

Redefining womanhood: combating gender discrimination in contemporary Yorùbá and Afro-Brazilian popular music

*Ruth Anike Omidire*¹

*Jumoke Ajuwon*²

Abstract: Some of the seventeen sustainable development goals of the United Nations to transform our world are directly linked to gender equality as well as economic and political empowerment of women. These are seen as a tool to resolve certain world problems like poverty, gender discrimination and oppression, underdevelopment among others. Likewise, gender studies scholars and feminists have focused on deconstructing the agency of discrimination and its use of language in feminine subordination, making it imperative to attempt a proper deconstruction and demystification of language as a weapon in combating gender inequalities. The present paper seeks to undertake a feminist analysis of womanhood and the language used to construct the concept of womanhood as a weapon to combat gender discrimination in contemporary Yorùbá and Afro-Brazilian societies through musical expressions. The corpus of the study is comprised of the songs, “Obirin ni mi” by Shola Allyson Obaniyi, and “Mulher” by Mariene de Castro.

Keywords: Language. Gender. Womanhood. Culture.

Redefinindo Feminilidade: Combatendo discriminação de gênero na música popular Yorùbá e afro-brasileira contemporânea

¹ Omidire Anike Ruth is an African feminist, who teaches Portuguese Language, Brazilian Literature and Gender Studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (Osun, Nigeria), where she concluded her Ph.D on Afro-Brazilian Feminism, ancestral African knowledge and Literary Studies in 2018. Between 2003 and 2006, she undertook a Post Graduate Specialization Course in Gender and Education (Especialização em Gênero e Ensino) at the Núcleo de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Mulher, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Brazil. She is the author of *Awero you a Woman* (2014), a short novel that explores Gender issues in Yorùbá culture and she has published many related articles in Portuguese and English languages in reputable journals in Nigeria and abroad. anikeade2002@gmail.com

² Jumoke Ajuwon teaches Yoruba language and culture at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (Osun, Nigeria), where she concluded her Ph.D on Great Men and Women in Yorùbá History. She has published various articles in National and International journals. juminiran@yahoo.com

Resumo: Algumas das dezessete metas de desenvolvimento sustentável das Nações Unidas para transformar nosso mundo estão diretamente ligadas à igualdade de gênero, bem como ao empoderamento econômico e político das mulheres. Estas são vistas como ferramentas para resolver problemas mundiais como pobreza, discriminação e opressão de gênero, subdesenvolvimento, entre outros. Da mesma forma, estudiosos e feministas dos estudos de gênero têm se concentrado em desconstruir a agência da discriminação e seu uso da linguagem na subordinação feminina, tornando imperativa a tentativa de desconstrução e desmistificação adequada da linguagem como arma no combate às desigualdades de gênero. O presente trabalho busca empreender uma análise feminista da feminilidade e da linguagem utilizada para construir o conceito de feminilidade como arma de combate à discriminação de gênero nas sociedades contemporâneas Yorùbá e Afro-Brasileira através de expressões musicais. O corpus do estudo é composto pelas canções "Obìrin ni mi", de Shola Allyson Obaniyi, e "Mulher", de Mariene de Castro.

Palavras-chave: Linguagem. Gênero. Feminilidade. Cultura.

Introduction

Music is one of the artistic expressions that are common to every human culture, although the language, content, rhythm, and forms may vary from one culture and society to another. Africans and African descendant peoples all over the world are known for their cultural music as a reflection of their traditional practices and values. This, some argue, was born out of their different socio-cultural and political-religious experiences over the centuries. Consequently, it has been proved that even the devastating experiences of enslavement, forced exile and colonization that have been the lot of Africans on the continent and elsewhere in the modern age can be said to have also enriched their musical repertoire:

The English A. M. Jones proposed that Indonesians settlers in certain areas of East, Central and West Africa during early centuries AD could have introduced xylophones and certain tonal-harmonic systems (equipentatonic, equiheptatonic, and *pelog* scales) into Africa. Ethnohistorians, on other hand, have tended to accentuate the importance of coastal navigation (implying the travelling of hired or forced African labour on European ships) as an agent of cultural contact between such areas as Mozambique, Angola and Congo, and the West African coast³.

This is true both in the case of Africans who remained on the continent as well as the descendants of the enslaved Africans who today constitute a significant population of the Americas.

Generally, all society uses music to express human feelings and cultural beliefs while at the same time educating and entertaining the listening public. The particularly rich variety of musical genres among Africans and African

³ Donald Keith Robotham & Gerhard Kubik, "African Music" [www.britannica.com>art>African...](http://www.britannica.com/art/African...) Accessed on 29th December, 2020.

descendants has been thoroughly discussed and debated in very profound ways by eminent scholars. Thus, it is not in the purview of the present paper to revisit them here. However, our interest here as literary and feminist scholars is to look at the content of some of these musical expressions as they relate to the construction of identity, especially, the identity of women and their status in the society. Specifically, we want to see how music in Africa and the African Diaspora has been used and continue to be used to define the place of women in the society.

A universal truism today is that every song is a poem, although not every poem is a song. This can be explained by the literary features that are common to both music and poetry. One major feature shared by both is repetition. Like poetry, every song is endowed with the power of repetition, a tool generally employed to fix an idea in the minds of people. Needless to say that this predilection for repetition cannot be said to be an innocent act, this is due to the fact that, the artist or the poet will always choose to repeat a line, word, or idea that essentially represents the nucleus of his conviction or the message he intends to pass in the song. In other words, it is the ideological message of the song or the poem that will be drummed into the ears of the listeners through repetition. The result is, therefore, the naturalization of such an idea, irrespective of whether the idea is a positive or negative one. In the case of references to women, through this tool of repetition, certain images of women, both the dignifying as well as the stereotyped images, have become naturalized via music to the entire listening public. For example, over the years, many negative, degrading and/or offensive images of women have become so naturalized through the so-called popular music⁴ that no one, not even most of the women themselves, seem to care about the harm such music do and continue to do to the collective female psyche and dignity. In this respect, expressions and slangs like “figure eight”, “lepa shandy”, made popular by Nigerian juju musicians like Sir Shina Peters in the 1990s, and “nêga maluca, solteira, tarada”, (freely translatable as “black woman, single lady, sexual pervert) or “periguete”, (promiscuous lady) etc. rendered popular by Brazilian singers and Carnival bands readily come to mind. It requires a sensitive mind to discern the dangers of such a powerful tool as the repetition of this kind of expressions in popular music.

