

**AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF WOMANHOOD: A  
STUDY OF SELECTED PLAYS OF FEMI OSOFISAN.**

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**Abstract**

*The concept of feminism varies from one continent to another. In Africa, a woman has to struggle with the man who arrogates all political and social rights to himself, and relentlessly refuses the woman a place. If we are to go by the popular belief that the totality of a people's outlook is harmoniously encapsulated in its body of literature, then it may not be out of place to turn to African literature in questing for the woman's place in Africa and more importantly the re-construction of the woman's position in the continent. Against this background, this paper discusses the re-construction of womanhood as independent rather than emotional, and 'as one that can attain recognition based on her innate prowess and energy potentials rather than clamoring for recognition based on gender sentiments. I will draw specific illustrations from three of Femi Osofisan's dramaturgy - Mororuntodun, Tegonni, and Yungba and the Dance Contest as we progress.*

**Introduction**

Since, as advocated by some scholars, the parameter to measure the African-ness of the African literature is its expression of African viewpoints and consciousness, African literature, therefore, is the expression of African people's consciousness in their specific and dynamic situation. Hence, African feminist scholars are teaming up and working through both governmental and non-governmental bodies to increase the participation of woman in politics. However, the effect of patriarchy still pervades all facets of African experience. Thus African women are clamoring for empowerment in all facets of life to be able to effect changes in the course of history. Their move is no doubt widening the scope of the struggle for gender equity. However, a reality we have to contend with is that there is

not just a recognition of gender differences but also the recognition of the inevitability of the major differences in their preoccupations as a result of these major differences as well as a case of assigning less importance to women and their female roles in the social process of the human world thereby effectively denying them any important standing within the social structure (Aidoo, 17).

The outcome of the manipulation of the society by the masculine gender is the construction of a patriarchal order that places the masculine gender higher than the feminine in the society. According to Jane Bryce, "Woman then is produced by patriarchy systems as 'other' and unto her is projected everything that man is not. She is the negative to his positive, emotional to his rational, weak to his spiritual, absent to his present, orient to his occident, dark to his light,

object to his subject” (3) This is in line with the argument that advanced in another work that, “since man has occupied the positive and neutral poles in the linguistic framework, women are left with only the negative. It then follows that if man is strong woman must be weak” (Owonibi, 92).

As such, the society within the context of this type of social order cannot do otherwise but to see the female as abnormal to the male's normality, thereby categorizing her as 'sub-human,' an epiphenomenon and a product of after-thought. After all, the Holy Bible records that God created man in His own image and created woman from man to fill a vacuum of loneliness in man's life (Genesis 2: 7-20). This line of thought has done a lot of destruction to gender relations. This worldview needs to be consciously and carefully re-constructed if the battle of gender-equity is to stand the test of time.

The foregoing is the representation of the woman in extant literature of African history which has indeed generated lots of controversies. The largest bulk of post-colonial African literature presents the African woman as a thoroughly oppressed and victimized lot that has been totally conquered physically and psychologically. Hence she must remain entirely submissive. As a defeated and dominated gender, her voice must never be heard nor her actions in public. However, there are empirical proofs with respect to the romantic representation of the African woman in pre-colonial years, the oral historical past when women were catalysts in historical process. Not only was the images and contributions of these women of valour pushed to the abyss of insignificance in the post-colonial African literature, the heroic deeds of the post-colonial African woman as a progressive agent in the historical process and political evolution of her society is scarcely represented in modern African literature. According to Bolanle Awe,

Most African oral traditions, surviving religions, cults and extant political institutions still attest to the significant position which women occupied in the social, economic, and political evolution of different African communities. Such evidence also shows conclusively that theirs was not merely a passive and supportive role, but was also dynamic and constructive. Indeed, it has been suggested that an analysis of the leading figures of pre-twentieth century African will show that there were more women than men in the forefront of social, political and economic life, than in contemporary Africa ... (10)

In the same vein, Emeagwali argues that: “The specific roles, contributions and general activities of women, in the past, were neglected themes, relatively speaking. We are, in fact, dealing with gross sins of omission in historical reconstruction” (12). Research findings show that the experience of slavery and colonialism has in no small measure 'refashioned' the areas of life of the African woman. In line with this, Kolawole (1997) posits that colonialism “brought different kinds of affiliation to different parts of the continent, national, ethnic, and regional idiosyncrasy, predominant religious influence, tradition, modernisms and post-colonial conditions” (13).

