

African Culture, Occidental Civilization, and Wole Soyinka's Gender Hypotheses in *Childe Internationale*

Abidemi Olufemi Adebayo

Redeemer's University, Nigeria

Abstract

The paper interrogates the effects of globalization on African culture in the specific context of marital and filial relationship, as Wole Soyinka conceives it in *Childe Internationale*. Globalization has spread Western (and Eastern) consciousness to Africa especially through the Internet and this has modified African culture in many ramifications. The study is anchored on Toril Moi's Post-feminist principles, which contests the achievability of the feminist agenda, as theoretical framework. In *Childe Internationale* Soyinka portrays the negative impact of Westernization on African conjugal relationship and gender roles. This consequently breaks parent-child bond and promotes youth counter-culture. This is represented in Wife's been-to arrogance which elevates her feminist agenda. And this attitude guides Titi, their daughter, into breaking cultural norms along the route of disobedience of her father, Kotun. The frustration that Kotun experiences as a result of gender confrontation compels him to seek company and solace in Godwin, the cook, who is also a man. This suggests that intra-patriarchal camaraderie is substituting African women affection due to feminist aggression. This situation has been occasioned by the misconception and interpretation of the concept of Westernization and cultural globalization by the contemporary African women. Wole Soyinka further suggests that this cultural menace appears to be perpetual on two fronts. The first is Wife's feminist onslaught which is being instilled in their daughter, Titi. And the second is that globalization will not relent in the sustenance of the presence of Western civilization in Africa. This indicates that contemporary African women need a re-conceptualization of Westernization to ease gender tension in Africa.

Key words: African culture, African literature, Feminism, Globalization, Patriarchy

Introduction

In the contemporary time, specifically, in the millennial decades, African culture is undergoing a phenomenal change process. It is being redirected and modified. It can therefore be said that African culture is changing from what it used to be. The traditional African culture was characteristically known to place premium on courtesy, didacticism, moderation, and piety. However, all of these attributes have

been eroded as features of African culture with the ubiquitous advent and consequent presence of globalization on the African continent. Definitely, globalization is a culture-changing phenomenon as it conveys cultural elements from one part of the world to another, and since the migrating culture is always stronger, the host culture often bows as a result of its permissiveness, either voluntary or compelled. The change in the host culture is, however, dictated by the

interpretation of globalization by the people of the host culture. When globalization had its indelible impact on the African people through Westernization and technological contact with African culture in recent years (around the millennium), the conception and interpretation of globalization by the African people could be assumed misdirected. Since globalization traffic dominantly originates from the West (and the East especially the Far East), to the African, globalization brought exposure, the Western way. The interpretation of exposure or civilization is in vehemence and counter-culture attitude. The traditional cultural and ethical principles began to give way to their opposites: courtesy, didacticism, moderation, and piety gave way to disdain, debauchery, extravagance, un-spiritualism.

The mis-conceptualization of globalization by Africans is notable in such counter-culture dispositions such as child strife, been-to consciousness as well as feminist contestations which are rife among Africans in the age of civilization and globalization. Social thinkers and literary writers have been reflecting these anti-culture phenomena in their works. One of such writers is Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's 1986 literature Nobel Laureate. Soyinka exhibits such consciousness in the play *Childe Internationale*. This satire *Childe Internationale*, runs the motifs of been-to feminist arrogance, negligent maternal parenting and counter-culture attitude of the youths in Africa. This draws attention to the critical issues of the child training and behavioural pattern of the younger generation in Africa in the contemporary time as dictated by globalization. There is a

link between negligent parenting and the disdainful behavioural attitude of the younger generation as demonstrated nowadays in Africa

Theoretical guide

The study is guided by Toril Moi's Post-feminist principles, which debunk the achievability of the feminist advocacy, as theoretical framework. Moi's post-feminist conception is executed through the argument that intersectionality explains the experience of exposure to many types of discrimination or oppression at the same time. It also addresses the power structures that create various forms of oppression according to Bergstrom (2015). The principle of intersectionality as a concept in postfeminist argument alongside postfeminist campaign as a whole is considered relevant to this study because it punctures the feminist point of view.

