

Gender Representation and Transcultural Issues in Yejide Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk This Path*

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Abstract

Several studies have been carried out on the conflict between tradition and modernity, most focusing on the negative effects of modernity on traditional values. However, there has not been much emphasis on these concepts. This study is set to interrogate the interwoven relationship between tradition and modernity. This article examines the conflict between tradition and modernity and its effects on family in Yejide Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk This Path* in its investigation of the existential issues in a purely traditional family. The paper adopts feminist theory (cultural feminism) as a framework for analysing the havoc caused by patriarchy and the prejudice it places on women. The paper submits that the extended family system, as embraced in African societies, especially the Yoruba family structure, is often responsible for the overarching conflicts within the family setting that result in sexual harassment and other anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, it is established that tradition gives us a sense of identity and belonging, and that individuals' conflictual posture to tradition will lead to alienation, loss of identity and disintegration from the family, being the bedrock of tradition.

Keywords: Tradition, Modernity, Family, Patriarchy and Feminism

Introduction

The transition from traditional to modern society on many occasions results in social problems such as the conflict between old and new values. Individuals begin to abandon traditional values to embrace new ones, while some opt-out of traditional values. Tradition can be defined as a pattern imitated by a particular group of people, which is passed from generation to generation. It can also be defined as a system which embodies the customs, culture and beliefs of a particular people, which are to be inculcated and upheld by them. Traditional societies have a rigid administration; there are penalties assigned for contraveners. Modernity is a very complex and controversial term which can be defined in so many ways. The root word "modern" suggests

something new. Modernity is characterised by new values, industrialisation, enlightenment, individualism, and urbanisation among others. A prominent characteristic of modernity is the abandonment and neglect of traditional values and norms. Modern society contrasts with a traditional society, where modern societies embrace new values and traditional societies continue to embrace old values. Family refers to a group of people related by blood or marriage. These groups of people share the same culture, traditions and beliefs. Family enables continuity of tradition; it is through families that tradition is being transmitted from one generation to another. Ever since the transition, there has also been a shift from the traditional extended family system to the modern nuclear family system.

This paper examines the conflict between tradition and modernity and its effect on individuals in society, especially families. In terms of tradition, it examines the issue of patriarchy and the prejudice it places on women or the girl child in a patriarchal society. It also examines the effects of maintaining an extended family in modern society.

Tradition, modernity and family are essential units of a society. Tradition can be defined as a system that embodies the beliefs, customs and culture of a group of people which is passed down from generation to generation. It is the most integral unit of a society because it integrates a group of people who share similar beliefs and creates an identity or a sense of belonging for them. The structure and foundation of our families and our society are being strengthened by tradition. This assertion makes us understand the importance of tradition in society and why it should be maintained by individuals.

Modernity, on the other hand, contrasts with tradition because it entails discarding traditional values, which are often seen as archaic. Modernity is a concept that has to do with new ideas and values, recent development or contemporary issues. It is characterised by enlightenment, autonomy, urbanisation and individualism. It gives individuals the liberty to act in ways that appeal to them.

Generally, the family is the basic unit of society but according to Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn (2018), the family is “the cornerstone of society” (459). The family simply refers to a group of people related by blood or marriage, who share the same culture and beliefs. John Macionis (2004) states that it is an institution in society that consists of united groups to ‘oversee the bearing and raising of children’ (336). This makes us understand that productivity is one of the major functions of a family, although there are other functions of the family identified by

Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn, which are: sexual, reproductive, economic and education. (462)

There is a relationship that exists between tradition and family; families uphold traditional values and they are responsible for the continuity and transmission of tradition. Modernity subtly encourages individuals to discard traditional values and embrace new ones. This is the problem identified in Yejide Kilankos's *Daughters Who Walk This Path*, where the protagonist, Morayo, is portrayed as a modern character who contravenes tradition owing to the prejudice placed on her by the patriarchal society. As mentioned earlier on, modernity gives individuals the liberty to act in ways that appeal to them. This liberty enables men to abuse their superior position constructed for them by society, by exploiting women for sexual pleasure. John Macionis (2004) postulates that families "transform women into the sexual and economic property of men." This simply implies that women are seen as commodities owned by men.

Traditional families embrace the extended family system, in this type of family; tradition is expected to be upheld by each member of the family. It is not every member of the family that upholds tradition; the modern ones defy them, which results in conflict. Tradition and modernity are always in conflict due to their different ideologies. Having established that fact, it is safe to conclude that there is a need for individuals to create a balance between tradition and modernity to avoid conflict.