She argues further that all these factors have condensed to de-emphasize the heroic contribution of the African woman in the world of reality. Arising from this is the fact, and pathetically so, that when orature transformed to literature, women's roles were already subverted and their images pushed to a dark corner of civilization. The construction of this type of absurd and negative representation of African woman in literature has led to a development

where some scholars, both female and male, have risen to re-construct the perverted social order. Prominent among these scholars is Femi Osofisan. This school of thought is concerned with righting the wrongs and putting the records straight for posterity sake. It is in the light of this that this paper carries out an expository analysis of the role of Osofisan in reconstructing the image and re-positioning the African woman to her pristine leadership roles.

### **Osofisan's portraiture of womanhood in *Tegoni*, *Mourountodun*, and *Yungba Yungba***

Tegonni is an adaptation of Sophocles' Antigone, one of the trilogies in Oedipus: The King of Thebes. In domesticating the structure and content of this play, Osofisan has made Tegonni fulfill the same role performed by Antigone in the original script and has made the Yoruba tribe of Western Nigeria the setting, as he does in almost all his plays. Tegonni, a princess, proposes to marry a white man, Captain Allan Jones, the District Officer. She decides to marry Allan Jones because Ashipa breaks up his relationship with her "when she insisted in joining the guild of sculptors and no man since then would propose to marry her" (12) thereafter, because the effrontery to "encroach" into a male dominated profession is considered as an aberration, abomination, and a taboo. According to Isokun, a chief and a relative of Tegonni,

It's never been heard that a woman of our land and a princess at that will go and marry one of these ghosts from cross the seas (13).

Although Chief Isokun is the only chief and male who supports Tegonni that she should be left to follow her wishes, he is nevertheless against her choice of an alien for husband. He defends his opposition to the marriage thus:

It will be a tragic error, I tell you, this marriage with the D.O. No one here accepts it, except you her friends, of course. Even her father's spirit in heaven will not approve it. Why are you trying to pitch me so recklessly against the dead? (13).

After a lot of pressure however, he gives his nod and blessings to the marriage. Nevertheless, the marriage turns out to be a disaster and a calamity. Tegonni and her bridal train, while dancing to the palace to pay homage to the royal tomb of her father and receive the fatherly blessings from the deceased, the happy train ran into a tragic roadblock'. Armed soldiers are seen guiding a corpse of Prince Oyekunle, condemned to rot on the surface of the earth. The Governor, General Carter Ross, has ordered that the common rite of passage should not be accorded Prince Oyekunle for his rebellious acts while alive:

The elder one however, Oyekunle, who caused all the trouble and dared to invite foreign troupes here to Yorubaland, will be made an example. I have therefore directed that his body be returned immediately to Oke-Osun, but to be left unburied in Public Square, abandoned to the claws of vulture (Tegonni,2).

Tegonni and her radiant train discover that the humiliated corpse is that of the elder brother of Princess Tegonni who had engaged in an endless brawl with his younger brother over who

ascends the throne. The shock can be best described in the words of Kunbi, one of Tegonni's friends:

We were dancing round the town. Flinging our happiness in the air,  
like frolicking birds. And then, at the square, it was death we saw,  
waiting for us (42).

Tegonni has decided to forget about her wedding plans and avert abomination by burying her brother. Not even the consequences of that action will deter her. The Governor has vowed that Oyekunle's corpse shall be fed to the vultures to serve as a punishment for the dead and a lesson for the living, but Tegonni feels different about it; she believes her brother deserves the last respect of burial.' Carter Ross' order that, "anybody who attempts to bury him shall be summarily executed. Repeated executed without trial" (40), falls on Tegonni's deaf ear. Osofisan has at this point crafted the point of conflict, this is made more complex by the orders of Carter Ross to Allan Jones, the bride-groom to be, that he (Allan) "must see to it that those orders are carried out" (40).

Tegonni, the lead character in the play has a unique trait that underlines all her actions: she does not believe in gender stratification or any social order that believes that womanhood is inferior, subservient, and submissive. She is propelled by an inner-will that will always make her assert herself, and makes her see herself as one that has the innate ability to reach her goals instead of pleading for a sentiment of the "weaker-vessel". Isokun points this out when he says:

Right from childhood, she's always been like that, a problem child.  
She's a gift from our mother Yemoja, and such children are never  
bound by the normal rules the rest of us live by ... (85)

Thus, living her true type, Tegonni tactically carries out the burial rites of her brother, beating the security network to it. This nonetheless leads to a great crisis. As a lady who is never bound by the normal rules the rest of us live by, Tegonni dares the gun of the Governor Carter Ross, buried her brother, and briskly faces death. She even refuses to renounce her marriage to Allan Jones or show any sign of remorse, even when she is face to face with death. These actions stand her out as having achieved greatness where perhaps even the masculine gender may feel jittery.