Literature review

As is the situation currently in Africa, youth disdain constitutes the culture of the youth populace. The mutual inclusivity between the two social phenomena arises from the former determining the nature and manifestation of the latter. The recent development in Africa, the representation of which can be seen in the instances from Nigeria, as it concerns the youth, leaves a whole lot to be desired. In Nigeria, today, the youth are engaged in many anti-social activities. These include drug addiction, drug trafficking, internet fraud (known locally as *Yahoo Yahoo*), the *Olosho* syndrome (elitist prostitution), and countless other moral vices. For example, the BBC

Africa Eye (2018) xrays the phenomenal addictive consumption of codeine cough syrup in Nigeria and millions of Nigerian youths are said to be losing themselves to drug. This because codeine addiction is capable of affecting the mental health of an abuser (Meyer 2019) a situation that makes everyone unsafe (Usaini 2019) as there is an association between drug abuse and crime commission (Abdul 2019). In the same vein, *The Punch* newspaper reported that “Operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Ibadan Zonal office, on Thursday, arrested 32 suspected internet fraudsters, alternatively known as *Yahoo Boys*. The suspects aged between 15 and 39 years were reportedly arrested on Liberty Estate in the Laderin area of Abeokuta.” (Babalola, 2019, p.1).

Additional to these moral and social infractions is the seeming (indeed, outright) recalcitrant disposition of the younger generation to African traditionalism. The insouciance is worsened by the advent of the social media which makes access to generational brainwashing possible. This had degenerated into counter-culture and inter-generational suspicion and rivalry in Africa.

There is, however, intense curiosity about the culpability of the African parenting canons in the youth decadence prevalent in the contemporary African society, It has been noted by some social observers (Mutunga et al, 2023, Van de Bijl, 2018, and Stephen & Udisi, 2016) that the ineptitude of contemporary parents could be responsible for the current counter-culture,

antagonistic and rude youth culture in modern Africa. This could be tenable to the extent that the material capitalist economy which the current society runs has set regulations for living and existence of the people. And the critical determiners of survival in such a capitalist economy are the states of the national currency in relation to the currency of world trading especially the dollars; and the economic profiteering idiosyncrasy of the investors. Since the parent in the contemporary time is compelled to strife to outdo or outsmart other competitors in the social circle, there may be little time for filial instruction for the children. This is a perspective which could be subjective, hence, porous because children of full-time priests are involved in the moral menace.

Many perspectives are being expressed on the counter-culture attitude of the younger generation in Nigeria in contemporary times. This concern for the youth culture in Africa is receiving the attention of Africa's literary circle. For Example, Athol Fugard presents philosophical youth culture in the play *My Children! My Africa!!* in which the curious suspicion of the youth populace leads to the murder of the charismatic upright Mr. M. Wole Soyinka also expresses critical concern about the contemporary youth culture in Africa, specifically feminine youth culture in the play *Childe Internationale*. This play has been described as a stubborn comic work which extensively addresses identity crisis and clash in Nigeria as an African country, Maestro Theatre (2020). It is the identity crisis that Afolayan (2024) designates as social malaises that is mirrored in the play. Afolayan opines that

Soyinka's commitment by addressing these social issues seeks the revamping of Yoruba culture in the postcolonial age. However, of all the manifestations of the contemporary youth culture such as drug addiction, internet fraud (*Yahoo Yahoo*), ritual killings, vandalism of public property, *Olosho* prostitution and so on, it is the moral decadence as against the criminalities peculiar to the youth, that Soyinka x-rays in the satire *Childe Internationale*.