Theoretical framework

Feminism is the critical approach on which this study is interpreted; this theory is one of the products of modernism. The theory enables women to be conscious of their marginalised position in society and empowers them to contest the position assigned to them by society. Feminism started in Europe in the nineteenth century; it is a movement, ideology and concept that recognise the fact that women are oppressed by men in a patriarchal society. Feminists are critical of the marginalised position that society has constructed for them. These feminists have discovered that women are marginalised and are seen as inferior beings as a result of patriarchy. Sophia Ogwude (2013) asserts that "patriarchy is the social system where men are the primary authority figure and their decisions are central to social organization." The system places men's decisions as supreme in society, thereby making women appear as second-class citizens. Feminist theory analyses the marginalised status of women and seeks to protect and emancipate women from the prejudice placed on them by patriarchal society. Michael Ryan (2007) opines

that feminist anthropologists like Gayle Rubin believe that the subordination of women to men originated in early societies in which women were used as tokens of exchange between clans. Ryan argues that residues of such ancient patriarchy are still palpable in our societies. This accounts for the differences in the social and cultural status of women in society.

Phillip Rice and Patricia Waugh in their book, *Modern Literary Theory* aver that “women seek equality and recognition of a gendered identity which has been constructed through the very culture and ideological formations which feminists were seeking to challenge and dismantle.” This position implies that feminists aim to eradicate the stereotyped identity of women which marginalises and subordinates them in a patriarchal society. Examples of prominent feminists include Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Mary Wollstonecraft, Germaine Greer, Shulamith Firestone, Luce Irigaray, Gayle Rubin, and Susan Gubar amongst others. These feminists approach feminism in different ways and their works have impacted feminist studies over the years.

Feminists and scholars have divided the history of feminism into three waves. The first wave is from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century (1839 to 1920), the second wave from 1960 to 1980, and the third wave began in 1990. The first wave of feminism was referred to as the suffrage movement which was concerned with women’s right to vote. Feminists, during this period, try to promote the political right of women by giving them the right to vote. Martha Rampton postulates that “the wave formally began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 when 300 men and women rallied to the cause of equality for women.” (1)

The second wave is a continuation of the previous wave which has to do with the liberation of women. This second wave is said to have been activated by the Second World War, where women were forced out of their workplace to be replaced by men who returned from the war. These men retook their old jobs and were paid higher than the women; this resulted in inequality between men and women. Unlike the first wave, this wave is more of a social and cultural movement than a political movement. Feminists in this wave advocated for the legal and social rights of women, they focused more on equality. Women felt marginalised, they also felt that their voices were not heard in the society. They sought to be removed from this marginalised position and to be heard in society. They want their opinion to matter in society, thus, they fight for gender equality. Women try to eradicate the discrimination and segregation placed upon women in a patriarchal society. A feminist prominent in this period is Simone de Beauvoir; she is a French philosopher and writer. She is well-known as one of the second wave feminists due to

her most famous work, *The Second Sex* which was popular during the period, published in 1949. In this work, Beauvoir challenges the perception of women as inferior in a patriarchal society. She condemns the fact that society is androcentric, that is, the experiences of women are evaluated and organised through the experiences of men. Androcentric societies are male-centered therefore; women are seen as objects defined by men. She posits that women should liberate themselves from this marginalised position in which men have put them. Her work shaped the second wave feminist movement.

The third wave of feminism which began in 1990 was like a reaction to the second-wave feminism. They did not have a defined goal like the first and second waves; they concentrated more on the appearance of women most especially young feminists. Some scholars refer to it as “lipstick feminism” or “grrrl feminism”. Martha Rampton posits that young feminists in this wave re-adopt “lipstick, high heels and cleavage proudly exposed by low cut necklines”. These young feminists are confident and seek to define feminist beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy.” She further posits that this wave is “informed by post-colonial and post-modern thinking”, where individuals have the right to do whatever they want and dress the way they want.

Some categories of feminism identified by Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn are liberal feminism, Marxist and socialist feminism, radical feminism, and black feminism. Liberal feminists believe that women are rational beings entitled to the same privileges as men politically, socially and economically. They see that women are discriminated against, which prevents them from having equal privileges with men. They seek to eliminate the stereotyped position of women. Marxist and socialist feminists assert that women are oppressed because of capitalism rather than the patriarchy. They believe that women are exploited through the capitalist division of labour, where women do unpaid domestic labour such as housewives and mothers. Men are paid and they benefit from this capitalist system where they depend on the unpaid labour of women in the home to feed and cater for them. They also depend on these women for a ‘new generation of workers.’ They seek to eradicate the disadvantaged position of women in the capitalist society.

Radical feminists believe that women are oppressed and exploited by men within a patriarchal society. They are the ones that see the society as patriarchal, where men rule and dominate. Radical feminists believe that the feminine image has been misinterpreted over time; this is why

they are more interested in feminine values, a term Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn call “gynocentrism,” can be defined as “emphasis on female perspective and female interest.” Radical feminists believe that “patriarchy results in women being harmed through rape, domestic violence, and prostitution.” These are some of the reasons why Radical feminists disapprove of the idea of patriarchy.

Black feminists see race as an important factor in the notion of feminism, they believe that their colour and experience (slavery) make white women privileged over black women. They believe that white women are not in the position to theorise about the experiences of a black woman since they never experienced it. It is also believed that white women are more privileged than black women. This class of feminists struggled against white supremacy.

