grandfather and end of his marriage to Sarah, the film narrative through Chadamu privileges him with a friend who encourages

him to start another church. When he heeds, despite his physical challenges, his followers accept him and the church grows exponentially. This recompense benchmarked on his ability and not his physique redeems his image as a worthy human being, renewing hope for a better life.

The Village Pastor also makes significant steps in redeeming the failing male-female cooperation in social spaces through the scene at the water tap in the city where Isaya resolves the conflict between the fighting women and restores peace among them, even making them greet each other. The two women escort him back to his house and apologise to each other, starting a better relationship. Similarly, through the scene where a couple rushes to his house after the husband catches his wife engaging in extramarital sex, the film affords Isaya another opportunity to unite them – another gesture of gender harmony. In the consecutive scene, women are praising Isaya's work in bringing families together. Isaya's decision to forgive his wife and Pastor Pascal and welcome them to his church exemplifies kindness and determination to create a more cohesive society. Yet through Pascal, the film also criticises man's participation in society as a demeaning enterprise.

This chapter has dwelt on the various facets of microaggression effected through the male character. It has explicated how male characters degrade female characters through language, interactions, circumstances, and eroticism. To comprehend how gender microaggression is effected through cinema discourse, the next chapter explores how female characters perpetuate microaggression against male characters.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 FEMININE MICROAGGRESSION DISCOURSES

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the behaviour of masculinised female characters towards effeminate male characters in the selected films is discussed. Focus is on the outcome of various character relations, the female character's activities, the wants accorded to them as well as other pertinent discernible aspects of their daily existence. This chapter further explores whether the tendencies appropriated to the female characters instigate microaggression against male characters and other female characters; and whether they are prevalent across the sampled films or just in a few. In appraising female to female character relations, this chapter shall explore how masculine tendencies transform these relationships, with specific focus on whether the masculine female usurps her bio-cultural terrain by tyrannizing fellow females. In the female to male relations, the chapter shall explore whether female characters' subjugation of male characters is resultant from masculine tendencies. Finally, the chapter will interrogate whether the usurpation and domination processes harbour instances of gender microaggression.

4.2 Biological Transcendence and Gendered Masculinity

Gender scholars have acknowledged the distinction between biological characteristics and social roles. Stets & Burke (2000), in their endeavor to 'pry apart' masculinity from maleness hinted of the existence of alternative masculinities as well as their manifestations within social systems. This is specifically articulated in their argument that femininity and masculinity (what Spence (1985) and Burke, Stets & Pirog-Good (1988) referred to as one's 'gender identity') denotes the extent to which persons perceive themselves as masculine or feminine, within the socio-cultural conception of man and woman as differentiated. Further, Stets & Burke (*ibid*) argues that:

Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex). Societal members decide what being male or female means (e.g., dominant or passive, brave or emotional), and males will generally respond by defining themselves as masculine while females will generally define themselves as feminine. Because these are social definitions, however, it is possible for one to be female and see herself as masculine or male and see himself as feminine (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 1).

Stets & Burke (2000) echo Judith Halberstam's (1998) argument which professes the possibility of female masculinity by recanting a prosthetic conception of masculinity which fuses masculine performativity to patriarchal physiognomy and hence impelled biological-feminine into masculine domain. In exploring how masculine tendencies diffuse through derivative concepts like class, race, sexuality and gender afforded her a more receptive view of masculinity not as a male-body attribute, but as a function that can possibly reside within the female body as well through prerogative variances in which a woman can perform man.

Masculinity in this society inevitably conjures up notions of power and legitimacy and privilege. ...masculinity seems to extend outward into patriarchy and inward into the family; masculinity represents the power of inheritance, the consequences of the traffic in women, and the promise of social privilege. But, obviously, many other lines of identification traverse the terrain of masculinity, dividing its power into complicated differentials of class, race, sexuality, and gender (Halberstam, 1998, p. 2)

Laura Mulvey's (1998) gaze can be considered as one form of what Halberstam (ibid) termed alternative modes of identification. Like other feminist scholars, Mulvey protested the cataclysmic effect of the demeaning gaze within visual media like cinema. Mulvey (1993) and (1998) discusses the phenomenal lingering of gendered gaze within cinema spaces. In both works, she traverses the normative terrain whose filmic rhetoric connects the different ways of appreciating cinema to a male controlled production (the camera gaze and the male-director's pathological obsession with pleasurable viewership of the female body); the intra-cinema spectator (the male characters within cinema narrative whose life without sexually stimulating female characters becomes ideologically dysgenic) and male-mapped audiences ready to lament, even protest of the scarcity of an eroticised female. Jacobsson, (May, 1999) however contemplates the possibility of gaze reversal earlier on alludes to by Myra Macdonald (1995, p. 29) who hints that there are media attempts to "present the male body, too, as an object of erotic contemplation" thereby expounding the dynamics of articulating a female gaze within cinematic texts. To her, female gaze would be realised when women objectifies men "to a subject of their desires and pleasures of looking (Jacobsson, May 1999, p. 8)". Whereas this reversal is just one form of transgender gender mutations, its actual implication to the debate of gender roles - and thus microaggression - can be perceived when applied to the notions of masculinity and femininity as analytical classifications.

In the larger echelons of gender mappings, this reversal can be adduced from Butler's post-feminist contemplations about the parameters within which we can envisage gender meaning and scope. Aware of the concentric debates about gender, Judith Butler posits that:

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature "or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "pre-discursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts (Butler, 1990, p.11)

Butler's body-role dissociation has also been acknowledged by other gender theorists like Judith Halberstam whose concept of 'discourse of acts' has normalised masculine-females whose roles can potentially challenge those initially reserved for men, hence the emergence of female-husbands as a functional social formulation. The emergence of female masculinity (or masculinisation of the female body) had earlier been alluded to by Julia Kristeva whose concept of telic decentralisation individuates experiences, circumstances, and roles. Masculinity is possible with these fading binary boundaries, opening up spaces for female characters to not only sample roles previously considered masculine but also to accentuate their unique individual traits without inhibitions.

From the foregoing gender debates, and in the context of this study, it thus becomes important to ask: what do female characters actually do in Kanumba's films? Does their behaviour conform or rebel against the social norm envisaged in their diegetic society? Do they enjoy freedom in exercising their behaviour while transmuted to masculine ideals or do they instigate microaggression as an inevitable or deliberate outcome? First, some scholars have hinted that creative media, film included, juxtapose feminine liberties with normalised constraints which nevertheless add to the woman's distinctive impropriety. Fraiman (1995, p. 22), in remonstrance of masculine ideals, articulated the dilemma of a woman's entrapped existence in her analysis of Jane Austen's Mansfield Park (1966) where Fanny (a female character in the story), when faced with the question about her love for Edmund (a male character), "does and does not confess her terrible desire for 'him'". She mouths a denial but cannot quite speak it; moreover, the word of disavowal she attempts is countered by the somatic affirmation of her blush... Fanny

declares her passion for Edmund against all norms of female modesty. The denial of Henry (another male character in the text) constitutes her voice based on inner conviction for her own good at the sacrifice of money gain, a decision termed as dishonour to “the ideals of female and filial obedience (Fraiman, 1995, p. 23)”. This could be interpreted as a patriarchal to undermine female liberties, and demean a woman’s social existence as man’s equal. Yet, on the other hand, such views can easily be construed as a campaign for restoration of chauvinist status quo in which masculinity is appropriated to both gender through what Macdonald (1995, p. 3) calls “hall of mirrors”, an ideological space in which media resituates cultural norms as mainstream, universal way of life. Reversal of these tendencies frees the woman while emasculating the man in a submissive strait. This is the ideological backbone which perpetuates masculinised femininity making it possible to reinforce feminine microaggression.

There are numerous key female characters in Kanumba’s films through whom ideological behavioural analysis is possible. O’prah, the leading female character in O’prah is one such female character. In the opening scene, O’prah is introduced as a modern upper class urban woman, youthful and beautiful. By parading her in her initial montage, the film creates an aura of desire based on her sexual appeal. But nevertheless, in the narrative, the viewer is presented with an alternative image of this character who besides the superficial composure, is depicted as sexually uncontrolled. Such a bland representation - augmented through her frustrations in pursuit of sexual desperation – is continuously contrasted with her husband’s innocuous temperament towards her repeatedly conjuring up images of torn individuality with dismal moral moderation.

That she gives up her marriage in exchange for sex is ‘narratologically’ symbolised as a grave weakness for which she pays with terminal punishment. But in the ensuing contexts, O’prah manifests short-lived masculine ascendancy in which she seems objectively decisive in her activities. For instance, when she decides to pursue Alfred for sex, she is bold and courageous, aggressively signalling him of her intentions until he surrenders to her overwhelming desire. In this instance, she is seen not only to usurp her social prerogative as a woman which decrees she should not overtly ask for sex, but is also exposed as a fully freed woman pliable to her new found freedom and fulfilment. This sexual liberty, it can be argued, symbolises the summit of her emancipation. After

this initiative, she undertakes all other decisions with admirable confidence. She fires Milkah without consulting her husband, and decides of her own volition to abandon her marriage and begin new life with Alfred.

Alice in Offside is another masculinised woman in Kanumba's films. In her world, she is a youthful, beautiful, and modern, upper-class prostitute who has just began her life as the housewife of a wealthy man. From the start, she is depicted as cunning yet vulnerable woman. Cunning in that she endears herself convincingly to her husband and wins his trust despite her evil motive to murder him; and vulnerable in her insatiable sexual desires. In the entire narrative, she evinces extreme confidence that irks and intrigues the men in her life, especially her overt sexual exploits. From the moment she invites Stewart to have sex with her, she brings in unthawed poise evident in her courageous escapades which she involves herself in to sustain their illicit affair. Her sense of sexual liberation is also manifested in the audacity she exudes when she approaches Alvin twice informing him that he too, like his father and brother, is welcome to have sex with her anytime he wishes. Yet, a closer look at all these emblematic images of liberation reveals a forlorn destiny assigned to her in the final part of the film. Unlike Alvin, the privileged male character whose life is preserved and restored at the end of the film, Alice is condemned to infinite jail term for murdering Nira and Stewart. She also suffers trauma after realising that Mr Nira is her biological father while Stewart is her biological brother. This becomes significant in the context of the narrative after her innocence is revealed. The narrative hints that she has been misinformed by her aunt whose motivation is extermination of Mr Nira and his family.