Fortunately, from time to time, some songwriters and singers have emerged to take up the challenge of deconstructing such naturalized negative images of women by consciously choosing to abandon the stereotyped images of women as sexual objects, emotional wrecks, and passive subject in their music. Two of such artists in the contemporary Yoruba and Afro-Brazilian musical scenes are Shola Allynson and Mariene de Castro. The objective of this paper is therefore to see how both songwriters and artists have achieved this necessary deconstruction in their selected songs in which each singer tries to define womanhood from a non-stereotyped perspective.

It is not just a coincidence that the two female singers/songwriters, though from different continents, produced a song of the same theme in their respective

⁴ Ifeoma Vivian Dunu & Gregory Obinna Ugbo, ‘Women in Nigerian popular Music Empowered or Debased?’ *Global Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* Vol. 3, No. 5 pp. 35-52, May 2015. European Center for Research Training and Development, UK. www.eajournals.org Accessed on 28th December, 2020.

languages, i.e., Yorùbá and Portuguese, at about the same period. Not only that, the two seem to also have agreed telepathically perhaps to compose and interpret a song with the same title in their respective languages. While Shola Allynson calls her own track simply “Obinrin” (woman), Mariene de Castro sings a track called “Mulher”⁵ (woman). It is apparent that the intent of the two artists is not just to entertain but, more importantly, to celebrate womanhood traditional values and to highlight their African heritage.

Language and redefinition of womanhood

In every culture, language establishes the place and rights of every man and woman in the society. In the patriarchal society, it is common to hear the man being described as the breadwinner, courageous, decisive and brave, etc., the one who dominates both the private and public spheres. Hardly will the same terms ever be used for any woman in the same society. A Yorùbá proverb innocently reveals this naturalized status when it declares, “Bí kò bá nídì, obìnrin kii jé Kúmólú” (it is only in exceptional situations that a girl child will be given the name *Kúmólú* at birth⁶). Even when such active adjectives and attributes are used for a woman at all, she is ultimately allowed to bask in the image they paint inasmuch as she is viewed within the shadows of a man who may be her husband, father or even brother. An example of this is found in the Yorùbá language, where, apparently, a woman’s achievement is only understood when she is compared to a man as can be seen in phraseologies like: “Obìrin yìi ní akíkanjú bíi okùnrin”, or “Obìrin bí okùnrin ni”, that is, this woman is brave like a man. A woman’s representation dwells within these stereotyped contexts where she is automatically ‘seen’ as an indecisive, weak, and fragile person whose roles in the social sphere can only be limited to her status as a housewife and/or a mother. All these point to a derogative - descriptive language that is very different from that which is commonly used for men.

In the traditional patriarchal worldview, any woman that revolts against this type of language and image or tries to create a new image for herself is seen as an outlaw, uncultured and a wayward woman, (ALVES Ivia, 2002, OMIDIRE Anike, 2014). Helena Parente Cunha (1997), while considering many representations of women in “A mulher partida: a busca do verdadeiro rosto na miragem dos espelhos” (in a free translation: The broken woman: seeking the true face of women in the mirror) re-invokes the criticism of Rita Terezinha on the short story titled “I Love my Husband” in Nelinda Piñon’s book, *O calor das coisas*. Rita denounces the use of all pejorative language for women, arguing that such stereotyped description of women ended up naturalizing such images. The continuous naturalization and usage of this gender-polarized language to describe and/or address any woman affects the way she perceives herself, and how she exercises her obligations in the society, especially within her marriage. Simone de Beauvoir (1980) describes the life of every man as complete in marriage because he has control over both his public and private life, while she decries the

⁵ The song was composed by the Bahian composer Gerônimo.

⁶ The name *Kúmólú* literally means, “death has snatched away the hero of this household”.

idea of seeing a woman reduced to the status of a second citizen. A woman will serve her father as a girl child, and later in life, she is expected to be submissive to her husband in marriage. Although every woman is conscious of her biological functions, these should not be the only parameters to judge the woman's capacity and potentials. Many Feminists are of the opinion that women need professional formations to be relevant within the public sphere because, wherever such formation is lacking, women tend to suffer from discrimination and domination.

In the case of the Afro-Brazilian woman, we see that her domination started during the period of slavery when many enslaved Africans were forcefully taken to Brazil to be used for hard, unpaid labour. The enslaved woman had to bear a double burden under such a regime because, apart from being forced to work without any remuneration, she was also made to satisfy the sexual lust of the white masters who never thought anything wrong about raping her anytime anywhere. The double trauma of Slavery relegated Afro-Brazilian woman to a state of permanent powerlessness. In addition, due to the long history of illiteracy and racial discrimination, she lacks the basic structures to better her lot even long after the end of Slavery. As a result, the Afro-Brazilian woman still suffers today from the stereotyped images that were created around her as can be seen in contemporary Literature, Music, Telenovelas (Brazilian Soap Operas), etc. In these artistic expressions, she is often projected as an ignorant woman and a sex object who is all too happy to serve as a side dish either as a housemaid or a lascivious woman willing to negotiate social ascension only with her body. This is the classical image that is projected through characters like Gabriela in Jorge Amado's *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela*, or the Rita Baiana of Alúcio Azevedo's *O Cortiço* to mention just those two⁷.

Shola Allynson: Re-defining self and motherhood through Yorùbá music

Shola Allynson-Obaniyi, a native of Ikorodu, Lagos, started her musical carrier as a young Yorùbá female gospel singer. A graduate of Music Technology from The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria, she adopted the stage name, Shola Allynson. She has produced many albums out of which are, *Eji owuro* (2003), *Gbeje f'ori* (2005). *Ire*, (2007) which contains the track "Obirin ni mi" (I am a woman), and her latest album *I mo'ore*⁸. One of her songs, "Omo tuntun" was adapted by Unilever PLC as a commercial jingle for one of their products, showing her relevance to the society. Shola Allynson is considered as a successful indigenous female musician in Nigeria who has enjoyed a tremendous acceptance from her fans. The song, "Obirin ni mí" contains many Yorùbá cultural values. The Yorùbás believe that a woman is expected to accept and respect herself as a woman. She

⁷ BENNETT, Eliana Guerreiro Ramos, 1999; FUNCK, Susana Boméo, 2003; SOUZA, Florentina et al, 2006; OMIDIRE Anike, 2012; DALCASTAGNÈ, 2011.

