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Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma

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THE DRAMATURGY OF VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: A STUDY OF SELECTED PLAYS

Professor Saint GBILEKAA, PhD
Department of Theatre Arts
University of Abuja, Nigeria
Email: stgbilekaa@gmail.com

Abstract
The theatre provides a vent for playwrights to express our common humanity by highlighting the problems that confront society. In today's world, one of such problems is violence. It is the contention of this paper that violence occurs where there is no equity. State terrorism and the absence of the rule of law can also lead to anarchy and violence. Joblessness and the denial of equal opportunities can also result into violence. By dramatising violence, playwrights do not only seek to portray the violent nature of man but at the same time seek ways of bringing about peace, more so that the audience shares the traumatic experience of victims of violence. Drawing our examples from *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, *Once upon Four Robbers* and *Hangmen Also Die*, the paper uses the qualitative methodology at arriving at these findings. The paper concludes that the dramatisation of violence throws up moral and ethical questions and that when playwrights use violence with moral consciousness, it result to positive ends.

Introduction

Violence has several definitions. The *New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* defines *violence* as follows:

> The quality or state of being violent; intensity; fury; also, an instance of violent action. Violent or unjust exercise of power, injury; outrage, desecration; profanation. Physical force unlawfully exercised; an act intending to intimidate or overawe by causing apprehension or bodily injury. The perversion or distortion of the meaning of a text, word or the like; unjustified alteration of wording (1402).

Our treatment of violence in this paper will take cognizance of the first three definitions leaving out the fourth.

Violence is irrational and destructive; it is injurious, unjust and abusive. Those who use violence against their fellow human beings aim at demeaning life, making life uncomfortable for them. The use of violence does not only reduce the quality of life but also makes man aware of the precarious nature of his mortality. Violence happens where there is no equity. From time immemorial, organised societies (states) have had the capacity of putting in place measures and policies that could enhance the rule of law and

thus prevent convulsive occurrences of violence. When a state relegates its primary duty of preserving lives and property, of ensuring a conducive society, the consequence is violence. Where there are class antagonisms, where there is unemployment, primitive accumulation of wealth at the expense of the masses, where there is oppression and bad governance, violent eruptions become the order of the day.

In other words, conflictual situations arise where there is poverty, deprivation, social and economic inequality and extreme violation of human rights. All these injustices increase the potential for violence and terrorism as people begin to rise against these socio-economic factors and political conditions using violence as a means. As Esiaba Irobi has noted:

> Terrorism is a legitimate tactic of all down-trodden people seeking to combat oppressive governments. Without terrorism by the I.R.A. would the Republic of Ireland have gained their independence today? Without terrorism by the Mau Mau, would there be Kenya today? Without terrorism by the Irgun and Stern gangs, would there be Israel today? Without terrorism by the Algerians, would the French ever have agreed to have North Africa in 1962? Without terrorism in South Africa, do you think Apartheid would ever be dismantled? (25).

There are also other forms of injustice and discrimination based on gender, religion, colour and age. Oppression of this nature renders these groups powerless and creates potential for violence. Victims of discrimination vary from society to society.

Violence and terrorist acts are ubiquitous in all societies. Violence can be used in a wide and vague manner. It can be a physical act or behaviour that causes damage to both living and inanimate things. Violence is not an abstract concept but a lived reality, particularly political violence which is a consequence of tyranny, megalomania and mis-governance. It is this type of violence that is the focus of this discourse. This type of violence inescapably has a history of action and reaction. Today, we live in a world in which justice and equity is disputed amidst claim and counter claim. This concept is replicated in the three plays under study – *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*, *Once Upon Four Robbers* and *Hangmen also Die*.

Violent eruptions have become the order of the day. It is either war in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen or radical Islamists under various names like Al-Qada, ISIS, Boko-Haram, Al-Shabab, and so on visiting violence and terror on their societies or several individuals wielding guns and invading schools, churches, mosques, hotels, market places, killing and maiming innocent citizens. Violence is destructive in nature and human violence unlike animal violence threatens their race. Violence poses a serious danger for man's existence more in the 21st century than it did in the previous centuries. Therefore, dramatising violence can be an imperative as to how we can transform and reform the destructive tendencies of homo-sapiens. There is the utmost need to explore this violent character of human nature through theatre in order to save humanity from itself since theatre is the mother of all arts. That is to say that, the dramaturgy of violence tasks the intellect of its audience to view the tragic moment of our times, to reflect on them and to imagine what a blissful world we would have without violence.

Theatre and Violence

In the **Foreword** to the book, *Theatre and Violence* by Lucy Nevitt (published in 2013), Catherine Cusack notes the following:

> The theatre is everywhere, from entertainment districts to the fringes, from the ritual of government to the ceremony of courtroom, from the spectacle of the sporting arena to the theatres of war. Across these many forms stretches a theatrical continuum through which cultures both assert and question themselves.

The dramaturgy of violence asserts and questions the world, indeed humanity in so many dimensions. The dramatisation of violence on stage allows the spectators to engage emotionally with the experiences of both victims of violence and those responsible for the violation of their rights. This narrative approach is done through powerful usage of language, images, metaphors and spectacle, images of preys, hunters and predators, the powerful and the weak, in a word, the oppressors who are the initiators of violence and terror and the *chosified* masses who are the recipients of violent products. The dramatisation of violence does not only jolt the audience into critical thinking along the Brechtian line but also raises ethical and moral questions concerning human nature and action. Thus, questions like who are the perpetrators of violence? What are their motives? Why do they act the way they do? And what are the implications of their action? are raised.

When playwrights present acts of violence in their plays, it is not that they want to valourise violence for its own sake, neither do they enjoy acts of violence, they do so to seek to contribute to making a more peaceful and less violent world. They do so to stimulate the spectators to critically examine the causes of violence as they emotionally and psychologically experience it on stage. Violence used with moral consciousness can lead to positive ends and if art as Aristotle has argued in the Poetics is an imitation of life, then art must capture, violence which is part of everyday life in order to purify the action being mimicked. Therefore, violence can empower the audience positively, particularly if it is used within the Brechtian/Boalian meta-theatricality ambience.

Anne Bogart argues that art is violence, "Violence used with moral consciousness and care is a powerful artistic tool that can be used for positive ends" (9). Masters of drama like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Shakespeare used violence to make dramatic statements not necessarily corresponding to the predominating philosophy of their times but drawing attention to the scavenging and predatory nature of human behaviour. Aristophanes in *Lysistrata* drew attention of the Greek populace to the destabilising effects of war, the Peloponnesian wars between Greek City States and Persia. He drew their attention to the necessity of peace where meaningful progress and development could be achieved.

Even though the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides did not display actual violence on stage, acts of violence were reported verbally to the spectators. Such incidences include the plucking of eyes, by Oedipus and the suicide of Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex*. Similarly, the death of Antigone, Haemon her fiancé and the suicide by Eurydice in

Antigone are all reported just like the bizarre violence in *The Oresteia* is not displayed by Aeschylus but reported by the chorus and Orestes himself. These unique instances of dramatised violence in Greek tragedy are not concerned with the sensational acts of murder and suicide per se but the truth that belies the act, the fundamental question of Greek justice based on retributive justice. The question then arises; within the modern context, are these murders and suicidal acts justifiable? Should modern society continue to dwell on jungle justice, this opaque sense of retribution? This to me becomes the raison d'être which Greek tragic violence has come to mean.

Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy on the other hand, beginning with *The Spanish Tragedy*, a revenge play, wallowed in wanton and bizarre display of violence on stage. Violence in the plays of Shakespeare takes several forms and serves a variety of purposes. There are duels or sword fights, sacrificial killings and suicides, self-inflicted injuries, sexual violence and comic violence (101-21). These violent incidences do not only reflect the attitudes of the Elizabethan period but more importantly is the significance of the reactions. That is to say that Shakespeare equated violent actions to cosmic disorder and tyrannical tendencies of the aristocracy which may not have conformed with his vision as a playwright.

For instance, the duels, the senseless wars for the acquisition of more territories, the power conflicts and palace coups and murders may not have conformed with his own view of society yet they were expressive images of violence prevalent in the Elizabethan times. Therefore, Shakespeare had to present these macabre and bizarre violent actions by perfidious characters in *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth, Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* among other plays. While the duels were an expression of the Jacobean and Elizabethan concept of law and justice, the wars and murders represented the greed, avarice and power arrogance of the aristocratic class.

From the foregoing, we have seen that violence has always been a part of art. As Bogart has noted, violence is a part of life's ergo and therefore, "it must be part of art as art is almost always a response to life" (9). Aristotle, the father of art, traces the origin of art from mimesis. However, for this mimicry to be meaningful, it must purify and heighten this life through the cathartic experience. That is to say that, violence in art must emphasise the moral and ethical dialectic which is immanent in the plays under study and it is along these lines that we will now turn our search light to the three plays under evaluation.

The Nature of Violence in African Drama

The nature and character of violent eruptions in African dramaturgy in displayed and enacted on the backdrop of colonialism or bad governance under the vice-grip of our kith and kin. If one were to do taxonomy of modern African drama, most of it would fall under political and social plays that lament rather than celebrate the gains of independence. That is to say that these plays either dramatise the travails of African nations under colonial demagoguery or bewail the lack of progress that flag independence has brought to African nations. Our focus here however, is on Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Mugo Micere's. *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*, Femi Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers* and Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen also Die*.

In *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Wa Thiongo and Micere celebrate the hero of the main struggle Dedan Kimathi who led the revolution of the masses to liberate his country Kenya from British imperialism. Betrayed by his own people and captured by the British, Kimathi refuses to plead guilty and is therefore sentenced to death by hanging. However, at this momentous occasion, the Boy and Girl who have been properly mentored and reconciled by Woman are adequately conscientised to carry on the revolution by shouting in the court "Not dead" (84). The stage directions tell us that, *"The girl shakes her fists at guards"* and there is:

> *Utter commotion as struggle between opposing forces ensues. A loud shot is heard. Sudden darkness falls, but only for a moment: for soon, the stage gives way to a mighty crowd of workers and peasants at the centre of which are* **Boy** *and* **Girl**, *singing a thunderous freedom song. All the soldiers are gone, except for the first soldier who shyly joins in the singing from behind* (84).

This Brechtian theatrical device is a sign of the non-terminality of the revolutionary struggle as Boy and Girl now takes over the leadership of the struggle, ably supported by the masses, including even First Soldier, a symbol of the oppressive arm of imperialism and state.

The next question to be asked is what has occasioned the revolution? The revolution or the struggle has become necessary because of the violence and injustice visited on the Kenyan masses by the British forces of occupation. By this, the British have made slavery out of Kenyan masses. Therefore, Kimathi and other braves take it upon themselves to unchain their kith and kin, as a consequence, violence is unleashed on both sides – the colonisers and natives alike. The opening scene in the courtroom highlights the tension and class distinction where "*Africans squeeze around one side seated on rough benches*"; while "*whites occupy more comfortable seats in the opposite side* (3). Thereafter, the audience is plunged into a violent scenario of chilling screams of an oppressed Kenyan being lashed with horse whips. This leads to the enactment of black man's history of slavery and exploitation by both Black Chiefs and White Colonisers, a situation fraught with violence in a most vicious manner highlighting man's inhumanity to his fellow man. When they revolt and take concrete steps to fight back they are called terrorists.

The first movement of the play captures this orgy of violence visited on the peasants. For the colonisers, this is captured by the settler, called, Mr. Windhoek:

> **Settler**: I had cattle and sheep by the thousands:
> Where are they now?
> I had acres of maize and wheat:
> Where are they now?
> I had a wife and daughter:
> Where are they now?
> Killed. Burnt. maimed
> By this lunatic and his pack of bandits (28).

The loss of Mr. Windhoek extends to all other settlers, for whom the struggle has made it almost impossible to operate their businesses and farms, including security of their lives.

For Kimathi, it is more of physical violence. He has been slapped several times by Henderson. *"Now really mad Shaw Henderson strikes him again and again, using hands, legs, gun and swearing as he strikes"* (55). Again, Kimathi comes out of the torture chamber bloodied several times. The stage directions tell us that:

> **Kimathi**, *blood stained, shirt torn, emerges from the torture chamber kicked, pushed from behind. He can hardly work. He falls on his hands and feet.* **Henderson**, **Waitinia** *and* **Gatotia** *and the two soldiers follow, holding some of the instruments of torture. They stand in a group except the human soldier who stands apart, slightly hiding his face in shame.* **Kimathi** *is obviously broken in body…. BUT not in spirit* (57).

It is important to note that violence in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is on two levels-physical and emotional. The physical would be taken to be the loss of assets and property experienced more by the white settlers, who have access to financial institutions they can borrow from to build their homes, establish farms, own cattle and ranches and indulge in other business ventures. The native Africans on the other hand have little to lose along these lines as they are mainly squatters on lands bought by the white colonialists or simple subsistence farmers. However, they underwent serious physical torture in the hands of the whites who colonised them and could easily throw them into prison under trumped-up charges.

The emotional or traumatic stress that the protagonist experience as a consequence of violence is shared by the audience through the cathartic process. Here, the audience is able to empathise with both Kimathi who suffers unjustly but stubbornly and nobly carries on believing in the rationality and justification of his cause and action on the one hand and on the other by the settler, even though in a lesser measure, for being caught between two powerful forces in the struggle for supremacy. In these circumstances, moral and ethical issues are raised in the minds of the spectators. For instance, is Kimathi right in taking up arms against imperialist forces? Should he plead guilty and then abandon the cause for which many have sacrificed their lives just to save his neck? Should he continue to resist until freedom is won and Kenya gain her independence? Again, the audience would have to rationalise whether Mr. Windhoek is right in his racist outburst and irascible behaviour.

To Kimathi and his fellow co-travellers, he is being provoked to violence by the oppressive and slavery nature of colonialism. Therefore, he must fight to liberate his people as he tells the judge.

> **Kimathi**: The jungle of colonialism? Of exploitation for it is there that you'll find creatures of prey feeding on the blood and bodies of those who toil: those who make the earth yield.
> Those who make factories roar

Those who want and groan for a better day
Tomorrow
The maimed
Their backs bent
Sweat dropping down their shoulders
Beaten
Starved
Despised
Spat on
Whipped
But refusing to be broken
Waiting for a new dawn
Dawn on Mount Kenya (26).

This precisely is the heart of the matter. Kimathi presents to Judge Henderson in no uncertain terms the existential material condition under which the masses of Kenya languish in the throes of colonialism. A system whose laws protect the oppression and license the murderers of his people, such a law is anathema to him and he would never plead guilty for taking up arms to dismantle such an unjust system.

For Shaw Henderson, so long as Kimathi and the likes of Stanley Mathenge Matenjagwo, Kimemia, Ole Kiso, Njama and the remaining terrorists are not captured nor made to surrender and plead guilty, violence and physical abuse or the torture of Kimathi would continue. To do this is Bwana Waitina who gleefully and with tremendous appetite furiously whips Kimathi with the aim of breaking his resolve. Unfortunately and to their disappointment, Kimathi becomes more hardened and defiant.

Shaw Henderson's arguments and actions are based on the dictum that, 'might is right'. He tells Kimathi: "Nations live by strength and self-interest. You challenged our interests: we had to defend them. It is to our mutual interest that we end this ugly war (34). To this, Kimathi responds:

Kimathi: … This is a new war. We bled for you. We have fought your wars for you, against the Germans, Japanese, Italians. This time we shall bleed for our soil, for our freedom, until you let go.

Henderson: You are dreaming again.

Kimathi: Yes. And I will keep on dreaming till my visions come true and our people are free (34-35).

Frustrated that Kimathi does not cave in, Henderson resorts to flattery; but Kimathi again refuses to betray his people. The arguments and counter arguments here lead to actions and reactions as each person tries to justify his position. As noted earlier, in a conflictual situation that leads to violence, each party tries to justify its position. Here, Henderson is justifying why the colonialist have to use violence to maintain law and order while Kimathi too justifies the use of violence as a necessary tool for revolution.

In *Once upon Four Robbers,* we are confronted with a different case of violence – armed robbery. At the end of the civil war in Nigeria in 1970, there was a proliferation of arms in the country and in the mid-70s, armed robbers terrorised Nigerians particularly in big cities like Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Benin, Enugu and Kaduna. To curtail their menace, the military regime under General Gowon promulgated the Armed Robbery and Firearms Decree 47 of 1970. With this decree armed robbers were publicly executed. Osofisan wrote the play as part of his own contribution to the debate about the execution of armed robbers in Nigeria. In *Once Upon Four Robbers,* Osofisan has not only shown societal dynamics and contradictions that give rise to armed robbery but has also asked his spectators the pertinent question: would the execution of armed robbers at the Bar Beach stop armed robbery? This is the heart of the matter, the moral ethic that underscores this play.

Once Upon Four Robbers plunges the audiences' sight and psyche into an orgy of violence. The stage directions provide a vivid account of the violence.

> **Soldiers** *lead in a prisoner and tie him to the stake. Then, at the orders of the officer, they take position. They fire. The prisoner slumps. A doctor steps forward to examine the body. The* **Soldiers** *untie the corpse and carry it out* (21).

Left to mourn their late colleague and lament their fate are Alhaja, Major, Hassan and Angola. They claim that their leader has been slaughtered gruesomely like a "Ramadan lamb". (22). Now the closely knit crime family is scattered like sheep without a shepherd as noted by Major.

> **Major**: The party is over and its going to be every man for himself from now on (23).

However, it is worthy to note that without collaboration without collective effort, the desire to simply rob or initiate change would not be possible. This is because a revolution is brought about through collective effort and not by a single individual. This is why Major's effort to go it alone to double-cross his colleagues leads to his tragic end.

The most important thematic preoccupation of the play, to me, is why the robbers should embark on this dangerous mission knowing well that sooner or later, the law would catch-up with them. Major acknowledges this truth.

> **Major**: Face the truth man! Ever since this new decree of armed robbery, we've been finished! You can only walk that far on the edge of the blade. Sooner or later; the blade cuts in (23).

But it is far from over because the four robbers "got a wound to avenge". The first target that would provide a balm to their wound is the Sergeant, who gave the order for the execution of their leader. The second are a group of citizens who must be made to account for their ill-gotten wealth and also, the poverty of their workers. These are essentially the pen-robbers and those whom Angola says "ride their cars along the sore-

ridden backs of the poor" (36). Unfortunately, these are not the victims of the four armed robbers whom Aafa gives the power to rob.

The second instance of violence occurs when Major tries to double-cross his fellow robbers. The pleadings and counter arguments of his co-robbers would not change his treacherous course. As far as he is concerned, he is out of the filth and into a new life. As he says:

> **Major**: No more scurrying in the smell of back streets. A house the size of a palace! The law, tamed with my bank account! And children. Listen, I am going to be a daddy! I will own the main streets, six, no… ten super market (52).

Just as he thinks he is out of the woods and would no longer rob, the soldiers strike. The sub-text provides the missing link in the following:

> *He begins to back away from them, still having them covered with the gun. Suddenly, the noise of gunshots from his rear. He wheels round, only to crumble as he is hit* (53).

As this instance, the soldiers overwhelm the robbers as the other three of them escape, without a penny, while Major remains on the ground wounded. His greed and avarice has led him to finally loose both his life and the money.

Major's action raises the issue of materialism in most African states. He wants to be rich to be a master to enable him buy justice, manipulate the law enforcement agencies and purchase chieftaincy titles. He is not alone in this line of thought as even the soldiers represented by the sergeant and the market women are all motivated by the profit motif. This extends to the civil servants and government contractors. The only difference between them and the armed robbers is that they do not rob with arms. The issue of robbery generally throws up a moral and ethical question. Are the authorities right in publicly executing armed robbers who steal mere thousands and let go civil-servants pen-robbers who collide with politicians to steal billions? Would such a situation not negate the true spirit of justice and encourage people with evil minds to indulge in armed robbery, targeted at the rich class in our society who are responsible as it were, for their alienation, joblessness and poverty?

These are the moral issues that the play raises and this is what is responsible for the violence that we encounter in the play. In other words, the trauma that the robbers undergo, the anger and bitterness in them which is not essentially of their own making but that which arises out of ineptitude and lack of pragmatic leadership by the political elite makes them to take up arms in revenge against a society that they believe dehumanises them. This form of social injustice corrodes moral values and gives vent to uncontrolled pent up anger and violence. These may be some of the considerations and equivocations that may make the audience of *Once Upon Four Robbers* argue against their execution in some productions of the play. This happens because of the

unconventional nature of the ending of the play typical of some African folktales. At the end of the play, there is a stalemate as Aafa walks out of the audience to state as follows:

> **Aafa**: A stalemate? How can I end my story on a stalemate: if we sit on the fence, life is bound to pass us by on both sides. No, I need your help. One side in bound to win in the end. The robbers, or the soldiers who are acting on your behalf. So you've got to decide and resolve the issue. Which shall it be? Who wins? Yes madam? Your reasons please? And you gentleman? Should the robbers be shot? Please do not be afraid to voice your opinion, we want this play to end. Okay, I'll ask five opinions and then we'll let the majority carry the day…. Yes? (77).

Thereafter, views are collated, however if the audience exonerates the four robbers, they are declared winners and they go on to rob the dancers but in the event that the house decides for the soldiers, the armed robbers are executed.

The violence experienced in Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die* is akin to that in *Once upon Four Robbers.* In both plays, societal dynamics and contradictions are responsible for the eruption of violence. In *Hangmen Also Die,* violence is occasioned on four levels, the assassination of Dr. Ogbansiegbe, dispossession and robbing violently by the suicide squad, the interruption of Chief Erekosima's coronation ceremony and his subsequent hanging; and finally, the hanging of members of the suicide squad.

Members of the suicide squad like the four robbers have a serious grudge against society. Let us hear their manifold agonies:

> **R.I.P.**: We have no jobs
> **Acid**: Therefore we have no money.
> **Dayan**: Which means we cannot marry.
> **R.I.P.**: And consequently cannot have children.
> **Chorus:** We are the rejects of the world.
> **R.I.P.**: (*Violently.*) So, if today, we have turned to violence as the only weapon to redeem our destiny redeem our fate, our future and our manhood. It is because…
>
> *(They charge into the audience, up the aisles, daggers in their hands.)*
>
> **Dayan**: We have no place in the politics of this nation.
> **Acid**: The Constituent Assembly is filled with the faces of the same ancient Chimpanzees.
> **R.I.P.**: It is because we have no chance in shaping the destiny of this nation.
> **Acid**: We are like tigers in a game reserve.
> **R.I.P.**: It is because…..
> **Dayan**: We have no place in history. No solid earth beneath our feet
> **Acid**: Our hands are tied behind our backs.
> **R.I.P.**: It is because…

Dayan: We are not even given a chance to contribute our own quarter.
Chorus: We have been marginalised out of existence.
R.I.P.: So here, we are…. (31-32)

It is therefore manifest that society is responsible for the manufacture of these miscreants who as it were, are taking their pound of flesh on society. Therefore, when society and in particular, those who are in position of authority fail to deliver, when they become selfish and limited in vision and all welfare measures are denied the underprivileged, violence becomes a veritable vehicle of ventilating their anger and disgust. This is the case with these seven characters in the play, well trained graduates who are now destitute. Given the fact that they have no means of good living in spite of their education, they maim, kill and rob violently. As they have all noted:

> **All**: We do what we do because we know we have no future, because we know no matter what we do, no matter how we aspire, there is something in the atmosphere to destroy us… (38).

In a situation like this, they become suspicious of everybody around them, including their mentor and lecturer Dr. Ogbasiengbe who initiated them into terrorism and justified it so long as "the terrorist hath sheathed his knife and washed blood off his hands". (26)

As young men, Dr. Ogbasiengbe colonised their minds and radicalised them to become his henchmen and assassins, visiting terror on his political adversaries. Consequently, when they became aware that he was using them, they in "good conscience" hanged him and made it look as if he (Ogbasiengbe) committed suicide. Thereafter, the squad become more hardened and addicted to crime. They took to crime as if it is an opium and therefore, had no conscience whatsoever about the wrong they are inflicting on society. They take pleasure in crime and valourise their dexterity and invincibility.

The third violent action in *Hangmen Also Die* is at the instance of Tamara, who challenges and harangues the squad to interrupt Chief Erekosima's coronation ceremony" (64).

> **Tamara**: … If you call yourselves men, if what dangles between your thighs is a symbol of manhood, then prove this on right now, prove to me that you are men?
> **R.I.P.**: Are you challenging us.
> **Tamara**: I am challenging you. All of you. Prove to me you are the suicide squad… here is a battle. A battle of the dispossessed versus the self-pressured. Between the haves and the have nots. Between the landless and the landlords. Prove your mettle, prove to me you are the warriors you claim to be. Prove to me that you are not eunuchs? Power prostitutes? Destitutes? Cowards? Bullies? Empty Barrels? (*desperately now*) young men, remember your seventy year – Old grandmother who still farms before she eats, remember also your poverty-stricken people,

> remember too your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins and then FIGHT FOR YOUR FREEDOM (64-65).

Tamara, like Woman in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi,* plays the role of a true mother, mentor and conscientiser, mentoring her children to be focused and be more responsible. She deconstructs the ideologically barren squad to pitch tent with the oppressed, "the wretched of the earth". To some, the use of violence to interrupt the vulgar display of ill-gotten wealth by the Chief here is positive as it draws the attention of the audience to the nefarious acts of Chief Erekosima in defrauding people of three million naira oil-spillage compensation money for the despoliation of their fish ponds and farm lands. Yet for others, the act of murder for whatever reason remains condemnable as it is not only extra-judicial but also morally wrong.

The fourth instance of violence happens belatedly in the yard of a Nigerian Prison. Although Yekini, the prison's hangman, refuses to hang seven members of the squad because he believes in the rightness of their action whose act was done to right a wrong. Nevertheless, the squad of seven are eventually hanged at the end of the play. Again, the audience would have to decide as to the rightness of this horrendous act of justice and would within themselves wonder whether the squad should have been given a life sentence or their case, dismissed in view of the glaring facts before them. Therefore, as Jordan Wash has noted:

> An act of violence enacted on stage and viewed by an audience can act as a catalyst for the coming together of that audience in defence of humanity, a togetherness in the act of defying the truth mimicked by the theatrical violence represented on stage, which has the potential to stir the theatre communion (212).

Conclusion

We have examined the nature and character of violence in selected plays of Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Micere Mugo, Femi Osofisan and Esiaba Irobi and have argued that violence enacted on stage creates a lasting impact on the psyche of the audience raising moral and ethical questions in their minds. The dramatisation of violence also allows the audience to engage more emotionally with both victims of violent acts and those who perpetuate violence. This further provides insight to the destructive nature of human beings. We also argued that it is the oppressors, the ruling and power elite that are responsible for the creation of violence. For instance, while it is the tyranny and oppressive nature of colonialism that creates violence in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, it is equally the neglect of society, injustice and joblessness and lack of care for the disadvantaged classes that is responsible for the violence in *Once Upon Four Robbers* and *Hangmen Also Die.* Therefore, in dramatising these acts of violence on stage, playwrights are drawing the attention of their audience to the skewed nature of society and urging them to seek ways of controlling them before they burst into violent acts.

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THE PLACE OF THEORY IN THE CRITICISM OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE: AYAKOROMA'S *DANCE ON HIS GRAVE*

Professor Osita EZENWANEBE, PhD
Department of Creative Arts
University of Lagos, Akoka
Lagos State, Nigeria
Email: ositaezenwanebe@gmail.com

Abstract
The environment and injustice are part of the concerns that are located within the fields of Eco-feminism and Eco-criticism. These concerns are universal. Sarah Ray Jaquette, a professor at the University of Oregon, USA, came up with the concept of *the Ecological Other*", by which she sought to highlight issues of social injustice 'embedded' in U.S. environmental policy and practice against the *ecological others* whom she identified as, Native Indians, People with Disabilities and Migrants. This paper examines the works of two Nigerian female writers, both of them reputable and versatile as feminists who are also environmentally conscious and concerned about issues of injustice against women in our societies. In other words, they are Eco-feminists. Eco-feminism describes a feminist approach to understanding ecology. Eco-feminists usually draw on the concept of gender to theorise on the relationship between humans and the natural environment. This paper attempts to reflect both the natural environments and the psychological domains under which injustice is meted out towards women and how these women respond to these situations in their lives. The women as represented through the chosen texts are thus considered the environmental/psychological *others* whose *bodies* have become the objects of social injustice in our own social domains of Nigeria. However, some of these women have been shown to have overcome *victim-hood* to become agents of positive change; negotiating and promoting social justice.

Introduction
Many writers have attested to the paucity of criticism in the field of drama. John Gassner, one of the foremost American dramatic, critic said that the theatre of his time was concerned not with dramatic criticism but with what he called "reviewerism" which is a practical box-office consideration (129). In my thirty years of studying and teaching dramatic literature, I have come to realise that the great majority of people who are interested in drama rarely read plays. Rather, they are much more interested in seeing theatre. Even the postgraduate students of theatre arts see play-reading as an excruciating experience and at worst unnecessary. I had to employ different strategies to get my students buy and read plays. They would rather use their money to watch theatre and films.

The situation is not different from that in more developed nations like Britain. Raymond Williams lay similar complaint when he wrote that, "few people see any need for literary criticism of drama; it is the reviewers of performance who are dramatic critics" (15). The assumption that the value of a play does not have anything to do with its literary value is wide spread and common among lovers of drama. However, it is argued in this paper that a play is a unique art form, different, though related, from its theatre, that is, its realisation on stage before a live audience. It is an apology for dramatic literature.

This paper is written to demystify the cult of boredom enshrouding or associated with reading dramatic literature and to propose reading, theorising and criticising plays as a pleasurable experience, indispensable for the flourishing of theatre, to support. I am strongly in support of the position Dr. Johnson that, "A play read affects the mind like a play acted" (in Majorie 24); or even much more than a play acted, an assertion hotly contested by Boulton Marjorie (24), but demonstrated through the critics of Barclays Ayakoroma's *Dance on his Grave*.

Theory and Criticism

On a general level, theory refers to "a set of ideas which claim to explain how something works" (Haralambos et al. 7). It is a system of ideas aimed at explaining something. Man had always tried to provide explanations to phenomena. Before the advent of theory, man used folktales and myths to proffer explanation to occurrences or realities around him, especially strange or outstanding ones. There are tales that explain, for example, why coconut has water up in the tree; why the tortoise has fractured shell; why a particular hill, stream, and so on, is the way they are, among others. In this way theory help us to understand our world better.

Theory is abstract; it is an abstract formulation used for explaining something. It is often based on general principals independent of the thing to be explained. By themselves, theories are not explicit until when applied in explication. Theory originates in the 16th century and means, "a mental scheme or something to be done" (34); for the Greek word, "thoria", means speculation, contemplation. Theories are primarily sentential, that is, expressed in form of sentences, for example, "Art is an imitation of life", is an abstract sentence aim at explaining the phenomenon known as art. A theory is an explanatory sentence that has form and content. Sentence is its form, and its subject, the content. The content of the theory "Art is an imitation of life" is 'art' which is its object of concern. Terms like: "Marxism", "formalism", "Feminism" are labels for theories, the theories are what they state, for example, the statements, "Art is technique", "Art is a representation of the inequality in the relationship of man and woman" are theories of art within the theoretical labels known as "Formalism" and "Feminism", respectively.

Not every statement is regarded as a theory. Theory is a scientific formulation or proposition. It is systematic. Theories begin with a close observation of phenomena, of things happening around us or the world around us, our environment. Out of the things we see, we gain knowledge through induction and deduction of the phenomena. With the knowledge, we put forward opinions, assumptions, or propositions concerning what we

observe in other to bring the reality closer. The hypothesis (untested assumptions, ideas, or propositions) are logically organised and expressed in form of statements, that is, in the form of sentences, and the sentences become systematic organisation of formulations. When these hypothetical statements are widely tested over time and are generally agreed by experts in the field as authentic explanation, they became theories.

A theory is therefore a set of inter-related propositions which can explain and predicts certain phenomena. This way, theories are organised principles, a set of principles by which we explain phenomena, and on which the practice of an activity is based. It is an objective tool, a scientific approach because the abstract deductions from nature are concretised in the sentential formulations. They are empirical statements, that is, axiom which can be generalised in place and time. The statement, "Art is a representation of life" is considered a theory of art – objective, factual sentence that explains the concept and field of art. Hence, it presupposes that any recreation of life in a unique, beautiful; way is art; be it visual (like in fine arts), or audio (like music) or literacy (like in poetry, fiction or dramatic literature). Theories can also be non-empirical when they are subjective, historical or hermeneutic statements of life. Every field has its own theories which explain the field. Dramatic theories are tested and widely accepted propositions in sentence form which explains the meaning of drama, its function(s), component parts, characteristics features as well as the principles of creating and analysing it. The emphasis in this research is on the literature of drama, not on the performance of drama. It is therefore the literary theory that is of interest in this paper.

Theories have content, and the content of theories is their subject matter. The subject matter of dramatic theories is drama; the subject matter of linguistic theories is language, and the subject matter of dramatic literature is the stage play, the literature of theatre. Apart from the subject matter, every theory must have epistemological essence, that is, it must be related to another field or another body of knowledge outside it. For example, dramatic theories are related to the fields of sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, and performance, among others. In fact, the history of critical theory, that is, literary theory, is related to the history of philosophy. Theory is dynamic. It is open to growth and changes. Nixon insists that theory is shaped by practice and must be understood in terms of the relation between practice and thinking:

> I do not contribute to theory by first understanding what theory is and then developing a theory of my own. I 'do' theory by developing collaborative models of thoughtful practice that challenges, taking for granted assumptions and suggest new lines of enquiry (28).

There are off-shoots and exceptions to every theory. In theory, we appreciate the importance of language. It is the duty of man to use language to concretise his reality.

Every theory must also have methodology. An analytical framework which is a sequential or systematic process/procedure of analysis must be designed for the explication of its subject matter. Every theory of art, for example, "Art is a presentation of the inner life of man", must have laid down procedure for analysing art in its own way. A theory is useless if it cannot be realised. Theoretical formulations or statements must

be explicated (explained) through some realisation. Dramatic theories for example are realised or explained through its components and practice – theatre like playwriting, acting, directing, designing, plot, character and characterisation, setting etc. It is in these that the theory is explicated and realised otherwise it remains an abstract statement. The criticism of dramatic literature is the practice of its theory.

Generally, criticism is a careful study of something in order to give an informed judgment about it or explain its meaning. According to John Gassner, "criticism… is a form of public opinion" (120). Specifically, it is the art of interpreting, analysing and judging works of art. A critic is an interpreter. He reads meaning into a work in order to interpret it and explain it to others. In this way, a critic is co-playwright by helping to make play meaningful to its users. Summaries of plays, and other critical explanations, for example, are ways a critic helps to make the play more meaningful to the audience so that they can understand them better. To be a judge, a critic must be a scholar. Adequate knowledge of the field or the subject is necessary for making an informed judgment. Criticism should be authoritative by making the criticised object its main consideration based on objective principles.

Many critics are averse to impressionism, which according to its chief proponent, Anatole France, "relates the adventures of the critic's soul among works of art" (in Gassner 121). Gassner refers to such criticism as "helter-skelter criticism" because it disclaims all objective judgments; admits no standards except those of personal impression; does not pass judgments, and claims no authority for judgments but registers an individual impression, a single man's reaction to a work of art (121). Although subjectivism cannot be ruled out completely in criticism, it should not be the sole basis for judgment. The best, common practice has been to employ some standards or general principles of execution to the content of the work and the artist's art in achieving or realising his aims. There is therefore a symbiotic relationship between theory and criticism. Criticism is the application of theory while theory provides the critical terms, perspective and criteria (principles) for criticism. This relationship is not different from the theory and criticism of dramatic literature.

The Place of Theory and Criticism in Dramatic Literature

To understand the place of theory and criticism in dramatic literature, one must first understand the concept of dramatic literature. Drama is primarily an art; a complex art. One common characteristic of all arts is the power to arrest and sustain the attention and interest of its audience. This power in art is commonly referred to as artistic beauty or aesthetics by which arts, in creating or recreating life is able to engage its audience in one way or the other. The complex nature of dramatic art makes its definition problematic. There has been a controversy whether drama is literature or an activity, a social event. For Aristotle, drama is a species of poesy, an imitation of life: "The name of 'drama' is given to such poems, as representing action" and "the poet may imitate by narration" (Aristotle 4). It is a re-enactment of action because it imitates men in action; re-enacting the story of their endeavours on stage before a live audience.

Plot is seen as the soul of drama. Following Aristotle, artists and art critics like Ulli Beier, Adrian Roscoe, Ruth Finnegan, Michael Echeruo, Graham White, to mention

a few, employ the notion of drama as literature with its essentiality of narrative or story pattern in investigating the presence or otherwise of drama in Africa in the 70's. For them, there was no drama because of the absence of "a longer story with complicated plot acted out" (Beier 271); lack of "linguistic contents, plot represented in the interaction of several characters" (Finnegan 500-501); Lack of dramatised story which is the absence of elaboration of the hidden myth" (Echeruo 146, 142); but only "signs of drama", "nascent drama" or "embryonic drama" with "some interesting dramatic phenomena" (Roscoe 177, 181) which do not even show "a clear chain of sequential stages of development from ritual to drama" (White 18).

At the other extreme, critics like Elder Olson, Ossie Enekwe, and Bernard Beckerman, to mention a few, see drama primarily as theatre with its essentiality of activity, social events and other performativities as the ingredients for drama. For Beckerman and Enekwe, drama is an activity, "involving the interaction of the audience and thee performers within a public space" (Enekwe 15); while Olson reiterated his disagreement with the definition of drama as "a form of literary composition", insisting that, "a play is not a literary composition. It is something which 'may involve' literary composition" (8).

None of the two opposing views of drama accounts for its richness and complexity. Drama as a complex art form is a synthesis of literary and the theatrical arts. It is futile trying to separate the symbiotic relationship between dramatic literature and dramatic performance. The **Preface** to *Norton Anthology of Drama* makes it clear that drama "is grounded in the different mediums of writing and physical enactment", and hence pays dual allegiance both to "the spectators of its theatrical realisations and to the solitary reader". Drama is therefore a literary document and a live event (ix). Drama as literature refers to the dramatic text, published as a play, or unpublished as manuscript or script. The literature of drama, that is, dramatic literature, like poetry and prose fiction "utilises plot and character, develops a theme, arouses emotion or appeals to humour, and may be escapist or interpretative in its dealing with life" (Perrine 903). A play is the dramatic literature, a unique literary form written primarily to be performed and not to be merely read. Drama as theatre is the collaborative product of playwrights, theatre managers, designers, directors, choreographers, audiences and actors and actresses.

Drama is therefore a two-legged art which can be realised as literature (a play as script) and as performance (theatre). Its literary aspect is the blue print for its theatre while its theatre is the essence of its literature. It is therefore a fallacy to assume that "the value of a play has not necessarily anything to do with its literary value" (Williams 15). The fact that a good play can make a bad theatre, and a bad play can make a good theatre shows that though they are interrelated, they are nonetheless unique art forms. Hence, "To consider plays as existing simply as literature, without reference to their function on the stage, is part of the same fallacy as to say that plays need not be literature at all". (Eliot 110). The emphasis on this paper is on the literature of drama; to emphasise the fact that reading and evaluating a play can be as educative and entertaining as seeing a theatre, if not more. This is because reading a play is dynamic; it involving a mental visualisation of its theatre. The reader immerses himself in the world of the play while feeding his fancy too with the arts of the playwright an intellectual activity Ellen Gainor

refers to as, "reading drama, imagining theatre" (82). This is demonstrated through the criticism of Ayakoroma's *Dance on his Grave,* a stage play.

