**Book Review**


Reviewed by: Joseph Moyinoluwa Talabi, Ph.D, Department of Religions and Peace Studies, Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University, Ojo, moyinoluwa.talabi@lasu.edu.ng

Situating gender roles within the context of cultural contrition has always been a difficult task for scholars and researchers. While generalizing a gender role based on cultural heritage may not be totally accurate, to a large extent it is safe to classify gender roles using socio-religious functions. To a significant extent financial role within the society and the family setting are also a differential factor. However, as noted in this book, gender confusion can happen. This ambiguity may arise as a result of cross gender functions in which women perform the role of men and vice versa. This ambiguity is noticeable in stereotypical perceptions of which temperaments of a particular gender are acceptable. But experience shows that some women like Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti possessed temperaments that were attributed only to masculinity. The writer further looked at contemporary issues like same-sex relationships within the narrow context of Yoruba culture. The book uses ‘historical-phenomenological methods’ (11) while ‘incorporating data from interviews’ (11) in its approach to this epic work. The central theme of this work runs through the six chapters. The book looks at some cultural practices such as gender mutilation and male chauvinism.

The book systemically adopted a ‘general to particular’ (11) approach by first looking at the Yoruba people from panoramic point of view, while focusing its lens on the roles of women within the context of a male dominated society. The writer projects women as a ripe pupa that broke away from its cultural cocoon to emerge as a beautiful sunflower-coloured butterfly. This emergence, argues the writer, is a systemic evolutionary process. It is as women have come of age and are willing to challenge the status quo ante. While the history, from re-
ligious, economic, and political perspectives, has not been gender balanced, the author argues further that women through sheer brutality, in spite of feminine tenderness and arrogance, in spite feminine submissiveness have breasted their way to the pinnacle and even sometimes have become *manly woman* and forced a role change in order to achieve rare positions of authority in their spheres of influence. Each chapter focuses on a special sub-theme: Chapter 1 focuses on the economic, political and religious roles of Yoruba women; chapter 2 focuses on the religious influence of Yoruba women and how they play leading roles in Yoruba religion; chapters 3 and 4 examine the spiritual status of women in both Christianity and Islam; chapter 5 beams its light on how women thrive in Yoruba religion outside the immediate geographic location of Yoruba people; and chapter 6 dwells more on interconnectivity engendered by globalization and how Yoruba women find their feet in a global religious ocean. The book, therefore concludes that Yoruba women have always made a way for themselves in spite of challenges of male domination in the religious space, and in spite of globalization and modernity, women have continued to evolve and play even increasing roles as Yoruba religion is being practiced abroad and also foreign religions are been practiced in Yorubaland.