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THEATRE, CREATIVITY, GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC DIVIDENDS IN THE SEASON OF PROSPECTS

Keynote Address

Mabel Ewrierhoma

University of Abuja

Whereas there now appears to be agreement on the need for democratisation, *the contents* of the democracy, its institutional formatting and the social agents of the democratisation are still matters of debate, often trenchant.

Omafume Onoge

The arts are where we discover and express our humanity, privately or *collectively*. They provide us the language to share our common joy and grief, to find communion with one another, to pass our stories and wisdom from one generation to the next.

Claire Peeps

This is the 27th Annual Convention of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) and like many would say, a lot of water has passed under the bridge. For about four decades, academics have gathered under this aegis to appoint ideas that readily fit the angle of scholarship that they espouse to advance humanity. Since 1990 when I became faculty at the University of Abuja, a lot has happened in the Society to challenge its existence. Many of us gathered here have witnessed at various national spheres different administrative styles, academic temperament, political (dis)orientation, depending on the dominant ideology in the nation, and physical or ideological exile of the forced, willing and reluctant types. Despite the challenges and specialty, the Society yearly admits academics whose robust scholastic bearing and standpoints have

helped to sustain the Society. Many of such are here today and I welcome you to SONTA. The theme for this year is logical and its centrality and soundness purported by 2015 as an election year. Theatre and Creativity in Enhancing Democracy is worthy of exegetical attention because the field of theatre arts has shown cross cutting exposé in the depiction and representation of reality in physical and virtual text, performance and other cultural manifestations particularly from folk to the new media. Life, as we know it presently, would be valueless without creativity of the theatrical kind.

This address is meant to anticipate what many participants at this conference have chosen to discuss as finished essays or work in progress from different spans of critical thinking, library research and field work. It is an address meant to facilitate an excursion into who creates what, how and why it is created, in order to enhance democracy in the Nigerian polity. The Nigerian society has undergone a lot of flux in different sense of the word and the upheaval arising from the unrest can only be mitigated by creativity, and the theatre is one of the endeavours or ventures that can salvage the country from such.

Onoge's view above poses the need to interrogate the contents of our democracy. Civitas, over a decade ago, engaged in a civic forum and education project and listed fourteen items to ascertain a democracy. The poster for the project showed the ways of monitoring the health of a democracy, and there is nothing strange about the indexes or content of the list. However, we may ask: what is our input into democratic practice as we now know it? The dearth of cultural inputs that are creative and project our common existence in our Nigerian democracy opens us up for more critical anxiety.

I

Theatre is discourse and it entails people-oriented and people-centred creativity that at once enriches through the spirit of cooperation. Whether it is identity-based or not, theatre pursues the values that make the world a better place, for the actor and the audience, and in between the lifelong factors that breed a valuable world. The Civitas project in Kuje, Abuja held in 2000 and had the following checklist: Human Rights, Bill of Rights, Citizen Participation, Multi-Party System, Political tolerance, Regular, Free and Fair

Elections, Accepting the Results of Elections, Rule of Law, Equality, Accountability, Transparency, Control of the Abuse of Power and Economic Freedom. These are not strange to theatre artists who have since ancient times created from the points of view of the checklist provided by Civitas. There are play texts on the Nigerian experience about every check list where a call to action is evident. To the theatre artist, it is imperative to build socio-political capital using such indices rather than score cheap political points. Theatre should continue to organize, and mobilize the masses, for therein lies its potency. Nigerian theatre since the pre-colonial time has not fallen short of this and it continues to boast of different forms of theatrical expressions.

All these depict the socio-political season in which we find ourselves and how theatre praxes can create paths for the (co)existence of multifarious or assorted creativity. The theatre is an ally of government when the latter finds the focus of the former in consonance with, rather than in opposition to its existence. Some political dramatists and their theatre of query have faced censorship and repression from government; thus, the examples of Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Joe de Graft, Al Amin Mazrui, who underwent incarceration for the blend of creativity, theatre and politics show the untiring spirit of the creative artist. Plays like *I Will Marry When I Want*, *Muntu*, *Cry for Justice*, earned their authors captivity. To Cieri and Peeps, "Art is usually among the first forms of expression to be censored under repressive regimes" (271). They affirm that this genre of art "gives voice to multiple perspectives, eliciting responses in the form of reflection, discussion, debate – the sort of civic discourse and public exchange of ideas that are elemental to a flourishing democracy" (271). Unfettered evidence proves that such creativity has advanced the dream and will of nations and even races. An example here is the silent film *The Battle Ship Potemkin* and the manner it propagates mass action. Connecting governance and its yields through creativity and theatre would help to make every kind of professional or amateur theatre or performance a parasol under which the visual, verbal, oral, virtual, creativity be they secular or religious coexist and propel to mass action.

II

The centrality of theatre to life cannot be overemphasized. The factors that limit creativity can also enable the creative spirit to head. The examples of repressive regimes that would 'drink nectar from the skull of writers' eternally prove the might of the pen than the sword or in very recent episodes, the bomb. Government can only support creativity to its advantage, or gain and suppress it to its loss. The ability to be creative about our challenges has led to the birth of theatre experiences that changed communities, countries and continents. It is well to appoint creativity to meet political problems. This is evident in the various community theatre or theatre for development expeditions in the Academy today. The creative enterprise in all its ramifications most suits the sustenance of democracy. Creativity involves people, and can influence them to act positively. It is the creative industry that is one of the few exceptions to operations that go under without government intervention. Our home video industry drew world attention to our creative acumen in the economics of culture. In the sphere of music, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Osayomore Joseph, Nowamagbe, Lanrewaju Adepoju, Miriam Makeba educe creative expressions that elicited the need for democracy. Where the politics of culture is concerned, however, the scorecard is abysmally a reflection of unsuccessful attempts to harness Nigeria's diversity for tangible profit, political or otherwise. Issues of nationhood and governance influence creativity, especially where regulations or laws do not offer adequate protection or compensation, or when the creative artist suffers breaches or neglect. The theories that commit the creative individual or group into a symbiotic relationship with his community offer cordial engagement. Where the watchdog effect is touted, creativity scrutinizes goings-on in the society for popular intervention or active participation. The mass effect is highly relevant here, carrying in its wake, the theories of the sociology of theatre, which analyse the commitment of creative artists to real life events in the society. The creative artist cannot therefore afford to play the ostrich and escape into oblivion without reflecting much concern with democracy and its attainment in Nigeria. It is creativity that empowers the functionality of the theatre, which in turn expresses the activity of the leaders and the led and extends the chain of humanistic deliberation.

III

Governance is engagement with the people who are the sources of the authority or power that the governor exhibits. The leader is only relevant in as much as the ruled acquiesce to his power. Sophocles' *Oedipus*, Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, J. P. Clark's *The Raft*, Zulu Sofola's *King Emene*, Femi Osofisan's *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest*, Tunde Fatunde's *No More Oil Boom*, Tess Onwueme's *Then She Said It*, and Frank Ogbече's *Harvest of Corruption* among a continuum of plays may have looked at political power, authority and governance differently; the led often represented by the audience or spectator, still determine governance. Democracy is possible where equity dominates actions. The form, content and character of creativity that challenges oppression by the raw truth it speaks to power can be found in traditional and modern performative experiences. We cannot forget in a hurry Ayota Theatre, or the Samaru and Iseyin theatre projects. Unfortunately, regions that once challenged colonial oppressive regimes through mass protest are, today, themselves caught in a conflagration of turmoil and disorder. One example is East Africa and the Mau Mau, Maji Maji rebellions, and today the traditions of rich creativity, and populist theatre are yet to be harnessed to quell the recent disorder in the region. We may ask: Are there no creative artists in DRC, Mombasa, South Sudan, Maiduguri or Somalia?

Arthur Lewis opines that "The essence of political democracy is that politicians are subordinate to the public in whom are vested the fundamental rights of free criticism, opposition and dismissal". Lewis continues, "Apolitical system in which the public surrenders these rights to politicians must love the same evil results as an economic system in which the market is subordinate to a guild of businessmen". Democracy is the only hope of the common man in the Nigerian polity. There is however an urgent need to see it from an African, apropos Nigerian perspective. Archie Mafeje argues for a local perspective of re-visitation or, if you like, revalidation of some disciplines:

It has to be admitted in all honesty that
American political science propositions are both

vulgar and inane. If African scholars were to abandon them in toto, instead of screaming and shrieking about them, they would not get any poorer by it but might, gain for themselves the necessary space for original and creative thinking.

In the same vein, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (xvi) argues for cultural pluralism, that to predicate life experiences on the Eurocentric approach is fraught with real errors.

The Call for the Western-based new world order should be countered by a continued call for a new, more equitable international economic, political and cultural order within and between nations, a world order that reflects the diversity of world peoples and cultures. Hence the struggle for cultural freedoms.

The thrust of the argument for this liberty is the need for cultural survival and four other types of liberty - physical, political, economic, and identity or psychological. It is pertinent for democracy to be functional at the micro before the macro levels. By this is meant the architecture of internal democracy and governance. The fourteen items above can propel theatre to higher heights as questions to community challenges are answered through them. This locates the creative artist in the realm of politics with regard to engagement, relevance, commitment, interrogation and mitigation of issues as they concern nationhood. In SONTA, a concern with democracy warrants us to first settle for internal democracy and governance that is accountable within our ranks and units before we appraise national democratic practice. Our creative outputs should champion this stance too. The grassroots for me is a better place to start, detailing bottom-up standpoints that empower the plebs or the masses. People – the audience – that we cultivate through our works should be developed and reap the dividends of democracy. The anti-

democratic sensitivities like bias, political prejudice, corruption, and imbalance in the distribution of power should be eschewed. Most important is the need to beat a retreat from the move towards the inglorious military days of clampdown on newspaper houses. True democracy is the watchword here.

The dividends that accrue from democratic practice are endless depending on the socio-political context of that democracy. The gains from democratic practice should be a synthesis that includes the functions of theatre and the effects they produce in the society. In *this* society, the instruments of creativity should always marshal our rights and obligations as citizens. We need both unity and opposition to convey the Nigerian polity to development. Non-conformists or holders of dissident opinions are not necessarily criminals. Great creativity often stems from the opposition. These are the major democratic dividends behind which others on our endless lists come: security, liberty, health, shelter, abundance, the good life, equality, justice, and above all an indivisible nation. This last dividend for this speaker entails the proper management of cultural diversity. This works out creative inputs and outputs that are inclusive as cultural exclusivity hampers the quest for unity. The year before any general election to me is best suited to make democracy through the Nigerian multicultural ideal a reality. The inter-textual approaches and cross-cultural borrowings that artists bring to theatre practice and scholarship are welcome towards this end.

IV

Seasons come and go and are therefore like life, transient. How can these times be full of prospects when news headlines daily scream tragedy, mayhem, commotion and diseases threaten our communal living and our collective ethos as theatre artists? Today the theatre exists in a season of plague, insecurity, and political as well as cultural upheaval. The current concern for health and sanitation may seem ordinary, but to theatre and creative artists the concern with health has political connotations and repercussions. Again, the individual seems to triumph over the collective spirit. Where do we situate the theatre experience where the fear of handshakes, close contact and collaboration, evident in the theatre experience threaten theatre going? How does a theatre or film director interact with the cast for the play? What is the

future of dance, acting, costuming, body designs, or make up among other joint/communal creativity in the theatre? In this season of Ebola if there was an election how do we count our votes? Where do we source the audience for a complete theatre cycle? The 'home theatres' again overcome public performances. I wager this is another triumph of the home video, enjoyed within domestic confines, over theatre, a more public and communal art. What prospects are available in these outlined circumstances? The major hope is for security to be established, environmental degradation/pollution and disease kept at bay through proactive governance at all levels.

At another level with the prohibitive costs of living it is unreasonable to see the vista of hope as regards how theatre can enhance democratic practice and make creativity engender recovery and escape from debilitating circumstances. These are lean times and the fusion of scholarship and enterprise becomes imperative. The opportunity for robust massification of ideas for profit by the cultural economy is here. To coalesce the key words of this year's conference theme-theatre, creativity, democracy- into one idea brings to the fore the keyword 'interface'. Each keyword affects the other and it is the basis for interaction that brings us to the next point below.

There is need for acute interrogation of government policies by civil society, of which SONTA is one. This association needs to speak to power the pitfalls of glossing over cultural issues, or even still, neglecting the culture sector especially as we saw at the just concluded national conference. The truth is that our democracy can only swing on the hinges of our local context, of which creativity is central. How will creativity fare in the next decade? We need a context where our national creativity in its protean form will become a global norm and not an aberration from layback 'wild' Africa.

A planned attempt should be made to take a census of our creative industries by region or geo-political zone. A consciousness of government's weak support for the creative sector should be queried. The endowment fund for the arts should speak for a sector that needs to be revamped and made relevant in the global scheme of things. Nigeria needs more examples of Anatoly Lunacharsky.

For us in SONTA, there is much need to make our space gender inclusive. I had mooted the idea for a Women's Collective in our dear

association during a conference some years ago to facilitate mentoring and growth of younger female academics. This is an internal democracy, which I hope will be liberal, and will certainly boost the general ranks of the society by promoting sorroral as well as fraternal scholarly linkages. In return, a huge vista of humanist window opens for us all.

As I end this address, I ask again that we rise to honour Prof. Jenkeri Okwori, Prof. Samuel Kafewo and Dr. Martins Ayegba as well as Dr. Stella Adadevoh, all creative geniuses who brought to their practices a blessed touch of humanity for which each of them would be respected in his and her own right. In life as well as in death, they unveil the prospects of feasible and achievable creativity despite limiting circumstances. The Nigerian democracy is doable, sustainable, with the expiration of the politics of acidic identities or official 'chop- chop' tendencies and the rise of a true collective dynamics that fashion healthy and consolidated democracy in our polity. From this conference I suspect SONTA would collectively approach the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to assist it in its advocacy efforts at voter education, mobilization, popular participation and indigenous democracy. The time is fully ripe for this association to locate and occupy its place in the centrality of national politics and even industry.

THANK YOU.

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THE QUEST FOR DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: METHOD AND MANNER OF DRAMATIC AGITATIONS

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Abstract

Quite remarkably, a careful study of Nigerian drama reveals among other things, the role drama has played in constructing and reflecting a dominant popular perception about democracy and the quest for good democratic practice in Nigeria. This paper interrogates the method and manner of dramatic presentations of democratic agitations by playwrights in Nigeria. It interrogates how Nigeria's particular brand of democracy has helped shape the playwright's response in his portrayal of democratic conditions and dramatic agitations for popular democracy on the Nigerian stage; that is, how the practice of democracy in Nigeria has influenced and shaped dramatic writings. Using the postcolonial and social critical art theories in analysing the selected texts, the paper establishes and clarifies metaphors of democratic transformation used by Nigerian dramatists. The discussions of the plays show that Nigerian playwrights have written plays that agitate and advocate transformational ideals for social change. The paper concludes that the transformative and agitation process discussed ensures that the plays do not end in simply destroying anti-democratic forces and establishment, but rather evoke the communal nature of theatre while at the same time challenging and problematizing the possibility of positive change.

Introduction

A major problem facing Nigeria as a developing nation and indeed, Africa as a whole, is the inability of African nations to establish democratic institutions in line with civilized practice. The lack of civilized popular democratic culture has resulted in the fragmentation of Nigerian nationalism along ethnic lines which has further fuelled identity struggles for recognition by the federating units. There have even been threats of pulling out of the federal union or of making the federal core less significant by empowering the states and ethnic

nationalities. The prevailing democratic conditions of the Nigerian state continue to threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation state. The democratic institution in Nigeria thus continues to contribute to the political and economic dislocation of the Nigerian society. These conditions have led to the emergence of conflict zones within the body polity of the Nigerian nation. This paper therefore interrogates the method and manner in which the quest for democracy is presented in Nigerian drama.

Agitation for Democracy in Nigeria

Questions concerning the nature and conditions of democracy continues to dominate discourse in developing countries as new groups and movements mobilizing for political reforms continue to emerge in contradictory circumstances either to challenge the existing political and democratic system or to foist a new one on the masses. Kaarsholm and James' observation about these conditions becomes relevant here when they state that:

Since the 1980's, questions concerning the nature of democracy have become prominent in debates on development in Africa, Asia and Latin America for two sometimes contradictory reasons. First, internally, new movements mobilising for political reforms came to the fore in countries that had experience decolonisation in the two decades after the end of World War Two and challenged the equity of the political systems that had come into existence at independence. Second, external pressure for democratisation were brought about by international donors who wrote political conditionalities into the agreements for the provision of development and packages and called for human rights and civil liberties to be included in the constitution of receiving nations (190).

In Nigeria, the several military regimes that held the nation hostage provided minuscule social amenities while siphoning billions of naira from the national treasury. The murder of Dele Giwa with a parcel bomb during the Ibrahim Babangida regime marked a turning point in acts of state terrorism in

Nigeria mounted against agitations for popular democracy. The anxiety generated in the populace which also led to the raising of questions on the state of moral and economic decay of the country gave rise to Nigerians' quest for democracy. The Ibrahim Babangida regime saw the emergence and proliferation of civil rights groups that sought to agitate for one form of right or the other. Some of these civil rights groups are:

- Civil Liberty Organisation (CLO) founded by Olisa Agbakoba and Clement Nwankwo on October 15, 1987;
- Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) formed in 1989;
- Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) formed by Clement Nwankwo in 1990;
- Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP);
- Campaign for Democracy (CD) founded in 1991;
- Movement for National Reformation (MNR), formed in December 1992 with Chief Anthony Enahoro as chairman, Mazi Mokwugo Okoye as vice-chairman and Dr Olu Onagoruwa as interim secretary;
- United Democratic Front of Nigeria (UDFN);
- National Democratic Coalition of Nigeria (NADECO), 1994;
- Democratic Alternative (DA);
- National Conscience Party (NCP) formed by the famous lawyer and activist, Gani Fawehimi.

There are several other groups formed within and outside the country that in their agenda mounted pressure on the military to quit power. The International community, trade unions and professional bodies also joined the advocacy for democratic rights. The Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) through several of its members has not only over the years used their literary output to call for democratisation of the country, its members have creatively put forward ideologies that had stirred special interest in the populace in opposing militarism in Nigerian political life. As Soremekun observes:

Democracy and its concomitant essence have continued to be the prime issue in scholarship. A cursory survey of the intellectual

scene reveals that rare is the scholar who does not have something to say about democracy. Meanwhile its ethical strain is such that it is almost impossible to mount any offensive against democracy. Indeed those who attempt to oppose democracy usually do so in the name of democracy (1).

It becomes easy to understand why even the dreaded military regimes in Nigeria and subsequent elements in democratic Nigeria paid lip service to the tenets of democracy while suppressing all democratic structures that stand in the way of their 'lootocratic' governments.

The attainment of independence by Nigeria from Britain in 1960 prepared the ground for a democratic culture. Regime after regime had played down on the democratisation process in various ways. The economic effects of the patterns of governments established by these regimes had had an effect of unjust and uneven distribution of wealth which made a mockery of every pretention at popular democracy. From the government of the First Republic of Nnamdi Azikiwe and Tafawa Balewa to the Yakubu Gowon era that plunged the nation into civil war and succeeding military and civilian regimes; all made mockery of attempts at establishing the foundation of "real" democracy. The effects of poor democratic traditions in the underdevelopment of the Nigerian society are quite visible. Nigeria is a country that has been wrestling with complex decolonization, militarization, economic and development issues since gaining independence in 1960. With a population of over one hundred and fifty million people, Nigeria is plagued by a downward spiral of the educational sector and economic ineffectiveness, high rate of poverty, high rate of crime, and to add, high rate of violence and a growing monster of terrorism. Hostility and rivalry between ethnic groups and between political parties has turned elections into "do or die" affair. Politicians arm youths with guns and dangerous weapons to rig elections. The cities have become crime centres, political assassinations are frequent and often left unresolved. Adeoti observes that:

in the case of colonial and post-independence Africa, the real life often recurs too closely to drama, especially of the tragic temper.

Take the instance of election, an ordinarily harmless exercise in the process of leadership recruitment in a modern democratic setting. In Nigeria, it has become a ritual of chaos where violence is the arch-priest, attended by killing, maiming and destruction as if the nation is at war with its citizens. (Adeoti, "The Place of Tragedy in African Drama" NP).

Democracy in Nigeria has had a gloomy prognosis with an accompanying instability, inefficiency, and political squandering of national economic resources in favour of groups within the polity that the survival of such regimes depends.

It can hardly be said that Nigeria has ever had the enabling social atmosphere needed for democracy to thrive. It is also apparent that the country has not had a true taste of democracy, whether in the colonial past or in the years after flag independence. (Ibagere and Omoera 67).

What Nigeria has witnessed according to Ebagere and Omoera is an attempt at demilitarization to which the Nigerian theatre cum drama has contributed immensely.

Given these background of democratic condition and the quest for popular democracy in Nigeria in which politician and government officials operate as feudal lords, appropriating their constituencies as fief for private plunder, the ingredients that provide the conflict motif for drama to thrive are quite alive and visible in Nigeria's political landscape. It is against this backdrop that this paper now proceeds to discuss the contributions of the Nigerian dramatist in framing democratic conditions and engineering a popular perception of politicians and democracy that further the quest for democratic practice in Nigerian.

The Nigerian Dramatic Environment

Drama by its nature is particularly suited to raise questions about democratic conditions and the quest for democracy in its conflict discuses of social

conditions, society, human inter and intra conflict situations, about presence and representing, about fragmentized conditions of living in human society, about participation in a democratic space, about human conditions in a plural society, all of which are major concern to the democratic establishment. The Nigerian dramatic landscape has been peopled by creative talents who have used their creativity to speak out in favour of the oppressed common man in society. It has been a post-colonial hotbed of theory, style and experiments in dramatic communication. The dramatist in Nigeria has been vocal in commenting on the conditions of democracy in Nigeria and furthering popular agitations for good democratic culture. "Drama, there can be no doubt about it, has become increasingly important in our time" (Eslin 13). Nigerian drama has continued to critique the democratic institution in Nigeria, it has constantly taken the risk of teaching what others fear to learn, and it has spoken when others remain silent. Drama and theatre has been a central part of everyday life of human society throughout the history of mankind. It has over the years perfected its techniques of communication and methods of connecting with its audience.

Drama has had a long standing battle through its bite of social criticism with politics and social order. Through the apartheid protest plays in South African form of cockroach or guerrilla theatre to those that highlighted the plight of the populace during the period of colonial struggles in East Africa all provide intriguing paradigm for the Nigeria experience with post-colonial struggles for justice and the enthronement of good democratic conditions. One always finds replete in the plays a tragic displacement of a majority of the populace by a tiny privileged segment. A careful reading of these plays reveals a complex manifestation of the tragic spirit in African drama which drowns the comic relief in the depiction of the quest for democracy by African states.

Dramatists of all ages have tried to criticize their society. Nigerian and other African dramatists have also tried to use the dramatic medium to express their dissatisfaction with the state of the continent, especially the Nigerian nation and despotic African leaders in their bid to clean their society of elements or images which they consider not good for the general well being of man

and what they consider as factors retarding the development of the African states (Eni and Otiotio 224).

All works of art are product of social forces which invariably shape the choice of medium and presentational mode of artistic permutations. The response of the dramatist in Nigeria to the democratic conditions of the Nigerian state has therefore been shaped “by the appalling conditions of deprivation, mismanagement, corruption and greed that reign in Nigeria” (Affiah 284) which in turn has influence the style and method of dramatic agitations.

Method and Manner of Representation of the Quest for Democracy in Nigerian Drama

Since the winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature through his drama, Wole Soyinka has stayed ahead and led the pack of creative writers in the country in forging an indomitable identity for the literary arts, especially the dramatic medium in the country. Soyinka especially has through his dramas and public lectures spoken out to every regime and called for democratization of the country. Other dramatists have contributed their own quota towards the democratisation of the country. Ibagere and Omoera draw our attention to Akinwale’s (1993) espousal on the usefulness of Wole Soyinka in this regard. This is evident especially in his plays *Kongi’s Harvest* and *A Dance of the Forests*, and as demonstrated his self-exile in the mid-1990s. In *Kongi’s Harvest*, also, Soyinka insists “that the old order must give way to a new one in a most violent way if peaceful change is rendered impossible” (Ibagere and Omoera 71).

Soyinka in most of his plays reconstructs the myth of Ogun in interpreting political situations in Nigeria. *Kongi’s Harvest* (1967), *A Dance of the Forest* (1963), *The Strong Breed* (1964), *The Swamp Dwellers* (1964), *The Beatification of an Area Boy* (1995), *King Baabu* (2002), are plays that demonstrate Soyinka’s concern with the state of democracy in Nigeria (Africa) and political conditions of African states. *A Play of Giants* deals more with political dictatorship. In *Beatification of an Area Boy*, Soyinka paints a portrait

of the Nigerian politician as a glorified area boy. Dauda Enna Musa says of *Beatification of Area Boy* that:

Owing partly to the genetics of the present democratic civilian government or the imperative of the continuum of Nigeria's political history, the Area Boys are not only consolidating in contemporary politics but can be said to be creating a niche for themselves (477).

Soyinka thus conceives the Nigeria politician as a societal pest that brews corruption, nepotism, ineptitude, unstable political system, dictatorial governance, and prebendal attitudes. One fact that most Nigerians accepts is that the Nigerian politician is corrupt. The unresolved question is how to deal with the Nigerian politician who has held hostage the collective aspiration of the people over time.

Many countries in Africa are therefore under various dictating factors that have no beneficial bearing on the life of the citizens but, instead, adversely affect their collective existence. The demand for good governance has therefore resulted in different forms of internal strife in countries like Sudan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Namibia and Nigeria (Adeyemi 2).

The democratic conditions of Africa states with particular reference to Nigeria has engendered strife, poverty, underdevelopment, greed and now, terrorism which has led to agitations that further the quest for popular democracy. These acts impede development and peace which democracy by its tenets and true practice brings to a nation.

An inter-textual engagement with Femi Osofisan's *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest* brings to light the political intrigues that engender negative democratic images of African states. Osofisan shows that the selfish interest of African leaders born out of their desire to sit tight and gain political control at all cost, causes conflict in society. Iyeneri's hold on the cult of the River goddess becomes exemplary of sit tight African political leaders who

usurp authorities, falsify history in order to perpetuate their selfish reign on the people.

AYOKA: They're not many, our grievances, Iyeneri, and they all come from the same single thing. You have been at the shrine now for ten years, priestess, Ten year! But when you were chosen for the post, our elders have now told us – when you were elected priestess, the normal term of such service was just a single year! One season, and that was all!

IYENERI: (unmoved). Ah! And is that all then? You said nothing new.

GBEMI: Not new, but scandalous! Yeye, ten years! Ten years and on single person!

IYENERI: So what? Now you are going to provoke us! Scandalous indeed! Such mighty words from your little mouth!

LABOOPO: It is our little mouths, Yeye, but the mighty words comes from those who sent us. Ten years is the life of ten priestesses!

IYENERI: But have you paused to ask yourselves why? Why has no one complained up till now? The so-called elders that you claim to have gone to for your stories, why have they themselves never raised their voices to object?

DUNBARIN: They say there were in fact many voices of opposition in the earlier years, but that these voices were brutally suppressed. (Osofisan, 39-40)

Sola Adeyemi highlights on the title of the play when he explains that:

Furthering the agenda of surreptitious insurrection starts from the title itself. "Dance contest" symbolises "the troubled situation" (Osofisan: 1998: 5) of our countries. It expresses the intoxicating orgy of elections carnivals celebrated in almost every country in Africa, not as a conscious electoral duty to improve the life of the

citizens, but as an exercise to further the pseudo-imperialistic wishes of the leaders (Adeyemi 4)

In *Yungba Yungba* Osofisan uses the extended metaphor of the dance to examine the quest for democracy by Nigerians and by extension, Africans and other governments all over the world that are still under undemocratic regimes. Through the dance, Osofisan examines the political acrimony that exist between political parties and politician, the boasting of Nigerian (African) politicians during political campaigns and rallies, the unfriendly atmosphere of political contest and the bickering that characterise the parties jostling for political offices. Thus Osofisan is of the view that acts of political dictatorship mar Nigeria's democratic efforts. Nigeria political leadership is thus perceived as engendering conflicts in its tyrannical hold on power. The penchant by the Nigerian politician for gaining and retaining power by fraud and mass slaughter is more congenial than doing so through free and fair elections. Given this background, the play presents the politician and democracy as it is practiced in Nigeria as a fraud perpetrated by a cult of select few on the Nigerian populace who are the victims of false democratic conditions. Eni also opines of the play that:

The play focuses on the denial of democratic rights. Through the debate proposed by Ayoka, Dunbarin, and Laboopo – the Yungba Yungba group – they argue for the realisation of the political aspirations of the younger generation. The argument progresses through tightly woven plot of intrigue, dance, music, and mime to the final part where Iyeneri, the priestess at the shrine of the river cult, is forced to open the way for a democratic process (Eni 91).

Nigerian (African) democracy is presented as hypocritical, its political leaders portrayed as paying lip service to the tenets of democracy while in actual fact, they are self-perpetuating and sit tight regimes which underdevelop the country and lay waste the vast potentials of a younger and more vibrant generation of its citizens. The participants in the Nigerian democratic

experience are thus portrayed as parasites. Iyeneri, the priestess of the river cult is revealed as a political figure that clings to power lustfully.

Published in 1993, the play was written during the peak period of political intrigues in Nigeria that characterise the Ibrahim Babangida regime. The Babangida regime saw a “maradonic” dribbling of the masses that witnessed an unprecedented shifting of political goals. When the elections that was adjudged the most free and fair in Nigeria’s political history was conducted, the election was annulled and the winner denied victory. Osofisan therefore uses the play to call for mass uprising against the sit tight Babangida regime and similar regimes in Africa. To an extent, this call was heeded by the Nigerian people as that regime was forced to “step aside” which paved way for further experiments with democratic transition during the Abdusalami Abubakar, Sani Abacha and the Ernest Shonekan regimes that finally facilitated the present democratic dispensation in 1999.

A careful perusal of Nigerian drama presents us with a stereotypical portraiture of the Nigerian politician cum pattern of agitation for democracy in Nigeria. In Esiaba Irobi *Nwokedi*, the quest for democracy assumes a cleansing ritual in which the old stock of undemocratic elements are washed away through the violent process of resistant championed by Nwokedi during *Ekpe* ritual festival. Senator Arikpo and Nwokedi Senior are portrayed as betrayers of the future of the Nigerian youths and people. Arikpo is portrayed as cannibalistic, womaniser, thief, murderer, and many more appellations which fit the contemporary Nigerian politician. Senator Arikpo slaughtered his wife and children for ritual in order to gain political power. The altercation between Arikpo and Nwokedi aptly defines the image of the Nigerian politician as such:

- Nwokedi: Senator, I have no respect for constituted authority.
Arikpo: Why?
Nwokedi: Because man has never constituted authority except to exploit and dehumanize their fellow human beings.
Arikpo: Only if you let them exploit you. Only if you cannot force your way into the status quo. Me, I carved my

way into the Senate. I was born in poverty. Grew up in poverty. Matured in poverty. And you know that poverty has a way of asking you who you are. When poverty asked me who I am, I said to poverty, "I am somebody"

Nwokedi: (advancing) But you are still suffering from a specie of poverty. Mental poverty. The worst type of poverty.

Arikpo: A peasant, I crawled, a determined crab, out of the swamp, into the Senate.

Nwokedi: Senator Arikpo, since you went to the Senate what single betterment has there been in our lives?

Arikpo: I never went into the Senate to make arguments for anybody's betterment.

Nwokedi: What did you go there to do? To sell pistols?

Arikpo: No. I only went there to graft some skin on the scar itching on my psyche. The scar of poverty and its attendant inferiority complex. Nwokedi, I went into the Senate to hang my portrait on the walls of the Senate. (Esiaba 72-73)

The image of Nigerian democracy and of the Nigerian politician drawn here is very troubling. Politicians exploit levers of government to lay claim to vast economic wealth while the majority of people in their constituency live in penury. The superficiality of Nigeria's democracy is made clear by Arikpo's assertion which holds true for many politicians occupying elective post in Nigeria's democratic establishment.

The past century has seen the expansion of forms of democratic governance throughout the world including Africa. Democracy is well considered the most legitimate form of government that no one dare publicly speak ill of it. The lack of vocalization does not mean lack of enmity. It would be premature and naive to conclude

that true democracy has emerged triumphant. History is still being shaped and the verdict is yet to be rendered (Tinubu 2-3).

Tinubu's observation aptly describes the situation captured in Ben Binebai's play, *If Not... A Play of the Gods*. In *If Not...*, there is a conscious warning that Nigeria must not mistake false images of democracy for real democracy. In the play, two types of democracy are dramatised. One is Eshu Laroye, who usurps the democratic throne of Ukolo Kingdom, the other is Democracy whose identity was stolen by Eshu and used to terrorise Ukolo kingdom. During the reign of Eshu as democracy, while clothed in the guise of real democracy, he dehumanises the people and appropriates Ukolo democratic structures to his personal benefit. Ozala's encounter with Eshu as Democracy illustrates this point:

Servant: Your Excellency, out there are two of your subjects waiting to see you.

Democracy: Send them right in. (*They are brought in*) what is your name? Before you answer me, let me warn you. It is a taboo to look at my face. I mean don't look at my face. It is strongly considered an act of insubordination and revolt against my government to look at my face.

Ozala: I am Ozala (*mistakenly looks at the face of His Excellency*).

Democracy: Don't look at my face, I will cut off your ears and pluck out your eyes if you look at me again. I warn you! Now what is the story?

Ozala: I am sorry your Excellency... Your servants have taken over my farm land and harvested all the crops i laboured for.

Democracy: And so what? Are you not in a community? Do you not know that a communal life is a collective life? Have you forgotten that it has a humanistic character? What is this your senseless grumble about

land? My land! My Land! All you people know how to say is my land! My land! Did you come with land from your mother's womb? Answer me now you greedy fool or I will teach you how to dance in the bosom and company of spiteful filaments of fire! (Binebai 14)

The play portrays Nigerian politicians as snakes in the political garden. They advocate for democracy only to gain power and serve their selfish interest. Once in power, they dismantle every democratic structure. They are “actors with democratic phenotypes but authoritarian genotypes” (Tinubu 3). Arikpo and Nwokedi Senior in Esiaba Irobi's *Nwokedi* fit also into this description. Again Tinubu observes that:

If we lend too much credence to the outward appearance, we will fail to look critically at the inner workings of the government and the substantive quality of its output. We dare not mistake the image of democracy with real democracy any more that we should mistake the image in the mirror with the real person. If we do, we will be applauding a form of government that looks like democracy but does not act like it (Tinubu 3).

As aptly put by Tinubu, Nigerian playwrights have been echoing these sentiments in their agitations over the conditions of democracy in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. The organs of democracy in Nigeria certainly do not function in a democratic manner, so therefore cannot produce outcome that advances the cause of public interest in a democratic manner. A look at Nigeria's electoral system and elections as portrayed in these plays show a prevalence of rigging and subversion of the democratic process. The democratic establishment as aptly put forward by Ben Binebai in *If Not ...* parodies true democracy. Simply, Nigeria's democracy is an authoritarian rule in a democratic garb! Again the contest between false and real democracy in *If Not...* illustrates this point.

Eshu: The throne is mine! I am democracy. Democracy can't come here. I declare war! War! Warriors! *(All the warriors desert him, he runs in and out of the mountain looking and shouting for warriors to no avail. He suddenly realises that he is alone. He then stands looking at Democracy).*

Democracy: This thing of iniquity and personified darkness, this bastard locked me up somewhere at the outskirts of Ukolo when I was coming to be sworn in as democracy, the president of Ukolo. Get hold of him people of Ukolo. (Binebai 35)

The 2007 elections marked a significant turning point in Nigeria's political history. Electoral materials never got to most polling stations; many Nigerians were deprived of the right to vote. Earlier, during the campaigns, Obasanjo had declared that the elections are a "do or die affair". The People's Democratic Party (PDP) stalwarts moved with rascality, snatching ballot boxes and announcing phantom results. Indeed, democracy was kidnapped at the outskirts of the Nigerian nation. The recourse in recent elections in Nigeria to the use of technology and forensic analysis to prove electoral fraud in the courts speak of the high undemocratic nature of these elections.

Conclusion

In Africa, the dynamics of democratic transition has become a key issue not only for the social sciences but also for the literary arts. The plays examined in this study are read against the backdrop of political turmoil that has engulfed the Nigerian society and state since the 1980's and the several attempts at democratic transitions since 1999. The plays have contributed to the discussion on democracy, politics and the Nigerian society by exposing the façade behind which Nigerian politicians hide to perpetrate undemocratic acts on civil society.

Since independence, Nigeria has witnessed rapid urbanization with deepening ethnic division, political regression and the emergence of resistant and agitation groups. Given these experiences, the paper reveals strikingly the image of democracy and the Nigerian politician through the presentation of

the dramatist as embedded in the psyche of the Nigerian. In the quest for a better democratic deal for the Nigerian people, Nigerian dramatist has thus continued to draw a sharp profile of the Nigerian politician and democratic practice as it affects the Nigerian economy, political stability and educational context of their society. The study reveals that the injustice perpetrated by this system on the Nigerian society relegates the people to acute economic and educational disadvantages and it is responsible for its warring politics. The dramatist has thus been in the fore-front of the fight and call for participatory democracy and social justice. The Nigeria politician is portrayed as greedy, cannibalistic, corrupt, and inept. Nigerian democracy is also mirrored in this plays as an aberration of civilized democratic tradition, therefore, economic and social problems of underdevelopment which the country is currently experiencing are traceable to poor democratic structures and bad governance. Many of the literary creations of the Nigerian dramatist has “consistently challenged political construct in its various pockets of power in Africa” (Adeyemi 3). As the examination of the plays have shown, it will be simplistic to assume that all the forces in Nigeria professing a commitment to democratization are willing to live up to the responsibility of the democratic process.

Therefore, left alone to the dramatist in Nigeria, the masses will continue live in a state of ideal democratic conditions. At the end of the plays, a result of the agitation for change in the plays always comes with ruin for the politician. While Soyinka holds a pessimistic and tragic view of the possibility for genuine change, Esiaba is more given to change coming about by violent overthrow of the old corrupt system through a process of ritual expiation, while Osofisan and Binebai are disposed in their plays to change coming as a result of awareness by the masses of their deprived condition which will engender popular mass uprising against the political class in a Marxian mode.