The idea of *beentoism* is mooted in this study and it is a convenient term in the paper to designate the idiosyncrasy of an African who has travelled and stayed abroad when such an individual returns to Africa. This is different from *beeninism* (Palavuzlar, 2018, Leach, 2012; Casaretto, 2012). There is a Socio-cultural and philosophical perspective to these terms. While the former expresses the idea of travelling to or visiting a foreign location, essentially, the latter signifies the situation whereby an individual remains or dwells in a location for a given period of time. In Africa, *beentoism* is an ideological philosophy which projects the superiority complex that an African who has had the *privilege* of travelling and staying in the West institutionalizes. Such an institutionalization is often employed by the people concerned as an instrument of social oppression of those who have not flown abroad. The significant leap in the economic and technological advancement has led to tremendous improvement in living conditions in the West. This is against the economic recessions in Africa. Therefore, access to these improved life experiences often makes the African feel privileged and as such superior to those who have not

visited or stayed in the West. Such improved living condition also motivates the impoverished African family to demand material commodities from the relative as illustrated in the case and experience of Baako in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (Mando, 2017). In effect, *beentoism* is an attitude of superiority, which in the context of this study, an African exhibits in his or her bid to prove that he or she is more exposed, hence, civilized than a *beeninist* who has remained in Africa for a long period of time.

The gender conversation, in Africa, is also relevant to this study. Gender has been established to be a social construction. That is, it is the belief system in terms of the social attitude and preferences that have determined the segmentation and categorization of the sexes as, particularly, male and female. To this extent, it is the community of a people that determines what constitutes gender since gender develops within the gamut of the community (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2009). However, the dichotomy between the sexes tends to be bridged by "the gender-intensity of productive economy" such that there is emphasis on the dynamics in the contributions of both men and women to the productive process in an economy (Cellis, Manuel & Blackdeen, 2006).

It is however important to signify that the gender dichotomy has given rise to two broad ideological blocs in the world with Africa being emphasized. These include patriarchy and feminism. The former is the privileging a male-centred society and the encouragement of male control (Eruaga,

2018) while “Feminism stands for equality with men and capital no to oppression, suppression, and marginalization” (Adefarasin, 2018: 22). To this extent, one may conclude from the foregoing that gender is not natural to humans and that it is a construction of humans in the human society. The construction of gender has, however, led to the emergence of females’ strife for equality with men. And quite a number of African women in the age of globalization have vigorously sought to attain this. In spite of the gulf and tension between the agitating feminist ideology and the commandeering and lording patriarchy, there are societies, such as Uganda, where both men and women play active part, without discrimination, in the socio-economic process.

Of crucial significance to this study is cultural movement, Postmodernism. The postmodernist theory, movement or ideology is an attitudinal rejection of standard in the cultural and social episteme of a people. It is an antagonism against the universal *truth*. It refers to a shift in the perspectives that have manifested in many ramification of life. This includes the shift in what has been accepted as truth and standard in the arts, the social sciences, literature, technology, communication, architecture, and fashion (Mambrol, 2016). The shift could be seen as arising from the re-scrutinizing of the existing standard through multiple interpretations. Postmodernism is a departure from the standards and cultural canons set by modernism in an attempt to advance the

knowledge system of a society. Such departure from the extant standard has been applied in literature and this has given rise to the coinage Postmodern Literature. This brand of literature thrives on fragmentation, impossible plots, parody, Paradox, dark humor as well as authorial self-reliance. As a result of these devices, Postmodern Literature “rejects the boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ forms of art and literature as well as the distinction between different genres and forms of writing and storytelling” (Fleming, 2014, p.1). The crux of these submissions and perspectives on postmodernism is the query of existing epistemological acceptances by subjecting such various acceptances to critical re-evaluation and doubt. And this is a practice which typifies the enterprise of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida’s critical enquiries.

