Dramaturgy, Split Personality and the Question of Identity in Effiong Johnson’s Son of the Land.

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ABSTRACT

The nature of man in relationship with his society is ambivalent, reflecting that human beings have the capacity to alter their personality to fit in to the situation they are confronted with at different times. This alterations result in indeterminate portrayal of human identity in creative works. No character is whole until the social condition he is pitched against justifies him. This paper evaluates Effiong Johnson’s treatment of indeterminacy of the human selves in a chaotic social milieu in Son of the Land. It uses qualitative research methodology and bases its theoretical framework on Sigmund Freud’s Psychodynamic Theory. Findings show that uncertainty of social conditions may force people to vary the attitudes they put up for survival. Dramaturgy is the various impressions people put up at different times. Personality is the discernible self marked for a particular regular situation, while the quirk in the marked self suggests split-personality. The totality of all selves in their sameness or differentiation in the confrontations with pleasant and unpleasant situations in life suggests human identity. The paper concludes that unstable society will provide unstable citizens. The circumstances people face in life shape their pattern of thought which motivates action they take. Everyone puts up a self when confronted with a happenstance. The knowledge of human behaviour should be broadened in drama to help in the curtailment of sweeping conclusion over human attitude, varying selves and identity in the society.

KEYWORDS: Dramaturgy, Personality, Identity, Effiong Johnson. Son of The Land.

INTRODUCTION

Man is a product of thought. There is no action a man takes that does not spring from the composition of his thought. In the view of Michael Haralambos, Martin Holborn and Robin Heald, “humans do not just react…action stems from subjective meanings” (15), and as long as the mind remains the engine room of man’s motives, he is a product of his thought. “A man is literally what he thinks” (Allen and Chue 3). However, all that a man does garner from the happenings around him and the way he responses to anything shows the application of his thought to the various situations which he may tackle differently based on the openness or vagueness of the mind.

The mind is dormant like the sea while social demands rotate like the wind, pulling the waves of desires that stir it to action. This shows that the human mind harbours both approved and bounded situations that arise in the human activities in society. Beyond the man, the
network of developments in the society reinforces actions that involve the interplay of others. Stability of character or dissimilarity of it then depends on the environmental factors which themselves stable or vary as human activities for various courses vary. These environmental factors compel human beings to develop numerous attitudes in different occasions in order to fit in to pressing situations at hand.

There are many reasons people put up strange attitude for. One of such is the need to preserve one’s sense of worthiness. Another is a response to motivation at hand which Angelo Denisi and Ricky Griffin (383) explain in terms of expectation of reward, eliciting that a good motivation may incite the urge to act the good while a bad one may make the good to turn the vicious in an organization. Others are found in unexpected threats, a constant terrifying experience, variance of object of appeal as found in love, and fear. For one to look whole, one is compelled to evolve a different self away from the self that people may have marked as one’s true self. Such divergence may culminate in pretended humility, false act of loyalty, wan smiles of goodwill, and aggressiveness that lacks basis compared to the cause of the aggression. The totality of them all buds in people a congruence of dissimilar selves. This means, one person has become a score of numerous persons. This may be the fact behind, David Sue, Derald Sue and Stanley Sue averment that “human beings are acting out their behaviours and that it is an aspect of disorderliness to some culture while to some it is normal” (10).

This series of acting people put up in different occasions is the “con man”, technically called “dramaturgy”. Con man in this sense does not refer to cunningness to cheat; rather, a set of responsive attitudes different situations require to making the person relevant to the course. For this reason it is possible to rate someone good for charity and also laud a person who rises to prominence for self-centered stinginess. So does a borrower look timid in the occasion of borrowing but turns vicious at the time of repaying; and the lender turns a very bad person. All these good and bad deeds retain a set of images in a person which the generality echoes what the person really is as portrayed in creative works like novel, poetry, and drama which theatre and film are based.

Drama is a creative work that portrays the life cycle of characters in a universe where the sociological, physiological and psychological factors reinforce their interplay for survival. In a drama,

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every \text{ person has their own (sic) unique worldview, background, background, attitudes and personality quirks, and these should inform the things they say as well as... the educational background... what economic background are they in? Are they creative? Logical? Even-tempered? Emotional? Vindictive?... Their dialogue will naturally come out sounding like them and only them (Uchenunu138).}
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The characters are exposed to the ups-and-downs of life that occasion demands in their environment to be sure of diet, to gratify desires, and to enforce wills according to the reality of their background.
Nevertheless, in the exercise of will aided or deterred by the environment, a gamut of irregular selves to tackle each emerges. In certain conditions, the common selves vary, opening us to peculiarities which should be traits. In one go, we sometime lump them together and call the trait self or the personality. But a milder way of grasping this idea is through attitude, “a favourable or unfavourable evaluative reaction toward something or someone, exhibited in one’s beliefs, or intended behaviour” (Myers 130). Attitude can easily explain the strands between traits and personality in a play.

In a way, one may infer personality from trait by drawing from the regular way of saying or doing a thing. Such regularity can make one to say, “I know this fellow in and out” whereas the speaker only knows the fellow as he has been presenting himself on the occasions the speaker has been meeting him which the thrusts of attitude have been maintained. When Changes occur from regular prints of selves, it opens us to indeterminate selves; but however varying the human attitudes are, there is a pivot unifying these factors. This pivot, this whole, this integrated body, marks people’s individuality. Marked individuality becomes a regular print, the personality; while slippages from the regular self highlight the split personality. The generality of them all gives direction to identity in Son of the Land which the paper deliberates upon.

