



The Deployment of Bottom Power and the Aura of Sexuality in Historical and Literary Perspectives

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Abstract

Sex and its symbols invoke different feelings in people depending on their sexual orientation and the context of reference. This essay examines the universal lure and use of sex and ‘bottom power’ in human society. It specifically presents the daring use of ‘bottom power’ and human sexuality in history, classical and Biblical times and in three contemporary Nigerian novels. The essay is predicated on the Nigerian English concept of ‘bottom power’ and the social exchange theory for the explanation of human sexuality. It is a basic qualitative work which used library and Internet sources, critical thinking, keen observation of the deployment of bottom power in human society as well as excerpts from classical works, the Bible, ancient history, Ojaide’s *Matters of the Moment*, Okediran’s *Tenants of the House*, and Jonah’s *The Trial of Sin*. The essay established that human beings employ bottom power and sexuality to eke out a living and/or improve their social status, lubricate the social wheel and wield influence in society and complicate the chain and flow of life events. It concludes that bottom power users do face the pros and cons of the habit and social game. The selfish use of bottom power for socio-economic gains often undermines principles, quality and merit.

Keywords: Bottom power; Human sexuality; Wale okediran; Tanure ojaide; Luci Jonah; Sex.

1. Introduction

Sex according to Zevallos (2014) refers to ‘the biological traits that societies use to assign people into the category of either male or female, whether it be through a focus on chromosomes, genitalia or some other physical ascription. When people talk about the differences between men and women, they are often drawing on sex – on rigid ideas of biology’ (p.1). Sexuality has to do with one’s sexual aura, attraction, identity and habits emanating from one’s biological sexual endowment, religious and socio-cultural orientations.

Sex and its attendant challenges attract universal concerns from individuals, government and non-governmental organisations. Humanity is yet to find sovereign solutions to the queries of human sexuality and its concomitant hot button problems such as rape, homosexuality, incest, fornication, adultery, monogamy, polygamy, etc. Will there ever be an end to these sexual practices and tendencies? Previous studies on the novels analysed here have not critically examined the deployment of bottom power in the novel in comparison with other historical sexuality exploits of characters in classical and Biblical works.

Bottom power refers to the use of the power of sex and woman’s sexuality in Nigeria. The euphemistic concept is entrenched in Nigerian usage and heterosexual connections (Adegbite *et al.*, 2014; Igboanus, 2002; Jowitt, 1991). Specifically, the essay examines the concepts of bottom power and human sexuality with a view to showing why human beings use bottom power to compromise others and gain an advantage and how the subject matter has been explored in some Biblical and ancient stories, and three contemporary Nigerian novels. The three novels have the recurrent motifs of socio-political, marital and relationship instability and how the character-victims confront the social scourges depicted in the novel by deploying their intellect, bottom power and sexuality. These motifs have not been well examined in the few critical comments and works on the novels. The few critiques of the works accessible were not also done from a comparative and historical perspective, as in this essay.

Accordingly, we isolated quintessential examples from the Bible, ancient Nigerian history and three contemporary novels, showing how characters in the stories use bottom power to advance themselves and society or even create daunting challenges for society. In subsequent sections, we present the methodology, theoretical background, literature review, discussion, conclusion and references.

2. Methodology

The essay is a basic qualitative research based on the historical and literary studies of how human beings deploy bottom power to advance themselves, assist or compromise others in different spheres of life. Instances in which bottom power solved and/or created problems for humankind are cited from the Bible, world legends and three contemporary Nigerian novels to substantiate the reality of the deployment of bottom power in human society. The

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novels used are Tanure Ojaide's *Matters of the Moment* published in 2009, Wale Okediran's *Tenants of the House*, 2009, and Lucy Jonah's *The Trial of Sin*, 2016.

The novel were read critically several times and the instances of the use of bottom power were identified and extracted for analysis. The extracts are either presented verbatim or paraphrased and then analysed to clearly show the use of bottom power and human sexuality.

The concept of bottom power and the social exchange theory underpinned our analysis.

3. Theoretical Background and Review of Literature

This section presents the theoretical orientation of the paper and the review of some works on the topic and novelists. The paper is based on the popular Nigerian concept of bottom power and the theory of social exchange with 'sexual economics'.

