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Conceptual Metaphors and Ideological Representations in J. P. Clark's *Song Of A Goat*

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Abstract

This paper examined how metaphor is used to conceptualize experience and ideologies, and how meaning is achieved in J.P. Clark's *Song of a Goat*. Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, complemented with Van Dijk's sociocognitive approach to critical discourse studies, served as the theoretical framework. Relevant metaphors that capture the predominant ideologies are identified and analysed. Three major themes are expressed in the play: sexual frustration, marital infidelity and vengeance. There are three predominant ideologies represented in the text, namely patriarchal, protestant and optimist ideologies. These ideologies influence the themes of the play. The metaphors are used to express sexual issues in an inoffensive manner. With the metaphors, the playwright addresses the need for couples to be sensitive to each other's needs and not to pretend that issues will sort themselves out. The play projects the world view of the Ijaw society as a representative of many African cultures.

Keywords: *Song of a goat*, Ijaw, Ideology, Conceptual metaphor

1. Introduction

Metaphor is a common way of expressing one's thoughts, emotions and experience in everyday and specialized language. It is not just an ornamental aspect of language; through it, people conceptualise their world and their own activities. It provides access into human cognitive process and constitutes a fundamental part of people's ordinary thought, reason and imagination. It makes human thought more vivid and interesting, and structures human perceptions and understanding (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Odebunmi, 2010).

Literary artists often capture the way tropes are used in the cultural milieus of their creative pieces. In fact, some writers do this so much that their works pass for a compendium of metaphors. One of such is John Pepper Clark, a renowned African poet and playwright. John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo was born on 6th April, 1935 in Erhuwaren, an Urhobo village near the Izon town of Kiagbodo in Delta State,

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Nigeria, to the family of Chief Clark Fuludu Bekederemo. *Clark's dramatic works, such as Song of a Goat (1961), The Masquerade (1964), The Raft (1964), Ozidi (1966) and The Boat (1981), manifest his cultural and experiential ideologies, through the figurative and ornamental use of language, especially metaphor and imagery* (Smith, 2008; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2010; www.africansuccess.org/visuFiche.php?id).

The Izon people are located within the Delta and Rivers States of Nigeria, and are immigrants in other delta areas of Nigeria, such as Ondo, Ijebu Waterside, and Lagos. The community has about twenty-seven clans living together. Most texts (for example, Ariye, 2013) call the people Ijaw or Ijo, which is the original name of the community. Izon, Uzon, Uzo, Oru, Ezon, and Kumoni are modern variants of the name, which all mean the same thing. The Izon people are culturally monolithic, but there are minor cultural variations among the clans (www.unitedijaw.com/culture.htm).

In the Izon belief of destiny, it is man who determines his fate, not the gods. A man can seek the advice of the gods through the oracle on how to change it if he discovers that his destiny is unfavourable. Tragedy occurs if, after consulting the oracle, he refuses to obey the instructions. In Izon's outlook to life, the natural and the supernatural worlds are one. Man must be loyal to the gods for peace to reign in the physical world (www.unitedijaw.com/culture.htm).

Water spirits are believed by the Izon people to be like humans, in having personal strengths and shortcomings. It is believed that humans dwell among the water spirits before being born. Also central to the festivities is the role of masquerades, a way of venerating the ancestors. Men wearing elaborate outfits and carved masks manifest the influence of the water spirits through the quality and intensity of their dancing. Spectacular masquerades are taken to actually possess the particular spirits on whose behalf they are dancing (www.onlinenigeria.com/finance/blurb=669).

The main occupations among the Izon are fishing and farming. The women are traders in fish, cassava and timber. Marriage is viewed as a transaction, as it is completed by the payment of bride price, which increases in amount if the bride is from another village, so as to make up for that village's loss of her children (www.unitedijaw.com/culture.htm). As Uzobo et al. (2014) note, women occupy a very important position in the community. They are given recognition and they participate in the traditional economic, political and spheres. Gods and spirits as women are also portrayed as women.

J. P. Clark's *Song of a Goat* is a tragedy of an impotent man, Zifa. His impotence is as a result of the curse placed on him by the gods. This causes his wife,

Ebiere, sexual frustration and untold mental and physical anguish; she indulges in an illicit love relationship with her brother-in-law, Tonye. This brings disaster to the family.