Various African feminists have also countered male domination and the subjugation of women in Africa. These feminists counter the stereotypical roles assigned to women and the prejudices placed on them. They seek to redefine the image of the woman as portrayed by male writers who are anti-feminists. According to Yetunde Akorede, male-authored novels portray women as “wives, mothers, girlfriends, prostitutes and low-paid workers who do not need to use much wisdom or initiatives.” African feminist writers like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Nawal El Saadawi and Chimamanda Adichie seek to redefine the derogatory image of women as portrayed by anti-feminists in their writings.

Flora Nwapa is the first female novelist in Nigeria. She portrays her female characters in such a way that they “defy convention by marrying outside their community or by gaining the upper hand in marriage through their financial acumen.” Male writers such as Chinua Achebe and his contemporaries have downplayed women by placing them in a subordinating position. Nwapa tries to counter this by creating strong female characters, who can survive despite their disadvantaged position in society. Flora Nwapa in her essay “Women and Creative Writing in Africa” tries to “project a more balanced image of African womanhood.” She does this by portraying her female characters as heroines. This is evident in her work *Efuru*, where the protagonist is portrayed as a heroine who is prosperous due to her independence and intelligence. She rebels against tradition in various ways. For instance, she marries a man who is unable to pay her bride price without the consent of her father. Nwapa’s female characters are always portrayed as courageous and strong even in adversity.

Buchi Emecheta is another prominent African female writer. Yetunde Akorede posits that she “portrays the female as a person in search of authentic identity for existence.” in a patriarchal society, women are seen as appendages to men, they are seen as incapable of surviving without a man. Buchi Emecheta seeks to empower women in her writings by enabling them to attain certain achievements which some men are unable to achieve. She further empowers them by utilising the theme of role reversal in her work, *Second Class Citizen*, where Adah, whose birth was a “disappointment” to her family and was considered “insignificant”, is made the breadwinner of the house due to her outstanding achievement.

Nawal El Saadawi, an Egyptian feminist writer, also seeks to emancipate women from the shackles of patriarchy, which is strengthened by the Islamic religion as depicted in her autobiographical novel titled “*Daughter of Isis*”. The Islamic religion and the Arab tradition brutalises women through some inhuman practices like early marriage, female circumcision and beating of a child bride on the wedding night. She counters these practices by challenging tradition and vehemently refusing to adopt the stereotypical roles of women. She kicks against the dehumanisation and discrimination of women. She also believes that women should not be domesticated and marginalised in the kitchen; she believes they should have access to education because it will enable them to emancipate themselves from the oppression of the patriarchal society.

Molara Ogundipe-Leslie is another prominent African feminist who introduced STIWANISM in 1994 as another version of the feminist movement, which is an acronym for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. This concept enables us to understand African feminism which differs from western feminism. To Ogundipe-Leslie, feminism in the African context is not “gender envy, wanting to be a man...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”. She says feminism in Africa has to be “theorised around the junctures of race, class, caste and gender; nation, culture and ethnicity; age, status, role and sexual orientation.”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a young notable feminist who believes that gender is responsible for the prejudice placed on women. In a show called TED talk, she gives a speech titled *We Should All Be Feminists*, which was later transcribed into writing. In this work, she argues that feminism is not a bad word. She tells us how she was criticised by men and women in the past. For instance, she tells us of a woman who tells her that feminism is un-African. (8) She also tells

us about her experiences in the past and how they shaped her into becoming a feminist. She discovered that there were prejudices placed on women. For instance, she says people think that any girl seen going alone to a hotel is a prostitute. (10) Adichie says “the problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognising how we are.” (14) Adichie is a feminist who believes that women should be given equal treatment as men. She also seeks to eradicate the prejudice placed on women.

These African feminists try to portray women as heroes and people who can attain achievement on their own, but Yetunde Akorede asserts that

the concept of heroism, freedom, achievement and self-actualisation in some female writings are however, sometimes, marred by the negative ways through which these are achieved. (129)

For instance, some female writers use prostitution as a means of attaining wealth. An example of such a writer is Nawal El Saadawi who “depicts prostitution as an instrument of protest in an unjust society.” Nevertheless, these characters are treated with respect, love and understanding.

Feminists struggle to be released from the oppressive force of patriarchy; they also struggle to make their voice heard and their opinions matter in society. Feminists have contributed largely to society by emancipating women from the shackles of patriarchy. They also empower women to discover their identity, their intellectual capacity and their social, economic and political right in their societies.