The Village Pastor is not different in its construction of woman's problematic masculinity. Sarah, an educated young woman is morally elevated through her decisive marriage to Isaya. This transcendence over the seemingly insurmountable class barriers grants her great ethical leverage in the film, symbolically positing her suitability as a village pastor's wife. However, the film is quick to taint this image with repeated assault on her character. First, she is posed as a weak-willed naïve woman unable to assert herself within the familial space. As she succumbs to their neighbours' sarcastic remark that she feeds only on *sukuma* because her husband cannot afford to buy her meat, she loses her prior aura of educated, strong-hearted woman. When Pastor Pascal comes to

their home with monetary gifts, she is further degraded as she starts an affair with him based on his financial ability. Her association with Pascal invalidates her as a morally dependable woman, stripping her of any moral claim to legitimate masculinity. Through the single act of sexual conquest, Sarah quickly becomes a sexual object while Pascal's masculinity is enhanced when he is given power to submit Sarah ideologically and even physically.

But even at this point, the film imbues Sarah's character with masculine disposition by granting her freedom to subsist away from her domestic space and boldly pursuing sex with the man she desires without restraints imbued upon her as a pastor's wife. She is seen as a liberated woman who goes to the township on her own, and even pursues sexual satisfaction from Pastor Pascal, which, until this point, the narrative hints is lacking in her husband, Isaya. This pursuit is first of all imposed as an inevitable direction for their marriage based on their social differences with Isaya – something that is heavily contested by their friends and parents prior to their marriage. While her ability to make sexual decisions and pursue her desire is passed off as an act of emancipation – especially when she convinces her husband after being discovered coming from the lodge with Pastor Pascal that they were just serving the lord – it nevertheless becomes a source of much discontent for her as she lives with guilt and misery. Her longing for fulfilment is not fully actualised through her sexual escapades, and she is forced to seek her husband's forgiveness to restore her peace. In this sense, therefore, it can be argued that Sarah's masculine personification embodied in her assertive act of sexual transgression suffuse her with guilt, as she prattles with remorse over acts exercised out of her own free will.

Joyce in Moses provides an alternative understanding of a masculine female. In her submissive pursuit of Moses, she displays a specific kind of free will and determination that guarantees her success in taming Moses' love where other women had failed. Despite the numerous frustrations that she endures, she nevertheless maintains her stance, exhibiting both a desirable image of submissive woman, while still maintaining claim on her liberty as a woman unafraid to pursue the man she loves. Her explicit pursuit of Moses inundates her submission by granting her moderation which emboldens her while retaining a safe distance from Moses' dogmatic masculinity.

On what basis should O'prah's, Alice's, Sarah's and Joyce's sexual emancipation be considered masculine? One argument is that they boldly usurp social edifices in their respective diegetic societies that require them to be sexually passive, choosing to fulfil their sexual desires, and pursue the men they love thus transcending the socially arrogated relationship practice where it is men who pursue women. Various scholarly perspectives have been advanced which concede this transcendence as an act of masculinisation. The most vociferous is Cora Kaplan's view, which essentially echoes Butler's sentiments:

Masculinity and femininity do not appear in cultural discourse, any more than they do in mental life, as pure binary forms at play. They are always, already, ordered and broken up through other social and cultural terms, other categories of difference. Our fantasies of sexual transgression as much as our obedience to sexual regulation are expressed through these structuring hierarchies (Kaplan, 1998, p. 594).

Hence, 'woman' in biological terms can perform 'man' in social terms. This dialectical antagonism to singular ascription of meaning to gender makes it possible to apply masculinity and femininity not just as a sexist principles, but also as cultural, normative trends. In the broad sense, therefore, interpellation of feminine microaggression within masculine parameters is ideally an exploration of the social precipices depicted through the films' instantaneous uncertainties about women's complex fury with men, exhibited by contrasting women's experiences with those of men in shared social spaces - marriage, for instance. As cited by Nguyen (2008), Sedgwick (1995) suggests that understanding female masculinity requires movement from a two-dimensional to an *n*-dimensional conceptualisation of gender and sex in which masculinity and femininity are no longer oppositional but orthogonal and independently variable. This is possible through interposition of Freud's 'figurability' within the diegetic space, where men and women are classified in different and clearly unequal strata. Passivity, as a complimentary element of submissiveness, would for instance subdue explicit female tendencies by promoting cultural clichés that favour male domination - sexual behaviour and taboos, for instance. However, there are films in which female characters play the leading role, occasionally creating liberties for themselves; or in which their deliberate actions usurp culturally appropriated boundaries congruent to their gender.

Against this backdrop, the four leading female characters in Kanumba's films can therefore be construed to embody masculinity in their effeminate ways. In a larger scale, this practice is not a preserve of the leading female characters alone. Flora and the unnamed secretary in Offside; Jane, Genevieve, Linda, Rose, and the unnamed girlfriend in Moses all exhibit strong tendencies which defy submissive stereotyping, indulging freely in their quest to stand up against men when it is in their best interest to do so. Flora refuses to move back to her former wealthy husband's house, choosing instead to live in poverty and prostitute for a living. Her independence grants her liberty to live as she desires, resisting any tendency to revert to a life of submission to her ruthless husband. Similarly, the unnamed secretary faces Stewart when he tries to smoke in the office, maintaining her ground that it is not allowed despite that it is his father's office. Faced face to face, he submits, despite grudgingly, to her firm stance.

Jane, too, transcends her feminine gender role as a lowly confined supermarket assistant to assume a masculine stance as she relentlessly pursues Moses when he goes shopping in the supermarket. Irrespective of her position of customer service, she gathers enough courage to approach Moses who is the object of her desire, successfully dating him, albeit for a short-lived single date. She even gives him her phone number, urging him to call her, and goes to his house, clearly dressed to affirm her sexual-cum-marriage objective. Her courage to pursue a man she likes and to assert herself signifies her new freedom in the public space, and the sliding of her persona into the masculinised character. Genevieve approaches Moses in the hotel out of her own volition. Her confidence as she walks down the long stairs, and crosses over to where Moses is seated reading, coupled with her open suggestion that she loves him overrides her sexually decreed behaviour as a woman. Linda and the unnamed girlfriend who comes to Moses' house also depict stereotypical transcendence as they override their social prescriptions in pursuit of their desires. Rose also defies her brother's intimidations and marries the man she wants. These actions sufficiently point to a new essence of womanhood which transcends bio-cultural norms, precipitating a rationale where these female characters can be seen as symbols of emerging masculine-femininity.

Steven Kanumba's dynamic personality in these films provides such rationale especially his crafty obscurity of the feminine-female praxis advanced by stimulating

the lead female co-actors to shun their culturally normalised spaces for new identities. In remonstrance of his consistent approval for feminised woman, he creates for the viewer a travelogue set on the frontiers of women's inner motivations, rewarding them when he wants while still tethering nearby his masculine imperialism. In this discordance, Kanumba affords women some fleeting moments to disenfranchise men in their immediate reach within and without the domestic spaces. It is in these moments that female characters sublimate their complacent tendencies by engaging in practices that can be considered microaggressive against male characters. These, the study has established, range from sneering verbal aggressions, interactive aversions, circumstantial abasements and erotic depictions. Each of these is discussed in details in the subsequent section.

4.3 Verbal Articulations as Microaggressions

Language is one form of human social interaction that has been used to degrade women in many societies. Within cinema medium, some scholars have hinted how it can be used as a tool of non-conformity and thus liberation. Commenting about the role of language in A Question of Silence (1982), Macdonald (1995) notes that: “language, instrumental in keeping these women in their place for so long, becomes a central issue in their strategy of defiance (Macdonald, 1995, p. 42)”. Sue (2010) however cautions that language, besides its duo role of subjugation and liberation, it can be potentially microaggressive. As evidenced among male characters in the preceding chapter, verbal microaggression when enacted by male characters serve to demean female characters. In contrast, there is substantial, though significantly less, use of verbal microaggression by female characters against male characters in Kanumba's films. In all the four films studied, only Offside showed substantial use of verbal microaggression perpetrated by female characters against male characters. Alice, the leading female character in Offside indulges in temporal intricacies where even her social association as Nira's wife seem flawed. Further to her disrespectful conduct in the presence of Stewart, the film uses verbal microaggression as an avenue to dispense the metaphor of pathologically despondent womanhood, deriding a woman's journey to self-assertion simultaneously as an aspiration to overrule man, an act she enacts without penance.

Yet, even in this scenario, the film does not deprive the male character of his masculine abilities. Rather the film forays into cinematic idioms where the congruence of masculinised female to masculinised male is polemical and not necessarily ideologically subjective. This is more evidenced in the dialogue below where Stewart and Alice are engaged in a verbal duel, clashing for dominance. In this scene, Stewart is portrayed as a victim of Alice's masculine excesses. She is reprimanding Stewart after he refuses to give her the remote control which she demands.

Alice Sikia nikwambie. Huyo babako nimekuwa naye zaidi ya mwaka. Na nimeanza kutembea na babako toka niko kwetu, ndo maana akaamua kunileta kwenye hii nyumba, unanielewa? Ili Mimi niwe malkia wa hii nyumba, yaani mimi ndiye nacontrol kila kitu kinachohusu kwenye hii nyumba... na sio kila kitu tu, kuanzia kakako mpaka wewe mwenyewe. *(Listen. I have been with your father for over a year now. I started dating him since I was at my home, and that's why he decided to bring me to this house, do you understand me? So that I can be the queen of this house, meaning I control everything concerning this house ... and not just anything, from your brother and even you.)*

In this instance, Alice is bragging about her domestic superiority and power privileges as Nira's wife. These articulations are microaggressive in the sense that they demean Stewart's rights within his father's house, where Alice feels she has the right to control everything and everyone. This control, she manifests, is based on her egotistical illusions that she is a queen whose authority in the domestic sphere is absolute. Stewart responds by calling her 'bitch' and 'prostitute', figuratively terming her a suspect who insults the judge without considering his power to send her to jail. This response is significant here because it is the first instance when the film hints that despite appropriating masculine tendencies to the female character, and empowering her to a position in which she can exercise significant control over male characters, the male character is not as yet conquered. Stewart remains masculine as well, and thus his abrasiveness in defending his ideological protectorate. His confidence is informed and unpretentious and he articulates his feelings without fear. Using a judicial metaphor to allude to the enormity of repercussions which may befall Alice if she continues her arrogance in the home, Stewart maintains a firm stance against her degrading demeanour, asserting his right to enjoy Television in his father's house.

