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EDITOR

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Mimesis and the Paronomasia of (In)Fidelity in Kunle Afolayan's *Anikulapo* (2022)

Olagoke Olorunleke Ifatimehin Ph.D.

Abstract

The human creative skill and imagination is often a consequence of social life. Whether it comes as film, music, painting, dance or literature, art is a byproduct of life and society. It is a representation of that which already exists, a precursor text, in order to create beauty and excitement through a new manifestation. And it is in this manifestation that the mimetic is invoked. The imitation/appropriation of a pre-existent text, like history, myth, literature and folktales is often examined from the binary problematic of exactitude and platitude (fidelity) or of creativity and adventure (infidelity). This paper concerns itself with Kunle Afolayan's *Anikulapo* as a mimetic representation of culture and myth/history and interrogates notions of fidelity and paronomasiac infidelity. It applies filmic documentary observation as a method and formalism as a theory to argue that art may require the history and myth of a people as source material to express itself, but it is not confined to the limits of the material's originality. It argues that mimesis is not the faithful reproduction of a matter as it is but an unfaithful reconsideration of a text as it could be. It also argues that however its dependence on a pre-existent text, an adapted text should be adjudged based on the internal workings of its own meaning-making propensities. The paper concludes that a precursory source is merely a resource, for the filmmaker, as for the artist in general; a material to be imitated as art, and art only works for the service of its own purposes and not for a slavish fidelity to accuracy and the creation of an exact equivalence.

Keywords: Fidelity, Infidelity, Mimesis, Paronomasia, Resource,
Anikulapo

Introduction

The most fundamental quality of the mimetic is its open declaration of a reliance on a source for its very existence, a copying. Mimesis is the imitation, reflection, appropriation, representation, and copying of an original. Originality here does not exclusively predicate a contestation of authenticity but an inference on an origin. Krings cites that the mimetic “do not deny their origins but seek to establish or maintain contact with their respective originals” (16). For a text to be mimetic therefore, it has to have depended on a precursor, and acknowledge same. It is in the act of copying the precursor by conscious admittance and/or by a silent evocation of elements of the old in the body of the new (intertextuality) that mimesis gains its distinction.

As the art of copying or imitation, mimesis undulates between the fissures of fidelity and infidelity. These fissures have been described as “the central critical category of adaptation studies” (Giddings and Sheen 2), “the most frequent and most tiresome discussion of adaptation” (Andrew, 100) and Starr (73) concludes that “fidelity in screen adaptations will always be a criterion resistant to anything like scientific quantification”. Fidelity concerns the faithful transmission of the mirror image of a source text within the context of its pristine meaning and presentation. It attempts, with great dedication to precision and detailed fealty, to match as closely as possible the overarching dispositions of the original text.

The effort at recreating an exact equivalent of the source text is the taxonomy of fidelity criticism in adaptation studies. And this is not without its problems. Mcfarlane submits:

Fidelity criticism depends on a notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a

single, correct 'meaning' which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with. There will often be a distinction between being faithful to the 'letter', an approach which the more sophisticated writer may suggest is no way to ensure a 'successful' adaptation, and to the 'spirit' or 'essence' of the work... since any given film version is able only to aim at reproducing the filmmaker's reading of the original and to hope that it will coincide with that of many other readers/viewers (8-9).

Some of the common sources of adaptation include literature, history, myth and film. These sources have consequent cult-like following of scholars and members of the spheres of influence of the precursory which have taken upon themselves to protect the texts from 'wanton' copying and copyists. The clamour for fidelity begins with them. While the notion holds valid that relying on a source to create a film automatically suggests a recognition of value, either in form or content (or in both), in the source which ought to draw some level of semblance in representation, loyalty to its every trait is not a mandatory act of creativity or filmmaking. History, for instance, is a record of past events which to a large account is sacrosanct. This sacrosanctity is not the responsibility of the filmmaker, who is first and foremost an artist, to protect. Yet the filmmaker understands the essence of staying true to history, but s/he is not confined to it. Dusi avers:

Studying *texts*, therefore, does not mean forgetting the *contexts* in which they produce meanings that are socially shared. There is no contradiction; it is a question of thinking, for example, of a film or a TV show drawn from literature not as a separate object, but as a point of arrival in a process. On the one hand, this process has

strong connections with the sources, that is, with the texts from which the cinematographic (or television) product draws themes, images, structures, and methods of storytelling. On the other hand, what is set in motion is a negotiation and a comparison with the target culture, which is often radically different from the source text it receives and decodes. It is thus important to examine not only how the source text was adapted, but also the choices determined by the means utilized, as well as the choices linked to the logistics of production and audience captivation, which directly depend on the producers and the receivers in the target cultural system (82-83).

Most often than not, the mimetic, however, its attempt at fidelity, is an unfaithful activity because it betrays one element or the other hitherto inherent in the source text. This element could be as basic as the transition from one form, say myth, to another, in our case, film. Stam in his words had even registered a cautionary doubt that “it is questionable whether strict fidelity is even possible. A counterview would insist that an adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium” (55).

Ultimately, fidelity alternates between its viability as a “choice for the filmmaker and a criterion for the critic” (McFarlane, 9). To find a meeting point, if there ever could be any, is to refocus the source for what it really is to the creative filmmaker, a resource. This way, the precursor is no longer a material which the adapter must faithfully transmit but a source of reference upon which s/he manifests her/his creative truth along the lines of historicity (artistic truth rather than historical truth). Hence, as long as the adapter does not refer to a source in his new material, that source may as well never have existed, except externally projected upon

it by the critic/reader. Also, when a source is acknowledged, this new material is rendered, and should be interpreted, upon the internal basis of its (re)presentation within the context of the new material and not on the external structures and strictures of the old. In other words, while a text admits to an influence outside of itself, its fidelity is adjudged on the parameters of its own understanding, interpretation, renegotiation and representation of the source of influence. This indeed, is how art ought to be read, from the principles of formalism.

According to Dobie formalism provides,

...a way to understand and enjoy a work for its own inherent value as a piece of literary art. Emphasizing close reading of the work itself, formalism puts the focus on the text as literature. It does not treat the text as an expression of social, religious, or political ideas; neither does it reduce the text to being a promotional effort for some cause or belief (33).

Klages also reiterates that:

Formalism is a mode of literary analysis that focuses primarily on the literary text itself, without regard to the context of its creation or consumption. Formalism emerged in the 1920s as a way to separate literary studies from other disciplines such as history, sociology, and psychology; formalism was designed to define literary studies as its own form of knowledge, with its own unique object and methods of study (30 – 31).

The text, therefore, exists according to the proclivities of its own narrative devices. Whatever contents are represented, however, their similitude with precursory texts, are mere subjective impressions of the artist. Film is art before it is anything else. It is a medium of storytelling, of re-creation. This is not in any way to

suggest that film is art for art's sake. But that before it can stand for anything else it first must be art. We may have film for the sake of history (placed at the service of history) but film is not history, in the image that it was but in the frame that it could be through artistry.

It is this freedom to evoke infidelity, to be disloyal to all but itself that makes art characteristically artful. Consequently, film may reflect certain normative worldviews and cultures, but it is not an objective authority for reference on the matter. It is at best a subjective derivative of what may exist out there yet counter-distinctively operating oblivious of it, only guided by its own internal systems and schematics. Analogies could be drawn by fidelity critics with pre-existent sources the new text acknowledges or shares equivalences by, but the new text is art which should be appreciated on that basis of distinction. It is on this conceptual frame that Kunle Afolayan's film *Anikulapo* (2022) is examined, bearing in mind that the mimetic is a zeugma for the indeterminacy of fidelity and infidelity.

Kunle Afolayan's *Anikulapo* (2022) and its Mimetic Resources

Inspired by a story acknowledged to Ifayemi Elebuibon (this is known only because the film gives that much credit in its peritext) who cites a verse of the Ifa's oracle divination called "Idin'osun", *Anikulapo* tells of a traveler from Gbogan, Saro a weaver of Aso-ofi, who goes from one town to the next in search of new markets for his business. He chances upon Oyo-Ile where a rich merchant and member of the royal court, Awarun, becomes his benefactor. His impressive weaving leads him to the palace of the Oba where he finds love in the youngest wife of the king, Queen Arolake, who sneaks out of the palace to visit him in his hut

at night. His benefactor, who also sleeps with him, discovers the sacrilegious relationship between Saro and Arolake, and cautions him of this. Saro denies his sexual misdemeanour with the queen. He continues to see Arolake until the young Princess, who is also in love with Saro, finds them out and reports them to the palace. The lovers are caught and Saro is beaten to death. The great Akala bird uses its resurrection power to bring Saro back to life. Arolake snatches the power of the mysterious bird, and they make their way to a faraway town to begin their lives anew. There, the son of the hunter they first meet dies and Arolake seizes the opportunity to present the power of resurrection to Saro who brings the boy back to life. Soon, Saro's fame grew, and he becomes an important man because of his ability to resurrect the dead, earning the nickname Anikulapo (he who carries death in his pouch). He marries more wives to compliment his growing ego and arrogance and snatches the opportunity to seek for the hand of the princess in marriage as the price to resurrect the prince who has recently died. Arolake, who now feels neglected and 'useless' empties the gourd of resurrection thus rendering Anikulapo powerless, and leaves. The king agrees to his request to give the princess to him as wife, but Anikulapo is unable to resurrect the prince because the gourd has now lost its potency. His failure leads to his death, but the great Akala bird returns and resurrects him yet again.

