

Women as Agents of Subjugation and Reformation: An Analysis of Jobi-Tume's *Not That Woman*

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Abstract

A lot of studies have been carried out under feminist discourse. In fact feminism seems to have been over-flogged in African fiction as majority of the African female writers dedicate their time and attention in promoting the image of the new African woman who is not just fearless but a goal getter. This study applies African feminist concepts of Stiwanim and Sisterhood to critically look at women as agents used in marginalizing other women and also women in sisterhood providing emotional and financial supports to other women. This research through contextual analysis of the selected African play reveals how women have unknowingly or knowingly be the reason why male sexist and chauvinist exist. It equally explores how women through nongovernmental organizations provide help to lift a fallen woman. Being that promoting the image of African women is a trend, this researcher dims it relevant to support this course by educating women. The selected writer through her play have contributed her quota in achieving the set goals by unmasking ways women put others down or uplift others. This research equally explores the relevant literary techniques adopted by the playwright which contribute positively to the accomplishments of their plays.

Keywords: Subjugation, Reformation, Feminism, Woman, Sisterhood

Introduction

Feminist study is a very common topic that is widely talked about. A lot of women are being maltreated under the cover of marriage, family bonds and relationships that only favour the male counterparts. Women suffer silently under the guise of marriage enduring; domestic violence which can lead to deformation, mental trauma and ultimately death of the abused female. This research therefore is carried out in order to expose the contribution of women towards torturing of other women.

African feminist thought refers to the dynamic ideas; reflections, theories and other expressions of intellectual practices by politically radical African women concerned with liberating Africa by focusing women's liberation, and as such cannot be easily defined or captured. African feminist thought is the potentially limitless product of movements that are themselves constantly in the making, succeeding in changing the conditions of their formation by their very existence. African feminist political thought can be traced to the world's women's movements that formed in the context of transnational liberal and emancipatory political discourses of the late 19th and 20th centuries of European empire. Out of these liberal emancipatory reformists, international labor, communist, socialist revolutionary, and Pan-African Diasporic and African nationalist movements were all formed. (Mama, 2019) She further writes that:

However, following the flag independence of over fifty nation-states, women who joined the anti-colonial freedom movements have had to pursue further struggles in independent nation-states, because Africa's new states often hesitated or reverted to conservative patriarchal views when it came to extending freedom and equality to African women. It is as citizens of new nations that 20th century African women have formed independent feminist movements that continue to demand freedom, equality and rights, for example, by seeking freedom of movement, political representation, educational and economic equality, and perhaps most commonly of all, freedom from sex and gender-based violence.

These are responses to objective conditions of global systemic inequality that have led African women to resume the struggle for freedom and liberation. African feminists in 2019 identify with earlier generations of women freedom fighters but enunciate visions of a future in which the women of Africa will be afforded human rights and freedoms, on a continent liberated from a global neoliberal capitalist system that continues to marginalize the vast majority of the world's peoples and

exploits natural and human resources to a degree that now threatens planetary survival. (Salami 2013) writes that:

...feminism is an absolute necessity for African societies. We rank lowest in the global gender equality index, have some of the highest numbers of domestic violence, the highest number of female circumcision and other harmful traditions. ... Yet I keep landing on articles like this and this which both start promisingly then go on to make claims such as "...the first objective for the Nigerian woman is the imperative of family building as the first step in nation building" and "African women do not feel the same urgency or need to be liberated from their traditional gender roles" respectively. ...I've argued oftentimes that feminism is not "unAfrican", that it has always existed in Africa, that so many of the African women we all love to love are/were feminists. But what exactly is the history of African feminism, you might be wondering. ... While the term 'feminism' is an import to Africa (as all English words are), the concept of opposing patriarchy, the *raison d'être* of feminism if you like, is not foreign. Africa has some of the oldest civilizations in the world so while they didn't always call it feminism (the noun) as far back as we can trace we know that there were women who were feminist (the adjective) and who found ways of opposing patriarchy.

Considering the above expression, one can clearly make out the importance of this study. Being that feminism has been part of African women despite having no name for it as (English and their implied names are foreign to African), regardless, African women as been recorded to be fighting against male dominance therefore it is paramount to support this fight for equality by highlighting the areas women contribute to inequality as well as their roles in achieving equality, ending violence and abuse against women and liberation of women in general through the exploration of the selected African plays. The social and historical realities of African women's lives must be considered in any meaningful examination of women in African literature and of writings by African women writers. A number of works have examined African women from variety of perspectives. Several statements have come from African women themselves in recent years. The only formulation of feminist theory for African women, however, comes from Filomina Steady who, after examining the commonalities of experience and response of African women in African and the diaspora, defines an African feminism. In her introduction to *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, she posits that this African brand of feminism includes female autonomy and cooperation; an emphasis on nature over culture; the centrality of children, multiple mothering and kinship; the use of ridicule in African woman's worldview. A number of traditional rights and responsibilities of women allow her to conclude that the African woman is in practice much more a feminist than her European counterparts.

