



Research Paper

The Impact of Education on Women's Empowerment and Its Significance in Society: A Review Of Literature And Analysis Of Femi OSOFISAN'S *ALTINE'S Wrath*.

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Abstract

This research paper aims to examine the impact of education on women's empowerment and its significance in society, with a particular focus on Femi Osofisan's *Altine's Wrath*. The paper begins by highlighting the importance of women's empowerment and the need to address gender inequality. It then explores the role of education in promoting women's empowerment, citing various studies that have shown how educating girls can lead to significant benefits such as economic productivity, stable labour markets, and improved societal health and well-being. The paper also discusses the portrayal of women in *Altine's Wrath*, examining how the play depicts women as marginalized, degraded, oppressed, and wicked. Through a detailed analysis of the play, the paper aims to shed light on the harmful impact of gender inequality and the need for education to promote women's empowerment and gender equity. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of educating girls and empowering women in achieving sustainable development and building a better society for all.

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I. Introduction

Women's empowerment has long been one of the most pressing issues around the globe. This is because women are sometimes overlooked when it comes to contributing to the country's social development (Bayeh, 2016, p.1). Around the world, laws and other rules have been created to preserve women's fundamental rights and help them close the gender gap (Chant, 2016; Ellsberg, Arango, Morton, Gennari, Kiplesund, Contreras & Watts, 2015).

Women's empowerment comprises raising women's self-esteem, providing them the power to make their own decisions, and allowing them to influence societal change for themselves and others, regardless of where they live (World Vision, 2021). Women demand a great deal of acknowledgment in all facets of our life, including top and minor positions in political, economic, and cooperative situations, as participants in day-to-day activities. Today's women in positions of leadership are making significant contributions to the nation's growth, and it is critical to recognize and appreciate these accomplishments so that girls and young women can look forward with confidence and emulate them in the future.

According to research conducted in numerous countries and places, educating girls is one of the most cost-effective ways to boost growth. Female education delivers significant intergenerational benefits and great poverty-reduction synergies (Tembon & Fort, 2008, p. xvii). Stronger economic productivity, more stable labor markets, higher earnings, and improved societal health and well-being are all linked to it.

Undiyaundeye (2013, p.9) believes that education is the one most important factor that can substantially improve women's standing in any community they may find themselves in. Education is unavoidable in that it

gives women not just more world knowledge, status, self-esteem, and self-confidence, but also the guts and inner fortitude to tackle life's many challenges. It also appears to make it easier for them to get work, increase their family's income, and attain social status. Women who are educated can contribute just as much to nation-building as men. As a result, knowledge unquestionably empowers women. In the play *Altine's Wrath* by Femi Osofisan, the writer portrays women as being marginalized, degraded, oppressed, and wicked. These portrayals by the writer will be discussed in detail in the body of the write-up.

Aims of the study

The goal of this study is to look into the injustice situations meted out against women using the play *Altines Wrath* by Femi Osofisan as a case study.

The objective of the study

1. To identify and discuss the injustices situation meted out against women in the play *Altines Wrath*.
2. To examine the barriers that militate against injustice among women in the play *Altines Wrath*.

Patriarchy

The initial lessons of patriarchy are learned in families where the head of the family is a man/father. Man is considered the family's head and is in charge of women's sexuality, labor, reproduction, and autonomy. Male birthing is preferred above female births in patriarchal families. The former is considered the family's inheritor, whilst the latter is subject. The Indian Joint Family is the "patriarchal family" and was made up of a group of male-related people subject to the absolute power of the most male senior member (Maine in Uberoi, 2005: 363). Kinship structures in the South Asian context are largely based on patrilineal descent, which is the cornerstone of a prevalent patriarchal paradigm that rationalizes men and women's unequal access to the material and symbolic resources of society (Ibid 377).