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REVOLUTIONARY THEATRE AND THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria's fourth attempt at democratic rule appears to be succeeding and military incursion into politics appears to be a thing of the past. Despite this appreciable feat, Nigeria still lies prostrate like a gang-raped virgin, with dividends of democracy trickling in like dew-drops. This is the tragic consequence of mindless individualism and insatiable greed of the new political class, of a yawning ideological void and lack of a courageous and visionary leadership. This paper interrogates these national problems vis-a-vis the ideals and values of democracy. It identifies some of the factors that provide fertile soil for the tragic seed to sprout, and which has unleashed the capitalist mongols and political tycoons on the nation. These factors range from mass inaction or public complacency, cosmetic and impotent parliament, terrified judiciary to the silence of the revolutionary left-wing that has almost vanished. Drawing inferences from the exegetical paradigms in some literary works, the paper concludes that theatre must creatively re-assert itself with revolutionary vehemence and foster something novel from this apparent national malediction.

Introduction

Through rigorous interrogation of relevant literatures, this paper seeks to examine the word "Democracy", its values and ideals as well as its travails or abuses in the Nigerian experience since 1999 when the Fourth Republic began. It will also discuss the kind of theatre that is best suited to tackle the travails and abuses that have rendered democracy unproductive and unprofitable in Nigeria. Democracy is defined as:

a form of government in which all eligible citizens participate equally – either directly or through elected representatives – in the

proposal, development and creation of laws. It encompasses social, economic and cultural conditions that enable the free and equal practice of political self-determination (Wikipedia qtd Ukala 3).

Adigwe (1974) explains that there are two types of democratic system. One is based on the notion that society is a community of individuals with different but reconcilable interests. The adherents of this belief fashioned their electoral system based on the right of each adult to vote the way he chooses. This is representative democracy which is founded on the principle of liberalism.

On the other hand, there are those who maintain that society is made up of antagonistic economic interests. Since it is one's economic status that determines one's social life, values and thought, people with identical economic interests usually congregate to form social clubs, cliques or orders through which they advance their political interests and seek to control the machinery of government. What this means, according to Adigwe, is that society is made up of antagonistic classes, and Karl Marx identified these classes as "the owners of the means of production" (and those whose wage-labour is exploited) (7).

Some also define democracy as the rule of the majority. If this is true in practical terms, then workers the peasants and the proletariat should rule since they are in the majority. This is a wistful logic for, as Adigwe again explains, "Historically, the capitalist class has always controlled the machinery of government." Therefore, to break this historical jinx, he endorses the Marxist argument that a revolution that would liquidate the capitalist class and establish true democracy, the rule of the majority should be initiated (7). The pertinent question that one may ask at this juncture is: What are the attributes, values and ideals of democracy that are so alluring that people across the world clamour and even sacrifice their lives for it? Indeed, when compared to other systems of government, the allurements of democracy rank next to those of paradise

Thomas Mann, the famous German novelist, states in his book, *The Coming Victory of Democracy*: "We must define democracy as that form of government and of society which is inspired above every other, with the feeling and consciousness of the dignity of man" (*Webster's* 1857). This

“dignity of man” is rooted in the freedoms, human rights, civil liberties, security of life and property, rule of law, free and fair election, separation of power and above all, good governance which democracy offers and upholds.

Good governance, according to Wikipedia, is an indeterminate term used in international development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources (Ukala 5). The principle of separation of power presupposes the establishment of such democratic institutions as responsible parliament and independent judiciary. These institutions, working in collaboration, not in collusion with or in subservience to the executive, can earn for the people the much talked about dividends of democracy. This is why Kofi Awoonor (1993: 1) explains that “Democracy, fundamentally, is defined by *freedom* from hunger, the *right* to education and health, and has little to do with multiple political parties ...” (emphasis mine). Thus, the dividends of democracy consist in this freedom and right.

Democracy in Nigeria

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has made three unsuccessful attempts at democratic rule which were truncated by military interventions. The fourth attempt which is ongoing and appears to be succeeding commenced on 29th May, 1999. It was preceded by a titanic battle of resistance against Gen. Ibrahim Babangida’s endless transition programme and later, Gen. Sani Abacha’s calamitous and tyrannical regime. The atrocities of that dark era are beyond the scope of this study.

Since 1999, Nigeria has had three presidents, namely Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Yar’Adua and Goodluck Jonathan. The democracy fashioned after the America presidential system has a three-tier structure with elaborate and expensive bi-cameral legislature at the federal level and uni-cameral legislature at the state and local levels. It also has a multi-layered judiciary and an extensive bureaucracy. A multi-party democracy, Nigeria has been ruled by the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) since 1999.

How has the country fared in this Fourth Republic? Despite all the hue and cry about bringing government closer to the people, government has not actually got to the people and the so-called dividends of democracy have not

raised the people's standard of living. The real beneficiaries of Nigerian democracy are those in government and their relatives, collaborators and contractors. The masses no longer see themselves as children of Nigeria because the country does nothing for them. Nwakanma (12) expresses the extreme of such sentiments: "Many Nigerians today would, if given the choice, pick up arms in support of a foreign occupation of Nigeria, rather than fight to preserve this country as it is currently advertised to them".

Travails of Nigerian Democracy

A veteran journalist, Areoye Oyebola, one time editor of *Daily Times*, in an article he wrote in *The Guardian*, captures some of the contradictions that have marred Nigeria's democracy:

Lack of empathy for the public, mindless self-serving extravagance of governance and state administration; the ridiculous cost of running the National, State and Local Government legislatures, and the executive pay-loads that include arbitrarily fixed and unaccounted security votes (Nwakanma 12).

As Nwakanma laments, Nigeria runs the most expensive public administration in the world. The cost of running government is so high that little or nothing is left to impart on the lives of the citizenry. In addition to this prohibitive cost of servicing a few people in government the country is drifting in midst of monumental corruption and sleaze. Today, corruption has permeated every aspect of our national life. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe sarcastically describes the corruption scenario in Nigeria. Speaking in the presence of his military chiefs at his 90th birthday luncheon, he delivered this caustic invective against Nigeria:

Are we now like Nigeria where you have to reach your pocket to get anything done? You see, we used to go to Nigeria and every time we went there, we had to carry extra cash in our pockets to corruptly pay for everything. You get into a plane in Nigeria and

you sit there and the crew keeps dilly-dallying without taking off as they wait for you to pay them to fly the plane (*The Nation* 80).

Stories of how successive administrations used the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to fleece the nation have been in the public domain for a long time. At the close of 2012, the Federal Government announced a budget provision of scandalous sums of money to be spent on the new Vice Presidential mansion and the Aso Rock Banquet Hall. The Vice President's house valued at N7 billion in 2009 was reviewed upwards to N16 billion in 2012. This was greeted with public outrage. In 2013, Nigerians were again hit by the scandalous news that the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority spent N255 million to purchase two bullet-proof cars for the Aviation Minister, Ms. Stella Oduah (*The Nation* 19). This scandal, known as Oduahgate, later led to the Minister's sack from the cabinet. Amidst grinding poverty, the Federal Government and many state and local governments still relish lavish banquets, drive around town in exotic luxurious SUV cars, with some state officials flying in private jets. Where then are the dividends of democracy?

Early this year, Nigeria was ranked as one of the three countries where poliomyelitis is still prevalent. As if that was not shocking enough, Nigeria was reported as the only country in the world that harbours all the three serotypes of the poliovirus, namely wild poliovirus type 1, wild poliovirus types 3, and circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (*The Nation on Sunday* 15). On March 15, 2014, Nigeria had the opportunity of showing the world her shame of unemployment. It was the recruitment test organized by the National Immigration Service across the country. According to reports, in Lagos and Abuja alone, 56,000 and 69,000 applicants respectively sat for the test. Many more applicants sat for the same test in other states of the federation. Each of these applicants paid N1000 to sit for the test. The test turned out to be a national tragedy as about 16 people died and thousands fainted from stampede and exhaustion (*Sunday Vanguard* 1, 6). This is just one shocking proof of the critical unemployment which our democratic process is not prepared to address.

All other aspects of our national life, ranging from agriculture, economy, education, health to security, are witnessing the same season of atrophy. As Alamu (3) recalls, towards the end of 2012, the Economist Intelligence Unit released its report. Using globally verifiable indices, the report indicated that of eighty sampled countries, “Nigeria was about the worst place to be born in the year of our Lord, 2013”. Just after that, the global Forbes ranking was released, declaring Nigeria as “the 20th saddest nation on earth”. As Alamu laments, it is indeed sad that despite her stupendous oil wealth, Nigeria is classed among such hellish nations as Central African Republic which clinched the first position, the Republic of Congo (2nd), Afghanistan (3rd), Chad (4th), Burundi (5th) followed by Togo, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Angola, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Mozambique and so on (3). This is what fifteen years of democracy has brought to Nigeria.

Besides the mindlessness, profligacy, corruption and greed of our political leaders, there are other factors that have rendered Nigeria’s democracy a sham. They include ideological void, leadership failure, irresponsible and impotent parliament, acquiescent judiciary, mass complacency and inaction and the near absence of the left wing critical vanguard. It is lamentable that none of the political parties during the Fourth Republic democracy is founded on any ideology. Ideology in this context is the corpus of ideas and objectives that influence or shape our national culture, especially our socio-political procedure (*Webster’s* 637). When there is no ideology, the nation gropes according to the whims of the leaders that the system throws up. If the parties were founded on clear ideological ground, the politicians would have known what the goals are and strive to avoid every form of ideological infraction or perversion.

The issue of leadership failure in Nigeria dominates most international discussions. The world knows that “Nigeria has been less than fortunate in its leadership”, to borrow the words of Achebe (13). The parliament and the judiciary have not done enough to advance the cause of democracy. Both arms are supposed to act as checks and balances to stave off every form of unmediated individuality and stupid negation of the very principles that define their constitutional responsibilities. The Nigerian masses, with the exception of Lagosians, have a character that is somehow stoic, complacent or

downright cowardly, a character that is antithetical to the messianic spirit. Recent history furnishes innumerable proofs of this fact: From Ibrahim Babangida's eight years of human rights abuses, unresolved political assassinations and endless transition programme through Sani Abacha's demonic era of looting and killing to Goodluck Jonathan's reign of corruption and impunity, the masses have had nothing to say. Mum has been the word from Enugu to Sokoto. Even now, the Nigeria Police is toying with the idea of imposing severe restrictions on the movement of Nigerians and even banning public protests.

Another closely related factor is the near absence of the critical vanguard which consists of ivory tower ideologues, radical lawyers, politicians, medical doctors, journalists, labour and student unionists. Of the old war-horses, Wole Soyinka and perhaps Femi Falana are the last men standing. The National Association of Nigerian Students has completely lost its bearing. The role the Association (under the leadership of Yinka Gbadebo) played in the last ASUU strike attests to this fact. Gbadebo and his ill-bred followers took sides with government and staged series of protests against ASUU. Apart from the few civil societies that are determined to defend democracy, the culture of silence is now the dominant ideology. In the light of the foregoing, what role can theatre play?

Dramaturgical Interrogations

In all ages, theatre has mediated every life-giving and life-threatening situation. From independence, Nigerian theatre has not shirked its bounden duty of watchdogging the society. In 1960, Wole Soyinka wrote *A Dance of the Forests* to celebrate Nigeria's independence. In the play, a great national event – the gathering of the tribes – is in the offing. Apparently, the gathering is for the celebration of independence to which the living and their ancestors have been invited. To the consternation of the living, the ancestors send a repulsive delegation whose earthly existences were marked by unmitigated grief. The play takes us eight centuries back in time to when Dead Man, as Warrior faces trial in the court of Mata Kharibu for refusing to lead a battle to recover the trousseau of a queen whom Mata Kharibu seized from another king. Against all threat, he remains adamant:

Mata Kharibu: (*Advancing slowly on him*) It was you, slave!
 You it was who dared to think.

Warrior: I plead guilty to the possession of thought.
 I did not know that it was in me to exercise it until
 your Majesty's inhuman commands.

Mata Kharibu: You have not even begun to repent of your madness

Warrior: Madness, your Majesty?
 Mata Kharibu: Madness! Treachery! Frothing insanity!
 Traitor! Do you dare question my word?

Warrior: No, terrible one. Only your commands.
 (*Mata Kharibu whips out his sword. Raises it.*
The soldier bows his head)
 (*A Dance 53*)

The Court Physician persuades him to go to war and save his life but the warrior insists: "It is an unjust war. I cannot lead my men into battle merely to recover the trousseau of any woman" (55). He is consequently condemned to slavery and death while his soul is made to wander for centuries in a kind of purgatorial abyss.

The Dead Women, also in the ancestral delegation, was sold into slavery and death in the days of Mata Kharibu. Now she gives birth to an Abiku, the Half Child after Centuries of pregnancy. The Half Child is Soyinka's symbolism for the new nation whose ancient malediction and treachery will plague her future. In the play, everyone – the gods, the living and the dead – stands guilty of the evils that have blighted the land. The gathering is uncalled for as the community has nothing to celebrate. The seven spirits prophesy that spiritual darkness will descend upon the land and this will eventuate in bloodiness (see pp. 73 – 76). The warrior presages the same doom:

Unborn generations will be cannibal, most
 worshipful physician. Unborn generations
 will, as we have done, eat up one another. I

took up soldiering to defend my country, but
those to whom I gave the power to command
my life abuse my trust in them (55-56).

According to Oko (62), “The play does not celebrate the dawn of a new era, nor does it celebrate the return of lost innocence, dignity and wholeness. Rather, Soyinka points out “the recurrent cycle of human stupidity’, the basic cannibalism in man, and man’s proneness to corruption”. Habila (28) agrees with this view when he states that “Soyinka was merely predicting the future in the play, but he ended up cursing us”. Indeed, the dystopia or the cannibal age which Soyinka envisioned has fully dawned on us now.

In *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, Ola Rotimi satirizes the corruption and political absurdities of Nigeria’s First Republic (1960-1966). In the play, Rotimi “takes a comic swipe at ideological misfits and opportunists who strut the ever-accommodating political landscape of contemporary Africa” (see blurb). In the play, the ex-army officer, Major Lejoka Brown, having made it big in the cocoa business which he inherited, ventures into politics with the singular aim of consolidating his power and position. His inane and hedonistic philosophy is captured in his speech:

You want to be famous? Politics. You want to chop life? – No, no-
you want to chop a big slice of the National Cake? – Na politics. So
I said to my party boys – when was it? Last week, or so. I said to
them... I said: Cakes are too soft, Gentlemen. Just you wait! Once
we get elected to the top, wallahi, we shall stuff ourselves with huge
mouthfuls of the National chin-chin... (4)

To borrow the words of Ilori (11), Lejoka-Brown loves pretending and posturing, and carves the image of “a fire-eating radical, a breathing freedom fighter who has pledged to liberate the masses of his country from the shackles of oppression and want” As part of his grandiose self-mystification, he adopts “snake” (serpent) as his totem, and his electioneering stratagem is code-named “Surprise and Attack” and it bears the tone of a war strategy:

Lejoka-Brown: Gentlemen, our election campaign plans must follow a pattern of military strategy known as surprise and attack. Surprise and attack, gentlemen, is “to catch the enemy off-guard and wipe out his power before he can mobilize enough forces to launch a counter-attack” (50).

Freedom, in all its ramifications, and tolerance are the hallmarks of democracy, but Lejoka-Brown’s actions and speeches are dominated by military overtones. He sees politics as a do-or- die affair, hence he declares:

Politics is war. Oooh – I am taking no chance this time, brother mine. Mmh. Last time I took things slow and easy, and what happened? Chuu! I lost a by-election to a ... a small crab ... a baby monkey. ... This time, it is war! (7)

Till date, the likes of Lejoka-Brown still dominate the politics of Nigeria. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo, former Peoples’ Democratic Party National Chairman, Ahmadu Ali, Senate President, David Mark, All Progressives Congress’ Presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, to name just four, are all retired soldiers. Even the PDP Board of Trustees Chairman, Tony Aneni is a retired Police Commissioner. And President Obasanjo was once quoted as saying that the 2007 election was a do or die affair. This do-or-die affair syndrome led to the assassination of such frontline politicians as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige, and Chief Harry Marshal.

Ilori argues further that the First Republic politics, as captured in *Our Husband Has gone Mad Again*, is bourgeois politics, rapid materialism, feckless chauvinism, hawkish grabbing and vindictive and corrupt tendencies. The contagion of moral bankruptcy, recklessness, corruption, injustice and profligacy of the post-war administrations radicalized the creative art of such dramatists as Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Kole Omotoso and others. As Gbilekaa (9) observes, what started as political agitation, protest and later satire developed into “total ideological commitment”, with the playwrights challenging “the whole political and economic structure of Nigeria”. For

instance, the ineptitude and corruption that characterized the Shagari regime (1979-1983) are clearly mirrored in Femi Osofisan's dark comedy, *Midnight Hotel* and Ola Rotimi's *If...* Since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic, series of bewildering and life-threatening events have been unfolding. How Nigerian playwrights will respond to these events is yet to be seen.

Imperative for Revolutionary Theatre

According to Alamu (3), "When a society reaches an ethical or political dead end, and in the absence of internal revolutionary forces for radical changes, the resolution is brought about by an antagonistic logic supplied by outsiders". Since Nigerian politicians, just like their military predecessors, have proved that our national redemption is beyond them, the resolution should be sought from outside the partisan circle, from the theatre artists, to be precise. Such a resolution should be creative and revolutionary in both content and form.

What is creativity? What is revolution? Creativity, according to Dievdahi (qtd in Ogande and Osori 1), is "the capacity of persons to produce compositions, products or ideas of any sort which are essentially new or novel and previously unknown to the producer" (p.1). Santrock (also in Ogande and Osori) says "creativity is the ability to think about something in a novel way and to come up with unique solutions to the problems".

Revolution is defined by *Everyman's Encyclopedia* (315) as "a fundamental change in the internal constitution of a country brought about by the inhabitants". A revolution is a mass action in which the vast majority of the inhabitants are roused to a just anger to bring about a vast change in their situation. Now what is revolutionary theatre and why revolutionary theatre?

Revolutionary theatre is the theatre that is specifically designed to revolutionize the masses to challenge and even the seek to overthrow the system that chokes them. The early contributors to the shaping of revolutionary theatre were Erwin Piscator and Vsevolod Meyerhold. The basic aim of revolutionary theatre, according to Piscator, is to transmit "not only excitement, but also enlightenment, knowledge, recognition (Braun 42). Besides this, a revolutionary theatre must be revolutionary in all ramifications, it must be defined by its radical departure from conventional practice and the bourgeois theatre of escapism and illusion.

Meyerhold agrees with Piscator that truly revolutionary theatre must establish immediate contact with its audience in order to ensure a lively and critical response and a sense of oneness with the action. What this implies is the breaching of the traditional barrier of the proscenium (Braun 39). That is the form. In terms of content, revolutionary theatre should highlight the social contradictions which determine the fate of the masses, the conflict between the haves and the have-nots, the illusions and yearnings of the people and the reality in which they are caught up; it should, in the manner of Piscator's epic, elucidate the socio-economic cause and effect, it should dialectically examine the inverse relations between the political rulers and the ruled.

Now, to the second question – Why Revolutionary Theatre? There is no doubt that the first and second generations of playwrights have responded appropriately to the events that shaped their time. They deployed the literary and para-literary arsenals that were in vogue to tackle the challenges of their times. Their stories and themes were masked in idioms, parables, euphemisms, metaphors and satires and the medium was the proscenium. They have played their part nobly well and their art greatly influenced the literary consciousness of contemporary dramatists. But the current contagion of corruption and indiscipline cannot be tackled with parables and metaphor.

Writing on the achievement of the radical theatre spear-headed by Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande and Kole Omotoso, Gbilekaa (218) says: the “tiger of the Nigerian radical theatre has not only proclaimed its tigritude, it has also bitten. However, the bite is not deep enough to cause considerable consternation among the ranks of the ruling class”. To cause this desired “consternation”. The radical theatre must be reinvented and revolutionized. The present crop of politicians is what Jesus Christ would refer to as snakes, brood of vipers (Matt 23:33). They have neither conscience nor sense of propriety. The theatre that can tackle them must be radically contrived and anchored on the old dictum – “Destroy this Temple”. As Abraham Kuyper teaches us, “When principles that run against your deepest convictions begin to win the day, then battle is your calling, and peace has become sin” (Bloesch 131). To prosecute this “battle”, Nigerian theatre must look towards the left even though a lot of deconstructions are still going on there. The left offers a lot of alluring and astonishing paradigms ranging from the legacies of Erwin

Piscator, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Bertolt Brecht to Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande and Kole Omotoso.

Meyerhold offers us an uncommon example of how theatre could be used to mediate a critical history in the making. On October 24, 1917, the Bolsheviks, a radical branch of the Communist Party, came to power after a revolution that saw to the abdication and execution of Nicholas II, the Czar of Russia. In November 1918, the Bolsheviks under Vladimir Lenin, went ahead to celebrate the first anniversary of the October Revolution even when they were far from secure. Though it was a hazardous act of faith for anyone to show solidarity with the Bolsheviks then, Meyerhold and Mayakovsky presented in Petrograd *Mystery-Bouffe*, a gleeful play on world revolution, as part of their contribution to the anniversary (Braun 38). Throughout his career, Meyerhold pushed zealously to assert the influence of the theatre in Russia's revolutionary epoch. As Edward Braun (1977) further explains, even during the Russian civil war, Meyerhold deployed his theatre to depict "the transformation of a capitalist war into an international proletarian uprising by opposing soldiers in the mythical town of Oppidomagne" (38).

The Nigerian political situation that is being examined in this paper is both complex and dangerous. The masses are not showing any sign of angst, discontent or disillusionment let alone any readiness for agitation, and the political class is getting more and more ruthless and tyrannical with obvious unreadiness to brook any criticism or dissent. But just as Soyinka says, "Complex subjects sometimes elicit from the writer complex treatment" (Agetua 46). Under this circumstance, therefore, Gbilekaa's exhortation to the catalyst groups that would take theatre to the people becomes invaluable and welcome: They should defy all odds and refuse to be intimidated. Even if they are incarcerated, only the speed of change would be arrested because the ideal of revolutionary change, once planted, would continuously be nursed by the oppressed until the day it would be given vent (215-216).

On the question of methodology, the idea of taking the theatre outside the proscenium and outside the ivory towers is a foregone conclusion. The reasons for this are not far-fetched. First, the vital messages that our radical plays are spewing out through the proscenium are not filtering down to the grassroots. Second, the plays are done in high-toned English language which

majority of the masses who are expected to be revolutionized and mobilized for action, do not understand. As Gbilekaa observes, even though these plays may be popular with university students who study than as set books, they are not only written in foreign languages but are also presented in an alien medium. This makes them “unappealing to a wide cross-section of the public” (201).

Revolutionary theatre that is being proposed here cannot operate in an exclusive environment. It must be withdrawn from the proscenium and headed towards the masses where ever they may be. Hence theatre-on-the wheel needs to be reintroduced, this time, with new content and for a different objective. This new genre may be labelled Theatre for Democracy (TfD II), an innovation of revolutionary theatre, and would operate within the theoretical framework of Piscator’s political theatre. The innovation would be the adoption of the mobile and perhaps improvisational paradigms of the Living Theatre of Judith Malina and Julian Beck, The Bread and Puppet Theatre of Peter Schumann or the San Franisco Mime Troupe, all of the United States. The founders of these theatres, according to Cameron and Gillespie (356), saw “theatre as a weapon for political battle”, and their goal was “to shake people from their complacency and to convert them from passive observers into active participants in a social revolution”. The proposed genre may also draw inspiration from what came to be known as Street Theatre or Guerrilla Theatre, examples of which are the Street Theatre Group of Calcutta or the Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre of Zambia. To guarantee the sanctity and focus of this form, the improvisation has to be carefully designed and professionally performed in an accessible language.

The ramifications of democracy are quite broad and extensive, and to tackle the rot in our democratic practice demands an approach that is different from that of TFD. The target audience of this revolutionary theatre will be found at the village and market squares, town halls, the local government secretariats, the palaces the factories, the churches and mosques, the state and national assemblies, the schools and hospitals, party secretariats and so on.

What would be the content of this proposed genre? The drama must be ideologically oriented and radically designed to meet the challenge of each

target audience. The message for the peasants cannot be the message for the senators. There are those who need to be educated or conscientized or emboldened (in the fashion of Paulo Freire) to jettison the “culture of silence”, and ask questions on why they labour so much and earn so little; why there are no doctors and drugs in the hospitals; why there are no teachers in their schools; why their constituency projects are not executed, or why there are no jobs for their children. There will also be drama that will challenge the impunity and lawlessness in the polity and challenge the political class to account for their stewardship. There will be special ones that will speak to power and authority about the type of society Nigeria should be. Such plays should draw attention to the inequality, injustice and endemic corruption that have cast a terrible blight upon Nigeria.

Scholarship is a dynamic and inexhaustible field. It follows society as it progresses and events as they unfold. Its purpose is to impart positively on man and his society. Theatre scholars, critics and practitioners should give this proposal serious thought and grant it some scope for experimentation before theorization.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper has modestly interrogated the history and practice of Nigerian democracy and observed that the values and ideals of democracy are being recklessly subverted by the political class. With relevant illustrations and instances, it posited that the bane of democracy in Nigeria ranged from leadership failure, mindless individualism, corruption, lack of patriotism and ideological void to the “culture of silence” or mass complacency and the absence of the critical left wing. It forcefully canvassed the need for Nigerian theatre to reinvent and revalue itself and creatively address itself to the urgent task of salvaging the Nigerian state by re-engineering the socio-political structures.

We proposed the adoption of “Theatre for Democracy”, a form of revolutionary theatre and a variant of Theatre for Development. The aim of this theatre is to mobilize every segment of Nigeria to oppose those things that render our democracy a sham. This proposal is inspired by Soyinka’s existential philosophy which he illustrated in his Ogunian aesthetic of forging

useful novelty from destruction and opposition. For Soyinka, Ogun represents rigidly restorative will, an indomitable spirit. Even in the earlier fragmentation of Orisa-nla, he experienced self-dissolution, but was able to re-assemble his shattered being, emerged wiser and was able to beat a path through the abyss of transition for other gods to follow. In the horrors of that abyss, he is crushed, but his titanic resolution of the will rescues him from annihilation.

We, therefore, recommend Matthew Brown's thesis of forging useful novelty from destruction in order to foster something bigger than what we have had. Democracy in Nigeria was purchased at a huge cost in human, material, financial and intellectual terms. It should therefore be defended at whatever cost. We, therefore, strongly recommend as follows:

The Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) should, after every conference, organize a colloquium to analyse recommendations made at each conference with a view to adopting the sound and practicable ones for recommendation to the relevant agencies for implementation. Policies generated from such terrains can greatly enrich theatre scholarship. This is the cardinal mission of SONTA as contained in Article 1 (section 8) of its constitution.

In the light of this, we request SONTA to organize a round-table discussion on the proposed Theatre for Democracy for possible integration into the curricular programme. After all, scholarship is dynamic. The various theatre departments are also enjoined to seriously examine the concept for urgent adoption and theorization.

For easy and fruitful implementation of Theatre for Democracy, the theatre departments or troupes should partner with the Nigeria Labour Congress, the Trade Union Congress, the professional bodies, the Non-governmental organizations, the diplomatic corps, foreign agencies, the independent National Electoral Commission and other critical stake holders for moral, financial and logistic support. Theatre must wake up to its calling and renew its ancient covenant with the people. The nation yearns for a revolution, and theatre must lead that revolution. As Iji (1) contends, "without challenge, without revolution, and without a certain degree of radicalism, the world would stagnate".

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LANGUAGE USE IN ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF OUSMANE SEMBENE'S MOOLAADÉ

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Abstract

Entertainment Education (EE) is the coding of entertainment (theatrical) programmes with topical pro-social messages with the aim to enlighten, influence, empower, and bring about desired change amongst the audience. Over the years, with the advent of globalization, EE practitioners in African nations have been faced with the challenge of finding the proper vernacular to communicate her citizens. The choice of language for communication in EE programmes around Africa has become a huge challenge to the development, progress, and success of some of the programmes. Researchers, facilitators, practitioners, and other stakeholders in this area, have continued to work tirelessly in solving this puzzle, knowing fully that some of the facilitators, practitioners and their programmes are foreign to the culture and communities where the programmes are to be carried out. They are usually faced with this huge challenge of communication (language). This paper examines the essential and effective role of indigenous language in the proper execution of EE programmes around Africa. It reveals the potency of the vernacular in the execution of such programmes. This study therefore advocates for the justifiable use of the vernacular in the propagation of EE programmes around Africa for a more effective result. Using the film Moolaadé, as a study, this paper avers vernacular as the most viable tool for communication, sensitization, and empowerment in EE programmes.

Introduction

Vernacular is a term which refers to the native language or native dialect of a given population or people. In some context, it is seen as a second or foreign language that is more widely spoken such as a national or standard language,

or a lingua franca. This study looks at the essence of dialect in the propagation of Entertainment Education (EE) programmes in Africa whether by Africans or non-Africans. One may categorically state, 'language is quintessential for the execution of EE programmes in Africa'. During such programmes, information tends to flow from one medium/channel (theatre or media) to a given audience, and often the other way round in some cases. The information flows are vehicles of communication for African values and ideologies. As a result, this study advocates for EE programmes targeted to its given audience without playing to the gallery of international fame. This will make EE programmes in Africa a serious business that will truly reach out to its target audience and create a true culture of the African peoples that would not rely on slogans, propaganda, and identities or on patronage of doubtful intentions and philosophy.

It is a fact that a people may be defined through their core realities, and identities. So far, no society/community void of language has been found. Expressing one's culture through another culture could be problematic because there is no one to one correspondence between two cultures. For instance, "*okuko hapu kwo m kwo m ...*" – how can one translate the Igbo word *Kwo m* in this context in English or French and it will have the same linguistic meaning. How many of our core African folktales could be retold in foreign dialect and it will still retain its linguistic power. When a traditional African food is cooked with Western ingredients, does it retain its Africanness, and worthy to be regarded as an African food? Indigenous African foremost Christian missionaries foresaw this misrepresentation of identities in their time and translated the Bible into various African dialects in order to properly represent, and appeal to the realities, and soul of Africa knowing fully that the African ideologies, identities, and imageries embedded in African dialect ought to be properly represented. One may then ask, is it relative for Africans to define Africanness or their identities from the Western or International point of view?

Ngugi wa Thiong'O, in "The Language of African Literature", maintains:

The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition to themselves in relation to their

natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of two contending social forces in the Africa of the twentieth century (285).

Ngugi further states, “Language, any language has dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture” (291). Language has codes and what it simply means is that the EE practitioner as an encoder, could utilize codes that are shared and understood by the whole community. According to Zakes Mda, in his *When People Play People*, states, “Codes here are systems into which signs are organized in a text (the text being the performance from which meaning is read). These systems are governed by rules consented to by all members of the community using that code” (49). From the statement, one could infer there are codes inherent in language paradigms of a given people which are specific to their culture and could only be distinct, understood, appreciated, and interpreted by such people. This and more are the reasons this paper advocates through the study of Sembene Ousmane’s *Moolaadé* for the effective and efficient application of dialect in the propagation of EE programmes in Africa.

Methodology

The study employed the historical and literary methodologies in analysing and critically interpreting data used in the work. Sam Ukala, in *Manual of Research and of Thesis Writing in Theatre Arts* states, historical methodology “entails the investigation of documented sources, such as books, journals, reports, films, video and audio tapes, archival materials...as well as oral sources” (12). He explains that this method is used to ascertain facts and occurrences in definite places and time. Literary methodology on the other hand, according to Ukala “focuses on written and printed library and archival sources, especially books, journals, theses, reports, literary works, such as plays, novels and poems” (13). These methods are necessary and were employed in this study because of their relevance to the topic.

Theoretical Framework

Educational entertainment also referred to as "edutainment", which is education + entertainment, is any entertainment content that is designed to educate as well as to entertain. Theatrical content or dramatic performances with a high degree of both educational and entertainment value is known as edutainment. There also exists content that is primarily educational but has incidental entertainment value. There are messages that are mostly entertaining but can be seen to have some educational value.

It can be argued that educational entertainment has existed for millennia in the form of parables and fables that promoted social change. Modern forms include television productions, film, radio, museum exhibits, and computer software which use entertainment to attract and maintain an audience, while incorporating deliberate educational content or messages. Since the 1970s, various groups in the United States, the United Kingdom, Latin America, and most importantly here in Africa have used edutainment to address such health and social issues as substance abuse, immunization, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, child mortality, and cancer. Initiatives in major universities, such as Johns Hopkins University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, NGOs such as PCI-Media Impact, Rohi Educational Services and Capacity Building, and government agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), National Orientation Agency (NOA), have produced edutainment content.

Singhal and Rogers maintain, "Entertainment-education refers to the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour" (xii). Like in cases of social marketing and health promotion, entertainment-education is concerned with social change at the individual and community levels. Its focus is on how entertainment media such as soap operas, songs, cartoons, comics, drama and theatre can be used to transmit information that can result in pro-social behaviour.

Originally developed in Mexico in the mid-1970s, the entertainment-education approach has been used in 75 countries, including Gambia, India,

Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Turkey. Paradigmatic examples of this approach have been soap operas in Latin America (*telenovelas*) and in India that were intended to provide information about family planning, sexual behaviour, and other health issues. Literacy and agricultural development have also been central themes of several entertainment-education efforts. The use of entertainment to achieve development objectives is not new. In the 1970s, the Academy for Educational Development documented numerous case studies of the effective use of soap operas, songs, and theatre to convey health and nutrition information in the developing world.

In the health sector, entertainment-education is a strategy that has been applied to maximize the reach and effectiveness of messages through the combination of entertainment and education. As its assumptions are drawn from socio-psychology and human communication theories, entertainment-education can fall under the modernization or diffusion theory area. Like diffusion theory, it is concerned with behavioural change through the dissemination of information. It is influenced by Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, a framework currently dominant in health promotion. Entertainment-education is anchored on the idea that individuals learn behaviour by observing role models, particularly in the mass media. Imitation and influence are the expected outcomes of interventions. Entertainment-education *telenovelas* were based on Bandura's model of cognitive sub-processes: attention, retention, production, and motivational processes that help researchers to understand why individuals imitate socially desirable behaviour. This process depends on the existence of role models in the messages: good models, bad models, and those who transits from bad to good. Besides social learning, entertain-education strategies are based on the idea that expected changes result from self-efficacy, the belief of individuals that they can complete specific tasks.

Entertainment-education draws on the fact that populations around the world are widely exposed to entertainment media content. The heavy consumption of media messages suggests that the media, more than any other tool, can effectively persuade how people think, feel, and behave. Most entertainment programmes, however, tend to dramatize anti-social messages such as aggression, violence, and sexual promiscuity. But as Miguel Sabido has

shown in his paradigm, entertainment programmes can be redirected to communicate positive messages that can help people solve their problems, instead of glorifying antisocial themes.

Simplemente María, a 1969 Peruvian *telenovela*, has been often mentioned as having pioneered entertainment-education even though it was not intended to have pro-social effects. The central character was Maria, a maid who attended adult literacy classes in the evening. The program traced an individual's success in moving from a village to the city and, by overcoming many obstacles, climbing the social class ladder despite resistance from urban elites. The highly entertaining *telenovela* had unexpected educational effects: It inspired low-status women viewers to enrol in adult literacy classes and sewing classes, raising their perceived self-efficacy (an individual's belief that he or she is able to take action and control specific outcomes) and ability for social learning (individuals not only learn through their own experiences but also by observing and imitating the behaviour of other individuals who are role models).

Singhal and Rogers further endorses,

Besides television entertainment, entertainment-education interventions were also implemented in music and music videos that promoted sexual control, and in radio soap operas that promoted women's issues, awareness of AIDS, sex education, and family planning. In the mid-1980s, a campaign was implemented to promote sexual restraint among Mexican teenagers. It consisted of songs and music videos featuring a male and female singer as well as public service announcements. Evaluation analysis concluded that the campaign had a number of positive consequences: teenagers felt freer to talk about sex, they became more sensitized to the relevance of sex, the messages reinforced the choices of teenagers who already practiced abstinence, and the messages led to a modest increase in the demand for family planning services (<http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org/ipm/32-entertainment-education.html>).

Research studies suggest that the entertainment-education strategy, which is mainly motivational, could be a catalyst for triggering interpersonal communication about issues and lessons from interventions, and in engaging and motivating individuals to change their behaviour and support changes in behaviour among their peers. Singhal and Rogers concludes,

a soap-opera radio broadcast in Tanzania played an important role in changing the fertility rate of that country. The broadcast increased the listeners' sense of self-efficacy, the ideal age marriage for women, and the rate of acceptance for contraceptive use, inter-spousal communication about family planning, and for the practice of family planning. A hierarchy of effects was observed in interventions in Mexico, Nigeria, and the Philippines. Campaigns contributed to audience recall, comprehension, agreement, and discussions with others about the messages that were promoted in the campaigns (<http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org/ipm/32-entertainment-education.html>).

Synopsis of *Moolaadé*

Moolaadé is a United Nations commissioned programme for the fight against female genital mutilation (FGM) in French speaking African States. The film revolves around the efforts of Collé Ardo Gallo Sy to protect a group of girls who have fled the community's female genital mutilation (FGM) ceremony. Collé, the second and favourite wife of the younger brother of one of the village elders, was "cut" when she was a girl and now refuses to have her own daughter, Amsatou, purified according to the community's beliefs. Once the mother's decision is made public in the community, Amsatou is considered *bilakora* or "impure." Collé's own FGM experience has created lifelong health difficulties for her, including infections as a child and difficulty during Amsatou's birth. Showing her ragged caesarean section scar to the village women who want their daughters to undergo FGM, Collé reminds them that she nearly died during childbirth because of the lasting effects of female genital cutting (FGC) procedure. The visibility of the procedure remains marked by Collé's scar, which reminds the audience that the ceremony has

physical consequences for a woman's health and affects her body for the remainder of her life.

Her personal experience with FGM and decision to exempt her daughter from the village practice frames the film when four young girls seek Collé's help after escaping the *Salindana* — the group of women responsible for mutilating the young girls in the village. Collé grants the girls sanctuary or *Moolaadé*, which is represented for the community by a multicoloured rope tied across the open doorway leading into her multigenerational family compound. The rope demarcates a bound space in which the girls are safe — they cannot be taken from the space or can they leave until Collé utters “the word” that breaks the *Moolaadé*. Her obstinacy angers the elders of the village who compel Collé's husband to publicly whip her. Mercinaire, a UN peace keeping veteran and a merchant in the village intervenes and the whipping is halted as the villagers jeer at him. That same night, young men of the village masked with traditional white chalk, murder Mercinaire in cold blood and set his merchandise ablaze as an example to anyone who dares usurp the authority and chauvinism of the leaders and elders of the village who are all male.

Moolaadé both grants sanctuary and levies a curse on those who violate its protection. According to village tradition violating the *Moolaadé* may result in death. In fact, adjacent to the village mosque built 150 years prior, one of the three central structures in the village is a large termite mound the community considers to be the transfigured body of a former king who violated a *Moolaadé*. In the film these two structures act as reminders of both the religious doctrine and community-driven cultural beliefs that guide the village.

