

Myth, History and the Revolutionary Ethos in *Morountodun* by Femi Osofisan

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Abstract

This paper emphasis on Osofisan's myth which is on situations in oral performance and it helps to select episodes from the life of Moremi to coincide with that of Titubi, while emphasis on both heroines as characters in a drama helps to keep the story line clear to the audience. The thrust of this paper is to select areas of the myth that are amenable to Osofisan's ideological mode of thought. Paradoxically, the use of this myth on stage lends physical body to an imaginary figure. It is on the moves of the story in a flux of fact, fiction, legend and myth, all arranged to allow the audience a critical, yet entertaining perspective. The playwright selects aspects of myth and history that are deemed relevant to the social and economic issues being discussed in the play. The paper identifies corruption, poverty and social inequality as the recurring problem of Africa in postcolonial era in this play. It adopts revolutionary ethos which links genuine social-political freedom to the collective actions of the people. He prefers as heroes, the ordinary people whose labour sustains society and a few people from the privileged class like Titubi, who commit class suicide and join the struggle of the common people in their agitation for self-determination. To Osofisan, societal and individual freedom is only possible through collective actions.

Keywords: Oral performance, Myth, Postcolonial, Revolution and Self-determination.

Introduction

This chapter discusses the manifestation of history in Osofisan's two historical plays: *Morountodun* and *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*. History is important as a reminder of the past. Osofisan makes sense from the past in his projection of the future so that mistakes of the past will not be repeated, though many atimes, man does not actually learn from the past, according to Egharevba¹. So, history is used as a tool in the hands of creative writers especially the playwright. The story of *Morountodun* is sourced in Yoruba myth of *Moremi*, a queen of Ife. This same story had earlier been explored by Duro-Ladipo in his play, *Moremi Ajasoro*. This play holds powerful messages for the society, especially the leaders. It preaches true love and genuine patriotism, as different from the way many contemporary politicians behave when they assume power these days.

Lekan Balogun in his own version of *Moremi* portrays Moremi Ajasoro as a legendary heroine rather than a mythical figure. Moremi is presented as a war captive from Ofa who lives in Ile-Ife and grows to love and admire the Ife people. Lekan Balogun presents Moremi as hailing from Ofa, a town in the present Kwara state. He gives her son's name as Omolarere. The play talks more about the themes of heroism and selflessness. The price of success is giving one's best and doing it with absolute commitment, determination and focus. Moremi symbolises patriotism, loyalty, determination, love for humanity, selflessness and courage. The play wishes not to only entertain but also stimulate people's intellect².

Another version of the story says a nobleman of Ile-Ife had a beautiful and virtuous wife named Moremi and a handsome young son, Ela. The people of Ife were at that time subject to fierce raids by a tribe called the Igbo, who were of such an uncanny appearance in battle that the Ife thought they were not human but a visitation sent by the gods in punishment for some evil. In vain did they offer sacrifices to the gods. The raids of these strange beings continued, and the land was thrown into a state of panic.

Moremi, desiring to bring an end to this condition of affairs, resolved to allow herself to be captured during one of the raids, so that she might be carried as a prisoner to the land of the Igbos and learn all their secrets. Bidding farewells to her husband and her little son, she went to a certain stream and promised the god of the stream that, if her attempt was successful, she would offer to him the richest sacrifice she could afford. As she had planned, she was captured by the Igbo and carried away as a prisoner. On account of her beauty, she was given to the king of the Igbo as a slave and on account of her intelligence and noble heart; she soon gained the respect of all and rose to a position of importance.

Within a short while in Igbo land, she had learnt all the secrets of her enemies. She found that they were not gods but ordinary men. Indeed, they were strange mantles of grass and bamboo fibre and this accounted for their unnatural appearance. She also learned that because of these mantles of dry grass, they were much afraid of fire and that if the Ifes were to rush among them with lighted torches, they would quickly be defeated. As soon as it was possible, she escaped from the palace and from the territory of the Igbos and returned to her own people in Ife. Her tidings were joyfully received at Ile-Ife and shortly afterwards, the Igbo were utterly defeated by the trick that Moremi had suggested. After accomplishing her mission, Moremi went to the stream and made a great sacrifice of sheep, fowls and bullocks, but the god of the stream was not satisfied and demanded the life of her

son. Sorrowing, Moremi was forced to consent and sacrifice the handsome boy, *Ela*. The Ife people wept to see this spectacle and they promised to be her sons and daughters for ever, to make up for her loss. *Ela*, as he lay upon the ground, was only half-dead, and when the people had departed, he recovered consciousness and sprang up. Making a rope of grass, he climbed up to heaven.