The perspective of family

Family refers to a group of people related by blood or marriage. These people share similar beliefs, cultures and traditions. A family is a basic unit of society. Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn aver that “family is a cornerstone of society.” It means that the family unit is crucial and integral in a society. John Macionis defines family as a “social institution found in all societies that unite people in cooperative groups to oversee the bearing and raising of children.” this definition draws our attention to the primary function of the family, which is the reproductive function. Families are established in societies to procreate and raise children for the continuity of society. This is prevalent in African societies, where the inability of a family to produce offspring is seen as an abomination. A family may not necessarily consist of people related by blood, it could consist of a group of people who live together and may not be related by blood. There are different functions of the family as identified by Michael Haralambos and

Martin Holborn which are: sexual function, reproductive function, economic function and educational function. (462) the sexual and reproductive functions are essential for the continuity of society, without them, members of society are limited or we would have no members at all. The economic function is essential for survival, for example, the provision and preparation of food. Also, the educational function is necessary for the transmission of culture in the society. These functions are evident in Yejide Kilanko's *Daughters Who Walk This Path*, where the issues of childbearing and transmission of tradition are explored.

There are two types of family structure which are: the nuclear family and the extended family. Michael Haralambos and Martin Holborn postulate that the nuclear family is the smallest family unit and that it consists of a husband, wife and their immature offspring, while the extended family is larger than the nuclear family. This implies that the extended family will consist of a father, mother, children, aunty, cousin, and grandmother among others. Africans embrace the extended family structure because they are communal people. Studies have shown that Africans, most especially Nigerians embrace this family structure owing to the need to help family members that are incapable of surviving by themselves.

Tradition versus modernity

Tradition according to John Scott and Gordon Marshall is.

...a set of social practices which seek to celebrate and inculcate certain behavioural norms and values, implying continuity with a real or imagined past, and usually associated with widely accepted rituals or other forms of symbolic behaviour. (537)

Simply put, tradition is a set of constructed behavioural patterns, inclined to the past, which is inculcated and passed from generation to generation. It identifies us with a group of people and gives us a sense of belonging. A traditional society is primitive, crude and uncivilised. Tradition embodies norms and mores that guide human behaviour in a society. Once these norms are contravened, non-conformists will be reprimanded. A traditional society is inclined toward the past; it contrasts with the modern society which deals with new values. According to John Scott and Gordon Marshall, modern society is "characterised by the democratic and industrial revolutions." The free will afforded by modernity enables individuals to break norms and get away with them.

Modernity was introduced by the western world; it started about the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. Factors that influenced it are the First World War, education,

industrialisation and the ideas of the three thinkers; Sigmund Freud (a psychologist), Karl Marx (a sociologist) and Charles Darwin (a biologist). The ideas of these three thinkers challenge traditional ideas. According to Mike O'Donnell, modernity is characterised by industrialisation, urbanisation, enlightenment, mass literacy and scientific and technological development. Modern society is "characterised by the rise of science and technology, industrialisation and bureaucracy, and a widespread belief (or ideology) in the possibility of human and social progress." This implies that modern society is a society that has undergone technological, industrial and political development due to discoveries and enlightenment. Some other features of modernity are free will and individualism. Freewill enables individuals to break norms and get away with them. These features are in contrast with that of a traditional society, where individuals are guided by implicit conventions and are communal in nature.

The integration of tradition and modernity will yield conflict due to their opposing ideologies. Modernity affects tradition, the reason being that tradition is inclined toward the past, and it has to do with old values, while modernity has to do with new values and ideas. The transition from tradition to modernity has also brought about a transition from communality to individuality, where the traditional society is communal and the modern society is individualistic. In traditional societies, individuals do things together, make decisions and help one another, but in modern societies, technology makes individuals be self-centered and take decisions without the help of others. When tradition and modernity merge in a society, individuals will experience what sociologists' term 'culture shock'. According to Henry Tischler, culture shock is used to describe 'the difficulty people have adjusting to a new culture that differs markedly from their own.' The juxtaposition of tradition and modernity brings about change in the social structure of a society.

The transition of a society from traditional to modern which Lai Olurode and Olufemi Olusanya refer to as 'societal evolution' has brought about a change in thinking and behaving as a result of socialisation. Socialisation makes individuals inculcate a society's way of doing things. Through socialisation, individuals imbibe the new values of modernity, making them discard old traditional values. This alienates individuals to their culture and tradition. In Umelo Ojinmah's *Chinua Achebe: New Perspectives*, Chinua Achebe opines that "one of the most distressing ills which afflict new nations is a confusion of values." The values he is referring to are the traditional values (old values) and the modern values (new values), which are burning issues that disturb the society. Chinua Achebe sees the European incursion as a disruption of order, where the Europeans replace the traditional system with their modern system, thereby causing

individuals to discard and contravene traditional norms. When an individual imbibes modern culture, such an individual will refuse to draw a balance between tradition and modernity and this will result in alienation from one's culture. This is why Wole Soyinka lampoons the West for this role in eroding our cherished culture. According to him, Islam and Christianity are the principal enemies of Africa's authentic traditional values and culture.