⁸ Anthonia Soyngbe, "Eji Owuro has turned my life around-Shola Obaniyi". An interview conducted by Anthonia Soyngbe to mark Shola Allynson - Obaniyi's footprint in Yorùbá popular music. www.independentnig.com/.../eji.owuro; www.nigerianvoice.com/.../why.i.dont Accessed on 22nd July, 2019.

is also expected to be a good child to her parents and neighbours, a good wife to her husband and a good mother to her biological and non-biological children.

The track “Obìrin ni mí” is a song of four stanzas with a refrain that celebrates her beauty as a Yorùbá woman by listing what she considers as her natural obligations as an agent of procreation, and the attributes that endow her body as a Yorùbá woman, “ewa atorun wa... wura iyebiye...segi...oyin...adun aye...”⁹. All these contribute to how a Yorùbá woman’s body and beauty are perceived which is diametrically opposed to the image imposed by the Western media. As we can see, the song sets out to point out the attributes, functions and values of womanhood as conceived within the Yorùbá culture, condemning emphatically all and every acts of gender discrimination and female disempowerment through the language of valorization. In the first and second stanzas, she uses imagery to define a Yorùbá woman:

Obìrin ni mí Mopélola, Obìrin ni mí ma rìn maa soge, ma rín gbèrè bí eni ègbé n dùn maa tún sapá genge...Owó èrò ni mo bá wá, itura ni mo jé f’áyé. Lát’orí mi dèékan esè Adésewà gan ní mí.... Mo ní ewà látòrun, ení mó mí mo mí pé. Olá mi kò lá kàwé. Èmi wúrà iyebiye. Èmi n’ iyùn, Èmi sègi. Èmi n’iyùn, èmi l’oyin...¹⁰

These graphic self-descriptions using various figures of speech to celebrate the natural beauty and biological grace of a Yorùbá woman are an exhibition of “self -” acceptance which is the first step to any feminist consideration in a male-dominated world. The American psychologist William James (1842-1910) describes this form of affirmation of oneself as self-concept, explaining that

the concept of self serves four important functions: self-knowledge, whereby we formulate and organize what we know about ourselves; self-control, whereby we make plans and execute decisions; self-presentation, whereby we try to put our best foot forward to others, self-justification whereby we try to put our best foot forward to ourselves¹¹ (JAMES apud ELLIOT et al., 2007, p. 150-151).

In this track, Shola Allynson has succeeded in celebrating herself as a Yorùbá woman and at the same time exemplifying her traditional functions within her society. In Africa, a girl child is seen as a prospective mother right from her childhood. This anticipated status reflects in the kind of socialization that a girl child receives during childhood. Today by marriage, a Yorùbá woman, like most African women loses her father’s name. This however is a fallout from colonization because, traditionally, the Yorùbá woman enjoyed the independence of owning her own property and still maintaining her position in her parent’s lineage. Oyèwúmi, (2009) maintains that such independence has been erased by the modern civil marriage.

⁹ “Heavenly endowed beauty...precious silver...royal beads...honey...costly sweet”(transl. by authors).

¹⁰ I am a woman, A complete woman (Complete in wealth and values). I am a woman, my stepping is adorned with style and elegance. I walk with poise feminine gait and pride...My beauty is directly from heaven, my creator did a perfect job. My wealth is incomparable. I am a priceless gold. I am the costly coral beads, I am the treasured pearls. I am the coral beads, I am the sweetest honey...

¹¹“Self-awareness is the act of thinking about ourselves” while “independent view of the self is a way of defining oneself in terms of own internal thoughts, feelings, and actions and not in terms of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of other people.” (ELLIOT et al., 2007, p. 150-151).

However, one can still argue that among the contemporary Yorùbá women, most surprisingly, the uneducated ones have been serving as good examples of how to preserve their independence in spite of the total submission to the wills and caprices of the male spouse that modern marriage preaches. Thus, many are the Yorùbá women who today run their personal business and are highly successful materially. The bottom-line for the Yorùbá feminist is for the woman in her material independence not to abdicate her roles as a mother. To that end, Shola Allynson decided to itemize the mother's roles in her song as that of a protector, teacher, guardian etc., in an effort to show that every Yorùbá woman performs many important roles that are classified as maternity roles towards societal development. In fact, Shola Allynson takes her self-assertion a step further by declaring her indispensability to the survival of the human race through her agency as mother and nurturer, thus bringing to bear the intimate and elaborate process involved in the Yorùbá parenting:

Láísí èmi ìbísí ìrèsí kò sì o. Mo máse isèdà se nípa ìbísí ìrèsí. Àpò inú mi ni omo n gbé. Inú mi ló gb'omo. Mo d'èjè lómo lóri. Omú àyà mi l'ó n mu. Èyìn mi l'orun tí n dùn. Olùtójú ré ní mí. Olùbí, olùtó, olójà, olùkó, olóbè, olókà. À je sanra à je dàgbà¹².

Furthermore, by affirming that the mother is the pillar of a child, “Bí'yá kúro leyin omo. Ìyà nlá gb'ómo sánlè...” (Without a mother's assistance, the child will experience hardship...) She evokes the Yorùbá religious belief that considers the mother as the first Òrìsà (deity) to any child. In this respect, the mother is the primordial *àsèse* or *òrun* to any child she has conceived, suckled, nurtured, etc. The child must not make her angry or sad at any moment or for any reason whatsoever, because, the Yorùbás believe that anytime the mother is not happy with the child, such a child will experience inexplicable misfortunes.¹³ Abósèdé George asserts this cogent position the mother occupies by affirming that “The Yorùbá places a significant emphasis on procreation as a condition for social adulthood, community membership, the possibility of immortality, and other valued aspects of social life” (GEORGE, 2016, p. 59-60).

Nevertheless, the fact remains that all responsibilities accorded to a woman in this song are located within the private sphere. In short, it is still a form of promoting the domination of the female gender through biological functions. One cannot help but problematize Allynson's criticism of any woman that refuses to comply with the motherhood specifications approved by the patriarchal society while she emphasizes that the woman's duty is to ensure that her children and wards are properly trained and nurtured, frowning on any woman who decided to ‘usurp’ the role of a man in the family setting by using the metaphor of the *gèlè* (female headgear) and *filà* (male hat): “È wo obìrin tó gbé gèlè sílè tó lo wa filà

¹² “Without me there is no continuity of procreation. I fulfill the creator's mandate on procreation. Only my womb can carry children. Every child is formed in my womb. I bleed blood to ease his passage. I breast feed him. He has sound sleep on my back. I am his devoted nurturer. I am his mother, nurturer, comforter, teacher, cook. I provide him healthy food for wholesome growth.”