According to Lerner, the family plays a vital role in preserving a hierarchical system since it not only reflects and educates the state's order but also establishes and maintains the order (Lerner, 1986: 127; Bhasin, 1993: 10). As a result, the family plays a crucial role in passing on patriarchal values to the next generation. The girls are learning to be soft, nurturing, and submitting while the boys are learning to be strong and aggressive. Both masculinity and femininity assumptions are not only social constructs but have also been internalized by men and women alike. While the burden to earn and care for the family is more on the man, the women are supposed to be doing the menial jobs and taking care of their children and even other family members. Women are at a disadvantage because of these gender stereotypes and are vulnerable to violence and other kinds of discrimination and injustice. Systemic poverty and violence against women: rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, female feticide, infanticide, witch killing, dowry deaths, wife-beating, high levels of female analphabetism, malnutrition, undernourishment and a constant sense of insecurity keep women bound to their homes, economically oppressed, socially marginalized and politically inactive (Ibid.: 13).

Patriarchal knowledge constructions reinforce male supremacy by perpetuating patriarchal ideology, which is expressed in educational institutions, knowledge systems, and media. More obvious examples of patriarchy, such as legends highlighting women's self-sacrificing, self-effacing pristine image, used symbolism to send messages of women's inferiority, and through ritual practice that emphasized women's dominant role as faithful wives and devoted mothers (Desai & Krishnaraj, 2004: 299). As a daughter, her husband's wife, and her son's widow, she should never be declared independent; she should always be under her father's authority (Chakravarti, 2006: 75). Women were mainly viewed as equals to males in ancient India (Vedic and Epic periods), but in the post-Vedic times, they were not (Brahmanic and Medieval periods) the restrictions on women and patriarchal values regulating the sexuality and mobility of women were strengthened with the rise of private property and the establishment of class society.

Because most religious practices regard male authority as superior, and laws and norms relating to family, marriage, divorce, and inheritance are linked to patriarchal administration of women-biased land, religion and religious institutions legitimize patriarchal conceptions of social activities. A person's legal standing with regards to marriage, divorce, and inheritance is governed by his or her faith, which sets duties for men and women, as well as their connection. Many religions uphold patriarchal values, and people of the upper caste and class interpreted and regulated all major religions. The imposition of parda, prohibitions on leaving domestic space, and public-private separation are all gender-specific and men are not subject to similar constraints. In this way, women's independence is regulated. They have no right to decide if they want to be mothers when they want to be, how many children they want to have, whether they can use contraception or end a pregnancy, and so on and so on (see also Bhasin, 6). Male-dominated bodies such as church and state often lay down limits on women's ability to reproduce.

Gendering, Caste Through a Feminist Lens (2006), for example, shows how caste systems maintain patriarchal ideals and beliefs that are used to legitimize patriarchal structures that are powerful, hegemonic,

hierarchical, and unequal. As a result, the substantive issue of subordinating particular segments of society, as well as the systems that subjugate them, is critical. The question for feminist theorists is no longer whether women's status was low or high, but the basic existence and structure of their subordination to society (Chakravarti, 2006: 25). Hence the historical developments of patriarchy/are and how they have come to stay are important.

Women's subjection and strict control of their mobility and sexuality, according to Uma Chakravarti, necessitated the establishment of private property and the requirement of caste purity. To maintain patrilineal succession within a regulated reproductive system, female sexuality was channeled into legal maternity (Chakravarti, 2006: 69). According to her, the control system operated on three levels. Once patriarchy was developed as an ideology, the first system was when women had internalized by stridharma or pativartadharmā to live up to the ideal notion of womanhood created by the society's ideologies. The second device was rules, customs, and rituals prescribed by the brahminical social code which strengthened ideological control over women by idealizing chastity and wife fidelity as women's highest duty. Unlike Gerda Lerner, she believes patriarchy was a system of patriarchal paternalism in which obedient women were granted certain rights, benefits, and protection, and that this paternalism made insubordination invisible and encouraged women to participate in it. The relationship between the purity of women and purity of caste was important and central to Brahmanic patriarchy, and women were carefully guarded and lower caste men were prevented from having sexual access to higher-caste women. The third factor was the state, which encouraged patriarchal dominance over women and thus could be established as a fact rather than an ideology (Uma Chakravarti, in Mohanty, 2004: 285). Gender interactions are thus organized according to the hierarchical framework of family work, faith, gender, caste, culture, tribe, and state. Feminist ideas thus describe a wide range of specific issues and have been strengthened by various approaches and viewpoints. Because one feminist theory is insufficient on its own, feminist movements must rely on the power of all feminist theories. 'The goal is to develop a sustainable and cohesive third-wave feminism,' which would describe the changing nature of gender relationships and explore the 'post-feminist concept,' that society is no longer patriarchal since the most evident manifestations of sexual inequity have been handled.