Myth and Revolutionary Ethos in *Morountodun*

In Osofisan's use of the Moremi story in *Morountodun*, there is an emphasis on "participating" audience. In its original form, the legend accommodates primarily an auditory audience. The context of its use here changes from pure orality to a combination of both the oral and the visual. Though the playwright does not strictly follow the modes of performance in oral literature, he does not completely depart from it because of the nature of the stage performance and the literary text. His audience, therefore, belongs to two overlapping groups; the literary group which reads the play as literature and the viewing group (which may or may not include the literary group) when the play is performed. However, our concern here is with the viewing audience, for whom the aural combines with the visual during presentation, as opposed to the purely aural and the purely literary in a mere re-telling of the legend or reading of the play. In performance, the visual is of great importance as Osofisan combines verisimilitude with the cinematographic device of flashback in narrating the legend.

By portraying the Moremi in scenes which show her as an emotional mother, jealous wife and an ambitious woman, like other women, Osofisan humanises her character. Apart from this, representing Moremi on stage lends body to a figure that had hitherto only lived in people's imaginations. This helps to further preserve the narrative and emphasise continuity which is an important element in the lives of a people. It also shows an aspect of events that led to the deification of Moremi who staked her life to save her people. In the same vein is Osofisan's emphasis on both the individual and the general situations that make Titubi a heroine as Titubi abandons her class and undergoes the ordeal of living with the peasant class, hoping to spy on them and thereby save the privileges of her own social class. The metamorphosis in her person comes in the process of her living amongst the people she has planned to betray.

Morountodun is concerned with the imperative of revolt in Nigeria's contemporary social situation. The play relieves the ancient myth of Moremi, the queen of Ile-Ife. The play is set in the Western part of Nigeria. It focuses on the Agbekoya uprising in history in which farmers who were thought to be docile rose to fight the military government over heavy taxes imposed on them. *Morountodun* reveals the suffering of the masses that work so hard but are denied full access to the fruits of their labour. Using the device of a 'play-within-the-play', Osofisan through his characters dramatises the revolt of poor farmers against oppression. The political leaders embezzle funds meant for community development thereby leaving the roads in a deplorable condition. This makes it impossible for the farmers to transport their goods to the market for sale. Despite the negligent by the government officials and the abject poverty of the farmers, they are asked to pay taxes for their farm products. The farmers resist this and protest to the local authorities for justice. All their efforts are ignored.

To complicate the issue, the new chairman who assumes office, Alhaji Buraimoh tries to bribe the farmers to pay their tax but this instigates further conflict. The government orders that those who refuse to pay their taxes should have their farms taken from them. When this order is to be effective, the farmers revolt and this leads to violence. The farmers flee their homes for safety and one of their leaders is killed. They target the properties belonging to the rich of the community, setting them on fire.

Titubi, the daughter of Alhaji Kabirat, whose mother is the leader of the market women, collaborates with the police to bring to an end, the fight. Remembering the story of a Yoruba legendary (Moremi) that brought an end to a war, she summons courage to do the same. As part of the plan, she accepts to be locked up in the prison alongside the captured agitating farmers. At night, the leader of the farmers, Marshal, visits the prison to set the people free and in the process, Titubi went with them. After living among the farmer disguised as mother in pain (based on her story to them), she returns to inform the Superintendent of Police (Mr. Musa), that the farmers are innocent and so, should be given a listening ear. On this mission, Titubi discovers the trials which the peasants (poor farmers) face and also finds love as she falls in love with their leader. She becomes the catalyst that brings about the end of the war. 'Morountodun' is the new name given to her by her love.

The first scene of the play is meant as a slice of the present before the unveiling of actual historical and mythical events. The theatre itself is demystified in order to make it more amenable to carrying the "revolutionary" message of the play, as dressing-room action is brought into public view (p. 5). Through the actions described above, the playwright gives the audience the cause to distance themselves emotionally from the stage action, thereby better placed to view the core of the story as education through entertainment. This act of distancing is further emphasised by the Director telling the story of his group's involvement in the historical struggle of a people (the *Agbekoya* uprising of 1969 in the old Western Nigeria), the interruption by Titubi and her gang, the actions of the Police and the subsequent turn of events culminating in the Director's speech at the beginning of Scene two (p. 16) Part of the opening scene is also to prepare the audience for subsequent events in the play. The Director refers to history and Titubi refers to Moremi's story. History is interpreted by showing

how Titubi wins the hearts of the peasants and is subsequently renamed “Morountodun”; after being married by Marshall. Moremi’s story is reconstructed to show its relevance to and possible utility in a modern revolutionary situation.