In Effiong Johnson’s Son of the Land, Dramaturgy and split personality blend as an interface for signifying the characters’ identity. Johnson draws from the cosmology of the Ibibio people of Nigeria to dissect the psychic drive of his characters by tossing his characters in the social storm which blows each character to a shore that is governed by mores, norms, taboos and laws. Each character develops many selves such that one reads every character as capable of changing. Funny enough, each character appears in different occasion as “one different person”, or “a different one person” to face different social issues in the society.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Drawing from the play, Son of the Land, this study investigates how the interactions of psychic energies such as sexual desires, protection, social worthiness and drive for self-actualization, with social forces compel people to act the way they do. Being that the discussion focuses on the interplay of thoughts and actions as marshaled by social forces within which the personality of each character is affected, the paper uses Psychodynamic Theory as its theoretical base.

The various situations that affect the steadiness or alteration of the way people behave are practically linked to the unity or disparity between the mind and society interplays. In discussing a premise like the “con man” called “dramaturgy”, a more objective approach will require a reference to the ground plan of personality theory which is fundamentally Freudian Psychoanalytic therapeutic theory. Because in psychodynamic theory itself, according to Susan Day, "the term psychoanalytic usually refers to a system that is strictly Freudian. It involves certain premises and techniques that were later given up... The system of these later therapists is called psychodynamic (and sometimes Neo-Freudian)… It
discusses life as a series of stages structures sharing energy... psychodynamists see mental life as divided into representation of others (128-129)

Psychodynamic theory is also Freudian theory. The difference is that Psychoanalytic theory burrows completely into psychic details centering on sexuality while psychodynamic theory downplays sexual issues but associates psychic interaction with discursive social issues such as the Id, Ego and the Superego conceived to form the component part of the mind.

Psychoanalytic theory captures what Lawrence Pervin and Daniel Cervone (113-122), refers to as the “oral personality”, “the anal personality”, “the phallic personality”, “latency”, and the “genital”. They maintain that satisfaction at infant stages where the mouth, anus, and the genitalia are the primary zones for deriving pleasure plays a crucial role in shaping people’s personality. Conflict developing from these stages, for instance oral stage, the person in adult stage would seek gratification in smoking, drinking, talkativeness-in short the person would be a glutton. In anal stage, the person may be stingy, mean, greedy and neat or in the reverse case, messy. At phallic stage, the person relapses into Oedipus or Electra complex which if fixated, would live bereft of orderliness in sexual issues. Characters may find dating too-old men/women than themselves pleasurable. A developmental phenomenon related to that of fixation is regression, which the individual seeks to return to an earlier mode of satisfaction. Other stages are not often emphasized since they discuss developments after the initial three stages.

According to David Myers, Psychodynamic theory “focuses on themes of important relationship, including childhood experience… aims to help people gain insight into the root of their difficulty, rather than focusing on undoing past hurts and offering interpretations; focuses on current relationships and on helping people improve their relationship skill” (500). While in Social Psychology, Sharon Brehm et al, write that “it studies the relationship between people’s behaviours and societal variables such as manipulation of mood and exposure to particular models of behaviour” (9). These positions shift psychoanalytic direction from sex as the basis of personality. This may be the reason Myers cites Westen Drew to have said that-

most contemporary psychodynamic theorists... are not wedded to the idea that sex is the basis of personality, they do not talk about ids and egos...What they do assume, with Freud, is that much of our mental life is unconscious, and that we often struggle with inner conflicts among our wishes, fears, and values, and that childhood shapes our personalities and ways of becoming attached to others (427).

In reassessing this Westen’s idea, psychoanalysis and psychodynamic theories share the same tenets except details of sex as basis of marked individuality that pervades psychoanalysis.

Nevertheless, the locus of psychodynamic theory hinges on the inner workings of personalities, especially internal conflicts and struggles as influence by social conventions. It focuses on the motivating factors forcing individuals to act the way the act. It recognizes socio-
cultural trajectories and other environmental forces as motivating factors. “Psychodynamic theories are not content with studying personality traits, instead, they want to probe under the surface of personality to learn what drives, conflict, and energies motivate us” (Dennis 483). The motivating forces are seen as the remote drives in this essay while the objective deeds evolving from the unconscious and conscious desires are viewed as the immediate drives.

Synopsis of Son of the Land.

Usua tells Ekpema, he is not Ekpema’s father since Ekpema has begun valuing his diet more than that of the goats. He returns home and hears the goats bleating; the goats are not fed. He beats Ekpema but Ekpema manages to escape his angry grip. He tells Ekpema to leave his house and go to his father; that his father is still alive. He threatens to kill him if he undermines what he has said before he leaves for his business.

Ekpema narrates to Koko, his friend, the level of dehumanization he is subjected to; that he has believed Usua is not his father. He lists instances he has done many things to impress Usua but situations still reflect that he is different compared to the advantages Arit and Ima, his sisters have. He mentions how he stole to pay school fee because he was neglected. He reiterates how he has put up various curious lifestyle to attract Usua’s empathy, yet he is still relegated to the level of a beast. Koko cautions he should not think that way, though it is pitiable that he is not well treated in the house, his father’s house. Ekpema makes up his mind to go searching for who his real father is. But Koko cuts in that he shouldn’t blurt such words that Usua is his father. Ekpema only impresses him but resolves to inquire for his real father in his mind.