Research paradigm: Poststructuralism.

The subject's thoughts represent a significant difference between contemporary and poststructural approaches. According to poststructuralists, there is no fundamental or essential self; instead, "we speak ourselves into being within the terms of available discourses" (Davies, 2000a, p. 55). Rather than arising from an independent consciousness or core, intrinsic self, concepts of who one is and what one is meant to be and do are socially formed. People are "subjects of" cultural narratives, or storylines, as poststructuralism envisions them. As a result, they are constantly being produced and cannot claim a unique fundamental character. To describe this focus on one being constituted subject through discursive activity, poststructuralists employ the term subjectivity rather than identification. Subjects do not create their ideology (Weedon, 2004). Ideologies, on the other hand, shape one's subjectivity, self-awareness, and understanding of what is both possible and permissible. Textually, the paper materials can be assessed using Femi Osofisan's *Altine's Wrath*.

II. Methodology

Qualitative research, according to Wyse (2011), is essentially exploratory. It is used to determine what influences people's decisions, opinions, and motivations. It provides details on the issue of assisting in the formulation of quantitative research concepts or hypotheses. In this study, the selected texts are examined using a qualitative technique. The study examines how patriarchy is shown in Femi Osofisan's *Altine's Wrath*.

Analytical Framework

Because this subject deals with the interpretation of texts, textual analysis will be employed as the analytical framework. According to Mckee (2003), textual analysis is the act of evaluating texts (films, novels, television shows, magazines, advertisements, clothing, graffiti, and so on) to gain insight into how people from various cultures and times make sense of the world around them. This study seeks to interpret patriarchy in the selected text using a qualitative textual analysis approach reading from the post-structuralist point of view to allow the research texts to be analyzed textually and evaluate how these writers use their play to portray patriarchy in *Femi Osofisan's Altine's Wrath*.

Synopsis of *Altine's Wrath*

Through Lawal, the creation of the characters in *Altine's Wrath* satirizes societal issues. A typical Permanent Secretary in a government ministry leads a justified dishonest lifestyle, enriching himself through his position with 10% kickbacks from contractors and evicting the destitute without compensation. Altine, Lawal's wife endures emotional, and physical domestic violence in marriage through the inhuman treatment by her husband, Lawal. Altine is demoted to a house servant after being forced to serve his mistress Mariam. She bears the humiliation until she obtains an education through adult education classes across the street. Realizing she has no place in Lawal's future, she creates one for herself by transferring all of Lawal's kickback funds to a separate account in her name.

The play is in one act and it begins with Lawal Jatau, a Permanent Secretary saw welcomed Mariam his mistress to his home with her luggage. Ahmed, the houseboy is surprised at this instruction knowing well that Altine, Lawal's wife may not be pleased with his action. This situation leads to the further humiliation of Altine who had already been relegated to the position of a house help by living in the boy's quarters. Lawal orders her to cook for Mariam and beats and humiliates her at the least provocation. His crooked nature can be observed in his collusion with contractors and the twenty percent kickback he receives when Alhaji Maikudi pays him a visit and the percentage on the contract given is negotiated. Aina, Lawal's former classmate, comes to advocate for the public about the government's recompense on their land. She is disappointed at Lawal's oppressive attitude as he casts his mind back to the ideology they propagated in school. This does not make Lawal rescind his decision.