The criticism of Barclays Ayakoroma's *Dance on his Grave*, an attempt to analyse and interpret the play in order to assess its worth, is based on concepts drawn from some literary theories which informed it. It is true that, "all literary interpretation draws on a basis in theory" ("Literary theory" 1). Literary theories refer to "the set of concepts and intellectual assumptions on which rests the work of explaining or interpreting literary texts". Simply put, they are "principles derived from internal analysis of literary texts or from knowledge external to the text that can be applied in multiple interpretative situations" ("Literary Theory" 2). A theory of dramatic literature is a literary or critical theory which offers the meaning of a play, its major functions, the main elements of dramatic literature, and above all, the criteria for the writing and analysis (criticism) of the plays based on it.

As a point of fact, every literary theory provides its critical terms, analytical perspective and criteria for the analysis of the work based on it. The theory may be sociological: "drama is a representation of the real world of men"; psychological: "drama captures the inner life of man"; formalist: "a play is a wealth of techniques"; feminist: "drama captures women's fight against forces of oppression"; Marxist: "drama represents class inequality and oppression"; post-colonial: "a play recreates colonial exploitation and black man's struggle for survival"; post-structuralism: "drama presents the antics of man in the web of existence" (absurdist); "a play is a violent outburst of suppressed experiences" (expressionist); "drama is a metaphor for life" (symbolist); "a play creates images of being and becoming" (semiotic); "a play is a celebration of surfaces", and so on. Each of the above examples of dramatic theory has implications for the writing and analysis of plays that are based on it. It is the task of the researcher to uncover the critical theory or theories that inform Barclays Ayakoroma's *Dance on his Grave* and employ the terms, perspectives and principals for analysis they provide to evaluate the play in other to support the view that a play read affects the mind, offering as much education and/or entertainment as the play seen.

Dance on his Grave: **Women's Struggle for Freedom in the Battle of Sexes**

Analytic Framework

The perspective for the analysis of *Dance on his Grave* is literary, based on concepts drawn from feminist and formalist theories. Feminism is a 20th Century literary theory that champions the view that women are subdued, marginalised and oppressed in society that is fundamentally organised in favour of men. For feminists, women in society are powerless and occupy secondary, ignoble position compared to that of men. Hence, the relationship between man and woman, gender relationship, is unequal and oppressive with the consequent battle of domination and its subversion in women's quest for freedom. Radical feminism best informs Ayakoroma's *Dance on his Grave.*

Unlike liberal feminism which holds culture and traditions accountable for women oppression and hence proposes women's individualistic quest for empowerment and self-actualisation as the strategy for emancipation, radical feminism sees women's physiology as the main reason for women's subjugation together with its accomplice,

man, the human symbol and perpetrator of oppressive cultural traditions and its number one beneficiary. It proposes female bonding and a separatist stance from men in a tough, fatal battle in which men must be overcome and pulled out the way for women to be liberated.

The radical feminist concepts of women oppression, separatist bonding and struggle for liberation provide the core analytical perspective in the criticism of *Dance on his Grave*. The oppressed women of Toru-Ama unite to take their proper place in their society, and hence engage the men, their husbands, in a dangerous battle for supremacy. The battle is fought based on Charles Darwin's Law of the jungle where only the fittest survives, and on this general level, the husbands crush the women's stubbornness with their physical might; they are the fittest, but not the stronger. The fight on the private level between King Olotu and his wife, Alaere, is a psychological one based on August Strindberg's concept of gender relation as a "battle of sexes" in which the women are stronger; hence, Queen Alaere employs the power of insinuation within women's biological essence to crush the mainly ego of the king and sends him into the grave on which the playwright invites her to dance.

Formalism is another label for all theories which held that a work of art like a play is a self-subsistent entity capable of meaning on its own without reference to external or internal realities outside it. Unlike feminism, which prioritises the content or subject matter, which are realities of social life outside the play, formalists insist that the meaning of a play is within the play and can only be uncovered through a close analysis of its formal elements. Mark Scholar, for example, opines that technique is the authentic means of dismantling a play in other to judge its worth since, according to Clean Brook, a work of art, like a play, is a "well- wrought urn", that is, a perfect craft from a good craft man. The formalist concept of textual analysis proposed by Richard's *Principles of Literary Criticism* is applied to the analysis of *Dance on his grave.*

Textual criticism tasks the critic to undertake a close reading of a particular play making implicit, the theoretical principles controlling its analysis and only bringing them in as occasions demand. The play is therefore interpreted in terms of its subject, organisation, techniques and style based on general standards of excellence proposed by the formalist used. *Dance on his grave* is a well-crafted play where the boundaries of tragedy and comedy are broken, and serious issues are *farcicalised* and drowned in boisterous laughter.

The World of the Play

Toru-Ama, like Africa and more specifically Nigeria, is a patriarchal society, one where male dominance thrives on women subjugation and power is the prerogative of men, crushing women to silence and powerless. Toru-Ama is a post-colonial Nigerian community where normative ideals of masculinity strive to perpetuate its hegemony despite the reality of a shifting landscape. The men of Toru-Ama, with their King, King Olotu, the *Akpobirisi* of Toru-Ama and the symbol of hegemonic mascunility, are uncompromising in maintaining and enforcing their traditional roles as "husbands" of their wives and "heads" of their families. They insist that the boundary of hegemony

must be kept sacrosanct: “Husbands are husbands; and wives must be wives”, says King Olotu (Ayakoroma 76).

Unfortunately, their wives, the women of Toru-Ama, with their leaders, Erebu and Queen Alaere, are radical feminists. They are discontented with the marginalised position their society offers them as wives and mothers. They believe the men, their husbands are the perpetrators and beneficiaries of their oppression. They take unilateral decisions about the affairs of the land and even concerning the upbringing of children. They as wives and mothers are neglected, silenced and marginalised. The women are aggrieved and decide to adopt serious measures to force the men to grant their requests to have a say in the affairs of the land: to stop the impending war with Angiama and collaborate with women in the upbringing of the children (24). The women decide to start a war in the families if the men turn down their demand.

As expected from men who are blinded with normative manhood in a modern society, the women’s request is met with stiff opposition and outrage from the men; as they declare:

> **Apodi**: What? Do they want to husband us? This is unheard of! Women wanting to put on thinking caps!
>
> **Osima**: It is utter rubbish! They think taking care of the affairs of this land is the same as haggling in the Zarama market? (58).

With the men and women uncompromising in their stance, the battle line is drawn. The world of the play reverberates with discontent, contestation, confrontation and crisis which degenerate into a gender war that claim the life of a king.

The gender war in Toru-Ama is fought on two levels: the social, communal level and the psychological, private level. Andrea Cornwall observes that: “contemporary struggle ‘to be a man’ are framed by expectations that are rooted in normative ideals of masculinity which began to fragment in colonial times and were increasingly contested…” (233). On the communal, public level, the women of Toru-Ama embark on a women collective action to forge a common front in the pursuit of a common goal. All they want is freedom, Alaere explains:

> **Alaere**: If any woman does not like her freedom; if there is any women that wants to play second fiddle to a man forever; if there is any that wants to remain a slave, to be only in the kitchen, look after children alone, and not sit at table with her husband; and if there is any woman who likes to have her sons killed in a senseless war; let her do otherwise (33).

In fact, there was none, and the women map out their strategy for liberation. At their meetings, they agreed on the weapon of stubbornness, explained by Alaere in the following way:

> **Alaere**: Stubbornness! If they say come here… uhm uhm! Go there. Uhm Uhm! Pick up the child … Uhm Uhm! Prepare food for me… uhm uhm! If he

> touches the loose end of your wrapper… leave me alone! If he wants to force himself inside you, you close your legs, kpaaam! (31).

Hence, the women refuse to do bed and domestic work. Although they argue on the difficult nature of its execution, they encourage one another to stand firm for success, should stubbornness fail, and the men beat them instead of granting their request, they agree to employ their second strategy: "We shall found our own settlement" (32).

The women's weapon of stubbornness is matched with the physical might of the men, their husbands. Initially at their meeting, the men decided to ignore them, "Let us ignore them. Are they not women? They will soon tire out" (59). But when they realise that the women are serious and unflinching, they decide to crush the women's will with their physical might. They embark on a caning spree of the wives that fling the women back to the kitchen and force their legs wide open to let the men in. The social war fought on the public arena was won by the men, but that was just the beginning. The men are the fittest, yes; but they survive only to witness a more damaging "battle of the sexes".

The psychological battle is fought in the private court of King Olotu, among king Olotu, his wife, Alaere and their daughter, Beke. The bone of contention is the upbringing of their daughter: King Olotu wants Beke to go to the city and study the ways of the white man; his wise wants her to stay at home. As always, King Olotu believes that as the head of the family, he has the sole right of thinking and taking decisions for his family, including Beke's future. He closes all avenues to compromise and refuses her wife a say in the matter, dismissing her views as unacceptable "feminine logic". He declares:

> **Olotu**: I know my rights and I'll have them! I have the final say as the head of this family! I'll have no one, woman or child, encroaching on my rights (49).

His wife resorts to a more dangerous weapon. She leaves the social and cultural front and penetrates the King's psyche. She resorts to the power of women's physiology, the same biological determinism for women's oppression, and sees in it the tool to expose the limits of the phallus, the very essence of man and masculinity. The war become deadly as she uses the power of insinuation and supposition to imprint in King Olotu's mind that he might not be the real father of their daughter, Beke in other to break his hold on Beke and actualise her own wish. Since it is widely held that it is only the mother who knows the real father of her child, Alaere asks the King, her husband:

> Suppose I was telling the truth just now when I said Beke was my child, my own child, and not yours… suppose it is true, you would have no more rights over her (523).

Alaere's play on the insinuation dealt a deadly blow on his husband's manly ego. His last resort to physical might in trying to strangle Alaere fails. Beke's objection to his violence: "If you can treat mother like this, then you are not my father" is the last straw

that breaks the camel's back. The sinks into despair and he commits suicide by drinking a potion. Hence, although the women are not the fittest, the woman is the stronger.

Women communal action is a favoured technique by African playwrights. The bonding may be between two female characters as that between Aisosa and Ede in Salami's *Sweet Revenge*, Obioma and Daalu in Ezenwanebe's *The Dawn of Full Moon*, among many others, in a spirit of sisterhood. It may also be among the female characters in the play as with the women stone crushers in Ezeigbo's *Hands that crush stone*; the wives of Lejoka-Brown in Rotimi's *Our Husband has Gone Mad Again*; or even with a whole community of women as with the Erhuwaren women in *The Wives' Revolt*; the women of Illa in Onwueme's *The Reign of Wazobia*, to mention few.

Similarly, the common strategy always includes the power of the feminine physique, the female body that is refusal to sex and domestic chores. The "stubbornness" of Toru-Ama women is akin to the "Duty Strike" of Erhuwaren women as well as the "Naked Dance" of the women of Illa. It is only unfortunate that that of the women of Toru-Ama fails to yield fruit unlike the others mentioned above. It is not surprising that the women's stubbornness fail in the play, *Dance on his Grave.* The playwright, Barclays Ayakoroma, is one of the trusted custodians of African culture. He is an apostle of cultural orientation, and the fact that the women's demand fail to succeed in the play is a dreadful affirmation of hegemonic masculinity with all its violent oppression against women. There is a dire need to re-orient Nigerian men for a life of gender complementarily needed in contemporary time.

The Style of the Playwright

Dance on his Grave is a formless form where issues that claim the life of a king is realised in boisterous comedy and farce. It is like Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists* where the fatal consequences of war are theatricalised in the antics of the Mendicants – a group of mangled humanity. Ayakoroma employs comedy and farce in recreating social issues in spousal relation. He is more of an Horatian satirist; "an urbane, witty, and tolerant man of the world, who is moved more often to wry amusement than to indignation of the spectacle of human follies, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy, and who uses a relaxed and informal language to evoke a smile at human follies and absurdities – sometimes including his own" (Abrams 138-139). However, Ayakoroma evokes not 'a smile' in his play but a roar of boisterous laughter, which dries up at the death of King Olotu. I could also perceive the playwright's laughter at the follies and antics of men and women of Toru-Ama as they deploy tactics for opposition and counter opposition. The play is thoroughly entertaining in its physicality. It reminds one of the deflated eulogies of women by Auntimi's, who together with the playwright, Ahmed Yerima, make mirth of the wives' foolishness in *The Wives*. I could hear the playwright mocking in the background as the men and women make jest of their own follies in *Dance on his Grave*.

The meeting of both the men and women of Toru-Ama is punctuated with lots of comedy and sometimes ridiculous, senseless interjections. The mapping of the "serious strategy" by woman includes ridiculous suggestions that: "No woman shall allow her husband to marry a second wife" (25), and that to avoid being under men, "The woman should be on top when sleeping with her man" (25); a suggestion that does not go down

with some of the women; for it would not be easy if one has a broom stick of a husband (with) big calabash (27), but "If you have a bulk of an elephant as a husband, the idea of sleeping on top appeals to you" (27). Similarly, Chief Atuaba's suggestion that women and their stubbornness be ignored fails to go down well with Biriala, who asks: "How many of us can control the togging of the muscles down there?; since "the thing has no ears…" (59); and he was advised to "look for a rope to tie it" (59).

The hilarious comments diffuse the seriousness of the issues and show the playwright subtly distancing himself from the subject. For Ayakoroma, as for some African male playwrights, women issues, especially the fight it is generating, is quite uncalled for and unnecessary. He disapproves of it, and shows his disapproval in the crafty way he uses language and creates characters. The play is full of theatricalities. It is an action-packed play where the technique of performance is at the centre of the drama, making the full power of the drama available to be deploy on stage (Williams 33). The dramatic action reverberates in salutations and group responses on almost every page. Songs, movement and dances, pursuits, "shouting matches", direct audience address, hot argumentation, attempted fight, caning fiesta and many more, result in a visual elaboration of actions that facilitate and enforce the communication of language. The play produces a theatre of the mind, making reading the play a dynamic process of what Gainor et al. refer to as, "reading drama, imaging theatre" (82). Reading *Dance on his Grave* is more than imaging the theatre, rather the reader is engulfed in the flamboyant activities; he is lost in the world of the play.

Ayakoroma's style is also a subtle disapproval or denunciation of the feminist ideal, especially the radical feminist aesthetics displayed by the women in the play. Like Ayakoroma, many Nigerian male playwrights dwell on the radicalism of the first wave of Feminism to discredit feminist ideals. He utilises well the power of the playwright to give life to his characters. His objectionable characterisation of the women leaders is a subtle castigation of the feminist ideals they stand for. For example, Erebu is "a short, stern-looking woman" (21), and Alaere is "another short woman with an aggressive air" (22). Alaere, King Olotu's wife, is represented as a vicious being without mercy who is swollen-headed and flexes muscles with not only the men of Toru-Ama but also with her husband, the king. She calls to mind the she-devils like Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*, Lady Jezebel of the *Holy Bible* and Tola, the "Rock of Gibraltar" in Ahmed Yerima's *The Portrait*. Neither her physical appearance nor her character commends her to the audience. They are presented to be rejected by the audience. In this way, the playwright disapproves them and their leadership in the play, thereby castigating Feminism and feminists.

Many African and Nigerian male playwrights prefer to emphasise all that is obnoxious in feminist ideal and neglect all that is commendable not only liberal Feminism but also in the womanist method of coordinating and harmonising differences so that they do not disrupt relationship (Phillips xxii). The women are called names: "you hens", (38), "egg-heads" 939), "crab" (55) and their gathering described as "gathering of hens" (36), just as they chatter away like "weaver bird" (21). The men enjoy a more sympathetic characterisation. King Olotu is cool-headed, a good king in defence of the

tradition of his four fathers. While his death elicits pity from the audience, the life of his wife evokes contempt. King Olotu is presented as the victim of the she-devil of a wife.

This is not surprising because August Strindberg, whose concept of gender relation as a "battle of sexes" is dramatised by Ayakoroma, is an avowed hater of women. Strindberg wrote *The Father* to mirror the presumed ignominy he has suffered in the hands of women, especially his wives. Here lies the weakness of the play – the deployment of Strindberg's "battle of sexes" on Nigerian gender relation in the world of the play is as foreign and obnoxious as the radical feminist separatist stance. It is, however, commendable that the playwright does not allow any of them chart a way forward in the African life of gender complementarity disrupted by colonial experience. As far as I am concerned, the wonderful play, *Dance on his Grave,* ends after the men's success at the canning scene. The later part is merely attached to assuage the playwright's urge to make his views heard on the issue of women liberation struggle, an intention that could not be realised in the play because he adopted the stance of authorial extension which allow the dramatic action to be propelled by the characters interacting among one another in specific context. There are also few occasions when the voice of the playwright is heard behind the utterances of the characters. A good example of an authorial intrusion is in Erebu's speech: "I am very much disappointed that we have been chirping like sunbirds, and quarrelling over frivolities…" (28). This is clearly the voice of the playwright casting verdict on the women's action.

Conclusion

Dance on his Grave is a good play. It is a mock feminist drama; a good dramatic literature, but a literature that talks and works. "A true play", according to Boulton Marjorie, "is three-dimensional; it is literature that walks and talks before our eyes" (3). In it, the controversy of Echeruo – Enekwe axis melts away. At a time when theatre is documented in audio-visual discs, there is no need to argue that a play is but only a documentation of a live theatre event.

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SOWING FOR THE REAPERS: THE IGBO, THE NIGERIAN PROJECT AND NOLLYWOOD HARVESTS

Professor Alex Chinwuba ASIGBO, PhD
Department of Theatre & Film Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: ogurumaja@gmail.com
&
Professor Canice Chukwuma NWOSU, PhD
Department of Theatre & Film Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: nwosucoc@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigerian film industry dominated by Nollywood films is a major employer of labour and foreign exchange earner in Nigeria. Historical review and developmental trends of Nollywood reveal the Igbo nation as a major contributor and sowers of the seminal seeds of Nollywood being harvested at present by the nation and her citizenry. However, the problem of this study is that today, like most Nigerian projects; the Sowers (the Igbo) are few among the reapers of Nollywood harvests. Unfortunately, this *monkey dey work, baboon dey chop* trend appears to cut across some other sectors of the Nigerian economy where some people toil and others enjoy. The aim of this study is to assess the contributions of the Igbo to the Nollywood industry as a major aspect of the Nigerian project and evaluate how the Igbo nation and other Nigerians are benefiting from it presently. The main objectives of the study include to ascertain why the Igbo is now at the periphery of the Nigerian project and conspicuously missing among the reapers of the harvests of the Nigerian project, despite immense contributions made to this project by the unfortunate Igbo race. The study therefore reviewed the evolution of Nollywood industry and the contributions of the Igbo as well as the consequent displacement of the Igbo by later entrants/reapers. Qualitative research method was adopted; while the findings concluded that the Igbo contributed a lot to the Nigerian project but unfortunately they have been displaced by other nationalities with unhindered access to government hence they now reap where they did not sow.

Introduction

The Igbo nation is one of the major ethnic nationalities that make up the Nigerian nation-state regarded as a project in this study. The Nigerian project was first of all a colonial contraption because it was mid-wifed by a colonist who amalgamated the northern and southern protectorates in 1914 and called it Nigeria. The historical beginning of the Nigerian nation is intertwined with colonial incursion into Africa. The portion of West

Africa being referred today as Nigeria is the natural home of some two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic nationalities like: the Edo, Efik, Fulani, Hausa, Ibibio, Igala, Igbo, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Kalabari, Kanu, Nupe, Tiv, Yoruba, and others too numerous to mention in this paper (Nwosu, "The National Question…" 88).

The Nigerian project cannot be discussed without mentioning the name Lord Lugard who played a major role in the evolution of the nation called Nigeria today. Whether, Lugard's motivation was his love for these black nations or personal ego rooted in his ambition to rule over a large colonial territory, the fact that the amalgamated territories have vast resources that were of paramount economic interest to the colonist was not out of place. Moreover the revelation that the southern protectorate is more daring and could be slowed down by the Northern protectorate if the North is made to Lord it over them was also another factor. That the North "co-operated" easily with the colonist than the South was yet another factor. Therefore putting together all these factors, one may conclude that Lugard was motivated more by colonial economic interest; political speculations of an astute colonial administrator who could easily predict the future of Africa, especially Nigeria than by altruism and love for the territory he was lumping together.

However, what started as evangelisation of Africa and establishment of trade links culminated in a conquest. By 1914, the Southern and Northern protectorates were amalgamated and named Nigeria. The British government established indirect rule and administered the country with colonial officers through the local warrant chiefs (Nwosu, "The National Question…" 88). Notwithstanding that Nigerian was a colonial conception, after a hundred years or more, the nation cannot continue to be a colonial project because at the attainment of independence the new Nigerian nation state automatically became a Nigerian project. Consequently, the study assesses the contributions of the Igbo to the Nigerian project and the place of the Igbo in harvesting the proceeds of the Nigerian project. The Igbo nation is among the big three, - the three major ethnic groups that dominate Nigerian politics that is Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo tribes. Canice Nwosu, Emeka Nwosu and Columba Ape state that; "… the traditional Igbo man like any other primordial man in most geographical enclaves of the world found himself in a hostile but nebulous environment, where he wrestled with the vicissitudes of life (111). Therefore, they conclude that, "the theory of the origin and evolution of Igbo nation is not completely divorced from Marx and Engel's widely accepted "theory of historical forms of peoples' community by concrete material reasons" (111).

Following Marx and Engels, one may argue that material tendency extended in survivalist tendency led the Igbo to occupy the present Igboland. "Hence, the Igbo nation gradually evolved from the zeal to live a settled life and cultivate the soil around presumed fertile and conducive geographical areas" (Nwosu, Nwosu & Ape 111). Regarding the location of the Igbo in Nigeria, G. E. K. Ofomata states that:

> The land surface of Igboland lies between Latitudes 4 '15' and 7 '05' North and Longitudes 6 '00' and B '30' East. It covers a total surface area approximately 41,000 square kilometres. It has a total population of 3,818,208 (1963 census

> figures) and a population density of 215 persons per square kilometre. Administratively it is made up of the entire Omambala (Anambra), Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states, parts of Delta and Rivers States (1).

However, recent studies submit that, "the population of Anambra State alone by the 2006 disputed census was over 4million. The whole of the Southeast had over 15million inhabitants" (Nwadigwe 516). There are many versions of occupation theory behind how the Igbo came to live in this part of the globe; some scholars say it was through migration, while others insist that, it was through creation. But then, J. O. Ijoma posits that, "theories of Igbo origins can be divided into three broad categories: Oriental, Niger/Benue, and Igbo homeland or independent origins" (40).

Despite divergent viewpoints among these three theories of Igbo origin, convergent points include that the Igbo nation was, prior to the colonial incursion, an independent and egalitarian tribe governed by the principles of equality and communalism. Igbo tradition, religion and culture are encapsulated in Igbo worldview, which Canice Nwosu says, "is one of the known worldviews in the African continent". Nwosu further explains that, "the Igbo worldview is parallel to the worldviews of most African tribes. However, it is among the most egalitarian, responsive, dynamic and accommodating *worldviews*" (Nwosu, "Evolving a Performance..." 135).

History of the developmental trend of the Nigerian nation-state despite geographical groupings; have other groupings and classifications proposed by political and economic pundits; however, these stratifications reveal two major categories of people that must have eluded the eyes of political and economic theorisations of the stratification of the new Nigerian nation-state. These two groups that blur other boundaries also realign ethnic groups, professionals, politicians, economists and the entire Nigerian citizenry. Though, critics may query criteria, bases and empirical data that gave birth to the two groups of Nigerians ("Sowers and Reapers") proposed by the authors, the idea stems from ideological considerations. According to Kenneth Agugoesi, ideology is a

> set of conscious and unconscious ideas that constitute one's goals, expectations and actions. An ideology is comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things (compare worldview) as in several philosophical tendencies (see political ideologies) or a set of ideas proposed by the dominant class of a society to all members of this society (a "received consciousness" or product of socialisation) (166).

Thus, to the adventurous category of Nigerians there is need to see the world as a hostile and nebulous universe that requires vision, dreams and labour, to be conquered. To the second category of Nigerians, the world is a bed of roses where others sow and others reap. This ideological conception polarises the entire Nigerian people, placing the Igbo nation as the case may be on the side of the sowers and some of the other nations on the side of the reapers. Hence, it may be a set of consciousness, goals, visions of the Igbo, or the way the Igbo look at things that make them seed sowers in the Nigerian project.

Most of the other ethnic groups put together constitute the reapers of the seed sowed by the "Sowers of Seeds". Though the seed sowers and the reapers are both components of the Nigerian nation-state; retrospectively the struggle for Nigerian independence, building of Nigerian army, most prosperous football era and development of one of Nigeria's goldmine – Nollywood industry including saving the nation from economic recessions and political quagmires; appear to be the task of the Igbo. The problem is that many of the other ethnic groups are not usually there at the unsure beginnings or troubled periods of phenomena that mould the new Nigerian nation-state. The second problem is how much of the harvest goes to the seed sowers, during fruiting and harvesting periods.

The struggle for Nigeria's independence and nationalistic movements were not only Igbo man's affairs as there were other key players like Herbert Macaulay, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Mrs. Fumilayo Ransome-Kuti and others. However, the truth remains that Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was the arrow head of the nationalistic movements that galvanised political activities and constitutional conferences that eventually led to the nation's independence. After Dr. Azikiwe must have sowed so much; the reapers took over after independence. Other events that endangered the Igbo as part of the Nigerian project are now history; today where are the Igbo? They are no longer among Nigerians who harvest the Nigerian political and economic fruits. J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu were among Nigerian army officers of Igbo extraction who toiled from the colonial army to the Nigerian army; today if you look at names that reaped the fruits of soldiering in Nigeria; Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Muhammed, Olusegun Obasanjo, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB), Sani Abacha, Abdulsalam Abubakar, T.Y. Danjuma, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, Joe Garba, and Muhammadu Buhari. The list is endless; but Igbo names are conspicuously missing.

Nigerian football was in shambles when Air Commodore Sampson Emeka Omeruah (Rtd), a man under whose watch the nation won many laurels in sports, took over the administration of football in Nigeria in 1993; and his era became the golden era of football in Nigeria. He repositioned Nigerian football and sports and his tenure became the most prosperous and golden sports era in Nigeria. Football started yielding foreign exchange and the Harvesters displaced the Sowers and till today the glasshouse has not known peace.

The likes of Uche Chukwumerije served as Honourable Minister of Information and Culture under General Ibrahim Babangida and under the Interim National Government of Chief Ernest Shonekan when the nation was in a turmoil because of political quagmire caused by the cancellation of 12 June, 1993 elections; Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo and others have been called by different administrations in Nigeria to come and rescue the nation from political quagmire, economic recession and disintegration. They laboured, sowed, carried out their assignments meritoriously and kept the nation on course. No sooner have they achieved these feats than they were displaced by the reapers.

Today, the Nigerian film industry is the pride of Nigeria, second only to Bollywood, in terms of number of films produced. Named Nollywood, a name it has come to adopt, the Nigerian film industry not only makes image for Nigeria it also

contributes immensely to foreign exchange earnings and provides employment for millions of Nigerians. According to Jonathan Haynes:

> Nollywood is an example of Nigeria living up to its potential role as the leader of Africa. Along with the rise of South Africa as a media power across the continent, we're seeing, for better or for worse, the delayed emergence of what I think is and will remain a fundamental historical pattern of dominance: South Africa specialising in the things that require large, rationally-managed capital and technical formations (broadcast media, celluloid film production and distribution, and theatre ownership), while Nigeria exploits its restless imagination, cultural depth, and entrepreneurial drive through video (5).

The question to be answered again is who are the sowers and the reapers in this Nollywood farm that is perhaps being taken over as usual by opportunists. The Nollywood industry in its development and multiplication of "woods" is becoming another seed sowed by the Igbo, but harvested by those who reap where they did not sow and displace those who laboured genuinely for the success of the project. Like most Western-oriented activities and technological innovations, Africans came in contact with film through the colonial encounter when the colonist used film for political mobilisation, propaganda and evangelisation. Colonial involvement in film notwithstanding, the history of what is referred to today as Nollywood is traced to the sowing activities of the Igbo. The history of motion picture in Nigeria dates back to the earliest Nigerian films produced by Igbo film producers like Eddie Ugbomah. "Eddie's dexterity in filmmaking was fanned by the statement made by late American actor Charlton Heston during the premiere of *Ben-Hur*, an American epic historical drama film, at the Glover Hall, Lagos" (1). According to Eddie Ugbomah:

> Charlton said that it was a shame that Nigeria (in 1959) had no film industry. That challenged 18 years old Eddie Ugbomah to pitch a career in filmmaking. The desire to pioneer a film industry that will tell the Nigerian story by a Nigerian to Nigerians (1).

The desire of this Igbo man, though like a mustard seed at its seminal beginning, germinated and grew into one of the largest trees in Nigeria, called Nollywood. Consequently, Nollywood is another contribution of the Igbo to the Nigerian project, Africa at large and the whole world. Apart from the fact that Ugbomah's pioneering role paved the way for evolution of Nollywood later, its immediate effect was the repositioning of the subjugate approach of the Colonial Film Unit (CFU). Rosaleen asserts that, there were two main approaches to production at this time, the affirmation of the culture of the colonial masters as better and the negation or mockery of the colonised culture. Films like *A New Fire Burns* and *The British Army* reflect the mighty power of the colonialists while films such as *Tarzan of the Apes* showed Africans as inferior beings that needed to be led around by imperialists (*Film in Nigeria* 1).

With the emergence of Ugbomah's films, things changed; he projected issues of national concern positively using didactic and thought provoking approaches. The seed sown by Ugbomah was watered and nurtured by another Igbo man, Kenneth Nnebue, who produced the first commercially viable Igbo video film in Nigeria, titled, *Living in Bondage*. The film was an instant success; it consolidated the achievements of the likes of Eddie Ugbomah within and outside Eastern Nigeria. The film made Nigerian motion picture industry to take a dramatic turn and Nollywood was born!

No More *Living in Bondage*

The Nigerian motion picture industry was in bondage, under the dictates of the colonial film makers until people like Eddie Ugbomah started the liberating enterprise with the production of indigenous films. Kenneth Nnebue another Igbo man with his entrepreneurial ideas and technical approach that appear to resemble the Biafran indigenous, simple, improvised but effective technology fully came to the rescue with the production of *Living in Bondage*. The production of *Living in Bondage* introduced new technological and entrepreneurial approaches into the Nigerian film industry at a time when the nation was facing a major economic recession and the government of the day had introduced structural adjustment programmes like embargo on employment, mass retrenchment of government workers and privatisation of government industries to cushion the effects of economic recession.

It is worth noting that, Nnebue's technological/artistic innovation was a child of circumstance and a response to the harsh economic policies of the government. It was a move towards self-employment and survivalist strategy for the citizenry. Nnebue's intervention not only simplified the technology of film making, it also reduced the cost of film production and made it easier for many unemployed people to enter the film industry either as producers, directors, actors, costumiers or designers. Some critics and film theorists affirm that Nnebue's creative ingenuity is a response to the structural adjustment programme in Nigeria. According to Hyginus Ekwuazi,

> … the present low level of production, distribution and exhibition activities (*vis-à-vis* the optical/celluloid film) which has led to prevalence of the video film in the industry, is a direct response to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) with the inability of the Naira to compete in the international market place… (vii).

Whether Nnebue's innovation was economically motivated or influenced by the Biafran war technological culture, the truth of the matter is that the feat achieved by this great son of the Igbo opened yet another floodgate for reapers from the four corners of the Nigerian nation-state to take over the Nigerian film industry. Indeed, it is worth noting also that being nationalist in orientation, Nnebue like his Igbo brothers had produced a Yoruba language film even before the ground-breaking *Living in Bondage.*

Obviously, many factors are responsible for the growth of the motion picture industry during the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era. This economic policy

(SAP) threw many workers out of job and many companies folded. It also led to high level of unemployment and the income level of most families became so low. The flourishing aspect of Nigerian motion picture industry that depended so much on Kenneth Nnebue's experiment became the saving grace as workers from different professions, unskilled workers, even businessmen from businesses that are not related to the theatre or film trooped into the industry, and it became a beehive of activities. Production increased while distributors extended their tentacles across the borders.

As a point of fact, there is no disputing it; the video format has kept activities in the Nigerian motion picture industry at the peak. With such an astonishing bustle and hustle, the industry is almost bursting at the seams. In video sales and rental shops across the country, the Nigerian home video is the fastest moving commodity; it costs more than even the American home video and is preferred (Ekwuazi 7). Even though the Nigerian home video improved at geometric rate in terms of quantity (the number of films produced) and distribution channels, improvement in quality remained at the level of arithmetic progression. The major factor responsible for this trend was the replacement of artistic finesse that motivated the pioneer artists who sowed the seminal seeds of Nollywood, with commercial interest and commodification. Unfortunately, the opportunistic reapers introduced strategies that truncated the intentions of the founding fathers of Nollywood; when adverts took more than half of the time allocated to the film and shot story lines are produced in five parts with "unholy" actors dominating the cast.

Consequently, rather than build and consolidate on what had been achieved, the new entrants introduced proliferation of "word". Hence, from Nollywood we have: Yollywood, Kanywood, Kallywood, Benuewood, Akwawood, Igalawood and so on. Today, given the proliferation of woods and the level of commercial interest, the harvest of Nollywood has been taken over by unscrupulous reapers and it has become, yet another contribution of the Igbo to the Nigerian nation-state where as usual, the Igbo are schemed out during the harvest period. The truth of the matter is that this has polarised the goal of Nollywood with the commercial side of the divide overshadowing the artistic cum cultural side of the polar.

Art versus Commerce in Nollywood

A major dilemma of the artist is the socio-centric pull between finesse in art and commercial interest of the artists. The Igbo pioneer film makers started the Nollywood industry with peculiar finesse and artistic quality despite the problem of funding and lean budget. There was this zeal to do things right and operate within the rules and conventions of the profession. For instance one of the Igbo pioneer film makers Eddie Ugbomah; makes films that are highly didactic, enlightening, thought provoking and most especially daring! Majority of his films like *Aba Women Riot* and *King Onyeama* were culled from real issues and events. Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* came into the Nigerian motion picture industry with a bang because of its dramatic and artistic quality. Technically, too, it is not a write off when compared to what followed immediately after its debut. Though Nnebue intruded the quick businessman's approach to film making, his *Living in Bondage,* which is "considered the inaugural Nollywood

film" (Haynes 71), met the standard of film production and was applauded by the audience ("African Cinema and Nollywood: Contradiction").

Film critics fault Nnebue's innovation and new approach and brand it the beginning of piracy degraded quality and poor sound. Their argument is that affordability and ownership of television, VCRs by middle class Nigerians around 1970s and 1980s facilitated and supported Nnebue's innovation. However, a closer look at the issue reveals that the problem lies in the abuse of this technological innovation of which Nnebue is not guilty of. When the reapers entered the industry, they replaced artistic finesse and quality with commercialisation and subsequently commodification. The craze to reap profit without hard work, to come to limelight without foundation and the thirst to market what is not marketable led to proliferation of woods like Jollywood, Kaniwood, Galiwood, Benuewood, Awkawood, Caliwood, and so on. The outcome is mass production of films without quality assurance mechanism that can assess, evaluate and control quality of Nollywood film.

Consequently, the developmental trend in Nollywood, tend to tilt more towards commerce, commercial quantity than development in quality and artistic finesse. "So far attempts to link the video industry with formal sector institutions have mostly demonstrated this grassroots mercantile culture's incompatibility with and resistance to fully capitalist structures" (Haynes 68). Ironically, still, Haynes posits that; the video films have grown into a huge phenomenon – Nigeria is now said to have the world's second largest film industry in terms of number of films produced (behind Bollywood), and the third largest in terms of revenues (behind Hollywood and Bollywood). The videos have spread far beyond Nigeria's borders, but are only beginning to be recognised, let alone assimilated, by the institutions of international cinema (Haynes 68).

This is, however, expected because businessmen hijacked what was started by professionals. Moreover, as at the time of its inception, available manpower was a major factor that militated against Nollywood as well as attitudinal issues which initially was against theatre practice generally. Actors and theatre workers were regarded as paupers, night crawlers, drunks and never do wells; that either cannot fit into other professions or were too rascally to settle down for meaningful business. Things changed for the better as more and more professionals joined the industry. Opinion poll changed alongside attitudinal change. Today, with the quality of professionals engaged in Nollywood, there is a reversal in the art versus commerce syndrome as art is beginning to dominate the pull.

Nollywood and Quality Control Mechanism

Generally, artistic finesse in every discipline and different endeavours of life is an essential aspect of Igbo cosmopolitan view of life. According to the Igbo, artistic finesse is expressed with the strength of one's right arm "Ikenga" which its full meaning is "ike ngaga" – translated as the pride of the strength of my right arm. Thus, in Igbo cosmology and pantheon of gods, Ikenga is the god in charge of finesse in arts and creativity. Nwosu affirms that: "the Igbo creativity myth is one of such mythologies which posit that; the spirit of creativity among humans is inspired by Ikenga the Igbo god of creativity…"

(*Postmodernism and Paradigm Shift*… 152). The knowledge and acceptance of this artistic finesse is what guarantees a particular level of quality in any work of art including film. Ways and means of sustaining this particular level of high standard in service and production process is called quality assurance mechanism.

According to J. P. Russell, "one definition for quality control is the operational techniques and activities used to fulfil requirements for quality" (1). He goes further to explain that, "often, however, "quality assurance" and quality control are used interchangeably, referring to the actions performed to ensure the quality of a product, service or process. The most effective quality assurance mechanism is the one that is imbedded in the people's culture, hence, it forms part of the people's professional ethics as reflected in Igbo cosmology. Artistic finesse inspired by Ikenga is part of the Igbo quality control mechanism; it is the secret of Igbo ingenuity and marvellous sense of aesthetics. This is the major motivation that propelled Igbo pioneer film makers and made them produce high quality films before commercialisation and commodification introduced the smile-to-the-bank syndrome.

Apart from artistic finesse consciousness, quality assurance mechanism can come in form of adherence to theory which helps the practitioner to recognise and keep to certain standard. Adherence to theory and conventions contributed immensely to the high quality of early modern African plays. Unfortunately, this quality assurance mechanism of modern African theatre was not sustained in its developmental stride because of sudden spread of the smiling-to-the-bank syndrome (Nwosu, *Postmodernism and Paradigm Shift…* 125). Adherence to theory as quality assurance mechanism applies to both stage and film. The disconnect between practice and theory in Nollywood industry is a minus that has not helped the quality of some Nollywood films, especially as the industry was hijacked by business men with the sole aim of making profit. Censorship is another quality assurance mechanism which affected qualities of Nollywood films negatively and positively because some contents that are censored by the Censors Board are the ones that appeal to the taste of the popular audience.

Professionalism is another quality assurance mechanism. Since more professionals entered Nollywood, quality of Nollywood films has improved. However, this improvement is in dire need of sustenance. The trend can only be sustained if more professionals enter the film industry. Remuneration in the industry must improve, the level of dishonesty and shabby treatment given to cast and crew by producers and directors lowers the level of professionalism and should be discouraged.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the Nigerian project is a macrocosm, of projects among which the Igbo have made immense contributions. The study also affirms that Nollywood is part of the Nigerian project pioneered by notable Igbo filmmakers. It is, however, sad to observe that, today, the Ugbomahs and Nnebues have not been given their pride of place in the entertainment industry, as people who sowed and watered the seed that has today germinated and blossomed to the big business that it has become. Like the Nigerian

attitude to everything Igbo, it is not surprising that the pioneers have today been forgotten, perhaps because of their Igbo blood.

This is why the development of the Nigerian film industry which led to proliferation of "woods" failed to give any preference to the pioneers but rather placed them at disadvantaged position. Consequently mediocrity took over the industry in time of harvests and the sowers now operate at the periphery. This attitude must change if sustainable progress must be made. Hence, this displacement also affected initial goals that tilted more towards artistic finesse in the industry and cultural revival. Hence, standards fall as attention shifted to quantity of films produced and sold.