When Usua rekindles his threat to Ekpema if he does not go to his father, Udo comes and compels Usua to retract his claims that Ekpema is not his son. Usua narrates that his conscience will not be free to claim Ekpema as his son; that he knows Ekpema is not his blood. Fortunately, Ibom comes demanding to take Ekpema; that Ekpema is his son. He narrates how he and Nneka, Ekpema’s mother, dated. He lambasts the judgment Obong pronounced on the case of which Nneka’s pregnancy was the centerpiece to decide who should marry her when they faced the village in judgment. He concludes that he impregnated Nneka and that he was irked, so could not overlook Nneka humiliate him so; that Nneka died of greed. He leaves with Ekpema to his house after stating his claims.

Ekpema stays in Ibom house and savours the aura of the bonafide son. Ibom gives him more confidence to adapt by telling him all that he has laboured and kept for him. He pours Ekpema some tots of Akai-kai to quaff and asks him to select a career of his choice that he will sponsor outright. Ekpema chooses to sell stock-fish. Ibom objects on the ground that his mother was lured away from him through stock-fish, and leaves to see his friend, Obot.

Ibom is a native doctor; his house does not lack sacred objects. Ekpema starts ransacking the house immediately. He gropes about and lay hands on a lafia bag and begins to check the contents. Discovering that it contains weird objects like human skull, though shocked, he delves further and discovers some money. While counting the money, someone knocks. He puts some into his pocket and begins to pack the items back in total trepidation. In his trembling haste, the skull slips off his grasp and breaks into two on the floor. Koko comes in. Ekpema
swiftly puts up a calm attitude before his visiting friend, Koko. He offers Koko some drink; Koko refuses. Koko gives him a dress Ima sends to him. He immediately discusses how his found father has been fond of him, asking Koko to accompany him to buy some cloths. They leave.

Ibom returns from his friend’s house, entering his house, he hits hit right toe. He walks to where he has hung his bag and discovers that his *lafia* bag has been tempered with. He delves and realizes that his money has been removed. Ekpema comes in. he asks Ekpema but Ekpema puts up a pitable impression, lamenting that he is always accused wrongly for everything. Ibom orders him to return the stolen money, and for about three days, Obot and Ibom have been asking him to return the money. Ekpema only sulks and puts up all forms of pitiable attitudes imploring that they have refused to believe him. Obot cautions that his fate is not good and in mentioning skull, Ekpema turns mad and begin to revel uncontrollably.

**Dramaturgy in Perspective**

The use of the word ‘dramaturgy’ in this essay does not allude to the study of play texts and the composition of theatrics for a stage production. Rather, the essay domesticates the terminology from Irving Goffman’s ‘Con man,’ which in *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* avers:

> People who have discrediting attribute deal with their potentially difficult day-to-day interaction with others through impression management by controlling what they tell others… they will always live in fear of being exposed. The two main strategies are… passing and withdrawal. Passing is seeking to hide the discreditable attitude, and withdrawal is when the person withdraws from social contacts wherever possible (116).

Goffman’s idea highlights the processes and situations human beings change naturally to fit in to the occasion at hand. His idea harps on passing and withdrawal which anchor spontaneous action and quick switching over to a different manner of person. For instance when a notorious armed robber enters a church to take communion, in the occasion of the piety, he puts forth a new self. When a church overseer seeks spiritual protection from a sorcerer, he would put up a new self before the sorcerer. When a deaf lady accompanies her friends to a party hall and sees her friends dancing, she begins dancing by imitating movement of feet, yet she is putting up a new self because the occasion requires not only movement of feet but exuberance. Equally, it is possible to see a delinquent child overwhelmed in a pitiable sobriety before his angry father; immediately he is out of the father’s peremptory tone, he is found discussing the player a football coach should change in England or Spain, and discusses in full ecstasy without any indication that he just escaped a serious whip. These deliberate attitudes, these willful inventive images on different occasions, these spontaneous switching from one emotion to the other, are what Coffman calls dramaturgy or the “con man”.

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A clearer presentation of dramaturgy sees it as an approach. According to Haralambos, Holborn and Heald,

Goffman saw the social as being rather like a drama, or a performance in a play. His work is therefore described as a dramaturgical approach. Individuals put on a performance for others to convince them about who they are. Like an actor, they have to believe in the role in order to be convincing. In the process, they may become the person they are trying to project an image of... through presenting him/herself in particular roles the individual develops identities (694).

The assessment of these scholars’ thought reflects that dramaturgy encompasses a way of evaluating people’s changing attitude in the situations they are found. This means, those attitudes and behavioural patterns of tackling situations through (artificial) modifications are perspectives of escapism. This is different from the mutations that occur in human lives as a natural course which suits the occasion the person is involved in a particular time naturally. In Determinants of Behaviour: Giving Meaning to the Psychological Concern with Behaviour, Isidore Eyo differentiates normal progressive changes in life from this slipping thrust occasioned by the desire to exploit the moment of tension by clarifying the natural mutations “as a progressive series of changes in the structure and behaviour” (10). While J. Egbule and Elizabeth Egbule (122-123) observe the other (dramaturgy) as a lifestyle that is marked by series of escapism; and that all attitudes reflect a deliberate mark of mastered disposition.