One of the fundamental mimetic resources of Kunle Afolayan's *Anikulapo* is the narrational mode of the film. As mentioned earlier, the film narrative derives its emplotment from a story inspired by a story told (history/myth). The film acknowledges its reliance on a story told by Ifayemi Elebuibon and deploys a narrative voice in reeling out the plot of the film. This voice functions at the same time as that of a narrator who is not

affected by the incidents in the film as well as that of the director who superimposes his interpretation of the story above the one that first inspired him through the filmic technicalities of voice-over and motion pictures. Hence, while the story comes across as a mimetic elicitation, subjective as it must be, the narration takes on an ambiance of originality to the point that it evokes in the viewer, an authentic believability. Or as Mcfarlane (16) puts it, “Those words spoken in voice-over accompany images which necessarily take on an objective life of their own. One no longer has the sense of everything’s being filtered through the consciousness” of the storyteller. But as storytelling goes, the creative inventiveness of the narrator/director entertains a level of “subjective impressions”. This is important to note especially because film is storytelling, and a film which relies on a text for its own existence would characteristically identify as an imaginative response, however the sacredness of its (re)source.

The voice-over/narrative establishes the background for the film. It situates the film within the ambivalence of the Yoruba cosmology and tradition. It introduces the Akala bird as a mystical bird which possesses the power of resurrection.

The Ifa oracle says that the Akala bird has power of resurrection. When people die in an untimely way, with its divine ability, the mystical Akala bird resurrects them. But if the person’s time is due, the mystical bird allows them passage to the great beyond (Afolayan 2022, 01:36-01:58).

This bird and its resurrection power become the *leit motif*, the springboard for all the actions in the film. The occasional intermittence of the voice-over goes on to provide continuity for the film and holds the viewer in the penumbra of the mimetic,

shaded between dramatic action and the fictional reminder of a storytelling, albeit filmic, session.

The superintendence of the Yoruba culture and legend as locale for the story provides yet another resource for *Anikulapo*. The filmic *mise en scene* is designed and shot in a manner that provides an ambience of Yoruba-ness to the viewer. The Yoruba people and their culture are well known beyond the lens of representation. And because they actually exist, the filmmaker who wishes to weave his/her story around their proclivities would be expected to demonstrate fealty in his/her adaptation. This is essentially expected of epic films, a genre to which the film under study belongs. According to Onu:

The Nollywood epic/adventure/cultural film is a type of film which involves stories in traditional locales, ethnic situations and expressing cultural experiences. They also feature local costumes, make up, props, setting and so on. The adventure films are packaged to present energetic and action filled experiences for the film spectators. Adventure films deal with love, conquests, travels and are often spiced with magic and fantasy. A good number of the adventure/epic films produced deal with popular legends, myths, folklores and common tradition (258).

Anikulapo characterizes the epic film, hence it would be expected that the film would strive as much as possible to avoid anachronism by demonstrating fidelity to the culture which informs the narrative. Ekweariri and Ejelonu have noted that the epic film must attempt a mirror image effect through,

The desire to add local contents to it thereby bringing it closer to the people and their culture. Such culture as reflective and portrayed in the film must be identifiable

through the myriad of materials sourced within. However, it has to be noted that in sourcing for these materials, authenticity and outright fidelity to the cultures and thematic contents of the film should be maintained to a reasonable extent otherwise its meaning may be misinterpreted.... (177 – 178).

While this may hold as accurate, the filmmaker has the God mode to create an entire universe of Yoruba tropes and icons. Film, as art, projects worlds beyond the familiar and in the intersections of fidelity and infidelity, there is hardly a falsity of culture and/or myth and history in filmic representation. This is especially so because art is an imaginative invention, however its claims at verisimilitude. The Yoruba in Afolayan's *Anikulapo* therefore, does not have to be tethered on the leash of faithful simulation. Every other world and context fades into the liminal and the universe of the film becomes the only one we are to know.

An essential component of the overarching depiction of Yoruba culture can be seen in Afolayan's use of the Yoruba language. The very title of the film is in Yoruba. The original language of the film is also in Yoruba. Names of places (Oyo, Gbogan), characters (Awarun, Arolake, Saro), are also in Yoruba. The soundtrack and music are rendered in the Yoruba language. All these combine to create a cultural setting (in all its myths and traditions) for the film, Yoruba land. While the voice-over had mentioned that Yoruba land is the setting of the film, the motion pictures, in what could be referred to as the establishment tableau, present an array of traits that could be regarded as constituting Yoruba-ness. There is music and drumming as the camera treats us to a montage of masquerades, costumes adorned by men and women, identifying royalty and commoners,

the Oba (king) riding on a horse while his chiefs and attendants walk on foot in a procession, dances and dance patterns, musical instruments, culinary identities, palace guards, sculptures, festival, arts and crafts and free movement (Afolayan 2022, 03:14-04-39). This tableau introduces Oyo-Ile where the king practices polygamy, women are freely allowed to work and trade, markets are functional, the king sits in council with his chiefs, elders are accorded respect and life is generally tolerant and accommodating. But when Saro, who visits Oyo from Gbogan, takes advantage of the positive reception of the town and its people by sleeping with the king's wife, Arolake, custom demands that he be put to death. It is at his death that the Yoruba myth of the Akala bird unfolds. The bird raises him from death only to realise that he is not worthy of life but before it could put him back to death, Arolake jumps in and snatches the power of resurrection from the bird (Afolayan 2022, 1:15:28-1:15:40).

In a distant land, Ojumo village, far away from Oyo-Ile, Saro, now equipped with the power of resurrections, builds a reputation for himself as Anikulapo, the one who carries death in his pouch, and grows arrogant and greedy due to his fame and prosperity. Unlike in Oyo-Ile where the king addresses his people by himself, the king of Ojumo does not speak in public. His mouthpiece speaks in his stead.

Arolake: Listen. What does the king look like? They say he is dumb.

Saro: (Chuckles). Come on. Arolake. He is not dumb.

Arolake: I heard he only speaks through a mouthpiece.

Saro: Yes. What I heard is that, it is an abomination for him to speak in public. At least he speaks to his queen and children. He also speaks to the chief priest during rites and propitiation.

Arolake: Ah! Then why doesn't he speak publicly? Or was it a heavenly judgment?

Saro: Hmm. Let's not be deceived. I don't understand it. Some people say that he swore an oath a few years ago, exchanging his tongue for power in order to conquer his enemies.

Arolake: Hmmm.

Saro: Some people also say the last time he spoke was when he saw his father being slaughtered like an animal during the war.

Arolake: Awwww. Ah. What a pity.

Saro: Ah.

Arolake: That's so bad.

Saro: But only God knows that which is true or false.

Arolake: Who knows?

Saro: Ah. (Afolayan 2022, 1:37:23-1:38:37)

Should there be culture enthusiasts who might want to fault the depiction of a Yoruba king who only speaks through a mouthpiece, this conversation above conveniently justifies the act and shrouds it in an ambivalence of uncertainty thus alluding to the slippery and provisional character of truth and falsity. What is of greater import at this point is the plausibility it gains from the viewer. Values and tradition exist and it is only expected that these values should be upheld. But infidelity plays itself out to reinvent self and redefine meaning.

Anikulapo and Mimetic Paronomasia

Afolayan's *Anikulapo* thrives on the creative impulse and thematic/plot structure of infidelity. The film, beyond the narratology of myth, revolves around unfaithfulness. Queen Arolake, while bound by the fidelity of marriage to the king, falls

in love with Saro, when he visits the palace to trade his wares. Theirs was love at first sight. She trails Saro on his way back home and makes love to him in the open of the forest. It is this act of infidelity that spurs the conflictual mimesis of the film. This infidelity, in its paronomasia, arouses a sense of disappointment and betrayal, a departure from the norm, in a sense, from the source. When the lovers are found out, the palace guards arrest Saro and lead him to the king with the chants “Saro, betrayer” trailing them all the way (Afolayan 2022, 1:10:31-1:10:48). Saro is brought down to his knees before the king:

King: Saro, what a pity. People of Oyo.

People of Oyo: Your Royal Highness.

King: Oyo Chiefs.

Oyo Chiefs: Your Royal Highness.

King: (Pointing at Saro). This is a betrayer. Oyo receives everyone from far and wide.

Chiefs: Yes.

King: We did welcome you. And you had the guts to pierce the eye of Oyo with a sharp stick you are holding. Not even a king dares try this with me. But you, a stranger, had the guts to.

Chiefs: Oh yes.

King: Who sired you? The king does not suggest.

Chiefs: Yes.

King: The king decrees. You guards.

Guards: Your highness.

King: Take this criminal, and treat him exactly the way he deserves.

Crowd: Long live the king.

Chants of “Saro the betrayer continues” (Afolayan 2022, 1:10:53-1:11:51).

This notion of betrayal is also a critical paradigm in adaptation studies. The reliance of a text on another and its consequent (re)production hardly hold the same mirror image in representation. This reveals the problematic of fidelity and infidelity, just as it does in the scenario above. The source is often left in a betrayed state because the adaptation does not reproduce it in its exactitude. Stam aptly submits thus:

When we say an adaptation has been “unfaithful” to the original, the term gives expression to the disappointment we feel when a film adaptation fails to capture what we see as the fundamental narrative, thematic, and aesthetic features of its literary source. The notion of fidelity gains its persuasive force from our sense that some adaptations are indeed better than others and that some adaptations fail to “realize” or substantiate that which we most appreciated in the source novels. Words such as *infidelity* and *betrayal* in this sense translate our feeling.... (54).

But this feeling of disappointment and betrayal emanating from the infidelity that all of Oyo have against the lovers is hardly the feeling the viewer has. This is especially because the viewers ‘understand’ the factors which lead the lovers to be unfaithful. And one of the factors is the creative knack to be different and free from the taxonomy of tradition, an essential factor in mimetic predilection. Arolake was married off to the King at the age of 15 to repay the favour the king extended to her father (Afolayan 2022, 1:02:19-1:02:55). Saro was only 6 years old when he was forced to go and work on a farm in order to pay off his parent’s debt. (Afolayan 2022, 1:04:24-1:04:35). Both have resolved that they would disentangle themselves from the chains of their parents’ misgivings in a manner that commends an adaptation’s

creative inventiveness to be different from its source's traditional modes. Infidelity becomes freedom from the shackles of a precursor's prededication.