In this early part of the play, the audience witness the demystification of seemingly sacrosanct social institutions, when Titubi is confronted by the Superintendent of Police. The audience, knowing what has happened before the arrival of the police, would no doubt, be outraged to see the Director arrested as a thief, and would have been taken away and locked up but for his vehement objection. Even after his protest, the Corporal, believing that fine clothes make excellent characters, tells the Director (p. 10).

Leaving the well-dressed “rioter”, Titubi, and arresting the Director, who is not so well dressed, goes against the Yoruba saying; “aso nla ko leeyan nla” (The hood does not make the monk). Thus, the playwright underscores a moral point with the contradictions shown between behaviour and dress. It also makes a point about social inequality and about class division in the society, a society of might is right or the rich is always right.

After this, Titubi and the Superintendent engage in a verbal war in which the girl rudely addresses the Police Officer and he, on the other hand, orders the Corporal to handcuff her. Titubi represents the rich and the Superintendent, the law. Their encounter here is noteworthy as each is used as a demystifier of the other’s public image. Titubi shatters that myth about the inviolability of authority as represented by uniformed officers who may not always be right, and the Superintendent debunks the unwritten law about not arresting members of the rich and powerful class. The social inequality in the play can be linked to the postcolonial condition of Nigeria and Africa at large. The scene implies that members of these two classes are ordinary human beings like the rest of the society. The fact of reducing them on stage is symbolic of the playwright’s desire to see them stripped of those privileges attached to their social class.

Moremi is reconstructed in *Morountodun* through her reduction to a housewife. Though a queen, she is shown as capable of being jealous like any woman. She suffers from the burden of emotions but she is encouraged by friends and relatives to achieve her ambition. Ambition is one of the high points of her psychological balance, but she is also capable, again like any woman, of being unfaithful.

When she is conjured up through Titubi’s reverie, she is approached by Ninilola. Their conversation ranges in topics from fear to ambition, to the gods. Later, Oranmiyan, her husband, tries to persuade her to abandon her plans and when that fails, he resorts to force, which weakens Moremi physically. She then comes up with a fake story of infidelity, and Oranmiyan leaves her to her ambition and fate. Comparing Moremi’s reactions to the two visitors (Ninilola and Oranmiyan), one discovers that she is more sincere with Ninilola than she is with her husband. She is friends with Ninilola; they are equals with neither having a superior hold over the other. So, Moremi has nothing to fear from Ninilola. She is, therefore, honest with Ninilola as both of them discuss Moremi’s ambitions. She admits being too ambitious and says further (p. 33).

Oranmiyan is a husband and a king. Moremi’s persistence in her ambition, in the face of Oranmiyan’s entreaties, baffles the king. When he compliments her beauty in a bid to persuade her to renounce her plans, she teases him by reminding him that he took another wife despite that beauty. When Oranmiyan does not relent and would force her, she outwits him by “confessing” to an affair with another man in order to stir jealousy in his mind. This “confession” is a mere catalyst, not to be believed as she laughs after his departure.

The trial of Lawyer Isaac and Alhaji Buraimoh, who are from the same community and are in fact closely related to some of the fighting peasants, shows on which side the playwright’s sympathy lies. There are also moments of tension and relaxation among the besieged people. Equally worthy of note is the maturity with which the group administers justice as the temperament of youth and rigid application of the law are both tempered with humility blended with a deep concern and respect for human life and dignity. In the trial of the two men, the other members of the group would like to relieve Mosun of the agony of being on the panel to try her obviously guilty father, the Alhaji. However, in a revolutionary spirit, she insists on being there. She has a personal grievance against her father, as some of the others do. In this case, her first duty is to the people whom she is there to serve. Deliberately, Osofisan puts two members of the family in different and opposing ideological groups. The character in the revolutionary camp is given more sympathetic treatment by being imbued with a better sense of judgement which allows her to set aside personal prejudices and base her argument on the political facts of their collective struggle. When she is being pressured to leave the panel, she reminds her colleagues that “oppression and injustice know no frontier of blood or decency” (p. 50). That is a reference to her father who is on the side of the oppressors. Alhaji is Wura’s husband. He has also sacked another one of the men from his employment. Because of his position in the society, he finds it difficult to live with the idea of peasants standing up for their rights.