Dramaturgy as used in this paper is distinctly captured by Joseph Charles. To him,

dramaturgy argues that at any given moment which man interacts with another, he is apparently on stage like in a theatre performing to the admiration of the spectators or audience... man tries his utmost to do those things that will bring commendation, praises, applause, ovation, cheers and claps which are all positive signs of approval... man tries to present images of something real whereas he is only acting those purposely scripted parts to send convincing messages to the audience who may assume it is real. It is all information game. (172-173).

This definition embodies the whole idea of the “con man”. Dramaturgy therefore comprises those willful attitudes put up by an individual to prove one’s self-worth eliciting gestures of appreciation and commendation in the occasion that demands such. This does not mean that one is really sincere in one’s attitude; rather, such a one may be ambivalent yet tries to please since that very office deserves such attitude. This is seen in this delineation of some characters and in these situations in Son of the Land as indicated below:
(... Usua charge after him, Ekpema runs to the door DL. Usua flings a shoe at him. He ducks, opens the door and runs out).

Usua: Go! Run! Fly! Nine days are for the thief… you are doing all these so that people will hear and shrug their shoulders saying, chai! Usua Okon Ita, what a horrible man! Isn’t it?... (Pg.1).

Ekpema: (Opens the door DL gently and peeps) please father, I will do it. I will go to the bush in the evening. I will give the goats their food. The sun is too hot now…

Usua: (Advances furiously to the door). The sun is not too hot for you to eat a basin of Garri...(p.2) (light returns and the door DSL opens. Ekpema comes in thinking aloud)

Ekpema: I am not his son, he said I am not his son. Then whose son am I?... Is this how all fathers treat their sons? (There is a knock, Ekpema is startled and confused. After a second thought he opens the door and Koko his friend comes in) Koko, my friend, welcome (p.5).

In the dialogue and action between Usua and Ekpema, Ekpema puts up a specific attitude. In the attitude he puts up to welcome Koko, his friend, a difference is spotted. With Usua, Ekpema is subservient because the occasion demands that to Usua; but in the line, “Koko, my friend, welcome”. He is temperate because he must not puncture the membrane of his countenance before his equal. He rather controls the discussion to surge into pitiable state because Koko has noticed something and asked a question. If he did not want to tell Koko, he could have as well said, Koko, my friend, what’s up? This is what George Ritzer refers to as “two selves thesis” (357) implying two consistent attitudes for two arising situations. That means, attitude which is the particular way one behaves towards someone or something to show one’s feeling at the moment counts for dramaturgy.

Biologically, man, as well as animals develops a mechanism to protect his deeds and defend his actions in all situations; displacement is one. Accordingly, Julian Huxley and Martin Ackerman observe that

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\text{in one way or the other, most of us come face to face with stimuli pulling us in opposite direction... in such a case what happens?... A puzzled man may scratch his head even though it does not itch, so an animal may perform trivial, apparently meaningless actions when it is frustrated.} \quad (42).
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In Huxley and Ackerman’s opinion, such acts, mostly in aggression, one purposely skips one’s original intent and act differently to please an occasion or avert hurtful confrontation counts
for dramaturgy. “Here the inclination to aggress is deflected from real target only to land on a substitute…” (Brehm, Kassin and Fein 415).

In religious activities, man has a distinct attitude that makes him Heaven bound because piety and sobriety would make him worthy and acceptable there; even within this sobriety, a subsidiary self also surfaces. Such as found in sharing of food, in giving testimonies, in responding to a familiar tune, in lending or borrowing money; and in occasions when a series of prayers and fasting have brought or not brought expectations to fulfillment. In economics, man puts up different attitude. In general, man has a gamut of selves. In love, in fear, in mirth, in hatred – all are registered in the mind of the person as a single self; but to the society, that man having numerous personalities from different occasions is “one different person” in actual sense. Dramaturgy underpins man’s zeal to control and impress his audience which is his society. For this reason, “everyone is weighing the costs of losing one’s audience against losing one’s integrity by behaving in a deceptive manner” (Cuzzort and King 243). This is basically to keep the fidelity of his society and appreciable aura for admiration. This is exemplified in Usua’s selves in love and another in hate of the same thing in his dialogue with Udo, his brother.

Usua: Ekpema is not my son. Take It from me.
Udo: Take what from you? This terrible madness? (sic) Listen to me…
Usua: I have borne it all these years… (p32)
Udo: Borne what? Is this not the same child during his mother’s pregnancy you wrestle with Ibom? Is this not that child whose mother, before death, had mentioned you, Usua, as responsible for her pregnancy? And you accepted it, didn’t you? … How can you explain all those actions you took, with me as your supporter?...
Usua: … I am not afraid, because I know that I am doing the right thing… (p. 33).
Udo: Don’t say it again! ... I know he is your son. I can swear that…
Usua: Don’t swear for me. You do not know me… Ekpema is not mine…
Ekpema: Who is my father? Please help me to get him. (p. 34)
Udo: … It is only your mother who can say who your father is…
Usua: She had said that to me before she died? No. (sic)
Udo: No. I will not accept it…
Usua: …We wanted ourselves. And you know our tradition well. Whosoever had the pregnancy would have the woman. And we wanted ourselves, so we… we…
Udo: You did what?
Usua: …Udo my brother, do people not prepare themselves, at least, the words they would utter…? We planned the whole story she told at the village council…(p. 35).
The above idea reflects the extreme human beings can go in pretense to gain social empathy as a worthy fellow. People are forced by the society to present a different self from their real self. According to Charles, “people have a wardrobe of roles. The different status they occupy demands different different roles each of which they must select from their wardrobe.” (177). This repertory of roles is dramaturgy while the different-different roles reflect series of inevitable but varying occasions of life. This may be the reason Henslin James (111-112) views dramaturgy as the presentation of self in everyday life and views man as embodying numerous attitudes for numerous events, maintaining that as events occur differently in different places in different times, man’s attitudes also vary to suit those events. Therefore, man is an actor in the world but in the view of Jane Plastow and Solomon Tsehaye, his alterations is “intended to raise morale in the resistance force...” (51).

