

# Deconstructing Masculinity: Colonialism Part 2

By D.O.P.E. Collective

## European Values

European Sodomy and Sexuality Timeline:

- **1400 BC – 1 AD** Greek and Roman Era. Sexual relationships between men are accepted culturally, with strict norms of who takes what role in sex acts.
- **1 AD – 700 AD** Christianity increases in Western Europe. Sexuality or nudity except for procreation in marriage is condemned.
- **533 AD** Justinian ( Christian Byzantine *East Roman* emperor) imposes death penalty for adultery and same sex acts.
- **900 AD – 1100 AD** Increased tolerance of differences: religious, cultural, sexual. Knights, clerics, and popes engaged in same sex acts.
- **1260 AD – 1600 AD** Intolerance increases. Inquisition, witch hunts. Same sex acts are equated with heresy. Women punished for violating gender norms.
- **1533 AD** Buggery Law. First English civil law to call for death penalty for same sex acts between men.
- **1600 AD – 1800 AD** Colonial America: colonists are scandalized by Native American beliefs about sexuality and nudity. Some Native American cultures revered cross-dressing women and men as healers and shamans. They also discover “buggery” (sex between men or between women) among Native Americans.
- **1800 AD – 1860 AD** Attitudes about sodomy change in France, the United States, Germany, and England. Such acts are still a crime but no longer punished by death. Thomas Jefferson recommends that the state of Virginia punish such sex acts between men by castration and sex between women by having a hole, one and a half inches in diameter, cut into their nose cartilage.
- **1869 AD** Karoly Benkert, a Hungarian doctor, coins the term “homosexuality” to describe same sex acts.



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## Acts Against God

- Sodomy was equal to the word sin.
- These sodomy laws in the British colonies were considered an act against God or unclean acts.
- A lot of beliefs from these Sodomy, extend back to medieval England. In which Europeans prosecuted witches (in a European context). Practitioners of Judaism, would be accused of bestiality.
- These acts included: oral sex, anal sex, “pagan” practices, and Judeo-Christian practices
- These laws remained a mainstay in many European societies even til this day, that it was imposed upon the people they colonized.
  - Against, or “unclean acts” could be considered sorcery (ex: African slaves practicing their ancestral religion).
  - Heretics (anyone who didn’t practice the religion of the Church of England)

## Buggery Laws (Jamaica)

- Sodomy laws (known as Buggery laws) in Jamaica are over 150 years old were British colonial laws that disallowed anal sex.
- Violation of that law would lead to 10 years in prison with hard labor.
- Any act of gross indecency would automatically result in 2 years in prison i.e. oral sex, handjobs, etc.
- Depending where in the world these laws existed determined how the rules would play out. Ex. African colonies, Indian and other Asian colonies, and Caribbean colonies may have different laws.
  - Most of these former colonies retain these sodomy laws until this very day

Buggery - In Middle English it means “heresy,” used to describe sodomy or disapproved sexual acts.

Section 76. Unnatural crime. Whosoever shall be convicted of the abominable crime of buggery ... shall be liable to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for a term not exceeding ten years.

Section 77. Attempt. Whosoever shall attempt to commit the said abominable crime, or shall be guilty of any assault with intent to commit the same, or of any indecent assault upon any male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding seven years, with or without hard labour.

Section 79. Outrages on decency. Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour.

*\*\*How can a family sit down and watch a bloody movie and when the sex part come dey cover up di pikni*

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face?"- **Mutabaruka, Jamaican Rastafari dub poet, musician, and actor.**

## Pre-Colonial African Views on Gender and Sexuality

- **Ifa (Ee-fah)** - is the divination system found in the Yoruba spiritual system of West Africa
  - This divination system is also in Haitian voodoo, Vodou, Santeria, Louisiana voodoo, and many other African based spiritual systems
  - Ifa religious tradition (tradition practiced amongst the Yoruba people who reside in what is now called Nigeria) worship a supreme who is gender fluid named Obatala.
  - Haitian Vodou (as well as many other Afro-Caribbean religions) stems from a multitude of traditional African spiritual traditions from central and western African nations, and indigenous Caribbean religions, but it most heavily stems from Ifa religious tradition.
  - Within the Ifa religious traditions a lot of the same ideology in regards to gender exists
  
- **The Orishas (Or-ee-shas)** are a spiritual manifestation of the supreme being.
  - We in western culture would say they “share” Gods, but the Orishas have a multitude of meanings and manifestations
  - These manifestations are a multifaceted interpretation of the complexities of the human experience

## Igboland & Non-Western Hegemonic Masculinity

**Ndubueze L. Mbah**

***Emergent Masculinities: Gendered Power and Social Change in the Biafran Atlantic Age***

**Ogaranya (Oh-gah-ron-yah)** - hegemonic masculinity obtained by wealth-power, the legitimacy of the status was assured by “helping others get up.”

