



Man 'Rape' Woman: Putting Feminist Discourse In Proper Perspective.

Adeseke, Adefolaju Eben

Department and English and Literary Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *Feminist discourse is an evolving and enduring brand or concept that has received praises and backlashes, aspersions and glorifications. This is because the concept itself is characterized by regional modifications that have brought about ideological schisms like womanism, stiwanism, Africana womanism etc. This paper sets out to correct some of the extraneous views about feminism by looking at the relationship between feminism and issues such as child abuse, motherhood, prostitution, polygyny, and the media. Although feminism is a sociological movement, this paper has customized the concept for literature, especially drama. Hence, a dramaturgical discourse is adduced. Plays are extensively drawn upon to exemplify some findings and conclusions. Recommendations are given based on Biblical and Quranic injunctions. It is also recommended that Theatre for Development could be put into good use in order to give sound orientation to both men and women, in the cities and rural areas.*

Keywords: *Clitoridectomy, Feminism, Male chauvinism, 'Rape,' and Theatre for Development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Feminist discourse, that is, agitation for the emancipation of women from all forms of oppression, started well above hundred years ago. Along the line, there had been some level of inactivity and disconnect which necessitated a resurgence in the movement in the 1960s. Yetunde Akorede (17,18, [1]) gave a clue for the resurgence thus:

The agitation was prompted by the reality of women's continued oppression, and the realization that women needed to evolve a theory and a strategy that would hasten the desired freedom from socio-political and economic oppression. This resurgence laid firm foundation for modern feminist movements and activities. The aim and objectives of propounders, adherents, critics, activists, radicals of feminist discourse is summed up in the following terms:

Feminist ideology rests firmly on the proposition that women should be given equal rights and opportunities as men. It articulates the politics of gender discrimination, expectation and liberation. It is an ideology that articulates the yearnings of most women who become conscious of the negative impositions being a woman have brought upon them in their different cultural environments. The central concern of feminist ideology includes the fact that human rights, status, obligations and privileges should not be determined by sex (Akorede 19.) Sotunsa (6, [2]) opines that feminism seeks to remove all the barriers to equal social, political and economic opportunities for women... it objects the notion that a woman's work is determined principally by her gender and that women are inherently inferior, subservient or less intelligent than men.

Our focus in this paper is not geared towards striking equilibrium between men and women, as our arguments will show later, but to shed light on fuzzy or grey areas in the relationship between men and women. To this end, we shall take a look at the root cause of discrimination against women, assessing some issues raised against women by men in ignorance, especially in the areas of child bearing, and child gender.

African women are grappling with numerous problems. The problems are identical in all African countries with little difference in entrenchment level. These problems include clitoridectomy – the surgical procedure to remove all or part of the clitoris, female circumcision; polygyny, child marriage, arranged marriage, forced marriage, prostitution, and oppression of barren women. The enormity of these problems is exactly what gave birth to feminism and other emancipation movements of women.

Women, the educated ones in particular, have reacted genuinely to the above challenges. They have shown their commitment to tackling the challenges through literature, paper presentations, seminars and workshops within and outside Africa. Although different nomenclatures have emanated from such academic engagements, the fact remains that all the active players are tenaciously and doggedly working towards actualizing the emancipation of women from all forms of oppression. Few of the nomenclatures are discussed below.

First, Buchi Emecheta came up with feminism (with a small 'f') aimed at reflecting the psycho-cultural depravities given to women, their children and their clans. Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie came up with STIWA which stands for Social Transformation Including Women in African (Stiwanism). Such coinage helps her to discuss the needs of African women today in the tradition of the spaces and strategies provided in our indigenous culture for the social being of women, claiming that:

This new term "STIWA" allows me to discuss the needs of African women today in the tradition of the spaces and strategies provided in our indigenous cultures for the social being of women. My thesis has always been that indigenous feminisms also existed in Africa and we are busy researching them and bringing them to the fore now (in Olaniyan & Quayson 550, [3]).

Similarly, Alice Walker, a prolific leading black American feminist, came up with womanism; that black women should speak for themselves to avoid misrepresentation. Cleonora Hudson-Weems prefers Aficana-womanism which advocates an Afro-centric kind of feminism for African/Caribbean women.

These strands of feminism were arrived at to bridge the gulf between the experiences of white women against their black counterparts so as to really lay hold on a concept that will provide a stark portrayal of black women experiences. For example, womanism gives attention to racial, classist and sexist oppression against African women, whereas feminism concerns itself mainly with sexist oppression. This is accentuated by Sotunsa (25) that, womanism "essentially aimed at alleviating women's multiple oppression ... it is rooted in black culture, giving serious attention to centrality of family, community and motherhood".

In addition to the above-mentioned nomenclatures propounded by African feminist women, there are other variants of feminism which include radical feminism, analytical feminism, Marxist/social feminism, liberal feminism, humanist-feminism, lesbian feminism etc.

Running through the above nomenclatures, the observable fact is that they all deal with struggle of which women are the focus and that the struggle is aimed at women liberation. Developing or generating such nomenclature to capture African women experiences is very appropriate. This is because it places such nomenclatures as concepts in the realm of gender discourse as literary theory and critical vocal point as well as repetition for emphasis.