While it is easy to think of Stewart's response as microaggressive, the narrative redeems him from this fate through Alice's admission that she is a professional prostitute, and that she used her evil seduction to lure Mr Nira. Further, she instantly invites Stewart to have sex with her, thereby legitimating his allegations that she is a bitch, thus redeeming him from any condemnation as a microaggressive chauvinist. By availing herself sexually to him, she validates his perception that she is a prostitute. Instead of contesting the allegation, she authenticates this negative depiction by hinting of her sexual availability to him. She seeks to transcend his disapproval by humiliating him through sexual inferences and beholding a spectacle of pleasure to which he can partake, sharing her sexual indulgences with his father. While not necessarily a question of morality, microaggression in this case is perpetrated in the form of derogatory inferences and foray into taboo issue such as when Alice diminishes her self-respect by extending sexual activities to father and son. As his step-mother, she vanquishes ethical barriers through her tactical sexual talk. Her words are meant to subdue Stewart into dismissing his resistance to her ridiculous moral degradation, so that she can destroy him and his family. As enacted in the narrative, she pursues this goal until he gives in and they start a sexual odyssey which culminates in his death.

Further, Alice's verbal onslaught against Stewart is also conveyed in her choice of words at the end of the ensuing confrontation when – after she pushes him – she refers to him as 'very stupid'. At this point the hitherto restrained aggression is elevated to a physical form before the freeze frame of Stewart's clenched fist just inches from Alice's nose. Pushing Stewart has the double meaning of physical triumph as well as psychological subjugation. Even more, calling him stupid reinforces her intimidation as they are confined to the sitting room by themselves during her assaults. When Stewart tries to hit back, she screams attracting Alvin's attention who enters the room to find Stewart's punch a few inches from Alice's face. This editing style symbiotically signifies the male character's laxity in causing harm while highlighting the female characters' exceeding evil. It also serves to create ideological confrontation between the two brothers, making it easy for Alice to abuse them.

This instance pre-empts Alvin to be opposed to his brother's aggression against Alice. Yet, towards the end of the second act, Alvin is confronting her about her shameless

sexual perversion with Stewart. In this verbal skirmish, she exhibits significant verbal hostility towards him, implying through her words that he must be retarded if he can be shocked by such 'usual' things.

Alvin Hebu nikuulize kitu kimoja Alice, kwa nini unafanya kitu cha dhaifu ambacho unafanya katika nyumba hii? Yaani hujui kama huyu ni mtu na baba yake?

(Let me ask you one thing Alice, why are you doing such an evil thing in this house? You do not mind that it is father and son?)

Alice: Aha, sasa wewe, kitu gani kinachokufanya wewe ushangaie, wewe si mtu mzima una akili ... hili lina ajabu gani? Ajabu gani ilioko hapo?

(Aha, what is there to surprise you, are you not an adult with sound mind ... what is there to surprise you? What surprise is there?)

Alvin ... Wewe mwanamke wa wapi? ... wewe mwanamke ni mwenda wazimu wewe. Wewe una laana.

(Where do you come from, woman? You are a mad woman. You are cursed.)

Alice: Wewe sijui ukoje, wewe lijitu, au lizee, wewe sijui uko dunia gani. Sasa cha ajabu nini? Kila mtu anataka kwa mda wake, nikatae ili iweje ... hata wewe ukitaka pia, ndio kwa muda wako tu.

(I don't even know how you live, just a thing, an old thing, I don't know in which world you are living. What is surprising there? Each one of them needs it at his own time, why should I refuse ... even you, if you want, I can give you at your own time too.)

Alvin ... Wewe mwanamke utakuwa ni muuaji wewe... una lako jambo.

(... You woman must be a murderer ... you have your own issues.)

At this point, the film incorporates physical assault where Alice slaps Alvin five times, telling him that even if he reports about her affair with Stewart to her husband, she would claim Alvin wants to have sex with her, and Stewart will side with her since she has already 'purchased' his loyalty with good, fulfilling sex. This action signifies not merely her demeaning hostility, but also the tipping of the masculine scale as Alice becomes a masculinised female while Alvin becomes a feminised male. It is noteworthy that Alice considers prostitution normal. Even more, she considers incest equally normal. Her reiteration that Alvin must be retarded and archaic if he considers her incestuous relationship with Stewart surprising rationalises her immorality, ending with open invitation for Alvin to come for his turn and have sex with her. While Alvin preserves his masculinity by refusing to give in to her travesties, she nevertheless exudes masculine microaggression trends. First, offering herself as a sexual object indiscriminately while enjoying it positions Alice as a social recluse. However, the way

she addresses Alvin in this case is demeaning as it exposes him to hostilities that demean his essence as a man. She denounces his value, calling him an old thing, a tactical resentment to force him to submit to her sexual compulsions.

In Moses and O'prah, female characters do not engage in verbal microaggression against male characters. However in The Village Pastor, Sarah defies patriarchal arrogations by creating an intermediate space in spiritualism where she can pursue her secret sexual interests convincingly. One of the ways she subdues her husband is through use of language which at the level of meta-text belies discernible microaggressive innuendos. For instance, in the first act when Isaya is coming home from the village shopping centre after his friends told him that his wife is having an affair with Pastor Pascal, he arrives home to find that she is missing. After a while, she comes home escorted by Pastor Pascal in his car, evidently from date. Her uncertain entry, somatically represented as shameful, is further enhanced by her blatant assertion that she is just coming from a worship service with Pastor Pascal. This explanation which Isaya hastily accepts, infantilises him by ridiculing his authority as Sarah's husband.

In this scene, Pastor Pascal does not even bother to alight from his car and greet Isaya, demeaning him as a fellow pastor and as a man. Despite that he has just had sex with Isaya's wife, he ignores his presence after coming to his home escorting Sarah back. When confronted about her outing with Pastor Pascal, the shameless vulgarity with which Sarah denies her extramarital sexual involvement with Pascal deliberately infantilises Isaya's intelligence as a man depicting him as excessively ignorant. This is clearly captured in her response:

Samahani mume wangu, kama nimekukosea naomba unisamehe. Lakini si kuwa na lengo mbaya. Wewe ni mtumishi sikutengemea ya kwamba hata wewe mtumishi unaweza kufoka wapi mi nimetoka wakati mi nimetoka kwenye kumtukuza mungu. Mimi nilikuwa kwenye maombi na mtumishi Pascal.

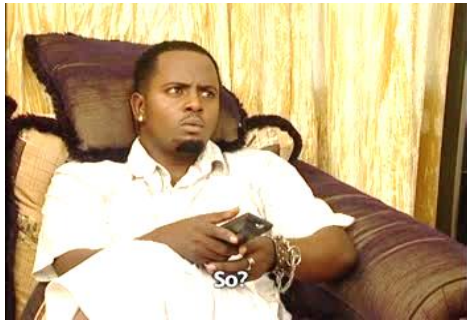
(I am sorry my husband, if I have wronged you please forgive me. But I had no bad intention. You are a man of God; I did not imagine you could quarrel about where I am coming from at a time when I am coming from worshipping the Lord)". The fact that his wife so easily subdues him resounds a terse counsel that he might be indulging in infested love.

The narrative however emboldens her to reveal her true metier when he confronts them coming from a lodging in the subsequent scene. In this instance, she rebukes him and tells him that he has no business following her to the lodge, since he should be at the village awaiting her return there. In this second instance, she simply implies that as an illiterate village man, he should not be bothering her, but should keep himself in the village where he belongs. She even rides in Pastor Pascal's car as they speed off after hitting him with the car and crippling him. Her utterances in this instance demean Isaya as her husband as she uses language that deprives him of his dignity and right to enquire about Sarah as his wife. Telling him to wait for her at the village is her way of assigning domestic space to her husband, as she continues to fornicate in the domestic spaces.

4.4 Interactive Antipathies as Microaggressions

While the previous chapter discusses many patterns of masculine microaggressions against women, Kanumba in Offside also presents instances where women commit severe indignities against men in the course of their interactions. In this film, the director uses both verbal and interactive microaggressions to emphasise the growing microaggressive trend in the film as it enters the second phase into climax. It is quite evident that after this point onwards, the film acquires a near obsession with character antagonisms in a variety of ways. The film's amplification of interactive microaggression is evidenced through inclusion of verbal insults, which demean both the female and male characters as they engage in duels for control of house rules.

In her first day as Mr Nira's wife, Alice portrays severe hostility against Stewart when she rudely disrupts his entertainment session by declaring she wants to watch television. In an attempt to cement her stance, Alice tries to snatch away the remote control from his hands without even bothering to request him. This is Alice's way of overriding Stewart's interests and disregarding him as a man. The camera situates their confrontation through a series of medium shots and long shots (Pictures 4.1 and 4.2) as it materialises to full blown duel for verbal insults. Alice's action comprises an occasion in which she does not acknowledge Stewart's rights as a son in his father's house, regarding him and his needs as secondary to her own. Her provocative stance denotes her demeaning consideration of Stewart as a 'nobody' in 'her' house.



Picture 4.1 Stewart sitting in his father's house watching Television, a remote control in hand.



Picture 4.2 Alice reprimanding Stewart after he refuses to surrender the remote to her.

However, in this film, female characters do not only exhibit interactive microaggressions towards male characters but also towards fellow female characters. In the scene where the secretary enters Dominic's office, O'prah clings to her husband possessively while staring at the female secretary challengingly as if guarding him from the secretary's threat. This act, it seems, is her way of notifying the secretary that Dominic is her man, and that she should not dare even think of having a relationship with him. During O'prah's epic escape to Zanzibar with Alfred, she uses this pose as a gesture of her total submission to him, as well as consolation about her heartfelt sorrows. Such somatic enunciations are also prevalent in Offside where Alice longingly clings to Nira whenever she wants to persuade him to submit to her will. Later on, she uses a similar stance to ridicule Alvin by clinging on Stewart in a sexually intimating poise. All these instances denote interactive microaggressions in that the perpetrators subjugate their opponents through biased pre-judgement as evil or otherwise insufficient.

Moses as a film positions the origins of microaggression in the woman's world. The narrative proposition is that feminine tendencies beget all forms of social aggressions, whether masculine or feminine. Moses' mother epitomises the core of the films' microaggressive stance, by first corrupting her own spaces through banal humiliation of her husband. Besides fornicating, she also abuses her husband and children every time she brings her lover home. After murdering her husband, she further inflicts microaggressive abuses to her two children, who re-enact her brutality in various stages of the narrative. Even though it takes place in the present, it is informed by a past that resounds with pitiful admonitions. In their childhood, Moses and Rose bear the

aggressive brunt of their irate mother who constantly punishes them by pulling their ears (Pictures 4.3 – 4.5) to impress her lover - because of whom she killed her husband. Besides this single incident, microaggressive tendencies are reserved for male characters for the entire movie.



