



Women and the Praxis of Intra-Gender Conflicts in Ogba Song-Poetry

Dr. Ben-Fred Ohia

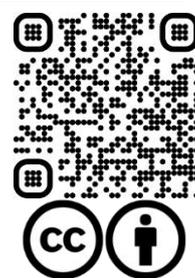
Department of English and Literary Studies, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract— *Women and children for the African people are the greatest family achievements. In Ogba, the women and children, in addition form the nucleus of the family called ImOgba. This paper examines the roles of women either as co-wives or co-participants in patriarchal society in inflicting pains and other cruel acts upon one another in selected Ogba songs. The paper shows that in some of the songs, women are portrayed as caring mothers and helpers to their husbands. But in many others, they are displayed as vengeful, envious, mean and antagonistic, especially with regard to jealous co-wives. In these songs, female intra-gender conflicts are artistically recreated to explore the notion of sisterhood that has eluded the female in contemporary society. The study draws inspiration from the feminist literary theory in the explication of the intra-gender conflicts that are fore grounded in the songs. The paper reveals that the stories and comments in many of the selected oral songs interrogate, in a subtle manner, aspects of intra-gender conflicts that are inimical to societal progress. It advocates for the women to use the songs for the betterment of womanhood in Ogba traditional setting and not to fern embers of conflict that will disunite them.*



Keywords— *Women, Intra-Gender, Conflicts, Ogba, Song-Poetry, Feminism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Song-poetry has over the years played significant role in the cultural life of the African people and indeed the Ogba. It serves both unilateral and commercial functions. Many of the songs in African societies act as the communal medium of censure and celebration; they confront in flamboyant manner the mighty and low in the society. In fact, everyone dreaded the satiric butts of the oral artist in traditional societies. When one is caught in acts that fall short of societal standard, he/she is shamed and vilified publicly in songs. “In Ogba as it is in other areas, the wider implications are speculations in the role of song and singing in establishing textual effectiveness in other cultures” (Ohia 2017, p.53). Also, when one’s action brings fame to the community, he/she is celebrated openly in songs. This is how society regulated itself before colonialism sets its foot on the African continent.

Wang (1965) tells us that in traditional societies, “Ridicule is one of the means of protesting against certain disgusting

practices and getting rid of things undesirable...” (Pp.313). Nwoga (1981) examines the social function of satires in traditional societies in his “The Igbo poet and satires” and believes that they... “served as a means of social control” (p.130). According to him,

Homogeneous, kindred societies depended on the sense of full human dignity being shared by all members. To find oneself regarded as in any way below the standard, to become the object of ridicule, or of children pointing fingers at one and sniggering, was punishment of great dimension. Satire was the verbal equivalent of actions like tying a stolen object around the neck of the thief and parading him through the village (Nwoga 1981, p.130).

This idea is also well expressed by Ojaide (2003) when he explains, with regard to the Udje dance-song tradition of

the Urhobo, that “excesses are checked since there are sanctions against falsehoods as well as lampoons against natural defects”. Continuing, he notes, the “songs maintain a delicate balance between the general good of the society whose ethos must be upheld and respected for the law-abiding individuals” (p.5). Darah (2005), on his own part, tells us that the “spirit that animates satire is that of criticism, a criticism vigorous enough to make culpable actions and injustices appear reprehensible and repulsive” (p.21).

In a similar vein, satirical songs are composed in Ogba to ridicule perpetrator of immorality in the society.

Songs and dances in this division perform a veritable traditional function to checkmate the vices committed by people of all classes in the society. Instances abound where names of people who committed crime of theft, fraud, incest, patricide and matricide are used in the composition to ridicule them and members of their families respectively (Ohia and Onyedibia, 2003, p.116).

Avorgbedor (1990) argues that man is ontologically and expressive being, and both actions and reactions consequently permeate our medes of life and living. The song mode is just one of the innumerable artistic avenues through which our latent response energies are released (p.208).