True feminism is an abnegation of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and reliant. The majority of the black women in Africa and the diaspora have developed these characteristics, though not always by choice (Steady, 2007: 561). Steady's position is perhaps the most appropriate especially since she examines the socio-economic and class factors which contribute to African woman's oppression (economic exploitation and marginalisation) and her responses to this oppression (self-reliance). Many will argue that assuming a nature over culture posture for African women denies her participation in the shaping of human culture and renders her an inert, unintelligent "vessel", not a creative person in her own right. Additionally, the discussion too quickly glosses over certain traditional inequalities which continue to subordinate African women. (While acknowledging their existence, Steady devotes only a footnoted to these inequities in favor of extensive discussion of what makes black women's situation different.) Among them, lack of choice in motherhood and marriage, oppression of barren women, genital mutilation, enforced silence and variety of other forms of oppression intrinsic to various societies which plague African women's lives and must inevitably be at the crux of African feminist theory. Steady's introduction, nonetheless, is still, so far, the most comprehensive detailing of the various facets of African women's experience. (Davies, 2007: 561-562)

Molara Ogundipe-Leslie' also detailed a well examined layers of oppression that have to be thorn away in situation of African women in "African women, Culture and Another Development" which locates the condition of women in African within the socio-economic realities of culture and

development. She makes the point (extending Mao-Tse Tung's "mountain on the back" metaphor) that African women have additional burdens bearing down on them) oppression from outside (foreign intrusions, colonial domination etc.) heritage of tradition (feudal, slave based, communal, 3) her own backwardness, a product of colonization and neo-Colonialism and its concomitant poverty, ignorance etc.; 4) her men, weaned on centuries of male domination who will not willingly relinquish their power and privilege; 5) her race, because the international economic order is divided along race and class lines; 6) herself. While she spends less time detailing the nature and scope of the last four "mountains" than she does on the first two, Ogundipe-Leslie makes it clear that the most important challenge to the African woman is her own self-perceptions since it is she who will have to define her own freedom:

The sixth mountain on the woman's back – herself – is the most important. Women are shackled by their own negative self-image, by centuries of the interiorization of the ideologies of patriarchy and gender hierarchy. Her own reactions to objective problems therefore are often self-defeating and self-crippling. She reacts with fear dependency complexes and attitudes to please and cajole where more self-assertive actions are needed (Davies, 2007: 562).

Progressive African women see the women's struggle as even more difficult as the obvious struggles for national liberation where the enemy is easily recognized. As Gwendolyn Kobie describes it: "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". (Sisterhood is Global, 1998 cited by Davies, 2007:562) And Annabella Rodrigues who participated in the FRELIMO struggle for Mozambican liberation identifies polygamy, initiation rites and lobolo, or dowry, as the most difficult of traditions to eliminate and the most oppressive to women and says, "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 own society". (Davies, 1988).

Feminism has been about challenging the representations of women and arguing for better conditions for them. Representation itself has at least two meanings, both of which are relevant to post-colonialism and to feminism. The first and more political one. It has to do with the matter of political representation, something which even in a democracy arguably never fully satisfies the needs and aspirations of all the people. For whom democratic systems are set up for political representation to be fully representative, it has to be constantly reviewed by those it claims to serve. The second and no less significant definition lies in the area of the discursive, in the ways in which metaphors, tropes, and concepts are used to project an image of some persons or person. Discursive representation has serious effects on the. Leave domain of everyday life and crucially set up forms of potentially agency which are offered as means of defining subject positions in the world. Both political and discursive dimensions of representation are relevant to feminism and postcolonialism, with the two frequently being conflated in general discussions so that the discursive representation of Third world women is often seen as ultimately of political consequence. (Quayson, 2007: 586)

The woman's role in Africa is crucial for the survival and progress of the race. This is, of course, true of all women across the globe, be they black or white. In my work, I try to project a more balanced image of African womanhood. Male authors understandably neglect to point out the positive side of womanhood for very many reasons which I will not attempt to discuss in this address. Recent changes in Nigeria - the 1967 - 70 civil war, economic changes, and an emphasis on the education of women - have affected men's views about women. Women have started to redefine themselves. They have started to project themselves as they feel they should be presented. (Nwapa, 2007: 527)

This research therefore, contextually analyse through the lenses of African Feminisms limiting it to Stiwanism and Sisterhood written by Tosin Jobi-Tume's *Not That Woman* exploring the roles of women as agents of subjugation and reformation as represented in these selected play. It also reflects the historical formation of the play under study.