Picture 4.3 Moses' mother reprimands him and Rose claiming they did not make her boyfriend happy.



Picture 4.4 Young Moses soothing his ears after his mother pinched him.



Picture 4.5 Young Rose weeps in distress, also assaulted the same time.

In The Village Pastor, interactive microaggression is reserved only for female characters whose fall back to regressive tendencies is characterised by ruthless atrocities. From the beginning, Sarah expresses open resentment to Isaya's friends when they come visiting him early in the morning. Through body language and restrained social interactions, she expresses displeasure with her husband's friends whom she regards lowly and outside her social class. For instance, in the scene where they congregate and jubilantly chat at Isaya's home, she clicks and walks into the house leaving her husband and the visitor's outside. This rude temperament hints of her secret disquiet in her new life as Isaya's wife, parading her abrasive emotions which on the subliminal level undermine her virtue as the pastor's wife. But even more, it is poignant that this act symbolises her growing uneasiness with the poverty surrounding her life, and consequently with Isaya whom she regards as a pauper and way beneath her social stature. Snubbing his visitors is her initial step to reinforce her materialistic demeanour. It also demeans the visitors by depicting them as filthy villagers way below her class.

Her restlessness is fully actualised when Pastor Pascal visits them in a big car, giving them a wad of cash. To endorse the looming indignities which she later on commits against her husband, the narrative cuts straight to the rumours of her adultery in the small village town, where Isaya is defending her reputation against the collective

counsel of his friends. This sequence is immediately followed by a more suggestive scene where Isaya has just arrived home to find his wife missing. Whereas the film strongly hints that she is returning from her sexual escapades with Pastor Pascal. Her behaviour towards him, though cursorily innocent, is potentially microaggressive when put into context. First, the film narrative in the first scene introduced Isaya in the forest with his guitar, singing a love song for Sarah. The beautiful innuendos captured through his music candidly captures the depth of his love for her. In addition, when he receives her love letter the camera dwells on his excitement as he joyfully pats the letter, first putting it in his breast pocket – then retrieving it and putting it inside his crotch as the scene fades out.

Reading the letter is also given prominence as - in the dim light of his *juakali* kerosene lamp – Isaya happily laughs occasionally to Sarah’s words. When he finally proposes to her, his romantic tone and choice of words captures the intensity of his vast emotional tract. These symbols contextualise a man whose love for his wife edges on psychopathy; a vulnerability that his wife exploits to demean him. At the end of this scene, Sarah asperses Isaya’s suspicions cast by his friend’s hint about her adultery. Narrative rendition of Sarah’s shameless infidelity thus attracts significant remorse as she is portrayed as ungrateful, lustful and selfish in her motivations.

It is also arguable that Kanumba’s feminisation in The Village Pastor initiates ideological dissonance by forcing the female character to ascribe to unrestrained masculine tendencies. His sorrow as a subjugated man is normatively implausible and individuated. He enjoys no support from his male friends; his grandfather, the only surviving member of his family, nor even from male colleagues within his spiritual calling. This isolation constitute ideological disavowal where fellow men refuse to identify with Kanumba – a symbol of repression – and denounce his voluntary indictment of cultural determinism which pre-ordains men as superior to women.

4.5 Circumstantial Degradation as Microaggressions

After her quarrel with Stewart about their respective liberties in the house, Alice is presented as a cunning woman whose heart is full of misgivings. Even though she is

the one who institutes their hostilities when she invades Stewart's space as he is watching television, she nevertheless insists that he should apologise, casting an image of a woman whose heart is cruel and selfish. Such an engagement, which positions Stewart in a collision course with his father and elder brother, can be interpreted as an unwarranted invasion on his image, and a degradation of his social honour within his own family. His increasing disquiet with the situation is evident in the position he occupies in the shot: sitting on the floor while the rest of the family members are seated on the couch (Pictures 4.6 and 4.7). Pushed into the extreme of these circumstances, Stewart leaves the discussion humiliated and infuriated with his father, brother and



Picture 4.6 Alice in Offside clings to her husband as she pleads with him to punish Stewart.



Picture 4.7 Stewart and Alvin watching their father and Alice. Stewart restlessly sits on the floor as a sign of arrogance and protest against Alice.

Moses tries to reconcile masculine and feminine microaggression tendencies through collation of multiple elements and harmonisation of spatial locales for the leading male and female characters. At six months of his wife's pregnancy, Moses is seen attending to his wife's growing demands with uncharacteristic patience and humility. He brings her a glass of water to the sitting room, a symbol of the ensuing self-giving to his wife that he has sustained three months in a row. In this scene, even their dialogue is replete with consensus. Moses affirms that Joyce - as the first woman in his life - has already gained substantial primacy in his life. Somehow, the old hatred for women is fading and in its place, a new form of self is emerging. Joyce on her part concedes that she is able to live with Moses, even though she may be the only woman who can do so. Instead of commanding each other as had been witnessed in the preceding sequences, they are now talking - sharing, conversing. Such is the maturity of their relationship. Contrasted with Rose's marriage depicted earlier in the film, Moses' marriage holds a lot of

promise. Even by the mere fact of his acceptance to live with Joyce, this is already remarkable effort. However, in this quiet relationship lies recurring microaggressive tendencies. Joyce is depicted as an abusive woman who uses her pregnancy to punish Moses. She makes him a target of humiliation by ridiculing his kindness. Her tendency to harass him is based on the knowledge that Moses cannot complain because of his deep love for the unborn baby.

Joyce's behaviour predates on Moses' conscience and exploits his emerging sense of goodness. Especially in the scene where she discovers that she is pregnant and Moses takes her to his house, she develops some imperious tendencies which place Moses in ridiculous situations. He has to keep on running around to feed her growing appetite for chips and fried beef, all the while as she rests in the house idly clad in her idyllic fixations with her expected motherhood. And even when he brings her whatever she orders, she does not eat, much to Moses' vexation. Such a depiction is contextualised as revengeful on her part, commanding him as he used to command her when she begged for his love and attention. Such an abuse on her husband's goodwill forays into his worthy as a person, ostensibly acceding to his wife's fraud on his incipient kindness.

The setting of Moses and Roses' upbringing in an abusive family also positions them as hopeless victims entrapped by a cruel, inhumane female grip. Their mother is depicted as not just a gullible woman but also as a woman devoid of motherly instincts. By bringing her lover to their home, and having sex with him in their matrimonial bed with disregard to her children who witness all this, she imbues deep disrespect for women through the recurring images of ruthless womanhood whose unquestionable authority in the family displaces all other characters. On the one hand she causes her husband's death when he is hit by her lover after confronting them in the home. Secondly, even in death, she reassigns her cruelty to her two young children whom she mistreats and abuses. Forcing them to accept her lover as their father, she physically abuses them to enforce her selfish intention thus traumatising. In her powerful stance, this female character figurate ruthless masculinity which overrules all other characters to servitude within the domestic space. Moses escapes with his sister to flee the unbearable circumstances in their home when their mother's obsessive ruthlessness transmutes to incessant physical abuses. The narrative attempts to expose the extent of

their suffering through exploration of their poverty and labouring as they hawk in the city to survive. Nevertheless, the narrative maintains that this is better than the situation they fled at home where their mother's abuse had progressed from obsessive to psychosis as manifested in the way she enjoys mistreating them; refusing them to sit on the couch their father has bought for them in their home, instead admonishing them to sit down on the floor.

Another way in which circumstantial degradation is effected by female characters is through juxtaposition of their perceptions with emergent character traits of male characters. In The Village Pastor, Sarah initially considers Isaya an ignorant village man not worthy of her respect. However, there is reversal of her perception after identifying herself with a civilised city man (Pastor Pascal) especially at the end of the film. She discovers, albeit too late, that the village man she ignores is virtuous and representative of her ultimate bliss. He epitomises wisdom while Pascal only advances an exploitative gaze upon her in the course of the entire narrative, a fact enforced upon her through the realisation that while Isaya thinks of her as a wife, Pascal only thinks of her as a prostitute. In the final stage of their adulterous relationship, she inflicts guilt upon him luring him to the forest and to the killer hoop in which he hangs himself to death. This amorous conquest of the male characters undermines their ability to exist independently despite being poised as sexually aggressive or even financially endowed.

Similarly, in O'prah, O'prah despises Alfred from the day he joins their family based on her perception that he is a village man, uncivilised and way below her social stature. However, with his transformation in the narrative's plot, she comes to rely upon him more than she relies on her city husband whom she later regards as unworthy of her respect. As she becomes emotionally reliant on Alfred, she seems to transform all her doubts and remorse to friendliness and longing. However in the last stages of their liaison, when Alfred is shot and killed by Dominic after he trails them to their hideout in Zanzibar, O'prah realises her mistake – albeit too late. Her sexual involvement with Alfred, even though it ended in self-destruction for her, still occasions within the narrative a space for her to demean her husband by degrading his honour. Her pursuit

of sexual satisfaction from Alfred is posed as a testament to her diminishing sexual honour for Dominic.

In *Offside*, Alice exists in a similar disposition. While her initial contact with Stewart upon entry to Nira's home is shown as abrasive, it is apparent that her association with Stewart is based on her presumed intellectual superiority. To tame her ideological excesses, the narrative provides an alternative interpretation as her reliance upon him for sexual satisfaction proceeds from optional to obsessive. In the later stages of their relationship, the narrative suggests, Alice relies on Stewart for all her sexual gratification, and even actively seeks him out in his room where she wakes him from sleep begging him for sex. While the narrative initially premises that their love may grow to commitment, in the final stage, she ecstatically shoots Stewart dead in his room bringing to an end his misplaced sense of power and arrogance. Through this fatal decay, the film categorically maintains that Stewart's participation in Alice's sexual escapades is not an indication of growing romance, but rather that she is using him as an instrument to assuage her sexual compulsions as well as a means to destroy him as part of her initial plan. His full-hearted participation in this tragic romance can thus be viewed as an act of foolishness, as he submits in good faith to a woman who is only exploiting him because she considers him stupid.

In all the four films, transformation of the male character to a spectacle that the female character can behold hypostatizes feminine disambiguation and ridicules the woman's conative derisions. This transposition of perception demeans the male character's ability to be objective, thereby ridiculing their intellectual ability. The outcome of all these films is destruction of the male characters whenever they partake of the woman's life. This constitutes circumstantial microaggression against male characters in the sense that they are confined to circumstances where they oscillate between acrimonious gaze of the female character, and self-destruction through arrogant tendencies. In either circumstance, the male character is still unfulfilled, socially undermined as unvirtuous and portrayed as intellectually superficial. However, these are passed off as necessary temporalities that empower the female character to disarm the man of all his rational prowess leading to his ultimate death in the fleeting moment when she embraces her masculine capacities.