It is Saro's infidelity that also leads to his downfall. While in Ojumo, he grows wealthy and important and impregnates his house help, Omowon, on the excuse that Arolake could not produce children for him. He goes ahead to marry yet another wife, Bimpe, and is eyeing to add yet another, the princess of Ojumo, Ajoke, who he has made the price for resurrecting the dead prince. Arolake, feeling betrayed and neglected, empties the gourd of resurrection and leaves. These acts of hers render Saro powerless as he is now unable to resurrect the dead (Afolayan 2022, 2:09:04-2:09:46).

Conclusion

As critical as fidelity and infidelity are to adaptation studies, a reliance on a precursor must never be a taxonomic venture. Verisimilitude and accuracy of facts may be culturally suitable for adaptation, but adaptation does not draw its value from fidelity as much as it does from infidelity. Those who lay claim to the position that once a film dims it fit to cinematize history, it is thereby bound to be truthful to history, would realize, once they pick up the camera, that film pans more towards the artistic than the historical. If such proponents of fealty are to be given cameras to create film from history individually, they are not likely to return with an exactitude of content even though the same historical material was appropriated.

Whether the story is a faithful transmission of the original or an artistic flirtation with infidelity, the art of film draws a suspension of disbelief in the viewer. The viewer is only obliged to

connect to the universe of the film and not to a projection of preconceived expectations drawn especially, from outside of the adaptation. Film, may be inspired by a monolithic preponderance, but its appeal is to a universal schema. Either way, film is fiction, and its most important characteristic constituent is that it is art and thereby, a product of imagination, first. The pun is intended.

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The Funny Side of Life: Exploring Humour and Social Commentary in Elechi Amadi's *Pepper Soup*...

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&

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Abstract

This paper examines comedy as a humoristic and iconoclastic dramatic genre. The paper uses qualitative research methodology in examining Elechi Amadi's *Pepper Soup*...and finds out that comic dramatic texts have the potential to draw from societal problematics and although these issues are presented in the most incongruous and or boisterous manner, they make critical commentaries that lead to eventual societal transformation and development. The paper concludes that a society without humour is not just on its knees or eventual death but lacks critics to return her back on her feet or from the dead. The paper encourages playwrights to intensify efforts in repositioning the Nigerian society through their creative works.

Keywords: Comedy, Humour, literature, and Social Commentary

Introduction

Having the penchant to ridicule and lampoon, satire in modern African drama and theatre as in other climes has always been met with resentment, opposition and sometimes, outright clamp down by its butts. (Ododo and Asigbo, 455)

The above bias against comedy as an unserious art as compared to Tragedy sets the tone for this paper. To purport that tragedy is a more serious art than comedy stems from the fact that the

issues treated by Tragedy as Aristotle submitted must be serious in nature whereas comedy presents issues through the lens of base action which must evoke laughter. While poking and treating serious issues through humour, comedy is seen as unserious art. Tragedy “imitates upright action while comedy imitates immoral and base action... the effect or impact of one differs from the other. Tragedy affects the the purgation of the mind through pity and fear and comedy through pleasure from the ridiculous (Bamidele, 2). Suffice it to mention that humour is intrinsic in human beings; the innate trait to be moved or elated by hilarious situations, events, or occurrences and to make other people laugh with either conscious or unconscious motivation. Often, we are vulnerable to these occurrences which are in form of words or actions and our reactions differs any measure of our control. However, under some circumstances, while our reactions come from within us naturally, we subject them or modify them or control them.

As little children without factual knowledge of what constitutes tragedy and comedy, we cry or scream at the sight of a horrible face made at us, when we are pinched or beaten, when we see our loved one cry, when we are hungry, and our mood changes when a frowning face stares at us. We then smile and laugh when tickled, pampered and funny signs or gestures made to us. The rationale for our reactions to that which seems serious or playful remains speculative. Hypothetically, however, the seriousness associated with the former activity and the cordiality that characterises the latter may explain the varied reactions.

As adults we respond same way although with some degree of self-control. We go further to amuse ourselves through our responses to daily activities, verbal utterances, and self-reflection.

It is common to see people laughing with themselves while working, reading a book, walking, or reflecting. We also cry when we are hurt, lost a loved one and so forth. These indexes contextualize the tragic and comic within an informal, non-professional everyday life occurrence. In the context of the professional level, appreciating comedy and comic forms as purposive art in comparison with tragedy is engulfed in divergent polemics. This trend stems from the perception and conception of comedy as unserious or playful art earlier mentioned. The understanding of these variables which is instinctual may inform this categorisation. In the same manner, people who are funny be they artist or not are adjudged unserious and those who are more restrained in character and action are adjudged serious-minded. Bamidele aptly corroborates this when he posits that:

... the simplest idea of tragedy defined as a play that has an unhappy ending or lots of corpses at the end, or a reversal of fortune for the worst, and comedy as a play that ends merrily, is a popular idea. The popular idea about comedy brings about weighing the bias against it as an unserious, therefore, very frivolous and a not purposive art when compared to comedy (1).

Comedy thrives on pungent and hilarious situations; through ridicule and boisterous show, comic works poke and provoke laughter at erstwhile serious events or happenings; as such, the art is taken to be unserious. The humorous nature of comedy does not, however, condescends its potential in transforming society; comedy is a two-pronged artistic form; it could be appealing through its evocation of laughter, yet, very iconoclastic with the

sensitivity and way it handles critical societal issues. Bamidele again affirms that:

Comedy is a vibrant art that no theoretical formula can contain. It depends on the demand of a popular theatre from ancient Greeks to the modern times. It allows for creative ingenuity of writers from age to age and clime to clime as against tragedy that has a universal theme of man being mar-handled by fate. Criticism of comedy under its various terms must have been enormous or is it just on the increase lately as against the situation some few years ago when criticism of comedy lags far behind that of tragedy. Is it really true to say that the critical literature of comedy is light when compared with that of tragedy? The fact that comedy tolerates and provides a bewildering variety of views because of its craftsmanship and purpose could be seen in Antonio Raccoon's view. (Literature and Sociology, 7)

From its oratorical base in Africa to its literary (documented) nature in western theatres, comedy assumes another dimension, the stand-up comedy typology. The evolution of dramatic comedy dates as far back as the classical period following the works of Aristophanes in his juxtaposition of the great Greek tragedians in the play, *The Frogs*. This humble beginning saw comedy through all theatre epochs to the present times. It is bifurcated into two forms: stand-up and dramatic comedy. Stand-up comedy is,

A comic style in which a comedian performs in front of a live audience, speaking directly to them. The performer, known as a comic, stand-up comic, stand-up comedian or, simply, a stand-up, usually recites a fast-paced succession of humorous

stories, short jokes, called, “bits,” and one-liners, which constitute what is typically called, a monologue, routine or act. Some stand-up comedians use props, music or magic tricks, to enhance their acts. Stand-up comedy is often performed in comedy clubs, bars, neo-burlesques, colleges, and theatres. (<http://www.NICO.gov.ng>)

Ayakoroma explicates further that,

Unlike comedies in dramatic form, stand-up comedies are mostly non-theatrical, without dramatic performances on stage reflecting characters in societies with a blend of elements of surprise, incongruity, conflict, repetitiveness, and the effect of sudden reversals. The intent of the comedian here is not the audiences’ critical perception of the message, but the eliciting of laughter or smiles over the jokes or vulgar jibes. (<http://www.NICO.gov.ng>)

Today, both forms of comedy are found in Nigeria with an overwhelming audience ship and patronage. The focus of this paper is on the dramatic typology.

The play, *Pepper Soup...*

Pepper Soup... is an intriguing play that captures the tale of Ichela as he grapples with life exigencies. He owns a musical band but could not maintain it due to low returns from performances. Following this problem, he relies on his girlfriend, Ineba who is very hard working to pay his house rent. On one of his performance trips to London, he met a lady, Mavis who presumably fell in love with him. His excruciating poverty situation made his friend, Oti to suggest that he marries Mavis so that she will enable him to get out of his current predicament. He,

however, rejected the idea because many people already know about his relationship with Ineba. Oti pressured him to dissolve the relationship to enable him to marry Mavis. He later agreed and his attempt to dissolve the affairs is stalled pro-temple by Ineba's pregnancy. Notwithstanding, he went on and drives her away paving the way for Mavis who come to Nigeria. Before her arrival, Ichela reorders the house with new furniture which he borrows; he hires a chef, a taxi car and its owner which he lied to be his car and his driver. Mavis's arrival is marred by Ineba's consistent invasion of Ichela's home. Ichela does not have any choice but to let her stay with them until she gives birth. As they live together problems of satisfying personal interest began to emerge. These spans from the choice of what Ichela will eat to where he will take either of his wives to spend quality time as well as how his body should be built. As time went on, they were able to put aside pettiness and live together as a polygamous family.

Humour and Social Commentary in *Pepper Soup...*

Pepper Soap... is a satirical play with its inaptness found deep-rooted in the irony of events and or situation. The play brings to the fore four social contradictions eminent in Nigerian Morden life - poverty, deceit, marriage, and the conflict of interest. This thematic focus further puts the play's trajectory beyond comic and or amusing aesthetics thus presenting itself as a chronicler of social challenges in Nigeria. Therefore, the play is read within the purview of its satirical qualities and its cogent commentaries on social issues.