For the purpose of this paper, we will adopt the general term "feminism", a term which subsumes other terms already mentioned above.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is imperative for us to define some recurring terms in this paper in order to provide definite meanings that make for better understanding of their usage contextually. Such terms include 'Rape', Feminism, Clitoridectomy and Male chauvinism, Theatre for Development (TfD).

"Rape" as used in the title of this paper is any injury inflicted by man on woman that is targeted at dehumanizing or subjugating her. Such injuries include rape in its real sense - that is, to force sexual intercourse or other sexual activity upon another person without their consent; sexual harassment, sexual molestation, forced marriage, physical assault and others.

Male chauvinism means belief in inherent superiority of man over woman to the extent that hatred of the female folks is evident. In modern societies, it is largely a psychological phenomenon that identifies specific individuals with the practice of extreme hateful and discriminating disposition against women. But it is imperative to point out that male chauvinism is importantly a carryover of cultural entanglements.

Clitoridectomy simply refers to female circumcision. It is an age long practice on African women with the believe that it prevents them from having genital sensations. According to adherents, it is performed on women to prevent them from becoming flirts or having sex outside marital embrace or to tame women's sexual desire.

Feminism has its etymology in Latin. 'Femina' means 'woman'. Therefore, "feminism" means "an ideology of woman; any body of social philosophy about women" (Ogundipe-Leslie 547).

Saint Gbilekaa (27, [4]) defines Theatre for Development (TfD) as "performances (scenarios and dramatic skits) dedicated to solving certain social problems of a select community" and "performances by catalyst groups – adult and social workers done before a group of people or select communities to educate them on ways of improving their life-styles and environment through communal action".

III. GENDER ISSUE AND CULTURAL ENTRENCHMENT

It is important to trace the real problem confronting African women to African culture and its nuances which are in sharp contrast to the western experience. Oakley (in Voet 90, [5]) argues that “sex differences have their source in culture, not nature”. This shows that discriminations against women are engendered and fallouts of our critical ambiguities. One important fact is that once those traditions are entrenched, especially over a long period of time, they become difficult to eliminate as adherents have accepted them as normal ways of life. This is accentuated by Rodrigues quoted by Davies (in Olaniyan and Quayson 562, [6]) that:

It is easier to eliminate the colonial bourgeois influences that were imposed on us and identified with the enemy than to eliminate generations of tradition from within our society.

Though the influence of colonialism was gladly imbibed by the colonized, it has not gripped Africans as much as traditional influences. These traditions regardless of decades of existence, regardless of how well we have metamorphosed through western advancement are still very much with us. The basic reason why it is difficult to eradicate is that most of us grew up with them, so they become integral part of us. This sentiment is shared by Carole Davies (562) thus:

The struggle for equal rights between the sexes is going to prove even more difficult than that of decolonization because in essence it is a struggle between *husband and wife, brother and sister, father and mother.* (Original Italics)

As erroneously believed, the inequality between sexes is not biological or divinely determined, rather, it is cultural. On this, Gayle and Copellia (1, [7]) posit that, “... inequality of the sexes is neither biological nor a divine mandate but a culture construct”.

As stated earlier, with different coinages, African women have made several comments and agitations to create awareness and to ameliorate the anomaly of how women are perceived and treated in African setting. For instance, African feminism or womanism as suggested by Alice Walker involves an effort by African women to be fully involved, as equal partners in both the struggle for the freedom and fulfillment of African people in the face of racism, colonialism and oppression and the worldwide struggle by woman against social, cultural, and political marginalization (Killian and Rowe, 96, [8]).

Such effort is an all encompassing one, torching all areas of such domination and marginalization as stated further by Killian and Rowe (97):

There has been an increasing awareness of the need to address the oppression of women both within traditional culture (for example by sexual mutilation, forced maternity, and polygamy) and by certain practices introduced by colonialism, including the economic exploitation of women among the rural and urban poor and the systematic attempt to under-educate women in relation to men.

IV. THE RIGHT VIEW OF FEMINISM

It is important to bring to bare what feminism really is, in order to discountenance insinuations that it is designed at separating marriages, making women equal to men, teaching women how to disrespect men, or even placing women above men. Feminism as an ideology is not designed to achieve any of the foregoing. Instead, it is designed to make man and woman live an enjoyable life, and to coexist peacefully and positively for the benefit of both sexes.

Molara Ogundipe-Leslie (545,547) mentioned eight points of what feminism is all about which may assist in positioning feminism within the African context. Four of the eight points deserve our attention:

- i. Feminism is not the reverser of gender roles, “gender” being defined simply as socially constructed identities and roles.
- ii. Feminism is not necessarily oppositional to men. It argues, rather, that a woman’s body is her inherent property, “not to be owned, used and dumped by men”, as advocated by radical theology feminists.
- iii. It is not opposed to African culture and heritage, but agrees that culture is dynamically evolving and certainly not static, that culture should not be immobilized in time to the advantage of men as most men in Africa want it to be.
- iv. Feminism is not a choice between extreme patriarchy on the one hand or hateful separatism from men on the other.