4.6 Erotic Metaphors as Microaggressions

Alice in the third act of *Offside* cuts the image of a sexually attractive woman using her sexual appeal to destroy a family. Even though the narrative premises that she is on a vengeful journey, still, her acts of erotic microaggression towards male characters in this act is quite poignant. In one scene, she goes to Alvin's room and enters his bathroom, boldly telling him that one day she would give him the opportunity to have sex with her which she believes he would use well and enjoy her really good sex. Her boldness as she reaches out to him, kissing him briefly and laughing at him until he cowers in her intimidating touch embody an act of erotic aggression on her part. Also, her continued sexual imposition upon Alvin, she casts an image that can be evidently construed as a form of sexual microaggression. Her choice of costume - she chooses to visit his bathroom and emerge with only a towel (Picture 4.8) - as a seductive tactic construes her motive to sexually molest Alvin who in the course of the entire narrative has remained aloof to her mounting temptations.



Picture 4.8 Alice seduces Alvin after emerging from his bathroom. He retracts as she advances towards him, verbally harassing him.

Alice also uses erotic intimidation as a seductive technique later on in the film when she creeps into Alvin's room and climbs on his bed wearing a transparent nightdress that reveals the contours of her body in a highly seductive way. But in this case, she chooses to tempt him when he is most vulnerable – emerging from the bathroom - so that when he enters the room with only a towel on his waist (Picture 4.9), she is there beckoning him to climb on the bed and have sex with her. Her seemingly irreproachable act of sexual submission belies her intention to lure Alvin to her trap so she can murder him. Her desire for Alvin is purely based on her desire to subdue him sexually, as she deliberately makes every attempt to touch his body, eventually clinging to him as they roll on the bed, her legs opening to surround his waist in a sexually functional posture.

Coupled with her forced kiss, this is her way of symbolising her physical triumph over Alvin's body, denying him a voice even in matters pertaining to his feelings or sexual decisions. His hesitation in dismissing her, his rigid body gestures and his seemingly involuntary reprimands are all complicit in his waning refusal in the presence of her mounting prostitute phantasms. Unlike Stewart's sexual conquest, the film narrative glamorises Alice's sexual advances with Alvin in a bid to illuminate her increasing sexual objectification of the only male character who has resisted her sexual advances so far. It also serves to accentuate Alvin's annoyance with her rising influence and confidence as the queen of Mr Nira's house. Her seduction in this case, based on her inner motivation to just conquer and destroy him, deprive their embrace of any legitimate affection, making it a material brawl inspired by the desire to use, and to destroy. Display of sexual eroticism in this case can be interpreted as a sexually assaultive manoeuvre, thus making Alice's generous erotic display a sham intended to abuse Alvin emotionally.



Picture 4.9 Alvin enters from bathroom to Alice's haughty stare, which contemplates his body as a sexual apparatus.

Alice's sexual indignities are further manifested in the next scene, in Stewart's room where it seems - after killing her 'husband' - she has shifted to live in her 'son's' room as his wife. Such representation further delineates her aggression against Stewart, a minor, by sexually molesting him. She even accompanies him to the bathroom, to go and shower with him just days after her husband's death. Depriving her of mournful solitude in honour of her late husband, and instead granting her sexual assertion that embroils her in an ethically contemptuous manner is the narrative's way of exploring her eroticisation and subsequent indulgences against the best interests of the male characters. To be sexually involved with Stewart, shown as her source of sexual

gratification, denies Stewart even the ability to make decisions about his body. She wakes him up at night to have sex with her. His reluctant submission to her demands deprives him of control over his emotions and body. In this sense, Alice is seen as a character who uses her erotic appeal to propel male characters towards evil. Portrayal of female characters using sexual appeal as a weapon to deliberately diminish the male character's integrity can be interpreted as the narrative's way of unearthing their hideous motives impelled through their erotic tendencies.

To augment this perception, erotic microaggression is further heightened in the successive scene where Alice and Stewart are going out. Just before they walk out of the door, Alice kisses Stewart in front of his elder brother to provoke him sexually since in the preceding scenes she has been trying to cajole him into having sex with her, and he has refused all along (Picture 4.10). This infuriates Alvin to see his brother submitting to Alice's sexual manipulation, but he remains dumbfounded and angry (Picture 4.11).



Picture 4.10 Alice kissing Stewart in front of his brother, Alvin.



Picture 4.11 Alvin reacting to their kissing.

In the preceding scene, Alice seductively displays her body to Stewart (Picture 4.12) in an attempt to convince him to murder Alvin whom she claims was raping her the day Stewart found him on top of her. Assuming his ignorance, Alice in this scene seduces Stewart to murder his brother. Coming just days after murdering Nira with Stewart's help, this scene is Stewart's last chance to redeem himself from her enslavement. However when he attempts to kill Alice in order to save his brother, she shoots him dead. In this way, the narrative exterminates all vanquished males while preserving those who refuse to engage in sexual acts.



Picture 4.12 In Stewart's bed, Alice is seducing Stewart to accept that Alvin was indeed raping her.

4.7 Conclusion

Laura Gorfkle (1994) depicts the damning exposé of the female character in Neoplatonic texts as the bearer of the hero's fulfilment, a task she should fulfil with submissive acceptance. She must concede subjugation for, "if she refuses this representation, bestowing her favours instead on the rival, the closing of her eyes dooms the ill-starred lover to loss of the self, epitomised by the 'eclipse' of the sun or a chaos of cosmic and catastrophic proportions (Gorfkle & Williamsen, 1994, p. 11)". This seemingly ordinary situation can potentially decapitate the woman's liberty, exposing her to covert enslavement – a rich niche for manipulation and control. Kanumba in addressing feminine microaggression explores how women transcend these social approbations by recreating for themselves liberties previously denied to them in favour of men. Through his creation of female characters unscathed by male characters in their spaces, he relocates masculine ideals to female characters in a way that affords them authority and access to social power over men. One way he manages to empower the female characters is embedding their masculinisation in the mundane activities in which female characters defy spatial-based hostilities identified by Jeunesse (Summer 2009);

Conventional opinions about women at the turn of the twentieth century were guided by deeply rooted cultural assumptions that female passivity and subordination should serve primarily as support for the public activity of males (Jeunesse, Summer 2009, p. 32).

From the findings of female microaggression against male characters discussed in this chapter, it is clear that Kanumba's films confer upon female characters the ability to occupy social positions hitherto appropriated to male characters and re-enact

microaggressive tendencies with similar, though unequal proportions. He depicts how consistent the phenomenology of masculinised female pervades the narrative consciousness affording female characters the ability to mimic male characters without dependence on biological transformation. These are women who have defied the boundaries of their traditional social freedom that “is often conditioned by an intense and almost inescapable ideological control. There are attitudes and protocols to which the girls must conform at all times and in all places. (Stoneley, 2003, p. 94).” They create for themselves new meanings of freedom and being, for instance; O’prah, Genevieve, Joyce and Alice who seek out sexual fulfilment overtly; and Judith who has refused domestic spaces establishing herself as a leader in a male controlled company.

Microaggressive tendencies, it seems, have been metaphorically used as indices to shift the conceptualisation of masculine and feminine taxonomies from physiological facet to social functionalism. In all the four films studied, enactment of microaggression by female characters against male characters has been downplayed, yet not denounced. The films’ narratives interrogate feminisation of the male body *vis-à-vis* masculinisation of the female body without presuming physical fixity or pre-ordained boundaries of its realisation or expression. While the narrative edifies a feminised male, it harshly punishes a masculinised female. In The Village Pastor, for instance, Kanumba’s attempts to serve his pastoral identity leads to loss of his family and even the church. Through Sarah and Pastor Pascal’s recurring adulterous liaison, the narrative ridicules Isaya’s forgiveness as conquest by his wife and anti-masculine functionalism concomitant to an inevitably sorrowful life. His wife triumph against him is eulogised as a persistent barrier to his spiritual and emotional wellbeing.

In the verbal context, the films are hesitant to bestow microaggressive tendencies upon female characters. Alice in Offside demonstrates verbal hostility towards Stewart and Alvin, yet she does not sustain her verbal onslaught as is the case with male characters. To Stewart, she seeks to position herself as an authority which should be glorified but he responds by submitting sexually, not ideologically. And even then, he considers her a bitch, a prostitute and a witch. His sexual complacency is thus more of a remorseful revenge than an actual submission of his will. On her side, she considers him stupid, as revealed when she shoots him dead, proclaiming that she chose him because he has a

shallow head, and therefore the most susceptible to her sexual lures. Her aggression towards Alvin on the other hand is reliant on his bodily appeal besides his dismissive tendencies which seem to thwart her mission to kill him together with other members of the family.

On the interactional front, female characters are hesitant to subjugate male characters, and those who dare are represented as regretting in their attempts. Sarah in The Village Pastor does not possess sufficient determination to free herself fully from Isaya or to append herself wholly to Pastor Pascal. She oscillates between both, each granting her a fragment of fulfilment corresponding to her conflicting desires. Similarly, O'prah in O'prah neither fully frees herself from desiring her husband nor become fully contented with Alfred to whom she has developed considerable emotional affiliation. Most of the circumstances in which female characters try to usurp male characters and engage in microaggressive trends are metaphorically denounced at the narrative level. Sarah does not emerge any better even after thrusting Isaya through humiliating circumstances; O'prah is destroyed after abandoning her husband for his rural friend. This is no different in eroticised microaggression as Alice's life is destroyed after sexually molesting Stewart.

The sexual overtones exhibited by the female characters are adjudged as severely demented through narrative outcomes. Alice is a sexy icon in her entire narrative life. However, she is humiliated to learn that the man she marries is her biological father and the one she kills after innocuous fornication is indeed her blood brother. This deprives her of any recompense as a masculinised female. Consequently, the study ultimately affirms that feminine assertion through use of fundamental ideological obstructions within Kanumba's cinema narratives, though passed off as masculinisation of their characters, expose female characters to a state of perpetual restiveness typifying them as insatiable and condemning them to a disparaging end. Abandonment of their familiar feminine territories seem to beget great sorrow for them, symbolising a reluctant will to conquer the masculine male by the fugitive woman whose central function in the social strata begets both inexorable desire and sorrowful loss.