The Lawyer, on the other hand, is reduced to jelly at his trial. He is drawn as a contrast to the Alhaji as he squirms and begs for life while the other man has the courage of his conviction and argues boldly from the stand point of a rich man and a former benefactor. The portrait of these two characters shows a lucid understanding of members of the *petit bourgeois, nouveau riche* who are undergoing critical stress (pp. 51-52).

The two men are found guilty and would have been shot but for Baba, the eldest of the leaders, who overrules the verdict, making references to the blood and friendship bonds between the two “traitors” and some members of the peasants’ collective leadership. His speech tilts mercy on the side of dignity and respect for human life which is lacking in the two men and which is also lacking in the government officials who poison the source of water that the peasants drink in order to force them to surrender.

However, the playwright allows retribution to catch up later with the traitors as they are killed by the government forces in their bid to escape from the peasants’ camp. Osofisan deliberately makes the two characters a Lawyer and an Alhaji. The two titles are meant to symbolise the decadence of the *petit bourgeois* class to which the two men belong. The Lawyer is meant to use his profession in the service of truth and to protect his clients. But he engages in giving fake documents to a driver, thereby, breaking the law that he is supposed to protect and uphold. Alhaji is a common title in contemporary Nigerian society for those that travel on holy pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia as part of Islamic religious injunction. The title has been cheapened by the bad eggs of Islamic religion who use it as a means of securing contracts and peddling influence, rather than for the ideals intended by Islam. Such bad eggs have been known to go to Mecca as smugglers of prohibited items into and out of the country. Alhaja in the play is an exploiter who prefers to use the peasants to get what she wants. An instance can be seen when Titubi decides to go for the mission, but Alhaja refuses to let Titubi because she is her beloved daughter. Alhaji Buraimoh typifies bribery and corruption in government agencies. He betrays the cause of the comrades like Marshal, Mosun and Baba among others in return for bribes.

The confrontation between Alhaja Kabirat and the Superintendent in Scene Ten further illustrates the mutual distrust between the rich and their paid protective agents. Alhaja aggressively demands to know her daughter’s whereabouts. Her action is underscored with the doubt of a clever cheat because she believes that the Superintendent is merely using her daughter to “win another pip”. However, the police officer turns the table against her. The Superintendent begins by play-acting with the Corporal in a bid to distract and frustrate Alhaja Kabirat. This scene is also a comic relief used to achieve alienation effect on the audience. Starting from insinuations, the Police Officer gradually goes into definite accusations as he begins to interrogate Alhaja. She is confronted with the evidence that she has been paying Lawyer Isaac and Alhaji Buraimoh for reasons unknown to the Superintendent. This counter-offensive interrogation is still going on as Titubi enters, covering Marshall with a gun.

The scene flows here into the next, which is a flashback showing the process of Titubi’s conversion through practical education. The women’s conversation at the stream leads from a mere nickname to the enactment of a situation which gives rise to that nickname, Morountodun.

The Postcolonial Thought in *Morountodun*

In *Morountodun*, Femi Osofisan talks about the intrigues and betrayals of people’s expectation by the government and its functionaries like the police, tax collectors and sanitary inspectors, who hold the people down in a terroristic grip. But the play also depicts the determination and the struggle of the peasants to combat the tyranny of the military government, and the economic hardship that they face under their government. The determination is seen when Marshal chooses to sacrifice his life for the same struggle not even considering the fact that he is just engaged with his new wife – Titubi, renamed, Morountodun.

Osofisan shows how determined the peasants are to fight corruption and wickedness of the state, to the extent of laying down their lives. The play shows the process by which rules and laws are misused in aid of self-enrichment by the elite. It also shows the spirit of resistance in a people who, though lacking in formal education, are ready to fight for their rights. One of them is Baba Kayode who spends two weeks in jail for not giving up his umbrella and for defending himself by beating the Sanitary Inspector. The scene is meant to arouse a sense of outrage in the audience as it does in Titubi. The outrage is evident in her question; “What!” This is because he wouldn’t give up his property. The answer by Mosun is a summary of the peasants’ suffering (p. 63).

The conversation which follows this shows how the peasants’ efforts at legitimate redress are thwarted through the frustrating legal process, and the visit of the Governor who only comes just to exhort the peasants to pay. Even at that point, the peasants are still making efforts, through a direct appeal to the Governor as Baba’s response to his speech is enacted by Mama Kayode (p. 65). Though, this is happening in post-independence years, it brings to mind the conduct of European colonialists in different parts of Africa.