Advocacy in *Moolaadé*

One lesson that we can take away from *Moolaadé* is the political rhetoric that while we live in a globalised village where interdependence is necessarily inevitable, people of all culture especially Africa must begin to look inwards to fashion out strategies for emancipation and development. The film is a commissioned interventionist tool, geared towards French speaking West African women. Collé was sure inspired by the outside world represented by

the radios. But the radios, like the UN war veteran and business man Mercenaire could not bring a lasting solution when he intervened in Cire's public whipping of Colle. Hence, Colle needed to stand up for what she knew was right for the women. She was ready to pay any price to ensure she does not lose her daughter Amsatou as she had lost her two children during birth and almost died herself. Her painful sexual intercourse with her husband and the scar from the mutilation carried out on her were painful reminders that if she fails to act fast, even the four girls under her roof will certainly face the brutal and rusted blade of the Salindana. She realised that the women had no protection within her patriarchal village. She invoked an ancient tradition to break the jinx of another ancient tradition. She gave the women some kind of justice denied them by the traditional and formal judiciary. Colle dared the impossible by becoming the women's de facto advocate and got them optimistic about the future by speaking up.

The Power of Dialect in EE programmes

Ikechukwu Erojikwe, in his thesis, raises the following salient questions:

How effective is the film medium in reaching to the grass root?
Can the local indigenes understand the language used in the film?
Even when the film is appropriately made, how can we get it to grass root, and what are the feedback measures used for evaluating these responses? (15).

In corroborating Erojikwe's position, Obiajunwa Wali after the conference of African Writers of English Expression held in Makerere College, Kampala, in June 1962, published an article "The Dead End of African Literature?" and points out:

Less than one percent of the Nigerian people have had access to, or ability to understand Wole Soyinka's *Dance of the Forest*. Yet, this was the play staged to celebrate their national independence, tagged on to the idiom and traditions of a foreign culture (282).

Entertainment education is not new to African societies of which Nigeria is inclusive. For instance, we have such programmes like BBC commissioned *Story Story*, MTV commissioned *Shuga* and so on which are on-going in the television and radio stations in the country, highlighting issues in – health, socio-political, religious, conflict management, peer pressure, domestic violence, and economic realities just as *Moolaadé* addresses the issues of female genital mutilation. One can allude to the fact that there are so many reasons why our forefathers chose to use songs, dance, drums, and masks to educate their young, to comment on the socio-political conditions in their societies and to preserve their historical legends. In one of the scenarios in the film, the women and children were singing in their dialect and dancing as a sign of victory over the *Salindana* and the era of female mutilation in the community. One of the reasons might be that our ancestors realized that one of the most effective methods of communication-in-education is through audio-visual aids of what is familiar. It might point out that they believed that if a person only hears he forgets but if he sees and hears he remembers. Through various alluring indigenous performances they were able to capture the imagination of the people. We can therefore state that one of the major functions of African indigenous art form is not just to entertain and instruct but to preserve the Africanness of art forms.

In the film, we see the women and their children around them listening to their transistor radio broadcasting in their dialect. The power of education and information as tool for advocacy and social change is emphasised in these scenes. This notion is further taken a notch higher when in response to Colle's bold courage and rebellion, the radios were seized and set on fire blaming outside influence as the basis for Colle's supposed insubordination. In spite of the protest by Ibrahima, the France returnee son of the village head who came back with TV sets, VCD player and radio.

Wali further states:

The purpose of this article is not to discredit these writers who have achieved much in their individual rights within an extremely difficult and illogical situation. It is to point out that the whole uncritical acceptance of English and French as the inevitable

medium for educated African writing, is misdirected, and has no chance of advancing African literature and culture. In other words, until these writers and their Western midwives accept the fact that any true African literature must be written in African languages, they would be merely pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity, and frustration (282).

The above is further strengthened by Innocent Maja when he states:

The current multidisciplinary language discourse in law, politics, sociology, anthropology and linguistics on the importance of language reveals that language is important in different ways being that language is a medium of communication, mirrors one's identity and is an integral part of culture. Ngugi wa Thiong'o referred to language as the soul of culture (<http://www.mazwi.net/essays/the-importance-of-language>).

Let us put it in clear terms that a person's language is a vehicle of their particular culture. This is clearly shown in proverbs and riddles. The former, for example, have dual meanings: a literal meaning and a metaphoric or cultural significance. When literally translated into another language, a proverb frequently loses its meaning and flavour. It is important to note that a community without a language is like a person without a soul. In Africa, people are often identified culturally primarily, and even solely on the basis of the language they speak. For example: the Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Ijaw in Nigeria, and the Tonga, Ndebele, and Shona in Zimbabwe and the Xhosa and Zulu in South Africa. Languages generally are intimately bound up with many of the society's traditional practices, and enshrine in multiplex and subtle ways of the epistemological foundations of indigenous moral values. As Maja argues, "linguistic diversity becomes symbolic of cultural diversity, and the maintenance or revitalization of language signals ongoing or renewed validity of the culture associated with that language" (n.p). Hence in this discourse linguistic diversity becomes symbolic of cultural diversity, and the maintenance or revitalization of language signals ongoing or renewed validity of the culture associated with that language.

Language as a means of expression allows a person to participate in community activities. It can be used as a medium of fostering a democratic culture. In this sense, language policy plays a vital role in the process of democratic transition. According to Maja, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights convincingly succinctly endorses:

Language is an integral part of the structure of culture; it in fact constitutes its pillar and means of expression par excellence. Its usage enriches the individual and enables him to take an active part in the community and its activities. To deprive a man of such participation amounts to depriving him of his identity (149).

On the other hand, Maja maintains:

languages are also valuable as collective human accomplishments and on-going manifestations of human creativity and originality. This is buttressed by UNESCO's argument for language preservation that: The world's languages represent an extraordinary wealth of human creativity. They contain and express the total 'pool of ideas' nurtured over time through heritage, local traditions and customs communicated through local languages (<http://www.mazwi.net/essays/the-importance-of-language>).

Language can also be a source of power, social mobility and opportunities. In some quarters, language is a form of power. The linguistic situation of a country's society usually reflects its power structure, as language is an effective instrument of societal control. Most African states are characterised by this averment that 'it is undeniably true that communities of speakers of smaller languages tend also to be the less politically empowered communities'. This may be one of the criteria used for determining the communities referred to as minorities in any given society. Language loss is not only, perhaps not even primarily, a linguistic issue – it has much more to do with power, prejudice, (unequal) competition and, in many cases, overt discrimination and subordination... Language death seldom occurs in communities of wealth and

privilege, but rather to the dispossessed and disempowered. This normally leads to situations where majority or minority communities within African states become vociferous in support of their own identity and desire to ensure that their language, customs and traditions are not lost. In this regard, language becomes an almost inevitable point of contention between communities.

Linguistic loss is sometimes seen as a symbol of a more general crisis of biodiversity, especially indigenous languages that are seen as containing within them a wealth of ecological information that will be lost as the language is lost. This eco-linguistic school of thought regards saving endangered languages as an important part of the larger challenge of preserving biodiversity. According to Keebe, “the loss of a language is the permanent, irrevocable loss of a certain vision of the world, comparable to the loss of an animal or a plant” (n.p). According to Maja, Nettle and Romaine buttress this argument by emphasizing that “Losing a language, irrespective of the number of speakers of that language, deprives humanity of a part of our universal human heritage insofar as the language embodies a unique worldview and knowledge of local ecosystems”.

Language has served both as a reason (or pretext) for brutal conflict, and as a touchstone of tolerance. Language can serve, in all spheres of social life, to bring people together or to divide them. Language rights can serve to unite societies, whereas violations of language rights can trigger and inflame conflict. There is, therefore, every reason to clarify the position of language rights in various African states and in international human rights law, and to analyse the experience of the management of multilingualism in diverse societies.

Conclusion

The idea behind the use of foreign languages in discussing challenging native issues during EE programmes, one may ask, is it a deliberate undervaluing of a people’s culture, art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, and so on, and the conscious elevation of the language of the coloniser? When the African child is raised and taught in the foreign dialect, is it a purposeful domination of the mental universe of the African child, so as to eliminate

every touch of Africanness? One may also ask, has the use of such foreign dialects in the propagation of EE programmes in Africa achieved greater success than its indigenous counterparts? Ngugi therefore endorses:

The second aspect of language as culture is as an image-forming agent in the mind of a child. Our whole conception of ourselves as a people, individually, and collectively, is based on those pictures and images which may or may not correctly correspond to the actual reality of the struggles with nature and nurture which produced them in the first place. But our capacity to confront the world creatively is dependent on how those images correspond or not to that reality, how they distort or clarify the reality of our struggles (293).

The language used in *Moolaadé* is an effective and efficient approach employed by the film. The film brings the message of the fight against FGM down to a layman's understanding through its application of vernacular. This methodological application of vernacular enlightens the ordinary people who are not affluent with the official language. So, if we keep on indentifying the problems associated with information dissemination we will eventually get to a stage where it can be said that our message is unambiguous or not too complicated that the overall message is lost. It is imperative that those involved in film for development take into cognizance the audience age, status and language. For our interest is not really on whether a film has content or not rather on whether the target audience receives the information and acts on it. If just words can empower and motivate an uneducated woman like Colle, her daughter, and other little girls to stand against the menace of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), how much more when it involves an entire community. *Moolaadé* itself is a resource to empower not just women but also men who must shed old customs and obsolete perspectives in the light of new realities to defend the lives and health of their wives and female children from a deadly practice such as FGM. This study therefore advocates for the effective application of African dialects in commissioned EE programmes for a target

audience in Africa aimed at the advancement, and preservation of African philosophies, and ideologies.

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THE PLAY-TEXT AS A DEMOCRATIC IDEOGRAPH: A TRANSTEXTUAL DISCOURSE ON SELECT ADAPTATIONS BY FEMI OSOFISAN

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Abstract

Creative works of literature, in all ramifications, are in a state of flux. A stiff adherence to the Aristotelian postulations in The Poetics will merely result in a hitch in the fluidity of the relationship between dramatic works and the society, which, inevitably, provides the raw materials for such works; as well as constitute the final consumers of them. This obviously explains the dynamism that characterizes the creative impetus of different ages, their historico-political and socio-cultural backgrounds. Hence, the creative muse cannot be encased in an inimical cyst of stipulated tenets or any restrictive principles whatsoever. In fact, it is averse to such a setup, which is capable of inducing literary inertia. This, perhaps, explains the reason behind a plethora of concepts, theories and ideologies advanced by critics on the forms, structures, as well as the thematic concerns of works of literature over the years. Every play-text is a mélange of several textual ingredients that indisputably have some sort of progenitors. This paper, therefore, discusses the principles of intertextuality, adaptation and textual interrelatedness that are observable through a critical evaluation of Femi Osofisan's plays, using Gerald Genette's five subtypes of transtextuality. This evaluation mainly aims at establishing the fact that play-texts, especially, adaptations can be adjudged democratic ideographs.

Introduction

Every definition of the concept of democracy, put into cognizance in a discourse, has its central concern revolving round the pulling and pooling together of ideas, viewpoints, and even ideological stances together, and subjecting same to critical evaluation vis-à-vis whatever subject under consideration. Democracy involves a group of people doing things differently

and at the same time together, but, overtly or otherwise, with an identical goal in mind. The play-text as a democratic ideograph, therefore, involves the scrutiny of a play-text from the point of view of interplay of a variety of voices that are employed by a writer to fashion out a topical thematic preoccupation. Thus, besides attempting to address some polemical issues surrounding adaptations, especially, dramatic texts, this paper sees Osofisan's play texts as democratic ideographs if juxtapositionally evaluated with their originals. Here, the feature of a democratic set-up being, different voices, same issues as well as different voices, different issues, but same purpose are noticeable in these adaptations and their "sources".

There have been several schools of thought on the essence or otherwise of adaptation as an approach to theatrical creativity. Some critics have dismissed the endeavour as a worthless one or mere senseless repetition devoid of any iota of creativity. Ode Ogede puts it succinctly when he says:

...there is a pervasive misconception that influence necessarily denies an author's claims to originality. It is an idea which fatally undermines any ability to understand the fact that originality lies more in what a writer makes of his or her borrowed material- the individual touch that an author can put on his or her inherited forms (xiii).

This paper attempts an evaluative study of modes and modalities of adaptation using Gerard Genette's five subtypes of transtextuality to appreciate Femi Osofisan's adaptations. Our main focus in this work, therefore, is to attempt to bridge the gap that has been there as a result of dearth of critical materials on textual relationships between Osofisan's adaptations and their originals. Hence, this work aims at attempting a more rigorous appraisal of the inter-relationships between the relevant texts in this regard. Having first problematized the issue of adaptation, we then attempt to bring to the fore the "intra-cultural" and "cross-cultural" critique of select adaptations by Osofisan to fully appraise their relationships in line with topical relevance.

Apart from the generally acclaimed sources of African literary drama, namely, myths, legends, folklores, festivals and ritualistic veneration, adaptation, over the years, has proven itself another veritable source of African literary and dramatic creativity. Dramatic creations, in particular, and creative works generally, be they plays or films, therefore, have a way of either influencing or drawing from (and, more often, as is the case in recent times), responding to issues raised in some other works, irrespective of age, setting, and or, the cultural backgrounds of such works. For instance, some extant Greco-Roman classical works have continued, one way or the other, to catalyze the creative muses in recent times, thereby fashioning out great works of current topical relevance. Akoh (8) puts it this way: "In their search for aesthetic ideology, these playwrights ... attempt disparately to reach new goals or build on or re/deconstruct old dramatic canons within ideo-aesthetic boundaries in both language and theme". Such creative works either re-echo or counter issues as presented by previous authors in some form of democratic debates in which ideas are either concurred or kicked against, all in a bid to better the collective interests of the people.

This, for example, is what Bertolt Brecht, in *The Three-Penny Opera*, does to John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Also, in adapting Brecht's version, Wole Soyinka, in *Opera Wonyosi*, reflects on the socio-political milieu of post-independence Nigeria. Ola Rotimi, in *The Gods Are Not to Blame* transplants a Greek mythology found in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, to the Nigerian soil manipulating elements like style and local colour to effect a thematic relevance that goes beyond mere issues of predestination found in the original. In the same vein, Soyinka revisits Euripides' *Bacchae* in *The Bacchae of Euripides* in which he introduces the Ogunian motif. Ogun here is seen by many critics as the Yoruba version of the Athenian Dionysus (Quayson 205).

The various Nigerian plays that draw either directly or indirectly from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* are: Iyorwuese Hagher's *Mulkin Mata*, Harrison's and Simmons' *Aikin Mata*, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's *The Wives' Revolt*, Tracie Utoh's *Our Wives Have Gone mad Again*, among others. (Noteworthy, however, is the fact that Utoh's *Our Wives...* is a direct response to Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*). Also, in adapting Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, Alex Asigbo's *War of the Tin Gods*, in the words of Akoh, "...brings

up for interrogation a nagging national question through a parody of the aesthetic ideology of two great Nigerian dramatists of an older generation, Woye and Emi” (167). Athol Fugard’s *The Island* and Femi Osofisan’s *Tegonni: An African Antigone* draw from Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Ola Rotimi’s *Holding Talks* is a Nigerian version of Tawfik Al Hakim’s *Not a Thing Out of Place*. The list, of course, is endless.

Ardent critics of the “post theories” which intertextuality is one may dismiss this paper as being laden with Eurocentric undertones. But the question is: are African creative literary works completely free from the shackles of Western influences? Femi Osofisan has often frowned at the tendency by literary critics to identify him with any ideological tag. His main concerns in his dramaturgy are: the emancipation of the mind-set of the oppressed in order to effect equity and justice; the upgrading of the proletariat; the advocacy of a classless society, and the betterment of the lots of humanity on the platform of an egalitarian society. His works, in entirety, are committed to these quests. But are they realizable or merely utopian? If utopian, what are the observable inhibitions? With a high level of optimism, he declares that through his works, he “... can succeed in re-empowering our people, in shocking them out of lethargy or despair, out of hopelessness...” (Osofisan 22).

The elucidation of his postulations in his dramaturgy cannot be done in isolation, but via the tenets of some of these theories. Thus, whether these theories are non-African and Eurocentric is immaterial. What is of importance is their potentiality in addressing the functionality or otherwise of African democracy. And this is what this work sets out to expatiate focusing on, especially, transtextual technique. Our major concern in this work is not to dabble into a large scale discourse on the polemics of indigenization of foreign concepts, meaningfulness or otherwise of such concepts; and their suitability or otherwise on African creative endeavours. But, as far as these theories offer perspectives which illuminate some crucial issues addressed by African playwrights, we, in this paper, refuse to pitch tent with these critics.

As a working thesis, we shall examine how expressive strands of transtextuality are on Nigeria’s (and indeed, Africa’s) political, economic, and socio-cultural situations viewed from the purview of literary endeavours.

More so, the extent to which these theories are consistent with the thematic concerns and structural approaches of our existing literary works, particularly, plays, is examined. This paper, therefore, discusses the principles of intertextuality, adaptation and textual interrelatedness that are observable through a critical evaluation of Femi Osofisan's plays, using Gerald Genette's five subtypes of Transtextuality- Intertextuality, Paratextuality, Metatextuality, Architextuality and Hypotextuality. It is at the interface of the study of these theories that we shall establish a position against the anti-functionalist perspective of creative works of literature, while highlighting their utilitarian essence vis-à-vis democratic principles, such as collectivism, diversified opinions and collective responsibility. We shall limit our scope to a critical analysis of five plays of Femi Osofisan which are adaptations alongside their "progenitors."

Responses to Adaptation

Generally speaking, historians and scholars of translation take a negative view of adaptation, dismissing the phenomenon as distortion, falsification or censorship (aaboori.mshdiau.ac.ir/FavouriteSubjects/adaptationhtm). In spite of this viewpoint, it is glaring that what these dramatists have done is far from what some shallow minded literary critics dismiss as mere plagiarism devoid of any form of creativity. A better description of this creative approach is offered by Hutcheon (146) by what she calls "re-contextualising" or "transculturation". What then is literary adaptation? Ogede (ix) rightly observes that "all texts have forebears..." Adeoti (8) sees literary adaptation as "...the art of deliberate re-rendering of an already existing work of art in a new form or shape". He further explains that, it involves the transposition of the work of another creative artist into a different medium within a specific socio-historical and cultural context. What necessitates such transpositions, it may be explained, is the fact that historical experiences have a way of repeating themselves in various cultural backgrounds, thus, the dramatist being a watchdog of his society, may decide to recreate such recurring issues to effect edification (that is, if the potency of drama in doing so is anything to reckon with). Sanders (19), as cited by Adeoti, sees adaptation as being concerned with "reinterpretations of established texts in new generic contexts or,

perhaps, with relocations of an “original” or source text’s cultural and/ or temporal setting which may or may not involve a generic shift” (Adeoti 10).

The best known definition is that of Vinary and Darbelnet who posit that adaptation is a procedure which can be used whenever the context referred to in the original text does not exist in the culture of the target text, thereby necessitating some form of recreation. This widely accepted definition views adaptation as a procedure employed to achieve an equivalence of situations wherever cultural mismatches are encountered. ([aaboori.mshdiau.ac.ir/Favourite Subjects/adaptation.htm](http://aaboori.mshdiau.ac.ir/FavouriteSubjects/adaptation.htm)). The central aim of adaptation as employed by African dramatists, Adeoti explains, is to make the old or foreign text relevant in a contemporary African situation (Adeoti 11). Yet, as undoubtedly irresistible as the appeal of novelty is, what writers across the whole continent of Africa are up to in terms of the adaptation, reinterpretation, and redeployment of en-during texts is nothing short of spectacular (Ogede xi). Femi Osofisan, himself, in an interview with Olakunbi Olasope, on the issue of sourcing creative materials from the classical era explains thus:

... there are several features of the history and mythology of the ancient Greek society that trigger off a spontaneous sense of recognition in a reader or spectator from, say, the Yoruba community. The gallery of plural deities, for one; but so also the socio-political collisions that are closely reminiscent of the recent civil wars among the Yoruba city states in the nineteenth century, and, of course, the grand human dilemmas that the plays dramatise, which continue to be germane to every human being. All these make the Greeks seem like our neighbours next door, sharing and articulating our common concerns (Olasope 6).

It is in line with this that we shall embark on a transtextual discourse of select adaptations by Femi Osofisan to ascertain their potentials as democratic ideographs.

Dudley Andrew, a film theorist, in an essay titled ‘Adaptation’ (See Leo Braudy & Marshal Cohen 461-469), separates adaptation into three separate

modes: borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation. Borrowing implies that the narrative has its roots in some earlier archetypal or mythic source material, one that has probably appeared throughout our cultural history in multiple forms. Medieval paintings based on Bible stories; the many types of Shakespearean adaptations; and other adaptations from literature to music, opera or theatre are all cited as examples of borrowing. Intersection, as defined by Andrew, is, in effect, the opposite of borrowing. "Here the uniqueness of the original text is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation," he writes. A film that, for example, includes nondiegetic narration or shows intertitles or pages of written text on the screen, in order to maintain the original source material's words and voice, could be a primarily "intersecting" adaptation.

The third element of adaptation deals with its fidelity to the original. Andrew writes:

Unquestionably the most frequent and most tiresome discussion of adaptation (and of film and literature relations as well) concerns fidelity and transformation. Here it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about the original text (Braudy & Marshal 461).

Fidelity is discussed in terms of an adaptation's faithfulness to both the "letter" and the "spirit" of the original text. The letter of the text can easily be recreated mechanically, Andrew argues. He writes, "The skeleton of the original can, more or less thoroughly, become the skeleton of the film." But fidelity to the spirit of a text means fidelity to its tone, values, imagery, and rhythm; and it is often more difficult to transform these intangibles into their filmic equivalents.

Several diatribes and critical appraisals on Femi Osofisan's dramaturgy point to the fact that he subverts indigenous Yoruba mythologies; and subjects the gods and goddesses to outright ridicule in his plays. His re-reading of the Yoruba mythology with a clear empathy on the deprived lots in the hands of some vicious gods and goddesses might erroneously suggest to some audience members that his is an art aimed at a conscious misrepresentation of the

Yoruba worldview. We refuse to pitch our polemical tent with this school of thought. Rather, we agree with Olakunbi Olasope (xv), when she opines that Osofisan uses myths and history to question political tyranny, and this use, according to her, serves a dual purpose of distancing and sheltering the dramatist from the menace of present terrors on the African continent. In response to Olasope's question - "Do you consider yourself a revolutionary dramatist who upturns myth, history and established ideologies?" Osofisan lucidly stresses the fact that it is not a total irresponsible rejection of the old texts that he is advocating as has often been erroneously alleged, but rather "... a fuller reading, a deeper and more critical archaeology and historiography...not just a maverick, erratic exercise of iconoclasm...." He sees himself as one "...calling for a truer, if more radical, reclaiming of our archives; for a reinvention of ourselves that will highlight the dynamic, progressive and innovative - if rebellious - resonances of our culture. That is the sense in which I 'subvert' myths and established mythologies..." (Olasope 10). Also, Osofisan, in the words of Garuba,

...has rapidly established a reputation for himself as Nigerian's most consciously intertextual playwright. In doing this in his numerous plays, he has adopted a free-wheeling iconoclastic attitude to antecedent texts and authors from which/whom he constantly borrows materials which he then refigures for the purpose of his own creative interests. The intertextual muse that inspires Osofisan's dramaturgy often appears to be a very deconstructive one revealing in the process of displacing and disfiguring previous plays.... (136).

Thus, Osofisan's drama, especially, his adaptations, seen in the light of this "refiguring" and "deconstructive" approach is aimed at fostering democratic governance, where the lots of the masses are given equitable cognizance. Deconstruction, of course, is a feature of postmodern theorizing. It refers to a method of reading texts to reveal conflicts, silences, and fissures. It is a method of analyzing texts based on the ideas that language is inherently unstable and shifting and that the reader rather than the author is central in determining

meaning. In popular usage, the term has come to mean a critical dismantling of tradition and traditional modes of thought, be it documented in texts or not. Hence, myths, legend, and even the folkloric can be deconstructed for specific democratic governance. Osofisan's literary essences have been successfully experimented in these adaptations.

More and less, a drama text is alive to unfolding interpretations; and by extension, the work is a call to critics to make a return to past criticisms of older texts and to prove that Nigerian drama ab-initio African drama have global context and are open to multicultural interpretations within world drama and other forms of creative expressions within the creative landscape. That is to say Osofisan's drama, poetry, fiction, essays and treatises prove beyond reasonable doubt that African creative works (in this case, drama) emanates from indigenous sources that can compete with other sources of global literature (and by extension, other creative enterprise or artistic endeavours). These textual analyses therefore further assist us to see Osofisan as a builder of forms that can be seen from the sphere of dramatic exegeses, theatrical hermeneutics; and a bold unpacking of the African cultural essence in his plays.

Many of his plays are responses to other playwrights, either in the form of refutations or in the form of adaptations. In other words, the source text interacts with his cultural and mythic backgrounds. Hence, he merges both cultural and temporal boundaries, incorporating traditional consciousness into modern inclinations (Olasope xv).

At this point, an understanding of the concept of transtextuality is germane. Transtextuality is defined as the "textual transcendence of the text." (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transtextuality). Gerald Genette, a French Literary Critic, in his *Palimpsests* (1982), proposed a more inclusive term, transtextuality, to refer to "all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts" (See Flittman-Lewis et al., 210 ff). Perhaps it is this intertextual relations that give rise to popular Ogede's position that "All texts have forebears" (Ogede ix). Genette further posits five subtypes of

transtextuality, namely, intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypotextuality. We see these as being particularly useful for our purpose in this paper because, they provide a convenient framework for a justifiable transtextual appraisal of Femi Osofisan's adaptation. Hence, our analyses of Osofisan's adaptations are herein carried out with these five subtypes as paradigms.

This approach chosen by this writer is open to, or prone to attacks from critics who believe that past critical efforts are not open to extensive criticism from subsequent researchers. This seeming fallacy has led to a shortage of revisionist criticism in Nigerian theatre. Nothing stops a revisit to the critical essays by Clark, Ogunba, Soyinka, Echeruo, Hagher, Ogundipe, Onwueme, Sofola and many others like them. This is because the body of Nigerian critical texts must grow; and this growth is contingent upon past critical efforts, as well as current manifestations to assist us in producing a mass critical output that is indigenous and home grown. A look at intertextuality, for example, provides seamless opportunities for analytical lenses to focus on the works of Osofisan prior to, and after the civil war, during the military era, post military era and the current experiences in the democratic government. The intertextual approach moves in between texts, crosses texts and places them side by side to afford a deeper look into contrastive and comparative issues within those texts. Here, categorization may fail as the one attempted in this work is not sacrosanct. Again, the formations can be seen from a strong cultural basis of performativity/performance. Each formation performs an idea, relates certain worldviews of what it is to write about a people, and for these people to be perceived by those who encounter them from within the culture and outside of it. In this regard, we see Osofisan's plays as structures fencing homes as an architect and referring to a multicultural audience.

Intertextuality

A Juxtapositional Reading of Femi Osofisan's *Love's Unlike Lading* and William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*: Femi Osofisan, in an interview with Biodun Jeyifo, albeit humorously, remarks: "I am, I must confess, an incorrigible plagiarist! I am like the old storytellers, constantly stealing from

other narrators” (Osofisan *Insidious Treason* 230). In his view, stories are not carriers of passports; yet “... they travel across frontiers, of space and of time” (231). He further argues that, no matter how creative one may assume to be, no single story can ever be entirely new as nothing, of course, is entirely new under the sun. Every story, therefore is triggered off by some other stories created or even recreated somewhere else, and sometime in the past. Intertextuality, as defined by Genette (1-2), is “...a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another.” This, according to him comes more explicitly in its literal forms as quotation, plagiarism and allusion. Genette, however, admits that Michael Riffaterre’s definition of the term covers everything he (Genette) sums up as transtextuality. Riffaterre, as quoted in Genette’s *Palimpsest*, sees intertextuality as “...the perception, by the reader, of the relationship between a work and others that have either preceded or followed it.” According to him (Riffaterre), “Intertextuality is ...the mechanism specific to literary reading. It alone, in fact, produces significance, while linear reading, common to literary and non-literary texts, produces only meaning” (See Genette 2). Our concern in this analysis shall be in line with Genette’s posited three literal forms three forms: (i) Quotation, (ii) plagiarism (iii) Allusion. We shall also apply Riffaterre’s “semantic-semiotic microstructures observed at the level of a sentence, a fragment, or a short, generally poetic text” in these textual analyses.

(i) Quotation: the complementary title of Osofisan’s Play-*Love’s Unlike Lading – A Comedy from Shakespeare* – and the story itself, make no pretensions at all about it having William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* as its “progenitor” or source. The theme of hate versus love runs through the two plays. In both, the antagonism between the two camps (Antonio and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* and Bassey and Fowosanu in *Love’s Unlike Lading*) does not stop the love affair between the youngsters in these opposing camps (i.e Lorenzo and Jessica in *The Merchant...* and Lasaki and Tumini in *Love’s Unlike...*) from blossoming into full marriage. Osofisan, however, stressed this superiority of love over hate by actually making the youngsters biological children of the arch enemies in the play.

Riffaterre’s “semantic-semiotic microstructures, observed at the level of sentence, a fragment or a short generally poetic text” in Osofisan’s version of the story manifests in the form of direct quotations, albeit, without any form of inverted commas. Of course, to state the obvious, the quotation marks are absolutely unnecessary here since every play is written mainly with a watching audience in mind. Instances of these Riffaterre’s intertextual elements abound in Osofisan’s quotations from Shakespeare’s *The Merchant...* in his *Love’s Unlike...* A few examples will suffice:

The three caskets in the contest instituted by Tosan’s late father for her suitors, as what obtains in *The Merchant...* are made of Gold, Silver and Lead (the third, however, in Osofisan’s version is Bronze). These symbolize a test on the level of human mentality as regards such tendencies as egoism, self-centeredness, materialistic quest, avarice and the likes as opposed to genuine love which, of course, is unconditional. The inscriptions on each of these caskets, as also quoted by Osofisan, add credence to this. Let us examine these quotations from the caskets in a tabular form.

| William Shakespeare’s <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> | | Femi Osofisan’s <i>Love’s Unlike Lading</i> | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Golden Casket | Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire (p.83). | Golden Casket | Whosoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire (p.15). |
| Silver Casket | Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves (p.83). | Silver Casket | Whoever chooses me shall reap as much as he deserves (p.15). |
| Lead Casket | Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath (p.83). | Bronze Casket | Whoever chooses me must invest in me all that he has (p.15). |

From the above, it can be seen that, apart from the few semantic differences noticeable in the inscription on the Silver and Lead/Bronze caskets, where “reap” replaces “get” and “invest” replaces “give and hazard”, Osofisan’s use of quotation as an aspect of intertextual approach to adaptation is in line with

Genette's position. Also, the archaic usage of such words as "chooseth" and "hath" is replaced by Osofisan with modern usage as "chooses" and "has" respectively. This, of course, is in line with Osofisan's assertion that, what the present storyteller does is "merely refurbish them, and renew them with our own voices" (*Insidious Treasons* 231). "Our own voices", as used by Osofisan here, may include modern usage of language as well as other socio-linguistic elements that are laden with witticism, apothegms as well as local imageries that enhance local linguistic piquancy. Also, the short note on the Golden caskets in each case (i.e the source and the adaptation) opens with the popular maxim, "All that glitters is not gold" (p.87 & p.45 respectively).

Finally, Riffaterre's "semantic- semiotic microstructure" which relate to the use of symbols and imagery in speech as "picked from" the original source can be seen in Osofisan's diction in describing the qualities of mercy while making Basiru plead with Bassey for leniency on behalf Fowosanu. "Mercy, they say, is like a gentle rain that falls on all alike, showering its blessings on both the giver, and the one who receives it..." (p.85). Other such symbols used in this speech as "picked from" the source include "crown" and "sceptre". (Compare page 175 of the source). This, of course, is a case of the different voices addressing the same issues, albeit in different ways and at different times. If history is germane to the practice of democracy, then, Osofisan has deliberately revisited this historical piece to hone some of the socio-cultural issues in our nascent democracy.

(ii.) Plagiarism: This term is often derogatorily used in academic circles to denote academic theft. It is a situation where a present makes use of someone else's ideas or exact words without proper citation or formal acknowledgement. Of course since we are, here in, dealing with drama texts, we do not actually expect Femi Osofisan to opt for the traditional citational approaches, as either end notes or footnotes, that accompany direct quotes such as are obtainable in other academic works as research. The adjoining title has taken care of this- *Love's Unlike Lading: A Comedy from Shakespeare*.

(iii.) Allusion: This is a literary device that entails the use of indirect or direct references to past occurrences, histories, mythologies, classics etc.

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is very rich in the use of this device. The work, through rich symbolism, employs classical, historical, biblical, mythological and other such allusions to attain vividness in the chosen narrative approach. "The Nun's Priest's Tale" appears the richest in the use of this device among all the tales in that collection (See Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, as translated by Nevill Coghill: pp.232-249). Allusion is therefore one of the oldest and most used literary devices as it permeates all creative works. The entire story of *Love's Unlike Lading* hinges largely on that of *The Merchant of Venice*. Hence, it is difficult to really say that Osofisan makes allusions to this play. As seen earlier, it is glaring that apart from the differences in language structure of the two plays, the ideas are basically identical. Thus, the issue of allusion here will merely seem an understatement. Apart from the episode of the storm in a the tea-cup over the wedding ring, which merely heightens the comic effects in *The Merchant ...*, as well as the near farcical portrait of the character of the judge in *Love's Unlike...*, the entire episodes in the two plays are identical. Of course, Osofisan, in his traditional style of employing indigenous belief system of the Yoruba also replaces the issue of a pound of flesh in the original version with the issue of forfeiture of traditional homestead, which, according to the play, will equally tantamount to death for the debtor.

From the afore-gone textual analyses of Osofisan's and Shakespeare's texts, which are, by no means, exhaustive, it can conveniently be asserted, as Olu Obafemi also agrees that: "... intertextual aesthetics has broadened the literary scope of discourse and apprehension of the cognitive and epistemic dimension of African discourse, as exemplified in Femi Osofisan's intertextual plays" (Obafemi 5).

The Issue of Paratextuality in Femi Osofisan's Adaptations

The issue of paratextuality, Genette's second type of transtextuality, refers to the relation, in literature, between the text proper and its "paratext" – titles, prefaces, epigraphs, blurbs, dedications, and even book jackets and signed autograph. It is, of course, a truism that, that Osofisan calls himself "an Incurable plagiarist" does not make him, by whatever critical evaluation, a senseless copycat. Thus, in all of his adaptations it is observed that there is an

inestimably high level of indigenization to such an extent that, in some cases, the new play exists independently, not even appearing as a progeny of any previously written play. For instance apart from the fact that a reading or watching audience might, sometime ago, have come in contact with Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, none of the elements of paratextuality in Genette's position above, would suggest that *Who is Afraid of Solarin* is its "offspring". This also holds true of the relationship between *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage* and *Romeo and Juliet*. This, perhaps, is the more reason why Genette describes paratextuality as being "...generally less explicit and more distant relationship that binds the text properly speaking, taken within the totality of the literary work, to what can be called its *paratext*..." (Genette 3).

However, in other plays by Osofisan, titles and sub-titles present a glaring relationship with, as well as echo the titles of their "progenitors." Such plays include the following: *Tegonni: An African Antigone* (adapted from Sophocles' *Antigone*), *No More the Wasted Breed* (a response to Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*), *Wèesó Hamlet* (adapted from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*), to mention a few.

A Metatextual Reading of Osofisan's *Another Raft* vis-à-vis J.P. Clark's *The Raft*

Genette's third type of transtextuality consists of the critical relation between one text and another, whether the commented text is explicitly cited or only silently evoked. Genette puts it this way:

The third type of textual transcendence which I call metatextuality, is the relationship most often labelled "commentary." It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it (Genette 4).

Osofisan's responses to the issues raised in Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* and John Pepper Clark's *The Raft* in his *No More the Wasted Breed* and *Another Raft* respectively, are such that reflect the present socio-political cum cultural stance of the present Nigerian society in particular and Africa in

general. He has not necessarily cited the texts but has “paratextually” alluded to their titles as seen above. This titular relationship (i.e. the repetition of “*Raft*” and “*Breed*” in the titles) points out that the texts actually have some form of common grounds. More so, the phrases of the titles by Osofisan in these titles, with such words as “No More” and “Another” are equally suggestive of the fact that they are commentaries and, or responses to earlier plays. Hence, as posited in Genette’s principle of metatextuality, even without naming the plays, one can easily discern an interrelationship between these titles and their precursors.

J. P. Clark’s *The Raft* presents human conditions, especially in Nigeria as being doomed to stasis. His characters – Ogro, Kengide, Ibobo, and Olotu - are left to helplessly struggle in a raft that is destined for destruction. Clark, in this play, unlike Osofisan in *Another Raft*, does not incite the characters towards self-emancipation and to see the need to will against those aversive forces that tend to pull them towards disaster. They are merely tossed about in the hands of fate according to Aristotelian concept of tragedy. The statement that Clark seems to be making in this play, which Osofisan refutes in his, is the fact no matter whatever the citizenry of Nigeria does, our lots in this nation cannot be bettered. This is too pessimistic point of view about life; hence his reaction in his *Another Raft*. He therefore demonstrates in this play the fact that humans are amply in control of their destinies. Like the naturalists, Osofisan shows in this play that what will be may not necessarily be, depending, however, on how humans manipulate whatever situation(s) they find themselves in. Thus, for him, one’s efforts, propelled by an innate will-power completely negate the principle of what will be will be. For instance, in *Another Raft*, the professional sailors, Waje and Oge, quite unlike Clark’s lumbermen, use their initiative, necessitated by an acute desire for safety, to effect an attempt at salvaging their pathetic situation. Here, when the raft stops moving, they use their attires and those of the others on board the raft to construct a mast. This, albeit temporarily, serves a purpose, as it enhances the movement of the raft once again.

Aboard the raft, Oge is committed to the idea of a conglomeration of the principles of will-power, determination and muscle towards a positive end. He thus improvises paddles for the three survivors on the raft. Oge’s level of

determination and conscientiousness is detected in the tone with which he encourages Reore and Orousi, "... Make we no surrender! De sea, we fit beat am! We fit fight de sea and win am! Come on!" (Osofisan *Another Raft* 82). From this episode, it can be deduced that individualism, which of course, is tantamount to tyranny and absolutism in governance is averse to development. This accounts for his introduction of Agunrin and his dictatorial approaches to issues in the play. Whereas Agunrin and his militaristic mentality could not salvage the state of the drifting nation, Oge's conscientious and collectivist tendencies, towards the end of the play saw the raft in motion as the jointly attempt to punt the raft to safety. This, is therefore suggestive of the fact that what this nation needs to wade of the present political and socio-economic quagmire is that element of togetherness, collectivism and identical sense of commitment in spite of ideological differences. This is, indeed the basis of true democracy.