In the Ogba society, many of the songs are devoted to gender and family themes. Such songs reflect the social relationship that exists between the male and female, among the women folks in the larger society, within the family setting and the lives of the children in polygamous homes. The themes and metaphors in these songs are articulated in clear gender focus that addresses, with human face, various gender conflicts that tread to distort societal equilibrium. The issues are stretched from domestic tussles, co-wives politics, to sexual as well as psychological struggles.

Feminism and Intra-Gender Conflict among Women

One of the basic tenets of feminist criticism is the issue that borders on the portrayal of women in literary texts. It examines the masculine roles given to male characters that stand in contrast to the dormant and distorted portraiture of female characters in literature. Its focus, Olubukola (2016) argues, “Is the liberation and emancipation of women (p.14). A “preliminary definition” is provided in which feminism entails:

The recognition that virtually across time and place, men and women unequal

in the power they have, either in society or over their own lives, and the corollary belief that men and women should be equal; The belief that knowledge has been written about, and for men and the corollary belief that all schools of knowledge must be re-examined and understood to reveal the extent to which they ignore or distort gender (Arneil 1999, Pp.3-4).

It is often the argument of many feminist critics that men have sustained and perpetuated their century-long patriarchal position in the society by creating stereotypes with which they deliberately subjugate women. They therefore examine issues in the work of arts that create social and cultural imbalances between the sexes by proposing a deliberate re-assessment of those cultural structures that discriminate against women. In other words, feminist critics want, in literary texts, strong and dominant female characters who should stand at par with their male counterparts. They are weary of the wickedness that constitutes the representation of women in many literary works by male writers. Klarer (1999) adumbrates this fact when she avers that “feminist literary theory starts with the assumption that “gender difference” is an aspect which has been neglected in traditional literary criticism and theatre [and]... have to be re-examined, from a gender-oriented perspective” (p.92).

Notion of inter and intra-gender conflicts

Feminist criticism, in recent times, has advanced different responses to the question of gender equality. It pursues goals that have the potentials to pit women against men in its bid to identify and remedy the distorted image of the woman in the society. It seeks to react against every social and cultural structure that assign the female to marginal positions in the society as well as place at her disposal, the power of liberty and freedom. In the *second sex*, it is noted, “While art, literature and philosophy are essentially “attempts to found the world anew on a human liberty, that of the individual creator”, women are moulded and indoctrinated by tradition that they are prevented from assuming the status of being with liberty” (Blamires 1991, p.374).

The motion of feminism in whatever ramification, however, should not reduce the cultural realities of the African society. This is because literature is a cultural production which must reflect the social reality of a given society. It is against this backdrop that Olubukola (2016) avers that another “way of understanding feminist criticism and the African woman is by taking a proper look at the role of the African women in life and literature”.

According to him, “it is obvious that treatment that the African woman gets in life would obviously be reflected in the literature from the continent” (p.19). Davies (2007) supports this view when she affirms that any analysis of “a text without some consideration of the world with which it has a material relationship is of little social value” (p.566). However, to cure the inter-gender conflict between male and female, we should adopt Wasson (1977) Marxist’s ideology by “cherishing literature as it contains values which lead to repression of men and women, classes, and races. Dominant modes of criticism make us forget that writers are concerned with class, race, and sexism, and the recovery of that awareness... (Pp.170-171).

The notion of “intra-gender”, in the context of this paper, is the relationship that exists among a particular gender/sex – the female gender. It presupposes the fact that aside the universal dichotomy that exists between the male and female gender in society, there also exists a conflict that derives from the strained and adverse relationship among women. Emecheta (2008) attests to this fact when she informs us in an interview with Adeola James that “half of the problem rests with women, they are busy bitching about one another (p.36). As shall be shown later in this paper, women are contributors to much of the oppression as well as the negative stereotypes against themselves in gender-based societies. The women in many African societies are never conscious of societal expectations on them and thus develop somewhat inferior complexes that have pitted them against themselves. Mohammed (2010) acknowledges this point when she notes that “the inferior positions of women can be linked to the activities of other women who continue to accept the inferior positions through their oppressive activities (p.465).