Finally, the study recommends that there is need to recognise the efforts of the Igbo pioneer filmmakers and other Igbo who contributed to the Nigerian project in other areas. There is also need to revive the initial goals of the pioneer filmmakers to sustain what Nollywood has achieved. Generally the Nigerian project should be restructured and repositioned to reflect reap as you sow and encourage healthy competition.

The Igbo too should wake up from their supposed slumber and start telling their own stories. Like Chinua Achebe had opined, *no one can tell our story better than us*. As rejected stones, we must prove to the world that we are the cornerstone of the Nigerian state. This is why efforts such as this, stand commended. The Igbo are pioneers in different sectors but more often than not, these iconoclastic strides go unrecognised. This must change.

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NEGOTIATING WOMEN'S SPACES AND POWER RELATIONS IN THE HOME: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF OKOH'S *THE GOOD WIFE*

Professor Irene AGUNLOYE, PhD
Centre for Gender & Women Studies
University of Jos, Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria
Email: ireneagunloye@yahoo.com

Abstract
Gender inequality in the domestic environment continues to rare its head despite global advancement and awareness in gender and development issues. Women have traditionally been marginalised from the structures in this environment where masculinity is linked to leadership/headship within the African tradition. In this realm, there is an obvious display of injustice in the gender hierarchy. This paper will discuss the struggles and challenges women face in breaking through traditional stereotypes of gender division of space in the home environment using the Nollywood film, *The Good Wife*, directed by Okey Zubelu Okoh and produced by Chinney Love Eze, who is also the Screenplay writer. The movie which was released in 2015 features a combined array of both new and relatively old generation of movie actors and actresses like Frederick Leonard, Yvonne Jegede, Oma Nnadi, Daniel Lloyd and Ayo Adesanya. Feminist film theories which have vast potentials to reinvigorate and energise the discourse will be employed to critically analyse spaces ascribed to women in the film. These theories which will be used to deconstruct the epistemological foundations of patriarchy will also seek for strategies for transforming gender disparity and gendered behaviours in these spaces. This attempt will move the discourse on gender relations in the home beyond mere rhetoric to tackling the gendered configuration therein.

Introduction

> I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen, and my living room and the *other* room (President Muhammadu Buhari).

The quotation above, part of which makes up the title of this work, stands out as one of the most sexist remarks ever to have been insensitively made by an incumbent president about his wife. While on an official visit to Germany and standing next to his host counterpart, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Buhari ironically made such a superior-posturing remark when asked by journalists about comments his wife had made regarding his government. While it may be a reaction to criticism from his wife about his government and leadership at the surface level, Buhari's comment which is in a way displayed a sense of gender insensitivity, implicitly reflects his perception and disposition

not just about the place of his wife but that of every other Nigerian woman, especially in an era when there is a global awareness and advocacy towards gender equity and equality.

Critically speaking, the statement in question suggests a dual level of oppression and subjugation for women in Nigerian society: first, that the place of the woman in the society where she must function is the domestic domain comprised primarily of the kitchen, the living room and of course the other room (referring to women as good only for sex); secondly, that although the woman enjoys some form of dominion and jurisdiction in those places, she is only allowed to do so by the man who holds prime ownership of them and also her being. Hence, besides the confinement of the woman to the home, her functionality within such "domestic sphere" is even still dependent on the space granted her by the "boss" (man) to operate in that capacity as a "domestic officer". He stresses "MY living room", "MY kitchen", emphasising his ownership of the space and the woman's subordinate position within it.

Against the backdrop of such suppression and the various forms of discrimination against women in many aspects of their lives, the Millennium Declaration and MDGs moved for the advancement of women's right to gender equality in the world. "Eight of the key commitments set out in the Millennium Declaration came from the MDGs, the third of which is to "*promote gender equality and empower women*". In addition, the Beijing Declaration and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) also did open new window for the promotion of women's rights which have resulted in several gender sensitive laws, constitutional provisions, policies, judicial decisions, government structures and resource allocations across the world today. However, despite these global efforts and many more towards gender equality which have yielded positive results over the years with women emerging from the shadows politically, economically and socially, women in this part of the world (mainly West African Sub-Region) especially Nigeria, continue to suffer different forms of marginalisation, discrimination and oppression in their lives.

In Nigerian likewise in other parts of Africa, women remain disadvantaged and disparaged regardless of the fact that they constitute about half of the nation's population. As a result of the gender inequality occasioned by the patriarchal nature of the society, women are made to play second fiddle to the men. They are to be silent, seen and not heard; they are seen as decorative objects, incidental as opposed to the essential – the man who is the subject and the absolute. Amobi avows:

> In spite of the general belief, that an estimated 50% of Nigeria's population is made up of women and girls…the gender disparity in access to paid employment is still very much alive. This disparity which dates back to the pre-colonial era finds its roots and continues to thrive in the African traditional culture, Christianity and Islamic religion both of which preach submissiveness on the part of women. Traditional African society has stipulated clearly different roles for men and women and both sexes grow up knowing exactly what society requires of them (394).

From the cradle, boys and girls are socialised into different gender roles which will greatly influence the roles they perform when they grow up and become adults. Given the process of socialisation which entails boys and girls being engaged in activities that are classified as masculine and feminine respectively, Amobi further observes that:

> The boys would eventually become husbands performing the functions expected of them by society and the girls would become wives – both performing functions according to the norms of society but not necessarily to suit their individual aspirations. While society places the woman in the home, specifically in the kitchen, it places the man in the hunting and fighting fields… Boys grew up knowing that they had to be strong, hardworking and wise so that they could take care of their wives, children and society. Girls on the other hand grew up knowing that they had to be hardworking and submissive so that they could find good husbands who would take good care of them. In other words, it was not up to them to make their lives successful but up to their future husbands and this notion robbed them of the initiative, ambition and creativity to make a choice which would make a difference (395).

These socially constructed (gender) roles which men and women are seen to play are often propagated and perpetuated by the media particularly film. The media remains a potent tool, force and agent of ideological representations in the society capable of shaping popular beliefs and perceptions. Through representations, with the media as a catalyst for socialisation, mass mobilisation and advocacy has the power to influence social attitudes either positively or negatively. The concept of representation implies "the social process of making sense within all available signifying systems: speech, writing, print, video, film, tape and so on" (O'Sulivan 199).

The Nigerian movie industry it appears has predominantly over the years promoted gender inequality given the negative portrayal and stereotypical representations of women and femininity evident in majority of the movies produced. In them, women are blatantly represented as people with low moral standing, subservient and dependent on men and fit for domestic rather than professional as well as career roles. They are glaringly degraded through various roles and forms of behaviours and are also given restricted voices which further intensify their vulnerability. Their perceived visibility is not without prejudice and negative stereotypes since what they mostly do is to play supporting roles for the natural order (Amobi 402). According to Patrick and Ekpenyong:

> The Nigerian media is guilty of misrepresenting the woman folk. Most critics view them as agents working for the consolidation of women stereotyping and their marginalization in the society. This is so as their contents utterly trivialise or relegate women to secondary and inferior positions in the society (102).

Sharing similar thought, Chika is of the notion that the media, especially the fecund Nollywood, is one of the altars where the image of the African woman is

sacrificed. Through representations which do not reflect changing attitudes (presently noticeable in the Nigerian society) but that which rather upholds and promotes unjustified stereotypes, women are depersonalised and traditional prejudices tend to be reinforced. Therefore, by negatively portraying Nigerian women as passive, evil, dependent and subservient, the Nigerian mass media reinforces the stereotyping of women in the society (103). The media, as a result of the role it plays in the construction of women, has continually come under intense scrutiny for stereotyping women and under representing them. Describing the litany of prevalent images of women in the media, a UNESCO report reads thus: "the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, the hard faced corporate and political climber" (13).

Despite the unprecedented growth and success of the Nigerian movie industry over the years, the content of most of the movies continue to reinforce gender disparity in their portrayal of women rather than reflect messages primarily aimed at correcting societal ills. Common images to be found in Nigerian video films are largely masculinist and patriarchal in form. As observed by Fram-Kulik, "films and videos could be considered a language of their own, but the language they use still symbolises the same binary order that has dominated our society with its phallocentric perspective" (2). Correspondingly, Patrick Ebewo remarks that, "Nigerian movies perpetuate sex role stereotypes and reflect the patriarchal social values dominant in Nigerian society" (49). "The general impression is that women are negatively portrayed" (48), most likely for the male gaze.

From the early days of Nollywood film production to the present, the industry has not stopped presenting audiences with negative, objectified and stereotypical portrayals/images of women as sex objects, weaker vessels, domestic servants and the likes. They are very rarely portrayed as company executives and professionals; "rather they play domestic roles where they cause family problems or rifts, engaging in diabolical acts in a bid to either secure a husband, child, wealth or fame" (Amobi 403). While, in contrast, men are often depicted as leaders in different spheres of life in many of these films, women's role are mostly captured in domestic spaces, showing them as a marginalised group whose functions derisively revolves around those of being housewives, mothers as well as other familial/matrimonial related roles.

Clearly, Nigerian movies, more often than not, are a reflection of the system of patriarchy and thus continue to nurture and reinforce male chauvinism in the country through representations that are biased towards men and unfavourable to women. Male dominance of the movie industry in Nigeria, like many other industries, means that Nollywood's depictions of women "adhere to patriarchal structures, but with time, have masked these messages under the façade of female empowerment and independence" (Dutt 3). Corroborating this notion, Kord and Krimmer posit:

> They show us what we are, what we were, and what we could, should, or (do not) want to be. When at their best, movies give birth to new visions of female strength and freedom. At their worst, movies ridicule, denigrate, deny what real women have long achieved, and replaced it with spectres from the past (cited in Dutt 3).

However, because the media, as an agent of socialisation, is generally believed to be the main setters of public agenda, it can equally be utilised to challenge these stereotypical and negative images of women. Through counter or alternative representations being placed high on their agenda, the media, particularly film, can be employed to change the imbalance in gender relations in Nigeria through sustained advocacy which can serve as a very potent tool for deconstructing and/or dismantling the patriarchal configuration in the content of Nollywood movies vis-à-vis the propagation of gender inequality. In doing so, as Norma Iglesias puts it, "cinema creates and disseminates important symbols that we use to (re)shape representations" (225).

Against this background, this paper examines the portrayal of women in the Nigerian home video film, *The Good Wife*, to ascertain the nature and degree of domestic oppression/marginalisation the woman suffers and to essentially negotiate for her spaces and power relations in the home front beyond the kitchen, the living room and the other room.

Theoretical Framework

Film theory and criticism has been greatly influenced by feminism as a social movement. Hence, the emergence of feminist film theory in the early 1970s was with the aim of understanding cinema as it was taken by feminists to be a cultural practice that both represents and reproduce myths about women and femininity. Since its inception in the 1970s, feminist film theory which is a product of 'Second Wave' feminism, a feminist movement that began in the 1960s, has provided the impetus for some of the most exciting developments in Film Studies. Central to feminist film theory and criticism are issues of representation and spectatorship. On the one hand, feminist film theory criticised classical cinema for its stereotyped representation of women and, on the other hand, debated possibilities for an alternative (women's) cinema that allowed for representations of female subjectivity and desire. Several theoretical approaches were therefore developed to critically discuss the sign and image of the woman in film and also to open up issues of female spectatorship.

However, feminist film theory, informed by a (post)structuralist viewpoint, soon moved beyond reading the meaning of a film to analysing the deep structures of how meaning is constructed. Thus, in making use of insights from a Marxist critique of ideology, semiotics, psychoanalysis as well as deconstruction as theoretical frameworks, feminist film theory is of the claim that cinema goes beyond merely a reflection of social relations but actively constructs meanings of sexual difference and sexuality. According to Smelik,

> Early feminist criticism in the 1960s was directed at sexist images of women in classical Hollywood films. Women were portrayed as passive sex objects or fixed in stereotypes oscillating between the mother ("Maria") and the whore ("Eve"). Such endlessly repeated images of women were considered to be objectionable distortions of reality, which would have a negative impact on the female

> spectator. Feminists called for positive images of women in cinema and a reversal of sexist schemes (1).

From the point of view of semiotics, Claire Johnston was one of the first critics to offer a sustained critique of stereotypes of women. She draws on the notion of myth by Roland Barthes to examine just how classical cinema constructs the ideological image of the woman. Johnston examined the myth of "woman" in classical cinema and argues that the sign "woman" can be analysed as a structure, a code or convention, representing the ideological meaning that woman has for men. Whereas in relation to herself, she means no-thing in the sense that women are negatively represented as "not-man". This means that "despite the enormous emphasis placed on woman as spectacle in the cinema, woman as woman is largely absent" (Johnston 25-26). As the study of signs and symbols basically, semiotics or semiology as it is also called can show how ideology operates in film through its textual codes. In the words of Chaudhuri, "a semiotic reading of a film analyse show its meanings are constructed at a deeper level, through the interplay of its codes of lighting, editing, scale of shot, camera angles, dialogue, and narrative" (24).

Although semiotics shifted the focus of feminist film theory away from a naïve understanding of stereotypes of women to the very structures of gendered representation in visual culture, it was psychoanalysis that brought about the renowned concept of the male gaze. Of the several approaches to the analysis of media contents, particularly film, within feminist film theory, the psychoanalytic perspective has remained one of the dominant influences and paradigms since the late `70s. Therefore, feminist film theory's psychoanalytic perspective is a major theoretical premise for this study. In its historical context, the psychoanalytic work of early feminist film critics is revolutionary, providing a powerful, radical alternative to sociological approaches at the time. In sociological approaches, feminist film critics assess films according to the degree to which images reflect the reality of women's lives and experiences.

As explained by Gledhill, the initial interest by feminist film critics in psychoanalysis, as well as semiotics and structuralism, represented a "critical shift from interpretation of meaning to an investigation of the means of its production." It is difficult to discuss psychoanalysis as an approach to feminist film criticism without turning to Laura Mulvey's approach to film studies via psychoanalysis and feminist film theory since her 1975 article, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", is the first to consider cinematic spectatorship and apparatus theory particularly within the context of feminism, calling for the destruction of visual pleasure as a radical, feminist weapon against patriarchy (7-8). According to Kotsopoulos:

> The term "apparatus theory" refers to work of French theorists such as Jean-Louis Baudry ([1970] 1986; [1975] 1986 and Christian Metz (1975, trans. 1982) who, drawing on psychoanalytic and semiotic theories of language, ideology and subjectivity, discuss cinema as an institutional apparatus, that is, as a standardising machine whose main function is to reproduce the dominant ideology via structures of fantasy, dream and desire, which the mechanics of

> cinematic representation (e.g., the immobile spectator, the dream-like screen, etc.), it is argued, are particularly adept at rendering (12).

Somehow, semiotics led to a way of understanding how images work as signs, Mulvey believed that psychoanalysis was best situated to unlock the mechanics of popular mythology and its raw materials' (xiii). Reflecting on her work fifteen years later, she posits:

> Psychoanalytic theory provided… the ability to see through the surface of cultural phenomena as though with intellectual X-ray eyes. The images and received ideas of run of the mill sexism were transformed into a series of clues for deciphering a nether world, seething with displaced drives and misrecognised desire (xiv).

For her, psychoanalysis renders the frustration women experience under 'the phallocentric order.' In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Mulvey draws on Althusserian, Freudian and Lacanian ideological currents in contemporary French film theory (currents that were simultaneously influencing other British film critics such as Pam Cook and Claire Johnston) to reveal how filmic text communicates as well as promote dominant and sexist ideologies through an active male gaze.

Within psychoanalytic feminist film theory, as argued by Mulvey, the primary function of cinema, specifically classical Hollywood, is to trans-historically reproduce and reinforce sexual difference through the image of the woman. Shedding more light on Mulvey's thesis with regards to this image of the woman, Kotsopoulos comments:

> Woman functions as 'object-to-be-looked-at,' an image made to the measure of male desire through voyeuristic or fetishizing mechanisms that reduce or contain the threat of Otherness her lack of penis poses to the male spectator. The cinematic reproduction of sexual difference works on behalf of the assumed, universal, male spectator, making him the subject of the voyeuristic or fetishising look that has sadistic mastery over the object woman (13-14).

In other words, women are depicted in sexually objectifying as well as stereotypical and demeaning roles where they are constantly looked at and displayed for the pleasure of the male spectators.

As further pointed out by Mulvey, Hollywood movies use *scopohpilia* (sexual pleasure through viewing) to communicate through a patriarchal system. In this way, the woman "become(s) the images of meaning rather than the maker of meaning." This, according to Ross, is evidenced throughout numerous films (including Nollywood movies) where women are "undermined by lingering close-ups" of their voluptuous and curvaceous body figures and tightfitting cloths which are all "made to order for the male gaze." In such depiction and representation "…'Woman' is defined solely in terms of sexuality, as an object of desire, in relation to, or as a foil for, 'Man'... mainstream

cinema is constructed for a male gaze, catering to male fantasies and pleasures" (Chaudhuri 2).

While Mulvey's pioneering and ground-breaking essay may have been written more than four decades ago, many of the insights therein is still applicable to film production today for the obvious fact that the representation of the woman as an object and spectacle to be looked at still pervades visual culture in virtually all countries of the world, including Nigeria. Another paradigm in feminist film theory is the concept of the female voice as explored by Kaja Silverman in her book, *The Acoustic Mirror* (published in 1988). In the book which is about the female voice, Silverman, through a critical re-evaluation of both psychoanalysis and semiotics shows just how sexual difference is constructed through film soundtracks. Pointing out that the feminist critique of cinema has largely been confined to the image tracks, particularly to the ways in which woman is constructed as an object of the male gaze, she extended her analysis to the soundtrack and argued that classic cinema is obsessed with the sounds produced by the female voice (Silverman 309). Her thesis is captured more succinctly by Chaudhuri thus:

> Women's voices are invariably tied to bodily spectacle, presented as 'thick with body' – for example, crying, panting, or screaming – and insistently held to the rule of synchronisation, which marries the voice with the image. But while women may scream, cry, prattle, or murmur sweetly in the course of any film, they have little or no authoritative voice in the narrative; their speech is characterised as 'unreliable, thwarted, or acquiescent (45).

According to Silverman, the maternal voice in cinema serves as an "acoustic mirror in which the male subject hears all the repudiated elements of his infantile babble" (81). The maternal voice, although at times viewed in a positive light as a symbol of bliss and plenitude, is mostly viewed negatively, as a symbol of impotence and entrapment.

Subsequently, in the wake of the revolutionary 1960s, feminist film theory became concerned not only with a critique of classical cinema but also with the question of a feminist cinema that would deconstruct the negative and stereotypical representation of the woman and femininity. There was call by feminists for a counter-cinema that would reconstruct the image of the woman on screen which led to the gradual emergence of women filmmakers who began to develop films in the effort to create new and progressive forms of visual and narrative pleasure (Smelik 4). A feminist cinema, thus, according to Mulvey, is a counter-cinema rooted in avant-garde film practice that would "free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialects and passionate detachment" (26). As further pointed out by Smelik, "the idea was that only a deconstruction of classical visual and narrative codes and conventions could allow for an exploration of female subjectivity, gaze, and desire" (4). Without doubt, films have power that move far beyond pure entertainment. Therefore, by creating new forms of visual and narrative pleasure, they can sway our collective imagination and influence our perceptions on crucial issues related to race, class, gender, power relations etc. It is on the strength of this that this study uses the movie, *The Good*

Wife, as a paradigm to negotiate space for the woman that transcends the domestic sphere.

Synopsis of the Movie, *The Good Wife*

The Good Wife can be described as a feminist movie that tells the story of a devoted wife who is abused emotionally, physically and mentally by her husband, but in the end reclaims her agency and asserts her, locating herself in a space beyond the kitchen, the living room and the other room. It is written and produced by Nollywood actress turned filmmaker Chinney Love Eze and directed by Okey Zubelu Okoh. Starring Yvonne Jegede, Fredrick Leonard, Oma Nnadi, Ayo Adesanya and Daniel Lloyd amongst others, the movie underscores the oppressive experiences of some women in the domestic spheres. In most cases, this abuse is by their husbands.

The Good Wife is a narrative about a couple, Susan (Oma Nnadi) and Fred (Frederick Leonard), who have been married for ten years. Although they once loved each other and were happy especially while they were dating, their lives together as husband and wife is far from peaceful and cheerful. While Susan, against her aspiration, is relegated to a full time housewife despite her qualification as a graduate, her husband, Fred, works full time. They have a six year old daughter, called, Mariam, who is very fond of Susan but detached from Fred as a result of both his uncaring attitude towards her (he forget her 6th birthday) and abusive character towards her mother. Fred disrespects his wife and wants her to remain just a housewife. When Susan becomes frustrated with his constant humiliation, she asks him for some money to start up a business; he declines and accuses her of being promiscuous and seeking an opportunity to mess around with her numerous lovers. Following constant physical, emotional, mental and also sexual abuse/oppression, Susan on two different occasions impulsively runs away to Priscilla's (her friend) house. Priscilla, whose home is a safe haven for Susan every time she is abused, is not happy with the way Fred's treats his wife, even though she is related to him. She becomes a source of strength and support for Susan. In her (Susan's) absence, Fred's mistress, Bola (Yvonne Jegede), whom he was having extramarital affairs with and got pregnant, decides to move into the house. Although an illiterate, Bola is a match for Fred and would not tolerate his excesses. Her hostility and inimical behaviour in the house causes Mariam, the little girl, to run away and is hit by a car.

By virtue of the support and encouragement she gets from Priscilla, Susan gradually regains herself and begins to forge ahead with life. Also, as divine providence will have it, while she was still in the house with Fred she gets reunited with an old friend and class mate, Daniel (Daniel Lloyd), after a very long time. This re-acquaintance ultimately paves the way for her employment when she applies for a job and turns up for the interview after being shortlisted. Daniel is surprisingly yet favourably the employer who wastes no time in employing her as a Personnel Manager where he works as Human Resource Manager. In addition to their professional relationship, they eventually got emotionally involved. While Susan experiences love and happiness again, Fred is left devastated as Bola carts away his thirty thousand dollar and informs him through a letter she leaves behind not to bother looking for her and the baby.

Women's Confinement to the Kitchen, the Living Room and the other Room and the Quest for Space

From the opening scene of the movie, *The Good Wife*, Susan is immediately shown as an unhappy wife who is enslaved within the domestic sphere. Trying so hard to endure a loveless and an oppressive marital institution, she sits on the couch in the living room in the night worriedly waiting for Fred (her husband) to return. In her sitting position, she waits in vain until she falls asleep. When Fred finally returns at past six in the morning and visibly disgusted at the sight of her sleeping on the couch, he spitefully wakes her up with a kick to the leg.

Fred: So you slept off? Right?
Susan: Where are you coming from by this time?
Fred: You're questioning me – where am I coming from? Yet you went to sleep. So you didn't see me and you went to sleep?...
Susan: Fred, it is only fair of you to let me know your where about.
Fred: O really!
Susan: I have been sitting here, this is past six am.
Fred: And who are you throwing the pity party for?
Susan: You should have at least called me or sent an sms.
Fred: Is it? And you think it is in your place to question me in my own house Susan? Huh? I'm not in the mood for this drama. Your husband is hungry make something for him to eat. And please make it spicy and hot. Don't make me cold food cos he won't like it.

This dialogue from the opening scene of the movie clearly describes the existing power relation between Fred and Susan. While Fred is the head absolutely in charge of the home and the entire domestic territory therein, Susan is a housewife in the mould of a slave who is only given the authority to operate or function in designated spaces in the home. She is confined to both a demeaning and subservient position. She is to be seen in the house and not heard; she is a servant who must carry out the biddings of the master (her husband). She is always at fault and the one to blame even when she is innocent of any wrongdoing or offence. In one particular instance, Fred unfairly blames Susan for trying to turn Mariam, their daughter, against him when in fact his negligence and uncaring attitude is the reason for Mariam's unhappiness and refusal to eat. Mariam is offended that her father (Fred) failed to remember her 6th birthday (as well as her age) and to buy for her a birthday present.

Susan once had a job but perhaps because she needed to raise and care for Mariam (as a baby), she was asked by her husband to stop working and she did. However, seeing that their daughter is now grown and attained an age that would afford her ample time to do something productive, Susan begs Fred for some money to start up a business but he turns her down and accuses her instead of seeking an opportunity to spend time regularly with men.

Susan: Fred you see now that Mariam is grown up, I have enough time for myself. So I need little sum of money so I can start up a little business.

Fred: Really? So you want me…to chunk out a reasonable sum of money and give to you so that you can go out there and start a business and then use that as a license to go out on a daily basis to frolic with your numerous partners.

He accuses her constantly of infidelity despite her innocence. She is a victim of an everyday ill-treatment that entails, amongst other things, being cursed, scolded and yelled at mostly without provocation. All Susan desires by asking to start a business is a productive life outside of the domestic sphere but Fred does not budge on his decision. He says to her:

Fred: Susan, my decision on this matter is final and my answer still remains no. There is nothing you do right now that can change that decision. Alright? So you can kneel down there and cry me a river for all I care, I don't have a broken coin to give to you.

Dejected, demoralised and with tearful eyes, Susan looks at herself in the mirror, reminisces on the good moments they shared while they courted and could not believe the woman she now sees in the mirror:

Susan: (*Crying.*) This is not the life I envisaged for myself. This is not the life Fred promised me. Where did I go wrong?

Susan's case is further compounded when she steps out of the house to get some groceries in a nearby supermarket and eventually bumps into an old friend (Daniel) who then drops her off at the house. Fred, who has always suspected and accused Susan of cheating on him, is infuriated at the sight of her alighting from another man's car.

Fred: Who was that man that dropped you off?

Susan: He is an old friend I ran into at the supermarket.

Fred: Really? And since when did you start hanging out with your old friends, male ones for that matter Susan?

Susan: I just ran into him and he offered to give me a ride.

Fred: You're a lying prostitute Susan!

His overbearing character and overreaction spurs him into making irrational decisions, the implication of which is that Susan's business/undertakings would forever be limited to the house – the kitchen, the living room and the other room.

Fred: Alright, I'm going to make it really easy for you since you want to stop driving… so that you have the liberty to walk on the road, wriggle your waist, shake up your buttocks so that men will see you, would offer to

give you a ride and you oblige them. As a married woman, I will make it really easy for you; I am confiscating your car. Henceforth, you are not allowed to leave the confines of this house and that is final.

Being locked up is what Fred calls this action of his towards Susan, it means Susan will no longer have to take Mariam to school or bring her back home let alone run errands. Her duty in the house has become more outlined – cook, keep the house clean and always perform her wifely duty in the other room at nights regardless of her physical or emotional state. In one of such nights while she sleeps and obviously exhausted from the numerous chores she has had to perform all day, Fred inconsiderately comes into the room for love making:

Susan: What do you want?
Fred: I want you baby.
Susan: Fred please I don't feel well. I'm not in the mood for…
Fred: You don't have to be in the mood darling. You're my wife so I can have whenever I want.
Susan: I am your wife not a prostitute. Besides, I do not feel well.
Fred: O stop it you don't have to… (*Begins to force himself on her*.)

Although she was brave enough to resist Fred's advances on the night, she was physically assaulted. Susan's domestic ordeals in this movie are similar to what another character with the same name suffers in the movie *Mr. and Mrs.* Susan in *Mr. and Mrs.* is also assaulted verbally, physically, emotionally, sexually, and so on. By her chauvinistic husband Kenneth. Despite being a graduate of Law, she is confined to the domestic domain where she is expected to remain from sun-up to sun-down. Her primary duties, similar to those which Susan is expected to perform in *The Good Wife*, is to keep the house tidy, cook fresh meals daily for a fastidious husband who does not eat stale food and also to sexually gratify him at nights whenever he wishes.

As a result of the physical assault on Susan, because of her refusal of sexual intimacy with Fred, she runs away to Priscilla's house. Although a cousin to Fred, Priscilla never allowed their family bond to cloud her judgement as she feels strongly that Fred, been an abusive and irrational husband, does not deserve Susan. She is forthright in rebuking Fred over his maltreatment of Susan and even threatens to have him locked up. Susan, however, returns home after Fred pleads with his cousin Priscilla who in turn leaves the decision to return home or not up to Susan.

Soon afterwards, Susan is compelled again to run off after she is accosted on the road by Bola (Fred's mistress) and she goes back home to confront him. She is surprised to learn that Fred has a mistress who is pregnant for him and wants some explanation but he feels emasculated for his wife to challenge him in this regard. This to him challenges his masculinity. As a result, he does not hesitate in battering her. While at Priscilla's place this time around, Susan gradually begins to pull herself together as Priscilla begins to counsel and encourages her:

Priscilla: …It was a good thing you left before it got too late. Fred had no right abusing you emotionally, physically and mentally the way he did. So by leaving my dear, you did… the right thing. Don't go blaming yourself for leaving Mariam. When you're strong enough, we are going to fight for full custody of her.

While Susan stayed with Priscilla, Bola moves into her home to take her place although without Fred's does not fully approve of this. Fred isn't happy about it but there's little or nothing he can do because she is a match for him as a *no-nonsense* and an aggressive person. She becomes a thorn in Fred's flesh and does not tolerate his excesses like Susan did. When Fred turns off the television Bola is watching in the living room and demands to know why she did not prepare any meal, her reaction is contrary to the way Susan would have reacted – Bola is disrespectful, haughty and uncompromising:

Fred: Alright, I'm just coming from the kitchen and there is no food. I spoke to my daughter she said she hasn't had something to eat since she came back from school why? Why didn't you cook?

Bola: That's all? That's why you turned off my film? (*Gets up and takes a sitting position on the couch.*) Fred I'm tired. *Oremi,* I can't cook today. I'm very tired.

Fred: Bola, what do you mean by you are tired and you can't cook today. What then are you here for? No, tell me of what use are you to me because you don't wash, Bola you don't clean and you hardly cook. So what are you here for then? .... Tell me of what use are you to me Bola except that you sit down there every day staring at the TV set and at the end of the week you ask me for money. Of what use are you to me?

Bola: Fred … look at my condition. I can't be…

Fred: (*Very aggressive.*) Will you spare me that rubbish! You're pregnant my foot. Are you carrying Jesus Christ in that tummy? Or you're trying to tell me that pregnant women don't cook? No tell me is it that you're playing stupid or just lazy?

Bola: (*Reacts sternly.*) Eh ehn eh ehn… *a bumio*. Don't insult me o! ... Do I look like your house girl? If you're looking for a house girl I will go to *Orile* and bring one come for you. Abi? In short I don't have time to be arguing with you here. (*Starts walking out on him but is held back by* **Fred**.)

Fred: You don't walk out when I'm talking to you. You stand and listen to me, do you hear me? Next time you walk out on me I'll break your neck (*Throws her to the couch.*) Are you mad?

Bola: (*Shocked.*) … Fred, are you mad? ... Your generation has gone mad. You're a bastard Fred.

Fred: (*Attempts to slap her.*) Bola you…

Bola: What do you want to do? Slap me? You can't. (*Leans her face forward*) Oya, take it. Oyana slap me. I will show you that I was born in *Orile*. I

will deal with you in this life…. I will show you…. There is no woman that will born you and make you to slap me. You're a bastard…bastard man, idiot.

In another incident, she yells at him for coming back late – something Susan would normally keep mute about:

Bola: It shall not be well with you. You're an irresponsible man. Shebi it is now that a responsible man should be coming back to his house, by this time of the night?

Sometimes too, she is superficially polite about it:

Bola: …I don't like this way you are doing this things. I have been sleeping on the couch…last night awaiting, you did not come home, you did not even say you should come… be it four or five (*looks at wrist watch*). Look at the time – eight o'clock… because when me and I get married I don't want any irresponsible character like this in the house…. So, I just want to tell you now in peace so that we know how to handle this situation because this your irresponsibleness is just… (**Fred** *begins to walk away.*) You are walking away so I should talk to myself?... It will not be good for you! *Oloshi*! Irresponsible bastard! Imagine the time you are coming to the house? You don't like peace talk… you will suffer.

Bola's no-nonsense attitude and meanness know no bounds. She forces Mariam to wash the dirty dishes and in the process she breaks one of the plates. She is scolded by Bola who threatens to beat her and out of fear she runs away from the house and is then hit by a car on the road. Fred is livid to learn of what has happened and even begins to regret his involvement with her.

Fred: What kind of a human being are you?

Fred: Bola you are wicked. You know sometimes I wonder even to myself why I got into this mess with you. And hard to think that you are part of the reason I treated my wife the way I did. And you turn out like this? You are despicable!

While Bola's relationship with Fred disorganises his life, Priscilla's relationship with Susan empowers and inspires her, re-awakens her self-esteem. Priscilla informs Susan of a job vacancy a friend told her is being advertised and encourages her to apply as it will enable her regain her self-esteem if she is successful. She applies, performs brilliantly in the test and is shortlisted for the interview. At the interview she is shocked to be the first to be called in. To her surprise Daniel, her old time friend and class mate is the one presiding over the interview. Daniel the Human Resource Manager in charge of

recruiting competent hands in the work place, immediately offers her the job, bringing the entire interview process to a close. Having a true friend (Priscilla) by her side that is supportive and with a job secured, Susan's life is back on track again as she begins to experience happiness and derive fulfilment. Her closeness with Daniel also means that she is gradually experiencing what it means to be truly loved. Priscilla tells her while she makes up for her date with Daniel:

> **Priscilla**: I am so happy you have decided to live again. Life is too short mourning over a man who is probably having fun somewhere. You need to find true love again. You deserve it. So go have yourself some fun girl.

Susan finds her self-confidence and self-worth through the help of Priscilla. When she visited the house and demanded to see their daughter, she does not appear as the frightened, inert and docile house wife that Fred once had a hold over and controlled like a puppet. Thinking it was business as usual, he slaps her but he is immediately stunned when Susan swiftly retaliates by slapping him twice using both hands. Excitingly, Bola is standing behind Fred and gives Susan thumbs up for her bold reaction.

With life being made a living hell for him by Bola, Fred finally realises his mistakes and sees the need for Susan in his life. His ego eventually paves the way for an unreserved apology when he was at the hospital to see Mariam:

> **Fred**: (*Remorsefully.*) Susan I'm sorry. Susan I'm really sorry. I'm sorry for the way I've treated you in the past. I'm sorry for the things that I have done to you. I'm not proud of those things. Please find it in your heart to forgive me. I'm willing to make amends I beg you. Sorry for every pain that I have caused you, please.

Although the apology may sound genuine, it is perhaps coming a little too late as, in Susan's own words, "no amount of apology can erase the pain you caused me and my daughter." Susan has found fulfilment (as a worker) and so rejects the temptation of returning to a man as well as a house that holds for her memories of enslavement and captivity. Besides, her blossoming intimacy with Daniel which makes her happy again is a relief capable of obliterating from her memories the loveless relationship with Fred which left her abused and dehumanised. The happiness she finds without Fred shows that the world does not end when one leaves an abusive and oppressive relationship but that life goes on and that the better life she deserves can be found away from such relationship. In contrast, while life gets better for Susan, Fred's life is shrouded in misfortune. He returns back home from the hospital to find out (through a note) that Bola has absconded with his thirty thousand dollars and his supposed unborn baby.

Conclusion

Over the years, the image of women in Nollywood video films has been that of negative stereotypes which is capable of negatively influencing the perception of the society about

women. This trend has made the treatment of women in films a critical subject of inquiry that has continued to occupy the realm of discourse with many feminist scholars and critics questioning the sexist depictions as well as negative stereotypical representations of women in Nollywood video films either as whores, sex objects/emotional objects of gains, passive and docile house wives in the mould domestic slaves, desperate and materialistic spinsters, gold-diggers, diabolical and scheming to say the least. Such portrayals demands to be countered, especially in a world where women's access to and active participation/ representation in the power arena socially, politically, economically and otherwise remains greatly restricted and which in turn undermines their status and roles.

Therefore, there is the dire need and urgency for a counter-cinema or an alternative video culture to the dominant male-oriented regular Nollywood video film narratives given that the media as a potential agent of socialisation and of social change is a major view that continues to form the nucleus of discussions especially of the relationship of the media to women's issues. As part of efforts to counteract the masculinised and hegemonic film industry in Nigeria which has for long been in the habit of producing movies with biased depictions and stereotypical portrayals of women, female filmmakers are gradually emerging from the shadow and rising to the occasion to deconstruct as well as to reconstruct the image of the Nigerian woman in these films. Such is the case of, amongst others, *Mr. and Mrs.*, which is a 2012 Nollywood video film, written and produced by Chinwe Egwuagu and *The Good Wife*, which served as a paradigm for this study, produced and written (screenplay) by Chinney Love Eze.

With the gradual emergence of female filmmakers either as producers, writers or directors, and so on, even though the number needs to greatly increase, the responsibility lies most with the (few) women behind the camera to champion the cause of reconstructing the image of Nigerian women according to present realities of women's positive undertakings and potentials in the society either in the home front, workplace or political domain. The few women in the business of filmmaking at the moment should as a matter of necessity engage their male counterparts in the industry creatively and constructively on the need to respect womanhood and avoid exploiting women's image through negative stereotypical portrayals. By getting women to tell their stories from their own perspectives, the image of the Nigerian woman in films can be more accurately refashioned in accordance with present realities and bring about more positive and dynamic representations. Through a resolute counter-cinema, the image of the Nigerian woman in Nollywood video films will no doubt be redeemed since the media, especially film, are potent instruments for creating and strengthening images of reality, which according to Gerbner, Gross and Signorelli provides a concentrated system of storytelling that surpasses religion in its power to change or shape perceptions (80).

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NAVIGATING LANDMINES AND PATHWAYS: INTERROGATING NEW APPROACHES TO THEATRE MAKING IN NIGERIA

Professor Emmanuel S. DANDAURA, PhD
Vice President
International Association of Theatre Critics (Worldwide)
Email: dandaura@gmail.com

Abstract
The growing global economic uncertainties have in recent times been attended by a cutting down of costs by corporate bodies and families alike. In most developing economies, the perennial scaling down of budgets has meant dwindling provisions for leisure and entertainment. This accounts for the sharp drop in theatre attendance in most of these countries. In Africa where people are used to enjoying folk theatre performances in the open community squares for free, the idea of paying for tickets to attend theatre becomes more and more unattractive. The growing cases of global terrorism and general insecurity in most societies has made it even more difficult for families to see the wisdom in risking attending theatre productions at night, what more to spend scarce family income on tickets when there are cheaper and safer alternatives at home by way of cable television and soap operas. Undaunted the theatre makers have been reinventing their audience engineering strategies and production approaches. This paper is an incursion into the new approaches theatre makers have adopted to keep their art and professionalism afloat in the face of persisting harsh social and economic realities.

Introduction

What is often glibly referred to, as Nigerian theatre nowadays is an amalgam of both the *traditional* and *modern* theatre traditions. The traditional strand is indigenous, eclectic, boisterous, diverse, and abounds in every community. This strand of theatre manifests in two forms. First, in the form of purely ritualistic performances, chants, masquerades, and festivals of the over 450 ethnic groups in Nigeria. Secondly, it also manifests in the form of age-long, entertaining and highly educative story-telling performances, folktales, fables, proverbs, idioms, praise songs, mimes, and dances performed during social events. Unlike its modern counterpart, traditional Nigerian theatre utilises any open space as its stage, with or without modern technological support and shies away from purely mercantile considerations.

The concept of theatre as a profession or enterprise is better associated with the modern Nigerian theatre strand, which subsumes theatre produced by *government-owned arts councils* in all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria; *experimental* theatre*;* and box-office driven *Yoruba Travelling Theatre* and the *literary* theatre traditions. *Experimental theatre* refers to the ideologically driven applied

theatre/theatre for development workshops that draw from the traditional theatre production aesthetics to lace their socially relevant messages. Their performances spaces range from the market squares, street corners, and other open spaces where people are found. In terms of structure, the performances are basically exploratory, fluid, unscripted and emphasise research, horizontal communication, people-centred development, and social change as their raison d'être.