1. Hegemonic masculinity differs from colonial masculinity
2. Cutting heads or “to cut a head” was a sign of hegemonic masculinity

Pre-colonial	British Colonial 1807-1960
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hegemonic Masculinity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Polygamy was a practice to ensure immortality through procreation</li> <li>○ Cowry shells and coral beads</li> <li>○ Successful harvest (ex: yam crops)</li> <li>○ Building houses, zinc-roofed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hegemonic Masculinity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wives were equated to wealth - <i>elite polygamy</i></li> <li>○ Vehicles</li> <li>○ British Pounds</li> <li>○ Guns</li> <li>○ <b>Enslaving people/capturing (a head)</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>houses</li> <li>○ Textiles</li> <li>○ <b>Winning battles/wars (a head)</b></li> <li>● Political System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dual-political system</li> <li>○ Dual sex = each sex had the autonomy to manage their own lives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wearing European clothing</li> <li>○ Being the head of household</li> <li>● Political System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Monarchy</li> <li>○ Euro-patriarchy = men over women</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Ike Nwami (masc.)** - to take a woman captive or possess her

**Oke-Nwami (femme.)** - woman possessor or female husband - this was seen as "warrior masculinity" in a later/colonial period and women who acted upon it were working on their ogaranya status.

### **Presbyterian masculinity and sexuality**

- Monogamy only, wage labor, and western education
- **Dibia ( dee-bee-ah, traditional medicine or spiritual mediumship)**, women and the power of elders were undermined and challenged.
- Under European rule only men were educated, positioned as religious leaders and were rewarded with "a good christian wife."
- Women gained wealth through Presbyterian sexuality - they became domesticated wives and were educated by joining the church, becoming "ladies" or "matrians" - had to practice the *arts of a victorian household*
- Women were subjugated and men became the head of household
- Agwu and Uka were seen as "deviant women."

**Ohafia** - matrilineal territory in Igboland

- The motherline distinguished kinship/family
  - Uncles/brothers were responsible of taking of their sisters' children as if they were the biological father.
- Ohafia women would marry wives from neighboring patrilineal Igbo societies.
- The integrated patrilineal women had no local matriarchal line and would gain membership as "husband sisters"

### **Otuwe Agwu and Unyang Uka**

**Madam Chief Otuwe Agwu (O-too-way Ah-goo)** aka Okere Ike Eleghe Ikom - She-That-Performed-Masculine-Bravado // Obia Nwami - Grand Matriarch

1. **BECAME A MATRIARCH** - Tapped into hegemonic masculine privilege and power
2. **Life and Marriages:**
  - a. Married in 1905, no children - needed a daughter to build an ancestral shrine to secure her immortality; she then married a wife to have children.
  - b. The male husband had no say in the relationship between Agwu, her wife and their children.

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3. **GAINED WEALTH UNDER BRITISH RULE THROUGH DIBIA** - gained hegemonic masculinity and femininity
  - a. **Smallpox epidemic in 1918** - while traditional medicine men were converting to Christianity (they felt “the Gods had failed them”) Agwu performed **dibia pilgrimages (traditional medicine or spiritual mediumship)** which was seen as “masculine bravado.” Because slave capturing made travel dangerous those who traveled were seen as warriors.
  - b. Healed STIs like gonorrhea; and infertility in women, was known as the “Impregnator of Women.”
  - c. Experienced bigotry for practicing diabia from colonists yet succeeded and was known as Anyanwu N’enye Ibe - The Sun that Brings Light to the World

**Unyang Uka (Oo-young Oh-kah)** aka Mmia Unyang Okpu Agu - The Leopard Cap Female Chief // Mmia Unyang Pon-Pon - The Female Chief who controlled British Pounds

1. **BECAME A MAN** - Tapped into maleness - wanted to be and was referred to as a man, cross dressed and wore traditional warrior garb as a representation of her status.
2. **Life and Marriages:**
  - a. **Elder brother (Johnson)** was “pampered by his mother” and became a presbyterian minister in 1917.
  - b. **Mother** was a wealthy farmer, trader and philanthropist
  - c. **Father** was a renowned warrior and slaver - Uka became like a man by assisting her father in the slave trade and took on the role of her brother. She took over the trade after her father’s death and sold male slaves outside of the territories and sold the female slaves as wives to her friends, family and other men in Ohafia.
  - d. 1885 - Married a male husband and had a daughter that she named after herself.
  - e. She married from 500-2000 (oral tradition) wives; her matrilineage was the largest in Ohafia, Igboland - Elite Polygamy
  - f. Through “giving” wives to men in Ohafia she gained Ogaranya status; the children from those marriage were legally her’s because she paid the bride price - men and the value of sperm had no claims; she was “the husband of many wives and father of many children.”