The “con man” perspective is the benchmark of Johnson’s signifier to human identity. This is a reflection of different personality identification in different occasions to conform to social necessity in a time. Dramaturgy entails people acting selves other than their original ones the society could readily describe them with in different scenes of social stage. That means “we are left with a ‘more or less unitary’ self” (Craib 136). Emanating from Freud, Jung and Lacan, we are aware of our shredded personality, but such personalities are not lived out consciously and deliberately, but unconsciously. For instance, we manifest Oedipal Complex, castration complex and/or Elektra Complex unconsciously. Oral stage, a person who, in his adult stage would seek gratification in smoking, drinking, talkativeness- in short the person would be a glutton, cannot tell, logically; that he is living out crisis that started in the ‘oral stage of his life.

**Split Personality**

The definition of personality is usually a perspective issue. Some scholars view it within the purview of temperament; some approach it as the calmness or hotness of character. Haralambos, Holborn and Healed (462), for instance, sees it as the emotional security of individuals in the home. All these are ways of explaining personality. However, it is possible to approach it by merely describing human character. It is possible to mistake it for mere attitude. Approaching personality through the window of trait can lead one to what it is all about. But trait is a distinct attribute in one’s personality; not the totality that can leave an identifiable self. Personality can be properly grasped if one approaches it within these stand points: what is same everywhere of certain human quality, dispositions, and meaning in totality of objective judgment; the difference between one person and another; and what is always true about a person. In these lights, in *Personality Theory and Research*, Lawrence and Cervone posit that

*the field of personality addresses three issues: (1) human universals, (2) individual differences (3) individual uniqueness... what is generally true of people? What are universal features of human nature? ...How do people differ from one another; is there a set of individual differences? How can one possibly explain the uniqueness of the individual*
differences? How can one possibly explain the uniqueness of the individual person in a scientific manner? ...Issues generally can be understood in terms of overarching questions about universal properties of personality (7).

In the above postulation, it is possible to infer that there is a unique individuality that has a universal cognition. There is an outstanding self that everyone draws a similar conclusion about. Such whole that marks people distinct from another is the personality while “split personality is the dissociative identity disorder...”(Coleman:644). Personality is a marked individuality in persons whereas a quirk in the marked singularity of self is the split personality.

Trait is another way one can describe to know what personality is all about. Human beings consistently manifest the same pattern of behaviour all the time. According to William Darity Jr, “one of the issues with defining personality solely as trait is that traits lead us to expect people will behave in a regular way across all situations... personality emerges as “situation-specific behavioural signatures– regularities in behaviour that manifest in certain situations, not in all situations” (218). It is possible to deduce self-image in Darity Jr’s position in personality. The different selves that one puts up alone cannot be seen as one’s personality but the specific stamp these selves repeatedly retain as a summation of the various selves marks one’s personality. Personality is the self-image (as seen by people). “If you change the self-image, you change the personality” (Waitely: 92).

In Son of the Land split personality is portrayed in Usua and Ekpema’s scene thus:

(The door DL opens and Usua enters and hear the bleating of goats... He frowns and gently tip-toes to drop his bag on the table and then to the door USL, opens it gently and enters... Ekpema dashes out... Usua flings a shoe at him) (p. 1).

The action of Usua to Ekpema is immediate; an angry father can punish a delinquent child. However, in these lines:

Usua: ... My trouble with you will soon come to an end. The season of caring for somebody else’s male dog is over ...I am not ready to keep wasting my salt anymore on the porcupine’s intestines. Never! (p. 2-3).

There is an undertone of suppressed hurt, a kind of remote ire that may have occupied Usua’s mind. The immediate action Usua expunges in direct action and the remote he gushes in utterance embody two regular signatures of his being. The self that tip-toes to punish Ekpema is a different self; the one that he releases his real inner pains of “caring for somebody else’s dog”, is expressed in a different impression suggesting another self. Against this backdrop, even if Ekpema has fetched herbs to the goats, Usua would have still done same in another way. Usua’s self in just anger to Ekpema is twofold.
Usua’s binary selves look like “one different selves”; that is a single self formed from double impressions (dramaturgies). It is further exemplified in his dialogue with Udo:

Udo: … what is the matter with you, Usua? How can you possibly drive your son away from the house and Usua with such…
Usua: He is not my son.
Udo: Who is not your son?
Usua: Ekpema. Ekpema is not my son. Take it from me … I have borne it these many years (p. 32).