In her assessment of intra-gender conflict in Tess Onwueemes’s play, *Tell it to women* against the backdrop of feminist ideology, Enajite Ojaruega expresses the idea that although feminist literature tends to highlight some of the “imbalances in social structure, which constrain the rights of women” by proposing “a reassessment of those issues that discriminate against women by virtue of their gender, women oftentimes, “are their own worst enemies” (Pp.199-200). According to her, “some of the causes of intra-gender conflicts that threaten the harmonious co-existence of the female gender especially in the various bids for self-actualisation and empowerment are hampered by women themselves” (p.200). Her assessment of the ideological moorings of radical feminism as recreated in the characters of Daisy and Ruth in the play, objectifies the notion. Ojaruega tells us that;

As proponents of radical’s feminist ideal and in their bid to assert their rights and upturn what they perceive as gender imbalances in social relations, they exhibit behavioural patterns that appear extreme within the existing standards in Africa... the two female friends are quite hostile to and intolerant of their fellow women as seen in the treatment meted out to Yemoja and other rural women.... Their hypocrisy and shadow-mindedness are revealed in the fact that while they fight for parity with the opposite sex, they create a class hurdle between themselves and their fellow women from the rural areas... (p.201).

This paper, thus examines how the metaphors which derive from intra-gender issues have sloped the artistic thoughts of Ogba oral artists/musicians. The paper addresses the matters from three perspectives: the roles of women as good and caring mothers, co-wives rivalries and the critical conditioning of children as victims in the family crisis and finally, women in cultural politics. The analytical materials for the paper are sourced from the musical albums of Ogba popular artists/musicians such as Late. Hezekiah Okwuku Nworgu and Late Matthew Ogbu aka Pop Ogbu. Some song texts which are not from the repertoire of the above musicians are also used; they are deployed strictly for emphasis.

Women and children play significant roles in the life of every African man. They constitute not only the measure of a man’s success but also the barometre for assessing a good and accommodating family. People often tend to recommend a home/family with well-behaved women for their children and relatives to go in search of wives for marriage. In fact, women are the embodiment of what is good in the African and indeed the Ogba society. Besides, among the Ogbas, the women group, Nwnuyeobu (women married into the family/eommunity) is one of the most powerful institutions in the society. They possess the capacity to bring down any authoritarian leadership in the community. This is because they are the mothers of everyone in the community. Another institution is the Umuadna/nde-adnane (sisters in the family/community) that wields authority in the homes of their brothers, wives and children.

Women as mothers, represent the continuities of every society. They are the ones who create, preserve and transmit oral traditions from one generation to another. While the men are abroad seeking means of livelihood to feed the home, it is the women who remain at home to

keep the family intact. This is why Nwapa (1981) explains that, the “woman’s role in Africa is crucial for the survival and progress of the race”. She notes that it is, “true of all women across the globe, be they black or white” (p.527). In traditional societies, it is the mother who gathers the children together at the fireside, under the moonlit evenings, to tell them stories about the origin of the community; about heroes and heroines, stories that help to build the moral development of the young ones. In this way, the mothers in traditional societies made the children, at an early age, to conform to societal norms. In fact, it is on the fact of the mothers that children see the world. It is

against this backdrop that Ngeobo (2008) tells us that, “the ideal wife is defined through her relationship with her husband and children” (p.538). In other words, women and children are priceless components of the society, and because of the premium placed on children in the African society, polygamy becomes a model for family development and community progress.

Pop Ogbu Jnr. in one of his songs, “*Oyne wurno nne lesi nne eyina*” eulogises good mothers in the Ogba society who are embodiments of care and good upbringing to their children and homes. He tells us in the song thus:

1.	Oyne wurno nne lesi nne enya Nne di uko, nne la bu ndnu ka umu Nne la bu ikne ka okpoknu la eznilaulo	A child should take care of his/her mother Mother is scarce, she is the life of her children Mother is the strength of the home/family.
2.	Oyne la emeni mu ka nne murumuyni? Nne bu nne Nne bu oyne eyina nkpo, obu nne Nne bu oyne ukwu nkwa, obu nne	Who will protect me like my mother? Mother is mother If mother is blind she is mother. If mother is deformed in the leg, she is mother.
3.	Ngozni ka nne a nigaga nwna Nne kwachni ni ga nwna Nne adiwo la igbade nwna ka, la egbochni ni nsogbu	Blessing is the lot of a mother Mother stands for her children A good mother does not leave her child unprotected.
4.	Nne nigaga nwna osa whne ownurno Ngozni ka nne anigaga nwna Owno oyne eme megide nwna la ihni ka nne a	Mother gives her child all that she has Blessing is the lot of a mother Enemies cannot pounce and kill a child in the presence of his/her mother

Inherent in this song is the recurrent theme of mother as the protector or guardian angel of the child. A true African mother will do all that is within her powers to protect her child from the preying eyes of the enemies – people who do not wish her well. In traditional society, the mother is always at the receiving end whenever a misfortune or death befalls her child. She, in most cases, is branded a witch who takes pleasure in eating her offspring. Hence a good mother must protect her children with all that is within her. Oreame, the witch grandmother of Ozidi Junior in J.P. Clark’s *The Ozidi Saga*, is a good example of the length a mother could go in protecting her offspring.

On the other hand, a mother who is careless and reckless is ridiculed in the songs. This is because the Ogba people have cherished and acceptable norms and traditions which they hold dear and whoever goes contrary to such traditions is regarded as a deviant whose aim is to distort the laid-down communal ethos. Such a person is either corrected physically or ridiculed in songs. Through such satirical attack, the victim of such antisocial behaviour is

presented for public scrutiny and he/she is shamed. By this, everyone tries to conform to the acceptable traditions of society. In the song “*Salomey ogbu di*”, from the repertoire of Hezekiah Okwuku Nwaogu, the artist lampoons the habit of young housewives leaving their matrimonial home to be with their lovers and ending up in killing their husbands to cover their sin of adultery. There is a similar song “*Ned oyne uhie*” by Matthew Ogbu aka Pop Ogbu, in this song, the artist’s persona is a married woman who falls in love with her father-in-law (Ned), prefers the company of her father-in-law, lover to her husband’s and family’s. The duo stubbornly refuses to listen to the reprimands from the community and their friends. Whenever she is confronted with the story of her illicit affair with her father-in-law, she will deny ever doing that with him. Even when she suffers the loss of her children as a result of her infidelity, she still refuses to disengage from her unholy act. The song goes like this:

1.	“Salomey, ogbu di, ogbula gbilaga Salomey oje okno, ogbula gbilaga Salomey ogwo ogwu, ogbula gbilaga”	“Salomey, husband killer, she killed and ran away Salomey, the adulteress, she killed and ran away Salomey, sorcery woman, she killed and ran away”
2.	Ned oyne uhie Ojnia nwnuye nwna Mma ka nwnuynenwna Ned gbajurua eyina Abia jnia la ele eyina la aznu Ego obula ichiro, emem nigi ya	Ned a criminal He slept with daughter-in-law The beauty of Ned’s daughter-in-law hypnotised him He slept with her, not minding the consequence The money you requested I shall give it to you.

This song may capture the fancy of radical feminists. Salomey is bold and fearless. She cares less of what society stipulates as the cultural standard of the woman. If a married man can cheat on his wife without reprimands from society, the woman should also have similar right. In such instance, there will be less intra-gender conflict because women now have rights to cheat on their husbands. In other words, a woman whose husband takes new wives without recourse to her feelings could also have the privilege of going out to meet with her lover. For Ohia (2023), the Ogba practice of men having the permission by society to marry more than one wife without consideration to the women’s rights is “part of patriarchal constructs maintained by men to serve their self-interests while it initiates and perpetuates female competition, oppression and divisiveness” (p.445).