This same unusual personality is what underlines the personality trait of the lead character in *Morountodun*, a play that deals with the farmers' revolt of 1969. The farmers from the Western part of Nigeria, under the leadership of Tafa Adeoye, revolted against exploitation and oppressive taxation by the government of the day. In the play, the sanitary inspector symbolizes the oppressing class. The high level of oppression the masses pass through could be felt in the following dialogue between Mama Kayode and Molade while mimicking the excesses of the sanitary inspectors:

Mama Kayode: That day he stopped Titus in the rain!  
(she turns to Molade, and they begin to play-act). Come here.

Molade: Sha?

Mama Kayode: I say come here, and you are saying sha,

Molade: Sha! [ ... ] what is that in your hand self?

Mama Kayode: Molade: You mean this umbrella sha?

Molade: Hen, hen that's what you call it, this dirty smoky ... ! I bet it's got lice in it too.

Mama Kotode: But it's brand new! Alabi just sent it to me from the city last week. Well, it's under arrest. .... Titus spent the next two weeks in jail

Titubi: What! Because he wouldn't give up his property?

(Moruntodun, 62-3)

The play is a fine blend of myth and reality. Osofisan uses the peasant revolt of 1969 to bring into light the Moremi of Ile- Ife. He draws a parallel in how Moremi saved her people from an external aggression of war and how Titubi, who initially appears as a socialite, anti-peasant, and a symbol of the oppressing class suddenly and dramatically turns a social radical that tilts the popular struggle in favor of the proletariats in what Marxism will term "social struggle". At the beginning of the play, we see a revolt that has been in for quite a long time and which has made the police and the State to be fully spent. The uprising keeps raging as there seems to be no end to the war. A group of actresses and actors is about to put up a stage to preach the need for peace in the land, and Titubi has come with her own team to disrupt the play, because according to her,

So in what are we responsible for the farmers' uprising? Ehn? What does our ways, riches have to do with it? Or is it only when we wear rags that we qualify to breathe the air? [ ... ] You mount these stupid plays calling everybody a thief, simply because we work and sweat and use our brain.  
(Morountodun, 9)

Titubi, a symbol of the bourgeoisies feels challenged by the way the art is used to castigate the ruling class as she's ready to challenge the masses and bring the raging war to a halt. The police under the leadership of Superintendent Salami, have come to the theater to quash the revolt but on finding out that Titubi, the pampered daughter of Alhaja Kabirat the leader of the market women, is the real intruder, Salami challenged her that quenching the revolt would require bracer actions than disrupting a show put up by innocent citizens. Titubi, a character formed in the likeness of Moremi of Ile-Ife and Tegonni in Osofisan's Tegonni, immediately takes up the challenge and surrenders herself to be captured by the farmers who are about to carry out a counter-attack to free their imprisoned colleagues. The main plot is for Titubi to be mistaken for a harmless, innocent sympathizer to the course of the peasants, under this guise, she is expected to use all power within her reach to bring Marshal, the commander of the farmers' revolt, to the police station. There is no doubt in the fact that this is not in any means a simple task. Without any iota of fear or disillusion, Titubi accepts the challenge. Alhaja Kabirat is shocked when she discovers this. She raises alarm at the condition of the prison:

No bed. No window. No fan or air-conditioner the walls damp and clammy. A terrible stench which followed me all the way here from the gate. Ah Allah! What have I done to deserve this? (Morountodun, 18)

All Alhaja's entreaties, threats, and cajoles to get Titubi out of the struggle falls in deaf ears as shown in the following conversation:

Titubi: But, mama, it isn't a punishment! I wasn't arrested for anything. I came in my own free will.

Alhaja: I thank you. Let's go now anyway. And the Policemen who brought you here, they will wish they'd never been born!

Titubi: Aren't you listening to me?