Thus, Osofisan's position in this play is simply that though the political situations in the country may, at present, seem gloomy; the state of the nation now is not tantamount to a futuristic doom as Clark in his *The raft* suggests. Hence, the characters are made to use everything at their disposal to salvage the situation. This is quintessence to Osofisan's belief in humans as the "centre of the universe, the source and end of ideas, action and meaning" as explained by Webster (79).

Also, Osofisan, in this play reacts to Clark by demonstrating that it is sheer foolhardiness for man to wait senselessly on a supernatural force to appear and remedy their unpalatable situation. He thus exposes the purported efficacy of the goddesses to disparagement. The people of Aiyedade believe strongly that the various disasters in the land are caused by Yemosa, the goddess of the sea, who has long been neglected, starved, and her priest, Omitoogun disregarded. And so, there is the need for human sacrifice so that, in the words of Orousi, "...we can have peace at last... so that our people can resume our history, without the terror of flood or fire...." (13). It is this kind of mentality that Osofisan rejects and laughs to scorn in this play. This, he does by demystifying the goddesses and making them confess that they are merely figments of human imaginations as well as "figures of fantasy" in the

minds of those who still believe in the existence of such things as gods and goddesses (See p. 35).

Osofisan's also updates Clark's play by basing it on the then Nigerian socio-political milieu with the military juggernauts in power, which he condemns. Of course, the four lumbermen in Clark's case were representative of the politicians during the era when Nigeria was broken into regions. Also, by extension, Clark's four lumbermen aboard the drifting raft may be taken to represent the former four major British West African colonies- Nigeria, The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Ghana. But Osofisan updates his to reflect the Nigerian military era. This, of course, is in line with the place of drama, as a mirror of the society. He demonstrates, with the authoritarian and autocratic approach to issues by Agunrin, a military dictator aboard the raft, that the military in government, as was the case then, could not salvage the situation of this nation. As seen in the character of Agunrin, force, subjugation, oppression and the deprivation of basic human rights being the features of the military can only aggravate the misery of the nation.

In summary, we can see from the above that, following Genette's position on metatextuality, Osofisan's *Another Raft* is simply a critique of Clark's *The Raft* considering their various thematic preoccupations.

The Idea of Architectuality in Femi Osofisan's Adaptations

Architectuality refers to the generic taxonomies suggested or refused by the titles or infratitles of a text. It has to do with a text's willingness, or reluctance to characterize itself directly or indirectly in its title as a poem, essay, novel, or film. It involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular (Genette 3). It is the designation of a text as a part of a genre or genres. Genette argues that:

In all cases, however, the text itself is not supposed to know and consequently not meant to declare its generic quality: the novel does not identify itself explicitly as a novel, nor a poem as a poem ... one might even say that determining the generic status of the text is not the business of the text but that of the reader, or the critic, or the public (Genette 4).

The idea of architectuality concerns itself mainly with the forms and, or the generic quality of a given write up. By extension, architectuality may be seen as having to do with the structure of a text. Our discourse on paratextuality as well as intertextuality applies here too. Of course it is the structure of a given text that makes it identifiable with any specific genre. The creative writer, in this case the dramatist, therefore could not possibly have created anything new outside of what had already been in existence.

Thus, whether consciously or otherwise, every given text assumes an “architextual” form of what have been the established norms of whatever genre it is identifiable with. For instance, in 2008, Osofisan did a stage adaptation of Fagunwa’s novel, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irumole*. In this endeavour, apart from the process of translating the story from merely Yoruba to English, what Osofisan does, in the first place, is a clear case of garbing the rich Yoruba cultural heritage, immanent in Fagunwa’s novel, with entirely new attire – the English language. This process entails his thinking in Yoruba and writing in English. Secondly, the form has to change (i.e. from a prose narrative to drama) and finally, the Yoruba mythology has to be made alive for a twentieth century audience, characterized by all the entrapment of globalization.. These, perhaps, explain why the interview of Osofisan by Tunde Awosanmi on this endeavour has to be captioned: “Re – Imaging Fagunwa’s *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* for the Modern Audience.” (See Olasope, ed. 51- 82). The word “Re- Imaging” in the above caption is germane to our discourse of architectuality in this section. Of course, in writing, Osofisan has to align himself with some established traditions of playwriting and adaptation, such that in the end nothing is entirely out of the blues in terms of structural presentation. The episodic presentations of dramatic action, the dialogue, the conflicts between the protagonist and the antagonist, the climax and the denouement coupled with all the dramatic devices, all injected into this project by Osofisan, in order to identify it with drama as a genre, all encapsulate the issue of architectuality as a transtextual subtype.

Hypertext vs. Hypotext: A Textual Analysis of Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed* vis a vis Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*:

Hypertextuality, according to Genette (5), refers to any relationship uniting a text "B" (which he calls hypertext) to an earlier text "A" (which he calls hypotext). Text "B" is therefore seen as one that transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends text "A." Hypertextuality, as Robert Stam et al. sees it, "...calls attention to all the transformative operations that one text can operate on another text. Travesty, for example, irreverently devalorizes and "trivializes" a pre-existing "noble" text (Stam, Burgoyne & Flitterman-Lewis 214). However, in some other cases, while accentuating some issues in the original, some hypertexts, update the earlier works. Of course as we earlier saw under our discussion on metatextuality, this exercise actually underscores the essence of adaptation, especially in drama, as it is essentially seen as the reflection of the society upon which it is rooted. Such transformation, coupled with modification, is exactly what makes Osofisan's adaptations outstanding. Thus, in this section, we shall be considering Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* as the hypotext, and Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed* as the hypertext.

Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, characteristic of his mytho-ritual approach to theatre, presents the absolute necessity of societal cleansing; the sole responsibility of which lies on a given individual whose life has to be terminated. This scape-goatism or carrier standpoint, he had once argued in one of his plays – *Death and the King's Horseman* – is equivalent to the vicarious death of Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity as believed by the Christians. Here, our focus is on Genette's proposition that hypertext, as it were, transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends the hypotext; and that it sometimes accentuates as well as updates it. These are obviously what Osofisan does to Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* in *No More the Wasted Breed*. Although *No More the Wasted Breed* appears as an entirely independent dramatic piece to any reading or watching audience who has not had any pre-knowledge of Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, the central thematic concerns of the two plays reveal some high level of transtextual relationships that bring to the fore the issue of hypertextuality. Of course, mention should, herein, be made of the fact that, contrary to what obtains above in our discourse on intertextuality, the plots of these two plays are dissimilar. There

is, also, of course, verisimilitude in characterization as what obtains between, say, Shylock and Mr Bassey, on the one hand, and Antonio and Fowosanu on the other in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Osofisan's *Love's Unlike Lading*.

However, thematically, the issue of the "special breed" or the carrier runs through the two plays. But it is the variance with which it is treated that brings to the fore the issue of Osofisan's transformation, modification or updating bid. Osofisan, himself asserts that "...the play...was written in direct response to Soyinka's own play, *The Strong Breed*". (Osofisan *Insidious Treason* 4). The carrier motif, as is the subject of modification in Osofisan's play, we should explain at this juncture is someone (either a member of the community concerned or a stranger therein) claimed by the community to have the super natural mandate to bear the debris of the society, dance round the community, sometimes with severe beatings and laceration, as is the case with Eman in *The Strong Breed*, and end up being flushed out to complete the cleansing ritual while awaiting a new dawn characterized by plenteous harvest as well as societal bliss in all ramifications. It is this issue of the periodic senseless waste of human resources in a vicious recurring cycle that Osofisan disavows in his play. Thus, in his version, unlike Eman, in Soyinka's own, he makes Saluga, the carrier to rise against the inimical oppressive forces. And even to the consternation of Elusu, the goddess of the inland waters who causes the havoc in the land, Olokun, her husband, the god of the Ocean is pitched against her, thereby facilitating Saluga's rebellion and subsequent physical and psychological emancipation of the land from the shackles of blood sucking deities. This heralds the abrogation of the institution of vicarious death in the name of cleansing the land.

The modification and, or updating of Soyinka's work in this hypertext hinges on the fact that in modern times, from Osofisan's ideological standpoint, it is no longer fashionable for mankind to depend solely on the supernatural forces for emancipation from an inimical status quo. Man should, therefore, be able to initiate actions that will set them free from the whims and caprices of some vicious deities who merely capitalize on their level of ignorance and gullibility to exploit them and make excessive demands that more often than not, result in colossal waste of both material and human

resources. Another statement that is prominent in this hypertext is the fact that in this postmodernist time of technological advancement, it is sheer foolhardiness for man to attribute some natural disasters such as flood, to the mere anger of deities rather than look out for other possible causes such as blocked drainages or absence of effective drainage systems. Olokun, in pitching tent with the aspirations of humanity to flow with the general societal cataract, characterized by modernization says this to his dying wife, Elusu:

Beloved, time is no longer on our side. See men have changed. They have eaten the salt of freedom and moved beyond our simple caprices. We must fulfill our appetite by other means for they do not demand protection anymore, but food; not worship but justice... (Osofisan *Restless Breed* 99).

Thus, unlike Eman in the hypertext who is coerced to succumb to the vicious demands at his life, Saluga rises to the occasion and frees not only himself, but the entire community from the strangle-hold of the gods and goddesses of the land. In conclusion, it can be conveniently asserted that the hypertext updates the history of man, who is made not to meekly and helplessly wait on the “unpalatable” intervention of the supernatural forces in the face of environmental, health and other such hazards. Thus, the hypertext (i.e. *No More the Wasted Breed*) agrees with Osofisan’s position that:

Indeed, the failures that we see around us have no mysterious roots at all, when one comes to understand our era of active and corrosive neo-colonialism. The errors and the fumbings and the dark spots are neither destined nor immutable. They are the product of identifiable political and economic causes, which can be altered... (Osofisan *Insidious Treason* 11).

Therefore, Osofisan’s revisionist statement, viewed herein as a response to the Soyinkan mytho-ritualistic stance in the hypotext seems to be encapsulated in the position that if the carriers are indeed strong breed, they should direct their strength, wits, wisdom and the likes towards meaningful developmental

endeavours that are in line with the present societal dire needs. If Nigeria, and indeed Africa is to move forward, such barbaric and backward practices as human sacrifice. In spite of the crudity and loutishness of such practices, their efficacy was merely guaranteed by the power of belief, or faith as the case may be. Post-modernity has ushered in an era of cultural renaissance when some of such cultural practices need be jettisoned and forlorn. Also, an unending search for a humano-socio-cultural harmony, coupled with an insurmountable quest for true freedom aimed at sustainable development, has necessitated the need to subject some of such cultural values to critical scrutiny and maintain an ideological stance as Osofisan has done in *No More the Wasted Breed*.

Conclusion

Our transtextual discourse on select adaptations of Femi Osofisan in this paper has negated the negative viewpoints of some historians and scholars of translation that adaptation has a distortive outlook and can merely be dismissed as an exercise aimed at falsification. But we have amply demonstrated, as Ogede (7) also agrees, that, superseding mere repetition of the obvious, adaptations make emphatic how the copy squares with the source; how the revised duplicate stacks against the original in essential detail, in the manipulation of deep angles of narrative structure, and which appropriately puts it out of line with studies which are preoccupied with the minor role played by what Hawkes (17) calls the concern with mere physical accuracy of description which does not take account of “the relationships which we construct, and then perceive, “between” things. Furthermore, Osofisan’s adaptations juxtapositionally examined with their “progenitors” in this work reveals their centrality as voices addressing political cum socio-economic issues affecting the wellbeing of the watching and reading audiences.

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COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES IN APALA MUSIC

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Abstract

This paper examines the compositional structure of Apala music, a Yoruba neo-traditional genre, with a focus on Yoruba popular musicians as creative artistes. It interrogates the issue of musical techniques such as speech melody, speech rhythm, scale, phonemic tones, theme and motivic development, call and response form, etc., as compositional and creative resources. Discussions are made on the structural uses of these musical resources, as a means of evaluating the various creative processes engaged in Yoruba neo-traditional music. This paper highlights the musical prowess and creative ingenuity of Yoruba popular musicians, the compositional style and the functional (musical and social) use of the genre. Musical notation with sectional analysis of the form and structure of two works of Apala exponents (Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura) were also included as a contribution to the body of knowledge on African musical study. In conclusion, the study establishes that Yoruba music, like any music of other world culture, engages a creative process of composition, and that Apala music and their artists remain relevant and functional in the social, educational, and political lives of Yoruba people and their societal terrain, especially in the current Nigerian democratic milieu. Hence, its musicological study and artistic performance stands to benefit the standard production of Nigerian music, and the establishment of a national identity, while suggesting its inclusion in our educational curriculum.

Introduction

Music, an artistic medium of sound organization, is a natural phenomenon found in every human society (Titon 2, Brace & Burton 42). It is one of man's greatest creative evolutionary exploration and through its consequential

interactions and functionalities with other creative arts, has become a significant fabric of human existence. Among the Africans, music serves as a way of life, encapsulating his existence and day-to-day activities, from the cradle – with music as his first source of cultural initiation, to the grave - through a continuous celebration of life. In Nigeria, there exists over 250 ethnic groups (The World Factbook), with the three major linguistic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo) having different indigenous (traditional) songs. The resultant musical and cultural pluralism means that each ethnic region possesses and practices its own musical language, ideas and stylistic forms in the country (wa Mukuna 241, Euba 476a, Vidal 12, 56a). Traditional music in Nigeria, created entirely from traditional elements and existing in several idioms before the Arabic and European influences, functioned in the context of the religious and secular aspects of the people’s indigenous music, representing a viable means of understanding their ethos (Lasisi 1, Euba 224b, Onyeji & Onyeji 19). However, amongst the Yoruba, and other ethnic groups, both the Islamic-Arabic and the Euro-Christian foreign influences were not without its (debatable) positive impact on the compositional techniques of the popular musicians as it was during this period, the first six decades of the twentieth century, that “new forms of musical expressions” emerged, with Apala music one of such neo-traditional typologies (Vidal 5, 99a).

The aim of this paper therefore is to discuss the creative process engaged by Yoruba musicians in composing these new musical forms, by shedding light on the musical (compositional techniques) factors that facilitate the composition of Yoruba neo-traditional music as a global artistic creative process, focusing on Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura’s Apala music as our case study. We will explore the creativity of the musicians in terms of their musical considerations. These informative resources are expected to add to the wealth of knowledge on Yoruba music.

Apala Music amongst the Yoruba

Apala music is a socio-religious music with a prominent instrumental part, and a vocal accompaniment rooted in Yoruba philosophy and poetry. It developed as a non-liturgical Islamic music used during Muslim festivals. As

an offshoot of the Quaranic chants and call to worship, Were and Waka musical forms were used by Muslim musicians and enthusiastic youths to wake up the faithfuls to eat 'saari' (early morning meal) during the Ramadan fast, and welcome pilgrims back from the hajj pilgrimage in Mecca (Bender 97, Mapunda 11, Frishkopf 490-2). However, with the infusion of traditional musical elements, vocal and instrumental styles, Apala was born and performed in the social context of both the Yoruba Muslims and non-muslims. Hence, with the deliberate act of creating a non-liturgical music appropriate for entertainment and social events by Yoruba Muslims, Apala assumed a popular status, which catalyzed its commercialization. It was popularized by exponents such as Haruna Ishola, Ayinla Omowura, Ligali Mukaiba, Ajadi Ilorin, while contemporary practitioners include Musiliu Haruna Ishola, Y.K. Ajadi, Tunji Sotimirin, Femi Lewis, etc. (Olusoji 40b). The instrumental ensemble of Apala consists of percussive drums (Iya-ilu, omele ilu and Akuba), Sekere (a rattle gourd), and Agidigbo (a thumb piano with four or five metal strips mounted on a resonating box).

Music among the Yoruba is a core and integral part of their cultural fabric. The Yoruba musical practice can be broadly discussed under two main categories: folk music and new music. These include musical typologies which are related to their religious, social (occasional and ceremonial), entertainment (and recreational) activities, together with their musical instruments (Olusoji, 1, 33a). While the folk music are their indigenous or traditional songs, the new forms are the neo-traditional and art music which assumed popular and commercial status out of intra and inter-cultural factors, which includes religious, social, economic and political factors. The external factors include the musical (elements, style, and instruments), religious (mode of worship), educational, and political influence of Christianity and Islam. Internally, while the "Islamization of traditional music", according to Frishkopf (485), helped in attracting a broad followership to the muslim faith, some liturgical songs were translated into indigenous languages and traditional songs adapted by the Christians. As a result of the impending desire for non-liturgical music that served as social and entertainment music, the people adopted a creative infusion of the foreign Arabic and European religious, cultural and musical components with their traditional forms to

create new musical forms (Vidal, 103-109a). This creative act was performed by both professional and non-professional musicians since music among the Yoruba, like many other ethnic groups in Nigeria, is both communal (general) and reserved (professional).

The growing trend of band music for social events, and continuous lucrative patronage by the elites, affluent, and government catalyzed the development, commercialization, and economic boom of the new social genres. The drive towards independence, democratic and good governance, charted a course for the political use of music in the nation, leading to songs for political parties and electioneering, protest songs, commentary songs reflecting on independence, census, democracy, etc. Other functions include social songs such as praise songs for dignitaries, to celebrate landmarks, for sports support, philosophical and educational songs (Soetan 7-28, Lasisi 111-15, Ajewole 171-74, Olusoji 120-121a). Song examples include “Eyin oselu wa” (You our politicians), Challenge cup by Ayinla Omowura (NEMI “CD” 24 & 14), and “Ipari Ogun” (End of war), “Are la fomo ayo se” (Playing with game pieces) by Haruna Ishola (SRPS 38 & 34).

Musicians throughout the history of music, and in every world culture, implement different compositional techniques for their music, through a creative process. These can be seen in the music of the monks, minnesingers, and troubadours of the middle ages who sourced for popular sacred or secular motifs to compose their monophonic songs. Also from the music of Palestrina, Bach, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, to Wagner, who employed compositional techniques (counterpoint, polyphony, chromaticism, atonality, etc), by adopting their traditional musical materials, a process that created nationalism in music (Grout 24-867, Allen 1-174, Strunk 73-875). Even the contemporary jazz, pop, and art music of this age are no exception to this creative process of artistic art.

Wallas (qtd. in Broecker 7) and Copland (23-31) have spoken of four stages of the creative process. While Wallas’ models (preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification) are general, Copland’s stages are musical in particular, which includes musical idea, thematic examination, sound medium and coherent whole. Apala music is no exception, as the musicians sourced for their compositional (musical) materials and ideas from within their traditional

culture, such as the sounds (musical elements) and socio-cultural and/or socio-political occurrence (extra-musical factors) in their natural environment, examine and adopt indigenous themes such as religion, social, education, politics and even theatrical poetry. They equally considered language with philosophical texts, speech rhythm, speech melody, the drum and percussive pattern, as well vocal and instrumental options as sound medium and technique to achieve a coherent whole in the entire music. This creative process of conception is a common denominator in all works of art, with the practitioners revered as creative artists. Despite the creative metamorphosis of the new forms from traditional music, the neo-traditional typologies such as Apala, Fuji, Juju, Sakara, highlife, etc., retained characteristic attributes of its progenitor. The new musical forms which were also composed, performed, and transmitted orally, continued to serve social, political, educational, and economical functions in the Yoruba traditional and urban societies.

We have stated earlier that musicians, like other creative artists, undergo a process for the creation of their works of art. In Yoruba traditional and neo-traditional music, this compositional process, which usually is a combination of pure musical and extra-musical factors, served the musician's imagination with the necessary resourceful inspiration, and equipped their skillful or talented capabilities towards an eventual outward creative expression musically. The musical factors are the musical elements, especially melody and rhythm, from which other elements can be deduced, e.g. harmony – the vertical displacement of melody, tempo – the speed of the rhythmic beats, etc. In Yoruba music, like other African music, melody, and rhythm compliments each other, although with more penchant for the latter, as the melodic use gains its indigenous richness from the rhythmic dynamism. This, according to Nketia, is comprehensible since the ingenuous melodic use is recompensed by rhythmic complexities (125), and texture is “one of basic units that influence the form of Yoruba music” (Olaleye 120). Other musical factors include vocal and instrumental forms and techniques. The extra-musical factors are the socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of the people's lives. The former includes religion, myths, festivals, rites of passage, education, economics, while the latter are the moral and value systems, history,

occupation, political associations, democracy and governance. Hence, the sociological context within which music is realized amongst the Yoruba, and in traditional African societies.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study, requiring a survey of the structural form of the genre. The two major procedures commonly associated with musicological research - fieldwork (collection of primary data while experiencing a first-hand musical practice in a cultural setting), and deskwork (collection of secondary data, transcriptions, analyses and drawing of conclusions), were adopted in carrying out and writing of this study. Ethnographic techniques including interviews with musicians, key informants, a combination of participation and observation, as well as focus group discussions were used to elicit valuable information on composition and performance practice of Apala music. Selected music (cd) of Harun Ishola (SRPS 38) and Ayinla Omowura (NEMI 0460) were chosen for transcription, notation and analysis, while live (field) recordings of some existing Apala artists served as contemporary data guidance and authentication. The analysis of the musical elements (speech melody and speech rhythm), musical forms (call and response, themes and variation, motif and development), and melo-rhythmic patterns (hocket, ostinato, and timeline) used as compositional techniques in the genre were carried out using the content analysis technique of its vocal music.

Compositional Techniques

The foregoing musical factors mentioned are important structures of Yoruba music that the musicians adopt as compositional and improvisational materials during composition and performance, having acquired such skills orally from years of apprenticeship and experience. We will now discuss the various compositional techniques adopted in Apala (Yoruba neo-traditional) music, which includes musical elements (speech melody and speech rhythm), musical forms (call and response, themes and variation, motif and development), and melo-rhythmic patterns (hocket, ostinato, and timeline).

Apala music, like most of African traditional music in general, is tied to the speech melody of the Yoruba language, as the contour of the melodic movement is mostly controlled by the speech tone of the language in use. The music is characterized by repeated, short and fragmentary melodies, which are varied and interchanged in order to make long melodic unities. These short melodies, which are mostly logogenic (word-born or speech melody), but sometimes pathogenic (emotion-born or improvised melody), or melogenic (melody-born or theme melody), are transmitted orally, and as such are easily learned, applied and memorized during training, rehearsals, and performance (Agu 33, Akpabot 103a, 26b). The Apala musicians create their melodic patterns using variants of the pentatonic scale that suits them, based on their melodic style and sometimes dialect, as a result, the melodic contour of the song shows the artistic creativity of each composer. Due to the overbearing influence of the pentatonic scale in Yoruba traditional music, combinations of its variants are creatively exploited in this neo-traditional genre, creating a modal and folk-like musical flavor.

Ex.2. Pentatonic scales



- A. Anhemitonic form B. Anhemitonic form C. Hemitonic form

Ex.3. Melodic use based on the two Anhemitonic forms by Haruna Ishola (Appendix I, bars 16-23)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Lead' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Chr.'. Both staves contain musical notation and lyrics. The lyrics are: 'o-o o-mo Ni-gi-r' and 'a-du-pe o-gm a-be-k pa-ri'.

Lead
Ie-yinl-pon-ju pe-h'ko-ro, i-dm-ru pe-h a - y'o fa o ma ri

Chr.
Ie-yinl-pon-ju pe-h'ko-ro, i-dm-ru pe-h a - y'o fa o ma ri

Ex.4. Melodic use based on the two Anhemitonic forms by Ayinla Omowura (Appendix II, bars 7-11, 46-51)

Lead
O mi tum tum ti ru, e ja ti tum wo ru o ob, e tum ma - a gbo,

Chr.
Eje ki a mi a ba fa - a - ji bo.

Lead
A-yin-h pa - da... do-mo tum-tum

Chr.
A-yin-h pa-da do-mo tum-tum o, A-de-wa-k pa - da do-mo tum-tum.

Ex.5. Melodic use based on the Hemitonic form by Ayinla Omowura (Appendix II, bars 77-80)

Iambic Trochaic Spondee Iambic Trochaic Spondee

A be' - ku, be' - ku, I - ku lo - lum o gb'e - be

Speech rhythm

In Yoruba traditional music, the speech rhythm is derived from the natural rhythmic pattern of the language, with emphasis on some words, resulting in

the iambic (short-long), trochaic (long-short) modes, and spondee (long-long) rhythmic modes, with the iambic mostly in consonance with Yoruba speech tone. Ekwueme (186-88), and Olaleye (124) have discussed extensively on a few of the general rules applying to rhythmic modes, serving as guidance for the creative use of speech rhythm in Yoruba and other Nigerian songs (see ex.5 above). With the tones in consonance with the words, it makes each musical phrase lead to each other, creating a natural sense of steady progression. Thus, in most traditional genres, including new forms like Apala, the musicians are able to pick up the lyrical meaning of any song in its inbuilt speech rhythms, and be creative in their musical accompaniment as the lead singer or master drummer leads in a performance, even when a new song is introduced. Its poetic rhythm is a strong determinant in the rhythmic pattern adopted in the music.

Generally, Yoruba songs make use of free, regular, and a mixture of free and regular rhythms, all of which are used by the Apala musicians as a creative means of musical expression and intelligibility of the language in use. The simple (4_4) and compound (12_8) quadruple time signatures are the most common in Apala music, adopting the ever present standard (bell) pattern and its variants. They are however used in additive metres, with the eighth note (quaver) serving as the 'density referent'. The 4_4 time, with eight pulses (or 8 quavers) per phrase equals 3+5, 3+3+2, etc., while the 12_8 time, with twelve pulses (or 12 quavers) per phrase equals 5+7, and other variants also of its additive metre. Scholars such as Nketia (125-38b), Akpabot (49-58b), Ekwueme (196-98), and Vidal (131-49b), to mention a few, have discussed extensively on this concept of standard pattern, time-line, rhythmic modes, and the duple and triple schemes. Although African rhythm is in triple meter, the musicians conceive it in duple meter, hence the prevalent 2 against 3 'hemiola' rhythm, used creatively as a compositional technique, as shown in Ex.6c, 7c and 7d below.

Ex.6. Simple quadruple time signature in varieties of additive meter

A) $5 + 5$
 B) $3 + 2 + 3$
 C) $3 + 3 + 2$

Ex.7. Compound quadruple time signature in varieties of additive meter

A) $5 + 7$
 B) $3 + 2 + 2 + 2$
 C) $3 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2$
 D) Horizontal & Vertical Hemiola

Despite the external influence of religious and musical elements, this natural speech melody and speech rhythm of Yoruba language is creatively exploited in neo-traditional genres, as the people can understand and identify with it, hence hastening its assumption of a popular status socially and commercially. This creative act practiced and mastered by these artists however ensures that the appropriate intervallic range of notes forming the melodies makes for intelligibility of the Yoruba lyrics.

Call and Response

In Yoruba traditional and neo-traditional music, like most Nigerian songs, where the voice is prominently involved, the antiphonal form in which one group of voice sings a consequent section, in response to an antecedent section sang earlier by another voice is a common practice. This form is referred to generally as the 'call and response' by numerous theorists on African music, such as Blacking (12-20), Nketia (139-46b), Vidal (96-102b), Ekwueme (208-9), Agu (15-7), Oikelome (40-4), Olusoji (112-13a), etc. It has been an age-long traditional compositional technique in Yoruba music, through creative expressions of her oral poetry, by means of musical and lexical repetition, parallelism/ juxtaposition, and tonal (phonemic) counterpoint/ contrasting intonation (Vidal 103-28b, Olatunji 17-36). This is

evident in the poetic functions of Yoruba proverbs (owe), praises (oriki), also (story), etc., in apala music, where words are sang to melodic and rhythmic motifs and themes, and elongated through musical developments, repetitions, and lexical wordplays, allusions, metaphors, etc (Ajetunmobi and Adepoju 31, Olatunji 17-64). In Yoruba neo-traditional genres, the call is sung by the lead voice (solo), while the accompanying voices render a chorused response. There are two main structural forms adopted by the apala musicians, with some other artistic variants existing within the confines of the main forms, thereby generating remarkable musical creativity. The following are the main forms with the innovative variants:

Call and Response with similar Textual, Melodic and/or Rhythmic phrase

This is a simple form in which the responding chorus echoes every musical phrase sang by the solo (lead) voice. The resultant alternatives to this form are:

- a. Same length of Call and Response, i.e. A – A form (see appendix II, bars 30-65, 107-126)
- b. Elongation of the Call in the Response, i.e. A–A¹ form (see appendix II, bars 67-82, 83-90)

***Short Repetition Phrase (S.R.P) - Often times, the tail end of the solo is quoted as a direct repetition by the chorus before responding with the whole call section, with or without elongation, as a means of resourcefulness and to minimize the monotony in repetition of textual, melodic and rhythmic elements of the music (see appendix II, bars 72 and 116).

Call and Response with different Textual, Melodic and/or Rhythmic phrase

In this form, the chorus voices sing a different musical response to the solo section, sang by the lead voice. The different variations here include:

- a. Strophic form, in which the chorus sings the same response to different calls by the lead voice, resulting in A-B-C-B form (appendix I, bars 5-13, 24-33; appendix II, bars 7-28)

- b. Through-Composed form, where the calls are always different from the responses, giving rise to an A–B–C–D form (see appendix I, bars 1-4; appendix II, bars 92-94, 97-106). ***Overlaps – Where the call bears no semblance with the response, the soloist part often extends beyond the entrance point of the chorus, thereby forming a creative overlap of text, melody, and rhythm, giving rise to an artistic beauty of music and aesthetics (see appendix I, bars 5-13, 24-33; appendix II, bars 72 and 101).

Within the structural framework of the call and response form are the stylistic possibilities of solo singing by the lead voice (appendix II, bars 30-47), and chorus singing involving both lead and group voices (appendix I, bars 2-4, 13-23, 34-44; appendix II, bars 13-15, 26-29). There are also the intermittent interjections by the soloist in-between chorus responses (appendix II, bars 11, 24, 55, 57, 59, 61, 73, 74, 77, and 122).

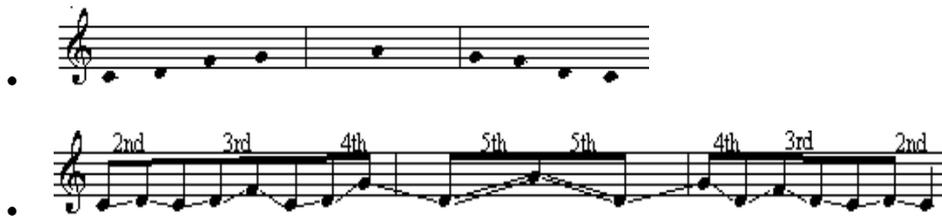
Themes and Motivic Development

A theme is usually the main, overall musical figure of a work. It is repeated and remains recognizable, and can be altered throughout a piece of music. In Apala music, the lead voice must be vast and innovative musically, as new themes are introduced with every new call sang as solos, and the chorused voices singing either a motivic development of the call or a new thematic material, as a corresponding response. The thematic materials used are based on the traditional Yoruba poetry (words), melody, rhythm, as well as the stylistic instrumentation, as a compositional technique for a creative development of the musical themes unique to the artist and the genre in general. Most often than not, a theme will generally be developed into a varied version either by elongation or variation of the tune by some succession of notes. Such technique involves the use of motifs, making use of musical elements such as rhythm, melody, and even the text, existing either in the instrumental or vocal form. A motif, which can be used as the building block to a theme, can be identified simply as a phrase that is outstanding by its repetitiveness and a development that could be simple or elaborate throughout the given music.

Often times an Apala musician, like most practitioners of Yoruba traditional music, will repeat his signature tune as a new call-theme, as a means of creative emphasis and aesthetic pleasure. In such case, while it maintains the same melodic and rhythmic motif, the texts will be different, thereby constituting a new call by the soloist (see appendix I, bars 7-8, 26-27; appendix II, bars 30-37, 67-72, and 111-116). In the opening phrase of the song by Haruna Ishola (appendix I), a theme stated by the lead voice is repeated by the chorus as a response, albeit in its retrograde variation, having the same melodic curve, range, and rhythmic pattern. This compositional technique thus results in a mirrored ‘motivic variation’ of the theme. Both the call and the response passage makes use of an Anhemitonic pentatonic scale (C-D-F-G-A), with the highest note (A) serving as a pivotal point between the first tetra-notes (C-D-F-G), and its mirrored version (G-F-D-C).

Ex. 8. Illustration of i) Linear, ii) Scalar and iii) Rhythmic pattern, Melodic Range and Curve of a Call-theme and its mirrored Response, based on Anhemitonic pentatonic scale (appendix I, bars 1-4).

- C – D – F – G – A – G – F – D – C



A three note motif was ingeniously used and developed by Haruna Ishola in a repetitive pattern between the soloist and the chorus, to form a long melodic phrase of eight measures twice in his music (appendix I, bars 8-15 and 27-35). The three note motif (F-G-G) was also transposed through a tonal shift down a perfect fourth (C-D-D) creatively on both occasions, exhibiting his artistic dexterity. Ayinla Omowura was not left out in this creative prowess. After stating a simple four-bar theme, he continued in a

tonal shift development of the theme, shifting down in a beautiful melodic transposition of major third, with a cleverly crafted developmental section of an Anhemitonic pentatonic motif bridging the thematic statements. The first thematic phrase started on note G, the second on E, and the last (spanning only 2 bars) ends on note C, lasting an entire seventeen bars (see appendix II, bars 30-47). Instrumental compositional (performance) techniques include motivic melo-rhythmic patterns such as hockets, ostinatos, timeline, standard (clave) patterns, etc (see instrumental parts in appendix I and II).

Conclusion

This paper has approached the creative process in Yoruba neo-traditional music from the perspective of compositional techniques employed by the Apala musicians. Core issues such as man's creativity, evolution of neo-traditional music in Nigeria, especially among the Yoruba, compositional technique as creative process in Apala music, and the functionality of the genre in the current Nigerian democratic dispensation were discussed in this study. We established man's creative ability, which he has demonstrated over the years in various performance arts, through his artistic creations and recreations, as expressions in different media, be it sonic, visual, or oral forms. Hence, Art is the creative language expressed in sights and sounds through which man communicates the objective or subjective feelings, ideas, or imagination of him or his environment. The evolution of neo-traditional music was traced to the inter-cultural influence of the Arabians and Europeans, while intra-cultural factors such as religious segregation and the need for non-liturgical music for social utilities fostered their development, with Apala music one of such Islamized neo-traditional typology.

This paper also highlighted that all over the world and throughout history, composers source for materials for making their music through different methods, albeit via a creative process, as modelled by Wallas and Copland. The Apala musicians use musical ideas and create their music from within their traditional environment, adopting compositional techniques such as speech melody and rhythm, call and response, themes with motivic developments, which are musical elements and language, form, and structural patterns indigenous to Yoruba tradition. This establishes the fact that the

creative process used by these Yoruba neo-traditional musicians in music making, i.e. composition, is not only a musical characteristic, but also a socio-cultural factor by which the music of a particular people, geographical location, or period directly reflects the way of life of a cultural epoch. Since preservation of the traditional music of a culture or society is a benchmark for their continued existence, then these new forms are essential for the survival of contemporary community. It serves a viable means towards musical and historical posterity of a people, and an identity of a nation

The musicological study of neo-traditional genres epitomizing such cultural relevance and historical value is therefore germane to the common objectives of African musicology, which includes scholarly and humanistic goals (Nketia 3-19a). It follows then that the inclusion of such study in our educational curriculum will not only benefit the standard production and performance of Nigerian traditional music, but the development of a national cultural heritage.

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APPENDIX II Ayinla Omowura and his Apala group. NEMI CD 0460
 (Instrumental accompaniment omitted from the second staff to the end)

Omi Tuntun Tiru Copyright © Pemi June 2014
Ayinla Omowura

Lead Voice: O mi-tun-tun ri, e ja si-tun-wo ni o

Agidigbo

Iya Ilu

Omele Ilu

Akuba

Sekere

9
 Lead: a-tun-wo-igbo, a-ra-ye, e-je kia mi-a-bu-a-ji bu, a-ra-ye wa-wo ran, bi ki-ni o-lum se-n gun-ge.

Chr. i-je kia mi-a-bu-a-ji bu, e-je kia mi-a-bu-a-ji bu, a-ra-ye wa-wo ran, bi ki-ni o-lum se-n gun-ge.

17
 Lead: Ni bi-ta-ja-noku fo-se i-si-ki, ni-le-to-meran-ko-ge-tu-un, a-yin-la, e-je

Chr. i-je kia mi-a-bu-a-ji bu, e-je

25
 Lead: ki-a-mi-a-bu-a-ji bu, a-ra-ye e wa-wo ran, bi ki-ni o-lum se-n gun-ge. A-yin-la pa-da do-mo-tun-tun o,

Chr. ki-a-mi-a-bu-a-ji bu, a-ra-ye e wa-wo ran, bi ki-ni o-lum se-n gun-ge.

33
 Lead: A-do-wale pa-da do-mo-tun-tun, A-yin-la pa-da do-mo-tun-tun, A-do-wale pa-da do-mo-tun-tun, e-brun-temi-ge-ge.

41
 Lead: kughe-njo la-ye, te-hu-n-ghe-wo-ge, ke-pa-ni-le la-ye, ta-bu-ro-mo-tun-tun a da-ni-ya, A-di-a, ta-bu-ro-mo-tun-tun a da-ni-ya

49
 Lead: A-yin-la pa-da do-mo-tun-tun

Chr. A-yin-la pa-da do-mo-tun-tun o, A-do-wale pa-da do-mo-tun-tun, A-yin-la pa-da

57
 Lead: i-shola la-ye, la-ye, la-ye,

Chr. do-mo-tun-tun o,

65
 Lead: A-do-wale pa-da do-mo-tun-tun, be-hu-n-ghe-wo-ge, ke-ghe-wo-jo te-hu-n-ghe-wo-ge, ke-ghe-wo-jo

Chr. A-yin-la

73
 Lead: ta-bu-ro-mo-tun-tun a da-ni-ya, ta-bu-ro-mo-tun-tun a da-ni-ya, A-yin-la pa-da do-mo-tun-tun

2

Lead
A he - ku, be - ku, iku rohin, o gbe - be, i-kunugbaju - mo baba e - te - me lo. A a he - ku, be -

Chr.
E - loe - ku, a he - ku, be -

Lead
ku, aja iku tohun o gbe - be, A a he - ku, be - ku,

Chr.
ku, iku tohun o gbe - be, a he - ku, be - ku, iku tohun o gbe - be, omugbaju

Lead
E - gbe i - fe - lodunwonfomo ya, Lagos, Shaga - ma - o - ro - lafe - je,

Chr.
mo baba - le - me lo. E - gbe i - fe - lodunwonfomo

Lead
E - gbe i - fe - lo - dan o,

Chr.
E - gbe i - fe - lo - dan o,
Adisa ba - ja Ka - mo - ni,
Al - la - y Ka - mo - ni o,
Ba - la - la - juke - ni o.