To the artists: Hezekiah and Ogbu, however, Salomey’s and Ned’s actions are anti-social and anti-social vices such

as extra-marital affairs end up destroying family ties. Literature is culture-based and should not be judged through the garb of Western epistemologies. Davies (2007) differentiates between Western and African feminism is among others, that which “examines African societies for institutions which are of value to women and rejects those which work to their detriment and does not simply import western agendas” (p.563). Frank (1984) supports this idea and goes further to explain that “feminism is an individualist ideology which is in contrast to the communal nature of African society” (p.17). Thus, Salomey realises her follies only when all she was promised by the lover turns out to be a mirage coupled with losses due to her infidelity – she has been scammed, at which point, it is already too late for her to count her losses. The artists thus universalise the song’s ideal in the chorus by admonishing men to be wary of any woman who dresses seductively like Salomey.

Odi ka ownurno nwnayna Yi akira (agbari) la ukwnu Salomey, la onynea nwnanem Nwnokno.	If there is ever a woman A woman who adorns waist bead The one who dresses seductively Salomey is who I compared her with, brother.
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The message from the oral artist exposes the fact that the Ogba people and indeed the African people use their song as a strong cultural tool to interrogate and evaluate both positive and negative attitudes in the society. The aim is to extol positive attitudes and condemn negative ones, essentially, to strengthen the culture of the people. This is because culture constitutes the life spring that holds the people in every society together which must be passed from one generation to another. Ohia (2018) describes a people’s culture as the “social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on from one generation to another, across many generations. The people’s culture is rooted in time honoured and oral traditions” (p.131)

Aside the above thematic, Ogba oral artists have also used their songs to confront issues that border on intra-gender

conflicts in the Ogba kingdom. In this way, they artistically contribute to the denunciation of anti-social vices that distort the social equilibrium of the society. In the song “*Iynewna ibne mu emiremu la unu kini – oweiya* – the female artist explores the intra-gender conflicts that pitted co-wives (*wnuynedi la wnuyeobu*) against themselves. In this song, a young man marries a wife who bears two children, two girls for him. Both of them lived and prospered together. However, after some years, the wife becomes restless. She wants her children to have *nwnane* (half-siblings) – that is, children born to her husband by another woman. Any woman whose children do not have *nwnane nwokno* – male brothers is ridiculed by her co-women as being possessive and greedy; a woman who does not want to share her man with another woman (*ekwe-nwnuynedi*). In fact, narratives have been

woven around such “wicked” and “possessive” wives. For instance, Alice Ajje, a renowned Ogba female artist reflects in one of the songs, “*Iyewna ibne mu emiremu la*

unu kini” and lampoons on her co-wife who refuses her breathing space in the matrimonial home. A segment of the song goes thus:

Iyewna ibne mu, emre mu la unu kini, oweiya	My fellow women please leave me alone
Ka unu bu mu ejerije, oweiya	What did I do that you gossip me
Ibu mu ejerije la emeremu la kini, oweiya	What did I do to you that you gossip me
Eje wnuynedi biko la ko samu eka, oweiya	Evil co-wife, please leave me alone.

Songs like this only foreground the people’s social attitude towards the salient truths that define their cultural background. Davies notes that an African feminism,

Sees utility in the positive aspects of the extended family and polygamy with respect to child care and the sharing of household responsibility, traditions which are compatible with modern working woman’s live and the problems of child care but which were distorted with colonialism and continue to be distorted in the urban environment (p.563).

Here the artist becomes, in his songs, the carrier of the unwritten laws of the community. Agwonorobo (2002) confirms this point when he tells us that “All poets in their works depict experiential realities that uncover, explore and interpret salient truths – these truths synchronise the inherent contraries that define man, his endeavours and the world” (p.17). The wife, in the above song, already aware of these societal expectations, decides to persuade her husband to marry another wife, not minding the negative consequence, so that her children can also have male siblings those of others.

The husband accepts her demand and brings in a young wife who eventually masterminded intra-gender conflict in the home.