The literary strand of modern Nigerian theatre, on the other hand, is a by-product of Nigeria's experience with colonialism and the intervening European theatre traditions. This is the category of theatre Oyin Ogunba describes below:

> Apart from the popular travelling theatre of Ogunde and his followers, there is also literary drama, which is pre-dominantly Anglophone, largely university-based and elitists. One of the first practitioners of this mode was James Ene Henshaw. He wrote several plays including *This is Our Chance* (3).

This strand of Nigerian theatre emphasises scripted plays, western literary canons, imported theatre technology and box office collections. Rather than the total theatre performance format of the indigenous theatre forms, the literary theatre encourages compartmentalisation of the theatre enterprise into different professional callings as playwrights, directors, choreographers, designers, critics, and so on. These professionals strive to earn their living by collaborating to *make* theatre in enclosed buildings, which are specially designed for such purposes.

This paper interrogates the challenges that have attended the development of modern Nigerian theatre in the face of the growing economic downturn of the last decade. Our emphasis is on the modern strand of Nigerian theatre described above because the traditional Nigerian theatre strand being a communally owned cultural product has remained robust and perhaps more resilient in the face of the growing financial challenges affecting the modern strands. This paper shall dwell more on theatre as enterprise in Nigeria.

Emergence of Professional Theatre in Nigeria and the Search for "Newness"

In 1945, Nigerian Theatre was set on a search for "newness". Hitherto, theatre was a communal activity, which was jointly created, executed and enjoyed by the people. Though theatre was part of the social and religious lives of the people, it was not a full time vocation or practiced as enterprise. Talented artists and designers engaged in it for free or as a part time vocation.

A Traditional Nigerian Open-Air Performance (Credit: Nzeh Mada Festival Secretariat)

However, the formal establishment of the African Music Research Party (later Ogunde Theatre Party) in 1945 as the first ever-professional theatre in Nigeria (Clark 4) introduced new dynamics to theatre making and consumption. The precursor to this bold move by late doyen of African Theatre, Hubert Ogunde, were the intervening English and European styled operas and concerts by popular artists like Handel and Mozart in Lagos city of the late nineteenth century. According to Ogunba, "the actors, concert groups and clientele of the foreign tradition were the new, Westernised elite… Similar concert groups were set up in lbadan and Abeokuta" (6).

African Music Research Party (later Ogunde Theatre Party) in Performance in 1945

However, Ogunde's effort in 1945 was significant because it was the first recorded effort by a Nigerian to eke out a living solely from live theatre. This venture was not without its pains, because from day one Ogunde's managerial acumen was continuously put to great task. In order to survive, Ogunde continuously reinvented his strategies. He was in persistent search of what was "new" as far as the taste of his audience was concerned. Sometimes, he resorted to "not too conventional methods" to keep his theatre company afloat all through the over three decades of its existence. For instance, in order to survive the stiff competition from the concert party and musical maestros like Bobby Benson that enthralled most of the audience in the 1950s, Ogunde acquired modern musical equipment and rebranded his production format to include an opening and closing glee. These were basically short musical sessions that catered for the new musical craves of his audience. In 1969, during his performance tour of the UK, Ogunde and one of his wives had to learn the tap dance in England to further enrich the opening glees of his performances. Ogunde also rebranded the name of his troupe a couple of times to keep in tune with the changing tastes of his audience.

Overall, Ogunde's search for "newness" was driven by the need to sustain the interest of his diverse audience and surmount the numerous challenges he was confronted with, from the social, economic to even the political challenges like his imprisonment by colonial authorities over the *subversive content* of some of his artistic works. His understanding of the changing tastes of his audience was what led to the unending transformations and refocusing of his performance structure, choice of themes and medium of expression. This also explains his engagement with the different performance media like theatre, dance, music and film. However, Ogunde was conscious of his ultimate goal, which was to use his performances as means to entertain, educate and inform his audience. Ogunde's appointment as the founding Artistic Director of the

National Troupe of Nigeria by the federal government in 1989 is a testimony to the success of his theatre enterprise.

Worthy of note is that Ogunde's bold venture opened the vista for the emergence of the numerous private theatre companies in most Nigerian cities to date. First to key in were the educational institutions starting with the University of Ibadan's School of Drama Acting Company, which later became the Unibadan Masques in 1967, Wole Soyinka's 1960 Masks, which gave birth to a full fledge professional company, the Orisun Theatre Company, in 1964. Ola Rotimi's Ori Olokun Acting Company (ACT) located at the then University of Ile-Ife, In the 1970s came the Performing Arts Company of the Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies, ABU, Zaria, Bode Sowande's Odu Themes, and a lot more. By the end of the 1980s most of these companies were disbanded for several reasons, Barclays Ayakoroma opines that principal among these was poor funding:

> The university performing companies were conceptualised as business ventures that could be self-financing. Unfortunately, the austerity measures that were introduced in the mid-80s, coupled with the harsh business climate, made the operations of these theatre companies unviable (6).

Besides the University based performing troupes, there were private theatre companies that also catered for the needs of the Nigerian Theatre audience from the 1980s like PEC Repertory Theatre in Lagos, Ajon Production Company in Ilorin, Anansa Playhouse, and Wizi Travelling Theatre. From the 1990s, there was the introduction of more theatre companies in capital cities like Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Jos, among others. Top among these recent companies are: the Crown Troupe, Lagos in 1996, Jos Repertory Theatre established in 1997, Thespian Family Theatre, Lagos, Ijodee Dance Company, Lagos in 1998, Renegade Theatre, Lagos in 2007, and Arojah Royal Theatre, Abuja in 2009.

Defining "Newness" in Modern Nigerian Theatre

A cursory look at contemporary trends in the 'professional' Nigerian theatre environment reveals that while the population in these urban centres has increased tremendously, the impact in terms of theatre attendance remains minimal. A myriad of socio-economic realities have conspired to complicate the case of the private theatre companies trying to drive theatre as enterprise in Nigeria. For example, some of the challenges like insufficient professional theatre infrastructure, funding, poor government support, which were faced by the early theatre companies, have become even more complicated in recent times and like *landmines,* remain threats to the growth of professional theatre in Nigeria.

The crux of this paper is to examine the pathways being created by the current crop of Nigerian theatre makers to circumvent these landmines. The pathways define what we also refer to here as the "newness" in modern Nigerian Theatre. The paper argues that these pathways are motivated more by the need for the Nigerian Theatre makers to survive in the face of dwindling funding and patronage of their theatre products than the crave for self-expression or aesthetics. The "newness" discussed here is therefore

essentially market driven than motivated by any inner desire for self-expression. First let us examine the conditions (landmines) that have made the search for "newness" in Nigeria Theatre a necessity.

Mapping of the Landmines on the Nigerian Theatre Terrain

Modern Nigeria theatre, like most national theatre traditions, has its challenges. Some of these are peculiar to the Nigerian environment, while others, like the challenge of dwindling sources of funding for the arts, are essentially global. In a recent review of Nigerian theatre, Barclays Ayakoroma concludes thus:

> Theatre practice in Nigeria has not been really vibrant over the years; the theatre profession has not created good jobs for trained artists; ... Unlike other professionals, theatre artists have not consciously tried to make a living out of the theatre; Funding is a major challenge militating against theatre practice in Nigeria (12).

The landmines within the Nigerian Theatre terrain are of two broad types. The *surface mines* are those common challenges whose dimension differs from one company to the other or those that are more within the control of individual theatre companies. These include the limited sources of funding, dwindling audience/patrons, competition from cable television and social media, and so on. The *underground mines*, on the other hand, are those deep-rooted challenges that are beyond direct control of the theatre companies. Often these predate most of these theatre companies and greatly threaten the sustenance of professional theatre practice in Nigeria. First, let us discuss some of the *Surface Mines:*

Dwindling Sources of Funding: The dwindling sources of funding for activities in the arts and culture sector has exacerbated in the last two decades in Nigeria. However, while film, music and other popular entertainment forms still enjoy relatively better financial support from individual patrons and corporate bodies, live theatre in Nigeria is alienated from this limited financial pool by the years.

Lopsided Distribution of Corporate Support: The involvement of corporate entities in funding the Nigerian arts and culture, a development spearheaded by few commercial banks and the telecommunication companies from 1999, is yet to make significant impact on live theatre in Nigeria. This is against the relatively higher interest shown in funding reality television shows, stand-up comedy, and Nollywood (popular name for the budding Nigerian film industry).

Since the headquarters of most of these corporate bodies are in Lagos or Abuja, theatre companies located outside these two major capital cities are invariably at a disadvantage in terms of securing funding from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets of these few corporate bodies. Theatre companies located in the other 35 states in Nigeria outside Lagos, often have to either depend sole on irregular patronage from state governments, or travel to Abuja or Lagos to compete for the highly limited

corporate sponsorships. The producer who braves it to Lagos soon discovers, on arrival that most of the corporate patrons have since granted their sponsorship deals to troupes within Lagos or its environs.

Lack of Government Support and Transparency: Over the years, government has played a lip service to funding of the arts in Nigeria. The national endowment for the arts has been in the 'drawing board' since late 1980s. Therefore, there is hardly any sustainable grant or regular financial support from government for theatre productions. The provisions of the *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* that pertain to government's role in the funding and promotion of Nigerian arts and culture has remained as dead as the paper upon which it was printed since 1988. The few opportunities that come from time to time to get government patronage for theatre productions are also not openly competed for but cornered by theatre companies whose chief executives have deep relationship with government officials.

Dwindling Theatre Audience/Patrons: The current economic recession in Nigeria has meant increasing loss of patrons and disappearance of regular audiences that frequent productions in Nigerian theatre. For theatre makers, this trend is a disincentive to creativity and administrative planning even as it is a debilitating disincentive to corporate bodies that are in a position to invest in theatre productions.

Competition from other Entertainment Forms: The Nigerian theatre maker's stiffest competition does not come from fellow Nigerian theatre makers but other sources leisure and socialisation – television, cinema, social media, nightclubs, bars and recreational gardens (Dandaura, & Asigbo 45). All other avenues where the brazen or intellectually stimulating entertainment is offered deplete the already thin Nigerian theatre audience. A condition worsened by the inconsistency of theatre productions, which also adversely affect the cultivation of sustained followership for theatre.

The cumulative impacts of the aforementioned landmines are enormous. First the absence of sustainable sources of funding and patronage has impacted negatively on creativity as most companies opt for less challenging productions that will cost them less to produce. Investment into major theatrical productions that will compete favourably with Broadway productions and the like are avoided.

Underground Mines

To continue our thematic metaphor of landmines, the underground mines in the Nigerian theatre terrain point to the polemics of whether or not a Nigerian theatre industry exists. In answering this question, I have summarised the frame upon which theatre as enterprise is founded into four key factors. These factors are fundamental to the existence of a healthy theatre industry regardless of the prevailing economic systems, religious leanings or state of development of the host community/country. These four pillars, *Infrastructure*, *Technology*, *Labour*, and *Industrial framework*, must interact effectively for a performing arts industry to thrive as a commercial venture.

Infrastructure: This refers to the stock of basic facilities and capital equipment needed for functioning of the art form; *technology* refers to the devices or instruments needed to undertake the creation of the work of art; *labour* refers to the creative, technical, administrative and other individuals involved with or who influence the creation of the work of arts; and, *industrial framework* refers to the matrix which connects the various aspects of technology, labour and the market, for the purpose of sustaining the creative enterprise and cultural production. Without technology, labour and infrastructure cannot interact to any productive level; in the same way that without labour, technology remains lifeless machines gathering dust in a facility; and without these three in balance, industrial framework cannot come to be, because the predicating dots to connect into a network will be missing.

Theatre infrastructure, which serves as both the factory and market for theatre production, as already indicated above, hardly exist in Nigeria besides the few state owned cultural centres across the country. This is a reality Chris Nwamuo highlights thus:

> a good number of theatres in Nigeria have very poor facilities, such as lack of rest-rooms, water including lack of comfortable seats for members of the audience, who pay to watch performances. This gives rise to situations where members of the audience are uncomfortable…. Naturally, such members of the audience and those who feel greatly disturbed will bid eternal farewell to the theatre after that type of experience (34).

In terms of technology, churches and other non-theatre events use the bulk of the available theatre lighting and sound equipment. Thus, modern technological aids taken for granted in most European theatres are hardly available to most of the private theatre companies in Nigeria, because they lack the funds to acquire or hire them. Labour on the other hand, is readily available, however, the low avenues for the utilisation of this labour force have limited the capacities and competences of labour available to feed the Nigerian theatre. Consequently, there is a weak framework to grow the theatre industry, hence the polemics of whether or not a theatre industry exists in Nigeria. Jahman Anikulapo summarises his impression of the situation with Nigerian Theatre thus:

> we cannot expect the art, the entertainment produced by artists living and functioning in this stifling environment to be well rounded in all creative departments as that produced in other societies where there are, at least, the basic infrastructures that enable creativity to flower; that encourages clean, clear thought, and make provision for facilities, including social respect and understanding; and thus assist the artist to concentrate on the business of thinking and creating (4).

Perhaps in other to appreciate the problem better, let us compare the above situation we have identified in the Nigerian theatre enterprise with the more successful Nigerian film and music sectors.

In the Nigerian film sector we find similar circumstances to theatre. The most relevant infrastructure to a film industry includes nationwide distribution of cinema halls and/or high quality and affordable broadband access. Compared to its population and potentials, Nigeria currently has grossly inadequate cinemas exhibition halls. The few available are sparsely located across the country. This has impact negatively on the growth of the Nigeria film industry. This is so because the availability of a variety of film distribution channels creates the environment to allow for large scale viewing of films, and invariably expand the market size and platform for a successful film enterprise. Technology on the other hand has had the strongest impact on the growth of Nigerian cinema because it is as available as labour. Therefore the industrial framework in place for filmmaking lacks the needed cohesion that could allow Nigeria maximise her filmmaking potentials.

The Nigeria music sector, on the other hand, is better positioned as an industry because of the relatively better mix of the four fundamentals already identified above. This has in turn ensured its sustained growth, which has seen local genres like *Juju*, and *Afrobeat* gaining full international recognitions. The infrastructure for Nigerian music exists with new musical studios springing up sporadically across the 36 states and the federal capital territory, Abuja. A second vital infrastructure which links audience to producers (the "marketplace" of music), which are radio, television and the internet, are also in good supply and under no threat as they are part of a value chain which transcends music. This is unlike the situation with the theatre houses and film sectors. Technology is also available to the Nigerian music industry as it is in the film sector. Consequently, the performance of the Nigerian music has been on the increase in the last three decades. Thus, the success of the Nigerian music industry has confirmed our earlier position that a good mix of the aforementioned four fundamentals is a sine qua non for a thriving theatre enterprise. Herein lies my submission that the most fundamental challenges facing the development of Nigerian theatre as enterprise are akin to underground mines as against what we discussed as surface mines earlier.

Non-Inclusion of the Performing Arts in the Formal Economic Sector: Other underground landmines include the fact that, the performing arts sector in Nigeria operates within the non-formal economic sector as its activities are largely not regulated or considered worthy of any serious economic value. This makes it difficult for any serious investment to come into the sector as the financial institutions consider the theatre a high-risk investment space.

Security Challenges: The onset of terrorist activities in Nigeria in the last decade has dealt another devastating blow to sustainable theatre practice in Nigeria as the few patrons left find it very risky to be out attending productions late at night (Dandaura, & Asigbo "Dry Bones…" (152). In the alternative, such patrons turn to television soap operas and productions from the budding Nigerian Nollywood industry. This is yet another underground landmine as the security challenges is outside the direct control of the theatre companies. Other challenges include: High cost of theatre productions,

inability of theatre companies to generate supporting or internal income, and poor understanding of theatre as enterprise.

Pathways Created by Nigerian Theatre Companies

In the bid to effectively navigate the landmines, the contemporary Nigerian Theatre makers have adopted several 'new' production and management strategies. The 'newness' of these strategies is defined from the perspective of the cultural context of their usage and not necessarily that they are new in the true sense of the word. Some of these 'new' approaches might have long been in use in Europe and other parts of the world with longer traditions of theatre as enterprise. Within the Nigerian context, some of these new approaches to theatre making could be summarised as follows:

Theatre Festival Seasons: The introduction of annual European styled theatre festivals in some major cities by theatre producers backed by rich patrons and international organisations are gaining momentum as the most visible platform for theatre producers to exhibit their works. The Lagos Theatre Festival, which was created by the British Council, Nigeria, and supported for the past three years is a good example. This festival runs a variety of shows for about a week every February. This Lagos Theatre Festival has motivated the creation of new plays and fresh opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas between theatre producers, festival curators from the UK and the rich mix of Lagos audience. Though at the moment, this approach of having special theatre festival seasons is one of the few that give the budding practitioner a feel of the operational set up of a functional theatre industry, it lacks the frequency, funding and intensity required to sustain theatre makers as full time professionals.

Boundless, Found Theatre Model: This approach sees theatre taken away from the physical structure of a hall and put in *real*, day to day physical locations which were not originally built for theatre production, thereby bringing a raw and unfiltered theatre experience to the audience. The new theatre performances spaces are found in car parks, garages, gardens, street sides, filling station, or whatever environment the dramatic content requires. This approach has also received some encouragements from the British Council, Nigeria. Among Nigerian theatre makers that are experimenting with this approach is Kelvinmary Peter and of late Arojah Royal Theatre, Abuja. Om'Oba Jerry Adesewo, the executive director of Arojah Royal Theatre advances here part of his reasons for his choice of this production approach:

> There is not a single theatre space in Abuja and the halls available are too expensive for us to afford in the business sense of the word. That's how we find ourselves here. Call it 'Parlour Performance', if you choose (*Daily Trust* 21).

This production approach could be said to part of the legacy practice of the Yoruba travelling theatres in the 1940s-1960s. Itinerant theatre practices go in search of audiences in their natural habitat rather than pull them out to a theatre structure, thus it is equally expensive when one compares the cost of transportation and accommodation of

cast and crew. As a commercial venture, the risks are difficult to calculate because one can hardly guarantee the availability of an audience willing to pay for tickets in the mobile locations.

The other challenge with this production approach is that it limits the extent the theatre makers can express themselves in terms of producing visually expressive performances that will give the audience an aesthetic experience near to the 'magical' experiences offered by cable television and film. The use of modern theatre technology that could enrich the aesthetic experience of the audience is also limited.

Adaptations of Western Musicals: Also a direct consequence of the aforementioned challenges is the renewed craze for adaptations of Western styled musicals on the Nigerian theatre scene. These have seen the creation of productions like *High School Musical Nigeria* (KiDZtrust in 2010), *Grease Naija* (Krump Studios in 2013), *The King and I* (Strauss School of Music and Arts in 2013), *Disney's Frozen* (El-Amin International School, Maitama in 2015), *The Sound of Music: with Nigerian Spices* (University of Abuja in 2016). This resort to adaptations of popular European texts derives its inspiration from the experiments by travelling troupes from Nigerian Universities in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The performance of these adaptations leave more to be desired as the audience sees Western performances being haphazardly executed by local amateur actors, dancers and singers who have neither the historical link, exposure, or professional training to effectively interpret the adapted foreign creative works. Consequently, while the unsuspecting audience might enjoy or comprehend some scenes in the performances, the overall effect gives the feeling of a stylistic and cultural mismatch, which makes it difficult to build a critical mass of followers that could translate into subscription based audience for a professional theatre.

Limited Cast Plays and Minimalist Theatre Production Approaches: The harsh social and economic terrain has encouraged more companies to opt for limited cast productions and less dependence on elaborate costumes, scenery and lighting. Notable performances in this minimalist tradition are Arojah Royal Theatre's production of Adinoiyi Ojo Onukaba's four man *The Killing Swamp* in 2010, African Renaissance Theatre's production of Africa Ukoh's six character *54 Silhouettes* in 2013, Majmua Theatre's production of Abiodun Kassim's four-man *Band Aid* in 2015, Patrick Otoro's production of Ola Rotimi's five character *Grip Am* in 2016, and Ojo Onukaba's three man *Her Majesty's Visit* also in 2016.

This limited cast and minimalist production approach may have the greatest impact on the development of playwriting in Nigeria should it become a dominant Theatre production strategy. Numerous plays from Nigerian playwrights of the first, second and third generations require large casts of performers, they being the equivalent of the Western musical, bustling with song, dance and evocations of communal traditional African life. So prevalent were these grand plays in the time of the first three generations of playwri1ghts that some considered the spectacular drama-musical as the only way Nigerian/African drama and theatre should exist. From the fourth and fifth

generations we begin to see a shift from this trend as necessitated by economic realities. Of course, large cast and spectacle-driven theatre is not completely abandoned but plays with fewer characters appear to command the interest of most producers. As such audiences themselves have come to embrace the intimacy of these minimalist theatrical offerings.

Split Performance Model: One innovative production approach adopted by some theatre companies in Lagos in 2015 saw theatre makers splitting performance runs across the four or five Sundays of a month. Rather than run for two or three days, a performance would be scheduled for each Sunday and where possible the play would run twice, successively, on one day. However, this experiment seems to be fizzling out since the beginning of 2016.

Corporate Integration and High Budget Broadway Styled Musical Productions: Despite the comparative limitations faced by theatre in accessing financial support, the corporate world remains the most likely source of funding. With the aid of some major telecommunications giants like Etisalat and MTN in Nigeria, there is an emerging new strand of high budget Broadway styled productions that are designed to satisfy the taste of a wide range of local and intercontinental audiences. However, in order to attract such corporate sponsorship, theatre makers need to integrate the brand identities and campaigns of the corporate bodies into their events. This strategy has proven most successful in Lagos. Two notable examples standout in this regard: Ifeoma Fafunwa's *Hear Word* in 2016, supported by the Nigerian telecommunications company, Etisalat. *Hear Word* took its star-studded show on a world tour across Nigeria, the United States and Amsterdam; and Bolanle Austen-Peters' *Wakaa! The Musical* supported by Nigerian telecommunications giant MTN, gaining the performance runs in Lagos and The Shaw Theatre on London's West End.

One of my concerns with the Broadway-styled musical craze is that it favours escapism as against serious socially relevant productions. Since most corporate organisations exist basically for profit, they strive to make money regardless of the socio-political atmosphere. This means they must not fund productions that are overtly political or critical of the political class no matter how callous it is. This is the situation Carrier and Johnson, critiquing the British theatre bemoan below:

> Musicals have been doing stunningly well, but all serious theatres rely on donations and they have been drying up.... Several leading venues for overtly political drama have either closed or are under severe pressure (76).

Thus, the kind of productions that get funded here are those that promote banal entertainment or essentially conformist artistic creations. Such light-hearted theatre productions rob society of the needed self-reflectiveness, which ultimately leads to growth and better living conditions.

In terms of aesthetic appeals, these high budget Broadway styled productions are visually exciting and utilise modern theatre technological aids to support the performing

artists on stage because the corporate sponsors prefer spectacle-and-celebrity-driven theatre as this best captures the grandeur, which they want their brands to be associated with. However, the impact of this corporate integration option hardly stretches beyond the performance run of the sponsored show. Also, the decision on which theatre production to fund is often subjective as there is more reliance on board room horse-trading than an open competitive selection process where only productions that could have significant socio-political impact win the sponsorship. These and many more factors limit the ultimate benefits Nigerian theatre can derive from such corporate involvement.

*Poster of **Wakaa the Musical** in London*

The success of Saro in has led to many more commercially successful musical theatre productions like *Wakaa*, Grandma Wura Theatre performances which targets young audiences.

From the discussion so far, it is obvious that while political, economic and social circumstances surrounding the Nigerian Theatre scene have changed considerably since 1945, the challenges and approaches towards solving them have remained similar. Is it, therefore appropriate to conclude that the attempt to firmly establish the Nigerian Theatre as enterprise has seen the theatre makers merely running in circles? What really is the current crop of Nigerian theatre makers doing to chart pathways that could guarantee greater audience engineering, increase box office earnings and ensure the commercial viability of the performing arts sector? These are some of the questions we shall address in the next section.

"Newness" in the Sources of Funding Theatre Productions

Just as modern Nigerian theatre producers are navigating the landmines through experiments with new production approaches, so also are they finding pathways out of the perennial challenge of poor funding. At this juncture, it may be beneficial to survey a few of these 'new' survival strategies.

Cultural Partnership with Embassies in Abuja ('Cultural Diplomacy Initiative'): Cultural partnership is a new trend, which is becoming popular in Abuja where most of the foreign diplomatic missions are located. This is the attempt my theatre makers to develop professional working relationships with the cultural arms of foreign embassies in order to secure financial support for their productions. The choice of plays in this case is essentially drawn from the works of major playwrights from the home countries of the embassies supporting the venture. These productions are often organised to mark national days of these foreign countries or significant events in the history of such countries like the American Black History Month. The forerunners of this style are the Patrick-Jude Oteh's Jos Repertory Theatre Company, Jos and Jerry Adesewo's Arojah Royal Theatre Company, Abuja.

A scene in August Strindberg's 1900 play, ***Dance of Death Part 1*** *performed by Arojah Royal Theatre, on Saturday, 28 June, 2015 at the official residence of H.E. Mr. Svante Kilander, Swedish Ambassador to Nigeria*

As innovative as this strategy is, partnership with Embassies or what the *Daily Trust* calls, "Cultural Diplomacy Initiative", is limited to promoting the interests of the embassy concern. This cannot sustain a viable Nigerian Theatre enterprise because often,

what could be of interest to the embassies is determined by interplay of factors in their home countries than genuine concern for the development of sustainable theatre entrepreneurship in Nigeria. This reality means that the content of performances from this initiative might have little cultural value or appeal to the larger Nigerian Audience.

UN designated Special International Days: In an attempt to secure funds from government ministries and other potential sponsors, some theatre companies have organised their annual theatre festivals around UN designated special international days like the International Day for Women, World HIV Day, The Day of the African Child, International Theatre Day, and so on. The idea is to have short run of select plays whose themes compliment the objectives of such UN designated special days so as to secure the prior support of sponsors and ultimately audience interested in celebrating such special days.

Self-financing: Like Hubert Ogunde did in 1945, today some theatre practitioners fund their productions with resources from other personal ventures or savings. Gold Ikponmwosa's Royalhouse of Gold and Africa Ukoh-led African Renaissance Theatre are two notable theatre companies in Abuja employing this funding approach. From February to June of 2016, the two companies collaborated to produce six shows (each running for three days at the end of the second week of the month) at Silverbird Galleria, Abuja.

The danger with the self-financing option is that since the source of finance is from an individual whose resources are often shared with other equally demanding wants and needs, any disruption to the flow of the individual's income leads to a collapse of the theatre production process. Also, if the budget of the self-financed production, as is more often the case, very low and the minimalist production approach fail to impress the audience, their experience cannot translate into core following and the needed consumer loyalty aborted.

Crowd Funding/Patron-financier systems: Only recently the Jos Repertory Theatre experimented with the crowd funding online platform, which was not too successful as recounted by the producer, Patrick-Jude Oteh in a recent interview in 2016:

> We needed to raise USD $25,000 but we ended up raising $200. The operation of the platform was another experience on its own. In fact, for me it is an industry whose workings we did not understand before we went into it. There are people who will help to jumpstart your fundraising, …broadcast your appeal… ensure that you got into the right 'channels' of the crowdfunding network… but all these for a fee!!! You will have fees ranging from $20 - $1,000+

Adedoyin Owomabirin, a theatre producer who is based in the South-Western part of Nigeria, is also currently experimenting with the terrestrial crowd-funding approach. His new patron system targets contributions from potential audience members functioning as long-serving financiers of theatre shows. The challenge with the patron-financial is with the current state of theatre audience engineering and development in Nigeria. In order to

engender and sustain the interest of any theatre audience to subscribe to a theatre, one needs to first build brand loyalty through frequent good quality productions. This requires sustainable sources of funding, which is of course hardly available.

Networking with Companies within the Entertainment Value Chain: Theatre companies and makers are increasingly realising that there is much to be gained from mutually beneficial partnerships and being part of entertainment hubs, professional clusters and networks. Partnerships with closely related businesses like restaurants, cinemas, event centres, lighting companies, and so on, are also on the increase as part of the strategy to lower production costs by getting services provided directly by a partner rather than paying for such. The partner in turn gets publicity or services the loyalty of its stakeholders by hosting them to theatre productions or publicity during productions and promotional materials. The experiment by Bolanle Austen-Peters at Terra Kulture arena in Victoria Island, Lagos where a purpose built theatre performance arena coexist with a restaurant, book shop, craftshop and art gallery is a bold example of this model of theatre survival technique even though in her case she owns the property and the auxiliary businesses.

Main bowl of the 400-seater Terra Kulture Arena Theatre at Victoria Island, Lagos Courtesy: Ideas Photography

Theatre Enterprise and Criticism in Nigeria

One of the essential supports commercial theatres require to run profitably is a vibrant theatre criticism tradition and of course the medium the critic uses to communicate to his audience. This is because often the decision of the audience as to what performance to spend their hard earned money on is partly dependent on the mediatory role of the critic. How then is theatre criticism faring in Nigeria?

Theatre criticism in Nigeria started as a casual activity than a profession. In the late nineteenth century when the British colonialists introduced English and European styled operas and concerts into the Lagos city, the colonial officers and the emerging local intelligentsia who attended such shows captured their experiences in form of memoir which they shared with friends and loved ones. This gradually translated into

public writings through *Iwe Iroyin* Nigeria's first newspaper in 1804 and an academic journal called the *Teacher*. The 'critics' at this time were mostly white colonial officers and a few Lagos elites who had studied abroad. The rebranding of this journal as the *Nigeria Teacher* in 1933 sharpened its focus and interest in artistic and cultural events in the country.

The establishment of *Nigerian Field Society* by expatriates staff of multinational companies and some teachers in Missionary schools galvanised interest in theatre criticism. Then came the regular publication of the *Nigerian Magazine*, which was managed by Frank Aig-Imoukhuede who was the secretary of culture in the colonial office. The German scholar, Ulli Bier's regular contribution of reviews in *Nigerian Magazine* and the *Nigerian Field Study journals*, culminated into his founding of *the Black Orpheus*, which provided platform for exposure of works of theatre critics who were basically either broadcaster or writers like Segun Olusola, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Charles Nnolim, John Munonye and later Ben Obunzelu, Theo Vincent, and Dapo Adelugba, among others. The founding of the university college, Ibadan (now University of Ibadan) in the 1948 and arrival of theatre scholars like Martin Banham and Geoffrey Axworthy in the 1950s saw the emergence of academics as the major players in theatre criticisms in Nigeria. This engagement at the University of Ibadan produced new generation of critics and writers like Femi Osofisan, Yemi Ogunbiyi, Ossie Enekwe, Gordini Darah, Odia Ofeimun.

The First and second editions of Festival of World Black and African Arts and Culture (FESTAC), which Senegal and Nigeria hosted in 1966 and 1977, respectively, brought a renewed interest in theatre criticism by Nigeria Newspapers after the lull occasioned by the Nigerian Civil war, which lasted from 1967-1970. During and after FECTAC'77 most Newspapers and broadcast medium created regular columns and programmes dedicated to the arts and culture criticisms with theatre enjoying prime focus. First to take advantage of this was the *Punch Newspaper* with music critics like Dean Disi, John Chukwu, Laolu Akins, Benson Tomoloju, then Eddy Aderinokun of the *National Interest*. In the broadcasting industry was Benson Idonije with the then popular *Top ten Chart* musical programme whose reviews were also published in the newspapers. Next platform for theatre criticism in the Press category was *Concord Newspapers*, after which that came the introduction of specialised supplements/ newspapers like *Spears* (published by *The Punch*), *The Drums* (franchise from South Africa operated in Lagos) and the *Lagos Weekend* of the *Daily Times*, where more names like Ladi Ayodeji, and Azuka Jeboise Molokwu were added to the list of budding critics.

With the debut of Ben Tomoloju's 'Review Desk' at the then *Weekly Democrat* in 1983, fresh impetus was given to arts criticism as a profession in Nigeria. This was to come to greater fruition with the establishment of *The Guardian Newspaper* in 1984, which ushered in the first full-fledged Arts Desk of a newspaper in Nigeria with its complements of full time staff dedicated to arts criticisms. Jahman Anikulapo appraises the situation thus:

> a certain section of the Nigeria mass media has evolved and sustained a consistent and forward-looking tradition of arts journalism practice in both the

> print and electronic media. Indeed, it is the sheer commitment to the noble ideals of culture, buoyed on a sound intellectual base that made the leading light of arts journalism to plunge head-long in the late 1970s into a vocation that they felt needed to be professionalised in accordance with the demands of journalism (2).

Sadly the golden era of theatre criticism in Nigeria described above has since nose-dived. A combination of several factors are responsible for this, one of which is the suffocating harsh environment described above in which the Nigeria theatre operates. It will be stating the obvious to say the theatre critic's job is in jeopardy if the theatre makers are not producing maximally. Anikulapo is apt on this:

> Criticism can only thrive in an environment where there is room for creativity. But when you live in an environment that stifles creativity, you cannot expect criticism to thrive. You want to look at the work of art, you want to talk about somebody's performance – a dancer or a visual artist – you must look at the environment of performance (3).

Anikulapo goes further to explain his personal experience and resolution as a Nigeria theatre critic:

> I don't want to go through the exasperating experience of writing comments on works that are by all the parameters for critical discourse are substandard; especially works I know… the dirty thing that people had to go into to raise money to produce a play. I have once been a witness to a lady theatre producer having to befriend a banker just so to be able to pay the balance of his cast and crew fees, when the supposed sponsors ditched her at the last minute (3).

As majority of the trained critics abandon full time work to become 'culture activists' or in search of full time appointments in the Universities, or even to become private business men in other sectors of the Nigerian economy, the space is left to journalist and other freelancers that have little or no training in theatre studies. As is expected, their reviews of theatre productions lack depth since they see their roles essentially as news reports or at best writers of memoirs from the perspective of a casual audience member. Even for the few that have learnt the craft of theatre criticism on the job, the economic crunch has robbed them of their objectivity as critics. So, they often write according to the extent of the gratifications they have received or expect from the producers of such performances. So, rather than provide independent professional evaluations that could guide the creators and the audience in their subsequent choices, these 'critics' merely serve as the marketing agents of theatre companies commissioned to secure favourable media mentions for their principals.

Perhaps, this explains why outside the academia, there are today very few notable names as far as theatre criticism is concerned compared to the golden age of theatre criticisms in the 1970s and early 90s. Arts editors and writers in the Nigerian mass media hold very little influence as theatre critics today unlike what is obtainable in the UK and

US broadways. Besides *The Guardian Newspaper*, which has also lost most of its vibrant theatre critics, there are very few credible publications in the Nigerian press as far as theatre criticism is concerned.

Though the campus based theatre critics keep Nigerian theatre criticism afloat to date, it is instructive to note that their contributions remain largely inaccessible to the bulk of the theatre makers because they are published in academic journals that have very limited circulation and readership compared to the newspapers. Even here one notices the infiltration of vanity publishing producing poorly edited academic journals that contribute little or nothing to the development of theatre criticism as a profession in Nigeria. There is also the challenge of limited avenues for engagement between the theatre industry and the academia in Nigeria. Majority of the vibrant theatre critics who contribute to academic journals have minimal exposure to emerging trends in the Nigerian 'theatre industry' since they hardly attend performances beyond the university-based theatres.

While it is gratifying to note that some of the trained theatre critics who have stop practicing as full time workers like Jahman Anikulapo started resurfacing as bloggers and arts advocates who still write regularly. However, the emergence of a new crop of 'online citizen theatre critics' whose only qualification is that they own mobile devices that can connect to various social media platforms has deepened the complexity of this scenario. What is certain is that, as an ephemeral art, no good theatre survives posterity without the full complement of a critic. Indeed no theatre industry can thrive without a vibrant culture of criticism.

Conclusion

We have so far conducted an environmental scan on the variables that interplay within the Nigerian professional theatre scene. We have identified some of the critical social, economic and cultural factors that, like landmines, continue to pose serious threats to the development of Nigerian Theatre as enterprise. We have shown that the modern theatre makers are equally undaunted as they try to invent or reinvent old approaches in new ways to keep their theatre businesses afloat.

However, in spite of their resourcefulness, the 'newness' in their approaches is only relative as most of the strategies are drawn from already existing paradigms albeit with slight modifications to suit the Nigerian environment. It is also evident that as interesting as some of these pathways or 'newness' are, at best interim measures that may not provide an enduring solution to the landmines. They may provide the needed palliative measures to keep the theatre makers going but they certainly cannot guarantee the theatre producers a means of livelihood as full-time professionals. This cannot be until the fundamental issues retarding the building a theatre industry in Nigeria needs are addressed systematically.

As the foundational problems remain unattended to these approaches see Nigerian theatre makers skipping – sometimes shabbily, sometimes deftly – the surface landmines only to inevitably land on the deep-lying landmines which are engrafted into the very path itself. The question that begs to be asked is: when dealing with landmines on a path what is the best solution, *avoiding* them continuously or *uprooting* them once and for all? I will go with the last option but that requires commitment, political will and

huge financial resources to put the necessary infrastructure in place. Theatregoers need basic comfort, facilities and regular power supply in the theatres and of course security, regular salaries for those employed and good roads as they commute to the theatres. It is also necessary for all stakeholders to take their responsibilities towards the development of an enabling environment for theatre enterprise and allied businesses to thrive.

Among the initiatives that come to mind readily here are as follows:

a) There is an urgent need for the government to step up efforts towards the establishment of the national endowment for the arts as specified in the 1988 *Cultural Policy for Nigeria*. The tedious process of reviewing this 1988 policy document to incorporate emerging trends not earlier envisage while the initial policy was crafted also needs to be brought to a logical conclusion soonest.
b) Corporate bodies and well to do individuals interested in supporting theatre need government encouragement by way of tax wavers and the like to establish foundations that could guarantee their sustainable involvement and institute fair competition for the funds.
c) National Theatre's Open Theatre initiative put in place in the 1980s by the management of the National Theatre to encourage the development of amateur and professional theatre practice in Nigeria needs to be revisited. This will open up the space for performances in the fringes to get better exposure through occasional performances in the national theatre.
d) The Annual Nigerian Universities Theatre Festival (NUTAF) needs to be supported by the relevant stakeholders and repositioned for sustainability to provide more room for experimentation by young theatre artists and increase their professional exposure even while they are still in training. Indeed most of the emerging playwrights in the fourth generation actually 'cut-their-teeth' during this annual festival before it went into limbo in 1997. In its first twelve editions, over 136 new plays were produced.
e) The Nigerian theatre makers need to think globally and act locally in their choice of productions, programme design and networking. The consolidation of the strategies that have worked for each of the companies is necessary and should be encouraged so that theatre companies can leverage the gains recorded by their sister companies in navigating the landmines.
f) Finally, concerted efforts need to be made to nurture the return of professional theatre critics to the Nigerian media scene. The veterans also need further encouragement to utilise available social media platforms or at least columns in newspapers to make their contributions towards providing the critical voice the Nigerian Theatre makers require to navigate the landmines and evolve enduring pathways that can grow the Nigerian theatre enterprise.

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POST-CULTURAL IDENTITY OR POST-IMPERIALISM: CULTURE AS HYBRIDISED PRESENT IN THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Professor Emman Frank IDOKO, PhD
Department of Theatre & Film Arts
University of Jos, Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria
Email: emmanid@yahoo.com

Abstract
Culture and language have always been an area that has undergone several discourse processes and discussions with variety of perceptions bandied. All these are geared towards attempts to identify areas of convergence that will serve as possible arena for development. Incidentally, this area of discourse is fraught with issues related the concept itself. The contact variously, the continuum of society makes it problematic to contextualise and utilise for such end results. Several emergent structures, both in consonance with an existing hegemonic (depending on the situation of this hegemonic, Western or strictly domesticated (?)), or as a counter to the existing structural imperatives-cult groups, religious groups, tribal groups etc., impinges upon it gravely. At the end of the day, there is a hybridised contextualisation that is imminently new, a phenomenon that, when accepted, would actualise desired goals of development. Would we accept this 'new' phenomenon as a terrain that can engender development? Would the recipients of this new culturally hybridised space or the artists that produce these, understand the contraption that is evolved or would the hegemonic play out in the end? This area must be understood for it to serve as 'real cultural' and/or basis for a desired consciousness shift in Theatre for Development.