Today, African feminists scholars, activists, artists and politicians such as Leymah Gbowee, Joyce Banda, Simphiwe Dana and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as well as feminist organisations such as the African Feminist Forum and the African Gender Institute are at the forefront of using activism, knowledge and creativity to change situations that affect women negatively.

No one but African women ourselves can bear the responsibility to protect the histories of African women and to connect them to the situations of today. We have many glass ceilings to shatter. To begin to do so, we must realise that the current situation disadvantages women tremendously. Women are being systemically marginalised within both our local and global societies. As our eyes increasingly open to this truth, we must continue to liberate and defend ourselves from limited notions of womanhood. It cannot be stressed enough how pressing that is. We don't need to reinvent the wheel; we can and should take inspiration from those who are already reshaping the narrative of African womanhood and the truth is that feminism continues to be the tool of choice for many of us.

Ogundipe-Leslie in *Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations* (1994) writes: I have since advocated the word "Stiwanism," instead of feminism, to bypass the combative discourses that ensue whenever one raises the issue of feminism in Africa. The creation of the new world is to deflect energies from constantly having to respond to charges of imitating Western feminism and, in this way, conserve those energies, to avoid being distracted from the real issue of the conditions of women in Africa. The word describes what similarly minded women and myself would like to see in Africa. The word "feminism" itself seems to be a kind of red rag to the bull of African men. Some say the word is by its very nature, hegemonic, or implicitly so. Others find the focus on women in themselves somehow threatening. Still others say it is limiting to their perspectives. Some, who are genuinely concerned with ameliorating women's lives sometimes feel embarrassed to be described as "feminists," unless they are particularly strong in character. The embarrassment springs from being described by a word which encodes women ("femina") so directly. So effective are the years of phallographic socialization! Be a Stiwanist. I am a Stiwanist. (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2007:549-550).

"Stiwa" is my acronym for *Social Transformation Including Women in Africa*. This new term describes my agenda for women in Africa without having to answer charges of imitativeness or having to constantly define our agenda on the African continent in relation to other feminisms, in particular, white Euro-American feminisms which are unfortunately, under siege by everyone. 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 for now. "STIWA" is about the inclusion of African women in the contemporary social and political transformation of Africa. Be a "Stiwanist." (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2007:549-550)

This concept is crucial to this research as we will be exploring how these playwright through the thematic concerns and characterization projects the transformation and growth of women just as the Stiwanists project. The goals of stiwanism present in the selected plays will be highlighted as it reflects women as agents of reformation.

Aspects of Feminism in *Not That Woman* by Tosin Jobi-Tume

This play explores the physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse of women. Here, the playwright shows how patriarchy has reduced women to nothing other than properties own by men to use and misuse at will. She equally promotes sisterhood as an agent to fight male dominance, patriarchy and a means for women to cope with abuses by taking each other in confidence and sharing each other's problems. The beauty and value of sisterhood theory is well promoted as well as the importance of Ogundipe-Leslie's stiwanism in combating abuse and uplifting the women in general through mutual support of all women.

This drama is a representation of violence against women in all parts Nigeria. The writer being a feminist writes from a feministic perspective exploring the problem of patriarchy and male dominated society. Human abuse against women is explored in this play especially: domestic violence,

psychological abuse; sexual abuse, physical and financial abuse. This playwright through dramatic monologue relates the dangers of abusive relationship and how it pushes a victim into mental depression; and it is a threat to human life. These experiences reveal the African women's struggles and their feminism goals which are important as the situation is life threatening. Jobi-Tume's vivid illustrations of these horrifying experiences not only terrify the characters experiencing it; but it also leaves ghost pimples on the readers. This study therefore, attempts to explore the contribution of some female characters in promotion of male patriarchy, female subjugation and violation of women by men in an attempt to put a stop to it. It will also highlight women contribution in uplifting other women through the bond of sisterhood and an organization that rescues distressed women. In this play, the meaning of the acronym STIWA, is fully explored. It plays an important role as that is the means by which these women are saved and healed

Character Exploration of Women as Agents of Subjugation in Jobi-Tume's *Not That Woman*

In this phase, we discover the roles of women toward the downfall of other women as Jobi-Tume (2019: 88-89) carefully highlights:

Madam B ... We expect the worst behavior from men and encourage them to treat us like dirt,

...