Altine, who has been silent throughout the performance, suddenly starts speaking. Lawal, Mariam, and Alhaji are taken aback by Altine's English ability and change. She releases her rage by recalling all of Lawal's and his mistress's humiliations of her. She signs off on the marriage with all of her husband's government treasure, which he had hidden in an account in her name. Earlier, Altine is seen to have transmitted the land documents to Aina and the landowners in an envelope. In the end, the poisoned gift (banana) left by Mallam Audu and Mr. Onene must have been responsible for Altine's death, though she is revived at the end of the play by Mallam Audu and Mr. Onene

How Women Are Portrayed in *Altines Wrath*

In Femi Osofisan's *Altine's Wrath*, the writer portrays women as marginalized in society. He portrays this by using Lawal's character to look mean to women. Lawal exhibits this in his oppressive statement to Aina "..... women here don't dare raise their voice when men are speaking! And you better get that into your head (*Altine's Wrath* Page 18). The writer further portrays marginalization against women when Lawal relegates his wife to the background to the extent of reducing her to a housemaid. He shows this when he commands her (*Altine*) to serve his visitors, especially Miriam, "[Giving her Maria's coat]. Take this, and hang it. You hear? Go and hang it. Wait! Where are you going? Have I finished yet? Food! And Fast!" (*Altine's Wrath* Page 6).

Femi also portrays women as being oppressed. He again uses Lawal to portray this hideous crime against women. Lawal refers to his wife as an animal. "Why are you staring there like an idiot?..... you dumb female goat! Down! On your knees!" The male domineering attitude portrayed by the writer is further exposed in the following statement Lawal makes to Aina "Listen men like me, we control this place! You hear that? We turn and the entire society turns with us! We snap our fingers, and women far more important than you fall on their knees in obeisance!"

The writer portrays women as being degraded. Lawal degrades his wife to the level of a lesser human being. We can see this in the following statement he makes against Altine "You see the kind of home I have! On one side a stark illiterate of a wife, who's as dumb as the chair you're sitting" (*Altine Wrath*, Page 7). Lawal further shows discontent for his wife by converting her into a maidservant. He shows this in the following statement "But let's not be too much in a hurry to drive her away now. At least, not before you've found me a housemaid".

The writer further portrays the wickedness of women. This portrayal is noticed in the behaviour of Mariam. Miriam sees her fellow woman in pain of maltreatment in marriage but she does not pity her. She just wants her to be completely out of the house, so she could occupy her space. She shows this in this statement "It's your wife isn't it? She's still here After all your promises!" (*Altine's* Page 4). This confirms the saying that women are their enemies.

Injustice in *Altines Wrath*

Their parents had arranged their marriage while they were young. They completed it when they reached adulthood, but Altine did not make it to school because she lost her parents when she was young. This drives her senior government servant husband's contempt for her, which escalates into violent assault. She chooses incomprehensible stillness, which her spouse misinterprets as sudden stupidity. Illiterate and dumb, Lawal Jatau sees his wife as the perfect conduit for the illegal wealth that he uses his position to acquire. He creates a new

bank account that only her can access with her thumb signature to erase any trace of his corrupt acquisition back to him.

Mariam (Owumi Ugbeye), Lawal Jatau's stunning lover, is impatient for Altine to leave the house so Lawal Jatau may marry her. But he's hesitant because Altine has the key to his stolen fortune, which Mariam is unaware of. Dr. Aina Jibo (Bunmi Sogade), an old schoolmate, visits Lawal Jatau as he charms his way through. She has come to plead that Lawal Jatau uses his position to return the land government seized from some peasant farmers. Lawal Jatau is furious; he was instrumental in the seizure and he benefited immensely from the act. He finds it unthinkable that Aina Jibo should plead on behalf of some societal vermin to return what the government has taken.

Farmers arrive prepared, knowing that Lawal Jatau is their issue and that he would not yield. As a result, they bring him a poisoned banana. They offer the banana to Lawal Jatau's wife after he chases them out; she adores bananas. She quickly begins devouring them.