It is discernible from the above that feminism is not an alien ideology or concoction designed to estrange adherents to their culture and tradition but designed to reappraise the status-quo and eschew conservatism, parochialism and obsolescence. This is in a bid to reposition marriages and relationship between men and women for more cohesive, compatible and compassionate relationship and coexistence.

The gender problems facing African women are not the same with their western counterparts. Western women are not discriminated against by their men. When it comes to education, in fact, they enjoy lots of appeal from parents and government. Apart from this, they are given free hand to choose their partners, even at tender age, with or without parents’ approval.

They are allowed the choice of either raising children or not. This researcher still remembers vividly what his father told him of his American friend about 30 years ago, who said that he and his wife have agreed not to raise children of their own because the husband's mother gave birth to 'too many' children and he needed to assist them to attain good education. You may ask the number of children he is referring to. Just three children of which the man is the first, with other two sisters. The question is, is that really tenable in Africa?

In the West, women are not castigated for giving birth to only female children except in Africa, women are treated as if they determine the sex of their children. When it is a male child, the husband has won. If, however, it is otherwise, the woman has won. When it is all male the man is powerful whereas, if it is all female, the man is lazy and the woman is stronger – for which she must be castigated and treated with contempt.

In all the above situations, African women, especially those in the rural areas, face lots of hardship. The situation of our women in Islam-controlled countries or the Northern part of Nigeria is more precarious. It is obvious, given the stark realities of the condition of African women, that feminism or whatever nomenclature it is given, is more relevant to Africa than any other continent. It, therefore, becomes essential to take a look at polygamy, forced marriage, prostitution, barrenness and childlessness viz-a-viz their impacts on African women.

In some African communities, for instance, the number of women a man has as wives determines how comfortable and rich he is, especially in the indigenous African setting. It may also determine how wealthy he is going to become because having many wives and countless children who work for him in whatever vocation he is engaged in, be it farming, hunting, blacksmithing, palm wine tapping, tying and dying, artistry and others, will essentially result in acquisition of wealth.

In urban areas of Africa, polygamy is gradually on its way out. Men do not wish to have more than one wife though they may have extra-marital partners, they do this pretentiously, unlike in the past, when they flaunted it to everybody, even their wives. Nowadays, the problem really is in the rural communities.

In some parts of Africa, daughters are used to raise money for the family's survival as they are practically sold to their husbands to improve the family's financial situation or solve some pressing needs or issues. According to Anyga (126, [9]), this "issue is tied to cultural traditions that see the women as a tool for material possession".

Forced marriages have led to maltreatment of women by men who feel that after paying such huge amount as dowry the woman has become a property at the mercy of the purchaser. Forced marriage has also led to escapades by girls who detest such act, only to escape into more dangerous situations such as rape, prostitution, and worse still, women and child trafficking. They are forced into this as an aftermath of escape from home which must have hitherto exposed them to hunger, accommodation and upkeep problems.

The issue of forced marriage to solve financial problems or to raise the family's status is the theme of Efu Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa*. Ananse sees his daughter Anansewa, as a means of amassing wealth or at least making life more comfortable for the family. Therefore, he decides to trade his daughter among four chiefs. The following excerpt substantiates this:

Ananse: Don't frown, my daughter. Have patience with your father. You are a child yet, in spite of your body development, you cannot see as far as your father can. There you sit looking lovely, and it's exciting for you to go out in all your beauty. That is all you know.

Anansewa: I implore you, father, I'm ready

Ananse: Finally, when I breath my last and die, will my coffin be drawn in a fine, private hearse instead of a municipal hearse? Will the people who come to my funeral eat salad and small chops and drink good whisky, instead of chewing bits of cola and drinking cheap gin and diluted Fanta? Tell me.

Anansewa: [Hesitating] So, father, do you desire all those things? Haven't you condemned many of them often? You have pool-poled them haven't you?

Ananse: Of course I have. Some of them are absolutely absurd. Empty vanities. But you see, my child, I'm trying to use this index to show you how all is well at home. So set your machine talking to help your father out [Walking away]. As a result of a most cracking of my brains, I'm at least able to see a little hope gleaning in our future and I'm directing my steps towards it (p.11,13, [10]).

One can just imagine the frivolities of life for which Ananse intends to sell her child to the highest bidder in the name of marriage. No courtship, no love, and she is just a child who still needs to learn a lot from the family before getting involved in marital affairs. In such unholy wedlocks, the girl-child will have nothing to contribute because she is married off when she could not take decisions of her own, when she has not contributed anything to the socio- economic development of her family, talk less her society. Consequently, there seems to be no end in sight to this incongruent attitude considering the fact that the Nigerian economy is in comatose. Therefore, the idea to use what one has to get what one wants will always take its toll on the girl-child as she grapples with forced marriage.

At times, such forced marriages may lead to tragedy. This is exactly the case with Oguoma and Uloko in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the gods* [11]. The joy and happiness of Oguoma is mortgaged for the survival of

her brother, Elozie. The family disallows Oguoma from marrying Uloko, the love of her life, because he is not able to provide the money needed for the sacrifice to save Elozie's life. Instead, she is forced to marry Adigun, who is able to offer the required money for the sacrifice. At the end, the forced marriage leads to tragedy, the death of Oguoma, Uloko and Odibei.