¹³ That is why, whenever a Yorùbá individual is experiencing a series of misfortunes, he or she would be advised to appease the *orí* (inner head) of her mother, i.e., *bo orí iyá e* which is an elaborate ritual that aims at getting the mother to ‘smile’ at such a child so that things may turn around for the better.

móri. Isé onísé ló jé. Ibi a rán ni làá kojú sí”¹⁴. Indeed, it is more than obvious that Allynson has really internalized the ideological discourse of female domination common to most traditional societies where women are advised to be submissive and keep to their assigned social space in order to have peace in the homes and guarantee for themselves a happy old age, “Ká le láyò tó pò. Ká dūrò nipò iyì. T’Elédà fi wá sí. È bá jé ká tójú ayé lára oko, lára omo. Ìfòkànbalè ojó alé gangan ló se kókó”¹⁵.

To Shola Allynson the best attitude of any woman is to focus on sustaining family stability and avoid venturing into some aspects that are considered as “man’s world”, the public sphere. To a certain extent, these biological functions highlighted by Shola Allynson above cannot be overlooked, as confirmed by Opefeyintimi, “it is the women that have the power to conceal life in their wombs and this gives them some kind of upper hand over men...”. (ÒPÉFÈYÌTÌMÌ, 2009 p. 165). Nonetheless, it is important to avoid the ideology of viewing women only through the lens of maternity and domestic life, as this will only serve to further deny the empowerment of women in other spheres of human endeavor.

It is important to also mention that the singer celebrates the patriarchal ideology of female domination by calling a woman a helpmate of her husband and not his equal as modern feminism preaches “...Èmi ni olùrànlówó oko, èmi ni...”, (I am my husband’s helper). Shola Allynson appears to be affirming the position of subordination for a woman as found in the Holy Bible, Ephesians 5: 22, “Wives submit to your husbands, as to the Lord”. Apparently, this is an interference of her Christian values in which a woman is seen as a subordinate to a man. Such anti-feminist ideas could fuel the patriarchal ideology that confines a woman to the domestic space. Apparently, the image she is promoting here does not represent (even) she her(self) as a musician, because she is a woman in a male dominated profession, her affirmation shows her innate perception of self that transcends into her artistic acts. However, while responding to a question on her carrier, Shola Allynson’s response can easily be read in the light of contemporary feminist discourse as a confirmation that she is yet to be liberated from the submissive bondage of patriarchy: “... But being a “star” does not define who I am. I am a woman who knows who she is in creation, what she’s made to do and set boundaries for herself which she is always conscious of”¹⁶.

The facts remain that the global world has evolved beyond this deformed idea of relegating a woman to a second-class position. A woman today is perceived as a multi-task being and if given the opportunity she will perform well in any given sector. In the world of politics today, we see many examples of capable women like former President Dilma Rousseff, Helen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, former Presidential candidate Hilary

¹⁴ “Look at the woman who dropped the head tie for a cap. She is in a wrong position. We should focus on how to accomplish our mission on Earth” (transl. by authors).

¹⁵ “Standing in the honorable position in which the creator has placed us. Let us mother the world through our husband and children. Peace at old age is crucial” (transl. by authors).

¹⁶ Ibid, Anthonia Soyngbe, “Eji Owuro has turned my life around-Shola Obaniyi”. An interview conducted by Anthonia Soyngbe to mark Shola Allynson - Obaniyi’s footprint in Yorùbá popular music. www.independentnig.com/.../eji.owuro; www.nigerianvoice.com/.../why.i.dont Accessed on 22nd July, 2019.

Clinton in the United States, ex-President Cristina Fernández Kirchner in Argentina, Nigerian Former Minister of Finance, Kemi Adeosun, and a host of others. The fact remains that every woman is endowed with varied values apart from the maternity roles and such attributes as mentioned above should be harnessed for global development.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that, even as she can be said to have interiorized so well the stereotyped co-referential of womanhood and maternity, Shola Allyson is seen to be timidly contesting some other gender stereotypes and discriminatory remarks within Yorùbá society. This is evident in the second and third verses of her song where she questions the abuse of women's rights, "Mi ò kì n sàtè méré. Mi ò kì n sàtè méré. Emí obìrin... Àwa ò kì s'áté méré. Àwa ò kì s'áté méré. Àwa obìrin. Lát'orí mi dèékan esè Adésewà gan ní mí"¹⁷. She disagrees with the idea of stereotyping women as sex objects and the practice of eroticizing the female body as is common within the image of the Yorùbá woman found in many songs produced by male Nigerian singers such as Òbésèré,¹⁸ King Sunny Ade¹⁹, Naira Marley²⁰, etc. However, one cannot but wish that she would go the necessary extra mile to assert better the ideals of feminist womanhood by encouraging her Yorùbá listening audience to be more critical of female-dominating patriarchal discourses.

Mariene de Castro and the metaphysical exploration of an Afro-Brazilian woman

On the other side of the Black Atlantic, Music has also played an important role in the lives of the people, especially among the blacks and this was dated back to the time slavery. Often the speech expressions were prohibited in the plantations where slaves worked, many were punished and humiliated because they broke their silence through speech, thus a lot of interactions were sustained through music, not only that, their emotion, information, pain, ancestral knowledge among others, were shared and preserved through music. Paul Gilroy, confirms this importance of music:

The power and significance of music within the black Atlantic have grown in inverse proportion to the limited expressive power of language. It is important to remember that the slaves' access to literacy was often denied on pain of death and only a few cultural opportunities were offered as a surrogate for the other forms of individual autonomy denied by life on the plantations and in barracoons. Music becomes vital at the point at which linguistic and semantic indeterminacy/polyphony arise amidst protracted

¹⁷ "I am not to be trodden upon. I am not to be trodden upon. I am a woman. We are not inferior persons. We are not inferior persons. We the women. From my head to toes I am the epitome of beauty" (transl. by authors).

¹⁸ Òbésèré is a popular Fuji musician, who won many fans to his erotic music in the '90s.

¹⁹ King Sunny Ade is the star of the Jùjú music in Nigeria, his outstanding music came to life from the '60s and he continues to impress his fans with his electric dancing steps even in his old age.