The rupture of African culture through the been-to attitude in *Child Internationale*

One of the primary running motifs in *Childe Internationale* is the construction of been-to attitude and complex alongside its attendant implications especially its effect on the conjugal relation and filial duties as African culture stipulates. It was conceptually explained earlier in the study that *beentoism* is an attitude and a complex, superiority complex. It arises from the global racial dialectics such that the white superiority and black inferiority structure serves as foundation for an African’s exhibition of sophistication over and superiority to other Africans as a result of the African’s contact with (visit to) the white man’s land. Such is

the situation with Wife in the play, *Childe Internationale*. Soyinka tends to suggest that Africans are the enemies of themselves, each other and the continent of Africa. The representation of the assumption is not in the instance of Wife in this serious satire. This is because Wife in the play relegates Politician (Kotun) to the primitive age and sensibility because she has been to the white-man's land while her husband, Kotun, has not. This claim manifests in Politician's vituperations following a session of frustration thus:

Politician: O se po! I know you have been-to. You don't let us forget you have been-to. Even though I was the one who put down the money for you to go and been-to. And it is my money which is running this house; you hear that Misisi Been-to? (*Childe Internationale*, 20)

This reminder as rude and angry in form, content and intent as it may be has been heralded by constant instances of intimidation and abuse which both Wife and Titi, daughter, have inflicted on Politician as husband and father of the house. For example, as a result of been-to disposition, there is not going to be native food in the house but buttered French Potatoes. And when Politician complains he cannot feed on that, Wife declares... "Oh Kotun, you know I don't keep gerri in the house" (5). *Gerri* in the foregoing is Wife's corruption of *gaari*, a stable foodstuff in a sizeable part of

Africa. This is as a result of her been-to attitude which has also resulted in her resenting local foods which her husband prefers. Such word corruption and resentment of African delicacies are sources of civilization, pride and social empowerment to been-to women or those that are globalization-exposed. There is a gender politics and conflict dimension to this as the reader sees the situation whereby it is Godwin that manages the kitchen because the wife has been to the West. The displeasure of Kotun as a consequence of Wife's misinterpretation of Westernization is unmistakable in the questions Politician asks thus: "Enh, can't you make it yourself? *Eba* only takes a few minutes or is there no soup in the house?" From the scenario painted in the foregoing, it is clear that there is feminist agenda to Wife's been-to attitude. This is the agenda of freedom or liberation as cooking as a domestic chore tends to be considered by the women of the globalization consciousness in Africa as a confirmation of being in bondage. Yet, the core objective and goal of feminist campaigners is "the establishment of greater rights for women ..." (Aiyetoro & Oworodu, 2018, p.187). This translates to mean that Wife's violation of the cultural and conjugal norms by refusing to cook for her husband is a feminist liberation strategy. She has, therefore, used her visit to the West as a tool since a visit to the West is seen and regarded by Africans as a mark of exposure or civilization and success. This scenario describes the gender and marital realities in today's Africa. Most African women who have been exposed to the West through a stay in or a visit to Western countries or

through globalization do not see cooking as a duty for the woman. The chore is either shared or the family eats out. This has contributed in no minimal measure to the disintegration in nuclear family in the contemporary Africa. It also associates with the high prevalence of divorce cases or marital dissolutions in Africa today (Ntoimo & Akokuwebe, 2014; Mekonnen, Kassa & Ayalew, 2019).

There is, however, a mounting paradoxical situation in the play which represents the despicable psychological fate of the African man. This is the development that it is Kotun, husband, that bore the travel expenses of Wife's trip to the West as pointed out in Kotun's vituperations above, yet the empowerment has been used to deny the sponsor of the means of empowerment of basic conjugal pecks as African culture stipulates. Again Kotun points out that the family runs on the income that he makes as could be seen in the purchase of food, employment of Godwin (the cook), sponsorship of Wife's visit to France (the West) and the payment of Titi's school fee in Pound Sterling. Kotun, in spite of the willing fulfillment of his marital financial responsibilities which were imposed on him by cultural ordinances right from the primordial time, did not complain. The subsequent complaint has arisen from Wife's mounting mockery of her husband which could be interpreted as a betrayal of mutual conjugal bond. The consequence is the Politician's fight back which is a mockery of her wife for her own weakness or inabilities as could be averred from Politician's utterances below:

Politician: ...Potato and misi grili .. That is all you bring back after four years of been-to.

Other women have become doctors and lawyers and they come back and still cook *amala* for their husbands. But you, only potato and *misi grili*. If you had spent ten years *nko*?