The above shows or represents how parents lure or force their daughters to marry for their own comforts not minding the psychological and emotional effect on the young woman.

Barrenness or childlessness is among the problems the African woman is faced with. A barren woman is regarded as a curse to her family and her husband. Barrenness, most times, is not traceable to the woman alone. Science has proved that both man and woman can be the cause of infertility. If this is so, why is the woman regarded as the only culprit who must be punished for a sin of two? In-laws, especially from the man's side, don't always take things easy for a childless woman, in the false belief sometimes that she is responsible. Such a woman is then subjected to various forms of victimization.

Women are sometimes punished or deserted for bearing only female children as if they are at fault. This is the experience of Omesiete in Tess Onwueme's *Shakara: Dance-Hall Queen*. The husband abandons her because she gives birth to only female children who the husband refers to as 'rats'. Omesiete says the following: Omesiete... Ah ya-ya-yah! My children, if you really want to know, I think your father lost interest in me because he expected male children. But do I make children? Don't I take what God gives? (To SHAKARA.) You should have seen the spiteful look in his eyes when he saw you, my baby-child. He just hissed and mumbled something about the house filling up with rats. Rats! That's what your father called you when you were born. And then he named you *Akajunwa-The hand never rejects a child*. (p. 23, [12])

It is quite unfortunate that ignoramus individuals like Omesiete's husband still abound in both urban and rural areas of Africa. It is ignorance on their part because science has revealed that it is the man's semen that determines the sex of a child while the semen of the woman is constant. This is one of the issues that Tfd can address in such communities to give proper education and orientation to the people.

Some women too are overburdened with bearing too many children. They give birth until their bodies are worn out which ultimately reduces their industriousness and which takes a toll on their health as well. This is summarized succinctly by Scally Birgham thus:

I don't believe there is a solution to these problems or at least, I don't believe there is one which recognizes the emotional complexities involved. A life without children is... an impoverished life for most women: yet life with children imposes demands that consume energy and imagination as well as time and that cannot all be delegated even supposing there is a delegate available (in Aidoo, 518, [13]).

Birgham's fears are justified because the two circumstances described above pose their peculiar challenges. Things are relatively better in the urban areas, though women are still being molested, and rape is equally on the increase but majority of our men have come to realize that their wives have a stake in the relationship and should therefore be given due respect, love and appreciation, especially for women who are really playing positive roles. But we think where the problem really lies is the rural areas, where the status quo still remains, where culture and traditions, thrives efficaciously.

We are talking about the rural area where the girl-child is not educated but married off against her wishes to bear children. Where polygamy is a normal trend (though it is understandable that due to religion and culture, every peculiar African society has its own peculiar gender problem), where child marriage is quite normal, where wives work too hard to the detriment of their health, where women bear children until they reached menopause. Where, even when she is battered regularly, treated unkindly, she must continue to endure. Even the urban cities are not left out of this. In the cities, the girl-child is made to serve as house help while some are made to hawk around, even in perilous weather.

A major issue that requires our attention is the fact that majority of African women are ignorant of their rights. Another issue is that women are portrayed negatively in literature and the media as well. These we shall give attention to now.

Regarding the first issue, women can only protect their rights only when they are aware that such rights exist. Therefore, effort should be made to enlighten them on their rights, the importance of protecting such rights as well as the benefits. How to achieve this shall reflect in our recommendation later.

Another issue is negative portrayal of women by men and unfortunately too by women themselves. Such portrayal either positively or negatively goes a long way to make or mar the image of women. To analyse this, we shall consider Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni: (An African Antigone)* - an adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, for positive portrayal and Adenike Akinjobi's *Family Secrets* for a balanced one.

In *Tegonni*, Osofisan shows that women should be strong-hearted, resolute and ready to protect their rights. We see how brave and resolute Tegonni, the character around whom the play revolves, is in the face of intimidation by tradition and its adherents. She fights against the obnoxious tradition that prohibits women from learning goldsmithing, a vocation left solely and entirely for men. In order to achieve her goal, she operates under the protection of Jones who gives her the needed assistance. Hear Jones' submission:

Jones: She came to me for refuge. At the beginning that's all it was. A terrified woman, trying to affirm her independence against an unreasonable tradition. They were going to have her fingers burnt out, as they treat witches. So she ran to me, and when I listened to her, I decided to offer her our protection. I helped build her workshop and got some tools for her from Lagos. And I began to see the products of her work. General, you've got to see them! I'm not exaggerating, when I say it's a work of a genius! If she was white, she'd be a major discovery (p. 99, [14]).

This type of protection is commendable and expected from men to women, particularly men in authority. The courage of the women characters in the play in the face of intimidation and provocation from Lt. Gen. Carter-Ross, the British Governor is also commendable:

Tegonni: Still let's not despair, my friends. However bad it may seem, something tells me it's only a passing phase of our history. That our people will rise again, one day.

Antigonne: Yes, that's the way we must see it, my sisters. This Gomina, this Carter-Ross, he will fade away like all oppressors before him (p.68).

It sounds optimistic that women who know their rights can agitate not to be trampled upon, it is also forward looking to hope that all oppressors and their oppressive tendencies against women, will be gone one day, or at least be ameliorated.