Solo: Dim bia ka ye kpari uka	My husband, the wife calls her husband
Biko nodi odnu	“My husband, please sit down”
Umu la bu ni mmu mrnu	“The two children I bore you”
Achom ka wo wno nwnane nwokno	I want the children to have half siblings
Biko, je alupia nwnayna ozo	“Go and marry another wife as my mate”
Ka obu nwnuyne dim	

The new wife is well received into the family that few years later, she bore two new children, a male and a female unlike her senior mate who had two female children. However, as years went by, the new wife becomes a schemer. She wants everything to herself – husband and property. First, she diabolically displaces the senior wife and makes her to leave the marriage with her two children. The new wife is happy. She is the sole possessor of the husband. On a particular day, as she sits down to reckon her achievements, she realises how huge her gain is. The senior wife plans a reprisal to eliminate the male children in the house because she realises that the junior wife is the one who has the husband’s wealth and other inheritances. “No. This cannot happen to me. The junior wife’s son must be eliminated, she said in a segment of the song. This time, she plans to bring her mate’s son back into her custody so that she can destroy him through any means necessary.

The senior wife is happy with her plans to eliminate the boy. This time, she goes to a medicine man and asks him to give her charm that can kill without remedy. She goes home and prepares a meal with it. In the morning, she calls her children into her room and warns them not to eat from the food on the table when they return from school. The food she informs them, belongs to their half-brother. The food under the table belongs to them. She warns them brazenly and left. In the afternoon, her children returned from school famished only to find out that their dog has eaten the food under the table. The food on the table is still intact and their half-brother is yet to return from school. The innocent children ate the food and start manifesting strange behaviours. The neighbours rush in to find them dying. They sent words to their mother who returns to chase them away thinking it is her mate’s son that is dying. But when she realises it is her own children she becomes hysteria. She rushes to her medicine man who informs her

that there is no reversal of the charm, in her depressed state, she goes mad.

The senior wife is depicted in the song as greedy, vicious, self-centered and insensitive. She is so blinded by her greed that she fails to care about the consequences of her actions. Her tragic end thus results from her greed and hatred of her innocent mate.

In the Ogba society from where the song derives, it is not out of place for the senior wife to ask her husband to marry another wife that would give her children and it is equally not a crime for the junior wife to come into the home. This is because it is the acceptable practice of the Ogba people; like other peoples of the world, for a man to marry more than one wife. Ngeobo (2008) informs us that “polygamy is almost universal in Africa” (p.356). Emecheta (2008) gives a detail illustration of the benefit of polygamy to the African woman as she avers that:

In many cases polygamy can be liberating to the woman, rather than inhibiting her, especially if she is educated. The husband has no reason for stopping her from attending international conferences like this one, from going back to university and updating her career or even getting another degree. Polygamy encourages her to value herself as a person and look outside her family for friends. It gives her freedom from having to worry about her husband most of the time he comes to her, he has to be sure that he is in good mood and that he is washed, and clean and ready for the wife, because the wife has now become so sophisticated herself that she has no time for a dirty, moody husband. And this in a strange way, makes them enjoy each other (p.555).

It should be well stressed here that the literary flavour and metaphors in a work of art derives essentially from the cultural background that birthed it. Wa Thiong’o (1972) expresses this idea when he tells us that: “literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, and direction and of concern by the social, poetical and economic focus in a particular society” (p.xii).

The cultural practice *nwnane-nwokno* may not be universal in Africa but it is a practice in Ogba culture, resulting from patriarchy, that in most communities it is a norm. It is against this back-drop that Ohia (2018) explains that “African cultures have regional characteristics that have been greatly influenced by the physical environments in which they were developed” (p.204). Thus in the song, it is

the senior wife who tries to distort the societal norms with her evil intentions that instigated an intra-gender conflict that destroyed her. Hence when she returns the kind gesture of her co-wife with greed and evil, she is summarily disgraced by providence and her stakes (children) in the man’s life are destroyed.