Alhaja: Enough, I say! I've swallowed enough of this foul air into my lungs. Let's go! (Morountodun, 20)

Titubi goes further to convince Alhaja Kabira, the only obstacle on her way, that her role is simple and straightforward, even when she knows that she is in for a big and dangerous task:

... the only way left is to infiltrate their ranks quickly, discover their real leader and the source of their ammunition. I volunteered (Morountodun, 20)

Volunteering to carry out this deadly task stands Titubi out as a woman of strong will and determination. This likens her to Tegonni. This is a role of spy which perhaps should be carried out by a masculine gender. But Titubi, a lady, volunteers because she knows she has the will power to achieve success within the intrigues of external aggressors. Her mandates are straight forward: she should arrest the leader of the farmers' revolt and bring him to the police station. This seems the only plausible end to the uprising. She's equipped with the little knowledge she garners from Nursing School before she drop out. Impersonating as a nurse gives her easy acceptability in the camp of the enemies as her services are so much in need. With love and passion she attends to the injured warriors with the best of her ability. This attribute, as well as her kind disposition, endeared her to Marshal, the warlord. Marshal has developed apathy, hatred, and suspicion in the person of Titubi. However, she braces up the challenges and becomes accepted by all. This marks a stage of exposition and great transformation in the peasant's camp.

Titubi mixes freely with the peasants, does those things she never dreamt she could do in life. As a modern, fashion-conscious girl from a well-to-do family, she humbly and submissively goes to the interiors, the farmland, the streamside, and all those places she has never visited because of her city life. She passes through pains and strains she never believes any human being could pass through. Nevertheless, she remains resolute and focused. In due course, she learns about truths she never came across before: truth about human suffering, oppression, and resistance, truth about the real cause of the revolt. She is empathic. Titubi, at the opening of the play, is a pompous, pampered, anti-masses daughter of Alhaja Kabira, a wealthy business woman who believes that money is everything; "Look at me. Go on feast your eyes. Am I not good to look at?" (Morountodun, 7). She arrogantly lambasts the audience that gathered at the theatre. She is full of herself and feels so great about her appearance, beauty and wealth that surround her person. She's soon to learn that she is capable of another

level of beauty and wealth. The situation in the prison and the peasants' camp serves as a leveler and the needed initiation into her future leadership role. Her emergence from the camp introduces us to a completely different Titubi: a compassionate, mature, humble, and objective minded woman. She is convinced that the farmers she was pitted to work against are indeed just in their struggle. And here comes the Osofisan's kind of woman. Not a woman that rises to stardom through the sentiment of "gender discrimination" or "gender inequality," but a woman that passes through odds to assert herself and achieve greatness. A critical assessment of the personality of Titubi will stand her out as someone who has the innate ability to achieve success in the task given to her. Furthermore, her encounter with Superintendent Salami shows that she is a lady that will not always take the easy way out. The way she readily agrees to the plot of being captured shows that she is radical-minded. Her seriousness becomes an issue when she hurries Salami up and says, "two weeks, I said. We've wasted five minutes of it" (19). The changing of her expensive dress for a prisoner's wear is symbolic of the transition that is to take place in her life afterwards. This may be likened to the coming of Jesus Christ to this sinful world leaving His throne and the crown of grace in heaven and agrees to come to this sinful world to die for the sinners. Titubi puts off her expensive dress for the prisoner's uniform, she never forgets anyway to keep her "Moremi necklace" which she adores. She carries on as Moremi reincarnated until she divorces herself from her:

I knew I had to kill the ghost of Moremi in my belly, I am not Moremi! Moremi served the state, was the spirit of the ruling class. (Moruntodun, 70).

She is no longer the Titubi who celebrates money and beauty and who feels it is a crime to be poor. Titubi is the spirit of Moremi up to the point when she changes her orientation as the symbol of the ruling class and empathizes with the oppressed. This is so because Moremi, a queen, was indeed a member of the ruling class, the oppressors. She serves the state, defends the state, and is never a defender of the less-privileged. Such a woman is not the type Osofisan will promote in his writings, little wonder then that he portrays her as the spirit of the bourgeoisies. This transformation of Titubi from oppressor to human rights activist is indeed as a result of her experience on the peasant camps. She says:

That was when I began to ask questions. Questions I saw myself growing up, knowing no such suffering as this .... In our mama's house we wake up to the chorus of jingling coins. Have lived in the forest among simple folk, sharing their pains and anguish ... and, I chose ... (Morontodun, 66)

It is indeed a situational irony when the ruling class sends her to the peasants' camp as a spy, and instead of fighting for the ruling class she gets converted and supports the supposed enemies. Titubi finds a new alignment with her erstwhile enemies and gets her status changed. She gets elevated to the level of valiant woman like Tegonni. Her status did not only change, even her name change from Titubi to Morountodun. With this change of name there is no stopping this leader of peasants' revolt as she exhibits all traits of a virtuous and courageous leader. In line with this change of name, Gbilekaa is of the opinion that: "... Osofisan is making a case for socialism. Titubi comes from a wealthy background. She is not even of the race of which victims are made. Her concern for the peasants therefore springs from a deep sense of justice" (104).