It is expected of artists to give a balanced representation of men and women in their work of art. Just as women fall short of expectations, so do men too. Such balanced representation forms the plot of Adenike Akinjobi's *Family Secrets*.

In the text, Mrs. Feyisitan considers Tayo as her husband's niece but it later turns out that Tayo is a product of her husband's previous pre-marital affairs in the village. Gbenga, Mr.Feyisitan supposed son is a product of Mrs.Feyisita's illicit sexual affair with another man. This comes to the fore when Gbenga who is at the point of death, needs blood transfusion and the blood of Mr. feyisitan, the supposed father does not match his.

Though it seems that one secret is heavier than the other, the playwright shows that men and women are vulnerable to mistakes. The outcome of these contradictions ensue thus:

Mr.Feyisitan: (stands up) Now my dear one, you have the privilege of staying here tonight. As early as possible tomorrow, go in search of Larry. You need his blood.

Mrs. Feyisitan: (on her knees) Please Bayo, forgive me please.

Mr. Feyisitan: (moves closer to her) sweetheart, this has turned out to be a night of secret-sharing. Now that I know yours, please share mine too. Tayo is my child. (she gaps) I deserted Abeke, a girl I met undefiled, who gave it all to me, disgraced her family in the village, estranged her father's relationship with my uncle, Chief Fesinkin, to please you. (Laughs) What an irony it has all turned out to be (p.77, 78, [15]).

Nemesis catches up with both Mr. and Mrs. Feyisitan; Mrs. Feyisitan faces divorce while Mr.Feyisitan has to grapple with infidelity of his wife till the rest of his life. Both of them experience traumatic and turbulent periods for the rest of their life.

V. GENDER ISSUE AND PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is another way of dehumanizing and humiliating women. On the issue of prostitution, the culprit is not only the girl or woman who offers her body for sale, the man who patronizes prostitutes is also a culprit. There won't be supply if there is no demand. Though some of these prostitutes try to justify this 'trade' as a means of survival but obviously they surely have sad stories to tell. No matter the argument of the prostitutes and those who patronize them, the fact remains that it is a bad act.

The argument of one of them from Rim Mon village of Thailand may suffice here, which will be quoted in full:

People may think we are stupid, selling our young bodies. We don't think so. It is a struggle to stay alive. We cannot bear to see our parents suffer. They brought us up. They didn't force us into it. And we have no other way of repaying them, because we have no good education and we don't come from rich or influential families who can find decent jobs for us. Our young bodies are all we have to improve the family's economic status. I don't care what other people say. May be Bangkok (or any part of the world) people really think that what we do is wrong. But none of us think so. It is our life and our future. Once we have made up our minds, we have to keep on telling ourselves it is okay to do it. Even though we are doing it, we don't want our sisters to follow us. The money is good that's for sure. But it is humiliating to be used to satisfy other people's lust...I tell every girl who wants to know what it is like in the sex trade. I tell them not to do what I have done. I tell my story with tears in my eyes. But they won't listen. (Skrobanek et al, 70,71, [16]).

This is the disposition of Shakara in Tess Onwueme's *Shakara: Dance-Hall Queen* who feels she can use the proceeds from prostitution to liberate her family from poverty. She rebuffs her entreaties to quit the act and learns in a hard way.

The above quotation is likely to represent the agonizing and traumatic ordeal of all prostitutes world over. They usually regret their actions, but unfortunately, once they start, they get addicted and stopping such act becomes difficult. This is exemplified in Folasayo Ogunrinde's *The Woman with a Past*. Millie who happens to come from a comfortable family has been battered or 'raped' by men's un-kept promises. She loses her kids in the process, searches for succor from other men but does not get any and thereafter takes to prostitution which she justifies through her actions and words. This is deducible from Dayo's lines:

Dayo: You see what I mean? (Pause.) Anyway Peju, do be reasonable, Millie is a HIGH CLASS PROSTITUTE. Her stay here expires next weekend. You can bring in your friend then.

Peju: Dayo...

Dayo: Peju. I've made up my mind. She has to leave before she turns this HOME to a brothel. All those phone calls (phone rings. Dayo is fed up) I'll come home for lunch. (exits). (p. 122, [17])

The cause of Millie's actions is not unconnected to the ill-treatment treatment she receives from men. This underscores the fact that women are sometimes treated as puns, they are treated with contempt and ignominy and this has led some women into uncanny actions in order to assuage their bruises. This is evident in Millie's statement:

Deolu: May be you want to talk about these relationships

Millie: which one? (Pause.) So many LOVELESS LOVERS (Pause.) can't even recollect. It's not the money... Peju doesn't seem to understand... I've seen the glitter. (Refers to the living room.) It's a cool thing. It doesn't wake you UP and say, 'Good morning, you're loved' (Pause.) Now, I can't feel anything anymore, I'd love to be a sweet-heart, to be hugged but... guess you can't touch the wind.

Deolu: Go on.