Through soft, simplistic but expressive wordings and narrative excellence, Amadi chronicles the excruciating poverty situation in Nigeria. It is commonsensical and unacceptable by law for people

who live in abject penury to become frustrated and take to all sorts of activities be they legal or others to survive. This explains the high level of crime and other forms of activities threatening peace and social stability in the country. In the play, Ichela could not maintain and sustain his musical band due to low returns from performances. He decries in a conversation with his friend Oti thus:

Ichela: ...But you know how it is. We stay here, day in day out without a job. A band hires you for one night and pays you one naira. Then two weeks Snothing. Then a girl comes in and clears the last trace of soup from your pot. I am fed up, Oti, I am. (*Pepper Soup...2*)

This is a cogent example of the life of commoners in Nigeria. Their experience also draws our attention to society's perception of the artist which according to them is low and very demoralising. They lament how impossible it is for an artist to secure loan to boost the potential of his/her band thus:

Oti: If only I could get a loan to buy instruments, I could start my own band. (*Getting excited*) Oti and His Leg Raisers' Band! then I shall play for the high society people. V.V.I. P's and all. None of this one-naira business at naming ceremonies. But where does one get twenty thousand naira? No one gives loans to musicians. Businessmen, contractors may be, but not musicians. And yet every evening they fill the night clubs. (4)

The lack of an enabling environment for artists to trade their craft is a daunting challenge to the development of the profession in Nigeria. In addition, it is common knowledge that the artist is given the most insignificant time in occasions. Although, time may

not necessarily be a constraining factor because the artist can use any amount of time to communicate adequately. However, time becomes a deterring and constraining factor when the master of ceremony hurries the artist out of the stage for more “important” events on the list to take place. This explains why the artist finds it difficult to access grants and other forms of support in Nigeria. In recent times however, government’s provision of loan has made adequate impact on the industry, however, much still needs to be done.

Marriage is closely linked with poverty in *Pepper Soap*.... Ichela remains unmarried because of his poor economic state. He currently does not have a job; this makes him susceptible to Oti’s idea that suggests he married Mavis his white lady friend in order to up his living standards. Oti says “Ichela, grab that woman and ride to success” (*Pepper Soup*... 10). While this idea seems superb, Ichela is scared of society’s impression of his new marriage identity. He complains that society already knows of his relationship with Ineba and that, it would be morally wrong to abandon her for another woman. This is aptly captured in the conversation between Oti and Ichela below.

Ichela: What of Inabe?

Oti: What of her?

Ichela: I am supposed to marry her.

Oti: Who says?

Ichela: I mean –eh...

Oti: Listen man, have you ever made a formal proposal to her?

Ichela: No.

Oti: Then you have no problem

Ichela: Oti, it is not so easy. We have been together for so long. Everyone thinks we ought to get married.

Oti: That is the way most men get foolishly married. Society is always the matchmaker. Just because you are seen once or twice with a girl, society throws her on you. Well, I refuse to accept that.

Ichela: It is not just a question of once or twice.

Oti: How many...? (laughing)

Ichela: Don't be silly. I don't mean that. (10-11)

Evidently, the marriage culture is very paramount in Africa. Among the potpourri of traditional ritual initiations found in Africa, marriage comes handy and very pertinent in the transition of boys and girls into the realm of eternal union. This explains why adults who are not married are accorded little or no respect within the traditional circle. They are sometimes considered not fit to be members of some associations, or privileged to talk were elders or their age grade do. This form of discrimination has forced many youths into early marriages which they regretted over time. In addition, this also explains why society is a fundamental match maker. While Oti makes haste to condemn this act by society, some level of advantage is evident. Such action curtails indiscipline or any form of moral misconduct or promiscuity by youth in the African society. The fear of what society will say of your person when she sees you with multiple sexual partners guarded the conduct of many youths. However, this act would become wrong when youth are forced into marriages. When freedom is lost, then tyranny takes over and this is not good for any society that desires peace and tranquillity. Ineba's pregnancy further compounds and threatens Ichela's moves to marry Mavis. However, his determination pulled him through as he sends Ineba

away and marries Mavis. This did not happen without Ineba putting up a fight. However, as time went on Ichela takes both of them as his wife. Trapped in a polygamous home, Ichela struggles between two women with different perceptions of life.

Ichela: (Stares from one woman to the other and from one plate to the other in embarrassment.) sit down ladies. Thank you. (He reaches for the bread and withdraws his hand when Ineba stares angrily at him. He makes for the yam but stops when Mavis appears to be collapsing. He tries all over again with the same results. Meanwhile the ladies are eating. He pauses to think. Finally, he reaches out with both hands taking a piece of yam in one and one piece of bread in the other. He tries to eat the bread first and Inebe stares furiously. He stops. He tries the yam and Mavis appears to faint. He nibbles at the yam and bread simultaneously.) One thing is certain, I shall be overfed in this house. (53-4)

A thorough periscope of the above description of the action between Ichela and his wives invokes a lot of laughter. The expression of fear, the sincerity in trying to balance the scale and not to hurt any of his wives, the quick withdrawer from any action that does not appeal to either of his wives all culminate into funny but educative actions that gives insight into life in polygamous homes. Other hilarious actions include these of his wives; one relying on furious facial expression and the other on suffocation. The play again sways away from this intense non-verbal mode of communication into intense verbalization characterized by the contest to satisfy an individual's momentary and immediate need.

In the excerpt presented below, the choice of physical outlook desired by both wives drags Ichela into another moment of frenzy.

Mavis: You should watch your fingers. You must play golf.

Ichela: The equipment is expensive. I can't afford it.

Mavis: That's ok. I shall ask my brother to send you an old set of his.

Ineba: I don't want a skinny husband with the flat bottom of a beggar. You must show evidence of my good cooking.

Mavis: I hate fat men! (54)

Two ideological and philosophical predispositions can be read from the contention presented above. The African traditional women love a well-fed husband against a skinny one for the simplistic reason of showing or proving to society that she takes good care of him. The thinking is that to be skinny implies a lack of good living; being fat within this context, therefore, implies living above the poverty line. The white woman on the other hand loves a skinny man. The intriguing part of this argument lies with Ichela who finds himself at the threshold and constantly trying to please or give answers that would favour both women. This is captured below:

Ineba: I detest bony men! Ichela, why don't you talk? Will you be fat or thin?

Ichela: Well, I am inclined to be f-f... (Mavis stares) ... I mean it is good to be rather s-l-e... (Ineba stares).

What I mean to say is that er...er...a man should be well built; that's it, well built. (They eat in silence.)

(54)

Often times he sounds ambivalent because he is thrown off balance and therefore, lacks confidence. He tries to say that there

is a possibility for him to be fat but Mavis's unfavourable looks would not allow him to complete his sentence. He tries to please Mavis by saying it is good to be slender, but Ineba's furious looks would not allow him to complete his sentence. He, therefore, strikes a balance when he says it is good to be well-built. Another episode of the attempt to satisfy conflicting interests is presented below:

Mavis: Darling.

Ichela: Yes, darling.

Mavis: Can you take me to the movies tonight?

Ichela: well... er... (Ineba stares at him).

Ineba: You remember the Egbukele masquerade from Abua. We shall go to Arts and Culture to see it.

Ichela: Well... er... well... er...

Mavis: Actually, I should love to see that one.

Ineba: No more Movies?

Mavis: Mind your business.

Ichela: (Pauses to think.) Ineba I shall take you to see the masquerade in the afternoon. In the evening, Mavis and I go to the...

Ineba: Who told you I don't like the cinema?

Ichela: Good. In that case we shall attend both.

(Mumbling to himself.) I hope I shall survive. (55)

The exhibition of conflicting ideologies and perception of life by Ineba and Mavis and Ichela's fervent attempt to balance the scale points to how our differences does not matter in our quest for peaceful co-existence and development. As family unites, nations and the world our understanding of one another is paramount to how we define our development and the future of the world as a whole. With Mavis and Ineba resolve to live together inspite of

their differences, progress and fruitfulness in their family is guaranteed.

As the world closes into a global village and interaction and co-habitation on the increase, it is pertinent to drop all forms of muddy feet and embrace the essence of collectivism. We must be willing to accept other people's ways of thinking and or ways of life, for outright condemnation and segregation would lead to social unrest and subsequently affect development. Our differences should be our binding and strengthening factors in a world where we need each other to attain maximum goals.

Conclusion

Comedy plays a vital role in repositioning any nation of the world. This is made possible through its critiquing of prevailing social problems in society. Elechi Amadi in this play through the lens of comedy presents polygamy as seen in Africa and the west with its attendant challenges. Comedy defines the concept, of edutainment where theatre is deliberately made to entertain through boisterous and incongruous action and language of expression. Though intended to invoke laughter, it treats very critical societal issues that reposition lingering societal problems.

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Animation for Development in a Terrorized Space: Co-creating Animated Stories with Internally Displaced Girls in Northeast Nigeria

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&

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways within which animation can be used for the purpose of development. The paper examines the issues and opportunities in per/forming folklore through the use of traditional animation techniques. In the paper, we argue against the canonical conceptualizations of animation on the premise that existing canonical definitions and concepts do not have functional value for many traditional African societies. In this study, we coined and idealize 'Animation for Development' as a sub-genre of Animation Theatre that uses traditional animation to facilitate developmental change in local communities faced with terrorism and banditry. We draw from our experience in designing *Rayuwa* ('This Life'), a Hausa animation-folklore intended for the Digital Lab Africa Project, to claim that traditional animation offers a repository from whence community people can find voice or agency to vocalize their developmental challenges. In doing this, we identified the issues in designing 'animation for development' as well as the opportunities in folklorizing digital content for animation. We use Media Convergence as a theoretical moor to assess the possibilities in locating indigenous oral media *a la* folkloric-animation contents in web 2.0 and projecting such contents through the divergent

forms web 2.0 has to offer. Our paper found out that the new media technologies offer possibilities within which folkloric-animation can be used to engage communities as well as stakeholders for meaningful participatory development. We submit that new media technologies is positively modifying the manners and ways folklore has always been conceived, and not reducing its potency as assumed by many conservatives.

Keywords: Animation for Development, Per/forming, Folklore, and IDPs

Introduction

The uses of animation in the past years have justified their contributions to entertainments, teaching and learning outcomes, and now folklore. Many digital animators and folklore theorists believe that digital animations provide a repository of conserving the myths, legends, folktales as well as other lore that exist in cultures. As a result, the tendencies to perceive folklore as a form of expressive culture has increased since folklore embrace other aspects of communicative and news/digital arts, such as animation, gaming, film, cartoon, Graphic interchange Format (GiF), and 'faklore' (fake news). Major developments in the internet and digital media have made the field of folklore as well as oral arts expansive. Animation is one aspect of the expressive arts that has benefited immensely from the development of the internet. It has formed a corpus of oral literature that can be referred to as 'oralanimation' literature. Oralanimation, for us, embodies all digitized animated-folkloric materials that is rooted in a given culture and treats issues about the folk-life of the peoples of that culture using indigenous languages or idiolects. In oralanimation, the legends, myths, folktales, festivals and indigenous performances of a people is digitized. Furthermore,

the lives, struggles, pleasures as well as contemporary realities of a society are represented. Thus, oral animation does not only treat stories about the past but also pressing issues of contemporary relevance.