Introduction

I only have one language, yet it is not mine. The contradiction resides not only in the statement, but in the universal reality of language. That we speak, that we may only speak one language, that one language seems like home to us does not mean that we have any possessive control over that language; it does not mean we own it. Something always remains outside our experience of using language. "Each time I open my mouth, each time I speak or write, I promise". The promise dwells in language as its call to a language, which it can never be, which we can never have, and the promise always threatens; it terrorises (Glover 67).

We are starting this critical engagement from this premise because of the fantasy of ownership and possession of communication medium in the area of creative engagements and communication. As a result of this, the assumed possessor imposes the language and culture that 'is originally colonial', and makes sense only when we begin to

learn it, gaining mastery over it, that we begin to claim legitimacy over the space. This is in spite of the clear impossibility of such possession. With the foregoing, it clearly authenticates the possibilities of the issue of language/culture and its utility within the premises of development in creative processes of theatre, being a bit more complex than we could ever imagine. The important issue is that there is a complexity that requires articulation first, and secondly, placed within the terrain of analysis and raking out its functionality, may not be in tandem with the consciousness and kind of effect desired by the concerned. All these issues are discussed within the structure set as alternative dramatic practice, which is termed, Theatre for Development (TfD), with its processes guaranteeing likely shift in consciousness in the interest of the communities engaged with. The question of this 'ownership' guaranteeing 'liberation', 'empathy', 'emancipation', 'giving power back to the people where power originally belongs', utilising the structure of this dramatic practice, is what this discourse intends to interrogate.

We would start this discussion by first stating one of the most frequently used clichés in the genre of TfD. It is always considered to be 'theatre for the people, by the people and with the people' because of its inherently democratic approach in the creative dialoguing process. At the end, after going through what constitutes the practices and analysing the basic characteristics that underpins this theatre, with the language/cultural concerns, we can then deduce if the used cliché is appropriate for the description of the genre. According to Augusto Boal, the proponent of this kind of theatre, it is a poetics of the oppressed, which essentially is "the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters to think or to act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself (Boal 155).

Boal began his approach by bringing into the fore the limitations and dangers inherent in Aristotelian theatre as it is consumed by modern audiences. He therefore, does not accept Aristotle's thesis on empathy and emotion because he feels that "…empathy is the emotional relationship which is established between the character and spectator and which provokes, fundamentally, a delegation of power on the part of the spectator, who becomes an object in relation to the character" (Boal 102). Accordingly, empathy immobilises the actor and dulls his consciousness. The spectator, who, through the technique of suspense, is sold to an indiscernible outcome in the action of the phenomenal dramatic rendition to provide pity and fear, is severely attacked by Boal who says it is preferable for the spectator to turn from being 'passive' recipient of the dramatic feat into a 'subject' or an actor in the whole process of societal transformation, rather than mere 'spectator' who is fed variously with an illusory reality.

Theatre is seen as a language and the barrier that existed between content of the drama that is produced, with the people's history, and their linguistic medium of expression is conveniently broken. It serves as an avenue where collective deliberation; and re-evaluations of relationships become an open intellectual insight and consent reflecting a collective experience. Theatre of the oppressed, therefore, develops the capacity of everyone to utilise that language,

> with the objective of trying to discover what oppressions we are suffering; second, to create a space in which to rehearse ways and means of fighting against those oppressions; third, to extrapolate that into real life, so that we can become free-which means we can become subject and not object of our relationships with others (47).

In this genre of theatre, it is the oppressed that is significant and not the theatre. Boal states thus:

> The Theatre of the Oppressed is a system of exercises, games and techniques that help everyone, whether professionally involved with the theatre or not, to try to develop a language that he or she already possesses (Boal, "Politics, Education…" 47).

The theatre we are concerned with here is one that tries to develop the capacity of everyone to utilise that language, in attempting to discover the nature of the oppression we are in and to rehearse ways and means of fighting such oppressions, all in a bid to become subjects in our various relationships with others.

In the language of the "Theatre of the Oppressed", it is the oppressed not the theatre, which is important. The oppressed person himself or herself is the artist that creates images through which to rehearse ways of liberation. That's why we also go into the realm of education, because images convey ideas. Images are a language that the child can create. Sometimes they have not mastered their native tongue well enough to express themselves precisely. Using the images of theatre techniques can allow youngsters to speak more profoundly what they want to say. And that is precisely why the theatre of the oppressed is a language (O'Tool & Donelan 48).

The oppressed supposedly takes advantage of the paraphernalia that is their forms of engagements, the costumes for festivals and other sundry activities, their songs and dances, their instrumentations, and so on., create through rehearsals images that highlight his liberation. Due to the fact that images convey ideas, the actor or participant becomes the focus. Theatre constitutes a powerful tool for the creation of aesthetic space that gives room for a democratic exchange. In this democratic space, the participant has the free hand to change images created of him to suit his own newly articulated self.

In theatre, the fictive image of self is changed to the newly acquired self-image, a progression from the fictive to the real world of exchange. In the process of the rehearsals, the actor penetrates the theatrical mirror image that is fiction, into another more concrete articulated self. But if the image is wrongly presented, due to mis-articulation or aural and (or) linguistic displacement, then the new image constitutes a lie. Theatre of the oppressed, therefore, searches for a correct way of communicating the correct meaning. Since theatre is language, it becomes a suitable tool for developing the self and by extension the community, and again, by extension the nation, and the world. In a performance situation, therefore, be it a scripted play with stereotypes as the character or not, the stereotypes would be used to better understand what is beneath the character. Boal argues that it does not really matter if the storyline is based on a scripted

play as long as the stereotypes are understood within the framework of the problem. Accordingly, therefore, in part two of the interview, he says that,

> if we are not stereotyped ourselves as spectators, we are going to use those stereotypes to understand better what the stereotype hides in persons. Because the stereotype is to repeat the same thing and not creatively. And the idea of Forum is to break, to destroy stereotypes by discovering what's behind the stereotype. Because sometimes the stereotype also gives comfort to people (4).

Sometimes, these plays are based on some predictable moral positions. But Boal says that it is not a problem either. Utilising the Forum Theatre approach, through questions and critical discussions, the situation is taken care of, because it is not the end that is important but the process. Says Boal in part one of the interview:

> What I believe is the most important effect of Forum Theatre is not the solution that we can find at the end, but the process of thinking. Because what I believe is that in normal theatre, there is a paralysis, the spectator paralyses his power of action and he is suffering the empathy of the character and for some time he's only answering, he is only doing what the actor does; only feeling what the actor feels, the character feels. And what is important for me is not exactly the solution that we found, [but] the process of criticising, observing and trying to find solution. Even if we don't find any solution at the end of Forum Theatre, I say, "OK, it's good. We did not find that solution, but we looked for it" (1).

The process, therefore, is the goal and not the end in itself. You are presenting reality and society on trial. When you place such situations or stereotypes within the context of society in general, 'spect-intervening', dialoguing, the dialectical position emerges and the group take a stand based on their understanding of the reality that has been placed on trial. This theory of Boal was experimented in various locations in Africa with specific reference to the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The other most critical experiment was the Kamiriithu community that took place in Kenya, an experiment handled by Ngugi wa Thiongo and Ngugi wa Mirii. Ngugi wa Thiongo says that:

> Kamiriithu then was not an aberration, but an attempt at reconnection with the broken roots of African civilisation and its traditions of theatre. In its very location in a village within the kind of social classes, Kamiriithu was the answer to the question of the real substance of a national theatre. Theatre is not a building. People make theatre. Their life is the very stuff of the drama. Indeed Kamiriithu reconnected itself to the national tradition of the empty space, of language, a content and of form (43).

The question of using the indigenous language was addressed when he came to Kamirithu. This according to Ngugi, forced him to have an epistemological break with his past, particularly in the area of theatre. He turned to the usage of Gikuyu with a

conclusion that, "the question of audience settled the problem of language choice; and the language choice settled the question of audience (43). His conviction stems from the fact that the barrier that existed between content of the drama that is produced, with the people's history, and their linguistic medium of expression is conveniently broken. The product, Ngugi argues, is "a content with which people could identify carried in a form which they could recognise and identify: their participation in its evolution through the research stages, that is by the collection of raw material like details of work conditions in farms and firms" (59). Most of these practices have leaned heavily on the theories of Augusto Boal. Iyorwuese Hagher indicates that,

> the community theatre for development appears in Nigeria to have descended from the experiments of Augusto Boal and Paolo Fraire in Latin America, through East African experiment in Kenya, especially the Laedza Batanani campaigns to Botswana and the Chikwakwa travelling theatre in Zambia… (3).

Both Freire and Boal have also been influenced by the work of Bertolt Brecht, especially with his break with conventional Aristotelian theatre. The intention generally is to create in the practice of theatre, openness for participation towards a democratic decision-making in the creative process, to an extent that conscientisation is to be achieved. Theatre for development is concerned with achieving the objectives of development through theatre where there is an attempt at what Chris Nwamuo describes as "bringing the people within a particular location into consciousness and awareness to the extent that they can take positive action towards the improvements of their lives in the interest of communal stability and nation building" (78-79). This is why Steve Oga Abah contends that in making the choice of adopting theatre for development it must be viewed "as a practice that concerns change in the society, on which is concerned to return a certain amount of power to where it was originally" (3), enabling easy mobilisation toward action, and identifying their needs and suggesting ways of solving them. These needs should be evolved from specific communities who would contribute to the definition of the development and communication agendas, and evolving concepts such as participation and empowerment that would project to the forefront, replacing pre-packaged messages as a communication strategy with democratic dialoguing.

Culture and its Relationship with Language and Ideology

It is easy to conclude from Ngugi regarding the language issue. Beyond the politics of multilingualism within the African states, and Kenya in particular, several issues come into play. Because the relationships inherent in a production process and the likely ideological/cultural issues that would arise with language guaranteeing and 'carrying' the former, it becomes expedient to understand the workings of the contentious existences. The desire to utilise the language of the people, their forms, traditions and cultures, unfortunately make these seem isolated areas that can be brought in as *Deux ex machina.* Are they really separate areas that are only effects of the people's histories, or serve as part and parcel of these histories? For every relationship in production, either one of textualising, or performing, in performance, there are ideological contestations which

invariably affects whatever meaning that is presented not on a one-to-one equation, as is with the base and superstructure narrative or 'determinisms', or causalities, nor as the case may be 'mere' manipulation or 'mere' opinion, 'it is a whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, our ordinary understanding of the nature of man and his world. It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear reciprocally confirming (Williams, *Problems in Materialism…* 38).

It would be difficult to draw a line or even attempt a description or definition of what culture that is carried by language in any relationship is or should be. As a result, we would begin by peeping into assumptions, suggestions and conclusions in relation to this complex parameter. Would we conclude that culture is 'a repertoire of beliefs, styles, values, and symbols, therefore we can only speak of cultures, not just culture; because for a collective mode of life presupposes different modes and repertoires. Hence, the idea of a global 'culture' is practical impossibility, except in interplanetary terms (Smith 1). Or can we reduce it to sets of solutions shared amongst us as universal problems of external adaptations (how to survive) and narrowing it to the internal dynamics of how to live together, as Schein, in Yeboah Kwame's *The Impact of Globalization on African Culture* attests as evolving over time and are handed down from one generation to the other? (4). Or can it also be simply put as a situation of changing our activities reflecting the changing times based on the changes in the environment in which it exist? Baffoe, Hofstede, and Adler see this phenomenon as collective programming of the mind that differentiates members of one group of people from another with the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence group's response to its environment. It is therefore not an abstraction, but a product of a complex inheritance constantly submitted to scrutiny and the need to adopt a constant conquest to achieve. It is agreeable therefore that, no culture is possible without a language. It has been noted that culture is bound up with language. This is an essential pre-requisite and hence to kill a language is to kill a culture.

This debate has been on for a long time and has refused to leave us. It has turned into a stranglehold that we revert to unconsciously to seek out easy ways of arriving at solutions without first understanding our situations. At the end, from whatever conclusions reached, there is the tendency to see art, literature, textual production, and performance as resulting from an existing determining factor (Selden 432). Accordingly, therefore, too much emphasis is given to a determining base in the whole societal relationship; the superstructure placed on a mere reflection of an already existing base with an epiphemonous status creates an impression of the various dialectical contradictions acting in isolation of each other. At the end, Lukacs' position is in no way at variance with Adornos'. This is instructive in Adorno's conclusion that "art and reality standing at distance from each other and that gives the work of art a vintage-point from which it can criticise actuality" (188). For Althusser production is placed "instead to a region somewhere between 'knowledge' and ideology. Arts can achieve this, because it is able to effect a 'retreat' (a fictional distance) from the very ideology which feeds it" (Selden 456). Lukacs' opinion is that; "reality is indeed out there before we know it in our heads, but it has shape, it is a dialectical totality where all the parts are in movements and in contradiction" (171). Adorno criticises Lukacs precisely because he transfers "to

the realm of art categories which refer to the relationship of consciousness to the actual world as if there were no difference between them" (Jefferson 188).

We are not just relating art to society but studying all the activities and inherent inter-relations, without any concession of priority to any one of them we may choose to abstract (Selden 432). Is it about difference? What kind of difference and where is the connectivity/interrelationships that should engage and is engaging both areas? In any production therefore, what is it that is tacitly implies and what does it does it not clearly state? In other therefore to say anything, there are other things not said "and to reach utterance, all speech envelopes itself in the unspoken" (Machery 85). Therefore, the mirror is expressive in what it does not reflect as much as in what it does reflect… the absence of certain reflections, expressions-in certain areas, is a blind mirror: but it is still a mirror for all its blindness (85). What therefore is there to conceal from the recipients? Eagleton in his *Criticism and Ideology* sees Althusser's 'absences' as an 'essentially negative conception of the relationship between text and history'. In spite of the relationships between the contradictions in text or any creative engagement, not being one of direct reflection, Eagleton sees some form of connection. So that, according to him, instead of 'focusing on the gaps and absences, he suggests there should be concern for complex mediation that govern the relation between history and production'.

These issues: 'determinations', 'absences', 'overdeterminations', and 'causalities' are the concerns of Williams, when he attempted to evolve a likely discourse that would transcend these problematic through the concept of hegemony. He tried to explain it this way:

> hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural... but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which as Gramsci puts it, even constitutes the substance and limits of common sense for most people under its sway… (37).

Williams tried to further espouse on the issue of hegemony, by making reference to the Dominant, Residual, and the Emergent. These he explains and clarifies, that the hidden other in production processes, the unexplained 'absences' as couched within the complexity of relationships in ideological power play within a creative work. Therefore, all activities that interplay with each other affects meaning at the end and not isolated except when attempting to give its specific understanding within the context of production. Through 'selective traditions', 'accommodation', 'integration', 'coercion', the existing subordinated cultures and institutions give credibility and workability of the dominant traditions/culture. These exist in hegemonic cultural institutions. They serve as conduits of values and norms that legitimise the functions of the dominant.

The deep relationship between the residual, the emergent and the dominant impinges greatly on interpretative mode, in control and domination. The residual, playing a function of legitimating the status quo and accepting as common sense whatever relationships that are crafted, for its consumption. It behoves on us to effectively stress that the supposed superstructure that is immanently seen within the framework of

literature, art and all creative processes, as being determined by an existing super economy or material as the base is particularly faulty. That is because, within the said superstructure there is a lived process and a huge ideological contestation as it relates with the supposed base, which in itself contains ideological contestations and as both areas related symbiotically with no particular overriding dominance. The unsaid meaning is the manipulative space where hegemony functions for purposes of same domination and control.

So, for whatever creative process we are engaged with, be it textual production, playwriting, the processes of Theatre-for-Development, there is interplay between language, ideology and culture. It becomes extremely important to articulately understand these complexities in relationships in order not to further complicate the area of desired reception of meaning. Even within the scope, it would be instructive to concretely relate them with the post-colonial situation that this artistic creativity is inchoately enmeshed. It is imperative to note that language, culture, ideology and thought, have an intricate relationship. When discussing these phenomena, the utility of one often denotes the utility of the other. Culture constitutes an all-embracing terminology. Ngugi wa Thiongo, in *Decolonising the Mind,* concludes that language is a carrier of culture. Conclusively, from this specific delineation, culture embraces one's concept of reality. Because language and culture are inseparable, and every community or groups conceive reality differently and as a 'lived' process, we must view culture differently.

The production of cultural practices may create an omniscient position outside the action itself, of the actor in production. This conscious neglect of the effecting variables outside this specific activity itself renders all other actions necessarily subordinated to the whole, and by some error, produces a monolithic identity rather than attempting to evolve a multiplicity of meanings and positions, without any form of false claims that would be extended to the audience as receptors. The alternative 'subject' audience and subject actors and representations become necessary in order to produce contradictory multiplicities of subject positions with varieties of accessibilities. This makes the participant in the dramatic activity already as subject because he or she has a history of ideological existence. Rather than talking on the meanings brought to bear in the creative processes, we can safely now talk about interrelationships where the 'subjects' would have been contextually determined, in which they all play relevant part, in their contextual determinations. But determinations?

Williams argues that history is a process but this process contains a subject that cannot be controlled, at the last instance. Hear his argument:

> Determination is a real social process, but never (as in some theological and some Marxist versions) a wholly controlling, wholly predicting set of causes. On the contrary, the reality of determination is the setting of limits and the exertion of pressures, within which variable social practices are profoundly affected but never necessarily controlled. We have to think of determination not as a single force, or a single abstraction of forces, but as a process in which real determining factors – the distribution of power or of capital, social and political inheritance, relations of scale and size between groups – set limits and exert pressures, but

> neither wholly control nor wholly predict the outcome of complex activity within or at these limits, and under or against these pressures (133).

Language impinges greatly on our thinking faculties. Therefore, relating our consciousness with what come out as spoken language, several likely variables affect the structuring of thinking itself. When works come out therefore, it would be grossly inadequate to discuss the meanings and by extension, the cultural imperatives that it may carry along. For Williams,

> all cultural forms and practices, even those colloquially considered to be debased, commercial, banal or frivolous, are embedded in larger social processes and can thus potentially serve as indexes of those processes with equally as much "hermeneutic success" as more sober cultural forms (126).

He concludes that while the social that takes the form of history and as that which is 'fixed' or 'finalised', is in error because history and the social are constantly in reform and in revision and ''in process' with the present acting on the past and the past informing the active present'. Therefore,

> in most description and analysis, culture and society are expressed in a habitual past tense. The strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products…. This vision of experience as finished product is habitually projected, not only into the always moving substance of the past, but into contemporary life, in which relationships, institutions and formations in which we are still actively involved are converted, by this procedural mode, into formed wholes rather than forming and formative processes (Williams 128).

A Critical Look and Major Concerns

The Emotional/Empathy in the Process

The problem of empathy has dominated the theatre scene from after the Aristotelian era. This has become a problem because there is the conception that emotion dulls the intellect. Bertolt Brecht developed his *Alienation Effect* in order to discover ways of erasing empathy in the theatre. In his theory, he intends that the *Fourth Wall* that separated the audience from the action on stage be broken down so that the action is not seen as a kind of ritual. He wanted an intellectualisation of the discourse of subject matter in the theatre. This is carried further by Boal who felt that the individualisation of the action on stage must be removed. Rather, the theatre must be seen as an area of academic discussion and not an illusion. The discussion must focus on the history of the people's struggle as its subject matter rather than some far away issue. But this whole concern for the removal of emotions in the theatre is a removal of feelings. And if feelings are erased, then humanity is erased. How can you intellectualise on an issue if you do not feel strongly about it?

Your internalisation of the subject enables the actor, the audience/participant understand the workings and complexities of such a subject. It is the feelings/empathy that provides the humanity in forging ahead to resolving the matter. Important as it may be to intellectualise on the problematic in the drama, the attempt to remove emotions or feeling of empathy would turn us into automatons and materialise our existence and dehumanise our being. This kind of liberation or whatever end result we expect from the theatre is neither freely given nor freely accepted, as a matter of fact, not a process we freely participate and determine or negotiate for. This brings us into the issue of participation.

Participation

Participation is said to be the bedrock of this process. Participation, which engenders identification with the subject matter of the drama and strategies of evolving a resolution of crisis that is being discussed therein, has become interesting. The question that bothers the would-be catalyst using this theory is how participatory is it? Whose idea is it in the first place to utilise Theatre for Development as a medium of resolving community problems? The community members are involved in the process but it is the catalyst whose agenda is presented and developed. Sometimes, the catalyst would have been given a grant by donor agencies that in almost all situations insist on their prescribed subjects, as the basis for the activity or the grant would not be given. At the end, it is the agency's prescribed result that is pursued rather than development for the target community(ies).

Sometimes too, the catalyst is too preoccupied with a particular end result that he virtually forgets the process for the communities. The cultural (residual forms) are taken into the process and the performance in order for identification by the people and give them a sense of participation, but at the end these traditional forms are merely spectacular integration that reduces their essences. It becomes rather a process of devaluation rather than evolution of a developmental strategy in the theatre for community benefits. It is for the same reason that Mazrui cautions that, "…for as long as the struggle for mental liberation is defined in terms that conform to the European ideal of humanity and civilisation it will only turn out to be an upward spiral to further alienation and conceptual imprisonment" (Mazrui, *Power of Babel* 62). In the same light, David Kerr feels that a superficially parroted process of 'cultural revival' without forms that provides "…communication channels by which subaltern communities are able to negotiate change" (243), will only be "tantamount to developmental imperialism"(248), or what he calls "atavistic forms or ethnic or religious fundamentalism" (249).

It is important therefore to conceptualise the issue of conflict from the point of view of containment because, to assume that conflict can be resolved, especially in relationship of human existence would be eliminating that existence in the first place. This is because conflict from whatever perspective serves as a medium that can guarantee development. Removing conflict or its suggestion would mean the halting of difference. Conflict where they occur, outside of violence, requires containment.

The important approach especially from the premise of a diversified Nigerian cultural and traditional situation is creating an enabling environment for coexistence,

learning to live together, accepting differences, relating with the 'others', and acknowledging the existence of the 'others'. This is so because when existing relationships are affirmed and are equal, it enhances dignity and a sense of freedom, from the individual perspective to group or community practice, validating the existence of such groups or entities. When such existence is affirmed, coexistence has fundamentally occurred. In Nigeria where change is fundamentally the focus of most creative endeavours, such affirmation is required to enable stronger individual communal identities. Identity is, therefore, necessary to the survival of the individual and the society in which the individual lives. Recognition of identity is essential for both universal and individual development. How could this recognition of difference work within the context of theatre for the oppressed?

The issue here is the kind of image the child or youngster or communities for that matter, get as a result of evolving these images. Clearly, the youngster is not or does not constitute part of that evolution, and therefore, he is given a cut and dry meaning. We must then begin to interrogate these kinds of images, taking into cognisance of the catalyst that assist in evolving such image. Does he really articulate very concretely the image that would be of benefit to his person and then transferred to the recipients? Does he really get the image to be able to understand what is expected of him/her? Is the catalyst not serving as mere conduit pipes to an already formed image in his consciousness, therefore he being an object deluded as a subject? For him, even more is in possession of a more muddled up image which he sadly transmits to the more 'saner consciousness' of the recipients of his image, thereby introducing the "common-sense that constitutes the tool of oppression of the hegemonic he is already enmeshed in? For success in the direction of 'liberating the members that are the recipients of this kind of drama,

> …It becomes desirable that for communication to get to people, a language that serves the needs of the wider community and which is also rooted in the local community be used. Absence of knowledge of available resources and how to use them effectively easily creates passivity or disinterestedness among would-be beneficiaries. Language, therefore, should be regarded as one of the most fundamental aspects of communication. Drama artists, as community developers, should speak the same language as the people they develop (Odhiambo 24).

The cultural (residual forms) are taken into the process and the performance in order for identification by the people and give them a sense of participation, inclusivity, and ownership, but at the end these traditional forms are merely spectacular appendages and integration that reduces their essences and value. It devaluates rather than the evolution expected of a developmental strategy in the theatre for community benefits. In this quest for mental liberation that conforms with Western ideals, would only turn out to be an upward spiral for further alienation and conceptual imprisonment" (Mazrui 62). It evolves a situation of mere 'parroting' of a deceptive 'cultural revival', where these communities do not have the same level playing field to negotiate change. This boils down to the question of the problematic of language, because theatre and theatre for

development is within the space of culture, whatever discussions and encounters in this space must be embedded within the clear articulation of existing or contextual cultural underpinnings. The complexities and ambiguities of culture would need to be looked at.

> But the word language can hardly ever be used in any ordinary sense; indeed, it obviously shed all ordinary sense since its first paradoxical employment as a description of its own system—that is, as a system of socially agreed signification. For language does not operate simply as communication but as matrices of discrete activity including of course those of articulation and meaning (Soyinka 2).

This constitutively evolves several layers of meanings that creates apprehensions and leaves us unconsciously/or as a matter of fact, consciously, affecting the recipient of our commingled vagaries of unexplained heritages with their meanings, with that language "indisputably the language of alienation" (Soyinka 6). And because language constitutes a social practice, the process of identity construction explains how language constructs and is constructed by various stratums of relationships that are basically unequal, and because language operates from various strati in its relationships, identity is therefore 'multiply affected and being affected, subject to change, and an area of struggle'. Relations of power in different sites influence this diversity conditions under which language learners speak, read, or write the second language.

The facilitator carries along to the communities with him his biases and heritages. Questions on whether he fully articulates his socio-political situation and the attendant complexities with the community or relational space he is emerging from is another matter entirely. Does he really understand the varieties of identities he constitutively carries in his day-to-day engagement with his social reality and possible encumbrances? What kind of identity has been constructed of his 'self' and its relationship with other 'selves', and what is the result of that relationship or engagements which he will carry along to the communities he will engage? In spite of his desire for the humanity of his 'target community members', interest in the elevation or their consciousness in their collaborative engagements, he is carrying a former that is entirely novel and carrying particular socio-political and cultural phenomenon-a dramatic encapsulated within a prism of a language of communication. The consciousness of the would-be catalyst or welfare officer has been muddles by effects of ideological experiences engraved in his consciousness. These experiences are varied and contesting for space in a huge ideological battle therein.

The concern for the welfare of the communities he/she intends to engage is understandable, but these several jostling for dominance within his consciousness, continuous as it requires articulation by the 'carrier' and must be sieved at least to an acceptable level of focus to reduce or diminish the shrouded hybridised space. To erase it completely would be impossible (or could be reduced to the deceit of erasing history), and to disregard it completely would be counter-productive and dangerous not only to the 'carrier' of the muddled consciousness but also to whosoever he encounters with intentions of any ideological consciousness shift. Note that ideology within the

consciousness is plural. And because we cannot adequately engage any discursive situation isolating or abstracting historiography, the subject of engagement (the communities in this instance) would require theirs for contextualised articulation.

The community members have or would have gone through their peculiar long drawn historical and social experiences that their consciousness has one way or the other been affected especially that socio-political and economic situations are a continuum. We must therefore pause to interrogate the traditional forms of the people we intend to inject into our dramas, for empathy and recognition towards a *'revolutionary change, and giving some powers back to the people'.* These traditional forms and language of disseminating such have undergone its own several histories and experiences. These forms carry specific ideologies that 'carry' the relationships with the contest of domination and subordination, which transmits into the reasons for the engagements in the first place. Without properly articulating these problematic of ideological power play, we would only be returning an assumed power that is deliberately shrouded with characters of the dominant, and the catalysts being conduit pipes and organic to the social formation we intend to counter as existing hegemony and make the situation even graver.

The community he is engaging has a history of language and development. They have grown with it and carrying or upholding these relationships all through the years, of course with their attendant continuum and dynamism. These communities easily can empathise and identify with their former structures of relationships that have become their attendant historiography. It is important to note that the traditional forms and language evolves from age-long communication and relationship with one another as they contact and are being contacted by the dynamism of change. The present cultural structure is therefore a result of that relationship. If there is an issue regarding the humanity of members of the communities, it could be linked or traced to the long inherited historiography.

The use of the people's language (one that carries along feudal relationships, oppressive relationships, or at least relationships that engendered the issues that attracted attention in the first place, or as the case may be, other structured traditional structures, in most cases that create the inhumanity and oppressive tendencies in themselves), to do theatre that may engender consciousness, constitutes a challenge. The people themselves are enmeshed in their own peculiar challenges. Their exposures with newly introduced relationship in which the facilitator comes along with his heritages converging with theirs, to evolve a novel structure in the social, cultural and political spaces becomes a problem. A shift into 'this new structure and consciousness could constitute a futile, deceptive and destructive arena for the purposes of changing perceptions, depending largely on the political desires within the superficial much touted consciousness mantra, or something new, a structure unknown to the facilitator and the community members themselves. This strange space could open up vistas of dehumanisation that could be even more destructive and dangerous.

Here, caution must be taken for a dialogue could constitute oppression when hegemonic purveyances permeate the 'language' that is the medium of this dialogue. It could manifest in cultural reproductions within the process of dialoguing and, therefore, carried in the seemingly liberating process of discourse. When we decide to approach this

from a negotiated discourse, there is an unconscious transcendence of dialogue. Within the negotiation process, there is always the dominating tendency that may evolve within the dialogue, and manipulation of the hegemonic in the process of deciding and accepting or altering the images within the aesthetic space. How can we, therefore, practice theatre of the oppressed within a nation like Nigeria with diverse languages, and by extension, traditions and cultures without compromising the medium of expression? Whatever structure we adopt within this cultural diversity, it needs to be in conformity with peaceful resolution of likely conflict that is or may result in the utilisation of a common space by these diversities. But before thinking of possibilities, it is necessary to stress that this diversity does not necessarily assume a possible concern for political instability or in any way a threat to nationhood.

Experiments have been conducted towards these possibilities, but the success of this process has been extremely limited. These limitations are easily identifiable where, the utility of the English is a carriage of a relationship of an unrecognised culture and tradition that is at variance with the inherently familiar, with the codes of the words that constitutes the dialogue carrying different meanings. Besides, in situation where local idioms and values are injected into the dramatic rendition, with English and/or other languages create something novel and diminishes the intention of recognition in the first place. The alternative choice of utilising the language and idioms of the people for cultural engagements in themselves is even more dangerous for the participants of these dramatic discourses, because the present status of the language has gone through a long history of feudalism, and/or of domination and subordination, and its utility invigorates only feudal cultural matrices, and therefore not in the interest of the participants of those involved in these dramatic engagements. There is then the issue of the Fourth Wall, the structural separation between the audience and the performers and the presentation of focuses for the audiences to take in without critically examining them. Rose Mbowa, concludes that, we

> are a multilingual society; mime and dance can cut across the language problem …in this kind of forum, you are able to communicate whether you are literate or illiterate because we talk in the language of the people, not in English. The images speak out loud and clear (111-112).

Instructive as this may be towards the resolution of the problem, images that result from gestures of dance and mime are not taken from the abstract. They are expressions from specific cultural backdrops. Images, therefore, that emerge in the process of mime or dance have cultural affinities with specific historicity and meanings derived only from that specific, except if what has been put together is not, and therefore an abstracted rendition of the spectacular. To conclude that dance and mime that would inevitably be derived from a particular language solves the problem of multilingual societies is grievously limited, shrouding reifying forms of particular hegemony. Just like language, body movements, gestures, and rhythm have cultural specifics within specific historical renditions.

There exist universal gestures, but these in themselves cannot constitute meanings when expressed in isolation. It is a conglomeration of gesture specifics that constitute meanings within the context of use, especially within the African cosmogony. For theatre and its 'valuation cannot be appreciated within isolated systems of signification with individual emotional disposition, aesthetic socialisation, world view or interest, because it would only reify subjective perceptions'. To adequately present an acceptable theatre that transcends this problematic of language, whatever meaning that is the preoccupation, the values of each language-gesture-mime-dance-specific (attempting though to escape from the inherently static), need to be taken into consideration, with 'a dialectical relationship between the context of the work or practice and its specific content and form, if the theatre is not intended to subordinate them and intensify particular hegemony. Or would it? Questions would therefore be asked regarding the place of development contextually. Can we adequately discuss development within this contextualised space? What kind of development would that be and from what parameter can we evaluate any existing structure resulting? Can we guarantee development within this hybridized space?

The contradiction between the assumed inevitability of development and the necessity of it being actively undertaken in 'Third-World' contexts works both to underscore and to undermine a White and/or Euro supremacy, that is, the positing of Europe and the West as the ineffable and inevitable site of human progress. White/Euro supremacy is facilitated by this contradiction because according to its logic the highest form of human development would only naturally spring from Europe and the West, whereas the 'Third World', characterised within most Development theories as backward, static, traditional and the lacking in the capacity to produce wealth, would 'naturally' require the assistance of the West (39).

Would we constitutively conceive of imitation of the centre as our basis for thinking ourselves as genuinely developed?

> The ambivalence around reproduction and what I have called the politics of not resembling rest upon the fact the un/underdevelopment of the 'third world' is a reminder to the 'developed world' of all that it needs in order continually to reproduce itself. And yet the logic of modernity demands that development spread the world over, so that when the 'third world' persistently *does not resemble* the 'first', it gives the lie to the notion of universal development. The result is that this failure to resemble becomes a source of deep anxiety to the Western episteme because the logic of a universal subjectivity, the unquestionable value of development and the spread of the western model ("Collusion Course" 39).

Is it anything far removed from the practice of Theatre-for-Development, where we evolve alternatives to developmental parameters, but still reeling around reproduction of Western hegemony and its strangulation and consciously or otherwise we tenaciously stick to these with unconcern? Practitioners sugar-coat their bitterness and pains of unavailable alternatives than to convince ourselves that we are radically 'conscientising'

the community populace when in reality, it is a reenergising, reinterpreting, and mediating the inchoately hybrid that we as practitioners do not even articulate, let alone the community members we are desperately attempting to 'conscientise'.

The cultural discourse that introduces and identifies the people as subjects (Boal reference) without necessarily subordinating even from the onset, thought processes and sensibilities become the focus. The critical premise underscores the value not only in the process of engagement but the participants in the engagement, reducing in the process possibilities of hegemonic strangulations, reducing also the shrouded hybridised spaces. That the area of engagement is a hybridised space is not contestable, and that it constitutes a problematic space for cultural engagement is also not contestable but the possibility of engagement (without a choice of reality) and a narrowing down of the difficulty of empathy for easy identification and access for utility, becomes a major concern.

Thus, we have to travel in language terrain through the tongue of our colonial masters beyond the atlantics in order to exchange meanings with our own African brothers. In spite of this constraint however the language of works that can really stand for African literature is not cast in European phonological, lexico-semantic and discursive patterns and standards. Rather, African literature displays the linguistic, gnomic and cultural symbols as well as oral verbalisation aesthetics and convolution both of cosmic, ethereal and terrestrial space, which make it to maintain a unique identity even in its relative hybrid status (Fashina 64).

The fundamental shift from the possibility of inarticulation refocuses the concern towards building bridges within the existing localities. There is the issue of incommensurability between the 'senders' and 'receivers' of messages as interrupted by power, a serious matter in relating with the indigenous and their histories towards their utility for developmental purposes. The type of reception here could be in several folds. It could be that of complete lack of it or could also be a distorted devaluation of the existing cultural essence because from whatever pipe hole the communicant is expressing from, it is done through the mediation of these essences that may be the heritages, double or 'triple heritages' or quadruples, as the case may be.

But can we afford to side-line or as a matter of convenience deny their familial histories with the essentially 'cultural specific' they belong? This would be inconclusive when dialectically thinking of a window of cultural exit. We definitely would not assume any originality in a deceptive continuum, but discussing a hybridised space. This space, 'new' as it may appear must be our starting point. Returning to the traditional/'original specificity' may further complicate and confuse the recipients who would not 'hear' and cannot 'speak' what they have not heard or articulated. Is there necessarily a post-cultural space for contextual identity or can we tag it post-imperialism of some sort? From whatever side of the political divide we choose to begin evolving our developmental structures or processes, the hybridised baseline becomes inevitable. Our concern now is evolving structures within cultural practices that would reduce dependency, imitation and 'resemblances' with the westernised cultural dictation and assuming contextualised supremacy within African cultural engagements.

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, the performances that historically engage our traditions and transmit them into our present socio-political cultural history mired by post-colonial relationships constitute two sharp and problematic edges. The side of 'selectively' making these residual elements that conveniently, protectively took refuge in the rural areas are being raked out to actively express our existing histories. Historically espousing as they may serve, they are put in danger. Its existing 'aural' activity is tampered with and disengagements from its continuum (slow and deliberate shift in content, context and meaning) viciously are experienced. Let us not forget this transition is in conjunction with the apparatus of Western representations, consistently and persistently devaluing them in the process. We are therefore not giving power to these communities or those engaged in the practice for that matter; rather we are aiding and invigorating the ideals and ideologies of dominant tendencies conveniently integrating the communities and ourselves consistently into the dominant hegemony.

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SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY: THE THEATRE TO THE RESCUE

Professor Ayo Olu AKINWALE, PhD
Department of The Performing Arts
University of Ilorin, Ilorin
Kwara State, Nigeria
Email: ayoakinwale@yahoo.com

Abstract
This examines some of the social problems confronting the Nigerian society presently. These social problems include among others, drug addiction, computer or internet fraud, kidnapping, cultism, examination malpractices, armed robbery as well as politico-economic problems. The Nigerian theatre has tried at all times to create plays in which these problems are dissected so as to bring about awareness to these problems. Atimes, the theatre even proffers solutions to these problems. But, the problems still persist. Who are we then to blame? The theatre or the society? Our methodology shall be the descriptive and deductive methods. We want to be able to describe fully the problems and engage in an analysis of the plays in which these problems were espoused. Our theoretical framework is Jean Duvignaud's theory: "Society in the theatre the theatre in society" (cited in Shevtsona 198). We want to examine how the populace has fared in the society and how the society itself has forced the populace to adapt to the problems under diagnosis. Our findings revealed that the Nigerian society have failed to leave up to standard when compared with the same society of two or three decades ago. The society itself has not been helpful because of the politico-economic problems that it witnessed. The technological developments that came into the nation had also been bastardised by the populace. We conclude that for us to have a change, there is a need for the government to mount a campaign on societal development and empowerment. The government should also establish more theatre buildings in order to create more employment for the populace. We hereby recommend that, it is when these problems are attacked from several spheres of life that we can begin to experience the change we are talking about among our people. This change we hope will bring about a vibrant and intellectually stable society that this nation needs.

Introduction

The theme of this conference is strictly rooted in theatre sociology, the special area of this presenter. Let us take a divergent look into what is theatre sociology. It emerged as a discipline through the efforts of pure sociologists, studying the relationship between the theatre and society. The tenets of the discipline were clearly articulated at the 1986 Annual Conference of the International Sociological Association held at the University of Rome. Gurvitch was the first to use the term in 1955 (72). He argued that because of its

functions and values in society, the theatre is both a part of social structure and a form of social interaction. He is of the opinion that theatre sociology is premised on a sociological approach to the study of the theatre.

Theatre sociology therefore, seeks to examine the theatre and society dialectics. It seeks to know the relationship between the theatre and society. In doing this, it examines the functions, uses, values and relevance of the theatre to the society. Theatre sociology views the theatre as a social institution whose existence within society is not just desirable but essential. This is because, its functions and values, its power s a weapon of mobilisation and change, its function as a medium of communication expressing feelings and ideas are indisputable. Clifford stated clearly that the theatre has appeared as, "… a teacher, communicator, philosopher, historian, social worker, literary critic and moralist" (4).

In this paper, therefore, we shall examine the role the theatre has played in exposing some of the social problems confronted by the society and how the problems either became reduced or totally eradicated. Our scope is the post-independence Nigerian society. Our focus will be on the last two decades, 1988 to 2018.