Lead
gegboghwonfofi rihun je, yaji sipa ka, o - ro - lafe - je, wani e - gi o - la - fo - rum, wani segi o - la - fo -

Chr.
rum. E nifo

Lead
e nifo ya, Kiemase je n

Chr.
ya o - ro - lafe - je - o - ri - ni, e - ni ti oyo rohun forin - kin, niso ju ti - gban se lomi a te.

Lead
gbo, pwojiwon to - rin ni, kiemase je n gbo, A - yink, pwoji e to - rin ni, koje je - e, o - ro - pa - la

Chr.
ni, A - yink,

Lead
Oroapala ni, ki e maa je n gbo, pwoji e to - rin ni, kiemase je n gbo,

Chr.
pe won ji e to - rin ni, koje je be o - ro - a - pa - la ni.

DRAMATIC VOICES IN THE DEMOCRATIC SPACE: A STUDY OF SELECTED NIGERIAN PLAYWRIGHTS

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Abstract

Postcolonial Nigerian playwrights are burdened by the habitual failure of democracy in addressing the socio-economic and cultural problems of the Nigerian state. This has resulted in the creation and dramatization of plays of social criticism and reconstruction on the subject of politics and democracy. Propelled by humanistic and democratic vision via the viaduct of creativity, they express concern with establishing morality in a country increasingly devoid of democratic values. They have demonstrated in their works a high level of classical humanism which views mankind and its development as the highest ethical goal. However, the contribution of these playwrights to democratic stability in Nigeria has not been given adequate highlight by the Nigerian literary scholarship. It is against this background that this paper sets to investigate the subject of creativity and democracy by Nigerian playwrights using the method of critical analysis of text. Investigating the dramatic works of Nigerian playwrights across generation and generic boundaries, the paper holds that Nigerian dramatists have long instituted their speakability status in the democratic space giving attention to politics and democracy. Furthermore the paper is of the view that Nigerian dramatists are truly committed to the question of democratic sanity in their creative vision. While highlighting the various ways in which democratic values are eroded they also harp on the reasons why positive democratic values should be invented and sustained for the building of a just and prosperous society. Finally, the paper holds that Nigerian dramatists are well established as voices in the nation's democracy and democratic space.

Introduction

A democratic space refers to the arena that exists between the state and the individual in which people interact to hold the state accountable, shape public debate, participate in politics and express their needs and opinions. Such space may exist in a range of states with different political regimes and may take different forms. However, it can only be deemed to be democratic when it is underpinned by the values of liberal democracy such as individual autonomy, political freedom, representative leadership, accountable governance and respect for human rights (Horner & Puddephatt 3). The aforementioned scholars further argue that democratic space provides citizens with an opportunity to interact with each other through direct communication, cooperation and mobilisation for advocacy, or by means of the media. Democratic space can provide people with sources of information and ideas that are not directly controlled by the government, building their capabilities to make informed decisions and empowering them through knowledge, diversity of opinion and artistic expression. (4). The logic to be noted here is that if political space is impartially democratic, it provides openings for all people to make their voices heard, giving equal authority to the opinions and needs of the poor and marginalised groups. Thus, the significance of a democratic space cannot be over emphasised because it offers the citizens of a country with civil liberties and optimism to have a say in the practice of democracy.

Andrea Cornwall and Vera Schattan Coelho note that democratic spaces are spaces of contestation as well as collaboration, into which heterogeneous participants bring diverse interpretations of participation and democracy and divergent agendas. As such, they are crucibles for a new politics of public policy (2). Democratic space is further conceived as a brainstorming ground for the oppressed to take their demands to holders of power. Citizens also have the chance to intermingle and communicate with each other through direct communication, cooperation and mobilisation for advocacy through various effective means and forms of public expression (Binebai 78-79). In these ways democratic space provides citizens with the tools and channels to influence decision makers and hold representatives to

account, and provides states with the insights and information that are necessary to make informed decisions that meet the needs of the people.

Voices in the Democratic Space

Democratic space welcomes any kind of political command that affords the citizens the opportunity to negotiate their rights, entitlements and privileges. It has individual and collective voices: political parties, religious bodies, civil liberties organisations, campaign groups, ethnic movements, media and the art universe are formidable participants in a democratic space. Khan notes that:

Freedom to protest is an intrinsic check mechanism in any democratic system. It provides a measure of accountability to the system. Even history remains witness to the power of protest. Who can ignore the fall of the German wall to persistent and powerful protest? Writers, artists, social activists, intellectuals, government employees, anyone can be a medium for this voice of reason. Disputing the government policies need not necessarily mean sedition. Governments are after all meant for the welfare of their subjects. If subjects are unhappy with a policy, they should have the right and freedom to organize and agitate. Labelling this agitating cohort as traitors is a calculated move by those who are inclined to fail democracy itself (1).

In Nigeria, voices in the democratic space have contributed significantly to the fall of the tyrant and modification of repressive policies of government.

The Nature of the Nigerian Democratic Life

To understand the nature of the Nigerian breed of democracy, it is significant to draw our attention to the nature of an ideal democracy. The trendy conception of democracy is that it is “a government of the people, by the people and for the people”. Adegboye expresses the point that this definition presumes a number of deductions:

- Mass participation in elections and electioneering process;

- The larger percentage of the citizenry is involved in governance;
- The government is responsible to the people in all ramifications;
- People can “reject” an unpopular candidate through the ballot or by recall;
- Elections are usually free and fair;
- Citizens will always exercise their civic duty by voting during elections;
- The sanctity of the ballot will be respected (76)

But in presenting a more detailed and clearer picture of democracy the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2010) lists characteristics of a good democracy:

- i. “Democracy helps to prevent rule by cruel and vicious autocrats;
- ii. Modern representative democracies do not fight wars with one another;
- iii. Countries with democratic governments tend to be more prosperous than countries with non-democratic governments;
- iv. Democracy tends to foster human development – as measured by health, education, personal income, and other indicators – more fully than other forms of government do;
- v. Democracy helps people to protect their fundamental interests;
- vi. Democracy guarantees its citizens fundamental rights that non-democratic system does not, and cannot, grant;
- vii. Democracy ensures its citizens a broader range of personal freedoms than other forms of government do;
- viii. Only democracy provides people with a maximum opportunity to live under the rule of law;
- ix. Only democracy provides people with a maximum opportunity to take moral responsibility for their choices and decisions about government policies; and
- x. Only in a democracy can there be a relative high level of political equality” (244)

In Nigeria politicians call it nascent or fledgling democracy. This brand of democracy cannot grow to become a sophisticated democracy if it continues to patronise tragic practices. A critical observation of the democratic culture in Nigeria reveals that it has done more harm to its citizens. This is because democratic leadership has failed to provide the genuine wishes and aspirations of the citizens. Democratic institutions that are put in place to translate democratic ideals or values are weakened by the egocentric operators and participants of democracy. These institutions cannot work effectively without the moral sagacity of the Nigerian politician. It is dismal and regrettable to note that, even the masses are not exempted from the repulsive tradition democracy presents. They collect bribe, practice commercial sycophancy and produce heroes of their errors. There is also the question of lack of involvement of citizens in election of leaders which has produced political leaders devoid of accountability. Additionally, the question of regime change through the ballot box has been hard and elusive for citizens. Politics of ethnocentrism in Nigerian democracy and the influence of economic buccaneers and political imps who style themselves as celebrated godfathers have further made a mess of Nigerian democracy.

Clearly, the inability of democratic leadership to provide prosperity for the nation is the reason for the emergence of ethno-nationalists' insurgencies like Mend, Biafra, Odua People's Congress, the Boko Haram sect and other civil liberties and human right organisations to appear strongly on the democratic space of the nation to negotiate their existence. Ikoni draws our attention to Attahiru Jega's lamentation of democracy in Nigeria

Nigeria's underdevelopment in spite of its richness is informed purely by the recklessness of the greedy and self-serving Nigerian elites who have poorly governed the country, mismanaged the economy, undermined infrastructure and socio-economic development, squirreled away the country's resources into their private coffers and undermined the foundations of democratic development (134)

What this suggests is that no democracy can develop beyond the moral state of its operators. Democracies in the western world are made strong and beneficial to their citizens because of strong vision, moral strength and accountability of the leaders. In most African nations, including Nigeria, democracy is yet to be equated with good governance and development. This is because it is characterised by tensions and contradictions leading to violence against humanity.

Artistic Creativity and the Democratic Space

The radar of playwrights and literary scholars point to the fact that drama and theatre are artistic metaphors that exist in the democratic space, (that realm of political talk and action between the state and society) to give meaning and explanation to democracy. Even if literature creates a world next to our physical external world; a world according to Plato, is two times removed from his platonic world of abiding beings, Literature imitates the things that happen in our physical world. The playwright and his dramas are products of literature. They write about what might be or what is likely to happen. This does not take them away from reflecting on social realism. Ojaide underscored the fact that:

Literature deals with the experience, world view, sensibility and other shared values of a people to which the writer responds in a creative manner. He states clearly that writers generally project a vision out of their people's experiences, and the writers of the Niger Delta often do this in their respective writings (11).

The democratic space authorises the playwright to participate as a moral agent and defender of justice. This task is achieved through the medium of dramatic creativity and performance. The playwright is the voice of vision, voice of wisdom, voice of societal conscience. He is the watchdog of the society, an effective participant in the democratic space. Through the dialectical power of contemplation empowered by creativity, he creates powerful universes that stridently respond to the condition of democracy and democratic practice in his society for critical reflection. He negotiates society's social treaty,

documents social conditions and calls for social change through argumentative thesis which makes claims. The seminal example of John Osborn's *Look Back in Anger* (1956) that brought changes to Victorian England is a good case of literature to point at. In Nigeria the likes of Wole Soyinka, J. P. Clark, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Esiaba Irobi, Olu Obafemi etc have been critical of the mismanagement of the socio-economic, political and cultural practices of Nigeria with their works. The art world is a world rigged with artistic philosophies and temperaments that guide the artist. This is the reason why artists differ in their commitment to society. While some writers embrace the concept of art for art's sake others believe strongly in the utilitarian function of drama. This perhaps explains the reason why Carter notes that

Not all artists have had interest or opportunity for using their art to advance social change. Some devote their efforts solely to creating autonomous works concerned with art itself and the enjoyment it provides. Others, voluntarily or involuntarily, create art to reinforce existing social conditions. In the most extreme cases, as in the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt, art in the form of colossal sculptures depicting the ruling pharaohs, as well as giant temples and tombs, was in fact intended to inhibit social change (20).

Carter further expresses the point that the emergence of social protest art is particularly notable during the period surrounding the French Revolution. Among the artists active at this time in the use of art to advance social change was the Neo-classical artist Jacques Louis David (1748-1825) (22). In Africa as a result of the colonial and postcolonial tragic experiences creative writing has been more functional than mere entertainment. Dudley Cocke quoted by Holly Sidford states:

Art holds a mirror up to society. Therefore, it is not surprising there is such a long tradition of artists concerned with social justice: Charles Dickens, Augusto Boal, Mark Twain, James Agee,

Walker Evans, Langston Hughes, Thomas Hart Benton, Wendell Berry, Leo Tolstoy, Frederick Wiseman, Diane Arbus, Florence Reece, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ralph Ellison, on and on. In fact, the artist who at some time has not wrestled with the theme of justice in society is an exception - how could it be otherwise given that the use and abuse of power is such a prominent part of the human condition, so near the center of our mortal experience? It is not a question of whether art and social justice are connected, but, rather, the forms and intensity of that connection (4).

The world of theatre aesthetically and truthfully reflects the human and extra human world of the physical and metaphysical universes. For uncountable number of generations, in approximately all cultures, the theatre has been a critical element of human expression. In his book *The Rainbow of Desire*, the Brazilian theatre director, Augusto Boal, calls theatre the first human invention because it is through theatre that we step back from ourselves to observe and interpret our own behaviour. He notes further that through the theatre, we reflect on our experiences and imagine new possibilities. Making theatre is a way of understanding the world around us and our place in it. We also find this process of projecting ourselves into strange or familiar circumstances immensely entertaining (247). If the theatre is all these, the point becomes glaring that the playwright has the task and craft of creativity that composes and exposes the political conflicts in his society to clamour for and if possible too, achieve sanity and social balance.

Dramatic Voices in the Democratic Space

It is fundamental to ask if Nigerian playwrights think and speak about democracy in their own country? Have they written plays that reflect and address the condition or practice of democracy? What statement(s) are these playwrights making from the democratic space? Have their argumentative theses made any positive impact on the society? These questions are critical to the issue of the playwright and in the democratic space. Femi Osofisan, a Nigerian dramatist and one of the most significant literary voices in the democratic space of Nigeria and the rest of the world, has given his voice to

play creation and its relevance to social change particularly in a society held hostage by post-colonial terrorism even in a democratic regime. He expresses the point that

History has trapped us: and not only by the force of tradition, also by the kind of government we have been saddled with since independence by the treachery and travesties of the ruling class which have succeeded the colonial powers and continued to hold our people under siege and by the crying needs of the suffering majority of the populace.... If we must change our societies, if the theatre (indeed, all generic forms of literature, oral and written) must fulfill its vocation as an agent of progress, the dramatists (writers) who create it have no option but to pitch their camp on the side of the common people and against the formidable agents of the ruling class (88).

Most of the Nigerian playwrights' approach to playwriting is in tandem with their commitment to social change. Their concern for democracy in their creative works is thematically diverse. This is in harmony with the maxim enunciated in Femi Osofisan's Inaugural Lecture that one does not find truth in a single dream, but rather in many dreams (30). What this hold for us is that drama is an irrepressible and conspicuous master symbol of engaging reflex. The investigative bearing of this paper is predicated on the critical and fundamental political statements made by the playwright through the appropriation of his creative mastermind. Against this background, I shall now proceed to investigate select playwrights and their works and how they have voiced concern for democratic practice in Nigeria.

Democracy and the Politics of Narcissism in *Our Husband has Gone mad Again* by Ola Rotimi

Ola Rotimi deploys the satiric medium electrified with farcical vestments to lampoon the democratic tradition in the Nigerian post colony. *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again* by allegorical deduction implies the madness of political leaders of Independent Nigeria. The type of political leader dramatized in the

play is the selfish kind who attempts to use his military frame of mind to rule and to amass the common wealth of the nation. The play was written long ago but the issues raised run into present day repulsive scenario that bestride the nation. Ola Rotimi makes contemptuous fun of the hero of the play Lejoka Brown and this indirectly laughs at the Nigerian society that has become politically polluted. For instance Lejoka Brown tells Okonkwo that politics is the thing... you want to be famous? Politics. You want to chop life? No you want to chop a big slice of the national cake? Na politics. (p.4). The foregoing dramatic lines expose Lejoka Brown's intention of becoming a politician. He is in the mould of politicians who have always believed that politics is a means to personal enrichment and not for the emancipation of the masses.

Besides the question of self-enrichment, Ola Rotimi also sardonically renders Lejoka Brown as a character that represents the Nigerian politicians who are intellectually weak, ideologically backward and too clownish to offer themselves as leaders of the Nigerian democracy. The painful implication is that the practice of politics and democracy today has become a game played to the advantage of people who are violently greedy. These aggressive and corrupt people take elective positions and offices by force. This is an ugly political foundation laid by the politicians' sense of democratic practice in Nigeria. This contemptible temperament that Nigerian democracy has assumed in recent times constitutes the strong focus of Rotimi's laughter of Lejoka Brown in the play. Lejoka Brown is presented as a greedy, selfish and pleasure hunting political leader in Nigeria. He states in clear terms:

Politics is war
I am taking no chance this time
I took things slowly and easy what happened?
I lost a bye election to a small crab (7).

Rotimi uses *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again* to subtly denounce Nigerian politicians who in their desperation believe that political power can only be attained through violence. The play takes a moral stand against decadent political tradition that has come to characterise the nation's political life. The point being emphasised here is that *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again*

depicts the rancorous political tradition and manipulation of the marital home to achieve political goals in post-colonial Africa. Ola Rotimi is critical of the fact that the marital institution has been brought to disrepute and women used as articles of trade in the practice of Nigerian politics and democracy. It is not for love and desire for marriage that makes Lejoka Brown to get married to Sikira daughter of the President of the Market women. It is to win the women's vote and after victory divorce her. This points to present day marital trend amongst democrats in Nigeria. Marriage is now a veritable weapon for political bargaining in the Nigerian morbid democracy. To win election, politicians either marry daughters of kings, market presidents or even the president of the country. Ola Rotimi does not only laugh at the sick democratic practice in his dramatic universe, he also revolts against it. Lejoka Brown's greed, his narcissism, his weak ideas and his autocratic nature are put to shame and stopped by the rise of Sikira from her subaltern status of voicelessness and subordination to contest election against her husband. By this, Ola Rotimi subtly denounces unproductive and anachronistic politicians who parade themselves as watchdogs of democracy. He holds firmly that these loathsome politicians that make democracy wear the mask of terrorism should be phased out from the practice of democracy in Nigeria and be replaced with credible leaders to allow for peace and prosperity to prevail.

***Ube Republic* by Henry Bell-Gam**

Ube Republic is another play that deals with politics of narcissism. Prince Eremadu, heir apparent to the Banana Royal throne gets the support of chiefs and elders of the chieftaincy council to secure a senatorial seat through bribery. He further wins internal election as senate president. But his father dies no sooner than he was sworn in as a senator of the Ube Republic. The Prince, prompted by greed, applies the system of double attack to consolidate his wealth. What this implies is that he plots to enjoy the salary of his late father as well as his allowances as a senator and senate president. He lies about the death of his father, the king, and connives with the Doctor to mask the truth of his father's death and even advises that the corpse of his father should be deposited along with corpses of destitutes in the mortuary. But luck runs out on him when the common people of Banana community publicly protest

demanding that he should produce his father, the king. These same protesters go to the senate chambers to demand for the return of the king. Left with no options, Senator Prince Eremadu confesses that he lied with his father's death just to bring fortune to himself. Eremadu discovers too late that his father's corpse has been given mass burial with destitutes by prisoners. In rage, torment and infamy he snatches a machete from the protesters and stabs himself to death.

Ube Republic is an artist's reflection on democrats who appropriate the instrument of democracy to devalue tradition and corrupt gullible members of society in sensitive positions. The play holds greed responsible for democratic decadence in our society which destroys even the traditional institution. Bell-Gam expresses the cardinal point that Nigerian democracy faces decay because corrupt politicians use money to persuade and pollute the consciences of people in the society whom they recruit as criminal collaborators to kill democratic sanity. The impression is that it is only through celebration of corruption that politicians amass wealth. Okedimkpa, the opposition voice in the play, states:

What a senator! We talk of democracy you preach democracy yet you can't practice it. My people, the King is he not for us all? How come he single handedly sent him abroad for treatment without the consent of the people? He must produce our King (53)

In the above words of Okedimkpa, the credibility of Prince Eremadu as a functional politician and custodian of tradition is questioned. The Prince is exposed as a corrupt politician. Thus *Ube Republic* is a thesis play based on the influence of corruption on democratic practice. Prince Eremadu is the metaphorical character, the tragic antagonist of society, an embodiment of dishonesty who trades with the death of his father the king. He bribes chiefs and even the medical doctor to conceal the truth of his father's death. The height of Eremadu's trickery comes to the fore when he composes and perfects a plot to dramatise the impersonation of his late King, essentially to collect his allowances. The Prince raises a false royal team to successfully defraud the government. This is democratic duplicity and theft. The character Eremadu

captures democrats and democratic practices in Nigeria that have suppressed the emergence of profitable democracy. Self-interest, intrigue, forgery, fraud, indiscipline, bribery and corruption are criminally vibrant virtues of Prince Eremadu. He represents all these and firmly fixes himself in a dangerous conflict with tradition and the gods. *Ube Republic* is a dramatisation of individual tragedy, tragedy of tradition, tragedy of democracy and of a nation. The democratic practice of Eremadu denies the ancestors of Banana community their legitimate rights. The throne is denied succession to it by the death of the King and his heir apparent, Prince Eremadu. Thus *Ube Republic* is a protest variety of tragedy which strikes against the antagonist of the society, the producer of tragedy. Bell-Gam raises a voice of protestation along with sane voices of democracy in the senate as agents of democratic revolution to destroy the oppressive and exploitative representation coming from highly placed personalities like Prince Eremadu.

One wonders at the prophetic accuracy of Henry Bell-Gam's *Ube Republic*. Apart from the fact that the play which was published in 2000 laughs at the destructive excesses of democratic practice in Nigeria, it points to political events which later unfolded in 2010. The refusal of Prince Eremadu to announce the death of his father, the King of Banana Royalty, points to the political intrigues, tension, uncertainty and concealment of facts that characterised the death of former Nigerian President, Shehu Musa Yar Adua.

Ube Republic is also critical of the role played by defeated political aspirants. Elder Okedimkpa who is defeated by Prince Eremadu in the senatorial elections mobilises youths he personally leads to ravage Banana community causing pandemonium with youths plundering, looting, destroying and chanting war songs. This is a political tradition promoted by the likes of Ahitophel Ogbansiegbe in Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen also Die*. *Ube Republic* holds the truth that defeated aspirants do not take their defeat calmly, they mobilise their supporters to unleash terror on their opponents. This type of political tradition eats up democratic stability and makes a country ungovernable as we are currently experiencing in most African nations. It leads to insurgency, war and terrorism. Henry Bell-Gam interweaves royalty and democracy with the politician at the centre using one against the other to

defraud and degrade both institutions, a practice which has placed tradition and democracy in bad luminosity in post-colonial African nations.

Democratic Revolution in *Sweet Revenge* by Irene Salami

Democratic revolution is the act of the great majority of people removing power from the former wealthy ruling elite, taking power into their own hands, and reshaping society to provide well-being for all based on the principles of mutual aid, equality, and democracy (3) John Spritzler and Dave Stratman, rationalising on democracy, hold that:

The words “democratic” and “democracy” have been thoroughly corrupted in our present world to refer to the anti-democratic dictatorship of the rich in which we live. We mean something entirely different: not this fake democracy we have in the United States in which politicians are front men and women for the real power hidden behind the scenes. By “democracy” we mean government of the people, by the people, and for the people. By “the people” we do not mean capitalists or the super-rich who live off other people’s labor or those who manage workers on behalf of capitalists. We mean the people who do the work that sustains human society (3).

Nigerian playwrights have constantly called for democratic revolution from the creative space within the democratic space. Rotimi’s *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, Femi Osofisan’s *A Restless Run of Locusts*, Irene Salami’s *Sweet Revenge*, Bell-Gam’s *Ube Republic* are very exciting examples of creativity and democratic reflections in Nigeria. These playwrights, through creative imagination, construct and propose ideas and ideals of a democratic society. Among the plays written by Nigerian playwrights along the landscape of democratic revolution is Irene Salami’s *Sweet Revenge*. The play which in a largely constructed form revisits the revolution started in Rotimi’s *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again* is a strong feminist drama on motherism, womanism and radical feminism. But the political undercurrent of the play is visible and strapping. Salami, from a feminist angle, creates the play to revolt

against democratic practices in Nigeria particularly how politicians make a mess of their marital institution because of the practice of fraudulent democracy. The women's revolution in *Sweet Revenge* against Dr. Sota Ojo is a democratic revolution. Senator Ojo fails as a husband and as a representative of his senatorial district in addition to the point that he is greedy and wicked to the same women who voted him into office as a senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Through the technique of embedded narrative, the women dramatise their encounter with Dr. Sota Ojo.

Power: (Advances to embrace him, but Sota Ojo stops her) my Honourable Senator, it's me Madam Power Power. That is Madam Executive over there.

Sota: I don't care who you are, you have no right Disturbing the peace of my home. I don't even know You.

Power: Me, Madam Power Power? Sota you don't know me? Well let me introduce myself, I am Madam Power Power the leader of the women group who Voted you in as a senator.

Sota: So? What is the big deal about that?

Power: Oh o, so becoming a senator in the Federal Republic of Nigeria is no big deal? You even refuse to recognise us, Dr Sota, this is amazing, I can't believe my eyes.(45)

Dr Sota accuses the women from his Edo constituency of disturbing his privacy and orders the Police to get them arrested. Even when Aboki the janitor reminds him of his position as a politician and emphasises the point that the women's action has not risen to the climax of getting them arrested, Dr. Sota Ojo insists the arrest must be made. Thus the women are arrested, charged with disturbance of peace and trespass of private property. They are detained (in cell) for three days but bailed by a lawyer. It is significant to note that the women's mission is to persuade Senator Ojo to fulfil his promises to the people of his senatorial district. Dr. Sota Ojo's ill treatment of the women

who voted for him coupled with the tragic rejection and divorce of his legally wedded African wife Aisosa, informs the women's revolutionary action against him.

The women's rise against him and his replacement with his own wife whom he rejected, ridiculed and served with divorce and dishonour is not only a feminist victory but a victory for democratic sanity in Nigeria. In Nigerian politics, the recalling of an ineffective and unproductive elected leader is not common but in the world of art, Salami makes a bold suggestion which is suitable for democratic growth in post-colonial Africa. Irene Salami's voice as a playwright echoes strongly. She campaigns against democratic darkness and clamours for change in Nigeria. It is crystal clear that Ola Rotimi and Irene Salami appropriate the brainstorming arena of democratic space through the bridge of drama to vigorously depict democratic decadence in post-colonial African countries particularly Nigeria, and go a step further to initiate, engineer, perfect and mastermind democratic revolution in their plays.

Democracy as a Family Property in *Destined to Be* by Christine Odi

In this play, Chief Gomogomo leader of the Freedom Party is clearly constructed as the prototype of a politician who is selfish and brutal. His imperfect political ideas, his profligate spending of party money without due process and his lack of respect for his party men add up as the defining factors of his political Waterloo. These attributes are inconsistent with a party that is ready to win elections. So he is expelled just when his ambition to run as governorship candidate looms large. But that is not all. His wild, immoral and cruel past catches up with him when he shockingly realises that his own son impregnates his own daughter and gives birth to his own grandson (*Binebai in Destined to Be* v).

In this drama, Christine Odi condemns the political tradition of introducing and maintaining democratic opportunities with incurable greed. Chief Gomogomo thinks of politics and democracy as a family property. He parallels the likes of Lejoka Brown in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husbands Has Gone Mad Again* who sees politics and winning an election not through the ballot paper and boxes but through brute force and thuggery. His vision is banal. His

methods are unconventional. Chief Gomogomo fails as a party leader, as a contractor and governorship aspirant because of his incurable ravenousness and lack of diplomacy. He attempts to make his wife a woman leader and his daughter the youth leader. The chief is guilty of financial profligacy and abuse of office. The following dialogue between Chief Gomogomo with his political party members exposes the nature of the chief.

Mr. Gabriel: Thank you. I must say that my committee has received tremendous support from our sponsors. However, I am afraid that if the other committees continue to withdraw money, the way they do now, we might have nothing left when we will really need funds. And as a reminder, Chief is yet to put back the N500, 000.00 he borrowed from the committee's purse last month.

Chief: Yes. That money. I have been busy with so many things. That's all. I did not forget In fact, I will write out a cheque right now. [Writes a cheque, hands it over]

Mr. David: Chief the party will beg you to refrain from such acts. And you did not deem it fit to present the matter to the house before you borrowed the money. That is not a good image of...

Chief: Have I not written a cheque re-imbursing the money? Which one is all these noise you are making?

Mr. Gabriel: Chief I am sorry to say, but your methods of handling issues are under-handed and bordering on being crude.

Chief: [Beats chest] *Emene... emene* Chief Gomogomo crude!

Financial recklessness stands against Chief Gomogomo here. And when Mr. David brings up the idea of a woman leader in the Party the chief reacts this way:

Mr. David: I just wanted to suggest that to make our work easier and to let our campaign get to the grass-roots we should have women's and youth wings. By extension of this suggestion, we should appoint a dynamic woman and a vibrantly industrious youth who will coordinate these wings and...

Chief: Exactly what I wanted to say. It is a brilliant idea. In fact, we don't have to look far for the dynamic woman. My wife, Ala-Ere, is a very dynamic woman. She is the *Kasetebe-arau* of Torubeke market. She will mobilize all the market women into our party and the women will in turn mobilize their husbands and children to vote for us.

Mr. David: I beg your pardon Chief. This is not a....

Chief: Don't beg my pardon. Let me finish. Ala-Ere and her women are even coming here to give us their support, and Bodise-Ere my daughter is a student of UNILAG. She is reading Political Science. She will head the youth...

Mr. David: Objections! Chief I strongly object to your antics. Moreover this is not a Congress meeting. We don't need a bunch of market women disrupting our meeting though I concede the fact that they are in our camp.

Chief: Mr. David, I don't know what your problem is, but I have said that...

Mr. David: Mr. Secretary, Chief is trying to convert the party's affairs to domestic matters. I did not

move for this inner caucus meeting for him to manipulate and turn into a family affair.

Chief: Look here, I have told you that my wife Ala-Ere will lead the women's wing and my daughter Bodise-Ere will lead, the youth wing whether anybody likes it or not and for your information.... [Pauses cocks head] listen everybody.... listen to that music... Ala- Ere and her women are here to give us their support. Tell them to come in and.... [Singing outside]

Odi is critical of the sorry state of democratic practice in post-colonial Nigeria in *Destined to Be*. The grab-it-all syndrome and the making of politics a family affair is not strange in the Nigerian political terrain. In addition, the play presents an irony in party nomenclature. The People's Freedom Party, on the contrary, is held hostage by one man. This is so apparent because the people's freedom the PFP avows to uphold is denied them with corruption and selfishness. What the party stands for, from its ideological predilection, reflected in its naming, falls diametrically apart. The Nigerian political parties sing the song of democracy in their naming but how democratic are these parties is another issue to ponder about. The poor democratic condition in post-colonial African nations is a reflection of the poor choice of leaders masquerading as democrats. The political universe dramatized in Odi's *Destined to Be* and Rotimi's *Our Husband has gone Mad Again* is a vivid visualization of the tumultuous and rancorous political life in Democratic Nigeria. Greed is a major clog in the wheel of progress in the practice of Nigerian democracy. It is the reason for the emergence of such politically induced violence and creations like godfatherism, political attackancy (politically motivated insurgencies), hypocritical and economic sycophancy, cultism and ritualism. It is for this latter reason that Queen Amaka in Sunnie Ododo's *Hard Choice* sells her unborn baby and her fertile womb to the gods just to be crowned queen of Emepiri Kingdom. It is clear that Odi expresses discontent and indignation over the practice of democracy in Nigeria in her critical realism drama.

Conclusion

Nigerian playwrights have in many works and ways raised their voices against the democratic tradition and condition in post-colonial Nigeria. In the plays investigated, democracy is portrayed in many lights. The sad thing to worry about from these depictions is that the images painted of democracy in the plays are very depressing and foul-tasting. The high point of the investigation is that through the connectivity of the playwright and his creative ingenuity in the democratic space, an enduring voice that will, if taken into serious thought and action, change the democratic direction of the nation has been made. Irene Salami's *Sweet Revenge* succeeds in instituting a new democratic structure. The playwrights investigated seek a new and proper face of democracy which in their creative imagination will bring sanity and progress to the common man. They call on leaders to be accountable and go further to remind the hoi polloi that political sovereignty lies with them and that they have a moral and political duty to effect changes when their political leaders fail. Nigerian playwrights' speakability in the democratic space remains audible in modern debate crucial to the wellbeing of Nigerian society. Through the art-society dialectic the playwrights contribute to nurturing approachable and responsible government. The investigation holds that the playwright's voice in the democratic space has been well established since the emergence of modern African drama.

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CREATIVITY IN “ZEBRUDAYAN” ENGLISH: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF EPISODE, “SQUANDERMANIA” OF *THE MASQUERADE* SERIES OF NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY

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Abstract

Since 1960 Nigeria is still a fledgling democracy. When is it going to mature? This paper diagnoses how the creator/playwright of the Masquerade series of Nigerian Television Authority creatively uses “zebrudayan” English language for satiricomic empathy. The textual/contextual and interview methods are employed. Due to its availability and topicality of themes, episode, “squandermania” of the series is analysed syntagmatically and paradigmatically. Theories of semiotics/structuralism, post-structuralism satire, R. A. Beaugrande’s general theory of creativity, Monroe Beardey’s thesis on the creation of art are employed. The paper discovers that in spite of the plurality of the Nigerian society, the “zebrudayan” English is understood in both the diegetic universe of the episode and the real audiential universe of the Nigerian society. The paper posits that the infant democracy in Nigeria can become mature and permanent if all vestiges of anti-democracy such as avarice, corruption kleptomania are demolished through the creative use of the language of satire.

Introduction

The thesis of this paper is to examine how the “zebrudayan” English creates satiricomic signs and the zebrudayan laugh and/or humour. The zebrudayan laugh is the laughter that emanates from a sudden realization that in spite of the incorrect English spoken by the protagonist – Chief Zebrudaya (Zebrudayan English) and that of some other characters in the series, as grammatically ambiguous and incongruous, it is semantically congruous and creative.

What is creating? What is creation? What is creativity? And what is creative? Creating, according to *Webster New Explorer Encyclopedic*

Dictionary, creating means: (1) to bring into existence; (2) to invest in a new form; (3) to cause occasion; (4) to produce through imaginative skills. On the other hand, creation means: (1) the act of creating especially the act of bringing into the world ordered existence; (2) the act of making, inventing or producing; (3) something that is created. Also, creative means: (1) the power or ability to be creative; (2) having the quality of something created not imitated.

Creativity and the Arts

This can be analysed in the following perspectives: (1) Why do the artists create? (2) What are the impulses that compel him/her to create? (3) What is the process of creativity? One of the reasons why the artist creates in the first place is known as conscious motives. For example the artist wants fame, money, love, power and so on (Beardsley 53). The second reason according to Beardsley is the unconscious needs and drive. According to him, this initial element of what later becomes the work is referred to by various metaphors (though some are misleading) are gem, cell, seed nucleus or the inceptive (53). The incept of the work may pop into the artists mind, when it does come from within, it no doubt has preconscious and causal condition, though to trace them would surely be very problematic (P55).

What is the process of creativity? Beardsley provides us with a precise and concise definition of what the creative process is "...the creative process is that sketch of mental and physical activity between the incept and the final touch "I may be on to something here and the thought" it is finished" (53).

The creative process can also be approached psychologically and philosophically. According to Catherine Patrick in her study of creativity in some poets and non-poets – to determine whether the typical process of artistic creation passes through the four stages classically distinguished by Graham Wallas in his book on *The Art of Thought* – the stages of preparation, incubation, inspiration and elaboration. She inferred that these stages can indeed be distinguished (cited by Beardsley 56). But it seems to Beardsley that the most remarkable feature of her material is precisely the opposite. As far as Beardsley is concerned, all four of these activities are mixed together and are constantly (or alternately) going on throughout the whole process (56)

Philosophically, depending on the angle of approach, the artist will be said to be converting sensations into intuitions, receiving divine inspirations, reshuffling the atoms of immediate experience, embodying the ideal in sensuous form, working out the consequences of an initial postulate or affirmation in the authenticity of the existence (57)

In theorizing creativity, there is also the theory of divine inspiration which was raised by classical poets like Hesiod and Pindar. This theory is still with us today. Nevertheless, according to Beardsley (57) if we insist upon a naturalist theory of artistic creation, we find two main ones. Therefore according to him (57) a new theory of creativity in the motivated modification of systems is set forth. Special emphasis therefore is placed upon systems of meaning, which can be effectively represented by network plotting various areas of creative language use, illustration of the theory in application, poetry, paradoxes, jokes, nonsense, narratives and functionality. In literary writing, creativity manifests in stylistic fluidity and style could be considered as that distinct quality which is so unique about a work that it becomes a creative exposition (Okereke 8). According to Okereke (21), in some radical perspectives, creativity could also mean breaking the rule in order to tackle a difficult situation thus expressing originality. This, according to him, is exciting but also demanding, consuming, frustrating and addictive. It is also fickle, erratic, tricky and risky (21) because looking and seeing what no one else is seeing is the greatest attribute of a creative artist.

The “zebrudayan” English in the series is related to the concept of deviation which has been favoured by theoreticians with a linguistic orientation such as Makarovsky (1932), Spitzer (1948), Sayee (1953), Levine (1963, 1965) and Erikrist (1973). In spite of the problems which Beaugrande (209-306) identifies, the researcher wants to support what he calls, the “neo-positivist traditions”, which says that deviations were considered as something manifest and thus accessible to direct observation. According to him, the concept of deviation, as usually discussed, would yield what he calls problematic postulates as: (1) creative, poetic texts must be deviant on the surface line; (2) well-formed texts are not creative/poetic; (3) a deviant text is *ipso facto* creative; (4) creativity varies in proportion to number and degree of deviation.

Although the above stated problems are germane because of the conclusiveness of their assumptions, as far as this paper is concerned, the “zebrudayan” English in the *Masquerade* comedy series is a creative contribution of the programme to satiricomic jargons of the Nigerian small screen and the society at large. And through the histrionics, semiotics of performance and the proboscis of the televisual “camera-mask” discourse, it is therefore a creative mode of communicating the satirization of the vices and foibles of the Nigerian society. Satire is the confluence of both the “teletheatrical”, “televisionic” and “telelinguistic” experience in the diegetic world of *The Masquerade* comedy series of NTA (it is important to note the inextricability of language as *parole* and as *langue* respectively in the diegetic world of the programme).

Since the role of the “televisionic” artist (who, of course, in this case, is a satirist), is to foster positive changes and development within the polity, to what extent has the programme, through the “zebrudayan” English brought about positive changes in the norms and values of the people within the Nigerian polity? The communicability of the programme’s satiricomic messages through the “zebrudayan” English is based on the semiotic assumptions that satiricomic expressions/signs are words or symbols, in action, which are about people, things and situations. That is, they are the mirrors of the human mind and language is essentially a system of symbols, signs and signals which are defined by their representational relationship (Stewart 57).

There are three characters or more in most episodes of the series who creatively employ the “zebrudayan” English for satiricomic empathy. They are Chief Zebrudaya Okorigwe Nwogbo (alias 4.30), Dr. Prince Jegede Sokoya, Zacky and Ovularia. However, Chief Zebrudaya, who is created for this purpose by James Iroha, has transformed what Onamor (29) regards as his own “concoction” of the English language to satiricomic art par excellence.