²⁰ Naira Marley is a popular Hip-hop musician in Nigeria. His music is often characterized with erotic words he uses to describe women and the promotion of social vices, an example of this is his song title, "Opotoyi" 2019 [www.azlyrics.com>nairamar](http://www.azlyrics.com/nairamar)... Accessed on 20th December, 2020.

battle between masters, mistresses, and slaves (GILROY, 1993, p. 74).

Furthermore, Music has proven to be an important communication tool and central to human relations, Paul Gilroy highlighted while analyzing the black identity and the historical commentary on aspect of black music:

Examining the place of Music in the black Atlantic world means surveying the self-understanding articulated by the musicians who have made it, the symbolic use to which their music is put by the other black artists and writers, and the social relations which have produced and reproduced the unique expressive culture in which music comprises a central and even foundational element...The oral character of the cultural settings in which diaspora music have developed presupposes a distinctive relationship to the body... it is nothing new to declare that for us music, gesture, dance are forms of communication, just as important as the gift of speech (GILROY, 1993, p. 7).

The historical metamorphosis of the music in Diaspora have produced many musicians and in Brazil, many Afro-Brazilians are making waves in the music world. Mariene Bezerra de Castro is one of such musicians that marks the traditional Afro-music in Brazil. A native of Bahia, she was born on the 12th May, 1976, started her music carrier in 1997 and has shared the stage since then with many important Afro-Brazilian musicians like Carlinhos Brown, Jota Velloso, Margareth Menezes, Maria Bethânia, among others. A singer, an artist and a composer noted for her skill and mastery of musical genres that are most popular among Afro-Brazilian populations, such as “Samba de Roda”, Mariene, as she is fondly called, is today gradually becoming a national star as she is appearing on the Brazilian popular music (MPB)²¹. Her recent ascension into the Brazilian *Telenovela* scene by acting in some soap opera on the *Rede Globo de Televisão* further points at a growing national presence. According to her, at age twelve, she was registered in a music school, but dropped out when her mother could no longer afford the musical training fees. In spite of that, she was able to develop her alto voice, which has brought her national and international recognition. She confirms to have inherited her talent from her family, “Na minha casa todo mundo cantava ou tocava algum instrumento”²² (In my family everybody can sing or play one instrument or another).

Furthermore, in 1996 through the influence of her mother’s friend, she sang in a popular show tagged, “Pelourinho dia e noite” in Salvador. In the show two French producers signed her on and she staged more than twenty shows in France. The influence of the Candomblé religion can be seen in her professional concept especially in songs like “Samba de Terreiro”, “Prece de pescador” which celebrates Iemanjá, a Yorùbá deity popularly revered in Brazil as the *Rainha das Águas* (Queen of the Waters). A close attention at her musical themes easily reveals her intent at continuing the cultural tradition of Clara Nunes, who became known in the 1970s as the voice of the Orixás through her wonderful rendering

²¹ Samba de roda has existed at least since the 19th century. It is recognized through the circular dance. It is danced with a lot of humour and body gestures. <http://www.infoescola.com/musica/samba-de-roda/> Accessed on 20th Oct. 2020.

²² Mariene de Castro, “Biografia”. www.marienedecastro.com.br/biografia.php Accessed on 23rd July, 2019.

of classical songs based on the myths of the Orixás - Oxum, Iansã, Iemanjá, Ogum, Ossain, Oxossi, Xangô, etc.

Mariene has a mark of an African traditional artist who usually performs bare footed on stage. To her this is a form of reverence and homage to her African ancestors. Some of her albums are *Abre Caminho* (2005)²³ (make way), in which the track "Mulher", (Woman) appears. Others are *Santo de Casa* (2010), *Tabaroinha* (2012), *Ser de Luz* (2013) and *Colheita* (2014). This last album, *Colheita*, has a track, "Ponto de Nanã", dedicated to the Yorùbá nation.

Mariene de Castro initiates a new representation of the Afro-Brazilian woman in the artistic world different from the historical images of "puta" and "vagabunda" (whore) "ama de leite" (wet nurse) and "mulata de bunda" - (big ass mulatress) that characterized and often still characterize many Brazilian songs, media and literary texts. As an Afro-Brazilian singer from a state with one of outside Africa and where the word "Axé" symbolizes the energy from Africa, she cannot but project herself and other Afro-Brazilian women from an afro-centric perspective. It is thus not surprising that the track "Mulher" celebrates the spiritual attributes of an Afro-Brazilian woman as against the derogatory image she is often accorded in the media.

The first segment of this song addresses the concept of spirituality of the Afro-Brazilian woman, a reflection of her African heritage derived from the Candomblé, just like the musician herself affirms in an exclusive interview conducted by Natalia da Luz: "Eu sou uma pessoa espiritualizada. Ela caminha, sai de casa, chega ao teatro comigo... A música é uma forma de se conectar com o sagrado"²⁴. In the course of many centuries of servitude and subordination, the spirituality exhibited by Mariene de Castro has performed a major function in building the self-esteem of every Afro-Brazilian subject in general, not just the women.

The spiritual power here in the song, "Mulher", is compared to that of a wind; we all know that no one can curtail the wind, it blows where it wishes to. This same spiritual power as possessed by the goddess Oyá is here conceived as a form of resistance to black oppression in Brazil. Over the centuries, the oppression by various government laws and social policies did not only marginalize the Afro-Brazilian population, but also marginalized and often condemned their cultural manifestations like *Candomblé*, *Capoeira*, *Samba*, etc. A situation that was symbolically overcome through the strong female spiritual will of notable Afro-Brazilian *Candomblé* priestesses such as Mãe Aninha Obá Biyi, Mãe Senhora Oxum Muiwá, Mãe Menininha do Gantois, and a host of other *Mães-de-santo*²⁵. Mariene de Castro declares further that at times, when she is on stage, there are some ritualistic effects that accompany her songs, for example,

²³ Mariene de Castro, "Música de Axé." www.dicionariomph.com.br/mariene-de.castro/ Accessed on 23rd July 2019.

²⁴ "I am a spiritual person, my spirituality walks with me, when I leave the house it comes to the theatre with me... music is a way of connecting myself to the sacred" (transl. by authors). Natalia da Luz, "Mariene de Castro". *Por Dentro da África* <http://www.pordentrodaafrica.com> Accessed on 4th April 2017.