The theatre's function is also dictated by the culture in which it finds itself. This is because it does not exist alone, but within a particular culture. Culture as a word was first used by Edward B. Tylor in 1871. According to Tylor, it represents the totality of the ways of life of a people over a given period of time. Hence, culture can be divided into two broad based units: material culture and immaterial culture. Material culture refers to concrete things that we can see like architecture, utensils, dresses, and so on. The immaterial culture consists of abstract things like religion, ethics, aesthetics or sense of beauty. These two areas must be combined in every individual in a nation before growth and development can take place and be complete.

In one of her classes, late Zulu Sofola came to class and she stated: "There are two farmers. One is planting yam, the other is planting flowers. Which out of the two is relevant?" As students, we all said, "Yam". So, she said, "You mean we should go and destroy the flowers?" She then told us that both are relevant. Yam will satisfy the physical or material need of man, while flowers will satisfy the spiritual or immaterial need of man. Both must grow together to produce a complete individual. Today, does our society respect growth and development of people with a combination of the material and immaterial aspects of life and living? We shall answer this question in the presentation of this paper.

According to Olu Obafemi, "culture offers meaning, purpose and value to the socio-economic, political, and aesthetic ethos of the society. Inevitably therefore, cultural and political (in terms of nation-state) formations are inseparable" (11). Therefore, the political often determines the economic culture of a nation. And to Mabel Ewvierhoma, "culture has ethical cognitive roles contingent on morality, beliefs and even superstitions" (6).

Consequently, in this paper, we are interested in examining how the Nigerian populace have fared in recent times compared to those of about two or three decades ago. Are they where we want them to be? Has the theatre done its own duty enough in the areas of education and enlightenment? It is on record that some of those problems

highlighted by the theatre have either disappeared or at least reduced to the barest minimum. Why are these problems remaining in position? This question will be answered in this paper.

As a point of fact, culture is dynamic. As the nation in which it exists continues to change, cultural values also continue to change. That is why baggy trousers was the in-thing in the post-Independence era; but it is no more today. Wives were dragged to any husband that was the wish of their parents. But, today, it is no longer fashionable. Our growth as it is today, in terms of GDP, does not compare with what it used to be. Our economy too has not helped the matter. But how have the people fared during this harrowing experience? It is our belief that this paper will have the necessary impact on our populace, so that they too can revisit their contributions to the nation. We have stated elsewhere that,

> Culture is something that is to be learnt from one generation to the other. We have political culture, economic, social and religious culture. The media culture is one through which our children and generations yet unborn can learn about our past, the present, and make projections into the future (Akinwale, *And the Journey Begins…* 17).

Our methodology in this paper will be the descriptive and deductive methods. We shall attempt to describe fully some of the problems facing the Nigerian people and then analyse the plays that raised these problems and how they were received in performance. The problems of the society will be examined under the following areas: the Educational, the Social, the Political and the Economic. It is our belief that a paper of this nature will be significant to both theatre scholars, students and the general public.

Literature Review

Several problems affecting the society have become national problems. The problem of cultural neglect and diplomacy seems to be found rampant in the Nigerian society. Cultural diplomacy in this paper will be taken to mean, according to Segun Oyewo "…a structured relationship between culture and its manifestations and international relations. It is the use of cultural expressions and activities in the conduct of official relations among nations" (106).

Because culture is dynamic and can influence people from far and near, our people seem to have imbibed foreign culture at the expense of home grown culture. John Michel maintained that, cultural diplomacy is "…the involvement of culture in international agreements; the application of culture to the direct support of a country's political and economic diplomacy". Also, Frank Aig-Imoukhuede sees cultural diplomacy as a concept that seeks to "… establish the atmosphere of friendly persuasion and to use the attraction of the arts to win people over" (41).

The argument here is that members of our society today are refusing to move close to the nation's cultural development. If you do not have a clear cultural growth the other areas of existence like the political, the religious, the economic and the educational will be eroded. Several African scholars too have made statements on the sociology of

the theatre in Africa and indeed in Nigeria. They include among others, Bakare Traore, Theo Vincent, Mineke Schipper, Jide Malomo and Uwa Hunwick. We shall try and examine their postulations on the sociology of the theatre as it existed within the Nigerian society. Let us now consider the works of theatre sociologists across Europe. One of the founding fathers of Theatre Sociology in Europe is Gramsci, who saw the society as a political construction (Shevtsova, *Gramsci…* 46). Raymond Williams gave the base and superstructure theory of theatre sociology in 1977 (67). He believed that the theatre is the commodity of rulers who dictate the form and content of it while the performers form the base of its existence.

Within African societies too, the ruling classes are the custodians of the people's art and religion. But, their dominance does not exist in the same oppressive manner that is postulated by Williams whose theory was anchored on the European society, to which he belonged. Traore in his book, translated by late Dapo Adelugba, wrote about the social functions of African Theatre. He believed that theatre and sociology should have adequate rapport. According to him, "…in so far as theatre is a permanent feature of society, the study of its function is the most important branch of theatre sociology" (10).

Mineke Schipper believed that it is simply Eurocentric to consider oral tradition in which the total theatre of African's exist as not being theatre. She stated that most of the travelling theatre troupes of the Yoruba as well as the theatre of English expression, and all poplar theatre across West Africa, focused on certain sociological issues that helped in the development of the theatre along the West African sub region. Furthermore, Theo Vincent stated clearly that some of the sociological issues that made the audience of the Yoruba travelling theatre bigger than that of the theatre of English expression include the language of performance, their itinerary nature and their simple plot. He stated that the theatre of English expression is elitist, making a serious intellectual demand on the audience. This was before independence and a few years after independence (23-25). Uwa Hunwick also wrote on the impact of contemporary modern Nigerian theatre on the society. She stated that the Yoruba travelling theatre performances are popular because the plays show themes that are "…built on operating attitudes, vices, prejudices and fads. They give the masses what they want" (18). Unfortunately, today, the tropes are no more in existence.

Some empirical works also exist from Nigerian theatre scholars, especially Malomo (117). He studied the audience that attended the National Theatre of Nigeria to watch both a Yoruba travelling theatre production and a literary theatre production. He was able to discover the demographic nature of the audience. He found out that the theatre was patronised by educated people predominantly the middle class. The people in the upper class seldom attend the National Theatre, Nigeria's premiere theatre. Therefore, the theatre is making an impact on those who are educated enough to be aware of the social influence of the theatre. It was found out that 39% prefer comedies, 25% musicals and 17% tragedies, 28% prefer plays in English language, 5% plays in Yoruba and 67% would rather prefer plays written in both languages. A higher percentage of the respondents to his questionnaire resided in planned housing estates like Surulere 37%, Apapa 5%, Ikeja 15%, Victoria Island 23%, others 19%; 40% of total respondents came to the theatre by commercial bus. This means that the theatre has not been properly

located in a residential area. Economically, Malomo also concluded that the theatre was not economically viable, a position which this writer also subscribes to with a little variation though.

In this study, therefore, we shall try to examine if this data is still applicable or not or whether the social problems within the society have not entirely killed the theatre completely. Malomo's conclusion with this data becomes relevant to us here because he claimed that the theatre makes more impact in an educationally alive region. Thus, we can now define drama and theatre from a sociological point of view. According to Agyeman-Wettey,

> Socially, drama (theatre) has brought so many people together for a common purpose of production. It has fostered relevance, love, patience, and understanding among other things. It has broken new grounds of shyness, inhibition, speech communication, diction, and respect for each other. It has prompted popularity and opened doors to important places for some people. People practice virtues of discipline, dedication, humility, generosity, human feelings, carefulness, truthfulness, responsibility and others. These good human qualities are the things that make a man human (537).

The presenter agrees with this statement having been in the industry for sometimes and one has watched the trend of events in the theatre industry.

Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework is Jean Duvignaud's theory that, "society in the theatre, the theatre in society". Duvignaud stated that as the theatre seeks to reflect societal problems, the society also forces the theatre to change in terms of its content and modus operandi. According to him, industrialisation was one of the factors which brought innovations into the world and hence to the theatrical world. The theory also aided the growth and development of many forms of theatre in Europe. Hence, as the theatre is impacting on the society, the society also strives to make a considerable impact on the theatre. The two way dialectics is our main concern in this presentation.

The Educational

The educational system of the country was all encompassing after independence. Then came the new system the 6-3-3-4, which is currently in vogue. Youths and elders alike were filled with passion and commitment going to school. There was no other way, especially for those of us who were born with no silver or spoons in our mouth. Education was the answer to all problems of empowerment. Most of the parents were civil servants, teachers, or traders. The school certificate was a paramount thing because that is what you need to step into the world. The whole area waited patiently for your result.

The university was a place where we all want to be, school certificate was just a promotion examination into higher school or the university directly. Our teachers were held in high esteem. At that that time at all levels, there were no way examinations

questions can leak before the examinations, students were ready to read heavily and prepare for the examinations. At that time too no parent will want to buy examination question for the children. Gradually, the face of education continued to change. Today, we have a lot of misbehaviour among students, examination malpractices, well criticism and a lot of irresponsible behaviour.

The theatre rose quickly to the challenge of this educational crisis. In Wole Soyinka's *Child Internationale*, he showed the attitude of a student to her studies. The student does not even remember whether she got a report or not for the term. All she was interested in was the visit of her boyfriend. Soyinka's play *The Lion and the Jewel* peached the village teacher against Baroka, the Chief, in a contest for Sidi, the village beauty. Baroka won against all the knowledge and intellect of the headmaster. His love of education does not count.

In just two or three decades, therefore, the preference for education had dwindled. It is now a matter of take it or leave it for the society. As a matter of fact, you don't have to read to make it in our nation today. The place of education and its budget in the federal government annual budget is as low as seven percent.

However, the point had been made that: "education breeds awareness. Once a people within a society are highly educated, they will be aware of the theatre, they will also know its intrinsic values and functions" (Akinwale, *And the Journey Begins…* 11). This goes a long way to show the need for artist in the various regions in Nigeria, to preach the value of education so that the people's appreciation of the theatre can increase.

The Political

Between 1960 and now, we have witnessed a lot of political problems and crisis. It is often an acceptable statement that, once the political situation of a nation is correct, the economic will automatically fall in place. This is because the government will take major political decisions that will affect the economy and all the other facets of life. If the reverse is the case, as we have in our nation then the worst will continue to happen to the nation on several fronts. Political instability was witnessed in Nigeria for long. A long stretch of military rule did not solve the problem. Our recourse to democratic government and party politics has tried to ameliorate some of the problems but yet we are not politically stable.

The theatre rose quite early to address the issues of political instability and the need for us to have some kind of clean political atmosphere. Presently we now have a lot of political misbehaviour cross carpeting and so on. Cases of corruption and nepotism in high places are well known in our society. In 1971, Wole Soyinka wrote the play, *A Dance of the Forests*. Here, his main concern was that a nation whose past has nothing to write home about, the present is chaotic, the future is bleak. This prophetic statement came about because the past, the present and the future are but one continuum.

Several other plays have focused on the political rivalry both within the traditional society and contemporary times. In Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi*, he made it clear that tradition is tradition. On no account should we forget tradition and begin to usher in a new political atmosphere that is not traditional. Ayo Akinwale's *This King must Die* shows the lop-sidedness of our political system, parties and leadership. The play then

advocates for a seeming political set up that is hardly known to the populace. This is because the existing political parties are a mere rejuvenation of the older order in different forms and nomenclature. Emmy Idegu's *Ata Igala the Great* shows the indigenous resistance of the Igala people to European invasion into their country. A dynamic, development-oriented Ata Igala welcomed the modernity of the colonialists but rejected anything that contravened the Igala belief system and mode of worship.

Similarly, Ola Rotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* is a story of an Oba who refused to bow down for the British, who were supposed to be the major traders with the Benin people. In a similar manner, Wale Ogunyemi's *Kiriji War* brought into limelight the excess of the "Ajele's" District Officers imposed on the people of Imesi-Ile to see to the political problems of the area. These Ajele's rape women, seize farmlands as well as farm produce. Their behaviour led to one of the longest Yoruba inter-tribal wars in history. Whether in the past of the present the Nigerian theatre had been aware to the various political problems. But, has it succeeded in driving away the problem? Or did the society's reaction not reject all these moves by the theatre? "Society in the theatre, the theatre in society". This is where our theoretical framework comes in. We can see how the society has moved from one major political crisis to another. We should however remember that the theatre is not an end in itself, but a means to an end.

The Social

A lot of social vices have bedevilled our society for long. For the purpose of this paper we shall divide the vices into three broad based categories. These are culture conflict, urbanisation and its attendant problems and the social problems of a dwindling economy. These problems could be found in the following specific categories armed robbery, kidnapping, corruption, people getting rich quickly through an ill-gotten wealth, marital problems and so on. We have moved away from the post-independence period of culture conflict into an era of cultural rejuvenation. We are now enjoying the dynamism of cultural proliferation. However, in a bid to manage the new status a lot of other new problems are re-awakened. For example, the new trend in music composition such that harmony becomes more important than the lyrics is the order of the day.

One major problem we want to discuss here is the issue of marital problems and its attendant, the divorce. The relationship between husband and wife has changed. Their understanding of the word love has also changed. In *King Emene*, Zulu Sofola gave her own philosophy of marriage which she upheld until her demise. According to her, in the play, "the god of the husband is the god of the wife. Destroy the god of the husband, and the god of the wife is destroyed" (7). In another vein, she stated in the same play that, "a parcel is like a wife, while the chord used to tie the parcel is like a husband. If the chord breaks, the parcel falls into pieces" (25). These philosophies are no longer true in the contemporary Nigerian society.

Marital procedures are no longer what they used to be. In a recent publication edited by Oludolapo Ojediran and Olurotimi Adeoti, Ekpe argues that Sofola was a traditionalist. According to her:

> Sofola writes from the perspective of a traditionalist; her plays overwhelm and enchant the sacredness of traditions, and her dramaturgy undermines any of her characters that goes against tradition. From her portrayal, the inviolability of tradition must be maintained and respected at all cost even in the face of its inertness and retrogressive nature (131).

This is a brilliant submission true only of the early plays of Zulu Sofola, especially *Wedlock of the Gods* and *The Sweet-Trap*. But in her later plays, such as, *The Ivory Tower* and *Song of a Maiden*, Sofola upgrades the role of female characters. This can also be seen in her last play, *Queen Omu Ako of Oligbo,* where the queen led the war and brought victory to her own people.

One of the problems of our civil war was the incursion of armed robbery into the country. The nation became besieged even up till presently by several robbery incidences. Femi Osofisan's play, *Once Upon Four Robbers,* which was published in 1978, focuses on the issue of armed robbery. In the play, Osofisan states clearly that unless we address the issue of corruption, ethnicity, nepotism and unemployment, the society will continue to manufacture its own assassins, the death penalty imposed by government through enabling decrees notwithstanding.

The Boko Haram Sect also came out as a social problem that is still bedevilling the nation. Political thugs in the North-East region of the country, who lost their source of funds, became terrorists terrorising the society. Again, the theatre responded to the issue of terrorism in Nigeria. Ahmed Yerima's play, *Pari,* gives a good account of a family thrown into despair by the loss of their only daughter during a Boko-Haram raid. The play moved on further to examine the complicity of religion, government and individuals in the harrowing experience of losing one's daughter to a group of terrorists. In a production of the play by the Department of the Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, the motives of the terrorist groups terrorising many parts of the country was clearly revealed.

The Economic

It is also very necessary for us to look at the nature of our economy in the past few decades and how a dwindling in the economic downturn of the nation has affected the theatre and society dialectics. We shall examine a few theories which we find useful to this examination.

Three major theories form the focus of our examination of the theatre and the economy relationships. Bomul and Bowen state that an economically active area is an oyster for the performing artist (82). This is because, in such areas there is a high frequency of performance, new theatre forms are developed and new theatre buildings erected. Blaug also states that the theatre also thrives during a process of economic recession (117). He explains that during such periods people see the theatre as a place of escape. They patronise the theatre heavily so as to release tension and stress created by the economy. Janet Wolf states that, in a place where demand is high for theatre productions, the supply is also high (24). Where it is low, supply is also low; thus, obeying the demand and supply principle. However, because these theories are

Eurocentric, we must remember that our situation could be different as a result of our difference in culture. This explains the exodus of artists especially musicians to Lagos.

Using certain economic indices, level of the exchange rate, balance of payments, level of foreign debts, import and export earnings as well as inflated rates, we can state clearly that Nigeria experienced a period of buoyancy in the economy and also one of recession. The artist and the arts have weathered it through both periods of seeming buoyancy and depression. Just after independence we enjoyed a period of seeming buoyancy. Three decades later until a few months ago, we faced a period of depression. Feeding became difficult, foreign exchange rose very high, there was a high rate of inflation and several systems within the nation including manufacturing outfits all collapsed. Again, if we remember our earlier statement of our theoretical framework, theatre in society, society in the theatre, the artist had to find some ways of existing, despite the harsh economic conditions.

The Yoruba travelling theatre troupes which were purely economic ventures collapsed. The actors drifted away and faced video productions. The English actors also left most of those institutions housing them such as the University Theatres as well as States Arts Councils. They encouraged the growth of Nollywood Industry along with actors of the various Nigerian languages. The economy drove them into owing personal artistic companies and corporations.

The theatre also rose to the defence of the economic situation in the country. Two plays, Ayo Akinwale's *This King Must Die* and *Hello Prisoners*, show clearly the periods of economic depression in the country. The first play shows a society moving from its traditional base to modernity. At the traditional point, most of the ailments of society could be solved by Ifa and Orunmila solved the problems and saved the society from collapse. In its modernity, several new diseases have taken over. Orunmila could no longer recognise his people with such diseases as political charlatanism, corruption, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank loans and so on. He therefore left without being able to solve these problems. The second play, *Hello Prisoners*, shows five prison inmates who come out of prison to tell their stories. The characters are a Professor who became a minister. He was imprisoned for taking bribe. The second, an armed robber, became a robber because he could not gain admission to the university despite the fact that he had the required qualification. The third, a union leader, was imprisoned because he led a protest. A politician who was a spend thrift, spending government money in government house. Finally, two women selling *akara* who later became drug pushers when they met their classmate who had made it economically. These characters represent the larger society, because what happened to them has happened to several others within the society. They then resolved to break the prison walls and go out there to preach for a change from what the society turned them into. They all believed that it is the society that brought them to a point of elevation that also conspired to bring them down.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to describe a few societal ills and how the theatre responded to them both as scripts and in performance. We have seen how the theatre

responded to these problems; but the problems seem to defy any possible solution. First and foremost, we must credit the theatre artists for responding quickly to societal problems and creating awareness for them. But, for some of these problems to be completely removed from our society certain recommendations given below must be fulfilled.

1. There is a need to overhaul our political system so that the economic can be resolved.
2. More theatre productions and centred are needed all over the country where there could be regular productions on an annual basis. This will also provide employment for the large number of theatre graduates being produced annually.
3. More organisations should come out to sponsor theatrical productions both in the country and abroad. This will give our theatre the international deserves. We must look inwards to correct our mistakes.
4. The old sponsors such as banks, state and federal government should participate actively in the sponsorship of theatre productions across the country.
5. The society needs to change its perception of the theatre artists. Theatre artists too need to present themselves as disciplined people which the profession inspires.
6. The Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) bill which is about to be promulgated into law, should be vigorously pursued. This will make the profession stand side by side with all other professions in the country.
7. Government should allow a lot of theatre companies to travel out of the country as it was in the 1960s and 1970s until around 1980. This is because the Public Relations job of the theatre is incomparable to others.
8. The government should build one theatre building in every Local Government Area of the country. After all, if it could build two party offices per local government, it could also build a theatre house per local government. This will aid the empowerment programme of the government.

As we plan our productions for the year, let us remember that the society is out there waiting for what we have to offer. Some of our social problems can be cured by the theatre if it is properly harnessed.

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MUSIC AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIAN DRAMA

Professor Josephine Ngozi MOKWUNYEI, PhD
Department of Theatre Arts
University of Benin
Benin-City, Nigeria
Email: profjosephinemokwunyei@gmail.com

Abstract
What constitutes modern drama in Nigerian theatre today is a synthesis of several art forms ranging from music to dance, mime, mask, acting, make-up, costume and spectacle. Consequently, the process of staging a play presents issues on formal as well as thematic levels in terms of what goes into the production, in order to achieve the right appeal on the audio, visual and aesthetic sensibilities of the relevant audience. This paper explores the use of music as a viable option and means of communication in an otherwise predominantly "dry", dialogue-based drama of the Nigerian literary genre. In addition to available scanty literary review, data for this paper is heavily reliant on participant, non-participant observation, buttressed by the experience of this author as member of a local audience and as a practicing dramatist with music credentials. The findings confirm that whereas earlier practices in Nigeria are known to have functioned in the Western style where a play could be performed without the help of music, contemporary practices have imbibed elements of traditional idioms and practices that portray their African/Nigerian identity. It therefore concludes that music is a viable tool as a means of communication in any drama that seeks identity with the roots of the Nigerian audience.

Introduction
Characteristically, although there are a range of modes and media of representation interacting in a single drama performance, our focus here is on the role and use of music in its various ramifications. This is particularly to underscore the dramaturgical importance of music as the other primary means of communication in African/Nigerian culture, besides verbal dialogue for which drama is essentially known.

A casual survey of Nigerian contemporary play texts portrays the following, which form the hypothesis for this research.

1. Some play texts do not mention or indicate any form of music but are never-the-less produced with music.
2. Some playwrights suggest where music should be used but do not specify the type of music.
3. Some playwrights go a step further to specify the type of music where indicated but they are not documented for ease of allocation and application.

4. Some playwrights compose and provide song texts in the documented play texts.
5. A negligible few provide scores for the music prescribed.

Contemporary Practice

Play texts of literary drama is usually dialogue based and produced as such as inherited from western practice from where it derives and hence deemed to be dry to the African sensibilities. The term, "dry", aesthetically refers to the style that utilises speech as the only means of communication. Such plays result in excessive dialogue without the exploitation of other available non-verbal modes that could otherwise have been useful either as tools for the attainment of dramatic intention, as effect for the creation of conducive mood, as bridge between passages or merely as entertainment to minimise the boring influence of protracted speeches.

In the literary tradition, practitioners, strain to disseminate all dramatic intentions through the available colonial *Lingua Franca* – English and French, which for obvious reasons are inadequate as sole media of expression, communication and interpretation within the African traditional setting. In view of such predicaments, the average literary play text merely provides a scenario for performance of these Nigerian based plays. Often, they are without adequate provision or direction for other crucial aspects of the production that would otherwise assist the director in achieving the playwright's intention in a well-articulated spectacle that in addition appeals to the audience.

This critical but typical African contemporary audience from all indications expects modern drama for the Nigerian stage to communicate in familiar idioms. Rather than "dry" drama, this means drama that is not limited to speech. It means drama that is rather inter-laced with music in one or more of its varying forms, as song, drumming, surrogate instrumentation, instrumental accompaniment, background music, sound effect and dance. This in effect creates some familiarity and identity with the traditional total theatre concept that they are already used to in the real-life drama of everyday living.

This is not expecting too much from an art whose nature is to pretend to be real life. From research it is notably based on such applications that popular drama along the West African Coast became the most vital, dynamic and widely supported theatre form in Nigeria and Ghana. Presumably, this is because of their clearest link with tradition through its emphasis on action, supported with song and dance. To support this notion is the fact that up till this moment in Ghana, the National Theatre in Accra "spills over" whenever the concert parties of "Nkomode" and the like are billed to perform (Mokwunyei, "Artistic Values…" 278). It is probably the same reasons why the local audience in Nigerian is willing to pay substantial amounts as gate fees to watch live comedy shows in preference to live literary drama productions.

Similarly, in Nigeria, it is on record that the Hubert Ogunde and other travelling theatres of the popular tradition sold out at every performance and on time. On the contrary, a lot of convincing and coaxing is required to attract a sizable audience for the literary style plays which always start showing behind schedule, in a bid to garner a sizable audience to reasonably populate the near empty hall at scheduled time. This is the common scenario whether at the Drama Studio at Legon, the Akin Deko Main

Auditorium in Ugbowo Campus or the Theatre Hall at Ekehuan Road Campus of the University of Benin, Benin-City, for the same reason.

In order to convince and coax its audience, the University of Benin Theatre Arts Department devised a special strategy termed "jungle publicity" for attracting audience to watch their literary style plays. This so called "jungle publicity" originated from the Theatre Management class in the 80s under the tutelage of Muyiwa Awodiya. Jungle publicity entailed mounting of mini carnivals with the aid of posters, banners and public address systems. The process is accomplished through singing, drumming and dancing either to songs from the play if any, or otherwise to improvised incidental music on a mobile float/road show but in the traditional style of the local culture.

This apparently cumbersome methodology designed to avert the lack of patronage managed to generate the expected interest in people who associated the singing, drumming and dancing promotion with what they were to see on stage. Whether or not it always turned out as expected vis-à-vis the audience reaction evaluation after the theatre experience is however a matter for another discussion. Suffice it to say that, once they have been successfully attracted to the venue and the play began, the aim of the publicity was considered accomplished.

Having practiced this as member of faculty, I often wondered why despite its fascination we would resort to this energy sapping strategy. I wondered if it would be more rewarding to divert such resources to the development of a style of production that would attract the audience to watch the play for its own sake, on its own merit. How about the idea of identifying with the audience and giving them what they want? At least this way, the effort and emphasis would be on the play as the final creative product rather than the "packaging".

However, for research purposes and for the benefit of determining or formulating directorial approaches, the positive result of the Benin experiment, should not be ignored. It remains a proof of the fact that audience expectation is based on contextualised concepts and traditional identity awareness that continually shape their perception. As such, music in traditional African societies is practiced as part of communal life, as evidenced in various facets of everyday life. Whether a woman is pounding wet or dry corn or rocking a child to sleep, a prisoner is cutting grass with his machete; a group of mourners are parading in sorrow, some music come handy in communicating and interpreting the associated prevailing moods and intentions. In the same vein, occasions and ceremonies such as the birth of a child, coronation of a king, initiation, death and religious worship are situations that call for music making. In scenes involving spirit medium-ship for instance, a given deity can be called from "*Jangare*" by the playing of his personal theme melody as is the case in real life situation of *Bori* spirit-medium-ship (Horn 181-202).

Such traditional concepts constitute factors that shape the theatre awareness and expectations of the average local audience. Such must also be reflected in Nigerian contemporary drama to make the events realistic and believable enough to sustain the interest of the sensitive audience. That is if drama is to serve its purpose as a mirror of society through which the African audience can see themselves, understandably in a realm where issues are contextualised only for certain dramatic intentions. It therefore

follows and makes sense to say that certain enactments should naturally go with the sort of music that complement them as evidenced by real-life situations as already mentioned.

Music as Communication in Nigerian Drama

Whereas the playwright's primary means of expression is speech, which leaves the dramatist entirely dependent on dialogue and stage directions to convey his concept, in the African situation when traditional music is performed, other means of communication and expression are added. These are inevitable since music within which related cultural factors and practices such as singing, drumming and dance are integrated to constitute the other means of communication in the culture.

About three decades ago, Meki Nzewi thought he would be unpopular to opine that drama not incorporated with music and dance was alien to the un-alienated Nigerian of any ethnic background. On the contrary from all contemporary indications, many literary dramatists and stage critics would agree with him to the effect that stage presentations not structured and sequenced with music and dance or stylised movements is alien to the inherent sensibilities of the Nigerian theatre audience (Nzewi 114). The assertion is understandably so because communications in African tradition, which may be verbal or nonverbal, are transmitted through three basic modes: speech, music and dance.

Music as Speech Surrogate

Perhaps it is better to deal with the speech surrogate phenomenon here, to enable us to appreciate how instruments in the surrogate category can share in functions attributable to the main vocal mode of speech from which they derive. In various cultures of Nigeria, there are melodic musical instruments ascribed with human attributes. For instance, is the *Akpele* in *Aniocha Igbo* culture of Delta State, the *Oja* of the Eastern *Igbo* culture, the *Goje* of the *Hausa* culture and the *Dundun* talking drum of the *Yoruba* culture. This class of musical instruments imitate the human spoken voice in their respective cultures. The sounds they produce are recognizable as a form of codified speech that is decipherable by the local audience as well as those who understand the codes of its language culture.

The relationship between speech and song is such that the boundary separating one from the other is hardly definable for as Elder long noted: "…So much is there in common between speech and music behaviour that it is permissible to regard singing as a kind of language, having regard to the use of tones and to the semantic physiological apparatus employed" (29). Therefore, in a drama presentation, music and dialogue can flow into one another with seamless ease as in the case of music drama. This can be achieved through singing or use of a surrogate instrument as verbal or poetic expression.

Music as Verbal Expression

As an avenue of verbal expression music in general, song (in particular) could be used in contemporary practices either to portray the thoughts of actors or for the enrichment and continuation of dialogue.

Music as Poetic Expression

As an avenue of poetic expression, music makes it possible for artistes and playwrights to maximise their talent in a form which would otherwise be too confrontational in spoken dialogue. Therefore, song as noted by Oscar Brockett formalises speech even more than does verse (46).

Music as Commentary and Criticism

Music in all its traditional ramifications as song, instrumental accompaniment and dance are very useful, for creating social commentary and criticism. They may be said to be more effective, more artistic and more indelible, yet appear less destructive than direct verbal utterance as earlier noted. In the case of derision, indirect but vividly understood commentary, criticism and information could be communicated through well worded melodious songs or delivered through specialised speech surrogate instruments or alternatively through suggestive motifs and communicative gestures in dance. When a dancer points his/her right hand or both hands skyward, her or she is indicating that god is his/her witness or benefactor. In other words, s/he is in effect using the "dance vocabulary" to say, "I look to God" or "I thank God".

Music as Reflection of Mood

Appropriate music at the right moment would elicit appropriate reaction among performers as well as between performers and audience. As Nketia documented, attitudes and hostility cooperation and friendship could be expressed through music. According to him, music has also been effective for maintaining emotional ecstasy where warriors must be kept at a pitch of frenzy (Nketia 32).

For far more than just and epilogue, Femi Osofisan ends many of his plays on a musical note. He uses songs in this manner as a mood establishment device to sensitise and at the same time placate the audience. Another reason for this playwright's use of this devise is to cushion the effect and sensitivity of his archetypal provoking endings that simulate the tenuous uncompleted incoherent quality of life itself. As Sandra Richards adduced in her book, *Ancient Songs Set Ablaze*, rather than offer prescriptions, Osofisan structures the conclusions of many of his plays like traditional dilemma tales in which viable options may not be immediately apparent. The assembled community is rather left to arrive at a possible critical interpretation, only through the free-flowing interchange of ideas, outside the fictive realm of art illustrated as follows.

In place of resolutions to issues raised, Femi Osofisan advanced songs such as the theme song of *Twingle Twangle A Twynning Tayle*, asking the audience to make their inferences and draw their own conclusions from the clues presented in the earlier parts of the play. Note the suggestive texts of the songs, which are meant to motivate, instigate or at least solicit audience reaction and interpretation. The entire cast renders the song in unison.

Twingle Twangle **Theme Song**

You who sat and watched our play
Now's the time to have your say

Refrain

Twingle -twangle a twynning tayle
Has no end but what you say
Let your minds unfurl their sail!
Let them sing like a joyous bell!
We took you to *Ereko*
And brought you to *Etido*
Each of these towns, as you see
Represents a philosophy

Refrain

Which is better, which is worse,
That's for you to choose, not us
But we have performed our play
Let us meet another day
O digba o
We'll meet in another tale
O digba o
Till we meet in another tale
[*A slow fade on the actors*. **End**]

Another such example from Osofisan is from *Midnight Hotel*

Midnight Hotel
Song of a Far Away Land

Chorus
And so my friends, in a faraway land
In a once familiar state
A once familiar time
The people have no peace
The people have no rest
For the robbers have come to power
And the robbers are now in power
The great looters of the public purse
With all their lying and thieving
They dance around in broad daylight

When will the people say it's enough?

(*Last part only*)
(*Spoken in recitative form at the end of the song*.)

"We'll draw up a constitution, they said"
"And put the real rogues in power"
(*End of Play*)

The words of above songs which would have otherwise been too confrontational in a particular Nigerian regime; too hash to speak and hence become masked in melodious singing that placate the audience on either side for or against the message presented no matter how true and appropriate.

Music as Introductions, Exits and Bridge

Music is a valuable tool for use as introduction, exit and intermittent bridges in a performance. However, the selection of appropriate music must be carefully considered since the wrong material can ruin an otherwise good production. Choice of music must necessarily be based on the context of the situation of every specific time and slot. A foremost Nigerian pioneer dramatist, Joel Adedeji, in his study of the opening glee in Yoruba drama, illustrated how the Yoruba Masque and Operatic professional theatres used the "Opening Glee" as technique of approach for the purpose of identification of the dramatists' intention (41). First used by the Lagos Glee Singers to describe its entrance song, the term was later popularised by the likes of Kola Ogunmola and Hubert Ogunde, who used it in the fifties "as a commentary on the action of the play … or sometimes to tell the story of the play" (Adedeji 49).

On a note of caution, it is pertinent to state, that musical application no "beautiful" or "sweet" at the wrong time would invariably create the wrong mood, thereby eliciting wrong reactions and wrong responses from the audience. For example, in two separate productions of the School of Performing Arts in 1997 Drama Week at the University of Ghana, Legon, this author witnessed Yoruba music erroneously played during a re-enactment of an Ibo event on stage and Igbo music juxtaposed in a Yoruba scene and *vice versa*. While this probably made no difference to the predominantly Ghanaian audience, for those familiar with the two divergent Nigerian cultures within which the plays were set, it was a serious error that detracted from the overall aesthetics of both productions. Upon investigation, it was gathered that the errors were based on ignorance on the part of the directors who assumed that any piece from Nigeria was adequate for any play from that country which is not correct. They, however, accepted this author's intervention/correction and were both grateful when she provided them with better alternatives as required. That field experience underscores the benefit of working with a musicologist on drama productions, for effective application and use of music.

In contrast to a different situation in Accra, the effect of substitution from another cultural background yielded a rather different result at the National Theatre in the production of Nigerian playwright, Fred Agbeyegbe's *The King Must Dance Naked*,

originally set in *Itshekiri* land of Southern Nigeria. This specific production was dramatically enriched with an *Akan* royal Durbar, usually accompanied with a display of various *Akan* music and dance displays with associated pageantry. That insertion of locally sourced music and dance by the director (though from, a culture, different from the originally indicated background) in this case did not distract from the play. Rather, the cultural parallel infused portrayed a good enough interpretation of the author's intention to the local as well as foreign audience of Ghana National Theatre as differently interpreted by the director with a locally influenced directorial concept that was also suitable for his audience.

It was a delightful experience enjoyed by both local and foreign audience including this author who had watched the same play as directed by Austin Asagba in Benin-City, Nigeria (the author is from Itsekiri land on which he set the play and Asagba being partly Itsekiri was therefore on familiar terrain which was quite evident in his dramaturgy and use of local music and dance. What becomes evident from this example is the possibility of substitution of artistic materials where applicable, to similar contextual situations where practices characteristic of African societies is commonly shared. In this case, the Chieftaincy institution is a shared West African culture in Nigeria as well as in Ghana.

It would, however, be out of place to allocate materials arbitrarily from one culture to another except for specific directorial intentions as was the case in a production of Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are not to Blame* by a Kenyan Director Sally Mwangola far away in Australia. In this case, while interacting with the Director of the cited production, she admitted experimenting with Kenyan songs she is familiar with to enhance her dramaturgy. Her specific intention was to draw intercontinental parallels among different societies by establishing the existence of continental (African) cultural parallels between Kenyan and Nigeria. In so doing, she however took advantage of the presence of some Nigerians around, whom she consulted to test her concept and ensure that all her choices conveyed the correct signals, without detracting much from the Author's focus. According to her, she realised her intention at the end of the production with the main goal of promoting better understanding among peoples of divergent cultures irrespective of their race, colour or creed.

Such problems dealing with choice of materials and ability to successfully integrate them is not peculiar to foreign directors involved with productions outside familiar cultural contexts but also a problem encountered even by local directors. A local director involved in the production of the same play may encounter similar problems, for, as a dramatist, he or she may not be culturally integrated or aware and as such may not be fully conversant with the requisite contextual materials from the relevant tradition.

This paper concludes that whereas earlier practices in Nigeria were known to have functioned in the western style where a play could be performed without the aid of music, contemporary practices have imbibed elements of traditional idioms and practices that portray their African/Nigerian identity. It therefore affirms that music is a viable tool as a means of communication in any drama that seeks identity with the roots of the Nigerian audience.

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DRESS NIGERIA, DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

Professor Sunday Enessi ODODO, PhD
Department of Visual & Performing Arts
University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri
Borno State, Nigeria
Email: seododo@gmail.com

Abstract
This essay contends that dress and identity are inseparable companions. Dress form an outstanding base for personal and cultural identification. Identity is a necessary process of a healthy personality as it is a part of self-realisation of a person. The paper sees Nigeria as a personality to dress up with derivable economic potentials and gains. It posits that even though Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society, we can successfully dress Nigeria, arguing that there is strength in diversity; diverse cultures give us a lot of cultural options to choose from and project. Ultimately an ethno-national dress culture can emerge to symbolise our national identity. To dress Nigeria therefore, with her large population, will translate to huge economic boost in terms of job creation, vibrant textile industry with vast value chain. To diversify the Nigerian economy through dress culture, the paper offers a number of recommendations which in themselves anticipate an all-embracing dress and textile policy for Nigeria.

Introduction
Dress is clothing with the associated accessories. It has been described as the total arrangement of all outwardly detectable modifications of the body itself and all material objects added to it. In other words, dress includes not only clothing, but all accessories, hairstyles, and any other alterations made to the body, temporary or otherwise. Dress is an important feature of all human societies. In addition to the obvious function of providing protection and warmth, dress serves many other purposes, most of them having to do with communicating our identity to others. Indeed, protection and warmth may not have been the earliest purpose of dress. Many people have always lived in warm climates where clothing is not needed for protection from the atmospheric elements, yet they have developed forms of dress. Other basic functions of dress include identifying the wearer (by providing information about sex, age, occupation, or other characteristics) and making the wearer appear more attractive.

For hundreds of years, people have put some message in the type of clothing they wore. Long ago people started wanting to stand out from the "crowd" and be different from other people by means of changing their clothing. Some examples of these "standing out" became very popular and were followed by more people. This was the moment when fashion appeared. Nowadays, fashion is sometimes defined as a "constantly changing trend, favoured for frivolous rather than practical, logical, or

intellectual reasons". Nevertheless, it is necessary to say that at the present moment fashion has a deeper influence on the life of people and possess more than just frivolous reasons for its existence. Clothing has become an integral part of self-realisation of every person. It is no longer just an "external shield" and a frivolous attitude towards it may cause losing a very important physical, psychological and social aspect of a person's life. The harmony attained by the combination of the inner world of a person and his "exterior" makes it very hard to say not even being a professional in this sphere that fashion is just about looks. Clothing is basically a covering designed to be worn on a person's body. This covering is a need, a necessity that is dictated by the norms of social conduct. This "necessity" brings a lot of variety into the lives of people and makes their image more complete. It is not about people serving fashion; it is about fashion meeting the needs of people.

Dress gives identity to the wearer and reflects self-perception which equates to personal identity. The choice of clothing and accessories (clothing, ornaments and hand props that are worn or carried, but not part of a person's main clothing) is as important as identification through the colour of hair, height, skin and gender. Clothing nowadays is a media of information about the person wearing it. It is a cipher; a code that needs a decryption in order to understand what kind of person is underneath it. The clothing of a person is therefore a means of communicating with the outside world. It is the way of telling people about the "state" and the "status" of its owner. Most times, the foundation of dressing is located in culture as every person belongs to a definite culture and has the right to reveal it. As such, personal identity may sometimes be replaced by cultural identity. Cultural identity is the type of identity that is related to a certain culture or a separate group. It brings people belonging to a culture definite highlighting differences with other people. Clothing in terms of culture is to reveal either the historical roots of a person or the roots of the group he belongs to. Demonstrating a belonging to a certain cultural community is the free right of every person just as people can freely declare who they want to vote for in an election.