Radical feminists often locate the various shades of cultural inquiries against African women on the men and society. They, however, gloss over such issues of intra-gender conflicts that pitted women against themselves. In African oral poetic forms, there abound songs by female artists with female intra-gender themes. Many of the songs question why women have not deemed it fit to come together, as co-wives, as market women, and as mothers to bring the men to conform to the equality standard that they sought. One must acknowledge the fact that there are certain patriarchal huddles against women in society. However, women have, overtime while working with men, used their position to oppress fellow women. This can be illustrated with a song by all-female musical ensemble. One would have thought that the thematic preoccupations of female oral artists in African should explore feminist issues and advocate for equality between men and women in the society. Rather, African female singers have also added their voices to the intra-gender conflict among women in the society, many of the songs adumbrate socio-political issues that pitted women against themselves in intra-gender tussles. The portrayals of women, in many of these songs, are only meant to redirect the women’s focus on themselves. Frank (1984) avers that “...women must spun patriarchy in all its guises and create a safe, sane, supportive world of women; a world of mothers and daughters, sisters and friends” (p.15).

In the song “*oyne iwe hasi mu eka ka mu biri*” for instance, Lady Adira Eluozo and her all female musical group artistically presents a socio-political theme that revolves around female intra-gender conflict. Her entrant into the foray of the male dominated popular music tradition of Ogba sparks off a new consciousness into the aesthetic taste of the people. She is bold and her brand of song bears testament to the older form of Ogba classical satirical form. Thus in the song, she interrogates the attitude of women in powers and how such powers are used against their fellow women. The woman referred to in the song join hands with other hegemonic groups to oppress their fellow women because of their status.

What the artist has done in this song is to expose the iniquities that abound in many societies in which individuals or groups sought means to undo their fellow humans just because they are jealous of their progress in life. However, what interests us most in this song is the

brazen wickedness of the women ridiculed in the song against her fellow women.

Children are a blessing from God but we find that women are jealous of themselves even in matters that concern childbearing. How has a mother with more female children pose a threat to other women? *“Iynewna Ibemu”* (fellow women) in the song as depicted in the song as those who are troubled, those low self-esteem and a high degree of complex in what Ogun-dipe-Leslie (1984) would call the African women’s “self-perception”. This is why she believes that:

Women are shackled by their own suggestive 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... (p.162)

This is juxtaposed with a song by another female artist about Janet who was jealous by her senior co-wife because of their husband’s love for her. The husband buys all manner of cloth for the junior wife because her submission to him to the chagrin of the senior wife – Hence the female artist developed the song: *“osi la agwa mu kpani di* (it is because of my character to husband). This song goes like this:

Dim zunim ukrna	My husband buys wrapper for me
Osi la agwa mu muo	It is because of my character
Osi la agwa mu kpania	It is because of my character to him
Dim zunim holandis	My husband buys expensive Holandis cloth
Osi la agwa mu kpania	It is because of my character to him
Osi agwa mu kpania	My husband buys car for me
Dim zunim ugbo-ali	It is because of my character to him
Osi agwa mu kpania	

The artist speaks in the song that the actions/character of the junior wife is pleasant to their husband hence he buys things for her as a reward. The decision of the husband is absolute. In this regard, every woman is advised to be submissive to her husband in order to reap the gains of marriage to create equilibrium in marriage for women and more for women in polygamous marriage.

The song exposes the intra-gender conflict in polygamy that constitutes much of female engagements in many societies, women are against themselves. This why Olubokola (2016) believes that “intra-gender relations of the female characters in texts... by women exposes a conflict capable of negating the smooth sail of the (feminist) movement in African” (p.23).

II. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, the feminist discourse that places all the challenges that women fall in the society on men only shy away from the series of intra-gender conflicts that exist among women. It is the position of this paper that women need to put their house in order first before confronting the issues of patriarchy and women subjugation that constitute the fulcrum of feminist movement in Africa. Things like co-wives rivalry, mother-

in-law syndrome, rivalry between mother and daughter and daughter or co-wives and general animosity expressed by women towards other women though not inherent, can hamper the success of womanism or feminism in Africa (Olubokola 2016, p.23). The paper, therefore, exposes the fact that many of the conflicts that pitted women against themselves are instigated by the women and the analysed songs have shown that intra-gender conflicts among the female folks are based on trivial issues which often times made the children victims. The fact is that women can live happily with, and among themselves, if they develop the spirits of sisterhood which are the inherent indices of African social construct.

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