Folake ... Do you really think that women are entirely blameless ...

Zainab ... Do you realize that for every woe that befalls a woman, another woman is involved, directly or indirectly?

Folake ... These so-called patriarchal laws, who enforces them? Who is the madame who engages in girl trafficking? Who is the passive mother and the monster-in-law? Who tells the girl-child to keep mum after being raped for fear of stigmatization? Who stays with a man who violates her girl-child?

Madam B ... Who raises the wife-beaters? Who raises the female child to defer to every male in her life? Who makes sure the girl-child knows how to cook, wash, clean the house, and care for her brothers, while the boy-child is encouraged to go play football, watch action movies, and generally idle away?

Folake Who advises her daughter to stay in an abusive marriage and pray? Who mocks single ladies of marriagble age as unwanted leftovers? Who mocks a woman who leaves her husband for whatever reason? Who is the other woman?

All WOMEN!!! ...

From the above citation, we see that women contribute over 50% toward their own marginalization and subjugation by men directly or not. So to further this study, the roles of some female characters as they negatively affect and impact other female characters are to be examined in order to highlight the destructive instincts of these female characters in this play. These characters include: Joyce's mother; Joyce's mother-in-law; the police woman; Madam Peace; Larry's mistress/Secretary and Zainab's co-wives that agitated for her divorce.

In this play, through the characterization of Joyce's mother cum mother-in-law, the writer tries to explicate the role of women in encouraging male dominance; supporting patriarchy and contributing to subjugation and maltreatment of another woman. These women turn blind eyes to their son's irresponsibility and compel the female character to cower and be silently submissive. Again, being that women are creators (mothers) and trainers, it is their duty to not only birth but to raise responsible men by inculcating in them how to value women. Teaching them gender equality; and division of labour at home by raising domesticated men who cook and clean; and not wait on their women to do all the chores serving them as demi-gods. This playwright tries to educate women in general to be aware of their contribution in creating hostile environment for women in general by tolerating male abuse, female subjugation, male overbearing attitude that chokes the women, domestic violence and unwarranted restrictions place on women by men; thereby teaching the daughters that it is okay to be abused by men and that it is a woman's duty (obligation) to tolerate her husband's irresponsibility; for that accounts to been submissive instead of encouraging them to stand against such ill treatment and dehumanization.

Joyce's mother - unknowingly, she is an agent of subjugation. She contributes to her daughter's lack of courage, despite witnessing the maltreatment meted out to her daughter by her husband; she admonishes her daughter to remain silent; endure her husband's abuse as a dutiful wife and remain in her marriage as that is her only identity. That even her mother, in same light tolerated her own husband's abuse and beatings. Funny enough, the husband's physical violation of her body causes a permanent damage; as she suffers from broken waist. Jobi-Tume (2019:69) writes:

Nkechi again arranges herself, walks with an exaggerated limp and begins a mimicry of **Joyce's mother**, while **Folake** assumes **Joyce's** persona again.

Nkechi (demurely) Joyce my dear daughter, a woman's place is with her husband. Let me tell you, a woman without a man is nothing. See, men only beat women they love. You have to stay in your husband's house and endure the beating for the sake of your children. That's what a virtuous woman does. That is how I endured with your father ... and today I'm thankful. My children are my reward.

Folake (wryly) I guess your permanent broken hip and the numerous scars on every part of your body are part of your reward.

Nkechi shut your mouth! How dare you talk to me like that?

Folake I'm sorry, mother.

Nkechi (firmly) Well, as I was saying, your place is here with Larry. If you should ever leave him, I will disown you as my daughter. I will not allow you to make me a laughing stock among my peers. No daughter of mine, I repeat, no daughter of mine will be a divorcee for whatever reason. Do you understand me?

Folake Yes, mother.

She tells her daughter that she will not be welcomed home on any account she leaves her marriage; even if her life is at risk. To die in marriage seems glorious than to live as a divorcee; reflecting on Emecheta (2007) that "she has no tolerance for women that remains in bad marriages just for the sake of self-respect". And that has become Joyce mother's reality and now, she wants to condemn her daughter to same fate. She makes it impossible for her daughter to confine in her on discovering her husband's evil plot to take her life; knowing her mother will not believe her; and always will take Larry's side as usual. She is compelled to take action with the help of her friends in sisterhood that lives in the NGO SWR. Judith (2019) writes:

Nkechi Exactly. Where do you intend to go now, though? What are your plans?