The play, set in the Ijaw society of south-southern Nigeria, embodies the socio-cultural and religious beliefs and ideologies of the society. The play has four movements, with an alternative close. The action kicks off in the first movement, where Masseur, who, in the Ijaw community, is a doctor, gynaecologist, confessor and priest, through a metaphoric use of language, interrogates and diagnoses Ebiere and Zifa. He suggests to them that Ebiere should be given in marriage to Tonye, Zifa's brother, to solve their infertility. The play pushes into its complication in the second movement, when Orukorere, Zifa's half-possessed aunt, foreshadows the destruction of the family through animal metaphors – 'leopard', 'goat' and 'snake.' As a result of Ebiere's frustration, she seduces Tonye into a sexual relationship with her. Zifa, aware of this through her countenance, attempts to kill his brother, who eventually commits suicide. Zifa also drowns himself.

Most of the existing studies on J.P. Clark's *Song of a Goat* are from the literary perspective (Ekanpou, 2007; Smith, 2008; Okolocha and Akhuemokan, 2012; Yaseibo, 2013; Aguoru 2013). However, Osoba (2013) examined the text from the linguistic perspective. Therefore, this study examined the use of conceptual metaphors in the text to bring to the fore how they are used to construct ideologies and capture the Ijaw culture.

2. Themes in *Song of a Goat*

There are three major themes in the play: sexual frustration, marital infidelity and vengeance. All these themes are intricately woven together. The theme of sexual frustration is depicted by the family of Zifa. His impotence, a repercussion of the punishment meted out to him by the gods of the land, makes Ebiere, his wife, frustrated. She feels famished and denied of sexual pleasure in her matrimonial home. It is this frustration that makes Masseur to suggest to the couple that they should get another man to be having sex with Ebiere, particularly because she desires having more children in addition to Dode, their only child.

Initially, the couple reject the offer of Ebiere. The sexual frustration of Ebiere makes her to be involved in extra-marital affair. The theme of marital infidelity is presented as a serious one in the society of the play. It becomes more serious and worrisome to the community because it is Tonye, the younger brother of Zifa, that Ebiere approaches to satisfy her sexual desire and she does it in such a way that suggests forcing Tonye into it.

The two themes discussed above lead to vengeance. Zifa wants to kill Tonye for what he considers to be betrayal arising from his adulterous act. Tonye

hangs himself in one of the rooms before Zifa could get to him. This act of revenge which Zifa could not perform makes him to drown himself. With this, the family of Zifa suffers tragedy upon tragedy. Their only son is seriously heartbroken, Orukorere, the oldest surviving person in the family, is dejected and the family becomes a byword in the community.

3. Method

J. P. Clark's *Song of a Goat* served as the text for this work. Metaphors that capture specific ideologies expressed in the text were selected. The data collected were analysed using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980; 1993) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, complemented with van Dijk's sociocognitive model of critical discourse studies.

4. Theoretical Framework

The study combined insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory and van Dijk sociocognitive approach to critical discourse studies. Conceptual Metaphor Theory claims that, in accounting for metaphor, the conceptual level of mapping is central, while language is secondary, originated in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). The theory is grounded in cognitive linguistics, since most conceptual metaphors are part of the cognitive unconscious, learned and used automatically without awareness. This is why metaphor is viewed as metaphorical concept.

A metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience in terms of a very different domain of experience. A strategy was adopted by the theorists for naming such mappings. This is called Mnemonics. Mnemonic names typically have the form of TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN or TARGET DOMAIN AS SOURCE DOMAIN. The mapping is tightly structured through ontological correspondences. These correspondences are called image schemas and frames, which are used in organizing experience and meaning and drawing inferences from the domain. Lakoff and Johnson (2008) notes that, when two neuronal groups A and B fire at the same time, activation will spread outward along the network links that connect them; this is experienced as a chain of thought. Neural binding is responsible for two or more different conceptual or perceptual entities being considered a single entity. Literal meanings of the words should activate the SOURCE DOMAIN circuitry and the context should activate the target domain circuitry, and together they should activate the mapping circuit.

Metaphor is a path into human cognitive environment: subconscious or conscious. When we study metaphor, we get hold of human essence and ideology – the distinctive assumptions unique to an individual or society. These peculiar tendencies that have been imbibed and become integrated in humans are exposed and expressed during interaction (Odebunmi, 2010). In all of this, culture is

important, because what is conceived as metaphor in one culture may not be so conceived in another culture. Therefore, in analysing metaphors, it is important to consider the context of the culture in which such metaphors are used and interpreted.