²⁵ Another example is Mãe Stella of Ilé Axé Opo Afonjá in Salvador (1925 - 2018), who was recognized for spiritual functions in her "Terreiro" and for her intellectual contribution in preserving the African ancestral knowledge, her intellectual productions won her a seat among the Bahia Academy of Letters (Academia de Letras da Bahia) in 2003. (FREITAS, 2016 p.63).

sometimes in a show in Rio de Janeiro, she declares that “Quando eu canto ‘Ponto de Nanã’, há um momento ritualístico porque também tem o ouro, que há muito tempo faz parte de meu show. Ele simboliza Oxum”²⁶.

It is obvious that the singer is proud of her African heritage and this has led to the values she attributed to herself as an Afro-Brazilian woman, which she describes in the chorus of the track, “Mulher”, “Eu sou, você também é mulher”, (I am a woman, so are you). She emphatically confirms the communion that exists between her and her African ancestry: “A herança africana está presente quando eu canto. A minha ancestralidade fala por mim”²⁷.

This concept of ancestral heritage that marked the musical profession of Mariene de Castro is seen through her figurative analysis of her invisible innate feeling in connection with the image of Òrìsà Oyá (and the wind), as shown in “Mulher”: “Meu corpo não tem forma alguma. Não posso ver, não posso falar. Só sei que empurro algumas coisas... E essas coisas... Ah! Se eu pudesse ver. O céu, o seu corpo e o mar. O meu sentimento é maior”²⁸. The representation of these ancestral values, which continues from one generation to the other, has been a reflection of the efforts of the Iyalorixás. The Afro-Brazilian cultural preservation testifies to the centralization of the Candomblé religion as a fundamental nucleus to the communitarian socio-historical preservation of the ancestral African knowledge in Brazil. (OMIDIRE, Anike, 2018, p.117). Henrique Cunha Júnior comments, “A ancestralidade é a nossa via de identidade histórica. Sem ela não compreendemos o que somos e nem seremos o que queremos ser”²⁹ (JÚNIOR apud OLIVEIRA, 2007, p. 264). Thus, the conservation of the history of the black race in Brazil over many centuries and the usage of such to fight against racial and gender inequalities deserve revalorization.

Furthermore, Mariene de Castro transports into her song the maternity role of the Afro-Brazilian woman as a mother as opposed to the imposed role inherited from male-dominated enslaved patriarchy that only conceived of her as a sex object and a wet nurse responsible for breastfeeding the children of the white master during slavery. In one of many debates on the position of an Afro-Brazilian in the society, especially the women, Conceição Evaristo pointed out the racist fictional construction of an Afro-Brazilian woman in literature, “Na literatura brasileira, nossas mulheres negras não são mães. No máximo, a mãe preta, que cuida da prole alheia”³⁰. In the same manner, she frowns at the perpetual naturalization of stereotyped image of an Afro-Brazilian woman, “A personagem

²⁶ “When I sing “Ponto de Nanã”, there is a ritualistic moment because I have a piece of gold on my stage which has become part of my show for a long time. It symbolizes the Osun deity” (transl. by authors). Natalia da Luz, “Mariene de Castro”. Por Dentro da África, <http://www.pordentrodaafrica.com> Accessed on 4th April, 2017.

²⁷ “My African heritage is always present when I sing. My ancestors speak through me” (transl. by authors). Natalia da Luz, “Mariene de Castro”. Por Dentro da África, <http://www.pordentrodaafrica.com> Accessed: 4th April, 2017.

²⁸ “My body does not have any specific form. I cannot see. I cannot speak. I only know that I do push some things around. And these things... Ah! If I could see. The sky, your body and the sea. My feeling is greater” (transl. by authors).

²⁹ “The ancestral is our way of historical identity. Without it, we cannot understand who we are and cannot be what we wish to become” (transl. by authors).

³⁰ “In Brazilian Literature, our black women are not mothers. At most they could be a black mother who cares for the children of strangers” (transl. by authors). Conceição Evaristo, informe@quilombhoje.com.br. Accessed on 29th April 2012, Omidire Anike, 2014 p. 78.

negra feminina é negada a imagem de mulher-mãe, perfil que aparece tantas vezes desenhado para as mulheres brancas em geral”³¹ (EVARISTO, 2009, p. 23).

The contemporary Afro-Brazilian woman is gaining more opportunities in the public space, but she has been denied for long the image of a “Mother” in many literary productions, appearing as a mother only in some Afro-Brazilian texts like that of Conceição Evaristo. We now see that an Afro-Brazilian woman who has always served as an erotic product for many literary productions produced by white Brazilians is now projected in the song as a “Mulher.” This is a counter discourse which affirms the wholeness and spiritual attributes of the Afro-Brazilian woman, “Mulher carrega o mar na barriga, mulher carrega o oceano também, mulher eu sou você, também é mulher”³². The metaphor of pregnancy represented here as carrying the ocean in the womb links the image of an Afro-Brazilian woman not only to maternity but to the Òrisà Osun (Oxum), the goddess of fertility, the mother of all. As expressed in the work of Conceição Evaristo, *Olhos D’Água*, (2014), the courage and maternal love of a black woman is immense, she is capable of laughing while her heart bleeds and suffers in abject poverty, “Um dia, brincando de pentear boneca (...), A mãe boneca e nós rimos e rimos de nosso engano. A mãe riu tanto, das lágrimas escorrerem”³³ (EVARISTO, 2014, P. 16). This image of deep resistance is very important in re-writing the reality and experience of an Afro-Brazilian woman in literature, music and in the society in general.

In addition, this valorized image of an Afro-Brazilian woman is a commendable result of efforts and resistance of the Iyalorixás like Mãe Aninha Obabiyi, Mãe Menininha, Mãe Stella de Oxóssi and many Afro-Brazilian militants. This effort could be seen in the life and acts of Mãe Menininha one of the leaders of the Candomblé in Brazil. She was the Iyalorixá that succeeded Mãe Pulqueira and during her lifetime, she defended the preservation of the ancestral African knowledge and the Afro-Brazilian religion. Vinicius de Moraes and Maria Bethânia celebrated her success and fame in Brazil in songs and prose (OMIDIRE, Anike, 2004). The manifestation of the Iyalorixás and the novel image of the black Brazilian woman in the song, “Mulher” confirms the theory of *Escrivivência*, a process of (re)writing the experience of Afro-Brazilians, showing the ethnic and cultural values, the strength, the sacrifice, struggle, dreams, aspiration, beauty as a constant fight to stabilize their survival. Conceição Evaristo called this, “um lugar social e étnico, o lugar de dupla face”³⁴ (EVARISTO apud OMIDIRE, 2018).