Joyce I really don't know....

Nkechi ... Will you go to your mother's place for a while?

Joyce That's out of the question. To start with she wouldn't believe that Larry could plan to kill me, and she would never approve of me leaving my husband.

Zainab You mean she would want you to remain with him even in the face of death? I find that very hard to believe.

Nkechi Then, you don't know Joyce's mother.

Zainab That's just awful. You still need to make a plan, though.

Joyce For now, my thoughts are still hazy. I need time to think and decide what I want to do with my life. One thing is sure though, I am never going back to Larry.

Nkechi I am happy your eyes are finally opened.

Joyce Can I stay here for a few days, please...?

Nkechi Of course, you are welcome here. SWR is always open to women seeking refuge from any form of abuse.

Zainab You can stay for as long as you like. This is why we are here. (84)

Joyce's mother-in-law - She is also represented as an agent of subjugation. Despite being a woman, she supports her irresponsible, unfaithful, woman beater son. This boils down to the responsibility of women; if a woman raises her son to be respectful of women, then there will be no need for feminist concept. It is for such sons that becomes brut husbands and tyrant fathers that feminisms concept exist in Africa today. Every sexist/chauvinist man is birthed and raised by a woman. So if women nurture their sons like they do their daughters, then the world will be a better place. Larry's mother is such that raises her son to be a brute, a woman-beater and very irresponsible yet she backs him up;

intimidating his son's wife as mother-in-law and encouraging his son's harsh inhumane treatment of his wife. It is for such woman that Emecheta (2007) and Adichie (2014) lament that women are part of the problem; in fact they are responsible for male subjugation of women; as they team up with beastly men to maltreat other women. And to think she is unembarrassed is horrifying. She even blames her daughter-in-law for her son's promiscuity. She claims her son deserves a finer woman as (she) her daughter-in-law no longer look pretty.

Folake Actually, Larry's mother is the one who amazes me with her lack of empathy. She doesn't see anything wrong with her son's waywardness and irresponsibility.

Nkechi Is it any wonder Larry is the way he is? It's obvious the woman did a poor job of raising him.

Folake True. I still can't get over the way she behaved the last time we went to intervene in Larry and Joyce's squabbles. Remember how happy we were when she came around? We thought that she would be able to talk some more sense into her son. How utterly wrong we were.

Nkechi *arranges herself and begins a mimicry of Larry's mother, while Folake assumes Joyce's persona. ... (in an affected accent)* Joyce, I am highly disappointed in you. Why do you like involving your single friends in your marital problems? Have you no shame? What has my son done that no man has ever done before? Is he the first man to engage in little discretions? And you go about broadcasting to the entire world that he is cheating on you? Why won't he cheat on you? Just take a good look at yourself... You look like an old woman. My son certainly deserves better.

Folake But mama, Larry hits me all the time...

Nkechi Oh, please! How big a deal is that? Are you the only woman to get a few beating from her husband? Marriage is all about endurance and submission. Didn't your mother teach you so? (*Softens.*) Now, be a good wife and go prepare sumptuous meal for my son. Don't forget that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

Folake (*quietly*) Yes Mama. (Jobi-Tume, 2019:68)

From the above illustration, it is obvious that Joyce's mother-in-law is against women. To her, a man is entitled to maltreating his wife. A woman is only but a man's acquisition and she has no right to raise her voice or complain about her husband. A woman should be submissive no matter how her husband is. She is neither a womanist nor stiwanist. She does not encourage sisterhood but instead fights against a woman's liberation and happiness. She further scolds her daughter In-law for involving her 'unmarried' friends in her matrimonial issues; admonishing her on a man's right to indiscretion (promiscuity) (Jobi-Tume, 2019:68). She is a woman who not only encourages patriarchy simply because it is her son but she psychologically puts another woman down just to ensure she is under her son; forcing her to feel that she is unworthy of her son; while her womanizer son is not just perfect but deserving too. This behavior gives wings to Larry to live as he pleases and abuses his wife at will without pity to her present condition (pregnancy).