Metaphors permeate all facets of human life and influence human conception of things. It is primarily a matter of thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The indeterminacy and fluidity of metaphorical meaning have been an obstacle for those seeking to scientifically study metaphor. Indeterminacy occurs when more than one semantic representation may be attributed to a linguistic form, in which case the mapping between form and meaning is not univocal (Zanotto and Palma, 2008). Indeterminacy refers to cases in which meaning is not distinctly determined. Metaphor allows polysemic reading (with compatible reading) or ambiguous reading (with conflicting reading) or even vague reading (without definite limits). However, indeterminacy is controlled within the context and does not represent a real problem (Vosniadou, 1988; Camp, 2005; Zanotto et al., 2008; Wilson and Sperber, 2004; Kovecses, 2009; Odebunmi, 2010).

Since metaphor is systematically structured and it deals with the human conceptual system, it can be used to unearth the ideologies (which are often latent) in any discourse. Blackburn (2008:178) describes ideology as 'any wide-ranging system of beliefs, ways of thought, and categories that provide the foundation of programmes of political and social actions'. The way a society constructs and interprets ideology is a central focus of van Dijk's sociocognitive model of critical discourse studies. Ideology could be viewed as a special form of social cognition that a social group shares (van Dijk 2001). This social cognition is made up of the shared socio-cultural knowledge and evaluative assumptions shared and restricted to members of the social group. Ideology is a part of the people's belief system.

van Dijk (2006) identifies four functions of ideology: organising and grounding the social representation shared by members of ideological group; being the ultimate basis of discourses and other social practices of the members of social group or group members; allowing members to organise and coordinate their (joint) actions and interactions in view of the goals and interest of the group as a whole; and functioning as part of the sociocognitive interface between social structures of groups as well as their discourse and other social practices. Although metaphors are deeply embedded in culture and are the basis of multimodally based cognition, they relate abstract notions to concrete experiences of people (van Dijk, 2014).

5. Interaction of ideology and metaphor in *Song of a Goat*

J.P. Clark presents the world view and culture of the Ijaw people in this text. He ties the themes with some ideologies. These ideologies are latent, but through the conceptual metaphors deployed by the characters, one can unearth them. There are

three predominant ideologies expressed in the text: patriarchal, protestant and optimist ideologies. These ideologies are woven around the three major themes discussed above.

5.1 Patriarchal Ideology

The predominant ideology in the play is patriarchal ideology. It is used to maintain male dominance in the society of the play. This ideology dictates the way women are viewed. It shapes the interaction between Zifa and Ebiere. There is sexual frustration orchestrated by the impotence of Zifa, arising from a curse placed on him. As customary of patriarchal attitude, the cause of the delay in having children is located in the woman, not the man. This is why she is asked to go to Masseur for treatment.

This ideology is presented through different metaphors. Generally, the woman is seen as *commodified*, treated as an object to be possessed. The conceptual metaphor below buttresses this:

A WOMAN IS A HOUSE

This metaphor is evident in the interaction below:

- Masseur: An empty house, my daughter, is a thing
 Of danger. If men will not live in it
 Bats or grass will, and that is enough
 Signal for worse things to come in.
- Ebiere: It is not my fault. I keep my house
 Open by night and day
 But my lord will not come in. (First movement, lines 5-11)

In this conceptual metaphor, the SOURCE DOMAIN is architecture, while the TARGET DOMAIN is the woman's genitals. A house is a place of habitation. It offers protection against danger. It is a place of succour and refreshment. A house typically has doors. The doors can be shut by the owner. A house is a treasured possession. It is not everybody that has it. Those who have it have to inhabit it. 'Live', 'keep', 'open' and '(land)lord' are some lexical items that point to house in the excerpt above. People have to live in a house; the house could be kept dirty or clean; the house could be close or open; and the landlord, who owns the house, may do whatever he wants with it.

The woman's genitals are supposed to be inhabited by the penis of the woman. The woman can choose to shut the door by disallowing the man to have sexual intercourse with her. The man can also choose to inhabit the house by refusing to have sex with the man. Similarly the man can choose not to enter the house; he can choose to enter another woman. This makes the woman an object at the mercy of the man, thus subjugating the woman. In this play, Ebiere does not have

the opportunity of enjoying the pleasure of sex. She is starved of success owing to the impotence of the man, leading to sexual frustration. She complains of the house being abandoned.

By describing her husband in this way, Ebieri approves of the ideology that women are properties of men to be kept and lorded over. Ideally, two men cannot own a house. In the same vein, a woman is fixed to a single husband, and any attempt to break this is called adultery and desecration of matrimony. However, a man can marry as many women as he desires, just like acquiring buildings; it is a show of wealth and power.