3.1. Bottom Power

Bottom power in Nigerian English is a well-established euphemism for sex and sexuality and how they are used in society, especially by the womenfolk. It has been defined as women's habit of 'influencing favour from men through sex' (Adebite *et al.*, 2014). It specifically refers to the female habit of using sexuality to curry (un)due favours from men, advancing themselves socio-economically, politically and otherwise, getting a job, promotion, appointment, contract, higher scores in examination, avoiding punishment, creating and resolving confusion, blackmailing, among other purposes (Igboanusi, 2002; Okoro, 2009).

However, in this essay, given the new trends in heterosexual activities in society today, we have reconceptualised it for the analysis of literary works in which the motif of sex and bottom power appear. The term is sexist because it is used for women only, as if only women use sex to curry favours. Modern life and heterosexual interactions in Nigeria and in the three novels used in this paper show that sex is an instrument that both men and women use to achieve some ends. If women use sex to curry favour from men, then it means that men also use sex as a condition to give women favour. So, what is it that men gain when they make demand for sex as a condition to help women?

Accordingly, in this paper, bottom power is reconceptualised as the deployment of sex and human sexuality to solve or complicate a problem or gain an advantage, which, among others, include advancing oneself socio-politically, economically, educationally, pleurably and otherwise. Although women mostly use bottom power, men also have bottom and 'bottom tool' for social and heterosexual activities. Men equally at times use their sexuality and tool power to have an advantage, and bottom power thrives where men encourage and are ready to accept it. Therefore, the concept of bottom power should denote sex on a general note and the use of sex and sexuality by both sexes because even men now find themselves in situations in which they willingly or are constrained to use 'bottom tool' to please women and gain their love and favour. Therefore, the dynamics and nature of bottom power and tool are conceptualized as follows:

- i. Female sexuality entices men in some seductive and overwhelming ways.
- ii. Women and men need one another to complement each other and consummate their sexual desires.
- iii. In a society in which men make and break rules and tend to dominate relationship, women willy-nilly use bottom power to negotiate sharp bends and escape from socio-economic cul-de-sacs.
- iv. By the very nature of their love for comfort, pleasures and material things, most women use bottom power to acquire them because men demand for their bottom as a condition, or when women offer their bottom, men do excitedly accept to explore it with their tool.
- v. Men often demand women's bottom consistently, questionably, and desperately at times, as a sine qua non for them to render women some simple or difficult assistance.
- vi. Both men and women actually use and share their bottom power and tool in secret to acquire extra power and influence over the opposite sex in both public and private life.
- vii. In the first instance, women acquire pleasure from using bottom power, and money, material gains and influence over the men in the second and subsequent cases.
- viii. Conversely, and in most cases, men gain only love and pleasure in the first instance and then bloated ego and respect from the woman subsequently. But this is not always the case because some women also buy their men gifts and give them money these days.
- ix. Bottom power is a secret affair, but its consequences, good or bad, may become open and concrete.

3.2. The Theory of Social Exchange and Sex Economics

The concept of bottom power dovetails nicely with the theory of socio-economic exchange and 'sex economics', which conceptualises sex as a commodity for social exchange. Social exchange theory sees interaction between two persons from the angle of costs and benefits to each partner in the social union. 'Interactors are only likely to continue if each party gains more than s/he loses' (Waller and Hill, 1958). Essentially, the exchange theory assumes that social interaction is sustained because each person gives something to the other and gains something in return. Baumeister and Vohs (2004), state as follows:

A heterosexual community can be analyzed as a market place in which men seek to acquire sex from women by offering other resources in exchange. Societies will therefore define gender roles as if women are sellers and men buyers of sex... Economic principles suggest that the price of sex will depend on supply and demand, competition among sellers, variations in product, collusion

among sellers, and other factors. System in which men and women play different roles resembling buyer and seller... (p. 339)

Becker (1976), says that four main assumptions underlie the economic approach to human behaviour. To begin with, individual attitudes are linked in economic/market system where costs and benefits influence individual choices. Market forces (demand, profit motives, price and supply) determine the allocation of desirable resources. There is competition among sellers, buyers of goods and services. Lastly, both buyers and sellers sell to maximise their benefits.

Baumeister and Vohs (2004), submit that cultural dynamics tend to endow female sexuality with value, whereas male sexuality is treated otherwise. So, sex in itself is not a balanced exchange, but a situation where the man is seen to have got something of value from the woman. To balance the scale, the man has to give her something else as payment or compensation because his own sexual contribution does not have enough value to match that of the woman. How much he gives her in terms of additional materials will depend on the cultural setting, their mutual understanding and expectations. "When sex happens, therefore, it will often be in a context in which the man gives the woman material gifts, consideration and respect, commitment to a relationship as desired by her, or other goods (p. 340).