Above all, it is a general believe that what women lose in the physical world, the public sphere, they gain it in the spiritual realm, a special don given to all women by their creator. The metaphysical exposition of ancestral African knowledge of an Afro-Brazilian woman by Mariene de Castro has become a complement to the representation of black people in Brazil. Nevertheless, a lot is

³¹ “The black woman character is denied of an image “woman-mother”, a figure that appears often and designed for white Brazilian woman in general” (transl. by author).

³² “The woman carries the sea in the belly, the woman carries the ocean as well, I am a woman, and so are you” (transl. by authors).

³³ “One day while playing with weaving a doll’s hair (...) we and the doll’s mother, all laugh and laugh of our error. The mother laughed so much that her eyes were filled with tears” (transl. by authors).

³⁴ “A social and ethnic space, a space of double consciousness” (transl. by authors).

expected from popular Afro-Brazilian female artists like Mariene de Castro because of the racism and sexism that mark the world and her Brazilian society in particular. We need to state here that a great crime of domestic violence, rape, domination and oppression of Afro-Brazilian women deserve a better highlight in the music of Mariene de Castro. She is totally silent on this issue and the data shows how extensive the domestic violence is ravaging the lives of many Afro-Brazilian Women in Brazil, “The domestic violence becomes powerful because many of these cases are never reported to the police since they occur in the family domain” (p. 138). The research shows that many people are surprised to see the high rate of family domain violence against women, “As pessoas se surpreendem porque acham que isso acontece somente com o vizinho. Mas a violência contra a mulher está acontecendo dentro de cada família. Agressor e agredida não têm classe social determinada”³⁵. Maria Elisa Munhol, the President of the Association of Female Lawyers explained that “a cada 15 minutos uma mulher é espancada em São Paulo e, a cada 12, uma é ameaçada”³⁶ (apud OMIDIRE, 2014). In view of this discrimination against Afro-Brazilian women, the songs produced in this society are expected to sensitize the people and government towards this gender-based crime.

Conclusion

In the course of this essay, we have attempted to establish the feminist argument that womanhood can be seen and discussed in diverse perspectives. While Shola Allynson emphasizes and even legitimizes some stereotypes and ideals of the African woman at the risk of being considered reactionary by contemporary feminist groups, due to her apparent apology of maternity, female submission, etc., Mariene de Castro can be said to have emphasized spirituality as the strength of the contemporary Afro-Brazilian woman. It is glaring that both female artists demonstrate in their songs their expertise and limitations in relation to what should be the values of womanhood and responsibilities of a woman as stated in the traditional society; this is in a way their contribution to the general debate on gender equality. However, as earlier stated, a social criticism of the daily oppression and domination of women is expected to feature in their songs.

It will be advantageous to all if the natural values of maternity, mothering, beauty, spiritual power etc. which are celebrated in the two songs are channeled towards the social, economic and political emancipation of women. It is important to state that the spiritual dimension of the good fortunes of children being closely connected to and controlled by their spiritual relationship with their mothers as expressed by Shola Allynson in her track, is within what T. M. Ilesanmi (2013), describes as the ultimate natural power of the Yorùbá women. Mariene de Castro

³⁵ “People are surprised because they believe this only occur in the neighbourhood. But the violence against woman is happening in the family sphere. The aggressor and the victim do not have a determined social class” (transl. by authors). www.renap@grupos.com.br “Violência contra a mulher” Accessed on 4th Sept. 2004

³⁶ “Every 15 minutes a woman is beaten in São Paulo and in every 12 minutes she is threatened” (transl. by authors).

also celebrated this same natural power of women as an ancestral African knowledge in her song, "Mulher", confirming the ancestral connection between an African woman and the Afro-Brazilian woman. Above all there is a great need to continue to fight for revalorization of women and their Human Rights everywhere they may be, in Music, Literature, Drama and in all ramifications of life.

Bibliographic References

ADELEYE-FAYEMI, Bisi. **Speaking for myself: Perspectives on Social, Political and Feminist Activism**. Ibadan: Amandla Consulting, 2014.

ALVES, Ivya. **Imagens da Mulher na Literatura, na Modernidade e Contemporaneidade**. In: Ferreira, Sílvia L. and NASCIMENTO, Enilda R. (Org.) **Imagens da mulher na cultura contemporânea**. Salvador, NEIM-UFBA, 2002, p. 85-98.

BEAUVOIR, Simone de. **O Segundo Sexo**. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Editora Nova Fronteira, 1980.

BENNETT, Eliana G. R. Gabriela, Cravo e Canela: Jorge Amado and The Myth of the Sexual Mulata in Brazil. In: **The African Diaspora, African Origins and New World Identities**. Ed. Isidore Okpeweho, Carole Boyce Davies & Ali A. Mazrui. U.S.A, Indiana University Press, 1999.

CARNEIRO, Sueli. **A Mulher Negra na Sociedade Brasileira-Papel Movimento Feminista na Luta Anti Racista**. In: MUNANGA, Kabengele (Org.) **História do Negro no Brasil, O Negro na Sociedade Brasileira: Resistência, Participação, Contribuição**. Brasília: Fundação Cultural Palmares - MinC, CNPq, 2004.

CASTRO, Zilia Osório de. **Notas de abertura, (2000)**. In: ALMEIDA, Moiza Fernandez (Org.). **A Inscrição do feminino e dos afetos na emoção e na razão da poesia escrita por mulheres. A Mulher na Literatura e outras artes - Comunicações apresentadas no I Congresso de Cultura Lusófona Contemporânea**. Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre, 2013.

CUNHA, Helena Parente Cunha. **A Mulher Partida: A Busca do Verdadeiro Rosto na Miragem dos Espelhos**. In: SHARPE, Peggy. (org). **Entre resistir e identificar-se: para uma teoria da prática da narrativa brasileira de autoria feminina**. Florianópolis: Ed. Mulheres: Goiânia: Editora da UFG, p. 107-137, 1997.

DALCASTAGNÈ, Regina. **Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea: Um território contestado**. São Paulo, Editora Horizonte, 2011.

DUARTE, Eduardo de Assis, FONSECA, Maria Nazareth Soares (Org.). **Literatura e Afrodescendência no Brasil: Antologia Crítica**. Volume 4 - História, teoria, polêmica. Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2011 [2014].