As an area of specialization, many Nigerian animator-critics (Joseph Azi 2012; Toni Duruaku 2013; Isaac Kwasu and Ema Ema 2015; Samuel Alade, Stephen Folaranmi and Odetunji Odejobi 2015; Akorede 2018) have used the medium of animation to serve several purposes ranging from entertainment, cultural preservativity, education, teaching and learning outcomes as well as to other aspects of Nigeria's social life. Traces of the deployment of animation-folklore in addressing somber development concerns is still very scanty as there are no fully fledged animation-folklore films that facilitate development. What currently exist are micro animation-folkloric materials produced by Nigerians for short film festivals around the world. Only recently, in the fourth edition of the "We art Water Film Festival" two micro animations that folklorize the issues of development, *Breath of Water* won the best film in micro animation category while the other, *Water wahala* made it to the finals of the competition. These micro-animation films are commentaries on the challenges of accessing portable water faced by many Nigerians. Nevertheless, the producers do not effectively deploy oral media to give cultural scope to the micro-animations. Hence, the works cannot be said to have the potential to mobilize (the Nigerian people, the sufferers of poor access to water) to take any meaningful action about their situation. Thus, these works only make comment about the problem. They do not engage or use local resources or people either in the process of developing micro-animation film or in the performance.

Animation for Development (A4D), which we propose in this paper, is the co-creating and use of folkloric materials to voice the developmental challenges of people living in a defined community. The concept is closely related to what Ida Hamre refers to as “Animation Theatre” (55), a wider conception of Puppet Theatre. A4D as a performative digitized art, uses indigenous resources; people, their languages, their stories and totems to mobilize, conscientize and animate people living in communities to take actions on the affairs of their development. Unlike the traditional conception and development of animation, A4D emphasizes participation of communities in the conception and development of the animation-folklore so much so that communities are not just spoken about but are involved in the planning and designing of the folkloric material. It is ‘developmental’ because in the process of participating, the community members are empowered on how to use animation to voice divergent challenges or aspects of their social or political reality.

In this paper, we argue for the taxonomization of micro-animation films that address concerns of societal development as Animation for Development (A4D) works. Our idea of A4D is such that these works should, in terms of their form and structure, deploy the indigenous idiolects of the folklorized community in the digital narration of the events in the animation-folkloric films or short films. Our idea of genuine development is premised on the finds from our ‘workshopical’ experiment with *Rayuwa* (A folkloric-animation video) that true development is empowering especially to the owners of the sourced folk materials. Whilst we acknowledge the contradictions in our acceptance of folkloric-animation works that address concerns of development as A4D,

we believe that the facilitator-animator[s] should take his art further by promoting or advocating in its entirety the oral media and lives of the people he is folklorizing.

The team of researchers worked with girls drawn across diverse groups. At the end of the workshop-experiment, the facilitators working with the group of girls came up with the folkloric animation video, *Rayuwa* produced. The choice of the story was sourced from the girls and performed by them. The team of facilitators only gave direction and perspectives in the arrangement of the sequences, the recording of the voiceover as well as the production of the first shoot. To begin with, it is important to give some explanations into the several concepts explored in this work

Conceptual/Theoretical Clarifications

Animation is the process of making the illusion of motion and change by means of the rapid display of a sequence of static images that minimally differ from each other (Jiang Tan, 1). Animators are artists who specialize in the creation of animation. According to Tan, animation can be recorded with either analogue media, a flip book, motion picture film, video tape, digital media, including formats with animated GIF, Flash animation and or digital video (2). To display animation, a digital camera, computer, or projector are used along with new technologies that are produced.

Animation creation methods include the traditional animation creation method and those involving stop motion animation of two and three-dimensional objects, paper cutouts, puppets and clay figures. Jiang Tan notes that these images are displayed in a rapid succession, usually 24, 25, 30, or 60 frames

per second (2). Traditional animations are those that use conventional methods, rooted in a defined culture, to tell stories. The stories told are usually folk-like and they animate mythic or legendary characters. This implies that the relationship between folklore and animation is age-long and symbiotic.

Universally perceived as a form of people's culture, folklore is both a repository of traditional philosophies and a conveyor of the quintessential reality of a people. This position corroborates the submission that folklore is the accumulated store of what mankind has experienced, learned, and practiced across the ages as popular and traditional knowledge, as distinguished from so-called scientific knowledge. Maria Leach and Jerome Fried see folklore as a generic term use to designate "the customs, beliefs, traditions, tales, magical practices, proverbs, songs; and in short, the accumulated knowledge of a homogeneous people (354)." Similarly, Norton Ruranga perceives folklore as an art form, comprising various types of stories, proverbs, sayings, spells, songs, incantations, and other formulas, which employs spoken language as its medium (npag). For Meyer Abrams folklore includes:

legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, and nursery rhymes; pseudoscientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals; customary activities at births, marriages, and deaths; and traditional dances and forms of drama which are performed on holidays or at communal gatherings (101).

From the divergent definitions of folklore above, it is apparent that folklore is a resource [bank] from whence animation can draw its contents. Diverse stories and urban

legends rooted in cultures have, at different times, been animated and used to entertain and instructs. In fields such as medicine, engineering, biological sciences, applied and visual arts, amongst others, animation with folkloric materials have been used for training and learning. In military and paramilitary trainings, animation that contains aspects of the folkloric nuances of targeted group or communities has also been used to plan and execute major operations. Such animation works are also folkloric even though they are classified and archived in military libraries.

For us, both folklore and animation are two respective and divergent medium of expression. While one is highly cultural and deploys oral media, the other is an innovation stemming from avant-garde advancement in media technology. Before now, the two media have always been treated in the terms of their contrasting binarity. However, the advancement of technology especially with the development of web 2.0 has ushered in what is today referred to as “media convergence”. This study is anchored on the theory of Media Convergence.

The development of media convergence can be traced to the well-known convergence theories. The theories related to convergence and multimedia are cross-media; multiple platforms, transmedia and intermedia production theories (Narcisse Kopecka-Piech, 78). The description and definition of Media Convergence is related to issues considered by this concept.

Murdock defines the convergence in the media, determined by the digital evolution, on three levels: technological level (communication systems), the content level (cultural forms) and the economic level (related to companies, employers and the media market) (36). For Henry Jenkins media convergence is an interaction between new and traditional media (npag.). Jenkins

theorization emphasizes cultural convergence and considers not only the technological shift in convergence, but also its effects on the media industry and its audiences. Juha Herkman, on the other hand, considers media convergence, from the point of view of inter-media relationships, and underlines that consequence of the economic convergence is the flow of cross-media products (371). Thus, convergence means many media products, linked not only through intertextually, but also in the production, distribution and marketing processes (Georgeta Drula, 131).

Deuze considers that the actual level of media convergence is the convergence of the citizen-consumer, which is also the creator of news (104). This new approach is determined by the changing media consumption habits due to usage of the new technologies. Thus, it can be stated that a new form of convergence is a combination of paid, owned, and earned content. This form of convergence combines at least two or more channels of communication, and is characterized by a consistent storyline, look and feel. One of the central frames of analysis of media convergence is that it embraces or simulates all other forms of media into the digital world.

Even before the neologism—media convergence was coined, traditional animation is the first experiment that sets the motion for media convergence-driven technologies like 2D and 3D animations. Traditional animation (also called cel animation or hand-drawn animation) was the process used for most animated films of the 20th century. The individual frames of a traditionally animated film are photographs of drawings, first drawn on paper. To create the illusion of movement, each drawing differs slightly from the one before it. The animators' drawings are traced or photocopied onto transparent acetate sheets called cels, which

are filled in with paints in assigned colors or tones on the side opposite the line drawings. The completed character cels are photographed one-by-one against a painted background by a rostrum camera onto motion picture film.

Nevertheless, one of the letdowns in Jiang Tan's conceptualization of traditional cel animation process, which we contest, is his submission that it has become obsolete by the beginning of the 21st century. Traditional animation could be relevant to communities in Nigeria as well as parts in the world. As part of the convergence, today's animators' drawings and the backgrounds are either scanned into or drawn directly into a computer system. Various software programs are used to color the drawings and simulate camera movement and effects. The final animated piece is output to one of several delivery media, including traditional 35 mm film and newer media with digital video. Some animation producers have used the term "tradigital" to describe cel animation which makes extensive use of computer technologies. Hence, traditional animation can be said to be relevant irrespective of new technologies.

Synopsis of *Rayuwa*

Rayuwa narrates the story of the suffering girls and women in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camp in Northeast Nigeria. Set in Chibok, the traditional animation begins with an attack in a girls-only school. The school is burnt as some girls are carted away by Boko Haram fighters. The surviving girls and women are taken away from their villages to an IDP camp in Maiduguri. Whilst at the camp, they are raped for food by soldiers, trafficked to the Middle-East by a military-pimp cartel, harassed and beaten, sexually abused and exploited. Relief materials sent

to the camp are given to girls and women who are ready to give in to their demands. The situation continues like this until the Boko Haram terrorist group takes the IDP camp unaware in a raid while soldiers fled. The relief materials are taken as soldiers fled. More girls are taken away as they call out to their God. Some women and children are killed as they call for help from the international community.