Baumeister and Vohs then expand Symon's social exchange theory to assert that sex is a female resource for social exchange, arguing that women 'receive valued goods in return for their sexual favours...Women are sex suppliers and men the buyers and consumers. Even though in one sense, a man and a woman who are having sexual intercourse are both doing similar things, socially, they are doing quite different things' (p. 341). They further hold that although men will offer women other resources in exchange for sexual intercourse, women will not do so ('except in highly unusual circumstance') because sexual activity by women has exchange value, but male sexuality does not attract additional value.

Indeed, that is the practice in most societies. The culture of paying bride price, pampering women with gifts, particularly during wooing and courtship, demonstrates this reality. However, in some cultures at present, women now consciously go all out to chase men for sex or marriage or for the both, offering them gifts and money. In certain Indian-Hindu traditions, brides give their grooms dowries. How are we to see such instances of presenting dowries? Is that not some value put on male sexuality? The so-called 'highly unusual circumstances' are no longer 'highly unusual.' Yes, the norm is that women sexuality is often paraded as an economic resource for social exchange. However, *jigoloism*, the growing habit of selling male sexuality for money and material benefits in covert and overt ways, is on the rise worldwide.

Also, rich and older women tend, these days, tend to purchase love and attention from younger men. Young women, nubile ladies and rich young widows hankering for sexual relationships and marriage go the extra mile to use material gifts and money to buy, facilitate and sustain heterosexual relationships with men. They place sexual calls to men and jigos in the social and mass media. In such situations, the men become 'sellers' of sexuality while the women are 'buyers.' What about homosexuality or sodomy: man to man relationship, and lesbianism: woman to woman? Who is selling and who is buying sex?

In some instances, sex occurs freely between partners, not for any material or pecuniary benefit, but for its sake: love for love's sake, love to express natural feelings and humanness; as one eats food when one is hungry. For example, mad people have sex; prisoners do it as well, imbeciles have sex; so are beggars on the street, among others. So, the theory of sex as economic resource for social exchange cannot adequately explain human sexuality in its totality though it is suitable for our purpose in this paper.

3.3. Literature Review

Tanure Ojaide's award-winning works have received critical universal attention. Tayo Olaofioye says that Ojaide uses imagery manipulates linguistic expressions and legends from folktales and history to express his thoughts and "depict topical issues." (7), a view that Ogaga Okunyade also holds. Ojaide "transposes forms and images in order to address more pressing post-independence concerns" (Ogaga 24). Ezenwa Ohaeto says that Ojaide is "a poet whose vision is all encompassing and the title of the poem metaphorically captures the width and breadth of Ojaide's experiences" (94). The use of proverbs forms a significant part of Ojaide works, and these have been well accounted for in one of Ojaide's novels. (Afejuku and Ekundayo) on proverbs and aphorisms in Ojaide's *Matter of the Moment* assert that a strong nexus exists between his proverbs and aphorisms, on the one hand, and his characterisation and thematic preoccupation, on the other hand. The themes of failed marriages and relationships, bad governance and political instability in the novel are linked with the use of bottom power, which coincidentally is also one of the themes of Wale Okediran's *Tenants of the House (ToH)*, an award-winning Nigerian novel.

Notable but few critics and public commentators have commented on *ToH*. Reuben Abati, a famous columnist and editorial member of the *Nigerian Guardian* commends the literary qualities and thematic quality of the novel (Salawu, 2010). Lanre Ogunyemi classifies it as strong political satire and Carmen says that it is a melodramatic novel (Carmen, 2010). Steve Bode Ekundayo examines the syntagmas of sexuality in *ToH* and shows how the characters in the novel deploy their sexuality, which is here tagged bottom power, to gain personal, and collective advantages as well as influence other characters.

Unlike Ojaide and Okediran, Lucy Jonah is a new writer in the Nigerian literary scene. Consequently, her very good works have not received enough literary criticisms. Some of the critical comments in her works may be gleaned from the blurbs of her novels and one or two literary analysis of her works in students' Projects. Osita Ezenwanebe says that *Shrouded Secrets*, another novel of Lucy's, is a "very interesting and captivating story, well crafted, socially relevant and timely. Written at a time when gender oppression and sexual violence against women are on the rise" (Blurb). Sophie Oluwole observes that *Shrouded Secrets* reveals "an underlying evil against women.