The Yoruba traditional society

The Yorubas are located in the South-West of Nigeria. The language they speak is Yoruba with different dialects. They are found in states like Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Kwara, Ondo, Lagos and in some parts of Edo state. Olumuyiwa Familusi in his article, *African Culture and the Status of Women: The Yoruba Example*. (2012, pp. 300), he opines that "The Yoruba nation like many other African societies is essentially patriarchal." He stressed that "the birth of a baby girl does not receive the kind of enthusiastic reception that is usually given out to that of a baby boy." This suggests that the Yoruba society embraces male child preference like the Igbos. In addition, he asserts that the issue of chastity is crucial in Yoruba culture. The implication according to Familusi is that virginity is a cherished virtue among the Yoruba people. The Yorubas, just like their Igbo counterpart cherish communal life. It is a close-knitted society. They have a strong relationship with each other, taking a close, friendly interest in each other's activities and problems. Thus, kinship is very important in the Yoruba society. They love being among their people.

The Yorubas are a people who love to uphold and preserve their culture and traditions. For instance, when a Yoruba wants to get married, the consent of their parents must be sought before the commencement of the marriage. In the Yoruba society, women are equally subordinate to men. Traditional women are expected to work independently of their husbands, they take up a trade in which they supervise themselves and use the profit to support the family. Yorubas do not allow women to be full-time housewives; they believe that women must engage in something to support the family. In addition to their socio-economic role, they are expected to fulfill their domestic and marital roles in the family, cook and run errands for their husbands. Like many other African societies, men enjoy the privileges of tradition and engage in polygamous marriages without recourse to their financial status. They do not care about taking care of the home. According to tradition, that is the role of women.

Children are highly valued in Yoruba society. Lai Olurode and Olufemi Olusanya aver that "Childlessness to a Yoruba is a calamity and procreation is the ultimate goal of a woman or a

couple.” This assertion shows the importance of children in Yoruba society. Children are a source of joy to their parents, especially the mother as it secures her position as a wife in her home and as a real woman. They are the ones to preserve the family’s lineage.

Some of the Yoruba cultures and traditions are as follows: greeting; girls kneeling while boys prostrate to greet elders, naming a newborn baby after eight days, and addressing elderly people with respect among others. Another tradition they observe is the culture of silence, which prevents Yoruba people from discussing certain issues that may tarnish the image of a person and disgrace the family. Also, the Yorubas like other ethnic groups in Nigeria, are very superstitious. For example, they believe children die and reincarnate, these children are referred to as ‘Abiku’ or ‘Ogbanje’ in Igbo. Another superstition they believe, which is evident in Yejide Kilanko’s *Daughters Who Walk This Path*, is that the birth of an albino child brings bad luck to a family and that the reason for this is, their mothers must have walked under the sun with their pregnancy.

Analysis

Tradition is highly esteemed in the Yoruba society. One of the Yoruba traditions that is highly valued, which is evident in this text, is the culture of greeting. The Yorubas are people of respect, they show respect in the way they greet and how they talk to their elders. This is seen in the text where Bros T prostrates to greet his uncle. Females kneel to greet their elders just like Morayo kneels to greet Aunty Tope. These greetings depict the importance of tradition as it teaches individuals how to respect elder ones, especially in modern society. Also, children are not allowed to eavesdrop when adults are talking and they are not allowed to discuss certain issues with elder ones just like Morayo did not deem it fit to discuss Mr Tiamiyu, whom her aunt loves. Another thing to note about the Yorubas is that they are superstitious, which is evident in the text. At the beginning of the novel, Morayo’s mother gives birth to Eniayo, who happens to be an albino (‘afin’ in Yoruba). Mama Ejiwunmi, Morayo’s grandmother, accuses Morayo’s mother of walking under the sun which affects the baby in her womb. She believes albinos bring bad luck to a family. (4) Morayo’s parents were able to accept the baby because they were modern individuals.

Marriage is another important culture of the Yoruba people. One of the principles guiding Yoruba marriage is the fact that the bride must be a virgin. Virginity is cherished among the Yorubas as it gives the family of that child a good reputation. If otherwise, it tarnishes the reputation of that family and the female children from that family will not be considered eligible

for marriage. In the text, Morayo is raped by her cousin, Bros T, whom her parents put in his care while they attend a marriage ceremony. Her parents refuse to discuss her sexual escapade because such a story will tarnish the image of the family. They believe that secrets told to a single person could be heard by multiple persons. This issue of silence is common among the Yorubas who do not discuss certain issues. Morayo tries to tell her mother about a boy she likes in school, but her mother scolds her because traditional parents do not discuss such issues. This issue of silence is also evident during the planning of Morayo's wedding, where Morayo tells her mother that she is sure that Kachi's family knows that she is not a virgin and her mother replies: "Morayo! What has come over you? If you do not care about yourself, please think of your sister. What do you want the Alabi's to think of our family?" her mother does not want her to talk about her past as her younger sister will not be considered eligible for marriage. This culture of silence prevents Morayo from getting the support she needs from her parents, thereby making tradition escalate her problem. Modernity allows such issues to be discussed. If Morayo's sexual escapade was discussed by her parents, they would have tried to assuage her pain and enabled her to leave a better life.