And when Alhaji Maikudi visits so Lawal Jatau can append his signature to a new deal that would illegally enrich him, he calls in his wife, Altine, to thumb sign for him as usual. This is when Altine takes her revenge for her husband's brutal abuse of her. She tears the documents to shreds. Not done, she starts to speak again to her husband and Alhaji Maikudi's dismay at the loss of their criminal deal. She explains why she is so stupid and how she surreptitiously schooled herself it is to spite her husband for physically beating her. She also explains how she now owns all of the money in his accounts and has her thumbprints on them. Lawal Jatau is taken aback just as Alhaji Maikudi begins to admire his friend's deception.

Indeed, the performance is a segment of a TV chat show in which a guest describes how she won an award for assisting farmers in reclaiming lands that the government had taken away. The entertainment was spiced up with sizzling dance routines, much to the delight of the audience. While Altine is poisoned by the bananas intended for her husband, Lawal Jatau escapes the lash, albeit empty-handed and without the proceeds of his many corrupt activities as a high government official. A humanist, Osofisan's Altine Wrath also shows him as a feminist, a man who is sensitive to the many cases of abuse women go through. As he put it, "There are all kinds of women in my plays. We have women playing heroic roles in society, but they are hardly acknowledged. There are women all over the place doing things, but they're silent and marginalized.

Patriarchy as a barrier *Altines Wrath*

The term patriarchy has been defined as a system of male authority that oppresses women through its social and economic institutions (Asiyanbola 3). Aina (1996) further opined that:

Patriarchy is a social system and differentiation based on sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females. (6)

These definitions give focus on what the African female gender lives with, lives in, and is confronted with through her sojourn in the patriarchal society where she finds herself. Osofisan's portrayal of the female gender in *Altine's Wrath* is a total representation of his society. *Altine's Wrath* is a satirical piece that dwells on domestic violence, oppression, moral decadence, and man's inhumanity to man. The point of physical violence is driven home when Lawal batters and kicks his wife, Altine. For his new status, his 'heroine' is no longer fit for a wife. He relocates Altine to the boy's quarters and degrades her to a housemaid. She is beaten and battered at the slightest provocation oppressively. Psychologically, she receives her master's visitors, cooks for them, and even washes their clothes. Emotionally, the playwright has exhibited how the African men/husbands show little or no regard for their wives which contradicts Binebai's (2011) position that a wife is a highly prized possession worth dying for (124). Lawal, an educated man, and a permanent secretary in the ministry are expected to uphold the core values and tenets of the cherished institution of marriage, rather he violates them with utter disregard for his wife as reflected in his conversation with Mariam.

Lawal: ... You see the kind of home I have! On one side, a stark illiterate of a wife, who's as dumb as the chair you're sitting on!... (*Altine*, 6)

He further shows his discontent for women through these oppressive words to Aina when she challenged his attitude toward the non-compensation of the landowners by the government.

... Women here don't dare raise their voice where men are speaking! And you'd better get that back into your head (*Altine*, 18).

The patriarchal nature of a society is controlled by men who subordinate the female gender to their selfish and hedonistic tendencies due to the atavistic belief that a woman is inferior to her male counterpart and is frequently subjected to undignified and harsh treatment by men has been with us for decades. His constant

scolding of his wife and houseboy, Ahmed, demonstrates the endemic nature of violence. Both his wife and Ahmed are dehumanized by him.

III. Conclusion

The patriarchal nature of a society is controlled by men who subordinate the female gender to their selfish and hedonistic tendencies due to the atavistic belief that a woman is inferior to her male counterpart and most times subjected to undignified and harsh treatment by the male has been with us for decades. The endemic nature of violence is also seen in his incessant scolding of his wife and the houseboy, Ahmed. He dehumanizes both his wife and Ahmed. In Femi Osofisan's *Altine's Wrath*, it shows clearly how the author chooses to portray women as Marginalized, oppressed and degraded. But I would conclude by saying women are talented, smart, and capable of achieving great things in life. Altine is an embodiment of the above statement because she chooses inscrutable silence that her husband mistakes for sudden dumbness to carry out her sweet revenge on her husband for maltreating her. This shows in Altine's statement as follows. "I made my own plans. Yeas! That's why I grew dumb so suddenly! Oh yes, you too Lawal you're going to suffer".

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