It surely can contribute in educating both men and women about the evil of rape and ways to handle and prevent it” (Blurb).

Maryann Ilebor discusses the overriding subject matter of rape in Lucy’s *Shrouded Secrets* and shows that the novel is a rich compendium of the incidents of rape, its causes, effects and panaceas. Similarly, Blessing Obasele examines social oppression of women in *ToS* against the theoretical orientation of African feminism. She concludes that the novel clearly portrays the plights of women such as discrimination and oppression in marriage, cultural alienation, sexual harassment, among others. What these few critical comments on Lucy’s works show is that the use of human sexuality and its abuse by both sexes are central in Lucy’s novels. Against this backdrop, we undertake a presentation of the use of bottom power in history and these three Nigerian novels. Human sexuality and bottom power lures both sexes into the passionate pursuit of heterosexual connections such as friendship, romance, marriage for companionship and reproduction and sex for socio-economic exchange.

4. Analysis and Discussion

In this part, the use of bottom power in historical and literary contexts are presented, beginning from classical history and literature and concluding with three contemporary Nigerian novels.

4.1. Bottom Power in Historical and Classical Perspectives

In classical history and literature, Helen of Troy is famous in this regard; the daughter of Zeus and Leda in Greek mythology. Christopher Marlowe describes Helen of Troy as follows:

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium--
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.--
Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!--
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena. (Act V, Scene I).

Helen is an epitome of beauty and sexuality who has inspired many classical creative arts, both fine arts and literary works. Suitors’ passions for her ‘bottom’ and sexuality caused the *Trojan War*, one of the fiercest and most intriguing wars in history, now drama and film epic.

In the Bible, the story of Delilah and Samson is woven around the use of bottom power. The Philistines purposely send Delilah to seduce Samson and find out the secret of his prodigious physical power:

Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.
And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and find out where his
great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict
him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver. (Judges 16:4-6)

Here, Delilah deploys her bottom power to destroy Samson and save her people for patriotic and material benefits. Delilah succeeds in the espionage after several attempts on Samson, manipulating him with her sexuality and liquor to divulge the secret of his power. Beautiful Jezebel also mesmerises King Ahab to do her biddings (First King Chapters 20-22). The story of King David and Bathsheba (Uriah’s wife) is another in which the female sexuality completely overwhelms male sensibilities and reasoning (2 Samuel 10). In the New Testament of the Bible, to satisfy a lady’s birthday request, the head of John the Baptist has to be cut off and presented as a gift! (Mark 6: 14-29). Different peoples of the world have their legends and true life stories about women who did great exploits with their sexuality and bottom power. The captivating stories of Moremi in Yoruba Nigeria, Queen Idia of the ancient Bini Kingdom and Queen Amina of Zauzau are used here.

The legend of Princess Moremi Ajasoro is popular among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. She was the angelic and virtuous wife of King Oranmiyan of Ife and the mother of Ela, a handsome young son. At that time, the ‘Igbo’ (bush) warriors would invade Ife in strange bushy appearances that looked mysterious such that the Ife people thought them to be spirits that the angry gods had unleashed on them as a punishment for some evils perpetrated. All efforts and sacrifices to pacify the gods failed. Determined to unravel the mystery, Moremi gave herself to the Igbo invaders with the objective of unraveling the secret of their powers. Her hypothetical beauty endeared her to the warriors who captured and took her away to their King. Her mindset was to discover the secret powers of the enemy tribe. Earlier, she had vowed to Esimirin, a river deity that she would offer it the best sacrifice Esimirin desired if she succeeded in her adventure. Being intelligent, sleek and seductive, she gained the trust and love of the enemy tribe and soon discovered the secret of their power in war. She discovered that they were not spirits but ordinary men who wore ivy mantles of grass and bamboo fibre which arrows and machete could cut or penetrate. If attacked with lighted torches, they would be burnt and defeated. Moremi consequently escaped and ran back to her people to reveal the secret that she had discovered. But she paid the supreme prize by offering his son Ela to Esimirin, the River Spirit who empowered her. The people of Ife were then delivered from the attacks of the hitherto invincible warriors (<http://moremi.oauife.edu.ng/history.php>, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/yl/yl12.htm>). In this legend we have a good example of the positive use of bottom power and sexuality to save an embattled people.