This chapter, building on the discourse of gender transcendence raised in the previous chapter, has highlighted transference of masculinity upon female characters. It has also explored how these masculine-female characters perpetrate the various forms of gender microaggressions against feminine-male characters, or fellow female characters. While chapter three offered a male-centric analysis of gender microaggression, this chapter offers a female-centric view. The next chapter will offer a critical commentary about the various gender microaggression issues raised in chapter three and four, summarise the findings of the study, offer conclusions, as well as recommendations for emerging research gaps.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of the study; giving conclusions based on the findings and give recommendations for further related research.

5.2 Summary

On the subject of gender microaggression, which was the key focus of this research, the study affirms that the analysed films which feature Steven Kanumba are rich in gender microaggression dialogues. However, Kanumba's character has infused ingenious creativity in the cinema narratives to enlighten the audience about microaggression as a social discourse, diversifying masculine attributes across the gender divide in his exploration of microaggressive tendencies. Gyrating between usurpation and servitude, he encapsulates multiple microaggressive possibilities. Usurpation and servitude, it seems, go hand in hand with classification, and both male and female characters are not spared from this sub-conscious tendency. However, the study maintains that Kanumba's character offers a really pragmatic stance that creatively pervades the viewer's perception without infusing him with non-essential emotions.

Significantly, there is unequal appropriation of gender-based microaggressive tendencies across the gender divide. Male characters are generally depicted as potentially more microaggressive than female characters. In all the films studied, male characters exhibit aggravated verbal, interactive, circumstantial and erotic microaggressions. Verbal microaggressions are prevalent in situations where the male characters are critiquing or deriding some behavioural attributes of female characters. For instance, when Alice in Offside tries to override the interests of Stewart, he uses derogatory words against her. Moses in Moses similarly uses intimidating language to dismiss women's intellect on the basis of what he considers their collective ignorance. Interactive microaggressions against female characters are prevalent where male characters seek to pacify their egoistic demeanours by subduing the ambitions of female characters through interactional neglect or exclusion. In Moses, for instance, when Moses and his boss are discussing the fate of Judith – a senior management female -

they exclude her from the discussion only calling her in to deliver the decision. In this sense, therefore, she becomes a victim of masculine aggression embedded in procedural corporate attrition. Circumstantial microaggressions are prevalent as instances of oppression in which female characters are depicted in degrading circumstances. Moses, Offside, The Village Pastor and O'prah – all movies studied - are especially rich in this form of masculine microaggression. In Moses, most female characters are exposed to circumstances that degrade their dignity. For instance, Rose relies on her brother not just materially but also in effecting her personal decisions - like marriage - that he has to endorse. Genevieve - despite her significant intellectual gallantry – exhibits weaker scholarly stamina when confronted by Moses' 'superior' knowledge. To demean her social aptitude, Moses further made her succumb to his curtly invitation to spend the night in his house - a loose woman –to be rudely expelled from his house the following morning. In Offside, this has been manifested through such characters as Alvin whose view of Alice borders on misogyny. In The Village Pastor, Sarah's social essence is diminished through the simple material conquest enacted through Pastor Pascal. In O'prah, Alfred's conquest of O'prah is symbolised as the narrative's way of impeaching her character, denying her satisfaction in the fleeting spaces where she pursues self-fulfilment. Finally, erotic microaggression is prevalent in especially Offside, O'prah and Moses. This study established that these films deploy sexual symbolism in voyeuristic ways which demean female characters by advancing Laura Mulvey's (1998) concept of the patronising gaze. These are escalated mostly where the female character is poised in a sexy role, as evidenced in O'prah and Offside.

This study also notes that despite the metamorphosing masculinity afforded to both sexes, female characters are more hesitant to engage in especially, verbal aggression against male characters. The only exception is Offside where Alice, the female lead character, is more verbally microaggressive. There is also high prevalence of homogenous domination of female characters through cinematic narratives. The study expressly asserts that womanhood, as the summative condition of a woman's existence, has been greatly incapacitated through these social constricts. Sexist indifference manifested through emotional detachment, and ratified through narrative elements have coded a strong disengagement from those issues which define a woman, clearly contrasting feministic altruisms. For instance, O'prah - the character - could easily pass

for a symbol of tainted female society, or a metaphor of disingenuous social actuality. Either way, O'prah still has some positive images which censure the viewer's sense of remorse towards the woman. She, a beautiful being, subsists on an emotional wedge partly out of the ignorance of her man and partly out of her own ignorance. The desire to re-attune herself by configuring her emotional strings is debased by the consequences emanating from her encounter with Alfred, and constantly changing her identity as she evolves into a different being – not necessarily better, but identifiably distressed.

The study also established that in all these films, socially appropriated gender identities are anchored on the nature and extent of social participation of characters within their diegetic spaces. The films have, aggregately, advocated for a male-controlled society in which women are subservient to men. Whereas in especially Moses and O'prah this activism for patriarchal dominance is overtly appropriated through the male protagonists, in The Village Pastor and Offside it is enacted through terminal deprecation of the abilities of masculinised female. In this condition, womanhood pulsates with the uncertainties of copious tunes of acculturated tethering, with the potential for alteration of the woman condition in the ensuing relations of dissimilarity with the masculine friend. Though the woman's social ramifications are essentially ideological, yet the process of her 'dehumanification' strongly submit to an existential social perspective in which her agony, her forlornness, her wretchedness and misery remain relentless and absolute. In this sense, equality and social participation as pillars of feminism are deprecated.

However, there are many other deeply meaningful aspects of these films which this study slightly touched. Pursuit of gender microaggression as a central discourse afforded the researcher complimentary perspectives on the geometry of Kanumba's dramatic exploration of social stratifications through masculinity's theoretical terrain to which microaggression is appendicle as an epiphenomenal doctrinaire. Yet, despite the microaggressive stance, Kanumba offers a witty treatment of many realistic social issues in his films. His genius is apparent in many ways, the most appreciable of which is how he gives the audience decision space in all his films. The way he desists from offering conclusive ideological prose, choosing instead to offer substantial social

change yet leaving the audience a chance to negotiate – at individual level – options that best attract their imaginations is one of his strongest talents. O’prah advocates for social change through Alfred’s murder and O’prah’s contraction of HIV, yet despite the convincingly logical end, Dominic is left alone in the house – to re-marry or remain a bachelor? He too is not spared from misery as he lives in agony and sorrow commiserating his run-away wife to whom, the narrative clearly affirms, he loves deeply. In The Village Pastor, Sarah and Pascal’s death, like crippling of Isaya changes the diegetic social contexts significantly. Even at the end of this change, Isaya emerges as a metaphor of solitude – just as at the beginning. As a person, he has not changed much - he started alone with his guitar, happily plucking his favourite tunes, and at the end of the film, he is alone with his guitar, a forlorn figure embroiled in wretchedness and solitude, facing a future which is as yet undefined, but clearly sorrowful. Whether he is leaving to start another church, another family, or another way of life altogether is an option that the film leaves open.

Moses and Offside on the other hand favour more generous speculation by offering a generalised prospect of the lead character at the end of the film. In Moses, Kanumba’s misogynistic tendencies are not redeemed even in the prospect of marriage as Joyce owes her marriage status to the unborn baby whom Moses loves deeply. The film in the last sequence causes Moses to reveal his childhood woes as a way of luring meaningful relationship with Joyce, but demands of her to accept him as he is since he stoically maintains that he will not change his attitude towards women. Will he love their child once born and discard Joyce? The narrative avoids any conclusive explanation to this end thus granting the viewer the imaginative liberty to contemplate the various possibilities to this end. Similarly in Offside, Stewart’s death and Alice’s discovery that Mr Nira is her biological father while Stewart and Alvin are her biological siblings – albeit occurring late in the film – institutes sadness to her, while aggravating Alvin’s hatred for her. Yet the film only hints that Alvin’s life may possibly progress well even when the police arrests Alice. His future abroad as the only surviving free child of his late father doesn’t look promising, but just as a new, drab, start. These open spaces, existing just at the end of the films are signifiers of the freedom Kanumba chose to imbue upon the viewers. In this partially non-obtrusive way, he has fashioned a highly stimulating context where the viewer emerges out of his story with enormous

information about the realities of various pertinent social issues, but at a free tangent towards his desired arc of social change. This prolongs the cinematic denouement to encapsulate the oscillating possibilities open to an individuals' socio-cultural interpretations.

5.3 Conclusion

In contemplating the re-emerging ways of perceiving gender discourses from the bipolar feminist-masculine point of view, Ettinger's (1993) theorisation on the relationship between art, the viewer and the artist in what she calls the matrixial borderspace, is a very strong critical stance. Further, her allusion to the concept of womb as a paradigm of changing self, and a starting point for individual rebirth is also most useful in understanding the frameworks of ideological rebirth and dispersion. Extended to this study, Ettinger's (ibid) theoretical approach sufficiently points out a new way of reforming gender relations, indeed extending on existing psychoanalytic and feminist frameworks. This observation has been most suitable for this study in that it helped appropriate individual character actions in the moment, and to analyse their behaviours as new forms of emergence of the self from the self. This theoretical model was also helpful in dissolution of gender (mis)fittings by drawing on effectual consensus between genders.

Whereas it is evident that Steven Kanumba's character affords us a deeper understanding on the issue of microaggression within various social contexts, it is also important to note that his movies ultimately entail very positive lessons focused on building better societies. His personality illustrates the human desire to siphon self-realities from subterranean facets of social existence - a hypodermic stance that is only minimally ratified through the cinema's narrative outcomes. Even though Kanumba has dissected microaggression with keen and strong normative motifs, his foray into the topic is with much wit and causal logic. His character, embedded within the narrative, has optimised the narrative's potency in communicating to the audiences. Among other cinematic significations advanced through his character, Kanumba's role in the films studied has advanced various textual similarities by exploiting unique narrative nostalgia, building across the films an interconnectedness of various facets of

microaggressive performances. This is especially manifest in the various pithy motifs which recast gender dissonances arising from his cinematic treatment of masculinity's theoretical conundrums.

On the guiding objectives for this study, it is arguable that gender spaces and contexts and social typecasts of both male and female characters' behaviour sufficiently narrate gender microaggression as a prevalent discourse in Kanumba's films. Social stratification in the film's diegesis and narrative outcomes through character relations, all diffuse various masculine ideologies whose outcomes are congruent to gender microaggressive dynamics. This study thus maintains that the objectives are sufficiently affirmed, as was the hypothesis for the research. This is because of the positive correlation between the objectives and hypothesis; and the research findings as established through the study findings.