Childbearing is another important aspect of the Yoruba culture. Individuals love to see their children and grandchildren. How the child is produced does not matter to some people. This is evident in the text where Morenike, Morayo's aunty, is raped by her father's best friend, Chief Komolafe, which results in pregnancy. Initially, her parents are furious, but after she conceives, they are happy to have the grandchild, especially with the fact that the baby is a male child. This points us to the fact that the Yoruba society is a patriarchal one. When a woman is unable to produce a male child, her husband marries another wife to get a male child. Chief Komolafe did not have a male child, as a result of this; he resorts to polygamy, which is the traditional idea of marriage that favours men. He marries three wives who are unable to produce a male child for him. He rapes Morenike which results in pregnancy. Initially, he denies the pregnancy to not to damage his reputation, but when Morenike finally gives birth to a male child and raises the child herself, Chief Komolafe comes to apologise and claim the child. He says "a child belongs to the father, and so Damilare rightly belongs to me. Even the laws of the land recognise this," If the child was a female, he would not have come to apologise or claim the child. This shows that male children are highly esteemed in the Yoruba society.

Most of the characters in this novel try to embrace old and new values. Morayo's parents, Bisoye and Owolabi are traditional and at the same time modern. For instance, they allow their female

children to study at the university, which is very unusual in traditional societies. Owolabi still recites incantations to his children whenever they have stomach aches and it works for them. Whenever their children do anything wrong, they are punished. Owolabi is a modern man yet he tells his children Yoruba folktales and a folktale embodies the tradition of a particular people. For instance, he tells his children a story about a man called Alao, who tells his best friend his secret, which is later revealed to everyone. His children learn from this folktale and this is one of the reasons why Morayo refuses to discuss her sexual escapade with anyone. Owolabi can transmit the Yoruba culture to his children, despite his modernity. It is due to modernity that Owolabi allows his daughter to marry an Igbo man despite his warnings against inter-tribal marriage.

Modernity gives individuals freewill to do as they desire without getting punished. Tradition gives men superiority and dominance over women in the society; it does not protect the girl child. The freedom offered by modernity enables men to misuse their superior position by sexually exploiting women. This is the reason why Bros T can rape his cousin, Morayo, because he feels he is a man and can do whatever he wants without getting punished. Modernity allows him to go scot-free while Morayo is left to wallow in pain. It also enables Chief Komolafe to rape Morenike (Morayo's aunty) and go unpunished. He impregnates her without feeling any remorse. When he is confronted by Morayo's mother, he blames her for not training her daughter well: "And so? Is that why you think you have the right to come into my office uninvited? Just because you neglected to teach your wayward daughter how to keep her legs together" (120) He feels he had the right to do what he did. When Morayo's mother, Mummy Ibeji, tells her husband about it, he refuses to believe the story and sends her out of his house. These men see women as sexual objects to be used at any time. If all these happen in a traditional society, Bros T and Chief Komolafe would have been punished severely, but due to modernity which promotes moral laxity, they go unpunished. Another reason why they are not punished is because of their gender. If it were the promiscuous ladies, they would have been criticised by society, which portrays the prejudice placed on the girl child by the society. Morenike was criticised for not keeping "her legs together" although she is not at fault. This is a result of the inferiority complex and prejudice imposed on women.

Another instance of moral laxity in the text is displayed on campus, where young boys and girls sleep around with each other. One day, an old man is seen kissing a young girl. His wife drives in with her car, moves towards them and slaps the girl. The girl retaliates by slapping her too.

The old man tells the girl to enter the car and they zoomed off, leaving the woman there. The girl is morally decadent and loses respect for elders due to modernity which offers freewill to individuals and leaves them unpunished when they do wrong.

Families care for each other and help each other in time of need; they also love and trust each other. Yejide Kilanko portrays the advantages and disadvantages of having a large family. This type of family is the extended family, which is traditionally accepted. The extended family could include friends who are referred to as family friends. Morayo's family is an extended one where her aunties, cousins and grandmother come to live with them or visit occasionally. It is as a result of this large family that Morayo and Morenike are raped. It is also as a result of a large family that they can find comfort and encouragement. This shows the advantages and disadvantages of an extended family. After being raped, Morayo needs someone to console her and relieve her of her misery. Her parents cannot do anything because tradition did not let them discuss such issues. Aunty Morenike, who has a similar experience with Morayo can relate to her predicament and provides the comfort and encouragement she needs. Aunty Morenike is also assaulted and sent away by her father who could have fought for her. Her mother and her grandmother console and encourage her, they make sure the incident did not jeopardise her career. This confirms Ayi Kwei Armah's prediction of women as "healers and sympathisers" in Sophia Ogwude's *Writing the Female Image in African Fiction*. This shows the importance of family because there is someone to confide in during difficulty.