There is also the legend of Queen Idia of the great Benin Empire, a great beauty, mystic, herbalist and warrior who used her charming beauty and powers to protect her son Oba Esigie and ensured victories for the Benin people in her time as ‘Idia ne Iye Esigie’: Idia the mother of Esigie (Queen Mother). She was the first woman to earn the title “IYOBÀ” meaning “The Queen mother” in Benin history. Queen Idia stopped the killing of the King’s mother at the ascension of a king to the throne in the history of Great Benin–West African Civilization; first female

commander to have led warriors to fight and win a war in defense of her nation; first woman to produce one of the most enlightened princes who had contacts with the European Portuguese in the 15th and 16th centuries (<http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com.ng/2014/02/iyoba-idia-popularly-known-as-idia-ne.html>). Her head image is one of the most popular art works in the world, used for Nigeria FESTAC (Festival of Arts and Culture) 1977 and the emblem of the University of Benin, Independence Television and many other institutions in Nigeria.

Queen Idia's exploits are reminiscent of those of Queen Aminatu of Zauzau now Zaria, her contemporary in Hausa Kingdom in the distant north of the then Igodomigodo (Bini) Empire. The point being stressed here is that some women in history had deployed their sexuality and bottom power to advance humankind, to destroy enemies and then save a people. Classical and modern literary works tend to focus on the ubiquity and influence of human sexuality and bottom power in human societies and history. In this paper, three contemporary Nigerian novels are used to demonstrate the leitmotif of bottom power and human sexuality.

4.2. Bottom Power in Three Contemporary Nigerian Novels

Two novels by two award-winning Nigerian novelists and a new entrant to the Nigerian literary world amply demonstrate the use of both female and male sexualities for personal and collective socio-economic and political gains. The first novel is Tanure Ojaide's *Matters of the Moment (MoM)* published in 2009 and Wale Okediran's *Tenants of the House (ToH)* also published in 2009. The Third and new entrant is *The Trials of Sin (ToS)* by Luci Jonah published in 2016. The novels have similar structures, characterisation, subject matters and themes. While *MoM* begins with interpersonal and heterosexual concerns and then gravitates to national issues of politics and military in power, *ToH* starts from political issues in the Nigerian National Assembly (House of Representatives, hence *Tenants of the House*, and veers to interpersonal heterosexual issues of love, relationship, courtship and marriage. Both *MoM* and *ToH* use the coinage bottom power as a standard Nigerian English word and demonstrate how women deploy it to solve and create social riddles. The *Trials of Sin*, however, treat the use of bottom power and sexual harassment of females from a virtuous woman's perspective.

Franka is Dede's ex-wife in *MoM* and Dede is a firebrand intellectual, activist and journalist. Franka becomes a quintessential employer of *bottom power* after their failed marriage. She declares, "I will not embark on anything again and fail. I will not fail again. I must use any means available to me to succeed" (Ojaide, *MoM*, p.111). The narrator says that "Franka raised seduction and bribery in the university to an advanced craft" (*MoM* 110). With her "bottom power," she influences the men around her to do her biddings. She begins to pay special attention to her body, taking her time to look alluring and practising all manner of seduction tactics on the male folks. In no time, Franka acquires male lecturers of ill-repute and students as boy-friends on campus and VIP's as lovers in the larger society. The likes of the Commandant of the Command Secondary School, Brigadier Eugene Otu, and many top-placed persons become her patronizers. She gains immensely from these sexual connections. The lecturers give her high grades whether or not she merits them. Brigadier Otu is always "cutting corners" for her; influencing her NYSC posting to a state of her choice, buying her expensive gifts, cars, flying her abroad for a shopping spree, taking her to the best of places, stuffing her with excess cash, building a mansion for her mother, establishing her in a trade and making her a dignified figure. Franka becomes so advanced in this game that she begins to connect other female students to top army men. Together, they become a chain of ladies wielding the influence and charm of *bottom power*: "They dressed deliberately to arouse the sexual appetites of men. The ladies were like hunters who wanted to end up with a big kill and most of them succeeded. Little did the men know when they thought they were chasing the ladies that they were themselves going to be netted into experienced women's bosoms" (Ojaide *MoM*, p.126-7).