Portrayed in this declaration are the deficiencies of Kotun's wife. These are a disappointment to Kotun. Despite the disappointment that Kotun feels because he is not receiving the right empowerment commensurate with the amount of money he has committed to uplifting his wife (and daughter), he has remained tolerant. In any case, the situation as above is that African patriarchy targets the empowerment of the African women but that this lofty gender cause is shut down and overlooked in the feminist agitation. This situation has occasioned the circumstance whereby women rupture the seeming good-intentioned patriarchal cause on women in Africa.

However, in spite of the positive representation of the African man in *Childe Internationale*, he is not infallible, in the least. The infallibility of the African man is seen in his disposition that suggests non-existence of the African woman. The African patriarchy tends to disregard the inclusion of the African woman in the scheme of things, as well as her existence and relevance. Such a disregard has led to the exclusion of women which Ogundipe-Leslie (2007) clamours for in Stiwanism,

which is her acronym for Social Transformation Including Women. The demonstration of the patriarchal disregard of the existence and relevance of women in the African society is noted in the authorial nononamastic designation of Wife in the play. Politician's name is mentioned as Kotun. But the reader is not told what the name of Wife is. The mere reference to the woman as a wife is an indication of the author's (African man's) commoditization of the African woman. It is an objectification of the African woman. Therefore, Soyinka's attitude towards patriarchy and feminist grievance is non-committal. That is Soyinka is neither endorsing the patriarchal domineering attitude nor is he endorsing the patriarchal agitation. It could however be averred that Soyinka's seeming commoditization of the African woman which is taken in this study as symbolic of the realistic patriarchal attitude in Africa could be a patriarchal response to the vitriolic arrogance of Wife. Such an objective as gender agitation and decision such as women's abdication of the matrimonial duties traditionally assigned to women through cultural practices might have elicited agitated patriarchal responses. These responses include African men in an intimidating large number have been defaulting in financial responsibility. These men who are in large number have constituted the Wild Masculinity which is the body of men that are rather irreversibly given to wild drinking, drug abuse, and to mention a few, misogyny. And this has made the African society to be on the brink of nuptial care and familial development.

Postmodernist youth counter-culture and the conspiracy of the been-to parenting in *Childe Internationale*

Another social concern that Wole Soyinka addresses in this composition is the menace of counter-culture postmodernist attitude of the youth rank in Africa. The playwright's concentration on this motif, however, is intended to lampoon the destruction of the African traditional and cultural values through the maternal been-to orientation which condones and supports the African youths' counter-culture attitude. Wife is culpable in this because Wife poses a cantankerous attitude towards her husband, Politician (Kotun). This may be primarily intended to seek and attain gender liberation, but simultaneously, such an attitude provides energy for the postmodernist or counter-culture orientation of Titi, their daughter. The inculcation of the Western (French) cultural values has led to Wife's rejection of the Yoruba (African) traditional values. Instances include Wife's choice of and preference for *misi grili*, rather than *eba*, and early *independence* of the girl child, rather than parental guide till adulthood which has rubbed on, and been transferred to her daughter, Titi. And what this does to Titi is the evocation of the postmodernist counter-culture consciousness in her. And this manifests in the proclivity to investigate, interrogate and review as well as reject the existing knowledge system with a view to providing an alternative system of knowledge dissemination. The consciousness has blended with the Westernization consciousness (which colonialism conveyed to Africa) in Titi, and the result is a counter-culture attitude in the

high school girl. Titi refers to the people of Africa as primitive when she asks her mother “Mummy is it really true that we still have primitives who can make rain fall? (12) This orientation could be interpreted as rude pessimism in the sense that making rain fall ought to be an extraordinary thing which should inspire awe in people. Titi should have expressed awe in appreciation of the power of making rain fall rather than the vitriol which her reference to the people as “primitives” signifies. Though, as a result of Titi’s exposure to the Western culture, she may wonder what the essence of making rain fall with African indigenous power may be. However, suggestions on how to make such power of tremendous use in the modern context could have been given. Soyinka believes this would have been an invaluable contribution to the development of Africa, rather than castigation. Again, Titi questions the filial authority of her father to forbid her from bringing her boyfriend, Alvin, to the house. This is why her father corrects her thus: “The proper thing that you must first do is to ask my authority.” (22). But to this, Titi retorts: “Oh, don’t be so silly daddy.” (22). What could have emboldened this teenager to have exhibited this temerity? Indeed, it is the been-to orientation of Wife in the play. A major instance corroborates this perception as affirmed in the strong support she receives from her mother. This hypothesis is buttressed by a number of instances in the play.