5.3.1 Crosscutting Leitmotifs

Kanumba employs a highly complex system of signification to amplify the effect of his messages. Through long sequences and patient actions, he has cast his net wide. But his approaches can be broadly categorised into three major segments, herein discussed as leitmotifs which cross-cut the narratives of the films studied: vengeful exploits, idyllic melancholy and the wretched souls discourse.

5.3.1.1 Vengeful Exploits

The films seem to undermine otherwise seriously contestable social issues in a very logical way; and this comprises Kanumba's genius in educating his audiences on microaggression while eluding perverse identification with feminine or masculine ideals. It is evident that despite the consistent microaggressive materiality in his narrative texts, in every film Kanumba embeds a logical shift from emboldening his redemptive outcome in which - despite the initial prevailing aggressions – he bestows honour upon the violated characters indiscriminately. Put into context, he persuades the audience to realistically review for themselves and re-process his proposed social perspectives in a subtle, more convincing way. In all the films studied, he avenges the disgraced character by punishing the offending character. In O'prah, punishing Alfred

with death avenges O'prah's mistreatment and exploitation in his hands; punishing O'prah with HIV and indefinite jail term avenges Dominic; while taking away O'prah from Dominic in a terminally non-negotiable way avenges her through the emotional turmoil imbued upon him. In Offside, Alvin's death avenges his deliberate shameless incest with his 'mother' while the emotional trauma that Alice suffers after realising that she has been married to and has murdered her biological father and brother avenges Alvin's moral terrorism which he suffers due to her behaviour and destruction. Mr Nira's death avenges Stewart's emotional turmoil from watching his mother get destroyed due to their father's inhuman stubbornness. In The Village Pastor, Sarah and Pastor Pascal's violent death through suicide avenges Isaya's emotional and physical crippling inflicted as a result of their sardonic adultery; while the eventual arrest and prosecution of Bishop Ezekiel who had masterminded Isaya's woes avenges Sarah and Pascal's deaths as they are depicted as victims of a genius, stronger, evil cult. Finally in Moses, the evil that their mother exposed him and Rose to is seen to be avenged through the mistreatment that he vanquishes all female characters – Judith and Genevieve for instance - until finally the narrative portrays him as emotionally incarnated and thus able to accept Joyce as his wife. Even then, the film gives him unrivalled power to subjugate her.

5.3.1.2 The Idyllic Melancholy

There is a discernible strand of creativity with which Kanumba renders his narratives. Offside, for instance, could easily pass for a romantic film, but its use of flashback narration style amplifies Alice's' villainy in the wake of an already protuberant sadness. The story is laced with sorrow and nostalgia, precipitated by a funeral in the opening scene and a calm, portent and angry sense of loss. Similarly, The Village Pastor is foregrounded by a sense of longing – for a distant love, for fulfilment – that is so engulfing that Isaya single-mindedly tends to it. His simplicity of character, his joy and sense of fulfilment in the midst of gnawing poverty casts realistic shimmer on his virtues. He even defies his grandfather and friends when they stand in the way of his conviction. It is therefore with a lot of sadness then, that he takes the last walk in the final scene of the movie, slowly pulling his legs along the dusty 'ghettoed' buildings where his dreams once lived. This enhances Sarah and Pascal's wickedness by wielding enormous sympathy to Isaya. O'prah is not different at all. In pursuit of her feelings

fashioned from the inability to get sexual satisfaction from her husband, she delves into a relationship that wrecks her marriage, gives her HIV and sends her to jail as a murder suspect. In the final scene when she is kneeling between the two police officers, her hands held high up in front of her, when she weeps and tells her husband that she knows he is the murderer, but that she will carry the burden for him, it is a very sad moment. Watching both Dominic and O'prah – who once had everything – resign to the fact that they will never be together again; the terminal, tearful separation is vividly symbolised in a sorrowful tableau. It is however noteworthy that in these narratives, Kanumba's character personifies attributes which appease masculine justice, so that at the end of each film, the climax does not require him just to triumph, but to also fill the intra-cinema spectator's expectation that the villain has been justifiably annihilated.

Concurrent with this image of obliteration is the isolation of the female character as a hateful being. In O'prah, the lead character harshly hates her subservient house help and in fact fires her from job out of malice. This, the narrative opines, is because she perceives Milkah as a barrier to enjoyment of her newfound sanguine bliss already melding well with Alfred's complicity in her sexual perversion. Critically, the fact that the director does not even bother to show the scene where Milkah is dismissed from her job by O'prah is a clear signal that he does not consider it worth showing. Shelving it has a normalising effect in the sense that it denies the viewer the chance to cross-examine the situation and form opinions which may be helpful in judging the circumstances surrounding the event. Whereas in this case the house help has not done anything to merit such a dismissal, the director contrasts this feminine attitude by introducing a whole scene in which Dominic, the distressed husband drives Alfred to an open field and dismisses him from the house, even giving him time (three hours) to pack and leave. In this scene also, he alludes to his humaneness by inferences to his conduct, and, though aggrieved, exhibits immense control over his emotions against the man who has slept with his wife and terminally ruined his marriage. That Dominic is hurt by O'prah's disappearance with Alfred implies that he has not dismissed her from his life despite her sexual ills, but would have wanted to live with her, even when he knew she has contracted HIV from Alfred. This narrative logic heightens his humaneness, amplifying his sorrow in the face of his disintegrating marriage.

Further, similar motif is evident in the sequences immediately after O'prah and Alfred lands in Zanzibar. Despite the fact that Alfred is a malicious man, he makes effort to show O'prah around, giving her some good time as they enjoy the sceneries. This precursor to other mistreatments construed through the film narrative still gives Alfred a good attribute that defines his positive essence as a human being. In the last scene in Zanzibar, Alfred - despite the fact that he is openly an evil person - chooses to give O'prah boat fare so she can travel back to mainland and to her husband. In both instances, it is the presence of the actual scene, as opposed to its implied presence (through deliberate absence) that persuades the viewer to dilute his harsh judgement of the male character in the face of this sudden, humane actions. In this sense, therefore, it is arguable that these films make gender concessions even at the director's level by allocating more attributes that are humane to the male characters even in moments of their utter digressions.

5.3.1.3 The Wretched Souls' Discourse

There are immense similarities between the portrayals of female characters across the sampled films. Offside, O'prah and The Village Pastor gives the lead female characters insatiable sexual appetite, which at the end of the film leads to their destruction. Alice's sexual affair with her son *cum* brother, despite being revealed as a plot by her aunt to carry out revenge on Mr. Nira, leads her to ultimate punishment through unspecified jail term. She finds herself a victim of circumstances who is used to achieve a vain end in that despite the anguish she faces in the third act of the film, revelation of her mistakes do not comprise means of restoration for her life. Her sexual decadence is elevated to grief and condemnation as a terminal outcome. Similarly, O'prah's extramarital love affair with Alfred too breeds misery and grief for her in the final act of the film. Just like Alice's broken family, the narrative decrees for O'prah terminal uncertainty by sending her away from her own home; and even when she tries to return, her husband refuses to have her back as she is already tainted beyond sanctity. The police officers who arrest her as a suspect in the murder of Alfred symbolise the arrival of life of gloom for her, for unspecified period. The outcome of Sarah's affair with Pascal is not dissimilar. Her insatiable sexual drive results in unbearable guilt on her part, living a life of misery despite having sex with the other man in her life out of her own free will. This film narrative actually elevates suffering of the female character by

decreeing death by suicide. All these narrative outcomes instantiate microaggression against the female characters in the sense that they are posed as gullible and stupid, a predisposition that really erodes their social appearance. More so, the vain way in which the narrative propels them to destruction downgrades their importance within their diegetic societies, being typecast as leftovers from a male-controlled world to which they seek to append themselves.

However, it is not only female characters who incur belittling gloom in these films. Even their male sexual partners with whom they engage in the illicit sexual affairs actually die in the three films. Alice shoots and kills her lover Stewart in Offside when he confronts her in the final act. Despite his obvious advantage - he is the one who has a gun – he is outwitted through her seduction and physical assault, the gun snatched from him, and shot dead. Dominic shoots Alfred dead in O'prah when he sneaks into his house in Zanzibar. Despite his arrogance and brutality, the film punishes him more than the female character for accepting her sexual advances when he knew he should not. Guilt haunts Pastor Pascal in The Village Pastor until, at the end of the film, he and Sarah submits to guilt-fed suicide. He commits suicide alongside her in the ridges of a dense forest. Consequently, it can be tacitly argued that the idea of 'wretchedness' is closely linked with sexual infringement within the marriage space. Any attempt to disassemble this institution – even if initially seen as possible – is severely punished within the narrative life; usually through real or metaphorical death. All those characters who try to assail this social institution are incarcerated. In Moses, no character infringes on marital institution. The misery imbued upon all characters is thus metaphorical as none suffers physical annihilation. In contrast to the disposition of female characters, the leading male characters are preserved despite their misery.

Alvin manages to survive Alice's evil plan to decimate his family, but the narrative does not redeem his ignorance which he shows at the start of the film as he defends her against Stewart. Despite his moral strength, he is depicted as a character blinded into believing Alice is a good woman until very late in the narrative life, when he couldn't undo the mess that she had already caused the family. Dominic does not die, but remains in perpetual sadness, being poised as a man who couldn't save his family just because

he couldn't have sex with his wife. Isaya, too, survives, despite losing his wife through guilt-fed suicide. The narrative also casts him as a witless man who could not guide his wife for better life together. He is easily fooled, despite glaring fact that his wife is cheating on him. Moses is significantly compensated for his woes by grating him a wife, but he is typecast as a weakling and perverted chauvinist who, despite his vast knowledge, could not redeem himself ideologically to live a more balanced life without the overbearing burden of misogyny. All these portrayals violate the character's integrity, demeaning their strengths through irredeemable consequences which devalue their worth.

5.4 Findings of the Study

This study sought to examine and discuss the discourse of gender microaggression as advanced through the characters within selected Tanzanian films which feature Steven Kanumba as either the protagonist or antagonist. In this pursuit, it has established that Steven Kanumba, through his cinematic character, has imbued the various film narratives with very meaningful symbols which advocate for a harmonious society. Despite the temporary ideological hypalgia mediated through some of his character's persona, he nevertheless highlights very pertinent social issues through his cinematic discourses. The power of his cinematic abilities can be traced beyond the narrative interstices, where he assumes various roles in which he significantly 'meteorises' his ingenious capacity in educating his audiences about pertinent social issues.