Dress and identity are inseparable companions. Dress with all its symbolism and attributes form an outstanding base for personal and cultural identification. Identity is a necessary process of a healthy personality as it is a part of self-realisation of a person that is so much required for finding a place in life of every person. Fashion has become a tool for achieving harmony with the inner world and a way of revealing or concealing peculiarities. Fashion possesses a specific meaning and the more diverse is the society around us the more fashion-trend would appear and surprise us. As long as it does not hurt people around, fashion symbols are acceptable, nevertheless while thinking about fashion and identity it is necessary to remember the ethical side of the issue. Even though fashion and identity still remains a twofold issue but there are a lot of positive aspects one can enjoy and share with other people. It is against this background we want to see Nigeria as a personality to dress up.

Nigeria as a Personality Entity and Socio-Cultural Space

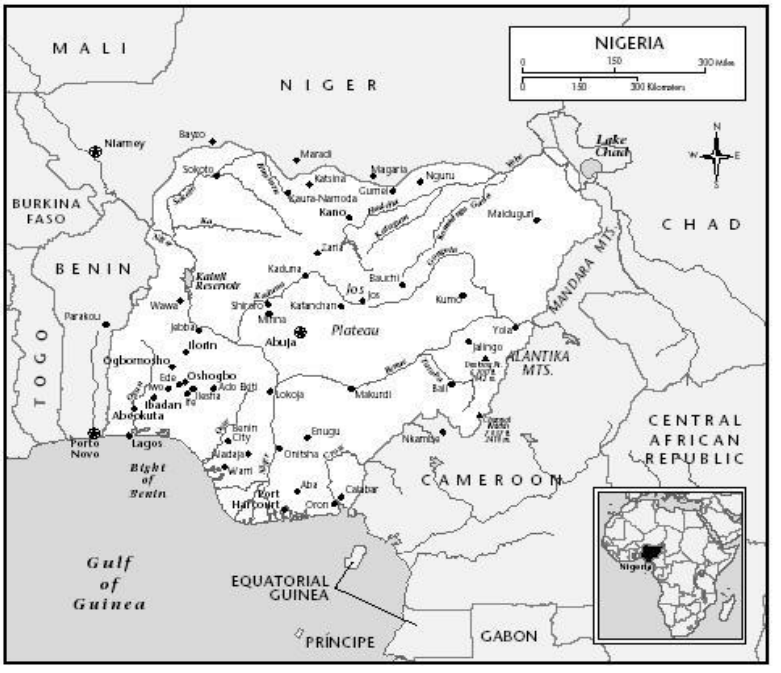
Nigeria as a political expression is a product of British consolidation of their colonial power over the area in 1914. The name Nigeria was suggested by British journalist, Flora

Shaw in the 1890s. She referred to the area as Nigeria, after the Niger River, which dominates much of the country's landscape. More than 250 ethnic tribes embrace present day Nigeria as home. The three largest and most dominant ethnic groups are the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. Other smaller groups include the Fulani, Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Tiv, Ebira, Manda and Edo. Prior to their conquest by Europeans, these ethnic groups had separate and independent histories. Politically, Nigeria is divided into thirty-six states and a federal capital territory. The nation's capital was moved from Lagos, the country's most developed largest city, to Abuja on 12th December, 1991. Abuja is in a federal territory that is not part of any state and serves as the official capital of Nigeria.

Demographically, Nigeria has the largest population in Africa. Nigeria's population is estimated to be more than 180 million people. With about 345 people per square mile, it is also the most densely populated country in Africa. Nearly one in every six Africans is a Nigerian. Despite the rampages of socio-economic hazards, Nigeria's population continues to grow at about 2.6 percent each year. The Nigerian population is very young. Nearly 45 percent of its people are under age fourteen.

Because there is little feeling of national unity among Nigeria's people, there is little in terms of national symbolism. What exists was usually created or unveiled by the government as representative of the nation. The main national symbol is the country's flag. The flag is divided vertically into three equal parts; the centre section is white, flanked by two green sections. The green of the flag represents agriculture, while the white stands for unity and peace. Other national symbols include the national coat of arms, the national anthem, the National Pledge and Nigeria's national motto: Peace and Unity, Strength and Progress.

Every ethnic group in Nigeria has its own stories of where its ancestors came from. These vary from tales of people descending from the sky to stories of migration from far-off places. Archaeologists have found evidence of Neolithic humans who inhabited what is now Nigeria as far back as 12,000 B.C.E. The histories of the people in northern and southern Nigeria prior to colonisation followed vastly different paths. The first recorded empire in present-day Nigeria was centred in the north at Kanem-Bornu, near Lake Chad. This empire came to power during the eighth century C.E. In the south, the Oyo Empire grew to become the most powerful Yoruba society during the sixteenth century.



Map of Nigeria

National Identity

The spread of overt colonial control led to the first and only time that the ethnic groups in modern Nigeria came together under a commonly felt sense of national identity. The Africans began to see themselves not as Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba, but as Nigerians in a common struggle against colonial domination.

The nationalistic movement grew out of some of the modernisation the British had instituted in Nigeria. The educated elite became some of the most outspoken proponents of an independent Nigeria. This elite had grown weary of the harsh racism it faced in business and administrative jobs within the government. Both the elite and the uneducated also began to grow fearful of the increasing erosion of traditional culture and values. They began movements to promote Nigerian foods, names, dress, languages, and religions.

Increased urbanisation and higher education brought large multi-ethnic groups together for the first time. As a result of this coming together, the Nigerians saw that they had more in common with each other than they had previously thought. This sparked unprecedented levels of interethnic teamwork. Nigerian political movements, media outlets, and trade unions whose purpose was the advancement of all Nigerians, not specific ethnic groups, became commonplace.

As calls for self-determination and transfer of power into the hands of Nigerians grew, Britain began to divest more power into the regional governments. As a result of early colonial policies of divide and conquer, the regional governments tended to be drawn along ethnic lines. With this move to greater regional autonomy, the idea of a

unified Nigeria began to crumble. Regionally and ethnically based political parties sprang up as ethnic groups began to wrangle for political influence.

Nigeria gained full independence from Britain on 1st October, 1960. Immediately following independence, vicious fighting between and among political parties created chaos within the fledgling democracy. On 15th January, 1966, a group of army officers, most of whom were Igbo, staged a military coup, killing many of the government ministers from the western and northern tribes. Six months later, northern forces within the military staged a countercoup, killing most of the Igbo leaders. Anti-Igbo demonstrations broke out across the country, especially in the north. Hundreds of Igbos were killed, while the rest fled to the southeast. This dovetailed into civil war in 1967 and the spirit of ethnic distrust has remained alive since then. Today it is still difficult to signpost an all-embracing cultural totem that can symbolise Nigeria's national identity. National integration should therefore still be a potent area of concern for our national leaders and all of us.

With split personalities and varying ethnic identities, can we successfully dress Nigeria? I say yes. In our diversity there is strength. Diverse cultures give us a lot of cultural options to choose from and project. Variety of ethnic products would certainly stimulate excitement and a rich aesthetic pool for creativity. In the end we shall have ethno-national dress culture that can symbolise our national identity.

Economic Diversification through Nigerian Dress

After the discovery of oil in 1957, Nigeria practically paid less attention to other areas of national income and concentrated more on gains from oil. The relegation of other vital and necessary sectors of the economy like agriculture, solid minerals, industrialisation/ manufacturing, taxation, investment and tourism is a regrettable policy somersault. Added to this is the sobering reality that too much emphasis on revenues from crude oil sales has made Nigeria to face the precarious future of oil doom owing to several principal factors. These include the unstable nature of the international crude market; possible glut in the market due to new oil finds and exploitation in different parts of the world in the recent years, the downward trend in the demands for oil by China, one of the major consumers of the commodity, following a lull in her industrial output in recent years; evolution of alternative energy sources (including those of hydro, solar, wind, biomass and geothermal) and efforts to explore and exploit shale oil (oil from rock) and gas by countries like the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Russia, China, Czech Republic and South Africa.

The resulting consequences of this adverse development are the increasingly dwindling revenues of government at all levels and the attendant slump in financing of capital projects and social services, sluggish economic growth and the terrible fate of naira whose exchange rate has noticeably depreciated against hard currencies like American dollar and pound sterling; dramatic reduction in foreign reserves, layoffs of workers, rising inflation, bankruptcy of many states of the federation (that now depend on bail-out support from the federal government) and incidence of banks facing bad debts from oil companies that bought oil fields when prices were high and are now struggling to repay their loans. The frail nature of the Nigerian economy can be attributed to its

being petroleum based. The instance the global oil price plummets, the economy of Nigeria begins to wobble. This economic imbalance can be corrected by the development of other sectors. Meaning, Nigeria economy calls for diversification.

Economic diversification is basically the idea of having multiple streams of income; it encourages the creation of different ways to increase cash flow. It recommends creating multiple revenue centres, as opposed to building a single income stream. It is an act of investing in a variety of assets. Its benefit is that it reduces risk, especially in the time of recession, inflation, deflation, and so on. Economic diversification strives to smoothen out unsystematic risk events in a portfolio so that the positive performance of some investments will neutralise the negative performance of others.

Indeed, diversification has been recommended to the government in the past, but has not been given the prime attention it deserves. President Muhammadu Buhari seems to see things from this direction when he said "diversification is urgent". As a major policy thrust, all arms of government and their agencies have been committed to how to buy into the diversification policy. From the cultural perspective, especially through dress culture, the Nigerian economy can be expanded and given a robust boost.

Our population and cultural diversity is a huge advantage. If three quarter of our 180 million population patronise Nigerian fabrics and made in Nigeria dresses consistently, this would translate into great economic boost. To supply the textile needs of this large population so many cotton plantations have to be established; many textile plants have to spring up along with feeder factories; traditional weavers would be very busy too; textile and fashion designers would be well occupied. Textile value chain will stimulate vibrant commercial activities and allied businesses. Ultimately, the textile industry in Nigeria would be an avenue to absorb our teaming youth from the unemployment market.

Strategies and Recommendations

To achieve this diversification objective through dress, the following strategies and recommendations are proposed.

1. Government should create enabling environment for the growth of textile industry in Nigeria by investing heavily in cotton plantation; give meaningful loans to cotton farmers with well thought out interest free regime.
2. Import relevant farming implements and tools to assist farmers in their plantations. In other words, mechanised farming is sacrosanct.
3. Organise training and retraining workshops for cotton farmers. This would equip them with modern farming technical knowhow to facilitate better yields.
4. Encourage public-private partnership in setting up and running textile factories and feeder companies. In all of these, local production technology must be protected, expanded and improved upon. This should ultimately transform into a well-organised and standardised production technology that will have comparative advantage over foreign ones.
5. Challenge our textile designers to create design patterns that emphasis the very best in our traditional fabrics across cultures; experiment with a collage of dress

senses and fabrics to produce unique patterns and styles that could harmonise our multicultural identities into one prominent national dress identity with time.

6. Relevant legislation is expedient in order to back up and instigate robust initiatives for national dress renaissance. Make importation of foreign fabrics and dresses unattractive so as to simulate patronage for locally produced ones.
7. President Muhammadu Buhari has declared Mondays and Wednesdays every week, as Made-in-Nigeria Dress Days across the country. This is laudable if well implemented. This policy would create rising demand for made in Nigeria dresses. But how many state and local governments and government agencies have embraced this policy pragmatically? A task on implementation has to be put in place to drive the process.
8. Experience has shown that the cultural dress codes of our leaders often attract high level of patronage from the citizenry. When Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the President of Nigeria, Yoruba dress attracted more patronage on a national scale. President Goodluck Jonathan similarly promoted the South-South dress culture and gained a lot converts too. With President Muhammadu Buhari on the saddle now, there is an obvious shift to Hausa Fulani dress types. This being the case, our leaders should take deliberate steps to showcase dresses from different Nigerian cultures weekly to give more awareness on Nigeria multicultural dress patterns and also the engender sense of belonging among all ethnic groups.
9. Our local fabrics can be used to create trendy fashion and those in vogue. This way, people would be attracted to these fabrics without inhibition. Traditional patterns and styles with the trendy ones would be available for all to choose from according to their preferences.
10. Design and fabric contents of our prominent carnivals, especially Abuja carnival and Carnival Calabar, should be revisited to predominantly adopt and utilise our traditional fabrics in the making of their costumes. This platform would serve a sure window to promote our traditional attires and dress sense nationally and internationally.
11. Our fashion design runways should exhibit more of traditional dresses in unique creations more than ever before. More dress exhibitions to hold periodically in order to expand the scope of awareness and availability of these dresses. There could be dress and fashion design competitions too to stimulate creative ingenuity and deepen the industry.
12. Our national traditional dresses should be a dominant feature in all our embassies, high commissions and mission offices abroad. All Nigerian nationals abroad should be encouraged to showcase our traditional wears as often as possible.
13. Nigerian fashion designers should deliberately use Nigerian fabrics to create dresses patterned after other people's cultures and traditions. As innovative creations, they would illicit interest and increase the market base for the products. To have non-Nigerians patronise our dress products would ensure market sustainability and expansion.

14. For systematic service delivery and monitoring, our dress and fashion industry should be mapped across cultural zones in Nigeria. The result of such mapping will also be useful for economic planning.
15. The social media and other relevant information technologies have to be relied upon to create a marketing and awareness hub for the made in Nigeria dresses. These are also veritable platforms for sharing creative ideas and designs.
16. All Nigerian dress creators and users of our traditional and trendy designs should don them with genuine sense of pride. Brand labels should be genuine and clearly tagged, "Made in Nigeria" or the name of the towns where they are made, for example, "Made in Aba", Made in Okene", "Made in Bama", and so on.
17. Fabrics are not just used to dress the human body, they can be used to dress our homes and public halls/places as curtains, drapes, table clothes, and decorative bands and stretched extensions. Our traditional fabrics should be so utilised in our homes and during public functions like wedding, inaugurations, conferences, public presentations, and so on.

Conclusion

The hallmark of our presentation with the suggestions and recommendations proffered, is to anticipate an all-embracing dress and textile policy for Nigeria which will provide the nitty-gritty of how the Nigerian economy can take due advantage of our multicultural fabrics and dresses, huge population and our creative ingenuity, while maintaining cultural integrity. To dress Nigeria is a serious business. When rightly done, it would soar our image and identity while commanding international followership. These are the intangible benefits of clearly articulated and well-implemented dress and textile policy. The tangible would be the resultant economic boom and wealth creation, which would end hunger in many homes and families.

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WOMEN'S BODIES SERVING ENVIRONMENTAL/SOCIAL (IN)-JUSTICE

Professor Elizabeth A. NYAGER, PhD
Department of Theatre & Film Arts
University of Jos, Jos
Plateau State, Nigeria
Email: nyagere@yahoo.com

Abstract
The environment and injustice are part of the concerns that are located within the fields of Eco-feminism and Eco-criticism. These concerns are universal. Sarah Ray Jaquette, a University of Oregon professor, in a seminal publication in 2009, came up with the concept of "The Ecological Other" by which she sought to highlight issues of social injustice 'embedded' in U.S. environmental policy and practice against the "ecological others" whom she identified as, Native Indians, People with Disabilities and Migrants. In this paper, we examine the works of two Nigerian female writers, both of them reputable and versatile as feminists who are also environmentally conscious and concerned about issues of injustice against women in our societies. In other words, they are eco-feminists. Eco-feminism describes a feminist approach to understanding ecology. Eco-feminists usually draw on the concept of gender to theorise on the relationship between humans and the natural environment. This paper attempts to reflect both the natural environments and the psychological domains under which injustice is meted out towards women and how these women respond to these situations in their lives. The women as represented through the chosen texts are thus considered the environmental/psychological 'others' whose 'bodies' have become the objects of social injustice in our own social domains of Nigeria. However, some of these women have been shown to have overcome victim-hood to become agents of positive change; negotiating and promoting social justice".

Introduction

Contemporary women writers from Africa like their global counterparts have been topical in handling contemporary global issues. The environment and social Injustice are among such issues. Nigerian women writers like Tess Onwueme and Sefi Atta are good examples of African women writers who are versatile and skilled in writing on global and contemporary issues including the environment and social justice. Tess Onwueme, for instance in her play, *What Mama Said*, skilfully highlights the ecological issues of the impact on the environment resultant from oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Onwueme equates the environment and its exploitation/ degradation to the female body which in this instance serves as the 'other'.

It is in the context of this equating/identifying of the environment/nature to 'Woman' that we seek in this effort to consider the issue of 'other-ness'. On the other

hand, Sefi Atta represents women voices as organs of National conscience and social consciousness. Her women like Tess Onwueme's are often presented as those who must mobilise social consciousness to confront injustice in society. Also, through their writing both the physical and psychological environments of African literary representations are reflected. It is from the writings of these two African women from Nigeria that we seek in this paper to discuss the issues of Environment/Nature and Social (In)-Justice.

Conceptualising Women as Other and 'otherness'

We begin this paper by a consideration of some connotations of '*otherness'*. Otherness may be considered to connote exclusion, segregation, *apartness*/apartheid. We therefore believe that Simone de Beavoir had this concept in mind when she said, "Man is defined as a human being and a woman as a female – whenever she behaves as a human being she is said to imitate the male". This simply means that 'human being' and 'female' are not the same but 'female' can work towards becoming 'human being'.

Thus, the 'other' who is the female and who, according to de Beauvoir is basically the "second sex" can easily become a target or an object of attitudes and negative behaviour like discrimination, oppression, abuse, subordination and victimisation. These attitudes, and negative behaviour towards women, have become the motivation of much feminist writing. Sefi Atta's writing for instance often advocates the "cause of women's emancipation in all realms of life" (Jyothirmai & Ramesh 56). All feminist writing is committed to this cause.

'Otherness' is constructed socially through exclusion and this exclusion is carried out through patriarchal relations in all spheres of life; social, cultural and economic ("Feminist Theory" 14). Exclusion amounts to separation and segregation. These in turn lead to subordination and oppression. In this effort therefore we attempt to discuss the works of two female writers from Nigeria; Sefi Atta and Tess Onwueme. Both Sefi Atta and Tess Onwueme portray and attempt to portray women as 'other' by 'constructing' and presenting women who rise from or attempt to come out of the place of 'otherness' and victimhood to become women of 'substance' with both voice and agency. Having acquired voice and empowerment themselves, through their education and exposure, they seem to be set to 'equip' and educate other women through their writings for social relevance and agency in their generation and age. Both are topical and adept in their approach to handling contemporary issues that plague our societies, both locally and globally. Such issues like patriarchy, (in)justice, gender-relations, under-development, and history (to mention a few).

As contemporary women writers, they have proved themselves to be committed feminists who take seriously the challenges of being female and being 'other' in our contemporary world. To be in the class of 'other' means you do not count, and anything can be done to you by way of injustice, abuse, oppression subjugation, and so on. For, as observed rightly by de Beauvior, "this has always been a man's world, and none of the reasons hitherto brought forward of this fact have seemed adequate" (64). This notion of 'this world being a man's world' is what feminists like Onwueme and Atta challenge in their writings. In another space (a conference paper), this writer had pointed out in a study of Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come,* where attention was drawn to an over-

arching presentation of a patriarchal society as an illustration of 'apartheid' which can rightly be described as domestic apartheid.

In this effort, we hope to take a look at both Atta and Onwueme as they tackle and illustrate the issue of "Women as other" in their respective works majorly, Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* and Onwueme's *What Mama Said.* These works can very easily come under any recommended book-list for an academic 'Women Studies Programme'. This is partly because Women Studies is "both a field of enquiry and a political practice" (Robinson & Richardson xiv). That is to say that it is the flip-side of Feminism with which it shares concerns and goals. The two Nigerian women under this study have proven to embody and fulfil these aspects of Women Studies/Feminism in both scholarship and feminist activism.

Tess Onwueme in *What Mama Said* raises issues of (under) development and environmental degradation through creating images of the land (nature, the environment); abused and exploited but also personified in womanhood. The story of the land (vandalised, exploited and abused) is also the story of womanhood; women vandalised, abused and exploited. Sefi Atta, on the other hand, in *Everything Good Will Come,* presents various women in exploited social circumstances and situations. She juxtaposes them collectively with the central character whose growth and education becomes a symbol of women emancipation and empowerment through education and mentoring.

Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*

Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* has rightly been described as a 'coming-of-age tale' since it begins with the prodigious life of an adolescent girl. Her dysfunctional home environment means that she spends quite some time on her own thus building/acquiring an independent spirit right from childhood. This independent spirit coupled with her father's nurturing and mentoring help to grow Enitan, the central character in the novel, into a sharp, observant, educated and exposed young woman who rises above the demands and oppression of the patriarchal society of South Western Nigeria. She also comes to embrace activism and becomes a spokesperson for women in the novel and by extension beyond the world of the novel. She thus overcomes 'otherness' and victimhood ('otherness-as-victim syndrome'), which permeates the lives of the many other women portrayed in the novel.

In the novel, *Everything Good Will Come,* we have characters like Sheri Bakare, who embody the 'otherness-as-victim' syndrome. Sheri is Enitan's childhood friend; who is cast and constructed antithetically to her. Their friendship endures throughout their lives although their lives are lived on differing and contrasting planes. Their differing lives and experiences underscore the important and central place education occupies in the lives of all, but most especially for girls/women. One of the points made by this work is the fact that girl-child education is vital in empowering and raising women out of a life of victimhood and ushering them into a life of agency. Sheri, in the novel, is also shown to have come from a 'dysfunctional' background but, because she did not have a doting father like Sunday Taiwo (Enitan's father), who prioritised education in his daughter's life; Sheri ends up as a school drop-out. This would make all the difference in the path/course her life would follow.

The disadvantages and plight of women without an education also come across in the portrayal of other women in the novel. The women in Sheri's polygamous home for instance are other examples. They are portrayed as women with low values and without meaningful life ambitions. They are exploited in time, labour and sexually, which is amply demonstrated through their relationships with their husband, their children, and with one another.

Sheri herself, though single, is also shown to fall victim to the enslaving relationship that is commonly referred to as 'sugar-dadism'. This is a kind of relationship in which a (young) girl is 'kept' by an older man, usually a married man, in a home he has built/bought or rented for her. She is provided for fully by this older man and, although they are not married formally, the young woman must provide to the sugar-daddy 'all' the 'services' offered by a married woman to her husband. In this relationship she cannot befriend another man and she is under strict control by the sugar-daddy. Thus, Sheri's body, time and mind became 'owned/possessed' and 'purchased' by Brigadier Hassan, her sugar daddy; to be abused and exploited regularly. This kind of assault involves both mind and body, although it is coated with an under-tone of an expression of love.

In Sheri's case, however, when the Brigadier attempts to physically 'batter' her, she fights back by slapping him, which of course brings an end to this relationship and deplorable arrangement. Girls who are denied education or who drop out of school usually follow a certain pattern of a disadvantaged life. They tend to marry early, have children early, and in most cases, they have many children. They begin to live in a cycle of poverty; they cannot hold a job, their children are ill-fed, ill-supervised and ill-brought up, usually also ending up as school-drop-outs, and so on. Thus, they live a frustrated and traumatised life. In Sheri's case this pattern is somewhat interrupted when she, by slapping Brigadier Hassan, opts out of the semi-marriage arrangement they have. She starts up a personal business and to some extent is able to escape her life of victimhood. Economic empowerment is another factor in moving women out of a life of subjugation and victimhood to a life of agency. We must commend and hail her courage in slapping the Brigadier, thereby ending the enslaving relationship. Symbolically and significantly, she was therefore 'slapping' out of her life, subjugation, subordination, as well as economic dependence and personal enslavement.

In this same work by Atta, we have the portrayal of other abused and exploited women mostly illustrating the psychological environment of the exploitation of the other. Toro Franco who has become Enitan's mother-in-law is such a character. She is portrayed as having a modicum of education and training and even some exposure. However, she has 'refused' to rise above the confining environment and circumstances of a domestic life highly controlled by her husband. Her only ambition in life seems to be fulfilling the desire of her husband and children, which fact has also made her an object of their scorn.

It is against the backdrop of this array and categories of women that we attempt to discuss Enitan as an example of women who rise from victimhood to agency through a refusal to be treated as the exploited other. Enitan started life as a victim; she was a victim of a dysfunctional home and a failed marriage. Growing up, she watched the

deteriorating relationship between her parents which no doubt brought a measure of fragmentation into her own life as well. Part of her life experiences included the discovery as a young woman with a supposedly close and doting relationship with her father, that he had sired a son outside of wedlock and had kept this fact from her. She thus suffers emotionally on account of the sometimes subtle and unspoken preference and elevation of the male-child over above the girl-child in African marriages. She also suffers being taken advantage of by the male-friends she herself has picked. She too, like her mother-in-law, had 'swallowed her voice' at a point in her life. She is quoted to have said, "I remembered also, how I'd opened my mouth once too often and thought that if I said another bad word another bad thought, I would remain childless, so I swallowed my voice for penitence" (189).

So, in her thirties, she realised that she was 'in a silent state". She held the same kind of views that most women hold in patriarchal societies and environments. Thus, she admits that, she "thought like many Nigerians that her priorities were best kept at home" (192); and also believed that activists ended up in prison (195); and so she would not get involved. It was a conversation with her father that began to awaken her from a life of complacent acceptance of life and its oppressive man-made circumstances. In a conversation, her father points out, "older people are afraid to talk, the young ones too busy chasing money. Doesn't the situation bother the youth at all?" Enitan answers, "It does." And he throws out the challenge, "Yet none of you are saying anything?" Later on, her father still raises the issue of silence from the women folk. Enitan belongs to both groups; she is a youth and a woman. "Women" he grumbled, "we never hear from them". Enitan asks: "Women? What do you want to hear from the women for?" And he says "Where are they? More than half of our population". Then, Enitan answers, "Human rights were never an issue till the rights of men were threatened" (196).

This conversation is significant. It is a conversation that would be tested when Enitan's father gets arrested. He was thus preparing the ground for Enitan's future 'induction' into (political) activism by another female activist, one Grace Ameh. However, before she could be fully inducted as an activist, Enitan had to undergo a kind of baptism; she had to be briefly incarcerated herself (218). While in prison with other women, she encounters various kinds of dehumanised, abused and exploited 'other' women 'bodies'. Their individual stories and collective narrative of victimisation, travesty of justice, abuse, exploitation by family and society, and so on, constitute a perfect picture of suffering as 'other'. This prison experience precipitates into her resolve to become an activist. Previously, she had 'articulated' in contemplation, "I wanted to tell everyone, 'I Am Ị Not Ị I Am Ị Not Ị Satisfied with these options'" (200). What options is she referring to here? Categorising women, she says, "By the time they came of age millions of personalities were channelled into about three prototypes; strong and silent, chatterbox but cheerful, weak and kind-hearted. All the rest were known as horrible women" (200).

So, these are the options open to women according to her judgment. This 'channelling' of women's personalities into prototypes conjure up a perfect picture of being treated as 'other' or falling into 'otherness'. So, Enitan "was ready to tear every notion they had about women, like one of those little dogs with trousers in their teeth.

They would not let go until there was nothing but shreds, and I would not let go until I was heard" (200). She had thus arrived at the high point of her resolve. Enitan's journey to activism is gradual but steady, propelled by life experiences and circumstances in addition to personal training and instigation by her father and later, by Grace Ameh, the female Journalist and herself an activist. Her father had taught her lessons in courage which would stand her in good stead in her decision for political/social activism (239). Grace Ameh encourages Enitan thus, "…but you have a voice, which is what I always try to tell people. Use your voice to bring about change" (258).

This is to say we all may have voice, but it is up to us individually to swallow it or allow others to deny us of our voice by the choices we make. When society tends to deny Women 'voice,' they must be prepared to give themselves that voice through making personal choices. Girl-child education and economic self-empowerment can be pathways to social and political inclusiveness and agency, thus, giving women voice. Both Grace Ameh and Enitan chose the path of relevance and inclusiveness through political activism. They chose to not 'swallow their voice' but rather gave themselves voice thereby moving from a place of perpetual victimhood as women, and as the 'other', to be abused and exploited to a place of empowerment and agency. They now had become effective representatives for the 'victim other', speaking on behalf of other women and on their behalf also; exercising their fundamental human rights to self-expression, self-realisation and existential relevance.

Time will fail us to discuss other works by Sefi Atta that are illustrative of our subject of discourse. One such work is her recent play, titled, *The Length To Which We Go*. In that work she presents us with a young woman who exercises her voice in spite of opposition and challenges to reach out to her community with revolutionary ideas through radio and later, through National Television. She refused to be silenced.

Tess Onwueme's *What Mama Said*

To extend our discussion on the subject of women as exploited 'other' in the face of social injustice, we must now turn our focus on Tess Onwueme. Like Sefi Atta, Tess Onwueme addresses contemporary issues/topical issues of social concern. Among such issues are issues of gender-inequality and the subjugation and exploitation of women as a social group. She is concerned about the plight of women in both traditional and modern African societies. Eke commenting on Onwueme's works has this to say, "Onwueme's works are strident criticisms of Nigeria but they are seen specifically through women's lenses" (9).

This means that women hold a special place of concern for Onwueme, and concerning the play with which we are here concerned we dare declare that the critical issues concerning Nigeria are seen through the 'bodies' of women. Women are portrayed in the play *What Mama Said* as the 'dominant' players as they are shown as a representation of the land/nation. The very names of the female characters in the play are names of geographic features of the land; Nigerian rivers for instance. Thus, we have "Omi" (which is a reversal of "Imo") a river in the South eastern part of Nigeria. We have "Hadeija" (a river in Northern Nigeria). We have Cross River (another name for a

Nigerian river) in the South-South of the country. Eke, in her introduction to this play goes on to observe that,

> … Onwueme has written this play which like her other plays is a platform from which the voices (of women) can be heard. Her plays are contributions to larger national, African and Pan African or International discussions of gender, race, history and politics (12).

Unlike what obtained in Sefi Atta's *Everything Good will Come*, where the heroine Enitan, needed to be conscientised, mobilised and groomed before arriving at the place of political activism, in *What Mama Said*, the women here seem to be already conscientised and mobilised for 'political activism'. Thus, from the very opening scene of the play, (the prologue), we see the women picketing. The action depicts a kind of awakening/turn around due to an emerging new spirit; a militant spirit when the wounded and chased around (that is, the subjugated, abused, and exploited) 'emerge' on stage "angrily, defiant, determined to be no longer crippled with fear or silence" (21). United in solidarity, they move to fight injustice, dehumanisation, victimisation, exploitation; all the things that had made them victims of 'otherness'. They have turned or are in the process of turning their experiences of 'victim otherness' into motivation and militancy. Indeed it is an awakening as the playwright suggests by calling women unto militancy with war chants and dances, "now women beat the drums" (22).

The women are revolting, against the hitherto endured stereotypical notions, attitudes and actions that held them down in life and society. Such notions and attitudes as expressed in the following lines "Women? Inflammable… hazards!" (22). The Shell Petroleum Development Company operating in the land is equated to "hell" in pun statements throughout the play and this 'hell' is for women; destroying the land which is equated to womanhood. It is the women who suffer this hell; when an explosion takes place, the victims are usually women and children. So, in **Movement Nine** of the opening scene, we see Imo in the market square chanting invocations to her ancestors to rise up and come to their aid; these ancestors are women!

> Rise up Mothers Ị
> My ancestors. Wake up Ị
> Your daughters need you now.

And later, Oshimi says:

> You know me, I know you. I Oshimi, leader of the market place, appointed by you, women of this land, to lead you with the assistance of Cross River. But this is not about me… or her, it is about us … us. Our world (138).

This is an indication that activism is supposed to be a collective and inclusive project for all women, globally. The fight is about 'our world' and about women in that world. It is about the safety of the world and taking up the cause for women's liberation

is about sisterhood. When she also says, "My siblings from many shores", she is referring to a global movement and the focus of this global movement/action transcends local shores, and goes beyond women of "Suffer-land" but includes women elsewhere and globally. Thus, in raising environmental issues of pollution and degradation, the land is equated to women. For instance, when Cross River says; "Not even the land is left. Not taken. Not polluted" (139). She also adds: "We are taken". The land is thus equated to womanhood; to women who are here shown to be synonymous to the land which is both "taken" and polluted. Consider also this line,

> **Cross River**: Ever since they discovered oil in our land, they drill, dry and fry us alive with fishes and farmlands all cooking in oil.

In one fell scoop, Onwueme seems to be raising multiple issues including gender, environmental, economic and human-rights issues. This perspective is later re-enforced through Hadeija when she says: "Why should you stand still, your voices chocking when you are oil and the river?" (141) In other words, you are the land; the environment; "… you are the heart and breast of the land". She re-iterates concerning the militancy and activism of the women in *What Mama Said,* Omi also addresses her mother and other women in a shout, "Mothers get ready! Sisters get ready" (141).

This is a universal call to all women to rise up and put right or fight the wrongs that fill our societies. So, again: "What did Mama say? Mothers, Sisters, Get ready! Ready!" This simply means: do not give up, do not just sit and watch. Do not just accept things as they are. Get involved in the movement to liberate the land, to liberate women. The women's weapons of warfare must be different. Women must employ creative, innovative and alternative strategies in this war-fare so as to avoid blood-shed. According to Omi,

> Mothers and Sister, you are not going to fight men with guns and bullets, with your bare hands and twigs? No, mothers and sisters. We cannot. Must not play their bloody game. For that is what they are. Bloody! (150).

The women are rather going to fight with united souls! Unity among women will do the trick.

> **Imo**: Our souls. United. Our souls Ị Our Spirits Ị Fight
> **Chorus of Women**: Fight!

The most important weapon women need is knowledge. This is spoken by Imo thus:

> **She**: The most important weapons we need is not guns but knowledge.
> **Imo**: Yes Wisdom (150).

Mothers must be taught the revolutionary techniques by daughters (151). Mothers on their part must be ready to be taught. And that is *What Mama Said.* In the women's fight

against injustice, oppression and exploitation, they must remember in the words of Imo in the play: "…remember, each one for us all". And

> **Chorus of Women**: Each one for everyone (153).

Equating women to the land/environment is also seen on page 80. In the following symbolism and imagery, "…no matter their height,… waves stand crashing at the vulva of the land" (80). Is bottom-power here being suggested as part of the strategy to over-coming male domination in patriarchal societies?

At the end of Movement Nine of the play, police swoop in on the women, handcuff some and lead them away. The younger women led by Imo, re-group, re-mobilise, re-emerge showing that the women (and their movement) are unstoppable. Women are unstoppable when they choose to unite. So, the struggle intensifies and must continue. The armed men throw tear gas into the crowd. The captives are led away, but soon the mob recovers; the girls first. They rouse the women once again (154). For the struggle indeed must continue.

Conclusion

From our examination of the works of these two Nigerian women, we see complementarity in both of the works examined. Whereas Sefi Atta focuses on 'drawing/highlighting pictures of the psychological environments of women's experiences, Tess Onwueme captures the response and experiences of women to life challenges, in creating physical, natural/environmental images of women in society. However, they both teach us that women must always strive to rise above their environmental circumstances, whether psychological or physical, rise above their restrictions, abuse, exploitation, subjugation and subordination. They must rise and take charge of their lives and serve society by becoming agents of change rather than victims of patriarchal norms and practices of society. These two writers have also proven that they are committed feminists. They confirm Salami-Boukari's submission that,

> African … women writers have managed to bring everyday life experiences into the academic realm where theory could actually be practically implemented scientifically through analysis and critical thinking. Through literature, individual and collective cultural history can be recaptured and released to the public (197).

Salami-Boukari also affirms Molara Ogundipe-Leslie's views on women writing thus:

> Molara Ogundipe-Leslie defines the feminine perspective of the woman writer as having two main responsibilities in society. First, the woman writer has to tell about being a woman. Second, she has to describe reality from a woman's view, a woman's perspective as opposed to what men have done so far (198).

Both Sefi Atta and Tess Onwueme have consistently fulfilled this mandate in their works. Sefi Atta is listed among African women who are focused on

African/Nigerian women's transformation. These women's "writings show signs of diffidence against many social ills that are hampering the overall development of post-colonial Africa(n)/Nigeria(n) women" (Jyothirmai & Ramesh 55). This is so true as illustrated by the above critique of the works of both Sefi Atta and Tess Onwueme

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CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE NIGERIAN YOUTH

Professor Barclays Foubiri AYAKOROMA, PhD
Department of Theatre Arts
University of Africa, Toru-Orua (UAT)
Bayelsa State, Nigeria
Email: barclaysayakoroma2017@gmail.com

Abstract
The Nigerian economy first experienced a downturn in the early 1980s, when the oil boom became more of a curse. Since then, the Nigerian youth have not come to terms with the need to make legitimate living outside white collar jobs. Incidentally, it is practically impossible for government to provide jobs for the teeming unemployed graduates. This paper highlights the potential of culture and creativity in meaningfully engaging the Nigerian youth. It submits, through an analytical approach, that culture provides a veritable means of providing job security for the Nigerian youth; and that the imperative is for them to come to terms with the stark realities on ground, adopt entrepreneurship, and depend on the immense cultural resources that abound in different parts of the country.

Introduction
The mention of culture brings to mind such words like, *fetish*, *barbaric*, *uncivilised*, *primitive* ways of a people. In actual fact, culture goes beyond such base terminologies. It goes beyond uncultured ways of life; it goes beyond crude ways of life; and it goes beyond ancient ways of life. The *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* adopts Edward B. Tylor's definition of culture as,

> the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours (3).

Basically, there are two components of culture: *tangible* and *intangible*. The tangible components of culture have to do with things that you can *see*, *touch* and *feel*. The intangible component deals with things that you *cannot really touch and feel*; but they are there and are part of the daily existence of a people. For instance, farming tools, food items, cooking utensils, clothing, mats, musical instruments, masks, canoes, medicines, houses, and so on, are things that we see and feel; they are not abstract. On the other hand, beliefs, traditions, values, festivals, gods, and so on, are not things that are seen and touched; but they remain part of the cultural heritage of a people.

It is pertinent to state that by cultural heritage, we are referring to the cultural practices, cultural resources, cultural industries, people and places, cultural festivals, food culture, dress culture, music, dances, building culture, farming culture, marriage culture, chieftaincy institution, language and the general belief system of a people, among others. These make up the totality of various human organisations, as they battle to control their physical and social environment. Also, they emerge over time as shared historical experiences of given societies, which are continuous and ever-changing and developing; and they give groups of people their distinct identities.

It is in the light of the foregoing that the *Cultural Policy for Nigeria* states that culture comprises *material*, *institutional*, *philosophical* and *creative* aspects. It is necessary to expatiate on these four aspects of culture for better understanding of the concept in human organisations.

Material: This aspect, as noted earlier, has to do with the artefacts of a people, namely, tools, clothing, food, medicine, utensils, housing, and so on. For instance, if you see a man wearing *babanriga*, you associate him with the Northern part of Nigeria; if you see a woman wearing *aso-oke*, you associate her with the South-Western part of the country; and if you see a man wearing a bowler hat, you see him as hailing from the Niger Delta. Similarly, a food item like *tuwo shinkafa* is associated with the North; *amala* and *ewedu* with the South-West; *akpu, ishi-ewu* and bitter-leaf soup with the South-East; just as *edikai-ekong, afang,* as well as starch and *banga* soup are associated with the Niger Delta.

Institutional: This deals with the political, social, legal and economic structures erected by a people to help them achieve material and spiritual objectives. Our political culture and educational system are quite different from what obtains in Europe or America because of our peculiar way of life and worldview.