Another conceptual metaphor that realises this ideology is
A WOMAN IS A FERTILE GROUND.

The excerpt below reveals this:

Masseur: My son, are you the husband of her who ran
 Out now? You have allowed the piece of fertile
 Ground made over to you to run fallow
 With elephant grass. (First movement, lines 99-102)

Here the SOURCE DOMAIN is agriculture, while the TARGET DOMAIN is the woman's genitals. In the SOURCE DOMAIN, a fertile ground is the farmer's delight, as it supports good yield. It does not waste the effort of the farmer. In the TARGET DOMAIN, the woman is seen as a site of attraction and procreation. 'Fallow', 'piece' and 'elephant grass' are collocates of ground. Ebieri is depicted as a piece of fertile ground left fallow, that is unoccupied for a period of time and made to grow elephant grass. In agriculture, fallowing is adopted as a means of renewing the nutrients of land. The period of keeping the land without planting any seed on it could last as many years as the farmer desires. During this period weeds grow freely on the land. But normally, after the period of fallow, the land is cleared and crops are planted on it. Such crops will have greater yield, because the land has been replenished. In the TARGET DOMAIN, the fertile ground is Ebieri's reproductive system, made up of her vagina and uterus, among others. Zifa leaves her fallow, by not having sex with her for three floods (years) owing to his impotence. This has made the woman unproductive. As a result, the fertile ground of Ebieri has been overlushed with 'grass', and 'elephant grass', which are mapped to the hair covering the vagina. The 'ears and tassels' from the grass, which can be seen by all, relates to the shame and loss of dignity that Ebieri's delay in having children has brought her despite her fertility. Zifa has allowed a fertile woman to waste away, leaving her emotionally and psychologically disturbed.

This metaphor shows that the woman has to be possessed by the man. She

can also be pawned. You pawn only what you possess. The woman is a property that is subject to the whim of the man; the man can do whatever she wants with her. She can be left fallow. She can even suffer for the weaknesses of the man and she is not expected to complain; otherwise, she will be tagged disobedient, rude and impatient, just as Tonye describes Ebieri when she complains of being left fallow by Zifa.

The patriarchal ideology that pervades the society of the play emboldens Zifa to keep his wife untouched for three years and prevented from going to another man to satisfy her sexual urge. His selfishness is seen in his attempt to kill Tonye even after recognising that the man has done what he could not do to Ebieri. He keeps his dignity; he is not bothered by the feelings of the woman; he does not want Ebieri to be made over to another man, even when it is obvious that the woman is not the cause of their delay in having children. All this is a product of the thinking of men that the women must always bear the brunt of all family misfortune.

The metaphors, 'the land', 'piece of fertile ground', 'piece of land', 'piece of ground', and 'my land', are derived from the domain of agriculture. 'My land' captures the status of women as fixed assets or properties in care of men. Land ownership is an index of the social status of an individual in many African societies, like the Izon community where the play is set. Similarly, a woman is seen as a means of social advancement, especially when she is a 'fertile ground'. A 'fertile ground' is known to be rich in nutrients, both organic and inorganic, which allows the yielding of crops in large quantity. This signals the high live birth rate of a woman. Ebieri, being a 'fertile ground', is a treasured property for Zifa, her husband. Despite the latter's impotence, he is not ready to 'pawn' or 'make over' his land. 'Pawn' and 'make over' capture the belief about marriage in the Izon community as a transaction or contract. Marriages are completed by the payment of bridal price, which increases in size if the bride is from another village. These metaphors portray the thought of most Africans about the women as commodities or properties bought and owned by their husbands.

Although Ebieri is fertile and agile to bring forth a child, she is at the mercy of Zifa, an impotent man, before she can bring forth. Just as the lord and keeper of a house can open the gate at any time, enter at will, and decide what happens in the house, the man owns every part of his wife through the penis.

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which increases in amount if the bride is from another village. These metaphors portray the thought of most Africans about women as a commodity or property bought and owned by their husbands.