It has also been observed that the creator and other subsequent producers/writers of the series have been consistently employing the character of Chief Zebrudaya and his incorrect English in conveying “satiricomic messages in most episodes of the series. But for our purpose and due to their relevance and the topicality of their subject matter as regards the problems of

the contemporary Nigerian Society, a denotative/syntagmatic reading/viewing of the deep structure of Episode “Squandermania,” (which is a satire of “penury in affluence” in Nigeria) is carried out. Therefore aspects of the “zebrudayan” English, or verbal degradation or verbal ambiguity of the use of the English language read/viewed and analysed which produce satirical signs within both the surface and deep structures of the aforementioned episodes, are violation of English grammatical rules, malapropism, tautology, verbosity, playful repetitions, code-switching/code-mixing and so on.

The “Zebrudayan” English and the Satirization of Penury in Affluence in Episode “Squandermania” of the *Masquerade* Comedy Series of NTA

The title of the above named episode, “Squandermania,” is inextricably tied to the theme of penury in affluence. The former is the cause while the latter is the effect. When one spends money or uses time carelessly, a squandermanic situation would have been created. On the other hand, there is the paradox of situations where few people are carelessly spending the wealth of the nation, while the poor masses wallow in abject penury. Kleptomania, greed, avarice, corruption and other vices are the manured soils for squandermania to blossom.

The First Republic under the premiership of late Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Minister for Finance, late Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, symbolized/iconized the lowest level of kleptomania and squandermania in a paradoxical environment of penury in affluence. He dressed flamboyantly with a long sleeved shirt on top of a wrapper about fifty metres long with the tail end of it tied round the neck of a man, he splashed money on the female dancers and gave cash gifts to the persons who lined up the street to welcome him. Ironically, the economy of Nigeria was far below subsistence level, because we depended on agricultural produce for our livelihood.

According to Ray Ekpu (1987), under the Gowon military oligarchy, squandermania of riches became latent. According to the journalist, the third national development plan rose from twenty three billion naira, to forty billion naira, the country set for itself ambitious targets, it constructed shaky flyovers and bridges, long tracks of roads, the National Theatre, and sponsored cultural festivals. According to the same source, the government

also tarred roads for some neighbouring West African countries. Gowon is said to have also picked up the bills of arrears of workers' salaries owed by a West Indian country. In a nutshell Gowon is quoted to have said that Nigeria's problem was not money but how to spend it. Today, that aphorism is right: our problem is truly not money or wealth but how to manage it. Today we have few Nigerians who are multibillionaires but the majority of the populace are wallowing in abject poverty. The regime that overthrew Yakubu Gowon (the Murtala/Obasanjo regime) could not trace a whopping sum of 2.8 billion naira which had vanished into the air. However, after an inquiry, it was discovered that illegal bunkering of crude oil was the conduit pipe through which the oil money could have leaked. Oil theft today is a continuum. Between 1985 and 1993 kleptomania became the ideal for top military officers. They lived above their monthly and annual incomes. Their civilian counterparts became emergency millionaires while millions of Nigerians continued to groan under the shackles of penury forced on them by the then president Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida's obnoxious Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP)

Between 1994 and 1998, the late General Sani Abacha's demagogic regime impoverished the common Nigerians and he enriched himself, his immediate family members, by stashing away billions of naira in foreign coded bank accounts. Although some of Sani Abacha's loot were said to have been recovered by General Abdulsalami Abubakar's transitional military oligarchy and President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian regime, squandermania between 1999 and the present (2014) is still creating and nurturing the environment of poverty in affluence.

According to *Tell Magazine*, No. 2 (17th May 1999), General Abdulsalami's military junta spent N60 billion naira for ministries and parastatals in twenty-six days. By May 1999 our external reserve that was seven billion US dollars plummeted downwards to a paltry four billion US dollars. Frivolous contracts were also awarded. Within a very short period, the figure was put at about seventy four million US dollars.

Apart from the stupendous cost of democracy, Nigerian style (see *Tell* 2000, 20 23 and *Tell*, 2001, 25 26), squandermania has been digitalized by some state governors nicknamed, "Owambe" governors, who travelled abroad

to spend lavishly the money they misappropriated and hiding under the obnoxious immunity clause in the constitution to commit all kinds of economic crimes against the country, particularly Governor Joshua Dariye who was caught by the British Police with millions of pounds in London. Very recently, between 2012 to 2014, the cases of corruption and kleptomania are too numerous to mention.

Denotative/Syntagmatic Analysis of the Episode, “Squandermania” of *The Masquerade Comedy Series* of NTA

Title: “Squandermania”

Story by: Kenechukwu Orakwute
Emma, Ame

Screenplay by: Kene Orakwute

Duration: 30 minutes

Characters

Chief Zebrudaya – Chika Okpala

Ovularia – Lizzy Ewuema

Jegede – Claude Eke

Gringori – James Iroha

Ramota – Vero Njoku

Dandy – Lassa Amoro

Zacky – Tony Akposheri

Natty – Romanus Amuta

Resume of “Squandermania”

Situation 1: Jegede’s house (home paradigm) day time: int- shot ls of Jegede’s parlour where Jegede and big Oga are seen exchanging banter. Meanwhile, Ramota is seated sewing with needle and thread displaying a hostile attitude to Big Oga when she receives the request that champagne should be served to Big Oga. Ramota looks at him with disdain in C.U., looks at Jegede from his lead to his toes in another media close up. Big Oga politely refuses the offer and gives Jegede his invitation card for the big party he is throwing. Jegede is full of encomiums for Big Oga and thinks that the party is the best thing that will ever happen for this Christmas. Big Oga also boasts that influential

personalities from all over the world will be guests at his party. He glances at his watch and says that it is time to go and meet his sweetheart so that she will not be kept waiting unduly. Ramota gives Big Oga's child food which she eats ravenously: Ramota also draws her attention to the fact that it is her father who has just left the house; she tells Jegede that his friend's child is the one eating hungrily like Natty. Jegede tells Ramota that he will be attending the party and enjoins her to stay at home and take care of the house. She insists that she must go with him or in the alternative, go alone while Jegede remains at home to take care of the home. Jegede, therefore, accepts the option of their going there together.

Situation 2: EXT. Shot club – day time (work paradigm) Is establishing the location of the exterior of the club house long shot of Tina calling Zacky, LONG-SHOT of Zacky feigning a quarrel and Long Shot of Zacky telling her that if she does not have any good thing to say, he would start going. Close up of Tina's shocked facial expression after her litany of requests for the Christmas is rebuffed by Zacky. Medium Close-up of Tina inadvertently stepping on Zacky's toes and Zacky showing his anger. Long shot of Zacky throwing the sheet of Tina's paper containing her requests at her and long shot of Zacky walking off; going to complain to Dandy did not help matters; she leaves in utter astonishment.

Situation 3: exit. Clarius workshop (work paradigm) long shot of clarius and natty sitting on a bench chatting. Long shot of big oga's girlfriend cat walking to them. Without greeting, she asks if Big Oga is around. They rebuke her for not greeting, she denies the accusation. She is then told that Big Oga has not come and she is also asked to sit down on a dusty bench to wait. She declines the offer. At that moment Big Oga arrives and apologizes to her and tells her that his delay is caused by his trying to tidy up a few things in the office. She hops into his car and before they leave, Natty solicits for some money from Big Oga who rebuffs him and zooms off in the car with his girlfriend. Clarius tells Natty that the man will never give him even "Chinchin" when he cannot even take care of his family. Natty explains that he could not give him paltry sum of two hundred naira.

Situation 4: Interior Zebrudaya's Residence, daytime (home paradigm) long shot of Gringory dressed in father Christmas costume, Zacky collects the gate fees. Kids come in while gifts are given to them by the father Christmas Ramota brings in Ulama. She gets her own gift. The package is trickishly wrapped. Ramota inquisitively opens it and finds to her chagrin two chewing sticks. She complains to Zacky, tells him that the gift is not commensurate with her gate fees. Zacky replies her that there are two chewing sticks inside, not one. She is also told that a gift is a gift. As she leaves the house angrily, she meets Ovularia on the way and complains bitterly about the Father Christmas gift. Meanwhile Ovularia is amazed that their living sanctuary has converted to a Father Christmas Grotto. And, as she is doing that Chief Zebrudaya fumes and unveils the mask worn by the Father Christmas, who, incidentally, is Gringori Both Zacky and Gringory take off. As Zebrudaya tries to use a big stock on them he falls. Meanwhile Ovularia's eyes catch the invitation card sent to Chief Zebrudaya by Big Oga, she reads it and protests vehemently the exclusion of "Mrs." From the invitation. However, Chief Zebrudaya promises that the two of them will attend the party together. Ovularia's nerves became calm.

Situation 5: Interior, Zebrudaya's Club House – Night (Work Paradigm). There is a long shot of a general atmosphere of merriment. Natty is busy with assorted food. Dandy takes care of himself with brandy and whisky. Meanwhile Tina is being wooed by a young man Zacky approaches her and the duo (the young man and Tina) moves away. Zacky is unhappy about this. Guests chat and interact. Suddenly there is silence Long shot of Zacky (who is in the Medium close-up). Zacky calls on the celebrant to open the floor. Big Oga and his girlfriend take the floor. As the girl dances, Big Oga showers her with crisp currency notes. Meanwhile Ovularia and Chief Zebrudaya are unhappy with the scenario of what they are seeing and dissociate themselves from the crowd. At first Chief Zebrudaya thinks that the girlfriend in question is the daughter of the celebrant. But he is quickly corrected by Ovulara who tells him that she is a girlfriend of Big Oga and that if she is a daughter of Big Oga, he could not have showered or sprayed lavishly plenty of money on her.

As Chief Zebrudaya and Ovularia are about leaving the arena close to the door, Big Oga's wife bursts in with a sick baby on her back and three other lean – looking children following. They yawn and walk hungrily, sickly and slowly. Chief Zebrudaya and Ovularia change their mind about leaving the party so that they will be part of the unfolding drama. Big Oga's wife grabs him on the collar, shakes him and wails continuously. She accuses him of abandoning her and her sick children without food, drugs and clothes, spending extravagantly and enjoying himself. Chief Zebrudaya abuses him for his wickedness and irresponsibility. Jegede also condemns this behaviour. But Ramota says that there is no difference between Jegede Sokoya and Big Oga. In a camera-mask discourse Zebrudaya accuses Big Oga and the big Ogas of this nation that when people could not afford ordinary water and medical attention for Christmas, he is burning money carelessly.

Connotative/Paradigmatic Analysis of the Episode “Squandermania”

In the diegetic world of the episode, Big Oga spends so much on a girlfriend and a Christmas party while in the real Nigerian society the big Ogas of this country waste money on young girls and parties.

Although at the surface level the source of Big Oga's income is not mentioned in the episode, however reading/viewing the episode deeply, Big Oga is either a highly placed civil servant or a public office holder or company executive or a business tycoon. In the diegetic world of the episode, there is no other evidence to show that he is also kleptomaniac than his squandermania. However, because in the real world of the Nigerian Society most people who are guilty of squandermania are also kleptomaniac, it is obvious that only a person who gets his money from foul means, not from hard work, spends extravagantly. Therefore, in the diegetic world of the episode Big Oga cannot be squandermanic if he is not kleptomaniac.

In the diegetic world of the episode Big Oga is painted as neglecting his immediate family who are wallowing in hunger, ill health and penury. Whereas in the real Nigerian Society, some of the big Ogas not only waste their money on girlfriends and concubines within the shores of Nigeria, they also take them on jolly globe-trotting trips outside the country at the expense of our foreign reserve.

In the diegetic world of the episode, Big Oga's girlfriend has preferential taste for foreign drinks, perfume and fabrics. In the real Nigerian Society there are some big men who, in addition, would even prefer to go to the toilet in either the United Kingdom or the United States of America or Britain. While the children of the Big Oga of the episode are painted as gnashing their teeth in abject penury in the midst of plenty, in the real Nigerian Society of today there are very few of such Ogas that behave like that. However, due to their squandermania the families of the masses are groaning under the throes of disease, ill-health, abject penury and death.

Iconicity/Indexicality/Symbolism and the Satirization of Penury in Affluence (The Character Paradigm)

Big Oga's Family = Icon/index/symbol of squandermania and penury in affluence.

Big Oga's Family = Icon/index/symbol of the poor Nigerian who are impoverished by the Kleptomaniac and squandermania leaders of the nation.

The sick and hungry looking physiques of Big Oga's wife and children = The icons/index/symbols of the weak and near comatose of the Nigerian economy now a victim of kleptomania and squandermania.

Big Oga's Girlfriend = Icon/index/symbol of some parasitic, avaricious and Kleptomaniac young Nigerian women.

Tina = Parasitic, avaricious and Kleptomaniac symbol/index/icon of some young Nigerian women.

Natty = Icon/index/symbol or emblem of poverty *par excellence* and also victim of Kleptomania and squandermania in the Nigerian Society.

Big Oga = Icon/index/symbol of promiscuity and prodigiousness of Nigeria's public office holders.

Big Oga's Party = Icon/index/symbol of squandermania environment.

Big Oga's Taste: Icon/index/symbol Nigerians with high taste for only foreign made goods which are available in Nigeria.

Chief Zebrudaya = Icon/index/symbol of honesty and transparency.

Ovularia = Icon/symbol/index of honesty, sincerity, frankness and decency.

Dr. Prince Jegede Sokoya = Icon/index/symbol emblem and metaphor of kleptomania and squandermania in the Nigerian Society.

Big Oga's Girlfriend = Icon/index/symbol of coquettishness, promiscuity and lasciviousness.

Big Oga = Icon/index/symbol of irresponsibility.

Reading/Viewing, Identification and Analysis of the Deliberate Misuse of the English Language and the Creative Satirization of Penury in Affluence in the Episode, "Squandermania"

After a careful reading/viewing of this episode, "Squandermania," we have indentified the following deliberate mis-use of the English Language for the satire of penury in affluence, deliberate violations of grammatical rules, polysyllabic humour and malapropism. The deliberate violation of the first rule of concord which states that a verb must agree in number with its subject. According to Oluikpe (84-85), this rule means that a singular subject must be followed by a singular verb while a plural subject is followed by a plural verb. As we observed in the other episodes of the series already analysed Chief Zebrudaya Okorigwe Nwogbo (alias 4.30) deliberately violates the first rule of agreement in the following dialogue between him and Ovularin over the non-inclusion of "Mrs. in the invitation card to a party which the spendthrift (Big Oga) sent to the chief.

OVULARIA: (Reads it) Na Only your name dey here,
ZB, Chief Zebrudaya Okorigwe Nwogbo, you are invited to a party.

ZB: Oh this man who Jegede are know, I see

OVULARIA: (Annoyed) So de man no know say you get wife en?

ZB: Are it because he are not put "Mrs. Gboo Ovularia"

OVULARIA: Yes now, he suppose to write am "Chief and Mrs

ZB: (Jokingly) Are you sure it are not for acting bachelor only?

In the above dialogue, Chief Zebrudaya's use of a tendentious joke in response to Ovularia's question, is a gross violation of the first rule, "ZB This

man who Jegede are know I see” which should have read in orthodox construction as: “This man who knows Jegede” This man,” singular is not in agreement with “are” (a plural verb). In spite of such a violation we as readers/viewers understand the meaning and we are also aware that there are violations. That awareness produces the “Zebrudayan laugh or humour”. Another example in the same dialogue is as follows: “Are it because he are not put Mrs. Gboo Ovularia”? The correct construction in orthodox English is: “Is it because he did not put Mrs. Gboo Ovularia?” In the above example, the transitive verb “are” (plural) ought to be “is” (singular); the wrong use of the tense and the wrong use of word is very obvious in the same sentence, “he are not put,” ought to read; “he did not” The infinitive, “are” (plural), present tense is supposed to be singular.

The next construction from Chief Zebrudaya is a tendentious and sarcastic practical/provocative joke: “Are you sure it are not for acting bachelor?” This, which should have obeyed the first rule of concord, is again violated by the inclusion of the infinitive verb, “are”. The correct or orthodox usage should have been: “Are you sure it is not for acting bachelors only?” What makes the ambiguity and incorrect grammar creative is that, “are” has become an arbitrary metaphorical trope that can stand for both plural and singular without reducing the level of communicability. Zebrudayan humour or laugh erupts because of our understanding of the latent satiricomic message in the construction in spite of our awareness of the wrong grammatical tendentiousness of the practical Sarcastic provocative joke (Martin Grotjahn MD 1960: 10 11, 40 – 42) the underlined our emphasis.

Due to the fact that Ovularia only understands the surface meaning of the practical joke which is cracked by Chief Zebrudaya, and could not know that within the deep structure of that joke there is a sarcasm or “tongue in the cheek”, her verbal “degradative”, “satire” of unfaithful, promiscuous and squandermaniac Nigerian men in telepidgin evokes Zebrudayan flattery and eulogy in a discordant English grammar and of course the resultant Zebrudayan laugh or humour is creative.

ZB: (Laughing) Mrs. Ovularia of Bakana Via Isiokpor do not be worry Chief Zebrudaya Okorigwe Nwogbo alias

4.30 are to be forward march to party with you. Are you hear me? (Ovularia seems to relax). Orthodox construction: ZB (Laughing) Mrs. Ovularia of Bakana Via Isiokpo don't be worried, Chief Zebrudaya Okorigwe Nwogbo (alias 4.30) will march with you to the party. Do you understand me?

Although the above orthodox construction is also eulogistic and can generate humour and laughter, our awareness of the ambiguous English grammatical construction creates Zebrudayan "satiricomic" laughter when we place ourselves in the position of Chief Zebrudaya who is able to establish his superior wit over Ovularia, in spite of her invective satire of unfaithful, promiscuous and squandermaniac husbands.

Malapropism

This is one of the most corrosive weapons of an invective of penury in affluence in the episode, "Squandermaniac", of *The Masquerade* comedy series. It is the choosing of a word with a similar sound but inappropriate meaning (Ross 11). Fowler and Fowler (18-27) comprehensively define a malaprop as a word used in the belief that it has the meaning really belonging to another word that resembles it in some particular. The following are, therefore, their six classes of malapropo: (1) words containing the same stem but necessarily, or at least indisputably, distinguished by the termination of prefix; (2) words like the previous set except that the differentiation may possibly be disputed; (3) give and take forms in which there are two words with different construction, that might properly be used and one is given the construction of the other; (4) words having properly no connection with each other at all, but confused owing to superficial resemblance; (5) words whose meanings are misapprehended without apparent cause; (6) words used in unaccustomed, though not impossible, senses or applications: There are two examples in the episode at present being analyzed, of which malapropism becomes veritable "satiricomic jargoneering signs of penury in affluence: "ZB: This thing are make my *Medulla Oblongata* to run turvy-turvy. How are a man of family throw money on girlfriend?"

In the first passage (original Zebrudayan English) the malapropic words that generate Zebrudayan satiricomic laugh or humour are “Mendulla Oblongata” and “turvy-turvy”. (Mendulla Oblongata is a part of the human brain) suggests “brain” while “turvy-turvy” suggests “confusion” or “upside-down”. (Tospsy-Turvy) The *Zebrudayan* satiricomic laughter or humour emanates from and is enhanced by the polysyllable humour, the well-formed words and bombastic modes of the telefilmic message.

The following example of malapropism that produces the most invective of squandermania and its Siamese sibling “penury in affluence” occurs at the point when big Oga is at the height of his vainglorious and squandermaniac paroxysm:

OVULARIA: ZB I dey go if you no won go. As they get to the door, Big Oga’s wife bursts in with a baby on her back and her three other children, including Abigail. She looks haggard, one of the children look malnourished. They yawn and walk hungrily.

ZB: Jehovah God (He and Ovularia watch as the woman marches upstairs with her kids, the woman grabs the Big Oga and begins to wail).

WIFE: Oh Papa Abigail, you are here and your child is sick. Ha! You left me and the children without food and you are here enjoying (Pulling Big Oga and screaming wildly; the crowd forms a circle around them. ZB gets near them, Big Oga trying to free himself) No please wait...

ZB: Shut-up your mandibles (points) look at your child who are sick-no attention from you. Look at your children who are hungry, look at your wife suffering. And you are here lavishing money on girlfriend.

The malapropic phrase in the last passage of the above excerpt is “shut-up your mandibles” and the malapropic word is, “mandible”, which suggests “mouth”. In the orthodox English, it should have read, “Shut-up your mouth”.

Although, it is an invective of squandermania and penury in affluence, it also produces a *Zebrudayan* satiricomic invective laugh or humour plus a modified West's (1-26) "laughing in pains," but which this writer modified to, "painful laugh," which, according to him, is typically, the grotesqueric genre that presents an estranged world fraught with frightful and ludicrous incongruities, human degradation, disfigurement of an aberrational nature. It assaults the senses organic and mechanical elements. It interpenetrates the categories of a rational and familiar order. It fuses, collapses and finally gives way to the absurd. In fact the whole situation, as described in the quoted dialogue above, is a confluential point between verbal degradation and physical degradation behind the camera-mask. The scenario, as described above, could have occurred in the real Nigerian Society. However, the awareness created through its dramatization and transmission to millions of viewers of "Africa's largest Network" NTA cannot be quantified. But have our public office holders been deterred by the hard message of the episode? The answer is obvious. The nation's leaders of today had made squandermania of the enormous wealth of this nation more sophisticated. If they laugh in pains like the Big Oga in the diegetic world of the episode, can they cry in pain by their going to prison and being made to disgorge their ill-gotten riches, which they squander to the detriment of the poor masses? The answer is "We don't know when". Perhaps, President Goodluck Jonathan might succeed in doing that before his tenure expires.

Binary Oppositions in Episode "Squandermania": 5.4.0.1 The Character Paradigm

- (1) Big Oga versus his family
- (2) Big Oga's girlfriend versus Big Oga's family
- (3) Ramota versus Big Oga.
- (4) Zebrudaya versus Big Oga
- (5) Ovularia versus Big Oga
- (6) Clarius versus Big Oga
- (7) Natty versus Big Oga

Ideational Paradigm

- 1) Penury versus Affluence.
- 2) Squandermania versus frugality
- 3) Zebrudayan jargoneering laugh versus painful laugh
- 4) Opacity versus transparency

Acting, Representation and the Communicability of the Zebrudayan English or in Episodes “Squandermania”

Acting is living. According to Lionel Gossman (11), the actor himself and the practice of acting serve as a touchstone of an aesthetics. He says that the actor is the only living being in the theatre and his gait, his gestures, his speech function as signs in real life and we see him not only as a system of signs but as a producer and creator of signs, a living flesh and blood creature. In the episode we are studying how the actors use several non-verbal signs to universalize the language of satire through the deliberately mis-used English language.

The intra-textual and intertextual modes of communicating satiricomic messages are both verbal and nonverbal telefilmic events made possible by good acting, good performance and/or representation and interpretation. Of the creative products of an actor, the form of his work must be imaginative and its content significant. To achieve this, the actor must have mastered the tools and understood the techniques involved in the journey from the inner personal experience through its externalization into group communication (Derek Bowskill 1973).

The communicability of the satiricomic messages through “zebrudayan” English in the episode is possible because the telefilmic audience identifies with the tools that are used by the actors during the histrionic experience because they are different from the tools we use in our everyday life. However, it is a truism that the tools themselves remain the same, breathing body movements, facial expressions and explanatory gestures: the intonation of a sentence, the raising of an eyebrow and the handling of a knife and a fork all are part of the day-to-day living. Yet for an actor they are the delicate fingers of the spirit with which he reaches his audience. According to Bowskill (3), body memory is for most of us unconscious but when an actor

uses them he does so with knowledge and awareness accepting the dependence upon them to communicate (the “satiricomic” *message with an audience*). (The italicized our emphasis).

Acting, says Steven (85-93), is an iconic sign or a better mode of sign production. According to him, its effect was a considerable expansion of the possibilities of significations in acting. He emphasizes that acting itself, as a signifier, takes on the new signified of its social and real existence. During the reproduction of the represented, through the video recording of the actors’ representation of the mis-used English language and during the transmission of the recorded action, the audience or reader/viewers are made to believe the actors through the use of all forms of the gestural modes of communication. The media which are typically judged as the most realistic photography (Monaco 1981) suggests that in film, the signifiers (actors) and the signified (what they represent) are almost identical. Most television and film critics/theorists like Monaco (127-8) think that the power of language (which we labeled satiricomic) system is that there is a very great difference between the signifier and the signified, the power of film is that there is not. This is what Christian Metz describes as the “cinematic signifier” or “the imaginary signifier”.

Episode, Squandermania of *The Masquerade* comedy series of NTA which is recorded on video-tapes suggests less of an obvious gap between the signifier and its signified which make it seem to offer reflections of reality (even in that which is imaginary, like the episodes being analyzed). But photography does reproduce its objects, it abstracts form and mediates the actual (Burgin 6). Whilst we do not mistake one for the other, we do not need to remind ourselves that a television programme simply records an event but is one of an infinite number of possible representations. According to a film theorist, D.N. Rodowick, “ Rather than reproducing the word spontaneously and automatically as ideology of realism, the spectator believe the cinematic apparatus always operates, selectively, limiting the images that are its raw materials (Rodowick 77). The film theorist, Andre Bazin, refers to the reproductive fallacy as being that the only kind of representations which can show things as they really are is one which is (or appears to be) exactly like that which it represents in every respect.

Within the diegetic world of episode “Squandermania” one accepts Keir Elam’s postulates that every aspect of the performance is governed by the denotative-connotative dialectics, the set, the actor, the actor’s body, his movements and speech determined by a constantly shifting network of primary and secondary meaning. According to him, it is an essential feature of semiotic economy, because it employs a limited repertory of sign vehicles in order to generate a potentially unlimited range of cultural units. For example, in Situation One of the episode, “Squandermania”, when Jegede Sokoya wants to offer Big Oga champagne wine, Ramota looks at him with disdain in close shot. The last situation of the same episode displays supra-abundance of nonverbal sign language. The first is the long shot of a general atmosphere of merriment. In the same frame and shot, Natty is busy with assorted food, Dandy takes care of himself with brandy and whisky. Tina is wooed by a young man, Zacky approaches her, he is rebuffed, one reads unhappiness in Zacky’s face. Other signs of squandermania and penury in affluence are the dancing of Big Oga and his girlfriend and his spraying and splashing of crisp currency notes on her and juxtaposed with the sudden appearance of the frail and sick looking big Oga’s wife and children who seized Big Oga’s coat and the ensuing atmosphere of pandemonium and the eventual disruption of the party which Big Oga.

The above mentioned gestural and kinesic actions prepare the way for *Zebrudayan* invective in verbalized *Zebrudayan* English behind the camera-mask.

Conclusion

After a critical reading/viewing and analysis denotatively/syntagmatically and connotatively/paradigmatically, within the surface and deep structures of episode, “Squandermania” of *The Masquerade* comedy series of NTA, we can now infer that the “zebrudayan” English of the programme has been effectively and creatively utilized for the exposure of the following vices and foibles of the Nigerian Society: “Penury in Affluence, and its sibling, kleptomania. The Peircean iconicity/indexicality/symbolism are some of the semiotic devices employed in the analysis of the two episodes that brought out the satiricomic messages already referred to above. Also through the creative

employment of “zebrudayan” English in the episode malapropism, code-mixings/code-switching, have become aspects of a satiricomic jargoneering mode of communication and established a confluence of verbal degradation or ambiguity and physical degradation to create a Zebrudayan painful laugh behind the camera-mask.

We have also read/viewed and observed that the diegetic worlds of the analyzed episode are representations of the real Nigerian Society. Therefore, through the “zebrudayan” English a combination of Engliyoruba, telepidgin Yoruba, telepidgin and Zebrudayan code-switching, mis-used English becomes an art of satiricomic jargoneering. Other satiricomic jargoneering signs that emerge are invective and indicting raillery which produce the Zebrudayan laugh/humour, “puncturealism”. Alliterative/assonancial jokes, which constitute jargoneering device that generate a Zebrudayan humour/laugh.

The identified satiricomic jargons have been reduced to an abstract “perspectivization” of the concrete in both the diegetic world of the episode and the real audiential universe of the Nigerian Society. Two types of binary oppositions are identified/constructed from our syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of the selected episode; the ideational and character paradigms. The diegetic and real audiential worlds of the episode acting, representational, teletheatrical telefilmic telelinguistic reproductions and transmission, we are able to establish that, in spite of the incongruity and ambiguity of the “zebrudayan English, the episode analysed is able to effectively and creatively communicate its satiricomic messages.

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TRANSMUTING FROM TEXT TO PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF *SHADOWS ON ARRIVAL*

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Abstract

*This paper analyses the art of transforming a dramatic text into a collective theatre experience. It highlights the pervasive role of performance arts in African theatre which turns a playwright's idiosyncratic thought or intellectual product into a collective, shared event that is relived at the moment of production. Using instances from the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival* and other relevant dramatic performances, the researcher illustrates that theatre making in Africa is still deeply rooted in the shared life of the people, governed by the aesthetics of communal living. The paper interrogates the relevance of African indigenous performance arts in the theatre, the distance between the self (in terms of the performers and the audience) and the role performed as well as the affective power of such distance. The research proposes that theatre making in Africa is predicated on certain aesthetics that inform African conception of theatre. It is the task of this paper to discuss the principles of theatre making as exemplified in the performance of *Shadows on Arrival* in an attempt to answer the question: What is the place of creativity in African Theatre?*

Introduction

Decades after the denigration of African arts and culture by Western imperialism, some critics like Egwu (2010) censures the critical attention given to African literary arts that capture the people's traditional culture. He foresees an urbanised Nigeria where the younger generation are so distanced from traditional life as to recreate it in contemporary art forms. This paper aims to refute the assumption by arguing that the dramaturgy of *Shadows on Arrival* (2012) is informed by traditional African (Nigerian) life as seen in the numerous traditional arts and culture it embodies and presented on stage. .

The materials for the study are both pictorial and literary gathered through the library and participant-observation of the premier performance. The concept of total theatre is applied in the analysis of the data. Total theatre is the idea, in dramaturgy (the art of playwriting and playmaking), that all the elements of theatre should be considered equally important. It belongs to the philosophy of Physical Theatre, a revolution against the theatre of words evident in social realistic and Naturalistic drama where the performers are imprisoned by the literary text and divorced from the audience. For Richard Wagner, drama is a 'total work of art' (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), a fusion of 'Poetry, music, dance, and the accessory arts of the theatre into a new spiritual harmony' (Block and Shedd 6). Richard Wagner's concept of drama as a 'grandiose celebration of mythic and ritualistic values' throws up a generation of imaginative theatre designers who search for alternative methods of dramaturgy capable of realising the complex art forms embedded in drama. Jean-Louis Barrault, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Jacques Copeau, Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, Richard Schechner, etc. experimented with new means of theatre making aimed at a 'new' theatre of poetry (Wagner), music (Appia), dance (Craig), a re-theatricalised theatre of the performer's art in acrobatic expressivity of the grotesque (Copeau, Meyerhold and Grotowski) (Bradbury 453-456, 461-462). Barrault, for example, sees theatre acting as a spoken mime and advocated that no theatrical element should assume primacy over another in the spirit of total theatre ('Physical theatre,' *Wikipedia*, n.d.).

In proposing the Theatre of Cruelty, Artaud searches for a new language which "cannot be defined except by its possibilities for dynamic expression in space as opposed to expressive possibilities of spoken dialogue" (Bentley 55) since it is only such language, he asserts, that can "put an end to the subjugation of the theatre to the text, and...recover the notion of a kind of unique language half way between gesture and thought". Such language, Artaud says, includes "music, dance, pantomime, or mimicry; uses movement...and turns words into incantations" (Bentley 56-57). Modern artists have therefore tried to maintain the link between theatre and culture. Artaud, in his protest book *Theatre and its Double* vilifies the triumph of

enlightenment in Western Civilization in its separation of culture from life “as if there was culture on one side and life on the other” (Artaud 13). Although Artaud links these qualities of theatre communication to “Oriental means of expression” (in Bentley 55): movement, poetry, song, chant, incantation, mime, dance, pantomime, music, comedy, drama, visual images, opera, direct audience address and participation constitute the communicative signs of African traditional performances as is demonstrated with the theatre under study.

Many African theatre artists continue the tradition of total theatre by fusing together a complex union of performance arts. Critics have employed the term “African Total Theatre” to explicate the technique of both the playwriting and playmaking of this kind of modern African drama. It is a technique that embodies African life in all its theatricality and body expressivity, that celebrates the functionalism and audience-oriented theatre by which African drama and theatre is known. My task in this paper then is to examine the African indigenous performances as captured in the premier performance of a stage play, *Shadows on Arrival* (2011) to illustrate that traditional African life is still of great interest to contemporary Nigerian playwrights. The proposition is that Africans still see culture as a product of their interacting life, with the past in the present for the future. The past, in form of traditional culture, signified in indigenous performances, continues to be of national interest despite colonial experience, and are also of global relevance in the conception of modern theatre. The audience identify with not only the subject but also the arts of the performance.

Shadows on Arrival, a stage play, was first performed on the 18th of July, 2011 at the Creative Arts Auditorium, University of Lagos, Nigeria. It was a rich theatre fare which engaged the audience including the younger generation of university students. The success of the premier performance inspired the writing of this paper. *Shadows on Arrival* (2012), directed by Oghuan Olasunkami, written and produced by Osita C. Ezenwanebe, is a drama on the wane of *ogbanje* cultural belief in the wake of modern experiences of Western education, capitalist materialism, Christianity and democratic principles. *Ogbanje* is a traditional belief that there is a group of children ‘Who are born to die to re-enter their mother’s womb to be born to

die and continue the vicious cycle of coming and going' (Ezenwanebe, 2012: 24). The play is premiered by the final year students of the Department of Creative Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria.

The crisis of change sweeping through Umuofia village is complicated by the fact that the spiritual leader of the community, Ezemuo, has soiled his hands in an unholy embrace with the white invaders. He misuses his office as an avenging tool against Egoyibo, a woman who refuses his amorous advances, by falsely declaring that her only child, her daughter, Agbomma, has been chosen as the next priestess of the earth goddess, Agbala Oha. He knows that Agbomma was an *ogbanje* whose life has been spared by the gods and he exploits the situation to torment her mother, Egoyibo. Unknown to him, Egoyibo is a typical traditional African woman: resilient in tenderness, instrumental in obedience, assertive in submission and unwavering in her conviction. Her unflinching battle with the powerful triad: her conservative husband in the home front, the Igwe (King) and his cabinet members in the political sphere and Ezemuo in the spiritual domain, to rescue her daughter from the pangs of an unjust avenger provide the dramatic action.

The performance of the traditional belief in the urban city of Lagos employs the rich resources of indigenous performance arts: poetry, dance, songs, drama, comedy, mime, story-telling, chants, incantation, etc. in which are embedded the people's traditional culture. The imperative of change in the practice of certain unwholesome traditional cultures was delightfully and successfully communicated. The success of the performance brings to the fore the place of indigenous performances in contemporary African life. How a play on traditional culture did engage the interest of modern audience became of great concern to the researcher.

Traditional Performances in the Theatre of *Shadows on Arrival* (2012)

Shadows on Arrival, performed in 2011 and published in 2012, is replete with indigenous African performance arts informed by the people's way of life. Unlike Graham-White (3) who defines Modern African Drama as "The drama inspired by European models", Martin Banham asserts that "The nature of the contemporary theatre in Africa can only be fully understood in the context of its historical roots, in its being "directly and immediately" related to its

functional roots; thereby linking drama in modern Africa to traditional cultures and performances. The researcher, however, argues that modern African theatre can be viewed as a contraction of indigenous performance arts explained below, and that it continues to be of interest to both theatre artists and audience.

Ceremonies in Feasts and Festivals

Shadows on Arrival recreates African communal and ceremonial life. Herbert M. Cole defines festival as “a relatively rare, climatic event in the life of any community” (in Soyinka “Cultures” 425). Commenting on modern African drama, Rubin (470) asserts that “the theatrical is even to be found in theatre buildings and scripts”. Banham and Wake (2, 3) support this view when they write that contemporary African theatre draws upon traditions, beliefs and needs that are not remote in time but which co-exist alongside time making most plays to have their relevance and inspiration to the living festivals of Africa

An initiation ceremony marks the climax of the performance of *Shadows on Arrival*. As people gather in the shrine of the earth goddess for the initiation, Chieme, the incumbent priestess of the earth goddess who is to perform the initiation ritual and invoke the earth goddess is conspicuously absent. The occasion is marked by Owu Mmili dance, ritual cleansing of Chieme’s empty seat and Ezemuo’s chant of her supernatural endowments aimed at wooing her presence, and finally, Ezemuo’s incantation as he takes it upon himself to invoke the earth goddess in spite of Chieme’s absence. Chieme is absent because the gathering is not authorized by the earth goddess, Agbala Oha. It is Chieme who is to declare to the people the pronouncements of her goddess and invoke her presence, not Ezemuo. Ezemuo is the Chief priest of Idemmili, the overall god of Umueze. He usurps Chieme’s duty to use it as a weapon against Agbomma’s mother for daring to refuse his amorous request. The people decode the implication of Chieme’s absence and call upon Ezemuo to do something: ‘Ezemuo, the air is heavy! It is too heavy for our little heads. . . . ; melt the air, and let it not release its load upon us’! (44).

The festive atmosphere of initiation ceremony is therefore marred from the onset by the corrupt activities of the Chief priest of Idemili, Ezemuo,

who lies against the gods to deceive the people by declaring that Agbomma has been chosen by the gods as the next priestess of the earth goddess, Agbala Oha. The joy that should have greeted the choice of a new priestess dwindles into contention and argument as Egoyibo, the young maiden's mother, resists the choice of her daughter and accuses Ezemuo of foul play. She displays the strength of traditional African womanhood in her defiant application of tender resilience of non-violent opposition which draws down the anger of the gods on Ezemuo and liberate the people from the calamity that would have befallen them have they dared initiate the choice of man as the priestess of the god. She draws Agbomma away, thwarting the initiation. The ceremony ends in tragic pandemonium. Similarly Tess Onwueme's *The Broken Calabash* is configured within the Ineh Festival, a satirical festival that precedes harvest. Modern African drama and theatre, Nigerian in particular, is replete with traditional feasts and festivals.

Ritual

There are two ritual performances in the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival*. Unlike *Death and the King Horseman*, where the whole dramatic action is a ritual process, *Shadows on Arrival* has specific scenes of anointing and initiation rituals at the beginning and end respectively. The first is the anointing of the young girl, Agbomma, with the divine favour of the earth goddess. Agbomma is an *ogbanje* who the earth goddess spares to live by revealing her thread of life (*Iyi uwa*) that ties her to the vicious cycle of coming and going thereby severing her link with the world of *ogbanje*. This favour is sealed in the scene near the shrine of the earth goddess, Agbala Oha, as Agbomma is returning from the stream with her friends. Suddenly, the spirit of the goddess possesses her; she whirls round and falls to the amazement of her friends who run away in fright. Chieme, the priestess of the earth goddess, appears with her maidens anoints Agbomma's lower jaw with *nzu*, the ritual white chalk of purification.