In Yoruba culture, old age is a symbol of wisdom and experience. Thus, Baba, who is referred to only as “Baba” because of his old age, responds to the Governor’s speech. He begins his appeal with a paradoxical statement in which he refers to the Governor as his son who gives a “fatherly” advice. Fatherhood in this context is the equivalent of being a father without being a biological parent. This point of view is supported by Baba’s speech that his people meet their civic responsibilities, as sons perform their filial roles, but the government, the father, failed to perform its parental duties. The people’s lack of social amenities is not commensurate with their taxes. On another level, the age of the governor is of some significance. Being in the position of a father (Governorship) does not, therefore, always mean that one is of a fatherly disposition. That is Titubi’s first lesson

about the suffering of the peasants.

In her thirst for more education, Titubi begins to ask more questions. She is answered in a way that accounts for the determination of the peasants in pursuing their revolt (p. 67). Titubi's education flows into revelations of love as the women tease her about having won Marshall's love. The revelation is made through innocuous teasing, which is harmless. The playwright chooses this method to demonstrate the spirit of unity and cooperation among the women. Titubi is not the only one with amorous designs on Marshall, but she wins him while the others are neither hostile nor jealous.

Titubi is teased through the folkloric method of riddle solving (*alo apamo*) like the courtship of Sontri and Yajin in *The Chattering and the Song*. Here, the process is prolonged, but it turns out to be a "trap" to catch Titubi as she blurts out the incriminating sentence; "you know, he still frightens me ---", "he" here refers to Marshall. In fact, to her credit, the other women think Marshall is lucky to have been won by her. Marshall appears as this sentiment is being expressed by Mama Kayode and the women leave, giving the two lovers the needed privacy.

The flashbacks which constitute the acted-out narratives are the core of the play as they show the process of transition for Titubi from a spy to Morountodun. The playwright shows the art of give-and-take within a revolutionary group in a situation of siege. The worth of life in those scenes are defined by the way the people share both their "salt" and their "suffering". From this point in the play, Titubi assumes the essence of the revolutionary spirit. When, therefore, she assumes that pedagogic role among the people she leaves behind before her transformation, she is sure of herself in telling them that, "our life itself is not important. Nor all the glittering tinsels we use to decorate it. It is how we live it" (p.66). That is the sum total of the playwright's message.

However, Titubi's rejection of the Moremi image in this scene calls for more reflection (p. 70). It is true that Titubi is not Moremi. It is also true that the State is not always right, but it is not totally true that Moremi served the State and was the State. Moremi as seen earlier in the play, volunteers and she is motivated by her ambition. She admits that much to Ninilola. With the pretence of jealousy and an admission of infidelity, she out-manoeuvres Oranmiyan who would have stopped her. What the mythical Moremi did was revolutionary. It is true she married into the ruling class, but she was not an embodiment or spirit of that class. Therefore, she cannot be regarded as the State. She acted for the people as the following argument by her would show (p.37) Osofisan's representation of Moremi should not be mistaken for the representation of Moremi's original legend. Her thoughts and feelings are for the mothers. She cites Oluorogbo as a symbol of love between parents and their children, emphasising the point with the undertone that every child is a "prince" in the eyes of the mother. Her deification is anchored on this concept of precious African motherhood. Even part of her praise-chant sung by the Director attests to this (p. 41) Furthermore, in her conversation with Ninilola, she says: "Nini, it is time for us to rise, to stand and square up our shoulders by our own courage, and stop leaning on the gods".¹⁴ Titubi encourages the peasants not to lose hope in the play. The only difference is that Moremi went among the Igbo to betray them for the salvation of her people, whereas Titubi went among the peasants hoping to betray them, but ending up betraying her erstwhile social class and becoming a heroine of the peasants, the class on whose side the playwright's sympathy lies. This is a demonstration of Osofisan's re-visiting of myth and history to make a postcolonial point.