For the fact that Ekpema is not Usua’s son, he has been bearing him by putting up different attitudes to shield the inner turbulence in his mind. Driving him out as Udo talks is a response to the Freudian conception of the fixated person in the anal stage of the psychoanalytic plunge elaborated in Pervin and Cervone (113-122). Usua does not allow stains and does not keep decayed product around him. Usua is mean; in the split self, Usua is naïve. The first self embodies the psychic import reflecting an unconscious anal self, while the second self is circumstantial reinforced by the interplay of social forces such as beliefs, economic condition, cultural sanctions, and taboos with mind.

Another character is Ekpema. Ekpema reflects many selves in different occasions. He can do anything for food. Johnson communicates the unsatisfied oral stage in Ekpema’s first self by opening and closing Ekpema’s world with food and drink respectively. This self is motivated by a psychic energy that beeps for satisfaction without control. This is clearly portrayed in Arit’s words, pointing that Ekpema’s mother died as soon as she gave birth to him:

Arit: … I remember her very well but she died when Ekpema was born. Poor woman (p.19)

Ekpema was not properly weaned. He may have suffered what Freud elicits as crisis in the oral stage. Johnson portrays his psychic and social motivated energies in the selves portrayed in these lines:

(...)not long after wards, there is commotion inside, a plate and a cup crash on the ground and Ekpema dashes out from the door USL with a morsel of garri still in hand…) (p.1)

Ekpema: I will give the goats their food. The sun is too hot now…
Usua: …The sun is not too hot for you to eat a basin of garri… Tell a boy early in the morning to enter the bush and fetch some herbs… He wouldn’t do it. Someone you are feeding many times a day… (The daughters appear from USL and Usua turns to them). And you wouldn’t cover the soup pot, would you? You would rather leave everything for that son of the oil bean tree to do as he likes, eats as he likes… (p.2).
Arit: It was his first food for the day, papa. He didn’t even eat in the morning…
Usua: Because he didn’t eat in the morning he had to eat a basin of garri in the afternoon? Look at the size of garri I met him with. Which one is more economical, to have eaten a human quantity in the morning, or an elephant’s in the afternoon? (p. 3)

Ekpema conversation with Usua is a unique self of fear. The self that does not vary is that he likes food. In the self portrayed in his conversation with Koko, there is a quirk in the two selves noted earlier. This shift is portrayed in Koko’s visit:

Ekpema: I am not his son, he said I am not his son. Then whose son am I? He took me to school and registered me as Ekpema Usua Okon. God… I don’t understand… Is this how all fathers treat their son?
(There is a knock, Ekpema is startled and confused. After a second thought he opens the door and Koko his friend comes in.) Koko, my friend, welcome (p. 5).

The image Ekpema puts up before Koko even in the turbulence he is going through in his mind is quite different from others. This swift switch of self is unconscious but it is there registered that social conditions have turned Ekpema a perfect actor of every role at hand. He believably loosens from the cord of the deep sobriety that marks his state of mind from his misfortune which heightens the statement, “…whose son am I?” and assumes a milder soberness that well accommodates a friend- “Koko, my friend, welcome”. In the switching impressions, another self occurs. The self is well captured in Ekpema’s conversation with Koko in these lines:

Ekpema: You are wrong, Koko. Very wrong… He doesn’t plan anything for me except, maybe, death…
Koko: But you took the examination. You wrote the examination with us…
Ekpema: Yes I took the examination. I will tell you how I managed to do that. I stole some money in the house… (p. 8).

Ekpema has reflected another self again, stealing. In Ibom’s house, a universally marked individuality has surfaced. In this assessment, there is an overt split in the preconceived individuality Ekpema is known with. Ekpema is now reflecting a split known as Borderline Disorder. According to David Sue et al, “borderline personality is characterized by intense fluctuation in mood, self-image, and interpersonal relationships. Persons with this disorder are impulsive, have chronic feelings of emptiness, and form unstable and intense impersonal relationship” (245). Johnson portrays this disorder bit-by-bit in the different split-selves
Ekpema consistently reflects in *Son of the Land*. For instance the slow but sharp slip from the oral stage conflict shown in his impression of taking a minimal bout of drink, and the refusal to quaff additional is portrayed in the following lines line:

**Ibom:** Drink that, my ancestors. *(He drinks what had remained in the glass and pours himself more. He drinks some and gives some to Ekpema) Come, take, and drink… *(Ekpema collects the glass from Ibom and swallows the drink which chokes him)* (p.54).

**Ekpema:** Too hot father…

**Ibom:** I should have warned you. Do you want more?

**Ekpema:** *(shakes his head) No. Not again…(p.55).

Here Ekpema possesses a different self. He gives an impression of a modest character, someone who is principled in eating; someone who cannot accept gift from strangers; that is, a timid child that cannot move from where he is seated. In the next action, as Ibom leaves him; Ekpema gives another impression which is a quirk of the initial self thus:

**Ekpema:** *(Watches him go) Forget about stock fish…? *(He pours himself another half glass of schnapps…) ( Goes to the window and picks up the raffia…) What could be inside here?… *(He attempts loosening it but then gives up) Yes. *(He picks out five bundles of naira notes…) (p.57).

**Koko:** It sounded like magic to me. Will the key bring out food for you? (p.60).

At this juncture, Koko’s feeling for Ekpema is mixed because he knows Ekpema as a mild fellow. However, Ekpema is a glutton and he can steal money that is not his but put up a subtle attitude that can easily belie his mien. However, “evidence suggesting changing personality and mood is often better provided by colleagues, relatives or friends… but even… work and social relationship, personal drive, level of dependency, ambition and authority response to stress will indicate” (Owen *et al* 319). In this very case, Koko, Ekpema’s friend, is confused to hear Ekpema blurt that he stole money to pay for exam and he is shocked to see him dabble in and out of wanton selves to a fault.