The study has unearthed three key findings. First, the study established that the films use male characters to highlight the rigid social fractals appropriated to modern day society in a manner not dissimilar to traditional patriarchy. In some instances, even Kanumba's character is used to diffuse paternalistic prefecture so typical of hegemonic societies where women are just the subjects, especially through the character of Moses, Alfred, Dominic, Pascal, Nira and Stewart. In their interactions, all these abrasive characters have created around them an aura of humiliating persona, often deploying their temperaments in ways that are justifiably microaggressive. Secondly, the study also noted that besides the masculinised social agenda, the films also use counter-discourse to show how social trappings can be appropriated across characters

irrespective of their gender. This is achieved by creating other masculinised female characters who defy patriarchal prescriptions and embrace masculine roles. Sarah, O'prah, Milkah, Alice, Genevieve, Judith, Joyce, Rose and Ruth all typify this new breed of socially powerful female characters. Their tendencies, just like those of masculine males, also intercept patriarchal musings by deploying an alternative face of masculinity. Finally, the study also established that masculinity, and hence microaggression, has been integrated in a multi-layered form in most of the narratives. Most of the films are double-diegetic, meaning characters exist in multiple identities at different times of the film narrative. Alfred, for instance, starts as a subjected male, and ends as a hyper male. Dominic is introduced as a wealthy all-powerful man, but ends up a miserable, lonely male so emotionally frail after his wife elopes with his best friend. Other feminised characters include Stewart, Alvin and Pascal, whose masculinity morphs to femininity across the narrative life. The only character who remains unchanged is Moses who retains his masculine ideals to the end of the film. In all these contexts, gender microaggression has pervaded the various aspects of the film's social discourses including verbal, interactive, circumstantial and sexual.

Having noted the fusion of masculinity and microaggression within cinema, it is important to explicate Kanumba's main contribution in these filmic narratives as a way of highlighting the usefulness of his character. In especially O'prah, Moses and Offside, he chooses to typify the aggressor; a trend negated in The Village Pastor where he is the victim. Yet in either edge, his attempt to not only reveal but also educate the audience about these subtle injustices inflicted on members of both gender is heroic. In these films, he offers generous wisdom to empower his audience traverse the various prairies of their social lives. In O'prah, he focuses on the essential issue of sexual fulfilment, pursuit of wealth and balance of priorities to create time for husband and wife to attune to each other's needs within family. He advocates for a strengthened marriage by highlighting potential shortfalls and consequences of reluctant relations between husband and wife. He tackles very pertinent issues in today's social life: HIV / AIDS, infidelity and pursuit of money. O'prah's strength lies in its realistic and near holistic treatment of marriage. He uncaps the troubled passions which agonise people in marriage beneath the idyllic facades projected in the public life. Dominic embodies the stereotypical wealthy man whose business is more important to him than family.

His repeated marital failure as a consequence of his inability to perform sexually is properly grounded in the narrative logic. O'prah – his wife – on the other hand symbolises the neglected beautiful housewife whose passions and sexual desire have run amok. By having Alfred killed by O'prah's husband and having O'prah contract HIV, the film enlightens the audience of the multiplicity of loss and suffering that can occur in marriage despite any surface temperament to the contrary. The misery inflicted on the lead characters warn of the painful consequences that may otherwise be bred of reckless relationship tendencies.

In The Village Pastor, Kanumba explores the difficult topic of power relations within the family. By contrasting the stereotypical cultural prescription where the man is supposed to lead his wife and to wield control over her, Kanumba's character warns of the dangers of excessive indulgences bred of pride and social power. Through Sarah, the film symbolises the enlightened wife who – buoyed on excessive confidence and ignorance – destroys her family and eventually herself. The film ridicules women's ignorant indulgences such as extramarital sexual affair, and women's tendency to demean their husbands especially when they wield more social power (education). In Pastor Pascal, the film signifies the extremity of bogus salvation – a postmodern trend where church leaders are becoming increasingly shameless in their lust and sin. Isaya however denotes adorable serenity and wisdom through his well thought actions and acceptance of his life status, enunciated in the various virtuous decision points of his life. By destroying both Pastor Pascal and Sarah, the film edifies cultural conventions and wisdom which foster good familial relations and hence preserve social norm. In his witty streak, he opines that education should not – and cannot – sufficiently substitute traditional cultural norms. Similarly, he advances the thesis that hypocrisy at the top levels of contemporary churches is becoming increasingly pronounced and even destroying the lives of the faithful.

Offside nurtures the cause-effect paradigm through Mr Nira whose evil past suddenly catches up with him. Cautioning against greed, this film maintains that status and happiness are not precisely aspects of money, but of character. He further points out that no one is really invincible – in the long run. In an inverse Oedipal trajectory, Mr

Nira marries his own daughter, who murders him and his son Stewart who is also having a sexual relationship with her. On the surface, whereas it seems that Alice's hatred for Nira and his family are justified, the social outcome haunts her more than they fulfil, ending in eventual arrest and undefined jail term. In this narrative, Kanumba peeks at the vanity of wealth accumulated through social vices like bloody criminal activities, and stipulates death to those who pursue wealth through evil ways. Similarly, he illuminates the vanity of revenge by denying Alice any sense of fulfilment and decreeing misery to her as well as a jail term. Finally, in Moses, Kanumba highlights the consequences of bad parenting to the society. Moses, due to his traumatic childhood, develops misogynistic tendencies as a result of his mother's mistreatment. His life is lived as revenge against all women. The film however offers him a chance to bring up better generation by making him a father to be in the last scene, and granting him unconditional love for the unborn child. Based on this trend to realistically mirror social issues, Kanumba's success with the cinema medium can be extended in an applied sense, just as theatre for development – to encompass wider social issues pertinent across various cultures. In this way, young artists can have a starting point in their filmmaking career, a reference to which they can reliably gauge their works. Yet at the same time, more audiences can be accessed and empowered to participate in influencing their lives for the better.

5.5 Significance and Recommendations for Further Research.

These findings hold various implications for the study, as well as the society from which it is drawn. First, the films enlighten us about frailty of gender relationships in a number of ways, starting with O'prah's very important focus on modern day urbanism and family. In this film, Steven Kanumba embodies the various social forces which threaten the stability of families, irrespective of their social ability. His attempt to show the necessity of unity between couples also carries with it the inner discourse of family values which has been highly analysed especially from the perspective of how gender interplays with microaggression. But that is not all, this study believes that Kanumba's effort to embody a youthful character teaches the Tanzanian society about the woes and vanity of greed, mischief and ignorance. Similarly, in Offside, Kanumba has embraced the lewd youth motif, joined by the equally treacherous bride, Alice, with whom he traverses various social taboos. Their interwoven lives helps to illustrate the role of

parenting and family relations in grounding children. His misery and indulgences all re-tell his inner battles which he wages in silence and solitude, as his father and elder brother sit in ignorant hush. What is a good family grounding like? What are the roles of parents in family grounding? What do children become as a consequence of their parent's decisions? These are very important questions not just for Tanzanian community, but for the larger global audience as well. In Moses, he takes us through the life of an ambitious, talented youth who is struggling to develop himself. His character encourages youth to work hard especially in educating themselves and diversifying their knowledge, and to make pragmatic choices whether in the corporate spaces or their private lives. He also advocates for courage and hard work, as well as healthy active life among the youth who must take charge of themselves and their lives. From the day he left home with his younger sister, Rose, he taught himself how to service in the streets, and worked hard to give both of them better life. His sense of responsibility actually dulls his microaggressive stance against women, whom he uses to typify urban laziness. Moreover, he enlightens young women about the vanity of dependence, advocating for a hardworking woman who has guts to become somebody in the society. Even more, his incursion into child brutality warns parents of the consequences of their actions upon their family – a theme that is prevalent in all the studied films. In the Village Pastor, Kanumba cautions against the excesses of youthful greed, especially among young ladies. He advocates for a society where they would make good use of their education and talents to become better people. He also teaches very vital lessons about poverty: it can be overcome. Moreover, his iconic symbol of resilience, and the strength he embodies in always forgiving his adulterous wife as well as the man who fornicates with her, epitomize great virtues for the Tanzanian society.

Kanumba's youthful character is quite significant in the Tanzanian society in two ways. First it identifies with the start of productive adulthood, a stage that is very important for the youth. By situating himself in both rural and urban setups, he showcases the various options available to today's Tanzanian youth, who must find their dream in a rather challenging environment. But Kanumba's bold character, especially in The Village Pastor, signifies the resilience of the Tanzanian youth, who, fuelled by their inner motivations and desires to become better people, trample all odds to achieve their dreams. Finally, it is arguable that the ingenuity with which Kanumba's character

embodies the discourse of gender microaggression is very commendable. In the various film narratives, he has woven the various strands of masculinity from both male and female perspectives, helping to highlight the deficiencies inherent in present day Tanzanian family, and by extension, the African family. His insights as a character provides ideological propulsion to the narrative spine, through which his *auteur* iconography is quite manifest.

Based on the above findings, this study has come up with various recommendations, which are clustered into two: research and policy.

As a starting point for further research, this study has established various research possibilities:

1. Extensive analyses can be done on films featuring other artists within East Africa in pursuit of a comparative study about gender microaggression on a regional front. Furthermore, comparative studies about the prevalence of microaggression discourses in various countries could also be an interesting research niche.
2. There is vast research niche in microaggression as a social discourse not just in films, but in social media, radio, print media, TV and even literary works like novels. This study is a baseline for framing more incisive studies on this new phenomena.
3. Meanwhile, the findings made from this Tanzanian study serves to enlighten about the social setup of the country itself, and a starting point for more fruitful discussions about East African cinema in general.

On the policy front, the study recommends the following;

1. That microaggression index be included as a vetting process by film classification bodies regionally.
2. That filmmakers be enlightened on microaggression discourses to enable them objectively evaluate their work and thereby produce more socially empowering films.
3. That films which feature the various forms of microaggression in their discourses without necessarily aiding in empowering the audience overcome them be banned, or moderated before release to the audiences.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Steven Kanumba's Significance in Tanzania Film Industry

Photographic evidence

Photo evidence attests to Kanumba's popularity in Tanzania's film industry (pictures below)



President Kikwete and the late Steven Charles Kanumba.



President Kikwete consoling family of the late Steven Charles



The casket of the late Steven Charles Kanumba being escorted by a multitude of mourners who had attended his burial in Dar es Salaam.



President Kikwete addressing journalists at the home of the late Steven Charles Kanumba, in Sinza 'Vatican' Dar es Salaam on April 8, 2012 where he had gone to console the family.

Media Profiling

More information can be found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Kanumba