First of all, when Titi returns from the Boarding School, she refuses to kneel down while greeting her father as required as the

phatic norm in Yoruba culture and tradition. In fact a parent whose daughter does not kneel down to greet will be slighted and angry. Kotun is definitely in this psychological condition because his daughter Titi refuses to kneel down to greet him. However, all her mother could do is to say: “Go and give your daddy a big kiss.” (7). Politician shrinks back at this ostensibly in shock as he does not expect to receive a mere kiss from her daughter for whom he pays four hundred pound starlings as school fee. At this juncture, it needs be stated in emphasis that in African tradition a kiss is mere. It does not dignify a parent when a daughter kisses. In fact, it is considered unimaginable and this may account for why Politician shrinks when Titi requests that Titi kiss her father in greeting. Titi demonstrates a lot of instances of rudeness in her filial relationship with her father. She refuses to show her report card to her father, a development that makes her father asks “(sternly) Did they not give you a report? (7) The response Titi gives is “How the heck do I know?”(7). The much Wife could do is to tell Kotun that Titi will show the report to them both when Titi is ready. However, Titi is quick to disclose to her mother that she has a ballet class to attend. The irony in the context of ethical consideration is that Wife prompts Titi to hurry up because she “should not miss her ballet lessons? (9).

The support that Wife gives Titi’s counter-culture attitude manifests more glaringly in other scathing remarks Wife as a mother and wife makes in the play. Such include: “Kotun, don’t shout at her like that. (9), “You are going to give her all sorts of repressions”(10). “Kotun, I have warned

you. Don't give this girl a complex." (11). "Leave the child alone. Goodness... (17), and the expletive "You brute" when Titi runs to Wife for protection from being spanked by Kotun.

Each of these utterances is scathing. Though cultures vary among the peoples of the world in the ways people express them. (Myers, Abell & Sani, 2014), yet is it constant among the Africans (and a substantial part of the global cultures) that the husband deserves some level of respect and reverence from both his wife and daughter. But as it is in the present circumstance, Kotun's personality is destroyed by the attitude of both mother and daughter. The situation could be interpreted as a gender conspiracy or feminine conspiracy between the bloc of Wife and Titi. Perhaps, it could be stated that this gender practice or this show of feminist misgiving is a sub-culture and culture-antagonism since sub-cultures are defiant practices (Marchetti, 2008). But how could a wife and a daughter be antagonistic and rude in spite of, in respective order, the conjugal vows and filial consanguinity both Wife and Titi have with Kotun?

On the part of Wife, the antagonism she poses against Politician, her husband is a part and the manifestation of the feminist agenda motivated by the West-oriented enlightenment that globalization has brought to Africa and which women have seen as a sensitization to earn them independence. A number of the character traits of Wife in this comedy of error attest to the attack on the patriarchal hold in the African worldview.