Another thrust of split personality is captured in Nneka who tangles two men in her web of love without recourse to both natural and cultural truth. Nevertheless, Johnson has successfully integrated what Freud, in his personality analysis, addresses as an unsatisfied phallic stage in Nneka. In *Human Development*, Thomas Crandell *et al*, clarify that “conflict during the phallic stage results in Oedipal complex for boys and Electra complex for girls… A person fixated in the phallic stage might display sexual problems/conflict such as impotence, frigidity, homosexuality, and an inability to handle competitive relationships” (37-38). Nneka, in this case, cannot make a rational decision over choice of a partner; and she does not see
anything pervasive in blurting in the public that more than one man sleep with her in the same time. However, in this conversation between her and Obong, she presents a remarkable outlook:

Obong: Eh-eh…How many times did he…love you?
Nneka: Please, my chief…(p. 40)

Here, Nneka reflects a conventional self of a typical Ibibio woman. In Ibibio milieu which the play is set, a woman would find it hard to accept in public that a man has made love to her. In this case, Nneka is battling with an aspect of Ibibio ideal culture, a tension from social force (superego). Shame has fraught her; fear has gripped her and the tension from asserting the unusual of her kind in the public hovers until Ibom’s reaction forces her to portray a different self as exemplified in the following lines:

Ibom: (Gets up desperately): Three times! Three good times within that same week…
Obong: And Usua, how many times did he meet you, women?
Nneka: Two times, my chief
Usua: Two times only? We have met many times, Nneka.
Nneka: No. We are not talking about those times…(p. 40).
Obong: …Which of these two men who loved you, is the owner of the seed inside your womb?
Nneka: (Points to Usua) That one there. Usua Okon Ita.
Ibom: Impossible. It is not true, when I met you, you told me that you hadn’t known any other man before me.
Nneka: (Turns to Ibom in contempt) Well, how did you see me then? Like someone who never met any other man before you?...(p. 41).

Nneka’s latter impression is bold, assertive and even whimsical compared to the previous one. These different impressions reinforced by her vociferations are referents to plural selves. One self makes men to compete for her love while the other self complicates her position before her lovers and her society. In Ibibio cultural standard, Nneka’s selves are indication of a deviant and a coquette. Nneka fails to handle her sexual life properly. She flaunts herself at two men of dissimilar attitude but similar purpose to her. One self reflects the positive self that embodies compassion she displays with Usua as a good wife while the other self reflects the greedy lady who stalks on men who can offer her stock fish through which she dies as Ibom implies. It reflects Freud’s position in what he terms Electra complex which in this case could be inferred that Nneka’s proclivity for the reciprocity of her father to her sexual intent has lengthened beyond curtailment to fixity. In consequence, her sense of correctness to spousal affairs is blurred.

In Sociology of Deviant Behaviour, Marshall Clinard and Robert Meier write that “explanations for deviance commonly emphasize that every person at birth feels certain
inherent, basic needs, in particular the need for emotional security …deprivations of these universal need during early childhood lead individuals to form abnormal personality pattern” (64). Nneka has clearly shown an insincere boldness in her love life, boldness characterized by insecurity. “This insecurity can rock our foundation and cause our fear. Coping with fear is usually through adjustment…” (Egbule and Egbule 123). Nneka successfully lays Ibom off and clings to the most likely better man, Usua.

Another self in Nneka is the socially motivated self. She makes her choice of husband by the social forces that she cannot resist. Johnson portrays this in these lines:

Ibom: … We shall all know that she lied in the council so that she could go to the place she feels money and food abound. (p.44)

The social factors that make Nneka reflect another strong self are money and food. Even with that, Johnson indicates another social factor as portrayed in these lines.

Obong: … The time comes when a man must be a man… Or like the woman when she needs a man… You know that food doesn’t satisfy her then…(p.50).

Nneka’s self, as implied in Obong’s statement, soothes her dissatisfactory psychic desire for sexual satisfaction.

Ibom is another character of note in this web of plural selves. He shows affection to Nneka but watches another man claim his child. To this effect, Ibom is a bold man in the night but a coward in the day. These are portrayed thus:

Ibom: I am a man of the night. I had said I will come again, didn’t I?... I am the puff-adder. I know when to make my appearance. I like the night because it hides our faces. That is when I perform my most serious duties…(p.36).

The above lines portray Ibom’s self at night. In another self, Ibom is portrayed in these lines:

Ibom: Obong, Ibom is a man of ancient wisdom… I know the truth about this matter. Even though your decision does not favour me, I will pay the charges your council normally takes from unfortunate people like us… What is my fee? (p. 43)

The ambivalence in Ibom’s feeling over his society splits his personality as portrayed in his self of the day and self of the night. At night, Ibom is dreadful, disastrous, and deadly; in the day, Ibom is generous, caring and sympathetic. Johnson seals Ibom’s split personality in his commiseration statement to Ekpema thus:
Ibom: It’s unfortunate, because none can ever believe him again.

This statement indicates the quirk in the formidable Ibom’s self. In love he is sober, in defeat he is temperate, in anger he is vicious; and in the confusion Ekpema causes, he is melancholic. One man, many selves at last.