Families depend on each other and trust each other. Trust is one of the features of a family. It is as a result of trust that Morayo and Morenike are raped. Their parents leave them in the care of someone they trust because they are family or friends. Morayo is raped by her cousin, Bros T, while Morenike is raped by her father's best friend, Chief Komolafe. Morayo's parents have a wedding to attend which entails them spending a night over there; Morayo is sick and unable to attend the wedding. Initially, Morayo's mother is skeptical about leaving Morayo alone with Bros T but Bros T assures her that he can take care of his cousin. Morayo tells her mother that their neighbour will be there if she needs anything. This is the mistake made by Morayo's mother, knowing full well about Bros T's past and their experience with him. The fact that he is a boy, most especially in a modern society where moral laxity abounds, should have made Morayo's mother stay back and look after her, or send for Morenike to stay with her. Despite the relationship Bros T and Chief Komolafe have with their family members or friends, they dare to

rape the ones that were put in their care. This shows the irresponsibility of men, whereas they are the ones that are supposed to protect their daughters or sisters.

The tradition of patriarchy contributes to this issue of sexual assault as it makes men see themselves as superior beings while women are seen as weak vessels and subject to them. They are also seen as objects for sexual pleasure and as a factory for producing children, especially male children. John Macionis makes a comment on patriarchy which says, "To know the heirs, men must control the sexuality of women. Families, therefore, transform women into sexual and economic properties." Therefore, tradition and modernity contribute to the issue of sexual assault as tradition gives men the upper hand while modernity gives them free will. Tradition does not protect them as it makes women susceptible. It is through the traditional family system that sexual assault is successfully perpetrated. Modernity allows the nuclear family system, which if maintained by Morayo's family, would have prevented the sexual assault.

Families are always there for each other and support each other; this is evident in the text. We can see the relationship between Aunty Morenike and Morayo's family; she is always there for them, during Eniola's birthday she buys birthday cake for them and helps them celebrate it. Morenike's son, Damilare, plays with Morayo and Eniola. Aunty Tope, Bisoye's sister, visits them with her son occasionally and buys things for them. Bisoye helps her sister's son, Bros T, by accommodating him for her husband to train him despite his bad behaviour. Morenike's mother and grandmother are there for her. During Eniola's birth, her family members are also there for her. Sisterly love can be seen between Morayo and Eniola. Morayo always wanted a sister, so she has to protect her. Although her sister is an albino, she loves her dearly. Although families love and care for each other, conflict exists between members of the family. There is a conflict between Bisoye and Aunty Tope due to Bros T's behaviour. There is also conflict between Morayo and her mother, they do not have a good relationship due to her mother's inability to discuss her sexual escapade and provide the comfort she needs.

The characters in this novel contribute to the development of the themes and plot structure. Each of the characters either represents tradition or modernity, some blend the two. Morayo is the central character in the novel. She is used by the author to represent other girls that have walked the same path with her, the path of sexual assault. The novel centres on her experiences from her childhood to adulthood and how those experiences shape her life. She is the daughter of Owolabi and Bisoye. She has a younger sister whom she loves and cherishes so much. The novel displays

how she grows from a young naïve girl, who is always under the protection of her parents, to a lady who wants to be in control of her life. Morayo is an intelligent, loving and caring girl. Her life is distorted after being raped by her cousin, Bros T. She is traumatised since the incident and even attempts suicide. Unfortunately, she is not raped once, she is raped continuously and this makes her psychologically and emotionally discomfited. These result in identity crisis because, she is unsure of how to move on with her life. She sees herself as unworthy of being loved. The incident makes her always want to gain control over men, which points us to the issue of role reversal. Men assume control over women sexually and otherwise. She says.

What no one understood was how much I needed to be in control. I wanted to decide what happened... The fact that I did not need their sweet words or attention drove them crazy. I was like a frontier they wanted to conquer. But if there was any conquering to be done, I was determined to be the one doing it. (200)

Due to the incident, she decides to be in control over men by being promiscuous; making herself available to any man that comes across her way. Her personality changes as soon as she gets into the University. Due to freewill offered by modernity in a modern city like Lagos, she dresses indecently to seduce men and this is one of the features of 'grrrl' feminism. Everyone knew her to be promiscuous; she was even put on a campus magazine titled "*Sensations*". (201) this magazine criticises immorality on campus. Whenever she is confronted about her promiscuity by her mother and aunty, she keeps quiet. Sleeping around with men was her way of challenging tradition. She loved the freedom she had in school.

She keeps living an immoral life until she meets a man called Ladi. Ladi is a Christian; he loves Morayo despite her licentiousness. It is not expected of any serious-minded Christian to keep a relationship with promiscuous girls but Ladi dates Morayo intending to change her. Morayo is not used to a platonic relationship. Whenever they are going for an outing, Morayo wears indecent clothes to seduce him. One day, due to unavoidable circumstances, she finally has sex with him. All she did to seduce him failed. One day, they came back from an outing at night and it began to rain. Ladi becomes very unhappy for defiling himself. He feels guilty for transgressing the Christian tradition of chastity. He tells Morayo he is no longer interested in her. Morayo realises what she has lost due to her licentiousness. After the incident, she decides to live a new life without sleeping around with men.