*Pic.1: Agbomma touched by the spirit Pic. 2: Agbomma is slain in the spirit
Pic.3: Agbomma is anointed*

The pictures above explains the performance of the anointing ritual Agbomma experiences. In the first picture, Agbomma, touched by the spirit of the earth goddess, Aghala Oha, embarks on a trance dance that whirls her into communion with the world of the spirit. In Pic.2, she is slain by the spirit who possesses her, as she awaits her anointing. In the third picture, Chieme, the priestess of Agbala Oha, seals the ritual with the physical mark of nzu, sacred white chalk of peace, as a visible sign of the goddess' choice.

The second ritual performance is in form of initiation ceremony, following the purported oracular pronouncement that the gods have chosen Agbomma as the next priestess of the earth goddess even while Chieme is reticent about it. It is Ezemuo's plot to torment Agbomma's mother who refuses his amorous advances. Hence, the initiation scene of Agbomma as the priestess of Agbala Oha is interrupted by Agbomma's mother with fatal consequences. The thunderous anger of the earth goddess kills Ezemuo and disperses the people. In both scenes, the dramatic ritual ripples with dance, song, chant, incantation and mime. The researcher believes that the ritual appeal to the young modern audience not only because of the many performance arts with which it is presented but also its cotemporary religious

realism. Many scholars and critics like Herbert Blau argues that the idea of ritual lived on, among other things, in “the parody and taxidermy of video and body art, “the sensory overload of the new expressionism” (334).



Pic.4: The initiation ritual. Ezemuo invokes the presence of the earth goddess, Agbala Oha whose absence is a sign of her disapproval of the ceremony. Yet, Ezemuo goes on with the initiation, usurping the role of the goddess and incurring her wrath.

The question of whether ritual is or is not drama, or whether it is primitive drama; or whether African drama originated from ritual is therefore a concluded issue. As Soyinka (426) says: ‘That more and more of the highly developed societies are turning to the so-called ‘primitive’ forms of drama as representing the significant dramatic forms for contemporary society’ attests to the fact that African indigenous performances are not mere attempts at drama and theatre after all. In his paper “Trends in indigenous African Drama Scholarship”, Anya Ekwu (2010) details the argument as it raged in the 1980’s and said that it ended inclusively because of a contemporary vigorous redefinition of dramatic genre. The researcher however is of the opinion that the “contemporary vigorous redefinition of dramatic genre” supports the

argument of the Relativists School which holds that “African performances are drama of a kind” (367). Quoting one of the proponents of the Relativist School, Egwu writes:

We would argue that not only Brecht but also Appia, Tortsov, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and in recent times, Grotowski, Goodman, Schechner, Barber, Ruffini and others have been advocating and moving European theatre in the direction which African theatre has prospered, perhaps from the very beginning (364).

If what is considered contemporary in theatre is traced to African indigenous performances, the researcher makes bold to say that there is no end to the appeal of traditional African life in African drama and theatre in the foreseeable future.

Performing Oracular Pronouncement

Oracular Pronouncement refers to an action of a messenger of the gods as he relates the message from the god to the people or person concerned. In the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival* (2012), Ezemuo carries the purported message of the gods to Agwudo’s house. Agwudo is the husband of Egoyibo and the father of Agbomma. He claims that the gods are not happy with Agwudo’s household because they are resisting the initiation of their daughter, Agbomma, as the priestess of the earth goddess. Egoyibo seems to be succeeding in convincing her husband, Agwudo, that Ezemuo’s declaration concerning their daughter is false. She asks her husband: “Is Ezemuo now the priestess of Aghala Oha? Is he not the priest of Idemili? If the choice is that of Agbala Oha, why didn’t Chieme, her priestess, bring the message?” (Ezenwanebe, *Shadows* 20). Though Egoyibo is right, she cannot impact her views because she is a woman and has no say in such decision making. Afraid that Egoyibo may influence her husband with her powerful, logical argument, Ezemuo storms their house, chanting the so-called warnings from the gods in rich poetry, indigenous proverbs, calculated rhythm and solemn movements

punctuated by appropriate gestures. The solemnity of the performance implies divine ordinance and commands obedience.



Pic. 5 & 6: Ezemuo performs oracular pronouncements in the house of Agwudo

Ezemuo's body expressivity is not different from the theatricalities of some contemporary religious adherents which the audience is familiar with.

Music and Sound

The performance of *Shadows on Arrival* is interwoven with music, especially the music of the *ekwe* and *ogene*, wooden and metallic traditional, musical instruments respectively. The action of the play opens with the sound of the

sacred *ekwe* summoning the titled men of the town to a crucial meeting. The meanings and the messages are entwined in the sound as illustrated below:

| Sound | meaning | transliteration |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|
| Koko tikpo! | Eke kpukwo! | Let the python come |
| Ko titi ti ko! | Mbekwu kpukwo! | Let the tortoise come |
| Ko ko titi kpom kpom kpom (2) raffia roof | Agwo nokwo n'akirika | There is snake in the |



Pic. 6: The ekwe, a traditional wooden of musical Instrument.



Pic.7: The three women decode the sound the Ekwe to get the meaning imbued in it.

The women who left early in the dawn to sweep the village square decode the message embedded in the sound of the music made by the *ekwe*, listening hard each time to get the exact meaning. According to one of the women, Aruego, 'The *ekwe* is mourning. Something bad has happened' (2). 'It says a giant tree has fallen,' says another woman, Oyilidie (2). It is Egoyibo who gets it right: 'The *ekwe* does not say that a giant tree has fallen. It says there is snake in the raffia roof, and that means trouble' (3), she clarifies. The key to decoding the intricate meaning of the music is a good knowledge of the people's culture. The sound of the *ekwe* disseminates not only the message but also creates the prevailing mood that regulates the posture and movement of both those it summons and those who hear it. It is a grievous matter that affects the life of the people, and the men it summons answer the call in solemn procession. The *ekwe* sounds at dawn when the stillness of the day amplifies its sound. Its music speaks to the people and its message is decoded by the community. In

Shadows on Arrival, music introduces the conflict, foreshadows and determines the course of the dramatic action. It is part of the plot.

The ceremonial nature of African way of life implies the imperative of music. Many African playwrights also believe that words are often too weak in expressing the mystery and depth of African culture and experience. In the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival*, music is supplied by African life. Nietzsche said that 'language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music [...] language, as an organ and symbol of phenomena, can never by any means disclose the innermost heart of music; language in its attempt to imitate it, can only be in superficial contact with it' (Nietzsche 56). Music is the life of African drama and theatre. Donald M. Morales (145) identifies two modes of interdependence between language and music in the way it is employed by playwrights. In some plays, he says, music is employed 'as a structure parallel to the musical form' as seen in many Western performances, or as 'an organic progression that naturally moves the play. In the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival*, music not only moves the play but also determines the course of the movement.

Songs

There is a pervasive use of songs in the theatre of *Shadows on Arrival*. The songs are of different types and functions. Most of them are choruses sung which comment on and foreshadow the dramatic action like in Classical Greek theatre. Some of the songs accompany the dances in the play, interpreting the action and evoking the relevant emotion from the audience. The songs are predominantly traditional and are rendered in indigenous, Igbo language though the playwright provides the transliteration. There are Western or foreign songs which are Christian hymns sung by the converts to the white man's religion. Hence songs are used to mark the two worlds of the play. While the songs of the Africans are rooted in traditional culture and rendered in indigenous language, those of the white man and their African converts are in the English language. Songs as identity markers serve is a method of characterization in the theatre under study. The most outstanding song is the Agbomma's song dialogue with his father that precedes her trance-dance, as stated below:

AGBOMMA: Obu onye n'akpome e e
Papa obu gi kporom?

Who is calling me o o
Father, are you the one who called me?

AGWUDO: Agbomma e e Agbomma e e
Biko azakwona a a

Agbomma e e Agbomma e e
Please do not answer

CHORUS: Agbomma gi ka anakgo
Agwo nokwo nakirika
Agbala Oha akpoluna nnwa!
Agbala Oha akpoluna nnwa!

Agbomma, you are called
There is python in the roof
Agbala Oha has taken the child! (15)
Agbala Oha has taken the child! (15)



Pic.8: Agbomma engages his father in a song-dialogue the spirit while the chorus supply the incident



Pic.9:Agbomma dances out to answer the call to find out who calls her .

Agbomma's song dialogue starts when she heard the call of the earth goddess and dances out for the anointing ritual. The song explains Agbomma's bizarre action and foreshadows what it portends for the people. The atmosphere of the performance presents Africa as a singing continent, living in a melodious connectedness with the three planes of existence. Song, like music, is best when it is organically integrated in the plot and helps to determine the course of the action. Like music, song is the language of an intense experience. Quoting Jenheinz John, Graham-White writes that 'only the Negro can teach rhythm and joy to our world subjugated by machines' (7). The imprint of African traditional music, songs and even dances are palpable in the contemporary forms, especially in their compelling rhythm and intensity. They are part of the contemporary experience of the youth in Nigeria and Africa.

Dance

About four different traditional dances are displayed in the performance of *Shadows on Arrival*, apart from the uncoordinated movement of the Christian converts to their church hymns. These are the spirit-dance, rendered by the young spirit-maidens of the earth goddess, Agbala Oha; the Owu Mmili dance by the initiates of the water goddess, Idemmili; the trance-dance of the main

character, Agbomma and the young maiden dance that marks the opening and closing glee of the performance.



Pic.10: Maiden dance



Pic.11: Spirit Dance



Pic.12: Agbomma's trance dance

Although the young maidens' dance is mainly for entertainment, the trance-dance of the main character, Agbomma, is organically integrated in the play as part of its structure. In her first trance-dance, Agbomma has to transit to the

spirit world of the earth goddess, Agbala Oha, to receive a supernatural favour of the god. Agbomma and her friends are returning from the stream along the narrow path near the shrine of the earth goddess when the favour of the goddess falls upon her; she is overwhelmed by the spirit presence and embarks on a dance of possession with which she connects with the spirit world. Although Agomma's friends neither feel the divine presence nor join in the dance, "Agbomma", we are told, "continues, whirls round in frenzy and falls. The other girls scream and run away. Chieme, the priestess of Agbala Oha, appears with her maidens and anoints Agbomma's jaw with *nzu*, a sacred white chalk" (9). Hence, through the dance, Agbomma becomes one with the spirit while their communion is symbolized by the ritual of anointing carried out by the priestess of the goddess.

In her second dance of possession, only Agbomma hears the voice of the goddess calling her, and to the amazement of her parents, she embarks on a trance-dance, fully possessed by the spirit. She dances out of the house and joins other spirit dancers in a dance that erupts in the shrine of the goddess. According to the playwright's note, "The dance stops at frenzy when the dancers whirl round and Agbomma falls" (16). With the second dance, the union is complete and made manifest to Agbomma's parents who understand it, accordingly. The rest of the dramatic action is the consequent effects and complications arising from Agbomma's possession enacted through dance. Hence, the dance of possession is the channel linking the two worlds of the play, that of the living and the dead, a means through which the living connect and interact with the spirits of the departed ones and the past mingles with the present, celebrating the unbroken continuum of existence. Adelugba's exciting essay in *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria* (1981) details the dramatic significance of possession in African theatre (203—211).

Dance as a deliberately, organized movement of the body in space and time is part of African culture. Both happy and sad moments are danced out. In the performance under study, dance is accompanied by music and songs. Anthony Graham – White in his study of African traditional performances observes that much that could be classified as drama were erroneously called dance (9). Dance, like songs, music, movement, chants, etc. is part of the multi-sign language of African theatre, and its meaning, entrenched in the

shared life of the people, can only be understood by those who are versed in the culture.

Direct Audience Address through Story-Telling

The bulk of African traditional culture is oral. The oral performance of story-telling is a powerful means of instruction, cultural preservation and transmission as well as an occasion for communal interaction. It ranges from an amateur performance at informal gathering to a skilled, professional art rendered at formal occasions with choruses and role-playing. It is more than mere utterances because of the numerous signifying actions involved.

In story-telling, everybody is a performer and an audience. The theatricality of the performance and the interrelatedness of the narrator and his audience remain outstanding characteristics of modern African drama. In the performance of *Shadows on Arrival*, the audience participatory theatrics of story-telling is realised through Egoyibo's direct audience address. Egoyibo, one of the main characters, shares with the audience her ordeal with the *ogbanje* children as detailed below:

(Egoyibo looks carefully to ensure that Ezemuo is not in sight; peers closely at the audience). I am looking for those whose chest bears the milk of life . . . , in whose stomach the seed of life is sown. My fellow women, are you there? (Waves her hand in search of response). . . . Ezemuo says my only child, Agbomma, is to be given over to the forest of Agbala Oha . . . I have carried four . . . children in this my stomach, each for nine months; each of them dies on the same market day they are born. They say my stomach is loved by the spirit of ogbanje, children who are born to die to re-enter their mother's womb to be born to die and continue the vicious cycle of coming and going. . . . My fellow women, it is this same Ezemuo who assures me that Agbomma...will live..., and that was after what he did to the corpse of Onwubiko. . . . You want to know what he did? Wait, you must see it for yourself (23—24).



Pic. 13: Egoyibo narrates her story.



Pic.14: She dramatises her anguish



Pic.15: Performs a defiant decision

Egoyibo's story is crafted with the audience in mind, and they empathise with her. It is a participatory speech where the performer needs the audience response to move on. Story-telling is the most outstanding element of modern African drama that preserves the participatory nature of indigenous

performance. Here, the audience are also performers as they engage in active dialogue with the narrator and become fully engaged with the dramatic action.

Chants and Incantations

Chants and incantations are rendered in rich poetry, proverbs and African wise sayings (idioms).. Chant may take the form of citation in honour of a great one at formal gathering, a recitation of someone’s great deeds and achievements or a rendering of “salutation names” or praise names. Chanting shows the closeness of a people as each person’s achievements are known too well to others. Chants can be performed in accompaniment of music, song and movement. Praise-singing is a traditional art well developed among the *Zulus/Zubango*, the Yoruba’s *Olobun-iyọ* or *Oriki* and other ethnic communities in Africa. In certain places, there are experts in chant arts as in story-telling.



Pic.16: Council orator chants the great deeds and attributes of the king

In the theatre under study, Council Orator chants the praise names and great deeds of their king, Igwe Ochendo, as he joins the cabinet meeting: “Igwe Ochendo our cover! Our shield! Defender of the defenseless ... You are the fearless one; the lion that enters the forest and sends the lesser animals into hiding with his roar. The elephant whose feet rock the trees of the forest; I greet you” (33—34). It is a recital of the Igwe’s outstanding qualities rendered by a talented, professional chant artist while other cabinet members and the audience nod in silent affirmation. When the chanting is directed to the gods in invocation or supplication, it is referred to as incantation. In Pic.15 above,

Ezemuo praises the greatness of the gods. Chants and incantations lives on not only in palaces of traditional leaders but in the antics of prayer by certain Christian and other religious faithful as well as in politics.

Domesticated Language

The continent of African has its own numerous indigenous languages before the Western invasion that brought foreign languages which some countries adopt as lingua franca. Though the use of a common language fosters national unity, it poses a great challenge to the literary artist in recreating the depth and mystery of African life. In Achebe's words: "The African writers should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English, which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience (62). This viewpoint is also supported by Soyinka's opinion that: "When we borrow an alien's language to sculpt or paint in, ... we must stress such a language, stretch it, impact and compact it, fragment and reassemble it with no apology, as required to bear the burden of experiencing and experiences, be they formulated or not in the conceptual idioms of the language" (107). The language of modern African drama is therefore as varied as there are African experiences. They include indigenous and foreign languages, domesticated or indigenised language, Creole, pidgin etc.

However, African total theatre dramaturgy is a 'signifying performance' (Fiebach 477). It favours domesticated language, where a foreign language like English is imbued with indigenous language features, capturing the beliefs, norms, traditional practices and thought patterns of African life which are embedded in the indigenous performances. In recreating aspects of Igbo traditional culture in the performance under study, 'African vernacular style' of domesticated English (Lindfors 4) is used. There are indigenous lexical items, lexical blends, coinages, proverbs and African wise-sayings or *Igbonised* expressions. For instance, personal names cannot be easily transliterated. The word *ogbanje* is used repeatedly because it lacks an equivalence in English in the way it is conceived in indigenous belief. Ezemuo explains the term *ogbanje* as "Children who are born to die only to come back

and re-enter their mother's womb to be born again and die and continue the vicious cycle of coming and going" (15). Aruego on her own part explains it as a child who is "neither of this world nor the other world" (4). The term *Iyi Uwa*, the physical symbol connecting the *ogbanje* child to the world of the unborn, is transliterated as "the thread of life" (12).

Domesticated language is not a mechanically contrived language in modern African drama and theatre. It is a deeply ingrained personality of modern Africans and Nigerians, in particular; a stamp of the colonial experience by which colonized Africans are known and which is part of lived experience. Even if other aspects of African traditional cultures are eroded by the passage of time as Anya Egwu postulates, the researcher believes the indigenization of the English language will live on.

Conclusion

The theatre of *Shadows on Arrival* aptly illustrates that African and Nigerian traditional life persists in modern African (Nigerian) drama and theatre and its continued appeal is its ability to transform into contemporary arts the audience could easily identify with. African Total Theatre is a theatre where all the performance arts are well integrated into realizing the essence of theatre. The audience is engaged because they could identify with the content and form of the performance which are culled from their common heritage. The Contemporary conception of drama as performance brings African total theatre techniques and modern African drama to the forefront of global theatre evolution. Hence Meyerhold's search for "a language of physical action"; Antonin Artaud quests for "a concrete poetry of gesture and movement" in space and the theatre of cruelty search for the use of "a new scenic language", all aimed at resuscitating the theatricality of drama as performance. Modern African drama presents a theatre that requires active rather than passive involvement. Such theatre, Don Rubin says is "a theatre to be lived as well as watched. Not theatre or ritual but theatre and ritual" (470).

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THE NEWS AGENDA, THE NIGERIAN MEDIA AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Employing the historical-analytic methodology, this study focuses on the news agenda in the Nigerian media. It argues that there is the need for news reporting and coverage activities of Nigerian media professionals to be redefined in order for them to be able to effectively contribute to sustainable peace in Nigeria, which is a sine qua non for development. In this context, this study examines the crucial role the media have been playing/ought to be playing/should be playing in the sustenance of peace and the galvanization of sustainable development in Nigeria as a microcosm of Africa. It specifically posits that the culture of peace can ensure the security of lives and properties in the Nigerian society and the society, in turn, stands a greater chance of being economically, socially, politically as well as culturally developed, if the agents of development such as the media and their operators/professionals diligently and dispassionately carry out their responsibilities. Towards this end, the media in Nigeria, both print and broadcast are encouraged to engage in more interpretational and investigative reportage of issues for national development.

Introduction

The media (radio, television, film, print, social networks, etc) are change agents in contemporary world. They can be deployed to ensure the culture of peace as well as galvanise other agents of development in 21st century societies, especially in Africa, where peace and sustainable development appear to be eluding many countries, including Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Congo Democratic Republic, Ivory Coast, Somalia, Congo Kinshasa, to mention a few. Appraising the state of affairs in Nigeria, Igbuzor and Moru (2005) warn that several intelligence reports on Nigeria indicate that if the country is

unable to create about 24 million jobs for its growing population, and provide effective platforms and infrastructures for fighting corruption and ensuring equitable distribution of its abundant wealth, it could become a failed state.

The questions of youth restiveness, unemployment and all shades of crime have taken a dominant space in global discourse, even as youth intransigence is threatening to shred the fabric of the Nigerian society (Ugor 4; Onuoha “Democratic Governance” 177, “Youth Unemployment” 116, “Religious Violence” 19; Omoera “Bridging” 39). If this were to happen, it will not only unsettle Nigeria, but disrupt the relative peace and security in West Africa and indeed the African continent as a whole. This is a grave issue that demands urgent attention considering the position of Nigeria in the sustenance of peace in the West African sub-region and indeed the whole of Africa.

Nigeria is located in the West of Africa and it is the largest black nation on planet earth, with a population of about 170 million people (Omoera & Aihevba 439). It occupies 923, 768.64 sq. kilometres, roughly sharing international boundaries with Benin in the West, Niger/Chad in the North, Cameroun in the East and the Atlantic Ocean in the South. Nigeria has over 450 indigenous languages spoken within its borders (Hansford, Bendor-Samuel & Stanford 1; Grimes 1; Anyanwu “MLA” 13; “MLE” 77). It is a multi-faith, multilingual and multicultural country. By October, 2015, Nigeria will be 55 years, having attained political independence in 1960. Its restoration to civilian rule from 1999 till date has been its boldest attempt at sustainable democracy or re-democratisation.

However, Nigeria is beset by a lot of issues, ranging from the emergence of ethnic militias/terrorists groups such as Egbesu, Odua Peoples’ Congress (OPC), Boko Haram, Biafra Zionist Movement, etcetera, to general insecurity of lives and properties; pervasive official corruption to failing public infrastructures; self-serving political class to despondent, crime-prone youth populations, grinding poverty to religious indignities, to mention a few. All these appear to have culminated in the clogging of the wheel of peace, progress and development of the country, which was once touted to be the ‘giant of Africa’ but with so many failed promises in spite of its huge potentials. This is probably why the Global Peace Index of 2013 ranked Nigeria as the 148th

peaceful country in the world, making it the 14th most unsafe nation among the 162 nations (Okecha and Mmuoebonam 1). This article uses Nigeria as a reference point for the African situation because whatever happens in Nigeria tends to reverberate across the African continent.

Theoretical Grounding

Theoretically, the agenda setting theory (AST) of the media as put forward by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (176) and refigured by Stanley Baran (2002) provides an intellectual foundation for this study. McCombs and Shaw in their very influential research on the role of the media in the 1968 presidential elections in the United State of America (USA), observe that:

In choosing and displaying news, editors, news room staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but much how importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. The mass media may well determine the important issues – that is, the media may set the “agenda” of the campaign (177).

Over time, AST research has demonstrated that the more stories the news media do on a particular subject, the more importance audiences attach to that subject. In relation to AST, Baran holds that the “media may not tell us what to think, but media certainly tell us what to think about” (67). He further argues that the agenda setting power of the media resides in more than the amount of space or time devoted to a story and its placement in the broadcast or on the page. Also important is the fact that there is a great consistency between media sources across all media in the choice and type of coverage they give an issue or event. This consistency and repetition signal to the people the importance of the issue or event.

Campbell, Martin and Bettina (14) largely agree with the foregoing. They posit that when the mass media pay attention to particular events or issues, they determine – that is, set agenda for – the major topics of discussion for the individual and society. This compass of proven capacity of the media

to determine what should dominate public discourse for reasons of accelerating socio-economic and socio-political development in contemporary society has been rearticulated and reformulated by a number of other media scholars (Banda 1; Sambe 20; Ugulah 44; Ibagere 42; Ahmad & Ashara 15; Zhang, Shao & Bowman 663). This is particularly in relation to refocusing the news agenda of media for national development in different parts of the globe.

It is in this context that this study examines the crucial role the media have been playing/ought to be playing/should be playing in the sustenance of peace and the galvanization of sustainable development in Nigeria as a microcosm of Africa. It specifically posits that the culture of peace can ensure the security of lives and properties in the Nigerian society and the society, in turn, stands a greater chance of being economically, socially, politically as well as culturally developed, if the agents of development such as the media and their operators/professionals creatively, diligently and dispassionately carry out their responsibilities.

A Brief Historical-Analytic Survey of the Nigerian Media

The Nigerian media predates Nigeria as a country. Ufuophu-Biri (8) traces media activities in Nigeria to 1859, when *Iwe Irohin*, a newspaper (print media) was established in Yorubaland (now western Nigeria) by a Scottish reverend gentleman, Henry Townsend. This opened the floodgates of print journalism in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria. Subsequently, Robert Campbell published a newspaper called *Robert Campbell's Anglo African Newspaper* in 1863. Among many others that followed were *The Lagos Times* (1880), *Lagos Observer* (1882), *The Lagos Standard* (1908), *The Nigerian Chronicle* (1908), etc. The next fifty years saw, on the one hand, the emergence of more provincial newspapers such as *Gaskiya Tafi Kobo*, *The Nigerian Eastern Mail*, *Lagos Daily News*, etc, and on the other hand, nationalistic newspapers such as *The African Messenger*, *The Daily Times*, *The Tribune*, *The West African Pilot*, etc.

For instance, while Babajo (52) notes that the production of *Gaskiya Tafi Kobo*, a newspaper written in Hausa by Gaskiya Corporation of Zaira in 1938, marks the beginning of actual newspaper journalism in the northern Nigeria, *The West African Pilot* produced by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe led the pack

of critical minded newspapers that served as platforms for Nigerian nationalists to ventilate their views towards the attainment of political independence in 1960. From the 1960s till date, there has been an avalanche of newspaper and magazine titles, both regionally and nationally in Nigeria. Some of these include *The Nigerian Observer*, *The Punch Newspaper*, *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *The Newswatch*, *The Daily Champion*, *Tell Magazine*, etc.

As regards the broadcast or electronic media in Nigeria, the showing of a film at the Glover Hall in Lagos in 1903, which is touted to be the first of its kind (Opubor and Nwuneli 6), could be regarded as its historical commencement. Importantly too were the largely propagandistic broadcasts through radio redistribution services during the colonial/pre-independence period. Omoera & Okhakhu (“Broadcasting” 119) contend that, at that point in the Nigerian history, the British authorities deployed the broadcast media to brainwash Nigerians to blindly support and advance the imperialist policies of the British Empire. As early as the 1930s the British colonialists had started a wired radio system and continued to operate as such until 1949, when the first wireless broadcasting was setup under the auspices of the post and telegraph department. Two years later (1951), the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) was created as a separate department. In 1957, the NBS was changed to Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC1) under the corporation act (NBC1 ordinance, No.39 of 1956), with national and regional services based in Lagos, Enugu, Kaduna and Ibadan.

Today, the Nigerian media is one of the fastest growing media ecologies in Africa. From virtually nothing some 60-plus years ago, Nigeria now has over 300 radio and television stations and a complex network of broadcast operations such as the Channels TV Network, the African Independent Television (AIT) Network, Ray Power FM, Silverbird Television, and Rhythm FM besides the largest TV network in Africa, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and its sister network, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). Thus, the broadcast media ownership structure in Nigeria at present is public (in the case of NTA, etc) and private (in the case of AIT, etc) oriented but under the regulatory umbrella of the National Broadcasting Commission [NBC2] (Okhakhu and Omoera “Media” 71).

Refocusing the News Agenda in the Nigerian Media for National Development

Perhaps, the words of Amilcar Cabral speak to the need for a more robust and confident media that will be willing to hold accountable those in government, media professionals (themselves) as well as the populace on issues of national importance which are critical to the speeding up of socio-economic and socio-political development of Nigeria as a growing democracy. He states “Hide nothing from the masses of our people, tell no lies, expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories...(Cabral 4). Although Okhakhu & Omoera (“Broadcasting” 12), while reflecting on the Edo State, Nigeria situation with regard to the functioning of media as agents of development, assert that the media have tried in a number of fronts, Omoera and Okhakhu (“Coverage” 118) argue that the Nigerian media still need to do more professionally to objectively report and interpret events for peace and national development. For instance, not too long ago it was alleged that over five hundred (500) local government councils out of the seven hundred and seventy four (774) in the country were illegally headed by council chiefs handpicked by the various governors across the country for over three (3) years. Such allegations if correct are unbecoming, undemocratic, and capable of threatening the fragile peace and stability of the country. Media professionals through newspaper articles, broadcast news analysis, commentaries, among other programmes on radio and television ought to have extensively examined this ugly situation; interpret and reinterpret its various scenarios and implications and even petition concerned authorities such as the judiciary for constitutional interpretation and adherence to the rule of law.

Unfortunately, the Nigerian media have yet to handle the bull by the horns in this regard and indeed other knotty national issues of the day. Some media operators respond habitually to the above accusation with run-of-the-mill statements such as ‘My family still needs me’; ‘my children are still very young’; ‘one should not put the society problem on one’s head because if one dies, society will not remember one let alone one’s family’; ‘I don’t want to get kidnapped’; ‘I don’t want to get bombed’; ‘I don’t want to have headaches or

sleepless nights over other people's *wahala*'; ' I don't want to be caught in a crossfire of political gladiators'; and so on. While these points may be valid or tenable in the circumstances Nigeria has found itself, the fact remains that one must live or die for something and if an altruistic/patriotic effort aimed at making the society a better place for the greater number of the populace kills one, posterity is bound to record it in one's favour and remembrance. The Dele Giwa's story may suffice in instantiating the point being canvassed. Consequently, media professionals should rise to the occasion to stem the observable growing culture of political disenfranchisement of well-meaning persons, virtual emasculation of the third tier of government in Nigeria, flagrant abuse of the rule of law for selfish political ends by those who see themselves as 'sacred cows' in the Nigerian political firmament.

Another issue is the regrettably poor information management system, where according to Iredia, it appears that the collective amnesia the Nigerian political leaders have foisted on the populace has resulted in 'media wars' (1). To all discerning minds, the greatest albatross (dilemma) in the re-democratisation process in Nigeria today is corruption. From budgetary allocation to project execution, from disbursement of welfare funds to employment, from appointment to public offices to high profile financial investigations, we see how the 'oil' of corruption has smeared the hands of Nigerians, including the media. One does not need to tax one's imagination to see that the national budget in Nigeria in the last four years, for instance, have been budgets of 'chop-chop for the boys', with over 70% of the allocations being on recurrent expenditure and little or nothing for capital expenditure or that the recent national assembly's legislation that public office holders in Nigerian could own and operate foreign accounts is an attempt to legalise the shameless siphoning of Nigeria's commonwealth by a few political opportunists. How do we move forward in such circumstances? How can democracy be sustained in such situations? How will the values of honesty and probity not crash in such conditions? These are part of the issues the Nigerian media urgently need to direct their attention to and systematically refract by canvassing fiscal responsibility in governance at all levels of public service in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the Nigerian media, both print and broadcast should find a way of reducing rumour-mongering and outright misinformation of the public on certain government policies, without being seen as grovelers or political jobbers. For instance, the events leading to the presidential media chat of 18 November, 2012, on NTA are clear cases in point. For over a week leading Nigerian media, both print and electronic, were awash with news items in which the president was quoted to said that fuel subsidy will be totally removed in December, 2012. Following this information from media sources, Nigerians were now 'gearing' up for a showdown only for the president to clear the air with an instructive remark that if his government proposed anything of such there would not have been any need for an budgetary allocation for fuel subsidy in the 2013 budget. This is a pointer to the challenge of mediocre reporting, which a considerable number of Nigerian journalists have been accused of. Many journalists hardly do serious background research before going to press and this has contributed to the heightening of tension in the Nigerian polity. The media should check their facts, figures before going to press in order not to overheat the polity.

Studies have lamented that countries which have more crude oil than Nigeria are more diversified, advising the country to diversify into non-oil sectors rather than wholly depending crude oil (Omoera "Potentials" 115; Hausman 1; Aisien & Oriakhi 19). The Nigerian media can begin to set the economic agenda through innovative insistence that there cannot be any meaningful development in Nigeria if its economy is not diversified. In fact, media catchphrases such as 'the process of diversification is the process of development' will not be out of place, to drum into the ears of those that hold the reins of power to stop 'earmarking' but practically explore other streams of revenue for the country. For instance, Omoera ("Potentials" 116) argues that the media, particularly television, hold a lot of potentials in reinventing the tourism industry for the socio-economic and socio-cultural transformation of Nigeria.

To achieve the foregoing, the Nigerian media need to encourage and lobby the Nigerian legislature to compel managers of the Nigerian economy to concretely diversify and squarely break the electric power generation quagmire. Such a deliberate effort will help to accelerate productive activities

in the economy. Overtime, a large percentage of the Nigerian populace, especially the youth, can become productively engaged, thereby reducing antisocial tendencies that can threaten peace in the society. Again, the Nigerian media must refocus in their monitoring of national budget implementation and service delivery of both public and private organizations for national development. Aside from the provisions in sections 22 and 39 of the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (1999), which empower the media to monitor governance, and uphold openness and accountability in government, the Nigerian media should effectively deploy the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which was recently passed into law, to get the Nigerian polity to work through getting the people and structures to work. In other words, media professionals in Nigeria must boldly set the agenda of fast-tracking development at the socio-economic and socio-political fronts in the country. They must go beyond the traditional routine news reporting activities.

The Nigeria media must also take the lead in recognising and celebrating national symbols, heroes, values and history for sustainable democracy and national development. Igbafe (31) contends that a country like Nigeria whose historical circumstances have exposed it to the devastating impact of foreign rule and influences and which is still struggling to be properly welded together as a nation, needs to rehabilitate its sense of history, values and national symbols. The Nigerian media must set the agenda, through their news coverage, in celebrating positive heroes/heroines and peace symbols such as the Nigerian coat of arms, the Nigerian green-white-green flag, personalities (for instance, Yakubu Gowon, Wole Soyinka and Philip Emeagwali, Dora Akunyili, Abike Dabiri), sports victories, etc, to serve as emblems of inspiration to the younger generations who will be prepared to give their all towards achieving national ideals. This subtle but concrete effort can help to rebuild in both old and young Nigerians the confidence needed to believe in their abilities to contribute to a united and integrated country erected on a foundation of knowledge of common past and a mutual understanding of a progressive future in an atmosphere of peace.

Media professionals in Nigeria should see the reimagining of the country as a task that must be done to breed a 'tribe' of constructive mentors and

mentees whose avowed commitment to national development will be unshaken and unshakeable come what may. Towards this end, print and broadcast contents which extol the virtues of national symbols and ideals should be propped up to serve as propagators of a belief system such as 'Nigeria and Nigerians can'. Coupled with this is that the Nigeria media hold it as a duty to rearticulate their surveillance propensities and capacities in aid of security operatives to ensure peace and development. Nigerian media professionals must proactively respond to the current security scare of kidnapping, armed robbery, gang rapes, among other crimes, which are on the increase in Nigeria by providing print and broadcast contents which can help security personnel as well as the general public, with useful information to nip crime in the bud or put in check those persons with antisocial tendencies that can threaten the peace of the land. It would also be profiting for Nigerian journalists to take advantage of ICTs to encourage 'citizen journalism', which will make the Nigerian populace to readily empathize and provide them with useful information that can help in reducing the seeming intractable security challenge confronting the country.

As part of the strategic intervention, the Nigerian media must begin to de-emphasise mere routine reportage of news that pander to the whims and caprices of selfish political leaders at various levels of government in Nigeria. For instance, it is high time the Nigerian media stopped giving front-page news status to news reports such as local government (LG) chairmen grading earth roads, evacuating refuse from local markets, providing local schools with stationery, etc. Ordinarily, such activities are part of their statutory duties, which have been provided for in a budget. Aside from questionable showmanship, there is nothing ingenious or innovative about such engagements. Therefore, Nigerian media professionals can do well to take the LG chiefs to task on their budget implementation because budget implementation is a framework or index of development. It should also be part of setting the agenda for development for the Nigerian media to do more of investigative journalism in order to keep both public and private individuals and organizations on their toes to achieve set deliverables. A situation where high profile corruption cases such as the Julius Berger, fuel subsidy heist, Siemens, Halliburton and banking sector scandals remain

largely unresolved does not inspire any confidence in the system and must be avoided.

Another vexatious trait of many a Nigerian media outfit today is the biased but presumptuous reportage of one-sided news items and the use of sickening prehistoric clichés that smacks of journalistic laziness and non-seriousness of purpose. For instance, on the NTA network news at 9 pm on Wednesday 24, 2009, the then minister of education, Dr Sam Egwu, was granted a special interview on the state of affairs as regards the Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) industrial action that paralysed public universities in Nigeria. The NTA did not deem it necessary to invite any representative of ASUU or the ‘striking’ workers to the special interview session. This is clearly a lopsided news coverage and, to say the least, pro-government. There are several other instances of unbalanced reportage of news and the danger of such skewed, interest laced news reports is that they can unsettle the society. At another level, it is not uncommon in the Nigerian media clime to read in the pages of newspapers or hear or see on the radio and TV media irritants in matters of grave importance to society such as ‘the official concerned was said to be unavailable as at the time of this news report’, ‘according to unconfirmed reports...’, ‘undisclosed sources say...’, etc. These are all evasive stratagems that have increasingly made reading/listening to news in the Nigerian media boring and uninteresting. Media operators as well as journalists should realise that balanced reportage of news is not negotiable in any forward looking media culture.

The position of Skjerdal (23) is instructive in the above regard. Reflecting on the East African socio-political environment, as well as a critical assessment of the media’s own role in development, Skjerdal argues that the media should not just support the ruling class (party) in their reporting and commentaries. He further argues that if reporting is mainly seen as routine work with focus on news coverage and dissemination, then it is rightly a matter of knowing the practical skills. If, however, reporting is seen not only as dissemination, but also as involvement in the public discourse and active engagement in the cultural and national formation (as we have seen in Channels TV’s *Diplomatic Channel*, AIT’s *Focus Nigeria*, NTA’s *Point Blank* and a few others), then it becomes clearer that the journalistic craft or media

practice involves more than simply knowing the techniques to be used in the editing room or conventional news media (newspapers, Internet, radio, television [TV]). This presupposes that the Nigerian media must engage in responsive and responsible practice that unearths hidden significant information on issues that concern the public for the greater good of the country. But the greatest challenge in Nigeria and indeed in Africa is the inability of the media to live up to their social responsibility (Iredia 10). This is the crux of the matter, which Nigerian media professionals must frontally address by refocusing their news agenda for national development. But again, putting in place certain support systems for Nigerian media professionals is critical to leveraging the fourth estate of the realm's catalytic role in ensuring growth and development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Although Omoera ("Democracy" 33) has previously noted that the media have done much in consolidating the Nigeria's growing democracy, but the use of freebies, 'co-opting', death threats, craze for lucre, assaults, intimidations and fear of kidnapping and assassination of practising journalists have greatly weakened their ranks in the country. Therefore, emplacing certain support systems for media professionals can go a long way in assisting them to effectively serve as cornerstones of societal growth and development. This is more so because for development to come and be sustained, it must be in a peaceful atmosphere. And, the functional imperatives of the media (information, entertainment, interpretation, transmission of values and linkage) are crucial to the maintenance of a culture of peace. Here lies the nexus between the media, peace and development. A relevant illustration of the critical role the media can play in putting societal issues in perspective and in the public domain is the recent increase in the pump price of premium motor spirit (PMS) by President Goodluck Jonathan that almost conflagrated Nigeria. The media, including, social networks were inundated with animated arguments for and against the removal of fuel subsidy. In the end, superior arguments, largely purveyed by the media in conjunction with the labour union, civil societies and the masses resulted in a 'compromise' to save the country from going under (Okhakhu & Omoera "Media" 13).