The third conceptual metaphor to consider is

THE WOMAN'S VAGINA IS A GATE

This metaphor is seen in the excerpt below:

Ebiere: It is not my fault. I keep my house

Open by night and day

But my lord will not come in. (First movement, lines 5-7)

In this conceptual metaphor, the SOURCE DOMAIN is building, while the TARGET DOMAIN is the female body. A gate is a control mechanism in a building. It determines when objects and humans are granted entry and exit. There must be a gatekeeper who does this. In relation to the woman's body, the vagina is a gate of life. It allows the entrance of the penis and the exit of the foetus during child delivery. Also, a gate or a door may require great force to be opened. This captures the pains of child delivery and sexual intercourse. Also, the location of the room in the inner part of the house, which is not visible from outside, corresponds with the location of the uterus which allows the embryo to become implanted in its inner wall and to nourish the growing foetus from the maternal blood.

An empty house is usually unoccupied and dusty; as a result, it rears animals and grasses. This assumption relates to the shame, physiological and emotional problems encountered by barren women no matter how beautiful they look outwardly. A woman will be barren without sexual intercourse, as the ovum cannot be fertilized without the spermatozoon ejected during intercourse.

This is tied to another conceptual metaphor:

THE PENIS IS A STAFF

Masseur: This is terrible, my daughter, nobody

Must hear of it. To think that a stout staff

Is there for you to hold on to for support.

(First movement, lines 31-33)

The SOURCE DOMAIN is administration, while the TARGET DOMAIN is the male genitals. A staff is a long stick used as a support when walking or climbing, as a weapon or as a symbol of authority. There is semblance in terms of structure, function and symbol are established between the staff and the penis. The length and size of the penis are emphasized; it is only a turgid penis that can force the vagina open during sexual intercourse. This metaphor presents women as docile,

vulnerable and sex objects; they have to hold on to the male sexual organ for satisfaction and reproduction.

Another implication of the penis as a staff relates to authority. With respect to this, correspondences are established between the penis and the domain of lordship with the use of lexical items such as 'my lord', and 'keeper'. The male sexual organ is a symbol of authority and power over a woman in marriage, especially when it has the miracle to bring forth fruits and satisfy the woman. It is also an object of social identity among males.

All these conceptual metaphors point to the woman as the dominated and vulnerable gender and the man as the exploring and dominating gender. The metaphors all point to the patriarchal ideology that characterise the Ijaw society and many African cultures. It is this ideology that enhances the theme of sexual frustration, aids theme of marital infidelity, and eventually leads to the theme of quest for vengeance.

5.2 Protestant Ideology

Another ideology represented in the play is protestant ideology. The patriarchal ideology subjugates the woman. Some women accept their treatment unquestioningly because society has entrenched this ideology in every facet of existence. The male folk desire to constantly dominate the female folk. Only few women can challenge this, as any woman that does it faces negative labeling, mostly as feminist. In this play, the hegemony of the men is challenged by Ebieri. She chooses not accept the status quo. She does not resign herself to fate. She quite knows that her delay in having children is not as a result of any fault of hers, be it spiritual or anatomical. Initially, she rejects the suggestion offered by Masseur to get sexual satisfaction elsewhere. But when she discovers that her husband wants to keep her perpetually under that state, she damns the consequences and makes Tonye offer her what Zifa could not give; she forces him to have sex with her. She frees herself from the subjugation of her husband, who does not want to do anything about her case. Her protest takes the form of deviance. She represents those women who go to any extent to get the kind of happiness they desire; such women challenge male dominance and subjugation. She says: 'Of course, it is the woman who is in the wrong always (Third movement, line 119-120).

This protestant ideology is captured through the following conceptual metaphor:

THE WOMAN IS A FOOD THAT CAN GROW MOULD

The extract below reveals this:

Ebieri:	You talk of your brother
	And of his patience as if patience were

His alone and he alone has suffered.
Tonye: Surely, he has suffered much abuse
From you lately.
Why, the whole village is talking.
Ebiere: Talking, are they? Like you are doing now
About his forbearance and his
Sufferings. What do they know about suffering and
Patience? And you, what do you know about them
Of course, it is the woman who is in the wrong
Always—I who suffered neglect and
Gathered mould like a thing of sacrifice
Left out in sun and rain at the cross-roads.
(Third movement, lines 109-122)

In this conceptual metaphor, the SOURCE DOMAIN is cookery, while the TARGET DOMAIN is the female reproductive organs. The mould is green or black substance that grows on cold food left in the open for many days. It is not fit for eaten by humans, as it could upset the body system. This connotes decomposition and worthlessness. Ebiere is protesting this to his brother-in-law. She recognises her state occasioned by neglect. The word suffer shows the enormity of the neglect; it is not pleasurable, as it is not mutual. If the two of them mutually agree to stay away from sex for a period of time, that would be a different thing; it would not be suffering.