Titubi uses to advantage her innate prowess, actualizes her energy potentials, and embraces a qualitative decision that earns her a pride of place in the society instead of canvassing for recognition on the platform of being a woman. According to Ajayi, "undoubtedly, gender becomes a critical factor in revolutionary ethos; particularly in the way the playwright, Osofisan uses the historical models to constructs his fictional heroine (97).

The crusade for gender (re)construction should go beyond mere sentiment and be taken on the path of a qualitative reconstruction that will bring into manifestation the energy potential of women. This energy potential needs to be harnessed for any society to experience any meaningful revolution. The foregoing line of argument is what also marked out Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest out of all of Osofisan's plays. A striking feature of this play is the fact that it is an all-female cast. Having a play made up entirely by women is no doubt an innovation by Osofisan. The play on the surface is all about an annual event in a particular society; the yearly dance contest of marriageable maidens. This play introduces an interesting twist in the gender discourse as the masculine gender is reduced to a mere' object of endearment which a woman can win in a dancing competition. The most handsome man in the land is one of the prizes attached to the contest, hence each family presents a contestant. It is a thing of great honor to be the winner. The play opens during the peace week that precedes the contest. The whole community is agog as each family puts finishing touches to the dancing steps of its contestant. Jeosuwon family is represented by Rokeke, Majesoge family by Osingin, and Aroorotan family by Gbemi.

It is seven days to the real contest hence; Iyaloja issues directives to the families to embark on a cleaning up of the market square. The cleaning up is accompanied by songs, dances and boastings by all contestants. The whole atmosphere is pervaded by festive mood. It is as if no one could actually wait for the day to come. Considering the heat that a mere cleaning-up preparation has generated, Iyaloja wonders, "what will happen on the day of the competition itself," (Yungba Yungba, 16). It is indeed a moment of excitement and great expectation.

However, in the midst of this euphoria grows a crop of challenge. The emergence of group of three girls called Yungba Yungba has brought about a pertinent issue. Yungba Yungba team headed by Ayoka has approached the Iyaloja and raises certain questions and Iyaloja has unwittingly allowed them to address the group of other girls. Leading the other girls in the trio, Ayoka raises a number of issues that has to do with usurpation of power. Apart from winning the most handsome man in the land, the winner of the dancing competition among others is expected to be the priestess for the year before she is succeeded by the next winner. It is this priestess that represents the maidens in the Council and Elders. Iyeneri, that wins the exalted throne ten years ago, has refused to vacate the power to the others after her. Arising from this long stay in power, successive winners have forgotten about the priestess issue and are preoccupied with the frivolities of the contest like winning of husband.

.. .in the past, any of us here could be priestess! It was never the birthright of a single woman! It was not a personal legacy of anyone, to be passed down the family line! No! It was always won at an open competition, the reward of merit. And that is what we insist must be again ... (Yungba Yungba, 26).

With these words, Yungba Yungba leads the revolt for power shift, as they head for Iyeneri's house to demand of her to vacate the throne before the next contest. Ayoka and her



team have not pleaded for any form of sentiment; rather they carry out findings, armed with facts and figures before calling for a revolution. As a leader who is ready to bail her generation and others after hers from domination, Ayoka has radically insisted that Iyeneri should step' down. She speaks further:

Are we Youth just going to continue to dance gleefully every Season and choose our husbands, as if that's all we're good for? The affairs of our state, don't they concern us too? After we shall have danced and be applauded, shall we return home to find food cheaper in the markets, and abundant in our kitchens? Is it the husbands, we choose who we shall now cook to tame our raging stomachs? (Yungba Yungba, 29)

The Yungba Yungba bravely clamors for a democratic order in the face of dictatorship. They challenge Iyeneri and she promises to relinquish power, but she later reneges on her promise and sends death emissary to Ayoka. Ayoka is able to escape death through a defector from Iyeneri's camp. As such, the twin bronzes sent to kill Ayoka goes back to attack Iyeneri and kills her. With this victory, the competition goes on and normality is restored and power is won for the good of the masses.