In spite of this, some kind of ‘overhauling’ is needed to make the Nigerian media more robust and development minded. First, the practice of media in Nigeria must be data-digital driven, wherein computer-assisted journalism will become the norm. Media operators and journalists must train and retrain as well as acquire the necessary facilities and competences to deploy information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their investigations, news reporting and analysis. Expectedly, Nigerian journalists should engage more in interpretational and investigative news reporting, drawing attention to critical areas such as rural integration and development, religious tolerance, environmental, gender, mental health, among other issues that a majority of Nigerians know little or nothing about. Structures should be put in place by both public and private media organizations to give journalists a sense of mission, commission and assurance that come what may their efforts can not be in vain. A situation where journalists are mercilessly beaten or incarcerated by security operatives under one pretext or the other should be discouraged. There are several instances where media professionals have been beaten/threatened/incarcerated by both known and unknown persons because of their even-handed coverage of burning national issues. The several threats to the lives of anchors of broadcast programmes such as *Focus Nigeria* on AIT network and *Good Morning Show* on Edo Broadcasting Radio, Benin City, and the recent incarceration of two print media journalists in Kaduna by the State Security Service (SSS) men, etc, are regrettable drawbacks to the agenda setting functioning of media professionals who by training are essentially progressive-minded people who are totally committed to the ideals of social progress, peace and stability of society.

Professional media bodies in Nigeria such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Radio, Television and Theatre Workers Union (RATTAWU), the Institute of Mass Communication and Information Management of Nigeria (IMIM) must work in tandem to procure an effective insurance policy and welfare system for their members who constitute the bulk of practising media professionals in Nigeria. The thinking here is that with a solid welfare system in place, journalists can rest assure that in the event of any eventuality, their dependants will not suffer and as such they are likely to give their all in the line of duty. Media professionals deserve to be

handsomely paid, inspired and motivated by media owners/governments or their employers, not just because of the ostensibly inclement climate of operation but because they are painstaking professionals worthy of attractive welfare packages. Importantly too is the need to maintain professional ethics without which Nigerian journalists may not be able to truly contribute to national development. Sobowale (15) argues that at best journalism is not designed to make you feel good, but to tell you what you must know; whether you like it or not. Therefore, a situation where state councils of professional bodies such as NUJ are embroiled in mudslinging, corruption charges, internal squabbles, power tussles, among other antidevelopment activities should be avoided at all cost. The crises that have engulfed the Edo and Adamawa States' councils of NUJ in the last few years are a sad point of reference that should not be allowed to occur again.

In sum, the Nigerian media must reappraise their role since the coming into being of Nigeria as a nation and make necessary amends by learning from history. In this context, media professionals in Nigeria must strive to play the game according to the rules; ethics that guide the profession must not be sacrificed at whatever cost. It is worth reemphasizing too that practicing journalists in Nigeria must raise the ante in their interpretational and investigative news reporting activities to, among other things, sensitize Nigerians on national ideals and aspirations; encourage peaceful co-existence among the diverse peoples of Nigeria; awaken national consciousness on the need for security and loyalty to the nation; create the capacity and template for reasoned and critical judgment; and serve as unprejudiced agenda setters in the discussion of issues for an all round national development of the country.

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FOLKISM CREATIVE THEORY AS A PANACEA FOR AN ENDURING NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY: THE EXAMPLE OF OSOFISAN'S YUNGBA YUNGBA AND UKALA'S AKPAKALAND

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Abstract

Creativity is an essential human attribute whose centrality to the existential essence of man may be equated to that of imitation. Creativity stems from the capability of humans to have new thoughts and develop ideas that differ from what was. Hence, the importance and service of creativity to the individual and community cannot be overemphasized. Different eras in theatre history produced different concepts and theories of creativity; that point to the fact that creativity is the production of goods and services in order to meet a need. This proposition is further authenticated by the pronouncement of Jean Jacques Rousseau: "I felt before I thought." Thus, despite convergent and divergent points of numerous creative theories, regional needs, peculiarities in cultural, economic and socio-political factors interplay to condition evolution and acceptance of creative theories. Folkism stands out as a creative theory in this category, since it was evolved to serve literary and socio-political needs in the theorist's environment. Its exponent Sam Ukala is a Nigerian theorist and dramatist who uses his theorizations and creative writings to solve problems in the society. Incidentally the Nigerian nation is in turmoil because of political and socio-economic problems begging for solutions at the ongoing national conference. Therefore, the problem of this study is to appraise Ukala's theorization on folkism and the democratic potentials of the folkloric dramaturgy so as to highlight how they can contribute to the democratic process in Nigeria. The aim is to highlight their capability of conscientizing the citizenry towards enthroning an enduring people oriented democracy capable of resolving the nation's socio-political problems. Case study and content analysis research

approaches of the qualitative research method are adopted for realizing set objectives.

Introduction

Evolution of a viable and people-oriented democracy remains one of the major hurdles facing African countries. Africans had their own systems of governance as reflected in ancient kingdoms in Africa. The Hausa, Ashanti, Igbo, Bini and Yoruba kingdoms had their own system of governance before the colonial encounter. Some of these systems were unitary and dictatorial while some were devolutionary and democratic in nature. The modus operandi of these systems notwithstanding, they served as the machineries that saw to the organizational well being of the people in the traditional African society. When the colonists came, rather than study and understand these local political institutions, they pretended that the people had no system of governance and imposed their own system of governance on the people. Eluwa, Ukagwu, Nwachukwu and Nwaubani posit that some of these alien political systems like indirect rule “recorded dismal failures in places like Igboland, Yorubaland, Tivland, and Nyasaland where it was imposed without adequate consideration of the socio-political realities of these areas” (187). Apart from the dismal failure recorded by these alien Western systems of governance, this political superimposition also stifled local political institutions and generated conflicts between the indigenous people and agents of colonialism who suddenly became key players in the imposed systems of governance. This trend continued from the colonial era to the post-colonial era. After independence, African countries swallowed hook, line and sinker, foreign systems of governance under the guise of civilized democracy. Independent African countries adopted either presidential system or parliamentary system of government because according to them, they embody British and American democratic ideals. The weakness of these holistic adoptions of parliamentary or presidential democracy is that it lacks adaptation or appropriation tendency to endogenize or indigenize these foreign political systems. Bertus Haverkork, Katrien Van’t Hooft and Wim Hiemstra posit that;

Endogenous development refers to development that is mainly, though not exclusively, based on locally available resources and the way people have organized themselves. External knowledge and resources are often used to complement these local resources. Endogenous development, therefore, does not imply isolation; nor does it limit its attention to local processes. It actively uses the opportunities provided by globalization (30).

While, “[a]daptation as a process becomes an act of appropriating and salvaging while trying to give new meaning... (2) Appropriation is in the same vein, domestication, it facilitates situation of phenomena within different environments. In their adoption of Western systems of government, African leadership class did not adhere to any of these domestication processes in order to situate these foreign political systems. There was no attempt to adapt, appropriate or endogenized the adoption of Western democratic systems. Hence, Africa ended up practicing what she does not understand. Some of these systems failed as democratic governance because they are not compatible with the people’s way of life. Moreover, the political class distorted the operations of Western democracy and made it breed dictatorship, greed, materialism that produced a stratized society that continued to widen the gap between the rulers and ruled.

There is no gainsaying that these Western democracies have failed Africa because they have contributed little or nothing to the evolution of genuinely united modern nation-states in Africa that can stand above ethnicity, religious sentiments and selfishness. Nigeria is one of the victims of colonial and post-colonial manipulations. The modern Nigerian nation-state is situated within the West African Region. The history of this acclaimed giant of Africa is known to scholars in various disciplines: History, Political Science, Economics Theatre Arts, Cultural Studies, and so on. The historic amalgamation of 1914 which ushered in the modern Nigerian nation-state has become a historical and political bench mark in the discourse of Nigeria’s nationhood. Whether the amalgamation was right or wrong, whether the amalgamated units were related, connected, separated or independent units or whether they had independent pre-colonial systems of governance are no

longer issues after centenary celebration of the modern Nigeria nation-state. Moreover, it is a truism that Nigeria is not the only modern nation-state in the world; United Kingdom and United States of America are also modern nation-states that thrive and control global politics and world economy. Even the then Soviet Union was also a modern nation-state. However, the question to be answered is; why the modern Nigerian nation-state has refused to unite and thrive like other modern nation-states. There is no gainsaying that Nigeria has survived one hundred turbulent years of modern nationhood that emphasized her federating units rather than the nation-state. Contrarily, Political theories of “democratic or humane socialism” show that modern nation-states make the component units shed their residual features and embrace the exclusive as well as the dominant features of the modern nation-state.

Unfortunately, despite the provisions made by the 1999 Nigerian constitution concerning: Exclusive, Concurrent and Residual lists, the modern Nigerian nation-state is yet to evolve true federalism and genuine democracy that will foster unity in diversity, equitable revenue formula and viable democratic governance for sustainable development. The nation has experienced both military and civilian government for decades, yet the so called giant of Africa (Nigeria) is still underdeveloped. There is epileptic power supply, high rate of unemployment, terrorism, militancy, armed robbery, students’ unrest, industrial actions, starvation and hunger and outbreak of epidemics. Many Nigerian leaders experimented and proposed one form of government or the other. Nnamdi Azikiwe transitioned from parliamentary democracy to diarchical system of government, Tafawa Belewa preached unity in diversity, Aguiyi Ironsi adopted unitary system of government and failed, while Odumegwu Ojukwu’s confederation and devolution of power was rejected and replaced with a false federalism master minded by an exponent of tribalism and a military dictator, chief Obafemi Awolowo and General Yakubu Gowon respectively. This paper cannot appraise the success and failure of this fake federalism because of space. However indicators are bound in the Nigerian political terrain to show that Nigeria has not practiced true federalism since it was enshrined in the Nigerian constitution as her system of government.

The Nigerian dramatist as the watchdog of the society points out the weakness of these systems of governance in Nigeria and Africa at large. Wole Soyinka in his *Play of Giants*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his *I Will Marry When I Want*, Ola Rotimi in *if..*, Emeka Nwabueze in *The Parliament of Vultures* and Alex Asigbo in *The Reign of Pascal Amusu*. These plays castigate the dictatorial tendencies and anti-social policies of bourgeoisie governments in Africa. Some of the playwrights adopted social realism methodological approach which lacks the bite needed for social reformation, while some of the playwrights like Esiaba Irobi adopt the critical realism reformation approach. Apart from Irobi, Femi Osofisan and Sam Ukala are also other Nigerian playwrights that have gone beyond the social realism technique to explore the indigenous folkloric approaches of drama for the resolution of Nigeria's political problems and the national question. Osofisan is one major Nigerian dramatist who came to limelight through the explication of the folkloric theatre in Nigeria. The folktale is an important aspect of the nation's storytelling theatre that influenced Osofisan. His plays like: *Morountodun*, *Moremi* and *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contests* take the folkloric tradition and use it as instrument for change and reformation in the Nigerian society. No wonder Osofisan is sometimes regarded as a Marxist dramatist. However, according to Canice Chukwuma Nwosu; placement of Femi Osofisan "...as a radical playwright is seen with some reservations. Osofisan himself has always viewed his classification as a Marxist playwright with skepticism. His placement by Samuel Ukala as an adherent of the folk tale tradition better describes Osofisan" (102). His plays "focus mainly on the lack of social justice in Nigerian society and the factors attendant upon this" (Ukala *Politics of Aesthetics* 32). Nwosu affirms that, Ziky Kofoworola's placement of Ukala within the folkist tradition is archetypal of Ukala. However, there are strong indicators that the folkloric nature of Osofisan's plays must have influenced Ukala's "Folkism" performance theory. Ukala's folkism enables him communicate with his audience which is a mixed audience of rural, peri-urban and literate audience. Yet, this erudite scholar in his "Folkism" addresses popular concern in an assimilable manner, deciding the appropriate language in which to do so (Nwosu, 102). Hence, "the concept of 'folkism' as a national aesthetic principle- a way of reconciling the use of common

language with the distinctive and often disparate needs of the Nigerian people” (Ukala “*Folkism.’ Towards a National Aesthetic Principles for Nigerian Dramaturgy*” n.p).

Ukala’s Placement of Osofisan through theoretical synthesis further lends credence to the selection of their plays as suitable case studies for this paper. Ukala reveals, through analytical theoretical method that his “laws of aesthetic response” (263) are manifest in Osofisan’s plays such as *Once Upon Four Robbers* and *Morountodun*. Following this trend, the search for solutions to political and socio-economic problems in Africa must be tailored to look inwards with cognizance and recognition of the other in the global community.

Folkism and a Viable Democratic System of Governance for the Transformation of Modern Nigerian Nation–State

The colonial encounter exposed Africa to the West and gradually to the rest of the world, hence after independence, there was this tendency among Africans and African nations to look like the rest, especially like the West through the adoption of foreign culture, religion, fashion, political and economic systems. According to Yaw Frimpong-Mansoh:

Ever since regaining their autonomy and sovereignty, post-colonial African countries have strenuously engaged in good faith efforts (in spite of struggles and setbacks) to develop and transform their political institutions and systems of governance along the lines of liberal democracy. The hope is that the fulfillment of such political dream would provide a solid sustainable framework and the foundation for infrastructural development to help the citizens to fulfill their social, economic and life aspirations. However, democratic consolidation is still struggling to gain a sustainable foot hold in Africa despite decades of effort and massive resources devoted to it (82).

Nigeria is among African countries that are still in search of a viable democracy. Incidentally, Nigeria is the most populous black nation, the giant of Africa and one of the world’s major exporters of oil yet her system of

governance is still very corrupt and erratic. Modern Nigerian nation-state has come a long way with an obvious turbulent political history, traumatic economic experiences and religious unrest that culminated in terrorism by the Islamic Boko Haram sect. Part of the nation's problem is resource curse that first of all led to tribalism, ethnicity, and militancy that almost destroyed the entire Southern Nigeria and now terrorism that is ravaging the North. The country has passed through decades of both military and democratic rules even though one may be tempted to conclude that democracy in Nigeria is still nascent and undergoing several experimentations. However, these political experiments are yet to produce good governance. Chukwuma Soludo quoting UN'S Universal Declaration on Human rights UDHR and its Bill of Rights and Conventions as well as the Constitution of Nigeria says that:

good governance can therefore be operationalized in Nigeria as one that guarantees the human, political and cultural rights of the citizens while also maximizing their material and social well-being with the limits of available resources.. In order words, good governance must pertain to the strict adherence to norms, values and legal frame works (Statutes and Conventions) which the people and their governments have freely adopted to guide their aspirations and behaviours (10).

Even though Nigeria is operating federal system of government, the Nigerian federalism is rather fake, and the nation is still in search of true federalism amidst calls for self-determination and disintegration.

Despite a prevalent and globalized believe that democracy is squal to good governance, Nigeria lacks the indices that may classify her as a nation that has attained good governance. According to Soludo; "the struggle for good governance has been essentially a struggle for democratic governance that continually improves the welfare of the majority of the citizens." (4) Therefore, different sectors of the economy, through their own creativity contribute directly or indirectly to good governance. Soludo affirms that:

the quality of governance in any society depends on the nature of the demand for it. Like power, good governance is not given: it is taken. We are all familiar with the old saying that a society gets

the type of leadership it deserves. Perhaps, it is not the leadership it 'deserves' but the leadership it is willing to tolerate or make effective demand for. In Nigeria's recent political history, we can cite dozens of examples of where and when organized people's power has elicited improved standards of governance. The famous 'June 12' struggle is arguably the foundation for the recent democratic regime and even more so the ceding of power to the South West of Nigeria (7).

Good governance has eluded modern Nigerian nation-state because the African political class as the exponents of nationalistic struggle headed anti-colonial campaigns in Africa. But on attainment of independence, the African political class derailed, reneged, and became exploitative, dictatorial and vindictive. Worst still the masses became passive and gullible. Consequently, the economies of African nations dwindled, suppression of the opposition, corruption and impunity became the order of the day. In response to these political and socio-economic maladies, the Theatre Artist cannot help but become a "writer in politics." Therefore in his creative enterprise, the Theatre Theorists has continued to elicit new thoughts and evolve ideas that differ from what was for uplifting the political situation of his nation.

Even though the formulation and elaboration of theories pertaining to the political process is conditioned by regional needs, peculiarities in cultural, economic and socio-political factors:

A special interest is presented by the connection of philosophy with the world outlook of *revolutionary democrats*. As a social phenomenon, revolutionary democratism is the product of the specific conditions in the countries which, due to a number of causes, lagged behind the historical progress in the 19th and 20th centuries, Revolutionary democratism is international in character though chronologically its appearance in various countries does not coincide. As an ideological and political trend, revolutionary democratism constitutes a transitional link between social movements headed by the arising bourgeoisie and the proletarian,

socialist emancipation movement (Institute of Social Sciences 25-26)

Despite the geographical and tribal delineation of African nations, governance created new class boundaries that further stratified African societies. Therefore, indicators of bad governance may vary in Africa, but the gulf between the rulers and the ruled produced special interest for revolutionary democratism. Unfortunately, the will of the emergent proletarian class has been tortured by brutality and desperation for “stomach infrastructure.” Hence, emerging bourgeois domination and passive electorate made the need for good democratic governance essential area of discourse in the Nigerian and African creative enterprise. Like the new bourgeoisie class, a typical Nigerian politician is insensitive, selfish and callous in his dealings with the masses. The craze for Western political fads and systems of governance has not helped governance either. Both parliamentary and presidential democracies are mere impositions of alien systems of governance. Not only that they are impositions, they are also bastardized and distorted to serve selfish and tribal political goals. The theatre theorist must look inwards in order to evolve creative theories that can produce plays capable of inducing the enthronement of viable democracy that can usher in good governance in Nigeria. According to Institute of Social Sciences’ Democratic Revolutionary Theory;

The philosophical foundations of the world outlook of revolutionary democratism depend on the concrete historical conditions and philosophical and revolutionary traditions of a nation. Often than not the philosophical concepts of revolutionary democrats were inconsistent, combining most heterogeneous and contradictory elements. At the same time, the revolutionary activity and the very conditions of revolutionary struggle made the majority or revolutionary democrats strive for scientific knowledge and critically re-evaluate the prevailing idealist conceptions (26)

Sam Ukala is one of the Nigerian and African theoreticians influenced by the democratic Revolutionary Theory. Ukala's Folkism is conditioned by concrete historical conditions, philosophical and revolutionary traditions of the modern Nigerian nation-state. For instance, Ukala evolved his Folkism, from the indigenous Folkloric tradition of the Nigerian peoples. Ukala's motivation stems from the position of some Nigerian critics like Oyin Ogumba, Biodu Jeyifo and Bode Sowande who insist that plays written by most Nigerian literary playwrights are unpopular and antipodal with Nigeria's socio-economic and political problems. Responding to these postulations, Ukala posits that these plays are unpopular because they are ineffective in tackling Nigeria's socio-economic and political problems. Ukala affirms that the subject matter of the plays does not reflect Nigeria's socio-economic and political problems. To counter this trend, Ukala proposes the alternative theatre which according to him is characterized by plays which "[t]heir subject matter is generally more relevant to the African" (32). Ukala presents a definition of folkism to illuminate the minds of his readers on the modus operandi of the Folk play. He says that folkism is the tendency to base literary plays in the history, culture, and concerns of the Folk (people in general) and to compose and perform them in accordance with African convention for composing and performing the folktale" (285). According to Ukala, "the African folktale is not prose. It exists only in performance before a live audience. It therefore entails dramatic phraseology, pleasant to speak and to hear; movement, gesture, impersonation, music making and dancing; and sometimes costuming, make-up, masking and puppetry" (171). According to Ukala, the eight laws of aesthetic response were inspired by; "the conventional responses of the Narrator and the Audience to folktale performance as found by researchers, such as J.P Clark, Efua Sutherland, Ruth Finnegan and Dan Ben-Amos in different parts of black Africa (173).

The laws as discussed by Ukala are:

1. The law of opening
2. The laws of joint performance
3. The law of creativity, free enactment and responsibility
4. The law of the urge to judge

5. The law of protest against suspense
6. The law of expression of emotions
7. The law of ego projection
8. The law of closing (33)

Ukala applies these laws in the structuring of his folk-scripts like *Akpakaland*, *Break a Boil* and *Placenta of Death*. Enita posits that:

- The folk play unlike the other traditional performances is narrative realized in performance
- The folktale and the play are temporal (allow for creativity), mimetic, interpretative and synthetic.
- Unlike other African traditional performances, the Folktale is like a play because it entails much speech (56).

Ukala concluded by recommending the folk play because it is effective and popular among the Nigerian audience.

Good Democratic Governance and Modern Nigerian Nation-State in *Yungba Yungba...* and *Akpakaland*

The plays of Osofisan interplay with Ukala's knowledge of his worldview to condition the latter's theorization in his folkism theory. According to Ukala; the plays of Osofisan incline more to African alternative theatre;

With a view to determining their effectiveness in the *global* politics of aesthetics; *hence* the plays focus mainly on the lack of social justice in the Nigerian society and the factors attendant upon this. These include corrupt and insensitive governance; flagrant display by a few of ill gotten wealth and power to the shock and envy of the poor and powerless majority; the suffering of the masses in a capitalist and / or totalitarian system, violence as a means of protest; the roles of the individual and the community in bringing about a new and progressive Socio-political order and the obstacles in the way (32).

Apart from capturing the focus, theme and content of Osofisan's new pattern of dramaturgy, Ukala's postulations above is a dirge for Nigerian democracy. It paints a pathetic picture of modern Nigerian nation-state which has refused to thrive either under military or democratic rule. Part of the nation's problem is that the component units have failed to unite. To them Nigeria is still a mirage. The political class thinks of their selfish goals and use tribalism as a major instrument to perpetuate bad governance in Nigeria.

Ukala gives an incisive treatment to these issues in one of the plays chosen for study. He combines domestic issues of envious fellow wives in a polygamous home with serious political issues of governance. Through this technique, he lays bare how a united and politically active populace can use agitation and protest to change the status quo and usher in democratic governance. He applies the laws of aesthetic response and uses them to energize the audience for the endemic struggle between the rich and the poor. The law of opening in an African folktale is expected to arouse the audience as seen in the opening of *Akpakaland*, the narrator starts the play by addressing the audience, he says;

Narrator; Lu n'ilu – Tell a tale
 Ilu Nwokoro – Tale about Nwokoro
 Donu udo – Tug at the rope
 Udo kpiri-kpiri – Rope kpiri – Kpiri (10)

This law as applied by Ukala in the play enables the narrator to charge the atmosphere for agitation and participatory governance. Subsequent protests that help to usher in change in the politics of *Akpakaland* (the world of the play) spring from the charged atmosphere established by the law of opening. The position of the Narrator at the middle of the setting at the opening scene also helps to bring out the central conflict of the play -the gap between the rich and the poor since the Narrator takes his position between the two groups. The struggle to bridge this gap in the Nigerian society has not yielded much fruit. The gullibility of the masses is a serious antidote to the struggle coupled with the Utopian campaign promises of the politicians which

they use as instruments of political manipulation. M.O.A. and NAR in the dialogue below lay emphasis on these anti-democratic practices that destroy good governance.

M.O.A.: Foolish people! So you now support Fulama?

NAR; (reappearing) what did you expect? When there's a dispute between the influential rich and the wretched poor, who supports the poor? (33)

M.O.A.: (dismally) No one!

NAR: Yes, no one. Several people pay them lip service. They spit fire during political campaigns. "I will stamp out poverty. I will uplift the wretched and support the weak." Or they write fiercely in news papers: "Equitable distribution of wealth," "PROBITY" All lip service! For as soon as they are in the corridors of power, they put the treasury in their pockets, lock the corridors against the poor and ask them to be self-reliant. (33)

The selfish and insensitive attitude of the political class is obvious in their anti-people policies. They ask the masses to be self-reliant when they are the most dependant group spoon fed by the one dimensional political system that pays them fat salaries, allowances extra-codes, awards of over bloated contracts and entitles them to "kick backs," free meals, free petrol for their fleet of cars and even free women. They put in place austerity measures in the world of the ruled, while to the chagrin of the ruled; the political class lives in affluence in the government houses that flow with milk and honey. Contrarily, starvation and hunger ravage the world of the ruled because of bad governance. Ide, one of the characters alludes to the wickedness of the leadership class and their descendants as Enwe baffles over the wicked acts of Fulama against Unata, a co-wife from the province of the poor.

Ide: Are you surprise that Fulama is wicked? Didn't you know her father? (34)

Enwe: Was he not the president of our fifth republic, who declared himself a Field Marshal, sold our oil and armory and built himself houses with blocks of solid gold?
Was he not the one who personally cut off the fingers of journalists whose writing offended him? (34)

The picture of dictatorship and high handedness of the leadership class painted above by Enwe is alarming. It is even more baffling because the ruling class has had their way all these years. This trend has continued unchecked from regime to regime as reflected in the present regime headed by Akpaka. It appears that there is no end in sight for bad governance in Africa as the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. Class consciousness becomes the criteria for distribution of values in Nigeria and Africa at large. Within the Nigerian context; there are anti-democratic policies and structures that perpetuate class domination and exploitation of the masses by the ruling minority. Federal character commission, educationally disadvantage states, quota system, state of origin among others pedal mediocrity and put cogs in the wheel of Nigeria's progress.

Thus, how to overthrow the rich and enthrone good democratic government becomes Ukala's preoccupation in *Akpakaland*. Through the law of joint performance which enables members of the Audience (M.O.A) co-perform with the Narrator and the law of the urge to judge; Ukala makes this objective confront the audience as M.O.A raises his hand and asks the storyteller; "How may the poor unite and seize power." (34) In his response, NAR. looks inwards and offers solution on how the poor can come to power, he says;

NAR. By cultivating self-esteem and refusing to be bribed with crumbs from the oppressor's table. By being dedicated to the course of self-liberation and self-humanization. By looking among the poor for a true, selfless leader... But ... well, what will the poor do with power? I'd like to know that. (Takes answers from the public audience.) If they get the power, will they not oppress the powerless just as they are now

being oppressed? (Take answers) Too bad, if they would, for oppression would not end that way... Well, Unata has obeyed the injunction to be self-reliant, since neither the president nor her wealthy fellow wives will fight for her. (34)

Consequently, Unata relies on her poor father and Enwe another member of the province of the poor and defeats Fulama and her mother who are members of the province of the rich. Akpakaland finds Fulama guilty of growing a tail, false accusation and greed and she is to face the law (public execution.) Akpaka and the rich try to bend the rule, but the poor protests and revolts through the law of agitation.

Finally, as stated by Ukala in his stage directions; COMMONERS, UNATA, and IYEBI begin to chant, marching and deploying sideways, round Akpaka, his MINISTERS, SEOTU, YEIYE, FULAMA and IYA FULAMA, this eventual unity of the poor strengthens the struggle for good governance and the poor are able to withstand the brutality of Akpaka and his agents as they mistakenly kills Fulama. Suddenly from behind a citizen sweeps AFIANO, one of AKPAKA's men off his feet and another citizen collects his gun. Violence begets violence, the poor armed with the gun collected from the rich succeeds in making the rich surrender. Ukala, in another stage direction concludes

The CITIZEN WITH THE GUN aims in quick succession; at OGUNPA, IYA FULAMA, UMAL, SEOTU, YEIYE, GUARDS and finally, AKPAKA. Each kneels and hands up... (57)

Beyond this victory and celebration, Osofisan questions the genuineness of Nigerian unity and foreshadows a crack in this union. Hence, he captures the self ego, self glorification, demeaning of the other and segregational attitude of the three major tribes in Nigeria in *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest*. *Yungba Yungba...* is a metaphoric dramatization of socio-political realities in Nigeria and other Africa Countries. The playwright utilizes traditional elements of folklore like song, dance, ritual cleaning, priesthood and festival celebration to put his message across. The play's dramatic situation reveals that three leading families in the world of the play

(the families of Mayesoge, Jeosunwon and Arooroton) are involved in a contest. As the play progresses, reference is made to the past when the selection of the priestess, at the shrine was democratic. Subsequently, the play reveals that Iyenri the reigning priestess usurped power and becomes a dictator for more than ten years. But change is inevitable; there is a call for revolution led by Ayoka and other members of the Yungba Yungba group, assisted by Iyaloja.

The call is geared towards returning to the democratic system of priesthood selection. Osofisan likens this call to the clarion call made during the days of military dictatorship to return the country to democratic rule. But, has the return to democratic rule changed the attitude of the leadership class? Amidst the so called Nigerian “democracy,” voices cry for self-determination as seen in the stories of Stomach and the Limbs and that of Song, Drum and Dance. Osofisan justifies the claims made by these voices with lack of consultation and consensus before amalgamation. Like the characters in Osofisan’s stories, some Nigerian leaders now see the federation as a means to an end. While some of the component units in their self ego claim that the other units cannot survive without them. Yet still, a particular component unit hijacked the seat of power and converted it to her own heritage. Osofisan raises these political and socio-economic issues as threats to the unity of the masses and good democratic governance. Iyaloja affirms this as she responds to the voices saying;

Iyaloja: What need do I have to speak again? It is the person who lights the wood that should be asked to blow it into fire! Whatever it is we elders are now accused of doing was done, I assure you, in the best interest of the land (23)

Through Iyaloja, Osofisan confirms that the play is a dramatic miniaturization of Nigeria’s cheerless political history. Like an elder, who does not gossip, but warns against impending danger, Osofisan mildly points out that the Nigerian union was a mistake, an unnecessary compromise by the nation’s founding fathers like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello and others who because of personal ego bowed to forces of colonial interest. However as beneficiaries,

the leadership class can continue to blow the seminal fire of a predetermined political agenda and sustain it against the will of the suffering majority if they embrace democracy and good governance. However, Iyaloja warns that the adamancy of the political class may lead to self destruction. She reminds the leadership class that:

Iyaloja: The pride of the virgin ends on the nuptial mat. The cockerel thinks it is fiery, until it stops by the hearth, and beholds the leaping tiger in the flames! Oh, the antelope's boast of elegance ends in the simmering of the cooking pot! ... (18)

The Nigerian political class who inherited power from the colonial masters did receive serious dents on their pride. They were overthrown by the military because of their inability to see to the organizational well-being of the people and weld the component units together through good governance. Tribal sentiments and anti-social policies of the first civilian government made the military rupture the virginity of the politicians during the 1966 first military coup d'état and usurped power from them. Ayoka reveals to us the intervention of the military and the eventual transition of the nation from democratic state to a sit tight military dictatorship:

Ayoka: It is no fancy, believe me! But as you can see, all that tradition has been changed! One person has usurped the post! For ten years non-stop! Ten years! Should we continue to accept this? (25).

Unfortunately the military juntas who usurped power from the politicians are no better. Intoxicated by the sweetness of power, they took delight in denuding the entire landscape of the nation and brutalizing the country's human resources. Ayoka observes that; "... For several years ... against the

rules of our tradition, Iyenri ... ensconced herself in the shrine, greedily and selfishly soaking herself in its privileges.” (26.) The truth is that there is no difference between the military and the civilian leaders in Africa, they are all corrupt. However, nothing is permanent except change; but change does not come easy, it requires sensitization and conscientization. Good governance is not given; it is won out of collective struggle. The people need a touch bearer who will show the light and the people will find their way. Osofisan presents Ayoka as one of such leaders of revolutionary change as reflected in a tacit but sensitive question she asked above – “Should we continue to accept this?” Ayoka portrays consistently, the consequences of military misrule and the need for good democratic governance, she says:

Ayoka: My sister, weighty things are happening in the land! The world is moving and rapidly too, all around us, Noting is standing still! Except us!....
 The affairs of our state, don't they concern us too?....
 Shall we return home to find food cheaper in the markets and abundant in our kitchens? ... or will our parents now cease to die in their numbers as they do now, in great poverty, and of diseases which have long been wiped out in other lands? (29-30)

The playwright's symbolic handing of the tug of war-like flexing of muscle over who rules Nigeria and war of words between different but similar leadership classes remain a creative artistic excellence that makes events of the play life like, timeless and ubiquitous. Coincidentally Ayoka raises the issue of the Arab spring and the demand for good governance as well as issues of outbreak of cholera, tuberculosis, missiles and most recently Ebola diseases in Nigeria. Apart from presenting Africa, as a continent abandoned by global civilization, it cast serious doubt on the agitation potentials of Nigerians. Ayoka's statement puts a serious question mark on good governance in Nigeria and the peoples demand for it. This is a major convergent point between Osofisan and Ukala. Though Ukala's success may partly be attributed to the geographical homogeneity of the world of the world of play, the active

nature of the citizenry remains an underlying factor. Similarly, citizens like Ayoka in Osofisan's *Yungba Yungba...* are very active, as reflected in what one may call political oratory with which Ayoka highlights indicators of bad governance in a tantalizing rendition for sensitizing the masses; the heterogeneous nature of the world of *Yungba Yungba...* impaired his mobilization ability. This impediment notwithstanding, Ayoka unequivocally, bemoans the failure of the Nigerian state as she laments:

Ayoka: ... A land of so much vitality, but such abundant misery! We see so much agitation around us every day, but hardly any movement.
We hear orders being barked all the time, Orders: orders! But very little achievement! (30).

Incidentally, while the two leadership groups fight over the survival of the Nigerian federation on one parallel, voices of self-determination emerge on another parallel. These are voices of the ruled; who brutalized and alienated in their fatherland call for the national question in a bid for a redefinition of the pre-requisites of federalism or for total disintegration. Aperin, highlighting this through the story of *Stomach and the Limbs* narrates: "The Right Hand to the right, The Left Hand to the left, And the Gullet in between ..." (50). The failure of the two leadership groups to weld Nigeria together and solve the nation's economic and socio-political problems led to the inevitable bifurcation of the play's plot. This appears nightmarish to the playwright as he grapples with an apparent but unsuccessful reconciliation of the opposing views of the rulers and the ruled. He graphically presents this in a parallelism of dual transition in the play. Hence, there is no point at which the interest of the rulers and the aspirations of the ruled can meet. The rulers for their selfish political goals preach one Nigeria, while opinion of the ruled transits to disintegration and self-determination. Aperin re-echoes the voice of the ruled through the story of *Song, Drum and Dance* and says:

Soon enough, the Sisters Broke up,
And the loom went dead: The market
learn
Also to forget their once abundant Stall!
(115)

Evidently, Osofisan suppresses the parallel of self-determination, and presents the dangers of disintegration; as he attempts eventual reconciliation at the end of the play where he makes Aperin and All Say:

For happiness is our goal,
Yungba yungba's the name of sweetness
Let's all join hands and work as one,
And sweetness will fill our lives! (118.)

Despite this tilt towards a united one Nigeria, the play shows clearly the destinations of the bifurcated transitions. Therefore a critical observer notices that one parallel heads towards the search for true federalism for the sustenance of one Nigeria, while the other surges towards disintegration and self-determination. Interestingly, these parallel political views produce in the play, two options for the ongoing national conference. Thus, the symbolic representation of the longings of the rulers and the aspirations of the ruled become areas of conflict in the effort to achieve good democratic governance in Nigeria. As these opposing views provide a monstrous riddle staring at Nigerians in ominous mockery; Osofisan's creative skills intermingle this political duet in an interesting manner that enables him paradoxes symbolically from the parallel of one Nigeria to that of self-determination; using dialogue songs and the imbedded stories in the play to encapsulate the two lines. Yet he provides a thin dividing gulf that enables a critical observer digest and appreciate the dialectical confrontation between freedom and oppression.

Though the play entitles Osofisan and other proponents of one Nigeria to their opinion, it fails to state clearly like *Akpakaland* that the idea of one Nigeria only feasible if there is attitudinal change among the leadership class.

Nevertheless, it heightens Osofisan's power of precision predicated on his prophetic creative impulse. Even though he tilts towards true federalism and a democratic and united one Nigeria, he foreshadows an eminent but painful disintegration if the self ego, demeaning of others, greed and self glorification of the component units continue. Ayoka reveals Osofisan's hidden fears for the Nigerian state and forewarns the political class by bringing to us the catastrophic end of Song, Drum and Dance:

So each had gone her way,
And each with her separate skill:
My Song's gone West. Drum's in the
East,
While Dance's somewhere in the North!
(116.)

Predictably, the playwright fears that bad governance may lead to the division and collapse of the Nigerian union into three or even more than three sovereign entities. Aperin confirms Osofisan's fears and says:

Well, the once glorious house of
Mosomidolola Moyege fell thus to
ruin while its daughters scattered their
talents elsewhere. (116.)

Conclusion

Ukala and Osofisan have shown through critical analyses carried out by the researchers that folkism theory and the folkloric dramaturgy have the potential to conscientize and sensitize the citizenry towards the struggle for the overthrow of dictatorial and bad government. However, Osofisan's methodological approach unlike Ukala's provides the audience and the reader options for self-determination. Ukala focuses on the unity of the ruled and agitation as panacea for good governance achieved outside self-determination. On the other hand, *Yungba Yungba...* reveals that there are two political groups that produce the bifurcated political opinion. Placing the opinions of the two blocks side by side; Osofisan allows the audiences enjoy erudite

political skimming by the two groups and watches who triumphs and vanquish the other, over the most urgent problematic political puzzles of contemporary Nigerian society that bothers on the national question -true federalism or self-determination. It is also important to note that the playwright politically spiced his direction of thought with a skillful unification but separation of the longings of the opposing sides. Adopting Brecht's epic alienation method, he places the longings and aspirations of each group side by side on the scale of posterity and stands afar to watch the weight of each parallel line dangle the scale in an intermittent equilibrium and disequilibrium.

Thus, caught between the opposing forces of unity and separation, Osofisan stands in between the two parallel lines and handles the longings of the rulers and the aspirations of the ruled with uncanny detachment. Like a Sartrean apostle, Osofisan shows that the imprisonment of man remains the joy of the gods, while the freedom of man threatens the supernatural context of the gods who lose their sacrifices and holy hymns of praises on the actualization of the freedom of man. Following Sartre, Osofisan portrays the dangers of total disintegration of the apparent one Nigeria as a gratification to the proponents of one Nigeria. Dialectically, he recognizes hydra-headed motives of disintegration and self-determination.

Folkism and the folkloric dramaturgy as explored by the two playwrights achieved high conscientization sensibilities in the worlds of the plays chosen for study. Therefore the researchers recommend that the directorial concepts of Osofisan and Ukaldas' plays should emphasize these major political goals of the playwrights. The service of folkism is also recommended for utilization by younger playwrights who wish to use their creative enterprise to contribute to good governance. Folkism theory and Folkloric dramaturgy remain the panacea for transforming modern Nigerian nation-state for enthronement of viable democratic governance.

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