To begin with, Wife abstains from cooking for her husband, Kotun. Such in Africa, is believed to be that a wife has failed in her responsibility as a wife. In fact, the African tradition ascribes the kitchen duty to the woman. This, to the African feminist, is inappropriate because the twenty-first century woman should be a global citizen who does not go to the kitchen. In that case, the kitchen duty could as well be the preserve of the African man. What Soyinka does not present to the reader is Wife's resolve to make the finance of the home the preserve of the African woman. Symbolically, when, out of sheer sense of self-affirmation, Kotun declares: "... And it is my money which is running this family: you hear that, Misisi Been-to"? (20). This is uttered as Kotun's response to Wife's deployment of the metaphor and imagery of the pig returning to the sty on her husband and the description of her husband as "narrow-minded" (20) because she has been to the West. Kotun's declaration on the financial running of the home ought to have been challenged by Wife to prove her financial commitment. But Soyinka tells the reader that the response of Wife to this challenge is mere scorn and rhetoric thus: "Money is not much use if you can even use it to better yourself. Anyway, don't think you can use your money to drag us down to your level" (21). Soyinka tends to aver that a sharp-tongued woman presenting herself as sophisticated, independent and counter-culture should have seized this moment to make financial commitment as a profound way of establishing her true gender independence. It would be recalled that Soyinka constructs Godwin as the kitchen

manager in the play to bridge the gulf Wife creates. However, Kotun pays for the services that Godwin renders for the family. This is a reflection of part of the fate of the African man amidst gender agitation in the age of globalization in Africa.

Another indicator of Wife's counter-culture disposition in the play is calling her husband by name. Instances include: "Oh, Kotun, you know I don't keep gerri, in the house" (5); on the same page "Oh, Kotun, do finish your meal and go to your meeting. "Another instance is "Oh, Kotun, you do keep on so." (8). On page 11, we see "Kotun, I have warned you." and "Please...Kotun let her ask questions." The practice of a wife calling her husband by name is alien in most parts of Africa. Perhaps this is because in most circumstances, husbands are usually older than wives, and the tradition imposes the duties of protection and provision on the man. But this tradition has been (is being) upturned by *modern* women, who do call their husbands by name to suggest that they are equal to their husbands.

Wife goes additional miles to realize her goal of gender independence through counter-culture behaviours. She employs mother-to-daughter perpetuation of recalcitrance as a tool. She does this by *initiating* Titi into the feminist onslaught against African masculinity. She creates a gulf between Titi and Kotun, the former's father, by encouraging her to persist on what Kotun complains about against Titi. For example, when Kotun asks for Titi's terminal reports card which she cannot produce, Wife interjects saying Titi will

produce it later. Again, when Titi compares her father to old Miss Fusspot as a metaphor for her resentment for the woman, Wife only screams "Kotun, don't shout at her like that!" as a reaction to Kotun's "Is that how they teach you to talk to your father? In the same vein, Kotun's attempt to correct Titi on how to pronounce an African word for fried plantain as "dodo" and not Anglicized "deudeu", is met with Wife's rains of insult on her husband. She asserts that calling the word "dodo" and not "deudeu" portrays Kotun as a bushman. "Bushman" in the African context means an uncivilized person. To this extent, Wife sees the proper African tradition as backward. And when Titi, instead of reading her book, plays music on Kotun's radiogram, Kotun screams "I say GO AND TURN IT OFF!" (18), but Wife interferes thus: "Leave the child alone. She is going to turn it off, what more do you want?" (18). These instances and many more in the allegory establish Wife as an impediment to the realization of Kotun's traditional puritanical standing in training Titi, their daughter. This involvement of, their daughter, in the antagonistic tendencies of Wife against her husband is to pair the daughter against her father. Such would serve as a support and energy for Wife's agenda and a perpetuation of such through Titi when she is eventually married. And in the play, Wife accomplishes this objective as Titi develops hatred for her father as could be deduced in the following words: Titi: "Mummy, why is he talking to you like that? I hate him, I hate him!... I am not your daughter. I'm mummy's daughter...Mummy don't let him spank me, don't let him spank me!" (21, 22, 25).

The foregoing exudes Titi's much hatred for her father, Kotun but obtains refuge from her mother. This is however, a situation that is not natural but stimulated by a conspiratorial stratagem employed by Wife in fighting her own feminist and gender ideological cause. But then, Wife's method may be seen as lacking integrity which is priceless and crucial to the development of an individual (Christian, 2010) because rather than investing in the knowledge-acquisition platform of Titi, she encourages her to be wayward with her father. How then would Titi receive knowledge? How would she receive wisdom? How would she contribute to keeping the society sane since wisdom helps in sustaining the cultural life of a people (McCaffery and Marsden, 2014). Wife's counter-tradition actions in this play may be seen, therefore, as inimical to the development of the African society and this is likely to persist because a daughter has been integrated.