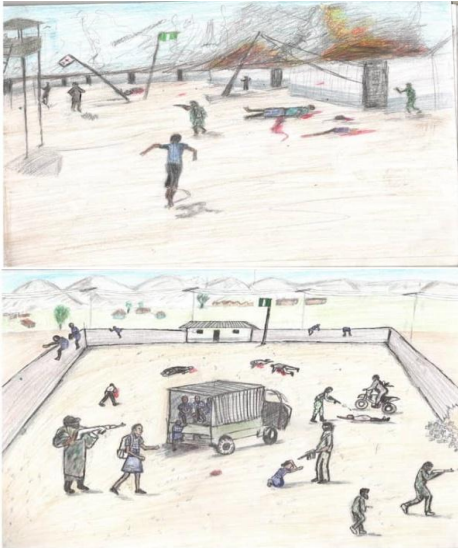
“The Rayuwa Animation Workshop”: Issues and Prospects in Design and Performance

Designing animation for development be it traditional or 3D animation is both expensive and demanding. It requires humongous financial war-chest and commitment on the part of the facilitators. Following this demand is the issue of trust. It takes time for the participants to learn to trust the facilitators and for the facilitators to share in the pulses of the participants. It is even worse when the facilitators are non-native speakers of Hausa language and dialects. As experienced in the development of *Rayuwa*, it requires an effective mobilization of community people as well as their resources. The first challenge for facilitators is to pique the interest of the participants through traditional games, play, focus group discussions. Initially, the idea of coming together to do A4D is new to them and does not reflect or answer their pressing immediate needs. As one of the participants said:

There are other things we can do. This idea does not answer our questions about life and our place in it as girls. We sleep with fear and wake up with fear that something bad will happen to us; that our mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters may be killed either by Boko Haram or by soldiers. We are not safe

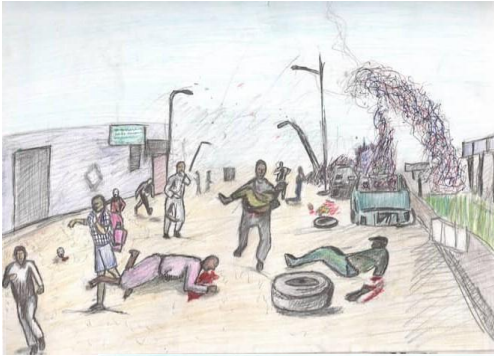
anywhere. Everyday people come to assures us and make promises but we are still here.

While the above statement paints a picture of despair, it was an entry point for the facilitators to get the participants to share their experiences.



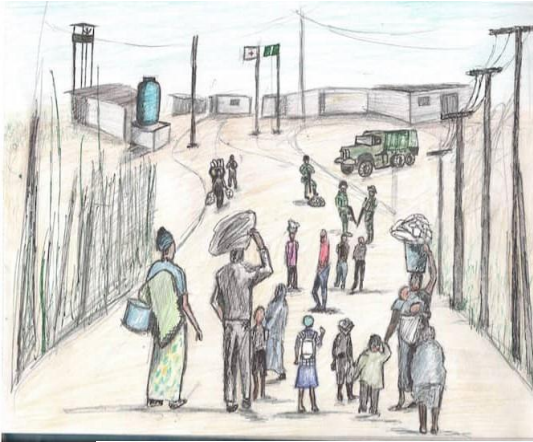
Illustrations 1 and 2: Scenes of attack on a public school

At the centre of the stories shared were fear, insecurity and little access to education for girls. The facilitators asked the participants to express their concerns using a picture-story. The outcomes were stimulating as most of the participants painted pictures of girls being chased out of schools, the lives and exploitation of women in IDP camps as well as viciousness and non-committal of men of the Nigerian armed forces. The facilitators put the picture-stories together and decided to use it as a script.



Illustrations 3&4: Terrorist carting away with girls

For the purpose of continuity, the facilitators added some other illustrations to the story and asked the participants to critique it. In the process of assessment, the lead-artist facilitator was asked to emphasize the sufferings of girls and women rather than the recklessness of the armed forces.

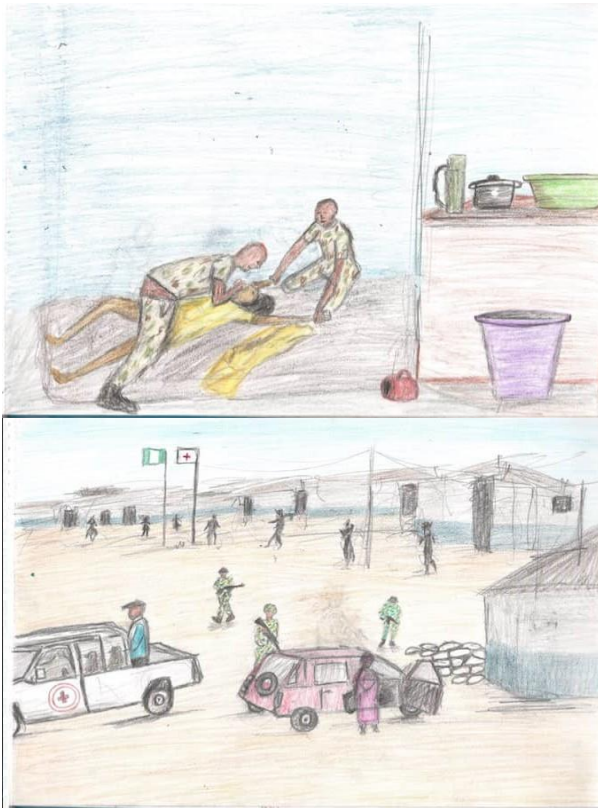


Illustrations 5&6: Girls and Women arrive IDP camp

The artist-facilitator instead facilitated them on the basis of drawing and tasked them to draw the needed illustrations themselves.



Illustrations 7&8: Relief materials arrive IDP camp as a woman begs for food



Illustrations 9&10: Soldiers rape Woman as a Sex Trafficker enters the camp freely

The above illustrations as well as others were scanned and subjected to media editing in the form of a motion picture.

Issues in the Design and Performance

Rayuwa falls within the category of traditional animation. The choice of traditional animation is sanctioned by the adverse impact the use of sketch pad would have had working with the

participants who would have been awed by the technology instead of focusing on the activities of the workshop. Furthermore, sketchpads as well as other new technologies for developing animation are expensive and cannot be afforded by community girls and Women. We believe that drawing on paper and cardboard is within their means and that they could further use it for other advocacy and demand creation. For them, traditional animation is affordable.

One of the major issues in the design of *Rayuwa* is character detailing and delineation. The folk characters lack depth and are difficult to identify in the different sequences. This affected the continuity of the story from sequence to sequence. To circumvent this problem, the sketches were done in a way that fewer characters are made to appear in each sequence; and the action in every sequence begins and ends in one happening. Each of the 14 sequences is complete in itself and sends a message.

Another problematic aspect of the design is the robust representation of the modus operandi of Boko Haram fighters as well as the exploitation of women and girls in ID camps were not explicit enough because of the lack of deep expertise of both the participants and the artist-facilitator. Nevertheless, enough was done by the artist-facilitator to highlight the method of attack of the terrorist group one of them being the element of surprise attack. On the issue of exploitation, rape and abuse in IDP camps, the illustrations were explicit. The roles of the military and external aid-givers were graphical enough to highlight the trafficking of IDP girls and women to places in the Middle East. For example, in the folkloric-animation film, Hajiya is seen promising the girls and women of a better life in the Middle East. She gives them money and encourages them to pull out of school and follow

her. She is also seen negotiating the prices to be paid for each girl with the camp commandant who gives her easy access in and out of the camp.

Scanning the illustrations to picture format also affected the quality of the colour used in painting the illustration. The colours were not as sharp as they were on the cardboard paper. Nonetheless, for the participants the picture quality (intermittent bright and fading colour quality) was okay by them as the shade of the scanned photographs reflected their realities as well as that of communities.



Illustrations 11&12: Sex Trafficker paying soldiers to take school girls away from IDP camp

The facilitators also had to deal with the size of the scanned pictures. Reducing the size of the scanned illustrations meant that the quality of the photograph would further be affected. At the same time, the facilitators wanted the folkloric-animation to fit well, in terms of clarity, into phone formats for easy distribution across divergent social media platforms.

Hausa language was used in the narration. The participants rehearsed their parts and performed them while being recorded. This aspect of the project was problematic because of the multivalence of Hausa language spoken. Most of the spoken Hausa in the folkloric-animation video were broken Hausa from different scattered areas. Standard Hausa was not used. The beauty of this is that it represented the diversity of the group we worked with. The participants' speeches were edited and cleaned up on the studio in the presence of the participants. Their opinions were sought on the aspects of the performance that they want removed. Those aspects were cleaned out.

To carry non-Hausa speaker along, the animation video was subtitled in English. The subtitling explains the action taking place in the different sequence. In some cases, the timing of the speech of the performers-participants did not match the timing or movement of the moving picture. They come either too early or too late in the picture. The software to better animate the moving picture was within reach but the Facilitating team wanted the participants to have an experience in traditional animation so much so that they can use it as a medium for voicing their challenges without new technologies constituting any hindrance to them. Hence, the non-availability of high-tech software was a non-issue.



Illustrations 13&14: Terrorists attack IDP camp, kills IDPs and soldiers then carts away with Relief Material

Observable again in the illustrations is the absence of pictorial depth. The illustrations were linear even though voice-recording was done to aid meanings.



Illustrations 15: Girl appealing to international community to come to their aid

Furthermore, the audience-reader is also left to make or deduce meanings from the pictures peradventure they could read the English translation or understand the [Hausa] language in the animation motion picture.

Prospects in deploying Animation for Development

The prospect of working with a community to develop a folkloric animation video that tells the stories of girls and women in a terrorized space is rewarding as it offers communities the opportunity to harness their indigenous to demand for better life. The experiment with *Rayuwa* is a reference point that proves that traditional animation video films that folklorizes the struggles of women can serve as a form of voice to people living in different communities.