Millie: Where to? I am tired of moving. Travelling and triumphs and trials. (Shakes her head.) NO MORE. (Pause.) Moved to this one... (Tries to recollect.) I've forgotten his name... but I made him what he is today... I paid his rent well in advance... I fed him for years until he brought another woman to live with us... then I realized... LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH...(Moves.) So I moved out... on again... just wrecked my love on his shores. (Stops moving.) There was this other maniac, remember?

Deolu: Who?

Millie: You can't teach me sex... but this man wrecked my back... so I moved again. Wasted these years... see?... managed to heal... slowly I moved on. (Moves) and on settled with another LUNATIC. (Stops moving, smiles.) Very funny I've forgotten how to laugh...(p.149, 150).

It is very traumatic for men, probably due to male hegemony, to subject women to such ridicule, emotion-sapping experiences. This is unacceptable because men will not accept such treatment from women. Factually speaking, it may be absurd to conclude that it is men's world.

VI. GENDER ISSUE AND THE MEDIA

Our assessment here will be predicated on how gender issues are treated in Nigerian films and Video. The portrayal of women in the media, especially films is worrisome. They are portrayed as witches, prostitutes, women haters, thieves, armed robbers, husband snatcher, lazy and indolent lags.

Nigerian films, in a bid to ape Western films, glamorize male violence combined with sex against female. In some films too, women are portrayed as violent gangsters who kill and destroy. Could this be an authentic portrayal of African women's character or a distorted version? Could this be an emerging trend in educated African women's characters? What impact would these films have on young boys and girls? Are they not recommending violence against women which might be responsible for the rampant nature of rape cases in our society?

It is imperative that the media entrench it as its duty to air programs "that promote and perpetrate certain values, attitudes and notions of what is acceptable behavior" (Nicholson et al.,vii, [18]). The positive portrayal of sexes may contribute immensely to how men and women view themselves, view image or sex. It may mean a lot to the survival of families and how safe and enjoyable the family may be. This is true because: the media is well placed to influence our opinions, beliefs, attitudes and standards, as well as our notion of self, so that our idea of who we are as female or male is influenced by value-laden media messages. The media has joined the ranks of social institutions such as the family, the church and schools, and has become a powerful socializing agent (Nicholson et al. 4).

Therefore, to say that the media has become "an indispensable parts of our daily routine" (Nicholson et al. 4) is merely stating the obvious. The musical video is even the worse in its portrayal of women. On the whole, Nigeria has produced more musicians and music more than all other African countries put together. Musical videos, more often than not, have not portrayed women in good light. In the videos, women dance to the lyrics in suggestive and amorous ways that show that they crave for men's body or sex. Sometimes many girls dance round a man. These videos derob women of their pride and this is unacceptable. Many of the songs, especially R&B and pop songs, "make good and explicit references to men's sexual exploits and female

sexuality". The emphasis in the media is usually geared towards "the women or girl's physical appearance and sexuality and the man's macho, sexual promises and financial success" (Nicholson et al 7, 17). Such videos glamorize perverted images of women with dire consequences - wrecked image. Example of such musical videos are 'Alobam' (2014) by Phyno, directed by A Clarence Peters; 'Pon Di Ti' (2014) Sarkodie ft. Banky W and 'Ibobe' (2014) by Dj xclusive ft. Olumide directed by Adisa Cookey to mention just a few. Even in advertising, which is the soul of mass media, women are used as bait to advertise goods and services. They exploit their sex appeal and bodies to persuade men and women to purchase goods. It is essentially important to address this image plundering of women in order to forestall violence against women and engender a better understanding of sex and gender roles and functions. In real sense, sex refers to female and male biological functions whereas gender refers to women and men's social and cultural roles. Therefore, gender refers to "what society say women and men should be and should do, what is considered female and what is considered masculine. This behavior is learned and is what shapes gender identity and what shapes gender roles...what we learn as men and women depends on the society in which we are born, its culture, values" (Nicholson et al.13).

VII. GENDER ISSUE AND HUMANIST FEMINISM

In theory, liberal humanism, socialist and feminist critics "wish to discuss literature in a way which will deepen, enrich and extend our lives", but socialist and feminist critics "point out that such deepening and enriching entails the transformation of a society divided by class and gender" (Eagleton,183, [19]).

The feminist critic "believes that gender and sexuality are central themes in literature and other sorts of discourse, and that any critical account which suppresses them is seriously defective" (Eagleton 182). Radical critics tend to respect "any method of theory which will contribute to the strategic goal of human emancipation, the production of 'better people' through the socialist transformation of society" as acceptable.

Classical liberalism believes that we "are all human beings with the capacity to reason, we should have equal right and equal status as citizens" (Voet 88) whereas the enlightenment theorists claim that all human beings are equal but mentioned that there is dramatic difference between men and women and so, such equality does not apply to women. Invariably, these theorists do not accept equality between the sexes. The social liberals though claim to be gender-neutral but assert that political equality of all adult citizens implies that peoples biological and social differences should not matter for their political status"(Voet 89).