In the consequence of all these seeming deliberate gender onslaughts, the African masculine world tends to have been responding to and handling the twist in the gender role calculations. Two instances are immediate---one a retaliation and the other a self-styled solution. That is, the author makes Wife anonymous in the play. No name is attached to her. And the namelessness could mean non-recognition or objectification of women. It may mean a disregard for the significance of women in society as a result of the seeming women's overbearing attitude portrayed in the play. The other instance is that Kotun has decided

to live without the warmth and affection of a wife and a daughter. After all, in spite of the abuses, insults and indignities which his wife and his daughter engineer, he goes on with life. The conviviality evident in the last conversation with Godwin, the maid says it all. He just causes a stir between Wife and Titi and then calls:

Politician: Godwin!

Godwin: Yes, sah.

Politician: Bring second course!

Godwin: YES-SAAH

BLACKOUT!

This conversation between Kotun (the boss) and Godwin (the chef) shows absolute informality. Usually, the relationship or interaction between a boss and a cook, in the African context, is expected to be formal, cautious and impersonal. However, this is not the case in the conversation between Kotun and Godwin, boss and employee, respectively. And attesting to the informality in this conversation are the exclamation marks, the capitalization of Godwin's words, the corruption *sir* for *sah* and *SAAH*, stressing or prolongation of the Godwin's last word YES *SAAH*. The implication of this situational twist is that Kotun has been disappointed and frustrated by the violation cultural norms guiding the conjugal relationship with Wife as well as the filial and consanguineous relationship with Titi, both of whom are women. He consequently seeks company and solace with Godwin, who is a man. This is intra-patriarchal gleeful release of pent-up emotion. The implication of this in the African milieu is

that feminist agitation is considerably creating (has created gulf) between men and women. And Soyinka tends to be of the view that these gender contestations and tensions are inimical to the social development of Africa. However, even though, ostensibly intends to end this social menace by drawing the attention of the populace to the ill in the allegory, yet solution tends to be distant. This is because the new found recalcitrant gender attitude being exhibited by a sizeable segment of African women has been motivated and strengthened by globalization. Yet globalization is still capturing the universe relentlessly through the Internet and social media, which still rule the world of African women (and men though but women are in emphasis since in the context of this paper, they are the aggressors). And the more globalization infiltrates the African psyche, and spread Western consciousness to Africa persistently, and the more globalization is misconstrued by African women, the more the current gender war persists.

Conclusion

The advent of globalization especially as became conspicuous through the Internet in the millennial decades has had negative effects on African culture. This is in the specific cultural aspects such as conjugal, filial, and youth sub-cultures. The inimical consequences of globalization in the current African socio-cultural life are the stark results of the misconception of globalization as wild civilization. This has eventuated in counter-culture attitude as a tool of feminist ideological pursuit. These ills are what Wole Soyinka laments in *Child Internationale*

which is an allegorical reflection on and a prognostication into the future of conjugal and filial relationships in Africa. Kotun is the metaphor for the African man and his fate in the composition. Wife represents the typical African woman as mother and wife in the age of globalization. Titi represents the modern-day teenage girl in the present social media-driven Africa. And Godwin is a symbol of and stands for the larger body of African patriarchy who provides solace for Kotun as a result of the strained relationship between him and his been-to feminism-aligned wife. However, Soyinka's ostensible intent of correcting the cultural menace may not be attained because globalization which conveyed Western technologies through the Internet will continue to be endearing. This portends the likelihood of further sustenance of the initial misconception and misinterpretation of globalization as wild civilization.

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- **Abidemi Olufemi Adebayo** holds a PhD and is of the Department of English, Redeemer's University, Nigeria. The researcher can be reached at: femishakespeare@yahoo.com; adebayofemi@run.edu.ng