Developing animation in the studio with all the highlights of new technologies and software is good but not really transforming or touching the lives of people for whom the animation work is created. It is a different experience to involve people at the community level in planning and developing

animation work. Through active engagement and sharing both the animators and community people are involved in a world of learning, de-learning and relearning. At the penumbra of these processes is empowerment for both the facilitators and the community of participants. While the community learns about new methods of voicing or speaking using the convergence of oral and new media, the facilitators learn new ways of simulating traditional animation to 3D. Learning never stops in the process.

Importantly, is the fact that digitized folkloric-animation for development is a user-friendly medium for facilitating intercultural communication across borders. As evident in the responses gotten from the post assessment form of the participants, (the Rayuwa) Animation for Development Workshop is a life-changing experience that gives girls and women opportunities of being part of the decision that affect their lives. A4D is not just a tool for amplifying voices, it is an empowering medium of handing over a means of livelihood or survival to people especially in projecting the problems in the peripherals and mobilizing for community action to solve problems.

Nigeria is a nation of diverse peoples, ethnics, tribes and tongues. As a nation of diverse cultures and traditions, the country boasts of diverse urban legends, myths, folktales, musical-drama, dance-drama, performative totems, amongst other folkist performances that can constitute a basis for showcasing Nigeria's cultural wealth. The plethora of histories, myths and legends in the different cultures offer developers of animation a source or folkloric bank from whence contents can drawn in communicating developmental change. Because the divergent stories in different urban legends and myths are enduring, and indigenous peoples can identify with them, policymakers working with animation

developers can animate these stories to serve behaviour change on any area of development concern. They can also be used to assert, rebrand or, better court attention to Nigeria through divergent stimulating animation programs in the new media.

Nigerians are currently the highest or topmost users of the new media in Africa and about 6th in the world. The question however is how many Nigerian content is in the cyberspace or the new media. With all its population and diversity, only few Nigerian content, that is Nollywood productions, are in the new media. The real deal, traditional lives *a la* folklores and urban legends are missing. With A4D, Nigerian contents can dominate the new media if concerted effort can be given to folkloric animations. Traditional animation is one aspects of animation that is affordable and can be used to facilitating participatory development.

Conclusion

This study has critically examined the import of folkloric animations in addressing issues of development in local communities. The study idealize the neologism, Animation for Development (A4D) as a tool for mobilizing, engaging and stimulating communities faced with diverse challenges to take action by voicing their challenges using animation as medium. The study is premised on the believe that girls and women in Nigeria's IDP camps and Northeastern States of Nigeria, a region besieged by the activities of Boko Haram terrorist group, has no access to the media to voice their concerns as most conventional media focus on the terrorist and the military operations rather than the lives and sufferings of women and girls. The paper has examined how folkloric animations can be used in empowering girls and

women in rural communities; and considerably, how the Nigerian-state can deploy folkloric animation video-films in showcasing its diverse cultural wealth. It also assessed the issues in folklorizing and designing traditional animation while also emphasizing the opportunities which web 2.0 offer in digitizing folkloric materials.

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Re-Decolonizing the Neo-Colonized: Towards the (Re) Construction of Afro-Postmodernist Thought

Mohammed-Kabir Jibril Imam Ph.D.

Abstract

The clamour for the return to indigenous languages, cultures and values is on the increase. This trend has called for afro-postmodernist movement. Afro-postmodernist engagements is the struggle by African scholars, writers, and critics for the revitalization of African values. One thing that has permitted this struggle is the returning to the “white masters” syndrome after the supposed decolonization. Africans especially, Nigerians have fought for their liberation from the whims and caprices of imperialism. But the situation at hand, is that of leaders and even intellectuals in Africa, Nigeria to be precise, making U-turn by returning to the imperialists for any problems that bedeviled them, borrowing of money from IMF and World Bank and many others. This is grossly creating an advanced form of colonialism or re-colonization. It is against this backdrop, this paper sets to expose the imminent and looming dangers of Neo-colonization. The paper espouses some of these problems as replicated in some Nigerian Drama. The paper leaning on some critical works on decolonization and colonialism did discourses on neo-colonialism and its attendant challenges on the Nigerian people. Therefore, the paper adopts content analysis of the qualitative research method as instrument for analysis because of the nature of the research. From the findings, the study concludes thus, there is need for a sense of redirection by African playwrights especially, Nigerian playwrights towards the emancipation and re-decolonization of the people from neo-colonialist hegemony through playtexts. The paper recommends that, until this is done Africans will know no rest or be at peace as result of the effects of neocolonialism.

Key Words: Colonialism, Decolonization, dependency, neo – colonization, Afro – post modernism

Introduction

When speaking of colonialism, most people imagine the European colonization of Africa. Historically, the period of colonization tends to refer to the era from the sixteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, during which ships from Europe were actively seeking out new territories, new peoples, and new markets to acquire. However, colonialism has been practiced throughout history and all over the world. In general, colonialism occurs when people from one territory establish or acquire, maintain, and expand colonies in another territory.

Often, colonization is driven by a desire for economic expansion. In the sixteenth century, European colonization of Africa contributed significantly to European economic development. European colonization intensified because Europeans had just developed galleons or ships that could navigate more easily all the way to Africa. Easier access to foreign lands encouraged European nobles and merchants to seek out new territories in an effort to acquire raw materials and develop new markets. While colonialism benefited European economies, it had devastating consequences for African economies. This corroborates the opinion of Ayoola Dada when he posits that: “The period of colonialism subjected indigenes or natives of various colonies to harsh inhuman conditions in such a manner that revolt against the system became inevitable” (82). Colonized territories were forced to depend on colonizers for trade. This is as:

... imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial phases
continuously press-ganging the African hand to the

plough to turn the oil over, and putting blinkers on him to make him view the path ahead only as determined for him by the master armed with the Bible and the sword. In other words, imperialism continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa. But on the other hand, and pitted against it, are the ceaseless struggles of the African people to liberate their economy, politics and culture from the Euro-American-based stranglehold to usher a new era of true communal self-regulation and self-determination. (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 4)

Local institutions and political structures were dismantled and replaced with ones imposed by colonial powers as Dada further avers that: "During the colonial period a vast majority of Africans were living in intolerable poverty and in absolute deprivation" (82). Where the good things of the colonies were taken away from them, they were taken to the colonizers' countries to develop the masters' place. Ellen Wood succinctly captures it as he identifies colonialism as a: "means by which the wealth of the subject was being transferred to the master" (34). This is what the colonizers or the imperialists were busy doing to their colonies. The menace, however, continues till the time we referred to as postcolonialism and neo-colonialism. Jean-Paul Sartre aptly opines that:

Colonialism is in a process of destroying itself. But it still fouls the atmosphere, it is our shame, it mocks our laws or caricatures them, it infects us with its racism, it obliges our young men to fight, despise themselves and die for Nazi principles that we fought against...; it attempts to defend itself by arousing fascism even here in France. Our role is to

help it die, not only in Algeria but wherever it exists.
(76)

From the foregoing, it is apparent that colonialism is at the verge of death. Or colonialism is supposed to be a dead notion by now. Against this opinion, colonialism has won a new garment in the disguise of neo-colonialism after postcolonialism. With this new coinage, neo-colonialism after postcolonialism which is: “a multifaceted and complex phenomenon which yields itself to various interpretations, uses and multiplicity of meanings” (Olatunji 34). Neocolonialism is intended to recapture the colonies to permit the draining of the former colonies. They force the former colonies to come down to borrow monies, they come to invest in the colonies’ economy thereby syphoning the turnover of the investment to develop their countries. Corroborating this, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o opines that:

The Berlin-drawn division under which Africa is still living was obviously economic and political, despite the claims of bible-wielding diplomats, but it was also cultural...saw the division of Africa into the different languages of the European powers. African countries, as colonies and even today as neo-colonies, came to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the languages of Europe; English-speaking, French-speaking or Portuguese-speaking African countries. (Ngugi wa Thiong’o

This is the time when the imperialists left and handed over to indigenous rulers and instead of ruling us they were more: “interested in considering its own dominance, and in monopolizing the continent’s natural resources than in improving the object condition of the common people” (Ogungbesan vi). Aligning with Leong Yew as he conceives of neo-colonialism as:

“continued control of former colonies through ruling elites compliant with neocolonial powers, populations that are exploited for their labour and resources in order to feed an insatiable appetite for finished physical or cultural commodities made by the metropole” (56). This is the case with Africans and Africa. It is against this backdrop that this paper does a critical mien into conceptualizing neo-colonialism.

Post-colonialism theories in philosophy, film, political science, and post-colonial literature deal with the cultural legacy of colonial rule; that is, the cultural identity of the colonised peoples, in which neo-colonialism is the background for the contemporary dilemmas of developing a national identity after colonial rule. However, Agboola Olatunji opines that: “Postcolonial African literature emerged as a reaction to colonialism as a theory and practice” (340). Post-colonialism studies how writers articulate, present, and celebrate their post-colonial national identity, which often first must be reclaimed from the coloniser, whilst maintaining strong connections with the colonialist country; how knowledge of the sub-ordinated (colonised) people was generated, and applied against the colonised people in service to the cultural and economic interests of the colonial country; and how colonialist literature justified colonialism by misrepresenting the colonised people as an inferior race whose society, culture, and economy must be managed for them. Post-colonial studies comprehend Subaltern Studies of “history from below”; post-colonial manifestations of people outside the hegemony; the psychopathology of colonization (by Frantz Fanon).

Decolonization: A Revisit

According Kwame Nkrumah, “neocolonialism is the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without

responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress” (34). As cited above, this is the time when the imperialists left and handed over to indigenous rulers and instead of ruling us they were more: “interested in considering its own dominance, and in monopolizing the continent’s natural resources than in improving the object condition of the common people” (Ogungbesan vi).