The belief of the vulnerability of women presents a sex-starved woman as an uneaten food. 'Mould' points to the stage of menopause in a woman's life when the ovum is no longer released from the ovary for fertilization and menstruation. Thus, if the female sexual organs are not enjoyed as early and as regularly as possible and the ova fertilized, their fertility and agility waste away; such woman becomes a thing of ridicule in the community. On the other hand, ejaculation has no pause. Ebiere uses this metaphor to lament and express her grief concerning her sweetness and fertility which are wasting away because her husband has no appetite to eat them. It is a subtle protest which leads to her eventual emancipation, as she gets that sexual satisfaction she has longed for. Ebiere, in an outburst against her neglect and waste, quarrels with Tonye concerning her state, to question the established belief that, in such a situation as the couple has found themselves, it is the woman who suffers and endures the shame.

Masseur, who is supposed to be a custodian of the traditional values of the society and an agent of perpetuation of the male hegemony is even the first to protest against it. He suggests involvement in extra-marital affairs to Ebiere and Zifa. Initially, they frown at the suggestion. But Ebiere could no longer endure the trauma. This makes her to make Tonye satisfy her sexual want.

5.3 Optimist Ideology

The optimist ideology is used to subjugate the female folk. An optimist keeps hoping even against hope. This ideology is captured in the metaphor:

MISFORTUNE IS A GUEST

The TARGET DOMAIN is hospitality, while the TAGET DOMAIN is human condition. A guest is not a member of a household. He or she is expected to leave at some time. This metaphor is signified by the following lexical items: 'misfortune enters the house', 'my guest', 'host', and 'return', as noticed in this excerpt:

Orukorere: One cannot tell how always watchful they
 Stand warding evil spirits away from
 The gates until misfortune enters the house.
 Zifa: Misfortune has been my guest these many floods.
 Orukorere: My son, are they still at the gate, the
 Housewives who deserted the hearth?
 Zifa: A guest after being fed looks up
 At the sun. But these many years I have been host
 To a guest that will not return.
 Orukorere: Oh, he must!
 (Final Movement, line 38-47)

The following assumptions about a guest in travel can be made:

- A guest is a person on a journey;
- A guest has a source location and he/she is visiting a destination for business, tourism, or just to visit friends and relatives;
- The visit may be impromptu or with prior notice on the part of the host;
- Every host should prepare to receive a guest at any time;
- The stay of the guest is temporary, and will return as soon as the mission is accomplished.

These correspond with misfortune. Any victim of misfortune of any kind should patiently bear with it because it is only for the night; joy comes in the morning. The problem will return to wherever it has come from soon. Zifa's impotence is viewed as a guest, and he hopes that the problem will be solved soon. It is this hope that makes him to keep Ebieri in her state. He thinks that a woman is expected to be loyal to her marriage even if it means suffering in silence. But he himself faints in his faith as the guest seems to have taken abode in his home.

Orukorere, in this extract, expresses the need for Zifa to offer sacrifice to the

gods so as to keep misfortune off their gate. Misfortune is conceived as human who is able to move in and out of a house. Zifa, sharing this religious belief, tells Orukorere that they do not keep away someone who has already become a guest. Zifa's misfortune is his impotence.

Zifa raises the assumption that when a guest has been fed, he stands up and leaves. Zifa's misfortune, impotence, has become permanent as he has made several attempts for a way out, but the guest is now the one hosting him. Zifa laments that his impotence has taken over or has caused the taking over of all he has – his wife, his pride and status in the society.

6. Conclusion

Metaphors in J. P. Clark's *Song of a Goat* and the explication of their meaning are context-induced. They are overt representations of the covert experiences, and ideologies of the Ijaw people, as representation of many human societies. Most of the metaphors are used to describe the male and female reproductive and sexual organs, which connect with the Ijaw's preference for the riddle when matters are too intimate to be spoken of directly. These ideologies helped in the comprehension of the subject matter and thematic preoccupation of the playwright. The interactions of the characters are conditioned by the predominant ideologies in the society. Clark has used the world view of the Ijaw people to address common problems that confront humans. His argument is that challenging the status quo of a culture definitely has its consequences. In other words, to effect change is not easy. It could be inferred from the play that, although certain human conditions seem insurmountable, humans must still find means of tackling any hurdle that they face. In doing this, both genders must be sensitive to each other's needs and not pretend that things are all right when it is obvious that the contrary is true.

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