Philosophical: This has to do with ideas, beliefs and values a people have cultivated over time. Our traditional and religious beliefs in Nigeria are diverse. Our attitude to life and death differ from one ethnic or religious group to another. Our marriage and burial traditions differ from one place to the other. Specifically, in the South-East and South-South, the burial of the dead could be one year after of more. This is followed by annual memorial services as far as the money is there. In fact, burials are now taken as business ventures, as invitation cards and envelopes are sent to people soliciting for financial donations.

Creative: This pertains the body of literature (oral or written), including the language of expression, the visual and performing arts (music, dances, dramatic performance), which has been developed by a people over time and which helps to mould other aspects of the culture of the people. Every writer draws from his/her cultural background. Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* is based on a Greek play, *Oedipus Rex,* by Sophocles. Rotimi skilfully adapted that classical play to the Yoruba setting.

Catherine Acholonu, in contributing to the conceptual framework on culture, states that, "the difference between man and animal is culture. Man is always trying to improve himself and the weapon through which he improves himself is culture" (6). This is in tandem with what the French philosopher, Albert Camus, had opined, when he observed that, "without culture and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle" (http://madisonian.net).

However, culture is always in motion; it is never static; it is ever adapting to changes. This explains why the dresses worn about 20 (or even 10) years ago are out of fashion now. The trousers and shirts that dominated the fashion scene in the 1990s are not what we have today. The same applies to the various hairdos, skirts, blouses and facial makeup that were in vogue years ago. This underscores the postulation that, *culture is dynamic*. Thus, it should be understood that culture is not merely the upholding of the ancient customs and traditions handed down from the past to the present generation. It encapsulates the attitude and world view of a people; it embodies their commitment and identity with the future of their values, norms and mores, which are faced with the demands of modern developments.

On the Concept of Creativity

Creativity, as a concept, could be looked at from the perspective of being ingenious. Thus, to be creative implies having the quality or power of creating or being imaginative. It is the ability to adroitly do certain things in ways that may be actually unimaginable. This ability could be innate (inborn) in a person; or it could be cultivated (developed) through constant and consistent practice.

The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* states that the word, *creative*, means, "producing or using original and unusual ideas: a creative person, artist, designer, programmer, creative talents, powers, abilities and creative thinking"; and that *creativity* means the "ingenuity and flair" in a person or people. To the *Business Dictionary*, it is the "mental characteristic that allows a person to think outside of the box, which results in innovative or different approaches to a particular task" (http://www.businessdictionary.com). In the context of this paper, therefore, creativity means doing those things which are entrepreneurial in nature and have the potential of the Nigerian youth exploiting certain opportunities *legitimately* for a living and possibly for financial gains.

The emphasis on legitimacy needs to be given a little attention here. This is in the sense that if the creative ability of a person is not put into good use, then that person becomes a deviant in the society. In other words, it is not all about the innate ability a youth possesses; it is the use to which he/she puts that ability. The so-called "Yahoo Boys" we hear about on the news media everyday are young boys who have raw talents as regards information communication technology (ICT). Unfortunately, instead of using their God-given creative ability to do things to improve their living conditions and, by extension, the Nigerian nation, they are using that gift the wrong way thus giving the country a negative image internationally.

Let me quickly point out two unique cases of creative ingenuity recently displayed by two young Nigerians. The videos went viral on social media; but we are yet

to get news of any positive development on both inventions. The first case is one who has produced a *toy* airplane, which he remotely controls by starting the engine; then he controls it to taxi, take off, and glide in the air (may be about 1,000 feet above mid-sea level, as long as possible, before he controls it to land safely. The implication is that such a young Nigerian could possibly design and produce drones and airplanes if he has the necessary support. A second case is a young man who has designed what could be described as *a triple-system car*, which could drive on land, on water, and even fly as an airplane. He drove the car from Lagos to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory and displayed pictures of the car on water and in the sky. This is a rare exploit, reminiscent of cars driven by James Bond of the popular *007 Series*, based on novels by Ian Fleming. According to the young man, his invention dates back to the administration of Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB). Unarguably, these are young inventors that would have been quickly encouraged by government and even philanthropists, in other climes.

The Nigerian Youth

Curiously, an acceptable definition of the term, *youth*, has been very elusive. Even the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) understood this in its definition of the term. In defining the concept, UNESCO says, "*Youth* is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community". It expatiates thus:

> However, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment. Therefore "youth" is often indicated as a person between the age where he/she may leave compulsory education, and the age at which he/she finds his/her first employment. This latter age limit has been increasing, as higher levels of unemployment and the cost of setting up an independent household puts many young people into a prolonged period of dependency (http://www.unesco.org).

The uncertainty is further explicated by UNESCO, noting that when carrying out its Youth Strategy, it uses different definitions of *youth* depending on the context.

> For activities at international or at regional level, such as the African Youth Forum, UNESCO uses the United Nations' universal definition. The UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States (http://www.unesco.org).

Incidentally, the confusion in the concept of *who is a youth* is further seen in the position taken by UNESCO thus:

> For activities at the national level, for example when implementing a local community youth programme, "youth" may be understood in a more flexible

manner. UNESCO will then adopt the definition of "youth" as used by a particular Member State. It can be based for instance on the definition given in the African Youth Charter where "youth" means "every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years (http://www.unesco.org).

From the above, it is generally clear that placing the age of the youth at 40 years and below is an absurdity. More laughable are situations where youth leaders in present day political parties in Nigeria, for instance, are as old as **50** years or more. Somehow, this abnormality is arrantly defended with the saying that, one could be *a youth at heart*; or that *you are as young as what you feel in your heart*.

Generally, the youth are supposed to be the future leaders (leaders of tomorrow); they are the future directors-general of government Parastatals; they are the future vice chairmen and chairmen of local government councils; they are the future professors and vice chancellors in our citadels of learning; they are the future honourable members of the states' houses of assembly; they are the future deputy governors and governors of our states; they are the future ministers; and they are the future vice presidents and presidents of our dear nation.

Furthermore, the Nigerian youth we are looking at are those who are self-reliant. They are honest and ready to use their hands to work and earn decent living. They are those who would not engage in internet fraud and other **419**-related criminal activities. They are those who would not engage in unwholesome practices like kidnapping, armed robbery, militancy or terrorism; they are those who will not readily offer themselves as ready tools for thuggery, ballot box snatching, assassinations and such other political criminal acts.

In summary, the ideal Nigerian youth are below **30** years old. They are hardworking, diligent, dependable and altruistic. They have the fear of God and would always want to be their brothers' keepers. We shall now examine how the Nigerian youth can be self-reliant, even in the face of the current harsh economic conditions.

Exploiting the Potential of the Creative Industry

The creative industry is synonymous with the cultural industry. By this, we are referring to jobs that the Nigerian youth can readily engage in using their entrepreneurial skills. But then, many the Nigerian youth appear not to know what to do. This brings to mind the song of the celebrated late singer, Sonny Okosun, when he sang:

*Which way Nigeria? (*2ice*)*
Which way to go?
Which way to go?
I love my fatherland
Oh yes
I want to know o
Yes, I want to know
Which way Nigeria
Is heading to? (Chorus of "Which Way Nigeria")

There is no gainsaying that the vocations available are diverse, just as the Nigerian people. Specifically, some of them include, but not limited to: photography, digital/screen printing, filmmaking, music, modern dance, drama/cultural troupe, stand-up comedy, painting, carving/sculpting, carpentry, fashion design, barbing/hairdressing, make-up, tie-and-dye, bead-making, shoe-making, catering services and local beverages, among others. Since the list is by no means definitive, we shall limit our discourse to just eighteen (18) aspects of the creative industry. This number is significant, as it marks the adolescent or voting age of the Nigerian youth.

1) *Photography*: The art of photography has become a very vibrant profession, most especially as practitioners do not require a long period of training. Little wonder then that some enterprising youth have taken to it and they flood public events to snap pictures of guests, even unsolicited. With developments in ICT and digital technology, they are quick to print the photographs with their mobile printers in just a few minutes just like the days of the Polaroid camera (wait and take). Nonetheless, if well pursued, this is one profession that can put food on the table for Nigerian youth.

2) *Digital/Screen Printing*: This is also an area that is yet to be given serious attention. There is no arguing the fact that, as one of the *happiest people in the world*, Nigerians like celebrating: wedding parties, graduation ceremonies, chieftaincy installations, political campaigns, product launchings, funerals, remembrance services, and so on. These and many other occasions require printing of various materials. Thus, if one is well-grounded in digital and screen printing technology, one would have more than what one could chew.

3) *Filmmaking*: The Nigerian film industry, (popularly called, Nollywood, and other emerging "Woods"), is gradually becoming a global brand. The industry has been adjudged by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as the second largest film industry in the world, after the Indian film industry (Bollywood), in terms of production quantity. Producing about 100 movies a week (about 500,000 movies per annum) currently and providing close to 500,000 direct and indirect jobs, as at 2014, the film industry was said to have contributed about 1.4% to the GDP of the country. The implication is that Nollywood is a gold mine yawning to be tapped my government.

   Also, worth noting here is the fact that a movie production engages various personnel like script writers, script editors, actors, costumiers, make-up artists, production assistants, location managers, soundmen, light/set designers, continuity, photographers, film camera assistants, directors of photography, production managers, assistant producers, producers, assistant directors, artistic directors, directors and executive producers (EPs). The production crew

highlighted above is in addition to those who provide ancillary (support) services like transport, accommodation and welfare, among others.

As a point of fact, filmmaking offers several windows of opportunity for the Nigerian youth to eke out decent living. The opportunities abound in front of the camera and behind the camera. However, experience has shown that many youth prefer opting for acting, which will supposedly offer them opportunity to movie stars. Ironically, that does not come easy because of the stiff competition in the industry. In this light, the professional advice we always proffer to such persons is: *Go for behind the camera jobs, work diligently, pray and wait for an opening. A time will come fortuitously for you to avail yourself of the opportunity to act*.

4) *Painting*: We know that one does not need to go to an art school to be a good painter. It is possible for one to have the talent to paint; and to develop that talent, one has to work at it as a vocation. Thus, there is need for those who have the flair for painting to practice the art. Once you have a very good collection, the next thing is to mount an exhibition for members of the public to see your works and possibly purchase. There are many companies, especially hotels that acquire good paintings to provide the right ambience in their interiors.

5) *Carving/Sculpting*: The mention of carving here may be misconstrued to mean a local carver of masquerades and other such artefacts. By this, we mean production of art pieces that could be used as souvenirs. They could be on wood, plastic, or other such media. Can we readily pick gift items at the motor parks, supermarkets, the airport, and other such places that could remind us of this visit to Kwara state? We are sure the answer would not be in the affirmative.

6) *Carpentry*: Like the one who paints, one does not have to go school to become a good carpenter. The basic requirement is the flair for the profession and a little apprenticeship. Secondly, the carpentry we have in mind is not the *cut and nail* type but one who can design various types of upholstery and cabinets. Once you have good quality products, dealers will always patronise you. In fact, furniture shops would buy you works to display in their showrooms.

7) *Music*: There is no arguing the fact that Nigerians have dominated the African music landscape. Incidentally, like painting, one does not have to study the art of music production before venturing into it. Once the inspiration is there, one can make an impact. There are many popular musicians in the country, including school dropouts, who have changed the fortunes of their families through music. Also, one could go into classical and choral music as a performer or an instructor.

8) *Dance*: Some Nigerians are also currently making a living through dance and choreography. There are people who are dance instructors, teaching young children the art of dance. Furthermore, the horizon has been broadened with the

introduction of calisthenics into major state events. Abuja Carnival, Calabar Christmas Carnival

9) *Stand-up Comedy*: This is an aspect of the creative industry, where Nigerians have also made great impact. It is also vocation, where one does not have to go to school to perfect it. Interestingly, only very few of the stand-up comedians making waves in Nigeria actually went to the university. Furthermore, out of those who went to the university, only a negligible number studied theatre arts. While stand-up comedians like Ayo Makun, AY, Julius Agwu, Basorge Tariah and Francis Duru, Michael Ogbolosingha and Gee Bonz read theatre arts, popular comedians like Ali Baba, Okey Bakassi, Basket Mouth, I Go Dye, Gordons, Dan d'Humorous, Omobaba, MC Miracle, Lepacious Bose and Princess, among others, had nothing to do with theatre arts before venturing into stand-up comedy industry.

10) *Theatre/Drama*: The theatre also offers a legitimate means of livelihood. One could run a vibrant theatre troupe to the extent that one could be on demand at various public events. There are private theatre troupes like Crown Troupe in Lagos, Jos Repertory Theatre, Arojah Royal Theatre in Abuja, and a host of others that are doing theatre and surviving very well. The artists running the aforementioned theatres are not working for any person – they are on their own.

11) *Fashion Design*: Nigerians, in recent years, have taken the global fashion scene by storm. Many reputable fashion houses have emerged, with their fashion brands and ambassadors. They feature in different fashion shows around the world. The secret is coming out with unique designs that make significant fashion statements. Some top fashion designers in Nigeria include Yemi Osunkoya, Duro Olowu, Folake Folarin-Coker, Lisa Folawiyo, Frank Oshodi, Ade Bakare, Deola Sagoe, and Lanre Da-Silva Ajayi (*Web*).

12) *Hairdressing/Barbing Salons*: This is also an area that is gaining ground. With the social media craze, we see various fashions, regarding hairdos, manicure and pedicure. Of recent, we have seen various designs regarding hairdos. Young men now use various designs on their heads or even design their faces on the back of their heads. Furthermore, some use the art of tying scarf, *igele*, as a special brand. Since there is hardly any weekend that passes without a party, some youths help party goes to tie their *igele* or pre-tied *igele* for hire. Of course, it stands to reason that the neater the tied *igele*, the higher the patronage.

13) *Make-up:* Bridal make up is now a job that enterprising youths creatively engage in. This is because people get married every week, which means the services of make-up artists are needed every week. Tara House of Beauty and a host of other agencies provide professional training in this respect. Also, once one is proficient, he/she could easily join any of the film production hubs in the

Nigerian movie industry: Nollywood, Kannywood, Yoriwood, Biniwood, Callywood, Igalawood, and any of the "woods".

14) *Tie-and-Dye*: The *adire* and *aso-oke* are unique fabrics that stakeholders in the creative industry have not capitalised on. The opportunities are there for these fabrics to be exploited for us to derive economic benefits.

15) *Shoemaking*: This is an entrepreneurial skill that is in search of the Nigerian youth. We are talking about design of shoes that can stand the test of time. Though there is craze for Italian or Spanish shoes, such shoes are not specially designed for our weather and environmental conditions. The shoe you can use for five years in London, Paris or New York, cannot survive two years in Nigeria because of our muddy roads.

16) *Bead making*: Unlike gold, silver and bronze, beads are gradually being patronised as adornments in dressing, as they are affordable. Coral beads, for instance, have a way of enhancing the beauty or appearance of whoever adorns them.

17) *Catering*: Food is a basic necessity in life. There are various snacks or small chops that people do not prepare at home. Where such items are on offering anywhere, the patronage is always on the high side. Today, in Nigeria, we have several eateries and outdoor catering services. While Mr. Bigg's, KFC and Chinese Restaurants were favourite brands in those days, they have since been overshadowed by local brands like *Tasty Fries*, *Chicken Republic*, *Tantalizers*, *Genesis*, *Jevenic*, *Mama Cass*, *Calabar Kitchen*, and so on. One unique approach among the Nigerian brands is the addition of African pot, that is, local delicacies.

18) *Local Beverages*: This is a business that would always attract clients. We are not giving attention to the production of local drinks like *kunu*, *fura*, *zobo*, and *soya* milk, among others. These are local drinks that do not have additives; they do not contain genetically modified organisms – they are direct from the source and are nutritious.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have attempted to highlight the nexus between culture, creativity and the Nigerian youth. We have enumerated the various creative enterprises that the Nigerian youth could venture into. The point is that, how the youth approach such creative ventures would determine how they could fare in life.

In considering the foregoing, the Nigerian youth have to appreciate the fact that government cannot provide jobs for everyone. The implication is that they have to strive to make legitimate living through the diverse opportunities offered by the creative industries, some of which have been delineated above. Also, the organised private sector (OPS) can reduce the teeming number of unemployed youths by creating more jobs.

Many may have ideas but do not have the platforms to realise such ideas in practical terms.

However, it is imperative that government at the levels, federal, states and local governments, be committed to ameliorating the situation by providing more conducive environment for the creative enterprises to thrive. In all of this, one advice to the Nigerian youth is critical. *They should start from where they are; start with what they have; and start now before it is too late*.

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VIABLE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN THEATRE ARTS AND LEGAL STUDIES: OPTIONS TO PURSUE

Professor MABEL I. E. EVWIERHOMA, PhD
Diaspora Centre
University of Abuja
Abuja-FCT, Nigeria
Email: mabtobrhoma2002@yahoo.com

Abstract
There are different areas of relatedness between performance and law as reflected in the codes on the rights of the performer to seek redress in the Nigeria court of law. They provide adequate substantiation for the seam between Theatre and Legal Studies. The artist-performer embodies the spheres of connection and continues to reflect how the codes could be articulated for the apposite enforcement of his rights. This shows that there are meeting points and they should be highlighted. Using library phenomenological research, this paper gauges the Sunny Ade Case and attempts to reveal these meeting points. Again it seeks to find out how and why they occur and ways the artist-performer could benefit from such. It found that the cases under litigation like those of Anidugbe Oluwatobiloba Daniel, also known as, Kiss Daniel; Douglas Jack Agu, also referred to as Runtown; and the singer and song writer, Olawale Oloforo, also called Brymo, the film and music producer, Remi Ibitola reveal the need for the practitioners of the law to accurately understand the universe of the artist-performer. On the other hand, the artist should comprehend legal drafting and contracts before appending their signatures to them. It is recommended that training programmes should be organised for both parties to remedy the deficit in the broad understanding of both intersecting areas of operation. The resort to alternative means of dispute settlement was also recommended.

Introduction

The theatre is known for its cross-cutting forms across disciplines. There have been inroads between the theatre and every aspect of life, hence it is often considered to be life itself. At another level, it is often assumed by many (and wrongly so), that the law has only but few intersections between its scope of relativity and artistic endeavours. In recent years, many practitioners of the arts and even artistes themselves have ventured into learning the law to become lawyers. To many within the house of artistes, such artiste-performers, artiste-scholar, or critic-artists, scholar-performers and diverse combinations of metier who venture into other areas have deserted the fold and bear no true loyalty to Theatre and or Performing Arts. The likes of Reuben Abati, Elo Ibagere, Jeleel Ojuade, Richard Mofe-Damijo, Taiwo Adepetu and this writer and others in no particular order, trained as Theatre Artists from different universities in Nigeria and later went on to study Law.

If interviewed, each of the above-mentioned individuals or respondents would adduce assorted reasons for his or her choice in different areas of Law. What is to be made obvious here is the clear link between the diverse areas of legal studies and theatre praxes. Nicole Rogers claims that, "theatre is commonly perceived as play but law is not although some commentators have viewed law as play". She cites Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*: *A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, to buttress her position. She further asserts that her focus in the essay is on "the use of legal texts in theatrical performance, or the (re)presentation of legal performance as theatre …" (430). The examples provided by her include: "Parliamentary inquiries, as well as courtroom proceedings" (430), which she terms, law in play, with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Dario Fo's *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist,* as very apposite examples. In African drama, there are examples like *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo, *Man Talk, Woman Talk* by Ola Rotimi, and Zulu Sofola's *The Wizard of Law*. Some legal dramas are also broadcast on television, like the defunct *Assizes* on Nigerian Television in the 80s; some are produced on radio and on film. These plays on arbitration further the position of intersection between theatre and legal studies in this treatise.

In this treatise, this writer attempts to look at the gains of exploiting the junction between the law and stage arts, especially of the performative kind, in the genre of musical performance. There are often cases brought against agents, marketers, promoters by actors, singers, musicians and vice versa, due to contractual breaches or breach of trust. Most of these cases are not heard or listed and often the parties abandon them or the cases are struck out by the courts without due and diligent prosecution.

The case of *African Songs Ltd v. Sunday Adeniyi and Anor,* Suit No. FRC/L/74/74 (1) at the Revenue Court and a second one *African Songs Ltd.v. Sunday Adeniyi and 8 Ors.* Suit No. LD/1300/74 at the High Court of Lagos shall be our focus (Cited in Asein, *Nigerian Copyright Law*). It is expected that some insight into the gains of the feasible intersection, and fusion, of certain spheres in both areas of scholarship and practice, if not the outright blend between the identified areas of law and theatre studies would have been achieved.

In the first case, the matter concerned copyright, breach of contract, agency and due legal representation as well as action for damages and an injunction to prevent further damages. The plaintiff's counsel Mr. Ademiju instituted the matter at the Revenue Court, Lagos, seeking an injunction to restrain Sunday Adeniyi, aka, King Sunny Ade, from selling produced records or performing at any other fora. This was a clear case of breach of contract and the plaintiff's counsel claimed sundry damages and insisted that the contract between his client and the defendant was still subsisting. However the case was struck out on 14thOctober, 1974, by Justice A. A. Adediran as a result of a motion on notice brought by the defendant's counsel citing section 7(1) of the *Federal Revenue Court Decree* of 1973 which clearly showed the lack of jurisdiction of the Federal Revenue Court to entertain it. On the issue of jurisdiction raised by the defendant's counsel which, the plaintiff's counsel argued, was premature, the learned trial judge affirmed that issue of jurisdiction can be raised at any time in the proceedings.

Justice Adediran cited *Decree* 7(1) highlighting the functions and jurisdiction of the defunct Federal Revenue Court in the *Federal Revenue Court Decree*, which stated as follows:

> The Federal Revenue Court shall have and exercise jurisdiction in civil causes and matters –
> (a) relating to the revenue of the Government of the Federation in which the said Government or any organ thereof or a person suing or being sued on behalf of the said Government is a party;
> (b) connected with or pertaining to –
> (i) the taxation of companies and of other bodies established or carrying on business in Nigeria and all other persons subject to Federal taxation;
> (ii) customs and excise duties;
> (iii) banking, foreign exchange, currency or other fiscal measures;
> (c) arising from (i) the operation of the *Companies Decree* 1968 or any other enactment regulating the operation of companies incorporated under the *Companies Decree* 1968;
> (ii) any enactment relating to copyright, patents, designs, trademarks and merchandise marks;
> (d) of admiralty jurisdiction.

From the facts stated above, the court had no jurisdiction to try the case. Thereafter the plaintiff's counsel sought relief at the Federal High Court, Lagos before Hon. Justice Dosunmu in 1975. The full title of the suit is as follows:

> King Sunday Adeniyi Adegeye (A.K.A. King Sunny Ade) (Suing on behalf of himself and members of Green Spot Band) – Plaintiff v. (1) African Songs Limited; (2) Take Your Choice Record Stores Ltd.; (3) Lati Alagbada (Nig.) Ltd.; (4) Record Manufacturers of Nig. Ltd.; (5) Ibukunola Printers (Nig.) Ltd.; (6) Alhaja Awawu Ade Amodu (Trading under the name and style of Alhaja Awawu Ade Amodu & Sons); (7) M.O. Alagbada (Trading under the name and style of M.O. Alagbada (Nig.) Company)–Defendants.

The following reliefs were sought, according to Justice J. Dosunmu. In this action, the plaintiff's claims, as amended, were:

> (i) A declaration that the agreement dated 6thOctober, 1970, made at Lagos between the plaintiff and the 1stdefendant with 7 others is still subsisting.
> (ii) An injunction restraining the defendants, their servants and or agents from distributing and or selling the gramophone records 12" SALPS 116 cartons No. 3/116 to the members of the public.
> (iii) An injunction restraining the defendants their agents, assigns, servants, partners, from putting out for sale any such recordings, or records performed by the 1stdefendant and his Green Spot Band or with any other group and in

particular the consignment of recordings and or records which the 1st defendant under this name Sunny Alade Records have ordered from Decca Gramophone Company Limited of London.
(iv) Alternatively, an order withdrawing from sale to the public the pressed records referred to in paragraph (ii) above which are in breach of an existing agreement.
(v) An account of all sales of the records sold in contravention of an existing agreement.
(vi) ₦852,012.00 special damages.
(vii) Anticipated profit ₦177,618.00.
(viii) ₦1000,000.00 general damages for breach of agreement.

It took forty years, from 14 February, 1975 to 12 November, 2015, for the case to be decided. It would appear that the contract of service entered into on 6th October, 1970, (over 40 years ago) between Sunday Adeniyi, alias, King Sunny Ade, and Decca Records would be devoid of challenges at that time. In present day Nigeria, litigations are not uncommon where damages are claimed over rights of agency, copyright infringements and performance rights. The Judge considered the contract 'restrictive' and declared among other things:

> The restrictive covenant which is sought to restrain the 1st defendant from further breaching in clause **4a** of the agreement is to the effect that he shall not during the currency of the agreement render any performance whatsoever to himself, any company or group of persons. That the court will enforce such negative stipulation under certain circumstances is no longer a matter open to argument.

The learned Judge continued:

> I have already set down the details of this agreement and I agree with Counsel that some of the terms are stringent. But this is not a ground for holding the contract invalid as the terms are all concerned with what is to happen whilst the defendants are employed by the plaintiff and not thereafter there is no question of restraint of trade.

The crux of Justice Dosunmu's judgment was that King Sunny Ade was wrong to have used the master tape to produce other LP records as the work was the right of the recording company.

The master tape, however, belonged to King Sunny Ade and the contract should have stipulated how to copy from it. After Justice Dosunmu, the case was filed before Justice Tsoho, and it lasted for 18 years in his court after having undergone the third amendment and costs reviewed upward. 40 years after the case would have different perspectives as a result of the pleadings and requests for amendment by the plaintiff and his counsel. Justice Tsoho gave an update of the case as follows:

The Plaintiff commenced this suit against the Defendants by writ of summons filed on 20/2/1997 while the statement of claim was dated and filed on 15/4/1997. There were subsequent amendments of pleadings and the present claims of the plaintiff are founded on the 3rd Amended Statement of Claim dated 10/6/2015, amended with the leave of Court.

The 3rd amendment statements of claim were as follows:

a) The sum of ₦1 billion (one billion naira) as general damages against the 1st Defendant for breach of contract.
b) The sum of ₦1 billion (one billion naira) against all the Defendants jointly and severally, as damages for the continuous infringement of the copyright in the musical works/songs of the Plaintiffs.
c) An order directing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Defendants jointly and severally, to deliver all the copies of the photographs or likeness of King Sunny Ade in their possession, to King Sunny Ade.
d) An order of this Honourable Court, restraining all the Defendants jointly and severally, from printing photographs or likeness of King Sunny Ade on any musical work whatsoever.
e) And order against the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Defendants to jointly and severally, deliver all the copies of the musical works/songs, which are the subject matter of this suit in the possession of the Defendants, their privies or agents, including all the copies in compact disc, cassettes form or any other form.
f) An order directing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Defendants jointly and severally, to deliver to King Sunny Ade, (who is the author, composer and owner of the said musical works) the master tapes of the musical works/songs in its original form and in any other form used by the said Defendants in the infringement of the copyright in the said musical works.
g) An order directing the 1st and 2nd Defendants, to deliver the master tapes of all the musical works which are the subject matter of this suit, either in its original form or in any other form, recorded under the label of "African Songs", particularly all those musical works/songs performed by the Plaintiff while known as the Green Spot Band, "Sunny Ade and His Green Spot Band" and "Sunny Ade and His African Beats".
h) An order of perpetual injunction restraining all the Defendants, jointly and severally, whether by themselves or their servants, officers, partners, agents and/or privies or otherwise, howsoever, from the continued infringement of the musical works which are the subject matter of this suit, either by way of sale, distribution, manufacturing, reproduction, hiring or otherwise or for any purpose prejudicial to the copyright of Sunny Ade.

In the Alternative to Relief 41B Above:

i) An inquiry as to damages for the infringement of copyright on the aforementioned musical works/songs of the Plaintiff.
j) The sum of ₦50,000,000.00 (fifty million naira) from the 5th Defendant as damages for the infringement of the copyright in the photograph and/or likeness of King Sunny Ade, used on the jacket cover of the musical works/songs of the Plaintiff in compact discs and cassettes form.
k) The sum of ₦500 million (five hundred million naira) against the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Defendants jointly and severally, as damages for conversion of the copyright in the musical works/songs and photographs or likeness of King Sunny Ade, printed without the Plaintiff's authority, or that of King Sunny Ade, on cassettes jacket cover of the musical works of the Plaintiff in compact discs and cassettes form.
l) An inquiry as to damages caused by the infringement of at the option of King Sunny Ade, an account of the profits made by the 5th, 6th and 7th Defendants by the said infringement and an order for the payment of the amount found to be due on the taking of such account.
m) Further or other reliefs as may be deemed fit by the Honourable Court.
n) Furthermore, the judge stated: There is no denial that the dispute between the parties in this suit, especially as between the Plaintiff and the 1st Defendant is centred on the interpretation of the agreement dated 6th October, 1970 (Exhibit Q] and the Judgment of Mr. Justice L. J. Dosunmu in Suit No. LD/1300/74 dated 14th February, 1975 (Exhibit R) and the effect of these documents on the claims of the parties. One fundamental feature of the agreement (Exh. Q) is that irrespective of its essence, it was for a term of five (5) years. This is explicitly stated in clause (2)(b) thereof, which provides thus:

(2)(b) The ARTIST will during a period of five years commencing from the date first above mentioned attend at such places and times as the company shall require and elect for reproduction in any record.

Two major issues are pertinent to mention here: Did the five (5) year contract lapse after the 'chronos' time of five years contract period; or was time still open for the specific performance of the contract? Justice Tsoho held that the contract expired as well as the engagement. The costs awarded were below what was demanded above but the crux of the matter was the burden upon an artist as a result of a contract he evidently did not understand, or even peruse. King Sunny Ade won the case and damages were awarded to him against the recording company.

It is pertinent to consider the following as performing or theatre artists as they were clear occurrences in the Sunny Ade case:

Agency

A performing artiste as principal, should not be left to negotiate the terms of an agreement or contract without a knowledge, experience of the rudiments of a contract, or both with a record label. The imperative of agency is central. Either as someone or group of individuals acting on the artistes or principal's permission or paid to represent the latter, the agent charts the course of the contract between the performer and the third party. The relationship between the agent and principal exists on one level, and the one between the three. The agent could also be the marketer, promoter, or any other name that captures the role played to facilitate the contract. The agent needs to be faithful to his principal and so ensure a fiduciary relationship between both of them. There should be consent before the relationship of agency is established, although it could be by necessity (Edeh, Anumba, Ukonu, & Agu 264).

Theatre artistes can be agents of their fellow artistes. The agent is also required to perform his duties, or would be in breach of performance. He should be loyal and obedient and exercise skill and care. Books, documents, profits should be declared to his principal. Proper guidance is however required. Where a lawyer as solicitor or advocate could fit into the required roles for the agency to subsist, the agreements could be seen to a logical conclusion, signed, sealed and delivered.

Contract

A contract exists when there is an offer to carry out a job or service, and the acceptance (Sagay 2). The performing artiste must have accepted to perform under the music label of African Songs for the contractual relationship between them to be valid. The friendship between King Sunny Ade and Chief Abioro was not a contract. The document or word of agreement between both parties is the contract and therefore binding as a result of the mutual consent between the parties (Alobo 5). The agent gets to this stage where the preliminary authority to act as agent has been obtained. The parties must have capacity to enter into the contract.

Breach of Contract

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Law*, breach of contract "is the failure by a party to a contract to perform his obligations under the contract or an indication of his intention not to do so" (66). A breach is tantamount to non-performance and remedies could be sought against such breach in a court of law. The breach in focus for which action was brought against King Sunny Ade was a fundamental breach, although African Songs Limited acted in bad faith and did not exhibit fiduciary relationship with his client.

Remedy for Breach of Contract

A remedy is a relief or redress sought in a court of law. However, the party in breach is made to pay damages in a civil procedure or action. Other remedies are: injunction, which African Songs Limited sought from the court in the first case; declaration, or specific performance. At the close of the case, King Sunny Ade was awarded damages, and compensated for the wrong that he suffered even though the defendants also filed a counter claim for damages.

Copyright Infringements

To own copyright, or be assigned the copyright over a work of art, stage play, performance, dance, means the works or performances, film, radio production, publication, DVDs, CDs, cannot be used, copied, performed reproduced without the permission of the copyright owner, usually the originator, or creator of the work. A copyright is a property that could be assigned or bequeathed. Recorded musical works are protected by copyright. According to Chioma Unini, in the suit between King Sunny Ade and the seven defendants in the previous case, there were infringements on the rights of the singer-performer as regards 43 singles, extended play and master tapes (Unini, "Copyright Infringement"). The different infringements led to the singer's loss of revenue and in turn, profit. The burden of proof rests on the person who claims, or alleges infringement as seen in *Densy Industries v Uzokwe & Ors* of 1964, 1 All ER 465. This denotes that the plaintiff should show evidence of the work as his own, and that the copyright is validly owned, he is the assignee and has the exclusive licence to exercise the right.

Performance Rights

The rights to perform music, dance or a play by an actor, is known as *performing rights*. Profits are shared according to the sharing formula already agreed upon between the song writer/composer, performer, instrumentalist, and so on.

Due Legal Representation

Once an artiste is not represented in court, it becomes difficult to obtain justice. Legal representation is due, when court processes are properly filed and both sides are able to state their sides of the story or case. In the case under consideration, both sides were duly represented.

Action for Damages

The monetary compensation often sought by the claimant, or which the court is approached to award in favour of a party seeking redress in a case is called damages. The wronged party is awarded money to mitigate the loss suffered as a result of negligence, breach of contract, or failure.

An Injunction to Prevent further Damages

A party that seeks an injunction to prevent further damages may seek to prevent general damages, especially if they would not be sufficient to deliver justice. It is an order of the court which prohibits a party in a suit, or a person from carrying out an action. An injunction may also require either of the parties in a case, or a person from doing something or such a party, or person may be required to effect an action, or do something.

An injunction is an equitable remedy, which makes the injunction to conform to the maxims of equity like; those who seek equity must do equity, equity considers as done, that which ought to be done, he who seeks equity must come to court with clean

hands, and delay defeats equity. Injunctions could be interlocutory, often granted to maintain the *status quo* between the plaintiff and defendants before the courts determines their individual rights. Where the injunction is final or perpetual, it is a remedy granted to preserve and protect the plaintiff's proven proprietary rights infringed upon from continuing. Other injunctions are Anton Pillar and Mareva injunctions. Damages could be general or special. In the extant case, the defendants sought leave of court to restrain the plaintiff or claimant from claiming further damages, especially general or monetary damages which were sought by King Sunny Ade.

Alternatives to Litigation

It should be noted that there was the chance of the breach being remedied without recourse to litigation. The option of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a veritable path to tread. The options of mediation, negotiation and the other opportunities to settle disputes without court action should be picked. The performative arts thrive on amity, cordiality and the mutual interrelatedness that are causal to and resultant from performances. The fewer the number of litigation in courts, the better for the purse of and symbioses between artistes. The different suits between the Collecting Society of Nigeria, performing musicians could be prevented by the choice of ADR.

Conclusion

Contracts are necessary to regulate business agreements where artistic performances refer. Artistes should exercise due diligence to read and understand the clauses of a contract. The enthusiasm of becoming a recording act is permissible; passion alone cannot serve a business relationship and litigation. Nevertheless it is necessary to respect agreements when they are reached. A case in point is Anidugbe Oluwatobiloba Daniel, also known as, Kiss Daniel, and his exit from G-Worldwide in 2017, which many claim may start another legal odyssey or tug-of-war between the artiste-entertainer and his former record label manager. It is not known whether his private record label Fly Boy Inc. established in 2017 would make greater impact than his former agent/label; or the clauses of the erstwhile contract that he entered into shall restrain him from future contracts or limit his performance freedom. The Hip Hop artiste, singer and song writer, Douglas Jack Agu, also known as, Runtown, and the singer and song writer, Olawale Oloforo, also called, Brymo, were also involved in cases with their record labels, Eric Manny Entertainment and Chocolate City, respectively.

It is clear that fresh performing often rely on excitement, interpersonal relationships of the mentee-mentor type in the pure contractual associations that should involve accounts balance sheets! Often negotiations are entered into without the knowledge of the recording or performing artiste. The recent claims by Inyanya are a reference point. When booking involving local and foreign trips are made, the exhilaration felt and exhibited by artistes often prevent them from asking the right questions about budget, finance, and accounting processes. The neophyte artiste is often made to believe he/she is enjoying the good will of the agent or marketer, where in reality, his/her act and performances paid the whole bill. Lawyers learned in

entertainment matters can save artistes and other performers from extortion via fraudulent agreements or contracts.

Furthermore, apart from contract of service, the area of wills, codicils and inheritance have often thrown the estate of legendary performing artistes into disarray. It has been claimed that great artistes often die intestate and leave their families in disorder, with very few or no offspring to make visible impact of their enduring legacies or execute their will due to litigation, if they died testate. The estates of prominent performing artistes come to mind readily. One of such is Chief Hubert Ogunde. This writer wagers that every artiste needs basic knowledge of commercial, labour and contract laws to function optimally in every artistic and performative enterprise that he or she engages in.

Recommendations

In Higher Educational Institutions where Theatre, Performing Arts and other variants of the course are studied, proactive efforts should be made to facilitate the meeting points between Law and Theatre Arts and thereby produce gains for students, teachers and practitioners. Courses like Media Law, Intellectual Property Law, Copyright and Entertainment Law, Ethics of Performance, Online Etiquette, and Alternative Dispute Resolution, should be taught by lawyers, or people with the rudiments of legal training or certification. Where this is an uphill task, they could be taught by adjunct lecturers from the faculty of law from within or outside the university. The performing artistes and allied staff should be familiar with the *Nigerian Copyright Act of 2004*.

Legal education or training in drafting for artists, performers and entertainers, is imperative, no matter how rudimentary it is in the areas of agency, contract, sale of goods and services. Where this is not feasible, paralegal services could be procured for this tutelage for artistes to be actualised. At another level, legal practitioners should have the requisite knowledge of the areas they adjudicate or advocate on where contracts of service in the arts are concerned. It is the opinion of this writer that if Honourable Justice Tsoho embraced the rubrics of copyright law, his judgment would have been different. This stance arose because the learned Judge gave a literal interpretation of the Law of Contract, which he applied to musical arts performance contract.

The pertinence of a second opinion on yet-to-be-signed contracts cannot be overemphasised as many artistes are eager to sign contracts without perusing these. Many artistes do not know the difference between invitation to treat and a clear contract offer. The need to avoid inherent pitfalls in agreements between artistes, managers and producers cannot be gainsaid. If managers or agents can resort to law to tie down the subsistence of contracts, artists should seek explanation of what the business agreement would likely be from third parties, and over some term of years or specific period. Lawyers should have a control of the sphere of artistic, musical, theatrical and other professions when litigations arise there from.

The time for the general practice of law to be stretched to suit areas of disjointed practice is over. New areas of theatre and legal studies keep manifesting and one of such is entertainment law. Media Law has gradually taken root and lawyers in the sundry areas of media practice, even New Media have continued to practice in the distinctive areas. By this, it is also proposed that lawyers and artistes seek to actualise the meeting points in

both spheres of work, upgrade their knowledge of the workings of the entertainment industry in the specific areas of theory and practice. Lawyers owe their clients, especially performers and entertainers the duty of diligence and commitment and courts have a duty in interpreting artistic contracts and to be conversant with the peculiarities of the industry as this would assist them to reach a proper determination of suits when they occur.

It is contingent upon the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA), National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), and the different guilds of performers in the theatrical, film, music, dance and the various performative landscape of Nigeria, to seek ways of sensitising the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to their world of work. Such synergy would yield much dividend for both the performers and lawyers. The time has come for entertainment lawyers to meet the specific needs of performers and encourage more intersections which are feasible and rational.

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