ELLIOT, Aronson; Wilson, Tim; Akert, Robin. **Social Psychology**. 7th Edition, Global Edition. Boston: Pearson, 2007.

EVARISTO, Conceição. "Gênero e etnia: uma Escrivivência de dupla face". In: **Mulheres no mundo, etnia, marginalidade e diáspora**. João Pessoa: Ideia, 2005.

----- . **Escrivivências da afro-brasilidade: história e memória. Releitura**, n. 23, 2008.

----- . Literatura negra: uma poética de nossa afro-brasilidade. **SCRIPTA**, vol. 13, N. 25, 2º sem. 2009, p. 17-31.

----- . **Olhos d'água**. Rio de Janeiro. Ministério da Cultura, SEPPIR/PR: Pallas Editora, 2014.

FAKINLEDE, Julius. Body Adornment and cosmetics, In: **Encyclopedia of the Yoruba**. Toyin Falola & Akintunde Akinyemi. Bloomington, USA. Indiana University Press, 2016.

FUNCK, Susana Boméo. O Jogo das representações. In: BRANDÃO, Izabel; ZAHIDÉ, L. Muzart (Org.) **Refazendo nós, ensaio sobre mulher e literatura**. Florianópolis: Ed. Mulheres EDUNSC, 2003.

GEORGE, Abosede. Childbirth and Childbearing. In: **Encyclopedia of the Yoruba**. Toyin Falola & Akintunde Akinyemi. (Org.) Bloomington, USA. Indiana University Press, 2016.

GILROY, Paul, **The Black Atlantic., Modernity and Double Consciousness**. 1993. www.tandfonline.com Accessed on 24th December, 2020.

GOOD NEWS BIBLE. Cardinal Basil Hume, O. S. B. Archbishop of Westminster, 1979.

HALL, Stuart. **A Identidade Cultural na Pós-Modernidade**. Rio de Janeiro: DP&A, 2003.

ILESANMI, T. M. The significance of the myths of women in socio-political role sharing among Yoruba people. In: Kolawole Modupe Mary E. (Org.). **Gender Perceptions and Development in Africa - A socio-cultural Approach**. Germany: Integrierte Gesamtschule Stadt Bad Oldesloe, 1998.

----- . **Obìnrin: A Cultural Assessment of Yoruba Women**. Nigeria, astra-Multimedia, Nig. Ltd, 2013.

OLIVEIRA, Eduardo D. **Filosofia da Ancestralidade: corpo de mito na filosofia da educação brasileira**. Curitiba: Editora Gráfica Popular, 2007.

OMIDIRE, Anike. "O processo de desconstrução dos estereótipos sobre a Mulher Negra e Afro-brasileira em Jorge Amado e Paulina Chiziane". **Ife Journal of Foreign Languages**, (IJOFL). Ed. Ajoke Mimiko Bestman and Babatunde Ayeleru, November 2012.

----- . A desconstrução dos estereótipos sobre a mulher nas obras escolhidas de paulina Chiziane e Conceição Evaristo. **Masters Thesis**. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 2014.

----- . O Feminismo ancestral africano como fundamento da contemporânea literatura afro-brasileira de Conceição Evaristo e Miriam Alves. Ph.D. **Thesis**. Department of Foreign Languages, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun, Nigeria, 2018.

OPÉFÈYÌTÌMÌ, Ayò. **Women in Yorùbá Culture**. (A Dozen of Academic Articles). Ibadan: Penthouse Publications (Nig.), 2009.

OYEWŪMÍ, Oyèrónké. **The Invention of Women: Making an African sense of Western gender discourse**. Minneanopolis. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

PALMEIRA, Francineide S.; SOUZA, Florentina da S. Representações de Gênero e Afro-descendência na obra de Conceição Evaristo. **IV ENECULT - Encontro de Estudos Multidisciplinares em Cultura**. Salvador: Faculdade de Comunicação/UFBA, 2008.

RUIZ, Bibian Pérez. *Lo lejano y lo bello, Feminismo y maternidade africanas a través de su literatura*. Madri: Editorial Fundamentos, 2012.

SOUZA, Florentina; LIMA, Maria N. (org.). **Literatura Afro-Brasileira**. Salvador: Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais; Brasília: Fundação Cultural Palmares, 2006.

Internet References

CASTRO, Mariene de. "Música de Axé." www.dicionariomph.com.br/mariene-de.castro/... Accessed on 23rd July, 2019.

----- "Biografia". www.marienedecastro.com.br/biografia.php Accessed on 23rd July, 2019

DUNU Ifeoma Vivian & UGBO Gregory Obinna, "Women in Nigerian popular Music Empowered or Debased?" *Global Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* Vol. 3, No. 5 pp. 35-52, May 2015. European Center for Research Training and Deveopment, UK. www.eajournals.org Accessed on 28th December, 2020.

FRANCIS, Juliana. "Shina Peters's revelation:My life as Obey's houseboy. *The Daily Sun*. Accessed 11th Feb., 2009.

ROBOTHAM Donald Keith & KUBIK Gerhard, "African Music" www.britannica.com>art>African... Accessed on 20th December, 2020.

MARLEY, Naira, "Opotoyi" 2019 www.azlyrics.com>nairamar... Accessed on 29th July, 2020.

SANTANA, Ana Lucia. "Música Samba de Roda - Música Brasileira - InfoEscola <http://www.infoescola.com/musica/samba-de-roda/> Accessed on 20th Oct. 2016.

SOYINGBE, Anthonia. "Eji Owuro has turned my life around-Shola Obaniyi". An interview conducted by Anthonia Soyngbe to mark Shola Allyson - Obaniyi's foot print in Yorùbá popular music. www.independentnig.com/.../eji.owuro; www.nigerianvoice.com/.../why.i.dont Accessed on 22nd July, 2019

THIELMANN, Pia. *The Dynamic of African Feminism: Defining and classifying African Feminist Literature*, (Review). www.muse.jhu.edu Accessed on 12th January, 2016;

African Feminism. www.encyclopedia.jrank.org Accessed on 12th Jan. 2016

Natalia da Luz, "Mariene de Castro". *Por Dentro da Àfrica*, <http://www.pordentrodaafrica.com> Accessed on 4th April, 2017.

Discography

Mariene de Castro. "Abre Caminho". 2005

Shola Allynson, "Ire". 2007.