Aspects of Stiwanism in *Not That Woman*

Here a lot of women are used as agent of reformation giving support to a falling woman and helping each other to stand firm. The chief character in struggle for uplifting women in this play is Madam B; who establishes an organization "Succour for Women Refuge" (SWR) that offers refuge to distressed women and helps them out of trouble. She becomes an angel and a saving grace to guiding women aright; and she rescues them from impending doom of physical abuse, domestic violence, psychological and financial abuse they are compelled to endure by their spouse, their families cum relatives. Through her organization SWR, women are saved and they formed a bond of beautiful friendship; a sisterhood that is strong helping them to uphold each other's honour and accepting each other. "The play urges women to organize more vibrant support groups as platforms to promote the empowerment and emancipation of women in general, while fostering rehabilitation and reintegration for abused women in particular". (Jobi-Tume, 2019:51) This quote represents Ogundipe-Leslie's thought on Stiwanism; a movement that supports betterment and liberation of women.

These emancipated women that forms the sisterhood in support of emancipation of women will be explored through analyzing the female characters that perform this roles:

Madam B – she is an icon of a strong woman that struggles to lift others despite being down herself. Her established NGO has rescued lots of Women. She rescues Folake from the abusive uncle that turns her into a sex slave just by paying her tuition fees. She refunds the money and sets Folake free from her abusive uncle and brings her to SWR for better life. Jobi-Tume (2019) writes:

Folake ... My mother suggested that they keep only my brother in school, while I go and live with a distant uncle. My father agreed. My uncle was magnanimous enough to send me to school however, he abused me sexually for ten horrid years. After I finished school, he seized my certificate and forced me to work in his shop while he paid me nothing. I was my uncle's sex slave until Madam B came along. ... she asked him to calculate all he had spent on my education, and she refunded it to him. Madam B rescued me, brought me to this refuge, and taught me how to live again. (56)

From the above quote, we can understand exactly what Ogundipe-Leslie is agitating against when she propounded the Stiwanim theory. Folake's mother also agrees education is only for boys. And this is wrong. Women agitate for equality and right to be educated without restriction. Educating a woman should not be 'an option' but a compulsion just as educating men. Stiwanim advocates for women's right to education, to healthy relations without being abused in any form; that a woman's body is hers and no man's property. And this play explores all these in order to put an end to it. Going further in this investigation, Madam B also rescues Nkechi from the clutches of Madam Peace's baby factory. She equally rescues other young girls trapped in the factory and ensures the business that dehumanizes and demeans young women is permanently closed; and she even ensures justice is served by getting Madam Peace arrested.

Nkechi ... Thankfully, the home was raided a few months after I had my baby.

Folake ... I remembered Madam B said that someone had tipped her off about the shady dealings at that orphanage. Thrust Madam B, she quickly alerted the security agencies.

Nkechi ... Madam B ... a woman like no other. She rescued us, and took us to hospital for treatment. (Jobi-Tume, 2019:59)

Then, she picks Zainab from the street and pays her hospital bill to get her treated from the horrible condition she is forced to endure after going through a horrifying child-marriage accompany with pregnancy. Jobi-Tume (2019:59-60)

Folake She was only eleven years old when she was given in marriage to a Sixty-three-year-old man. She had just reached puberty. ... She became pregnant almost immediately, people around her were jubilant, but she was clueless and couldn't fathom what the excitement was about. An eleven year old, she was only a child.

Nkechi She had no ante-natal care. She was oblivious to what was happening inside her body, and nobody cared enough to enlighten her. ...

Folake After fifteen days of hell, a long stick was forced into her abdomen. Her dead and decomposed baby was forcefully expelled. ... she had lost control of her bladder and rectum. Urine and faeces flowed out of her non-stop.

Nkechi Her co-wives mounted pressure on her illiterate husband to throw her out of the house. ... she had become a big embarrassment due to the unpleasant smell and the swarm of flies that trailed her. ... Zainab's husband ... gave her a divorce.

Folake No one wanted her, not even her family. She became a destitute until Madam B and the Succor for Women Refuge stepped in and took over. She was diagnosed with an extreme case of VVF. Her urethra, bladder and vaginal wall were completely eroded. Over four years, she had to undergo twenty repair operations to rehabilitate her.

Nkechi Madam B paid every cent of Zainab's medical bill. Today, Zainab no longer leaks urine or faeces, but sadly, she can never have a child again.