It is quite evident that the playwright wants the audience to see the socio-political and spiritual essence of Moremi's act used as a reference point by Titubi. Moremi's failure as a person is overshadowed by her act of self-sacrifice which is more relevant to the present socio-political imperative that the playwright suggests by marrying the *Agbekoya* uprising with Moremi's story. Scene 15 recalls Scene 8 with the women at the stream celebrating harvest. Titubi is the centre of attention as somebody is putting finishing touches to the plaiting of her hair. In this scene, however, the discussion naturally centres on the struggle and the expectation of hope based on the peasants' struggles. It leads to the song that Titubi teaches the women. The song is one of the ideological messages of the play (p. 71). The presence of the three men leads again to a teasing game by the women as they act the "obstructive" go-between, preventing Marshall from having direct access to Titubi. It is a game of courtship in which gestures and actions, rather than words, convey the message. The game culminates in the presentation of coral beads to Titubi as a token of love, and her being renamed by Marshall. Thus, Titubi becomes Morountodun, a symbolic healing bridge through which the wounded and the stricken peasants can hope. Thus, Osofisan finds in Moremi, a symbol of courage relevant to the modern postcolonial society in Nigeria. There is a representation of Moremi in Titubi's courage, wits, feminine ego and pride.

It is noteworthy that Titubi is decorated with *iyun* beads, the beads of royalty in Yoruba culture. The more *iyun* is used, the more its lustre comes out. Ordinary folks regard it as a priceless jewel, the owning of which is a status symbol. The use of this category of beads echoes the song rendered just before the wedding ceremony. Hope, likened to a jewel which never fades, is an apt description of the beauty of Titubi's internal strength. Throughout the play, there is a spirit of celebration, especially with the women at the stream. The fascination and graceful sensibility of the wedding scene also commands special note. The scene-changes

artistically exploit the co-operative undertaking which the theatre itself is, as the scenes flow into one another with actors becoming stage hands, some of them taking on multiple roles. The whole theatre thus becomes one performing area.

Osofisan eliminates stage illusions in order to distance his audience, adapting the Brechtian technique of epic theatre. Creating such emotional distance allows his audience to appreciate his position. But the distancing creates complexities as the audience is kept in suspense and, therefore, absorbed more into the performance. Osofisan also uses dramatic elements like music, song, dance, riddles, proverbs and dialogue as well as involving the audience in a participatory role. He advocates the active involvement of his audience in the process of evolving a future from the present through an examination of the past. He believes that there are ways of facing the challenges of the emerging societies and those solutions can only be found from within the society. While depicting a nation that has gained independence from colonialism and is struggling with the challenges of self-governance, Osofisan exposes the features of socio-political development in Nigeria; poverty, class distinction and underdevelopment. Different aspects of Nigeria's postcolonial experience are highlighted in the play in the following concepts: First, there is unhealthy class distinction and social stratification. Osofisan probes the socio-political and economic injustices in the society, which are the major challenges confronting Nigeria after independence. In the play, Titubi, a member of the upper class like Moremi, tries to bring culprits to justice through disguise. These culprits are militant-peasant-farmers who resort to arms in order to express their grievances in response to the government's tyranny. This tyranny involves imposition of taxes and levies, bribery and corruption in administrative agencies like the Sanitation Commission. He argues that it is really the whole society that is criminal and corrupt. He suggests that there is no rationale behind executing armed robbers while neglecting fraudulent civil servants, corrupt law officers, politicians and profiteers.

Second, there is crisis in Nigeria after colonialism (after independence). Every scene of the play focuses on the Agbekoya uprising (1968) in which farmers who are thought to be docile rise to fight the government over the heavy taxes imposed on them. The wealthy are referred to as the cause of this uprising and in a bid to put an end to the crisis, Titubi, a young and rich lady, decides to infiltrate the camp of the rebel farmers who are demanding their rights in order to find out the farmers' plan and bring their leaders to the authorities. She sets off on this suicidal mission against her mother's wish. On this mission, Titubi discovers the trials which the peasants (poor farmers) face and also finds love as she falls in love with their leader. She becomes the catalyst for social change.

It should be noted that one of the major aims of postcolonialism is to restore or recreate the glory of the African past. Osofisan achieves this recreation by laying emphasis on communality (seen in the peasants) rather than individuality. Besides, in his subtle treatment of gender issues, he merges the image of the African woman represented through Moremi with the image of a modern society after independence.

Conclusion

Osofisan explores mythical and historical materials in order to advance his post-colonial thematic concern in *Morountodun*. He finds in myths stories and situations that are relevant to contemporary situations. He also borrows the methods and motifs of myth and history. However, he deliberately distorts the borrowed myths in order to advance revolutionary goals. He draws on African theatrical and cultural elements such as song and dance, riddle, role-playing, and story-telling. His overall goal is to produce a play that allows the audience to make social, political and cultural choices and to accept surprise and change. Titubi, the heroine in the play, becomes the modern Moremi, used as an icon of social change that blows from the past to the present post-colonial order.

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