After her graduation Franka opens an *Art Shop*. Very important persons (VIPs) come personally to purchase art works rather than send their subordinates. "They wanted to be in her presence, wanted to inhale her sexy fragrance, look with longing at her half-exposed breasts, and chat with her" (Ojaide *MoM*, p.131). The height of the use of bottom power for socio-economic gains is demonstrated in Franka's ability to captivate the President himself. General Ogiso, the military tyrant and scare-crow, first promotes her from a mere artifact seller to the Director of the National Art Company, granting her equal shares with the Presidency (Ojaide *MoM*, p.138). Subsequently, he announces her name as one of his ministers who is "directly responsible to the President on matters of culture and information, unlike others who have to go through the Chief of General Staff" (Ojaide *MoM*, p.140). The mighty General dies immediately after exhaustive wild rounds of sex with Franka. Ironically, Franka is acclaimed a national hero for bringing down an oppressive, irresponsible and inhuman government (Ojaide *MoM*, p.184). However, at the death of General Ogiso, the crises of state that ensue now reverse her fortune downward until he runs into Dede, her estranged ex-husband, at an unavoidable corner at a most critical time; and there Dede saves her life.

The use of bottom power also permeates Okediran's *Tenants of the House (ToH)*, which Ekundayo (2013) has partly examined. Ekundayo (2013), states that several characters deploy their bottom power and sexuality for personal and collective socio-economic ends. Honourable Elizabeth Bello, alias Lizzy, and Batejo, the red Fulani girl, Angelina who is sent as a spy to the House Deputy Speaker and the jigolos in Abuja, one of who called to inform Lizzy that they are available for sex, reflect the use of bottom power by both sexes for socio-economic purposes (Ekundayo, 2013). The novel states that "rumours swirled around Lizzy's name. The soft-sell magazines wrote of her romantic linkages with one minister and two senators. But I couldn't care less. I wanted Lizzy. I needed Elizabeth" (p.8).

During an 'impeachment project' against the Speaker of the House of Representative, Lizzy, who is on the side of the President, uses shameless seduction to get and sustain Hon. Sam's support: "Over your former request," she said as she approached me again. Giggling, she unbuttoned the top of her night gown to reveal her perfectly formed

breasts. Smiling wickedly, she lifted her left breast towards me. "Come Samuel, you have always wanted this. (*ToH*, p.66). Hon. Lizzy, as delineated here, is an adept seducer and user of her sexuality for her selfish ends.

Furthermore, Ekundayo (2013) explains that the Senate President pays Angelina to act as a spy and mistress of the Deputy House Leader to get some secrets to blackmail him. Angelina sleeps with the Deputy House Leader in a double deal, posing as the Deputy Leader's mistress; and she gets well paid by him and, at the same time, functioning as a secret agent for the Senate President (332).

Interestingly, this novel balances the scale by showing that men also sell their sexuality, as the jigolos in Abuja of *ToH* openly do. Honourable Elizabeth (Lizzy) then reveals pointblank that "Many rich single women keep jigolos. They hate to get involved with men who will give them a headache. Far cheaper, far safer, far, far more emotionally comfortable to have their needs met on demand. Paid for, no complications..." (p. 208).

The two Nigerian novels successfully and amply reflect the reality of the use of bottom power and its consequences on individuals and human society. Sam himself, who resisted Lizzy's sexual overtures earlier, latter falls helplessly for Batejo, a nineteen-year old, scintillatingly beautiful Fulani girl. After getting thoroughly flogged at the public event of 'sharo' stick flogging, Sam loses out to Gidado, his Fulani rival who flogs him to a stupor! (pp. 292-295).

In *The Trials of Sin (ToS)*, the third novel, two interesting perspectives are introduced to the use of bottom power, human sexuality and men's forceful demand for sex from women. The first dimension is that a woman who finds herself in a circumstance that should overwhelm and make her succumb to the use of her bottom stiffly resists the lure on principles, unlike in the other two novels. Second, the third novel shows that sexual expression is ingrained in human nature to which for one reason or another we succumb: some for material gain or money and some for pleasure, relief and true love, as Adaego, or Ada, the heroine of the third novel, epitomises. Ada, a paragon of pulchritude, is the epitome of human sexuality and the use of bottom power for socio-economic pleasures and gains in the novel:

At fifteen, the promising flower had blossomed into a beautiful shoot. Every young man who set eyes on Ada wanted her as a wife. With her height at 5 feet and 8 inches, her spotless light skin that shone as if it were constantly polished, long beautiful hair, bright eyes and bronze-coloured lips, Ada, a combination of brains, beauty and character, became a trophy which the privileged men in her community desired and struggled to win. (p.9)

This early portrait of Ada's beauty in the novel sets the stage for the use of her sexuality to solve the economic predicament which Ada's family later runs into with the sudden death of Okocha, Ada's father, from an industrial accident. Even before his death, Okocha had advised Ada to brace up for early marriage because her parents will not be able to fund her education as well as that of her male siblings who have Okocha's priority, as the general practice is in the setting of the novel. So, 'when Dike indicated his interest in Ada, Okocha felt it was a double blessing because Dike was not only rich and eligible but also born to a worthy father. He discussed it with his wife and they agreed that Dike would be a good husband for Ada' (14).

Much to her chagrin, she is constrained to marry Dike who promises her parents to send Ada to secondary school and everybody but Ada is pleased with the development: 'Why is everyone so happy and I am feeling so sad? Gracious Lord, is my family asking me to sacrifice my ambition and future for their happiness? Even if I must marry, must it be this man? Should I not be given the chance to choose a husband myself?' (15). It is precisely as she has reasoned. Her seductive sexuality becomes the sexual commodity which her parents trade off to improve their standard of living. Unfortunately, the marriage, which had rosy beginnings, eventually hits the rocks after Ada has endured years of torture, flagrant infidelity, abuse and childlessness culminating in Dike impregnating and bringing in another girl, a development that pushed Ada out of Dike's home and out of the village.

Ada relocates to Lagos to live with Fidelis, her uncle, the only asset she left Dike's home with being her secondary education and extensive reading in Dike's home. Determined to survive, Ada takes tutorials in secretariat administration and enrolls for the General Certificate Examination (GCE), which she passes in flying colours and the success and secretarial skills enable her to get employed as a Secretary and Personal Assistant to the Managing Director of Black and White, a firm that 'deals with import, exports and general contracts' (p. 73). Here for the second time her beautiful sexuality soon lands her in trouble. She has been given an assignment to reach the Ministry of trade and secure an import licence to import materials which Black and White requires to execute a fifty-million-naira contract, a huge sum of money at that time. Ada meets Brigadier Ewo, the officer in charge of issuing the import licence. Brigadier Ewo is presented as a character with an appealing sexuality:

Brigadier Ewo was a man with good looks. He was robust and about 6 feet 3 inches tall. He wore a well-tailored military uniform, had a cocoa brown skin and a smiling oval-shaped face. He decked a gold-framed pair of glasses...with his boisterous posture, he looked like a giant among the men who worked with him. At thirty-eight, he looked considerably young for his status and responsibilities. (p. 75)

That is the character Ada is to face, the type that women often refer to as 'the ladies' man.' As usual with most men, General Ewo will not issue Ada the licence without conditions attached. And what are the conditions? The General states them firmly and clearly:

I will give you the licence on two conditions...He stood up from his seat and moved nearer to Ada's seat under the full glare of a handful of visitors and grabbed Ada by the hand. Ada was embarrassed. Terribly displeased, she gently pulled her hands back. The Brigadier noticed her frown and said, 'Young woman, as I said earlier, the two conditions must be met. One, Black & White must give a kickback of ten percent of the value of the licence to members of my

committee; two, you must become, girlfriend because I cannot imagine dealing with a beautiful woman like you without having a taste of her inner self. (p.76)

We see a balanced use of bottom power here: Men do ask for it and then women give or not give it, as stated in the theoretical explanation. Surprisingly, Ada refuses his attractive offer, even the possibility of getting her own import licence. While Black & White is ready to give the ten percent kickback, Ada is most unwilling to give her body to the army General to facilitate the issuing of the direly needed licence. To no avail, her Managing Director blackmails, coaxes and coerces her to succumb to the General's overture. Ada stands her ground and so does General Ewo. To secure the licence, Black & White uses another seductive female staff members who fulfills the General's condition. Consequently, Black & White fires Ada, throwing her back into the unemployment market. She will not have the sympathies of Uncle Fidelis now because Fidelis had advised her earlier to 'close her eyes' and do it to retain her well-paying job. However, she refused on moral and principled grounds, unlike Ojaide's Franka or Okediran's Elizabeth who would have jumped on the 'wonderful' opportunity to use their bottom power to their socio-economic advantage. Lucy Jonah's *ToS* is a clear departure from the general run of presenting women as almost always incapable of resisting the use of their bottom power to their advantage. Jonah's Ada is an excellent examples of virtuous women who can achieve that feat in real life.