It is more than evident that the women in this story face lots of difficulty challenges just for being women; instead of a girl to be sent to school, she is being forced into marriage at tender age and her dowry is used to raise her siblings. Nkechi is given into marriage as a gambling debt settlement by her parents while Zainab is given out to reduce the burden of her upbringing. All these maltreatment of

women is what Ogundipe-Leslie is agitating against. Seeking for a safety environment for young girls and women where their rights will not be restricted; and they will not be abused or used in any form. She advocates for organizations that will seek for growth, support and development of African women and here, SWR becomes a home to a lot of distressed women and the members become family/sisters. “**Zainab** You women are the only family I have ... **Nkechi** And we qwill always be here for you. **Folake** We will always be here for one another. SWR is our fortress. ... **Folake and Nkechi take turns to hug Zainab**”. (60) Madam B along with other women who have been liberated work together to provide emotional support and financial aids to other women to fix their lives and start up something for themselves for financial independence is liberation itself.

Folake - She is another strong and dependable female character represented in the play.. Despite her hard life from childhood; and all she had to endure, she is still able to overcome her traumatic experiences and works as second in command to madam B at SWR to support other women in distress. She has once paid Joyce's children's fees on her behest to support her. “**Joyce** ... Folake paid the children’s fees last term”. (65) Also, during Joyce’s marriage crisis, she is the one to go to the police station along with her; and she provides moral support and encouraged her to speak up and she equally defended her from the abuse of the female police officer regardless of her threats to lock them up. (Jobi-Tume, 2019:70-73).

More so, she even stands against Joyce's mother in-law; when she scolds Joyce for her son’s (Joyce’s husband’s) unfortunate misbehaviors (Jobi-Tume, 2019: 68-69). It is due to her eagle eyes that Madam B's life is saved just in time. On realizing something is odd with madam B, she contacts her neighbour and alias with her ton be giving her updates on the Madam B. On such account she gets hint that Madam B's life could be in danger and goes quickly to help her. It is due to her bravery and quick thinking that Madam B’s life is saved successfully from the 'Stab to death' trick her husband played in order to gain access to her wealth and properties.

Folake ... I got a tip from a young lady who is one of Madam B’s neighbours. She told me that Madam B was steadily undergoing domestic abuse from her husband. Since Madam B never discussed the issue with me, I decided to keep an eye on her. ... I told the young lady to Watch over Madam B’s apartment and alert me if any such thing happens again. On the fateful day of this unfortunate incident, the lady called me. She asked me to quickly go and check on Madam B as she could hear blood curling screams from her apartment. I hurried down there, and happened upon Madam B’s almost lifeless body in the pool of her own blood. Her husband had stabbed her and ran away. ... I called for help and rushed her to the hospital. Thankfully, she responded to treatment quickly, but because of the peculiarity of her case, the doctors and the police decided to allow the general public to believe that she didn’t survive the attack. (Jobi-Tume, 2019: 86)

She is a true sister and show solidarity to other women / sisters in need; she also exhibits characteristics of a Stiwanist. She is not after separation from male gender but equality for women and end of violence. She still advocates and encourages Nkechi to give men a chance as there is still good men who fight for the cause of uplifting women.

Folake ... Don’t be so antagonistic towards men. Do not perceive all men to be bad. I personally know some men who are committed to making our society a place where women are gratefully accepted as deserving of equal rights with their male counterparts. ... This is actually part of the problem. In a situation where women expect every man to be a misogynist, when women cannot accept chivalry from men without some sort of disbelief or distrust, then you have already written the script, and leave the men no other choice than to play the roles you have assigned to their characters. (Jobi-Tume, 2019:88)

Lastly, we have other women in SWR that come together to seek justice for Madam B. Their quick response shows their love and support towards each other. (86). As stiwanists in sisterhood, these women come together, and tries to identify the cause of women’s marginalization; realizing that women are the reason women are in chains. Therefore, to make a difference, they promise to bring about change in the environment by being women that reform and support other women not the type

that destroys and disgraces womanhood. They all stand together to advocate for better safe environment, peaceful co-existence, liberation and empowerment of women.

Dramatic Techniques Explored by Jobi-Tume in her Play

The playwright uses a very unique technique. Firstly, the story starts in Medias Res. That is from end to beginning and then to Climax. She uses Nigeria as her setting and ensures to pick different characters from every region in Nigeria. This is to show that female marginalization and abuse are not limited or restricted to one tribe alone but instead it is a universal mayhem. This story tries to combat female abuse and it adopts strong women who despite their traumatic past are still willing to help others overcome abuse and say no to abuse at any level including domestic violence. This story carefully debunks the myth that women are the only object of exploitation by their male counterparts and that male are the sole perpetrators of female marginalization but instead, reveals the contributions of women to their own downfall.