The Question of Identity

Identity of a man garners from a gamut of numerous selves. It filters through all social processes everyman finds himself doing. “Identities are seen as variable and as constituted through a relational social process” (Williams 68). This is possible because certain acts of pretense, certain shifts and willful departures from normal and identifiable set of regular impressions come to play in a man’s identity.

The question of identity is brought to series of scrutiny as determined by what is whole of the divergence in human personalities, such wholeness garnering from dramaturgy, personality and split personality as conditioned by environment, in Son of the Land. It occurs as a mixture of regular and irregular identification, an integration of all portrayed self-images of a character in the play.

In Son of the Land, characters are portrayed with numerous selves. The images characters put up in different occasions sum up to make for what they are. Through a quirk in the personality, such as repeated during under stress, when eyes watch and when they do not; such constant and split self at night and in daylight, the totality of them all make for identity in Johnson’s Son of the Land.

The totality of personalities and “con man” self-images can only put down their signatures of wholeness when characters are viewed through spectra of lives: religious lives, political lives, economic lives, and psychological lives. That means both pretended and normal attitudes that summarize to give people their identity embody appraisal the way we carry out our beliefs attitude, the way we lead or are led, the way we do in money issues, and the way we reflect our thought through our deeds. John Santrock suggests that “identity formation is enhanced by family relationships that are both individuated, encouraging adolescents to develop their own points of view, and connected, providing a secure base from which to explore the social world (155). By the direction Santrock suggests, the characters identities are then observed within family relationship and its significant social identification.

Ekpema is borne with spite in Usua’s mind from birth. He is denied of his social rights; but his privileges alone in Usua’s house could make him more humane. In Usua’s house, he was a thief, in Ibom’s house, he is a thief. Fillip Boeck and Alcinda Honwana clarifies Ekpema’s identity by generalizing that, “children and youth have been routinely portrayed as innocent and vulnerable, in need of adult protection…. Children and youth are often perceived through opposition to adulthood and as ‘people in the process of becoming rather than being” (3). By this view, Ekpema is not becoming a thief because of social pressure. If social pressure in Usua’s house could lure him to theft, he could have repressed it. In both pressure and freewill, Ekpema retains a whole self in one thing, theft. Then, Ekpema is a thief.

Usua gets what he counts and counts what he gets. He maintains that trait of exploring
and exploiting vital chances in life. In full view of the village crowd, he lied to win a wife, Nneka. If Nneka had lived, Usua Okon Ita would throw her and Ekpema out for making him live in guilt for many years. His idea of handling issues for the trade union, it is his satisfaction he seeks first. In his house, he knows that goats are his and he prioritizes them above a human being who is not his blood. When Usua is involved in anything, he must get his full portion of the proceeds. By Johnson’s conclusion in *Son of the Land*, Usua is a cheat.

Ibom is portrayed as a brave witch doctor in *Son of the Land*. He seduces Nneka, Nneka yields. But in the day of glory, he rather accepts defeats for what he knows belongs to him. He chooses to act his stronger self at night but relegates to insignificance in the day. Ibom is a dreadful figure in the play but in the composition of his “con man” images and totality of his split selves, Ibom is a coward.

Nneka does what a true lover should do, giving. All she has, she gives for love. When Ibom asked her out, she gave her all. As Usua emerges, Nneka shows the generosity. If not death, Nneka would have extended her generosity to the others: such that she does by giving another man’s child to her lover. “Obedience is medicine for love…” (Ebewo 132). She leaves Ibom and marries Usua because of food and money. But the most significant is her desire for sexual satisfaction which is the primary psychic drive. Her sexual perversion merely heals her unconscious wound. If Nneka had lived, would other voices never appeal to her to give her heart once and a repeated time? In Johnson’s *Son of the Land*, Nneka is a whore. In this network of “dramaturgy” and split personalities Brian McLaughlin et al conclude:

> Now, there are, of course, notorious difficulties attaching to the question of personal identity, and particularly to the question of what conditions are necessary and sufficient for the identity of the self over time. However even without being able to settle this question, we may well be in a position to determine that the identity conditions of the self, whether they may be, one different from those of the body (349).

What the society reads of a man’s totality of selves may be different from a man’s real being. The totality of all makes the whole called identity. However, mutations in human impression depend on the circumstances of the society.

CONCLUSION

It would have been quite easier telling who someone is if life is just a one-sided coin that could be observed with a simple binocular; yet life is a routine that births many activities which split into different actions. As long as the social circumstances are not certain, man will remain uncertain in character to his fellow man and in reality to his society.

The play, *Son of the Land*, reflects a society where different institutions exist to address human conditions. What the society makes people to be is what they will make the society to become. A society with chaotic institutions will address citizens’ situations haphazardly. A society that is constantly upset with the hustle for material glory, tussle for power, restlessness
for riches, craze for fame and a total relapse to lechery will produce restive citizens that may not understand peace; that may lack coordination; that may not tolerate the other. To fit in, to the unpredictable milieu, each man evolves a mild defensive self for various scenes.

The con man faces his world in a gamut of impressions for different challenges in one immutable frame. Personality is the identifiable self shaped by a regular strand of attitude, while split personality is the “one different selves” that spring from the adjustment of attitude for a purpose. Man’s identity is the change in total dramaturgies; a summation of all his marginal units of pretense and reality as portrayed in Johnson’s Son of the Land.

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