The all-woman-cast innovation by Osofisan in Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest has afforded him the opportunity to create different types of women, the good, the bad, and the ugly. This affords him the privilege of promoting heroic ones like Ayoka and condemning the bad ones like Iyeneri. Osofisan's portraiture of woman is that which do not allude to feminine sentiment but that which attains fame and recognition through determination, hard-work, and zealously. These women leaders must have overgrown stigma and discrimination to be able to achieve such a feat. In African context, a female achiever is usually stigmatized and labeled as a witch. In traditional African culture, most especially Yoruba where Osofisan hails from and which has been the setting of his plays, roles are established. Individuals play these roles according to the social order. How best an individual plays designated role is what determines the status of such an individual. There were "...heroines like Moremi who delivered her people when they were under external pressures of war..." (Owonibi, 95). Owonibi quickly adds that Moremi, having achieved this feat, succeeding where men failed, was particularly ostracized. It is believed that she must possess a power superior to that of man; as such she must be "... a witch" (95). Even in the contemporary Yoruba culture, this witch stigmatization still holds sway. For any woman to defeat man, it is believed that such a woman must possess the supernatural power of the *aje* cult (i.e. witchcraft). According to Adams, "women are the witches and very old women are feared because of the suspicion that they might be witches" (106) According to Owonibi: "Witch-craft is one of the productive weapons of blackmail the Yoruba man uses to control the energy potential in a woman. No woman will want to be tagged as a witch because witches are stigmatized and isolated in the community" (96).

The foregoing is not unconnected to the fatal defeat the male gods namely Oosanla, Egungun, and Oro suffered in the hands of Aje also known as Eleye. According to Yoruba oral tradition, Oosanla's wife has gone to fetch water from Aje's well and spoilt the water thereafter. Angered by this, Aje went to Oosanla to report the case but Oosanla rose in defense of his wife instead of reprimanding her. In the course of the row that followed, Aje "swallowed him and

his wife. Egun and Oro who wanted to help Oosanla and his wife were both swallowed up as well" (Abimbola, 309). The power of Aje subsumed that of a perceived superior. As a shameful reaction to this, the Egungun and Oro cults never admit women up till today. In fact, it seems that these two divinities started as a means of curbing the powers of woman "... There is no doubt at all that both Egungun and Oro were, and to some extent still are directed towards terrorizing woman as a means of keeping their powers in check (Abimbola, 310). Hence, Aje was regarded as a malevolent spirit in Yoruba world-view.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Osofisan in his plays constructs a different image of womanhood: a woman who is recognized for her achievement and not just for being a woman; a woman who commands and earns respect and adoration; a woman who is the symbol of excellence and not a "weaker vessel" that merely cries foul, feels cheated, and lives cheated; a woman who recognizes her energy potentials and taps into it for empowerment; a woman who breaks the ugly yokes of stagnation and discrimination; a woman who sees being called a witch as complimentary and not derogatory. Furthermore, either in the ingenuity of Tegonni, the political dexterity of Ayoka, or the revolutionary acumen of Titubi, Osofisan has displayed a striking attribute of womanhood that does not only cry for injustice but moves out decisively to curb injustice instead of crying foul. Finally, for womanhood to win the obvious war of gender equity she must address her mind at those innate powers that make her stand out as a human being and not as a woman. Those valor and ingenuity in her that can make her impact in this world of reality. Then she must push forward for recognition against odds and restrictions. She must be ready to accept and admit being a witch and live up to the standard of a witch by beating a man in domains restricted and classified as masculine. She should attribute to 'witch' a positive connotation just like, 'wizard', that is now linguistically associated with excellence. As long as she sees 'witch' as a 'negative term that is associated with a malevolent spirit that must be avoided, she will avoid the term like a plague and run away from anything that can earn her that title. It is part of prejudice. A male achiever is proud to be called a wizard in his chosen career, so also a female achiever should feel proud to be called a witch in her area of excellence. Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of Great Britain without pleading female sentiments. She contested against male oppositions and defeated them. Without seeking for feminine sentiment, Indira Gandhi won the polls in India, Hellen Johnson Sirlef emerged the first African female president without campaigning for "give woman a chance". One heroic deed or the other has placed them on the rostrum of global attention. That, I agree with Osofisan is the way forward for womanhood in Africa.

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