This story uses the main characters to recast and narrate other incidents in the play. The story despite being in a dialogue form comes across as a tale told by the characters. It is very dramatic and highly emotional. It explores domestic violence that are near fatal and other forms of female subjugation with all their gory details as well as the psychological deformation such traumatic experiences can cause to a human mind.

The language is simple but very intense. There is use of dramatic monologue to narrate situations; use of songs to deepen mood constituting strong emotions; and use of pidgin language to show level of exposure of a particular character. This is mono thematic and is not written in scenes. The play is very technical as it critically promotes sisterhood bond and women empowerment through stiwanism.

Aspects of Sisterhood Representing Women as Agents of Reformation in Support and Liberation of Another

Mankwinji - She cares for and supports her aging mother. She does all she can to look after her and provides for her. She makes lots of sacrifices and tolerates her husband's abuses just to keep her mother living in safely with her. She even goes as far as giving in to her husband's blackmails; allowing for her son to be sold to Whiteman's farm and her daughter forced into marriage with her Uncle just to keep her invalid mother safe and out of her husband's callousness. (Moyo, 2919: 106)

Mankwinji You are aware that my mother is an invalid, why do you give me living hell? There is going to be payback time, you will pay, Nqwayi. You would sell my son for cigarettes and alcohol? Nqwayi, how do you come by the money you are spending these days? Those people must have paid you advance monies against my minor son. Your parents made the biggest mistake when they left you this homestead. That set a bad precedent of your not being gainfully employed, Nqwayi....

Again, she is able to take some initiative. On pleading with her daughter to marry her aunt's husband, she equally arms her with charms to protect her from him and to ensure she fulfills her dream of becoming a pilot. She gives her daughter some money and the medicine; she instructs her to add it in her husband's water that the medicine will paralyse him and leave him in deep sleep allowing her enough time to escape. Moyo (2019) writes:

Mankwinji Listen to me very carefully **Yinka**. You are aware of how much I care about you, apple of my life. You are justified for hating me after what happened to your brother **Thusi**, but this time, give me an ear. Please listen to me. ... Sighs desperately ... *She takes out a black cloth with a herb inside from her pocket. She hands it to Yinka and brings out money from her other pocket.* ... Please take it, I won't find any other time to give it to you.... Your father is determined to marry you off. He is looking out for such a man.

Yinka opens and closes her mouth not quite believing her ears. ... That can't be true Mama. Baba is aware that I want to go to college, to be a pilot.

Mankwinji You can. You can go, only if you listen to me. ... Simple my daughter, you can use the money that I just gave you, use it to go to town. Stay with my brother's children. ... This is (*manqoba*) black magic that Yantonto gave me. You need to spike it in your husband's drinking water. This will hypnotize him, putting him to sleep for maybe two or three days. This will give you ample time to run for your dear life. (118-119)

It is evident in the play that women are stronger united and weaker apart. Therefore this study concludes that women contribute to their subjugation and maltreatment by their counterparts. Women contribute over fifty percent to the sufferings of other women and women are the ones that raise brutes as sons and team up with their irresponsible sons to handicap a woman (wife) in the name of marriage. These women writers carefully highlight women contributions towards the marginalization and shaming of other women. They equally contribute to their abuse because keeping silent to abusive treatment and silencing victims of abuse are boosters to the abuser to continue. So, any abused woman that tolerates abuse silently is equally responsible for women humiliation. Therefore the playwright through her work try to educate women on importance of empowerment through education; gaining financial freedom and the value of standing against what is debasing for women in general.

This research therefore concludes that the bond of Sisterhood formed by women is their greatest weapon against patriarch and maltreatment of women. They liberate one another through sisterhood and empowering women; no woman can be humiliated because women become stronger when their strengths are united and their weaknesses eliminated. Women are in better position to stop patriarchy by raising responsible men that respect and value women. Women also need to stop tolerating abuse and revolt against the evils of the society towards her. Women should come together in one voice and disembody male dominance present in their society. Through stiwanism women are empowered to be better; and through formation of sisterhood amongst women, they become a formidable force to break through male dominance and make a place for the emerging image of a new woman who is liberated and free.

Women are capable of changing the societal perception of themselves as well as coerce men into giving them their due respect; and allow equal footing of all genders in government and society at large. This study therefore concludes that these playwright through her unique stylist techniques and formation of strong female protagonists project the significance of empowered and liberated women as well as ways for women to emerge and help one another to emerge as well while fighting all the “isms” that are keeping them down.

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