The third instance of the deployment of sexuality and its charms is of a sort in the novel. At a juncture in which true human nature emerges to the fore, Ada succumbs to deep emotional pressure. After losing the good job in Black & White, she relapses into harder times, joining a Catholic church for succour now at 26, becoming totally committed to church activities and soon catching the attention of Ayazi, a young business man and Vice President of the Pastoral Council. Ayazi is a handsome, cute, smooth-skinned, ever-smiling young man in his forties, about 6 feet tall, who notices and appreciates Ada's humility and commitment. What is more? He finds Ada's stories very touching and decides to help her. Consequently, she gives her a job as Sales Supervisor in his supermarket. Ada with her Midas' touch and consistent hard work, even at the detriment of her health, makes Ayazi's business prosper to an unprecedented level, a development that gladdens Ayazi's family and endears Ada to them. But somehow, suddenly, she takes ill and needs serious company. Ayazi is on ground to offer the succour that she needs and in that show of sympathy, or even empathy, love unintentionally creeps into their hearts:

Three days after she was discharged, Ayazi paid her a routine visit, and was surprised to meet her weeping. As he could not bear the sight of Ada weeping, he held her in the arms and tried to comfort her. But as fate would have it, he found himself kissing Ada and before he could control himself, the masculine nature took control of him and so he carried Ada in his arms and placed her gently on the bed and undressed himself. Ada lay still and watch Ayazi as he undressed. Ayazi came over to her, gently removed her clothes without her resisting. They had it! Full passion and desire! At the end she felt the kind of bliss she had never had all her life. She slept off like a baby, resting her head on Ayazi. (p. 95)

In this scene overwhelmed with the aura of true and deep affection, Ayazi's and Ada's sexualities stand on edge for self-expression denied. Ada and Ayazi expresses their true sexualities here, unavoidably. Ayazi becomes her weak point, the only man she loves; but it turns out to be catastrophic because Ada goes pregnant for Ayazi, having a son later by him named Blessing. Agnes, his wife, discovers the unintended extra-marital affair. She organises some people to give Ada the beating of her life, scandalising her in public. Thereafter, Ada runs far away from Ayazi and his family, preferring to being a single mother and so avoiding trouble.

Once again, her better nature and sexuality takes her to the love precincts of Akanbi, a widower-colleague in Abami Nigeria Ltd where she now works and earns a livelihood. As Ada reasons with Akanbi, 'I felt sorry for you because I have come to believe that nature has a way of ridiculing the pure at heart. It looks as if those who run away from trouble and sin suffer more than those who embrace it... I have been sinned against and in my desperation I too have committed sin I never thought I could' (125). Ada and Akanbi enter into a relationship which is to be consummated in an open wedding, but out of the blues, Dike relaunched her love for Ada's personality, thus disrupting the wedding that is to take place between Ada and Akanbi right in the church before the congregation. Willy-nilly, Ada returns to Dike who dies shortly after, paving the path for Ayazi her true love to return to her. The life of Ada in the novel shows that human sexuality is extremely powerful like a double-edged sword which cuts both ways. One either becomes a victim of one's sexuality or another person becomes a victim of it. Women, and now men, deploy their sexualities to advance themselves socio-economically.

5. Conclusion

The paper examined the concept of bottom power, a euphemism for sex and its deployment in human society, citing instances from history, Ojaide's *Matters of the Moment*, Okediran's *Tenants of the House*, and Jonah's *The Trials of Sin*. Bottom power in the novels is deployed for different reasons, as in human society and history. Both women and men in all society are active participants in the dynamic use of bottom power and human sexuality. It is capable of solving problems and creating serious problems for those who offer it and for those who accept it, as seen in the cases of the characters Franka, Lizzy, Sam, Ada, Batejo and others in the three novels examined in this paper. It does not look like humanity can eradicate the use of bottom power and human sexuality because even the continuity of life hinges on it and it is done in utmost secrecy and privacy. However, its use to pervert justice and reverse human progress must be condemned and checked.

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