## Decolonization

“Decolonization is the ending of colonialism and the liberation of the colonized. This requires the dismantling of the colonial government and its entire social system upon which control & exploitation are based. Decolonization, then, is a revolutionary struggle aimed at transforming the entire social system and reestablishing the sovereignty of tribal peoples, in political terms, this means a radical de-centralization of national power (i.e., the dismantling of the nation-state) and the establishment of local autonomy (community and region, traditionally the village and tribal nation).”

### ***Colonization and Decolonization: A Manual for Indigenous Liberation in the 21st Century***

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### **Phases of Decolonization:**

**Recovery** - reconnecting with one's history, culture and people. Ex: returning to one's community, re-establishing family relations, re-learning culture (art, language, songs, ceremonies, hunting, fishing, dancing, etc.)

**Mourning** - a time when a people are able to lament their victimization which can be expressed through deep sadness and anger. "The abuse of the mourning phase can continue in mourning, anger, hate and the division of people; getting stuck in victimhood.

**Dreaming/Reconstruction** - THE MOST CRUCIAL; restructuring involves reassessment of existing institutional power structures and expanding our worldviews and shifting our paradigms to make a better world for all nations. Those who ridicule the dreaming phase usually have short-sighted goals which measured by material gains.

**Commitment** - committing to your dreams and making the decision to make them reality; combined voices and clear direction.

**Action** - MUST be done after commitment to be the true will/decision of the people; political/social change. - **WHAT DOES DECOLONIZATION LOOK LIKE TO YOU?**

**\*Healing** - continuous processes of self care and communal supports. This can range from staying hydrated and remembering to eat to having exclusive spaces for suppressed identities and social intersections i.e. black/african women only spaces.

*"Decolonization is always a Violent event. At whatever level we study it-individual encounters a change of name for a sports club, the guest list of a cocktail party, members of a police force or the board of directors of a state or private bank-decolonization is quite simple the substitution of one species of mankind by another."* - Frantz Fanon

### **Intergenerational Trauma and Healing**

- Trauma is universal! Regardless...
  - Age
  - Race and ethnicity
  - Gender and sex
  - Class
- ...determined by physically or psychologically stressful events. Resilience differs from person to person
- Types of Trauma
  - Acute - single incident
  - Chronic - repeated or prolonged

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- Complex Trauma - exposure to multiple traumatic events which are usually prolonged, invasive and personal
- Cortisol - the primary stress hormone, increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues.

### **Generational and Historical Trauma**

- Descendents from traumatized peoples have higher levels of cortisol
  - Katrina, 9/11, Syrian War, Israeli and Palestinian War(s), the Holocaust, Chattel Slavery, colonialism, etc.
- PTSD is more likely to be passed through the mother via high levels of cortisol in the placenta
- Risks:
  - **PTSD:** a mental health condition triggered by experiencing or seeing a terrifying event.
  - anxiety and depression
  - behavior
  - obesity
  - hypertension
  - insulin resistance
- Systematic violence retraumatize communities and traumatized peoples can continue, even subconsciously, violent behaviors.
  - Ex: LAPD would report cases involving black people and/or sex workers by using the term "N.H.I." meaning "No Human Involved."

### **Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)**

- Adaptive behavior - conceptual, social, and practical skills that all people learn in order to function in their daily lives; including but not limited to literacy; self-direction; and the concept of numbers, money, and time. Skills for daily navigation.
  - Paranoia of: police, healthcare systems and social workers
  - Parenting / Interpersonal relations
    - Emotional neglect, lack of self-determination and abundant criticism
    - Dr. DeGury conducted a study with 200 young black men within the same neighborhood (half have been incarcerated, the other have not) and found that the most significant predictor of violence was NOT witnessing violence, but was the lack of respect.
- Learned Helplessness - the feeling of loss of control or autonomy in one's life.
  - Belief in not achieving adulthood or short life expectancy
  - High levels of depression
  - Loss of hope
- Internalized Oppression - oppressed group that believes and acts out the stereotypes created about their group.
  - Colorism

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- Intellectualism is closer to whiteness
- Self-hate
- Horizontal Oppression - oppression that occurs within a specific group by some members towards people who lack the same or similar privileges.
  - Anti-blackness and respectability politics (policing behaviors and values of others to align with the mainstream i.e. colonial values) in the black community
  - Other examples: Femmephobia among LGBTQ+ and binary trans people oppressing non-binary trans people

## **Decolonized Masculinity**

**What does non-hegemonic masculinity look like? What exactly is a depatriarchalized masculinity? - Shay GenderFuq**

- A masculinity that is not based on domination.
- A masculinity not based on hierarchy
- Masculinity based on understanding the diversity, of how gender can be perceived within a culture.
- In regards to colonized groups this can be seen as the understanding on how gender has been perceived within the culture of the colonized group. finding examples of pre-colonized ideologies of gender, or recognizing toxic, or problematic ideologies of gender that will hurt the colonized group when the group decolonizes.

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