Pauline Johnson (in Voet 89) argues the perception of radical humanist which incorporates two interconnected values, that is, the equal value of all people as members of a genetic humanity as well as the value of someone's uniqueness and individuality. She further argues the humanist face of feminism in the following terms:

The central claim raised in (this) book is that feminism is a humanism. The anti-humanist attempt to establish that modern humanism is hostile to the principle of diversity and difference –that it insists on measuring women and men according to the same standards and treating them in the same way –is an assessment which fails to recognize humanism universalizing claims as the underside of its own commitment to the idea of the unique difference of each personality. Each time a feminist theory raises, once called upon to account for its own motivation, a principled commitment to the idea of the autonomy, the unique and rightful diversity of feminine selves, it speaks in the language of humanist values (in Voet, 89, 90).

The feminist agenda of humanist value is encapsulated in the following quotation which needs to be quoted in full: humanist feminist also argue that in public life we should present ourselves as all being part of the same humanity and therefore all deserving equal respect. We should encourage everyone to develop their talents as human beings. Regardless of people's sex, they should be considered equal citizens. We should all count as one person in politics and in law, as this is the difference between modern democracy and the status system of the past. The political role or subjectivity as, therefore, the same for women and men: the rational individual...is people have been discriminated against in the past, then they may claim compensation for this injustice. (Voet 90).

VIII. GENDER ISSUE AND MOTHERHOOD

Dictionary.com describes motherhood as "the state of being a mother" [20]. It states further that motherhood is having or relating to an inherent worthiness, justness or goodness that is obvious or unarguable.

What is deducible from this is that motherhood engenders joy and a state of wellness and goodness. This is exactly what motherhood connotes, not the type obtainable among the Bantu people of Cameroon where "women were marginalized at their new husbands' homes" (Ngcobo 533, [21]). A place where the woman: ...is reduced to a permanent state of dependence and estrangement...always be an outsider among his people, always the first suspect when things go wrong ...her position of motherhood entails hard labor to provide food for the family. Nothing will change until old age, if she is a powerful woman or a senior wife she will be

empowered to move centrally, to exercise authority and train the younger women in the practiced art of walking the tight rope... (Ngcobo 534)

It is not also the type found among the Bemba people of Zambia where young girls are taught that:

A good wife does not talk to her husband much, sometimes she is supposed to leave her husband with her co-wives as soon as she is pregnant. The rationale is that she has got what she wanted and throughout her pregnancy and lactation she will no longer need the husband (Ngcobo 535).

The above experiences of our African sisters capture almost all the injury inflicted on women in most of African rural communities.

IX. PUTTING THE VIEW RIGHT

There is no gain saying the fact that Nigerian women, by extension, African women have shone brightly in all spheres of life and disciplines. There is no field of human endeavor where African women are found wanting.

It is important to also state that the issue of discrimination against women is not peculiar to Africa, by all indication, the West had a fair share of this before they corrected the anomaly. Kolawole mentioned such instances during the Victoria age where women had to adopt male Pseudonym to be accepted. She observed that:

Charlotte Bronte first published *Jane Eyre* under the Gurner Bell. Her two sisters adopted Ellis and Acton Bell. George Eliot had to conceal her real name Marry Ann Evans as well. This accounts for the subsequent search for women self realization in western literature and literary criticism (in Ogunba 56, [22]).

In Africa, just like in the West, many women had succeeded in the economic and political space. Such women were Queen Amina of Zaria, Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan, Madam Tinubu, etc. In recent times, we have Fumilayo Alakija, the acclaimed richest black woman in the world, Dr. Mrs. Selif, President of Liberia, Mrs. Okonjo Iweala, the Minister of Finance and we won't forget in a hurry the doggedness and astuteness of late Professor Dora Akunyili when she held sway as the DG of NAFDAC in Nigeria (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control).

Factually speaking, most African women are dutiful and supportive to their families. They lovingly support their husbands knowing quite well that the success of their husbands is their own success. Therefore, the truism of the statement that "behind every successful man is a woman", which is more appropriate in Africa than to anywhere in the world.

Referring to the assistance usually rendered by Yoruba women to their husbands and household, Rasheed Adeoye states the following:

They (African women) see their husband's works, vocations or trades as their own and knowing full well that the Yoruba inheritance custom is through the patriarchal system, the logic is that once their husband's business succeeded, they and most importantly their children will automatically benefit immensely through such businesses... It is also pragmatic for Yoruba women to fully put their God given potentials and creative powers into their husband's works or businesses. (153, [23]).

Women certainly derive joy in working closely with their husbands in their businesses and they become happier when the businesses boom. Considering the above quotation, the issue of inheritance is another issue that raises questions on how women are treated. In some parts of Africa, inheritance is only allocated to male children while few or nothing is allocated to the female children.

The Eastern part of Nigeria is not an exemption. In the Eastern part of Nigeria, the women equally have positive roles they play, as their own contribution to their families and their society at large. The Umuada (all daughters born in a clan, married or not, and wherever they may be) plays various roles stemming from peacemaking – settling quarrels between husband and wife, parents and children. Women were successful trader who took care of their children and their husbands as well, they play leadership role in their families as well as in the churches and local governments. They are usually resourceful and industrious and through this bring to themselves, success, respect and influence in their community (Nwapa 527, 528, [24]).

Without doubt, it is probably right to conclude that African women are good resources in nation building. They are industrious and would go extra mile to meet the target. They love and always pursue peace.

X. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEMS

One major problem is that majority of African women are ignorant of their rights as well as knowing and doing what is expected of women in the rural and extremely interior communities.

Another issue is that despite men's passionate defense of human rights, human value and justice, and their vigorous resistance to oppressions and tyranny in any form (El Sadaawi 520, [25]), they have failed to attend to women's problems with the same zeal. This is evident in their literature and treatment outside the pages of books

There must be a reason for instituting marriage. The basic reason is that two are better than one, and when the two come together, they become one. Invariably, this means that the two people, likely from different backgrounds, cultures and orientations, must speak with one voice in all matters, be it having children or not, number of children to raise, family finance and expenses (what to purchase and when) etc. The question is that, is it everybody that knows this and shares this same view? If majority are in the know, women would not have been treated as inferior and subservient.

Every electronics and automobiles have manual that spell out instructions on their use. Marriage too has a manual filled with instructions by the institutor of marriage in the bible. For a marriage to succeed, therefore, it must follow the instructions strictly. Why we have lots of ill-treatment of women by men is that both (marriage mates) have neglected such instructions. Some of these instructions could be found in Ephesians 5:22; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:23-31; 1 Peter 3:1-7 [26] and in Quran 2 v 233, 4 v 34 [27].

One of the instructions is that man should be the head and provide headship for the family for which he is held responsible. Every establishment has a hierarchy of staff for proper organization and smooth running of affairs. Such applies to marriage as well, the husband is held responsible for how the family is run with no less strong support of his wife to achieve this (Ephesians 5:23-31).

When a marriage is run smoothly according to the family manual (the Bible and the Quran) such a family will thrive in all facets of life and will become a shining example for other families to follow.

Another major problem is a religious one. People do not take the marriage vows as seriously as they should - this is especially so for those who are legally married. If one will not violate the terms of legal documents stamped and signed by a judge, one should not violate a vow made in front of a crowd of witnesses in the case of marriage. The marriage vows usually entrench a kind of unconditional love such as: "Till death do us part, for better for worse" "in times of surplus and in times of wants". Where this vow is followed strictly, marriage mates become best of friends and are ready to make sacrifices that will make the marriage survive and succeed.

XI. CONCLUSIONS

So far, it has been established that rape represents all injuries targeted at dehumanizing the woman and subjugating her. Such injurious treatments include, among others, sexual harassment, forced marriage, child marriage, clitoridectomy, polygamy, prostitution, girl-child trafficking, oppression of barren women etc. It has been foregrounded that to create awareness and curb this trend to the barest minimum, women have reacted unitedly against such inhuman treatment by the men folk. They came up with different nomenclatures such as Stiwanism, Womanism, Feminism, feminism with small 'f', Africana-womanism and others to resist men's oppression of women and to liberate them.

It has equally been mentioned that the maltreatment of women has remained constantly with Africans because Africa's culture gave birth to and nurture such habits and traits which later become difficult to eschew.

How women are portrayed in our literature and in the media are equally attended to. It is very clear that women are not fairly portrayed in these areas, except for few exemptions. Giving the needed opportunities and the enabling environment, it has been mentioned that our women are very industrious, dogged and always ready to make laudable sacrifices for the survival of their families and their societies. This invariably has a chain-effect on the economy and the survival of their communities and their societies at large.

Feminism is not geared towards separating man and woman or placing the woman above the man but it is focused on creating a tranquil environment for marriages to thrive as well as assisting women to know and move towards achieving their potentials. The instruction from the marriage manual, the Bible and the Quran is equally indispensable in actualizing good treatment for both men and women, and importantly for marriages.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing, it has been established that the major problems are that majority of African women, especially those in remote communities do not know their rights, neither are they capable of demanding such rights and that women are badly portrayed in the media and literature. For example, rape victims usually cover up the incident in order to avoid the stigma attached to such act.

It is recommended therefore, that affected governmental agencies and NGOs should embark on vigorous reorientation and education directed towards changing the erroneous views of men that our women are inferior and subhuman and the erroneous views of women that they are subjugated under men and therefore have no rights of their own. Such orientation, by extension, will enable them know their rights, and how to demand for such rights, how to press for charges when abused or 'raped'. Violence against women in the media should be reduced drastically through censorship so that it does not appear as a model on how to treat women.

To achieve a maximum result, Theatre for Development (TfD) could be put to adequate use. Theatre for Development uses theatre for educational purposes by helping the rural dwellers to create their own drama presentations with their own stories, that is, the problems they are facing as well as proffering solutions.

According to Kalipeni and Kamlongera (65, [28]) TFD has been developed “as one way of helping the masses in the developing world to come to terms with their environment and the onus of improving their lot culturally, politically, economically and socially”. Men should not be excluded from such reorientation. They should learn how to treat their wives with dignity, how to respect the wishes of their female children when it comes to marriage as well as sending them to school to develop their potentials and become contributors in the emancipation of their societies.

It is certain that TFD can capture effectively the reorientation that African women needs. It is expedient that the Nigerian films Censors Board takes drastic steps to stop negative and bias portrayal of women in films and musical videos. If this is allowed to persist, it will definitely be an overriding major influence on teeming youths. If curbed, we feel it could stem the tide of rape that is spreading like wide fire in our society.

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