Her mother is a typical traditional African parent, who is always over protective of her children. She warns Morayo about boys and warns that if any boy touches her, she will notice it. Unfortunately, she is unable to sense her daughter's defilement by her nephew, Bros T. After discovering the incident, she refuses to talk to her daughter about it because tradition did not allow them to discuss such matters. This silence mars her relationship with her daughter. Thus, she is unable to give her daughter the comfort she needs. To protect Morayo's younger sister, Eniola, she takes her to a boarding school, where she will be far away from Morayo. This repels Morayo and makes her jealous of her sister. Nevertheless, she has to protect her younger sister which is her primary duty as the firstborn of the family. Despite all odds, Morayo still loves her sister unconditionally. This shows family bonding between them. Though her skin colour is abhorred by traditionalists, she still finds someone to marry her.

Another character the novel centres on is Morayo's aunt, Aunty Morenike. She is a very loving and caring aunty who is always there for Morayo and her family. She can be described as a shrewd, resilient and perseverant woman. She is sexually assaulted just like Morayo. She is raped by Chief Komolafe, her father's best friend and expelled from school. She later bears a male child for him. She can relate to Morayo's predicament which is why Morayo confide in her. She is Morayo's solace and surrogate mother. Unlike Morayo, she is comforted and encouraged by her family. Her grandmother accommodates her, takes care of her and encourages her to move on with her life. She goes to the University to study sociology and is offered the job of a research assistant in a non-governmental human rights organisation. She also becomes a political activist and believes other women should be politically active too. She challenges tradition by going into politics because it has been socially constructed that women are not to be heard on such issues at that time. She is a living testimony of a sexually assaulted victim who does not let their predicament dictate their life for them. She can make good use of her life despite all odds. Morenike can also be described as a strong woman who can balance her education and her responsibilities as a mother. Through her achievements, the author tries to make the reader aware that women, not only men, can succeed and provide for the family. They do not need to depend on any man for survival. Morenike is rejected by Chief Komolafe (the rapist) and her father, yet she can raise her child and survive on her own. Therefore, the patriarchal idea of women serving as appendages to men is inaccurate in modern society. Even her mother tells her that she is "worth a thousand sons". (140)

Some of the male characters in this text are portrayed as irrational and irresponsible. Examples of such men are Bros T and Chief Komolafe. These are the rapists in the text. These people are so much trusted by their family members and friends. Bros T is Morayo's cousin; he is the only child of his mother. He is spoilt and irresponsible. His mother, Aunty Tope, brings him to live with her brother-in-law, Morayo's father to train him. He (Bros T) changes and this is the reason why his aunt put her daughter in care just for a night. He invites his friends to the house to celebrate. They are all drunk and one of the boys asks him if he could have sex with his sister. Instead of protecting her, he rapes her. He does this continuously and threatens her not to tell anyone or else he will rape her younger sister, Eniayo. Chief Komolafe is also trusted by his best friend, Morenike's father, to always drop her at school. One day they were not able to continue their journey due to traffic and they had to lodge in a hotel. He summons her to his room and rapes her. When Morenike's mother discovers it, she goes to confront him in his office and all he could say was that her mother did not teach her how to "keep her legs together". (120) He denies the pregnancy although he is in dire need of a male child. The author uses this character to demystify men's superiority by showing how shallow-minded they are. Years later, he comes to claim the child because it is a male child. These men go scot-free; they are not reported to the authorities because of their relationship with the family of the victims. They misuse their superiority over the female gender by raping the ones whom they are supposed to protect. They are true representations of patriarchy.

Conclusion

Tradition and modernity affect the lives of individuals by influencing their decisions. Tradition disallows Morayo's parents from discussing her sexual escapade, leaving her to bear her trauma alone, which results in her promiscuity. Modernity is also responsible for this promiscuity as it promotes moral laxity by giving individuals free will. It is also responsible for the sexual assault perpetrated by Bros T and Chief Komolafe. Tradition requires them to be punished but modernity emancipates them. Through this analysis, the negative and positive impacts of tradition and modernity can be seen. Tradition gives us a sense of identity; it also gives room for punishing offenders, which restrains moral decadence such as immorality. But, tradition does not favour women due to patriarchy which makes women vulnerable and it aggravates the pain of sexual assault by keeping silent about such matters. The author projects the positivity of modernity as it enables individuals to discuss such matters, which would have alleviated Morayo's pain. It also gives the girl child access to education, through which victims of sexual

assault can move on with their lives. The negative effect of modernity is also displayed as it promotes moral laxity which enables Bros T and Chief Komolafe to carry out their evil act. The advantages and disadvantages of having a large family, which is the extended family, can also be seen in this analysis.

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