After World War II, colonial systems were dismantled in a process referred to as decolonization. Decolonization refers to the undoing of colonialism, or the claim of a formerly colonized people for independence and self-determination. In part, decolonization was the result of independence movements in colonized territories. In part, it was also the result of a calculated economic decision made by colonial powers. The cost of maintaining colonial empires had begun to exceed their value for the European powers. According to Jean-Paul Sartre:

neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism is the geopolitical practice of using capitalism, business globalization, and cultural imperialism to influence a country, in lieu of either direct military control (imperialism) or indirect political control (hegemony). In post-colonial studies, the term neo-colonialism describes the influence of countries from the developed world in the respective internal affairs of the countries of the developing world; that, despite the decolonisation that occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War (1939–45), the (former) colonial powers continue to apply existing and past international economic arrangements with their former colony countries, and so maintain colonial control.

“The political science term ‘neo-colonialism’ is widely used in reference to the continued European economic and cultural control of African countries that had been decolonized in the aftermath of the Second World War (1939–45)” (Matteo Tondini 66). Kwame Nkrumah, former president of Ghana, is believed to have coined the term, “which appeared in the 1963 preamble of the Organization of African States Charter, and was the title of his 1965 book *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965)” (Guy Arnold 56). As a political scientist, Nkrumah theoretically developed and extended, to the post–War 20th century, the socio-economic and political arguments presented by Lenin in the pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). “The pamphlet frames 19th-century imperialism as the logical extension of geopolitical power, to meet the financial investment needs of the political economy of capitalism” (Lenin Vladimir 49). In *Neocolonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*, Kwame Nkrumah writes: “In place of colonialism, as the main instrument of imperialism, we have today neo-colonialism . . . (which) like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries. . .” (Nkrumah 60). Nkrumah again, states that: “neocolonialism is the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress”. He further made the following points as being characteristics of neocolonialism:

It continues to actively control the affairs of the newly independent states.

In most cases neocolonialism is manifested through economic and monetary measures. For example the

neocolonial territories become the target markets for imports from the imperial center(s).

While neocolonialism may be a form of continuing control by a state's previous formal colonial masters, these states may also become subjected to imperial power by new actors. These new actors include the United States or may be international financial and monetary organizations. (69)

The result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment, under neo-colonialism, increases, rather than decreases, the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world. Corroborating, Nkrumah notes that:

The struggle against neo-colonialism is not aimed at excluding the capital of the developed world from operating in less developed countries. It is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed. (Nkrumah 63)

This espouses why the colonial powers or the imperialists after decolonization and they handed power over the indigenous rulers still look back to continuously dominating the former colonies. They take undue advantages of their underdevelopment and lack of genuine focus by the leaders of the former colonies in the name of borrowing and lending, they keep them in perpetual state of abject poverty. Through this, they encourage African/Nigerian leaders to keep dropping and saving stolen monies in their countries and pay taxes to them.

Theoretical Framework

Dependency theory is the theoretical basis of economic neo-colonialism, which proposes that the global economic system comprises wealthy countries at the center, and poor countries at the periphery. Economic neo-colonialism extracts the human and the natural resources of a peripheral (poor) country to flow to the economies of the wealthy countries at the center of the global economic system; hence, the poverty of the peripheral countries is the result of how they are integrated in the global economic system. Dependency theory derives from the Marxist analysis of economic inequalities within the world's system of economies, thus, the under-development of the Global South is a direct result of the development in the Global North; the theories of the semi-colony from the late 19th century. The Marxist perspective of the Theory of Colonial Dependency is contrasted with the capitalist economics of the free market, which propose that such poverty is a development stage in the poor country's progress towards full, economic integration to the global economic system. Proponents of Dependency Theory, such as Venezuelan historian Federico Brito Figueroa, who has investigated the socio-economic bases of neo-colonial dependency, have influenced the thinking of the former President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez.

Owing to the theory, this is the predicament poses by the return to the west by African countries for all sort of helps puts the African nations or black nations into. The African nations wallow in perpetual and abject poverty as a result of dependency. The African nations continue to borrow from them and these black nations continue to suffer. African nations no longer think straight because of dependency. That is the position of dependency theory. Through International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank

and other agencies like the aforementioned were established by the imperialists to keep the poor or developing nations under consistent paucity. Most of the monies borrowed from these multinationals are intended to put some persons above other persons in Africa. The above-mentioned substantiates Dada's submission that:

The multinational Corporations are not left out in these neocolonial activities. Neocolonial thinkers aptly believe that investment by multinational corporations enriches few in developing countries and causes humanitarian, environmental and ecological devastations to the population where they operate. (84)

Critics of neo-colonialism also argue that investments by multinational corporations enrich few in underdeveloped countries and causes humanitarian environment and ecological devastation to the populations which inhabit the neocolonial entities whose development and economy is now dependent on foreign markets and large scale trade agreements. It is submitted on this note that, "Recolonisation of a more subtle and fiendish type hidden under the clog of globalization and exuded in the blatant show of military and economic might of the West. Why has the IMF or the World Bank for instance become more powerful than any national government today? Yet we all know the powers behind the mask!" (Akoh 8). This, it is argued, results in unsustainable development and perpetual underdevelopment; a dependency which cultivates those countries as reservoirs of cheap labour and raw materials, while restricting their access to advanced production techniques to develop their own economies. World Bank Charter points it out that: "...some countries,

privatization of national resources, while initially leading to immediate large-scale influx of investment capital, is often followed by dramatic increases in the rate of unemployment, poverty, and a decline in per-capita income” (50). This is the reason why Dada submits that:

Africa today pays more money every year (in loan interest payment) to the IMF/World bank than it receives in loan from them. Structural adjustment programmes consisting mainly of economic process of transferring property from public ownership to private ownership as a policy by IMF/World bank has not in any significant way helped the third world countries... the so-called investors are the neocolonialists from the metropolis. The profits from their investments do not remain in their former colonies for reinvestment but are rather transferred to the metropolis thereby repeating the process as it was during colonialism. (84)

The aforesaid espouses one’s mind to the danger of neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is the total return to colonialism. This is because what all the African nations including Nigeria do before and now, is, thinking always to go to the developed nations to borrow money. We do not think on our own any longer. History has it that most of the people that helped in the development of these developed nations are blacks, still they never see anything good coming from Africa. Corroborating this,

It is now obvious that ‘postcolonial aura’ (Dirlik cited in Akoh) has once more thrown African and Third World literary criticism to the whims and caprices of global capitalism... Postcolonialism is neo-colonialism beautifully dressed by its

inventors to look attractive to a consumer and by-standing Africa (Akoh 8)

This is particularly true in some African nations of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, and Mauritania where fishing has historically been central to the local economy. Beginning in 1979, the European Union began brokering fishing rights contracts off the coast of West Africa. This continues to this day. New York Times validates this that: “Commercial unsustainable over-fishing from foreign corporations has played a significant role in the large-scale unemployment and migration of people across the region” (24). This stands in direct opposition to United Nations Treaty on the Seas which recognises the importance of fishing to local communities and insists that: “government fishing agreements with foreign companies should be targeted at surplus stocks only” (45).

Neo-colonialism is a term used by post-colonial critics of developed countries' involvement in the developing world. Critics of neo-colonialism argue that existing or past international economics arrangements created by former colonial powers were, or are, used to maintain and control of their former colonies and dependencies after the colonial independence movements of the post-World War II period. The term Neo-colonialism can combine a critique of current actual colonialism. Cultural rejections of colonialism, such as the Négritude movement, or simply the embracing of seemingly authentic local culture like the *Ata* in Idegú's *Ata Igala the Great* or Yerima's *Ameh Oboni the Great*, are then seen in a post-colonial world as a necessary part of the struggle against domination. This is captured in the words of Ngugi wa Thiong'o that:

It is an ever-continuing struggle to seize back their creative imaginative in history through a real control of all the means of all communal self-definition in time and space. The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of the two contending social forces in the Africa of the twentieth century. (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 5)

By the same reasoning, importation or continuation of cultural mores or elements from former colonial powers may be regarded as a form of neo-colonialism. "The language of African literature cannot be discussed meaningfully outside the context of those social forces which have made it both an issue demanding our attention and a problem calling for a resolution" (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 4).

Critics of neo-colonialism portray the choice to grant or to refuse granting loans (particularly those financing otherwise unpayable Third World debt), especially by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB), as a decisive form of control. As Ameh Akoh posits that: "a re-colonisation of a more subtle and fiendish type hidden under the clog of globalisation and exuded in the blatant show of military and economic might of the West" (8). They argue that in order to qualify for these loans, and other forms of economic aids, weaker nations are forced to take certain steps favorable to the financial interests of the IMF and World Bank but detrimental to their own economies. These structural adjustments have the effect of increasing rather than alleviating poverty within the

nation which corroborates Akoh's question that: "Why has the IMF or the World Bank for instance become more powerful than any national government today? (8). Just to put the nation in a perpetual hardship and dependent situation.

Some critics emphasize that neo-colonialism allows certain cartels of states, such as the World Bank, to control and exploit usually lesser developed countries by fostering debt. In effect, third world governments give concessions and monopolies to foreign corporations in return for consolidation of power and monetary bribes. In most cases, much of the money loaned to these less developed countries is returned to the favored foreign corporations. Thus, these foreign loans are in effect subsidies to corporations of the loaning states. This collusion is sometimes referred to as the corporatocracy. Organizations accused of participating in neo-imperialism include the World Bank, World Trade Organization and Group of Eight, and the World Economic Forum. Various "first world" states, notably the United States, are said to be involved, as described in Confessions of an Economic Hitman by John Perkins. By convention, the United States nominates the head of the World Bank while the Europeans nominate the head of the IMF.

Those who argue that neo-colonialism historically supplemented (and later supplanted) colonialism, point to the fact that Africa today pays more money every year in debt service payments to the IMF and World Bank than it receives in loans from them, thereby often depriving the inhabitants of those countries from actual necessities. This dependency, they maintain, allows the IMF and World Bank to impose Structural Adjustment Plans upon these nations. Adjustments largely consisting of privatization programs which they say result in deteriorating health, education,

an inability to develop infrastructure, and in general, lower living standards.

They also point to recent statements made by United Nations Secretary-General's Special Economic Adviser, Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, who heatedly demanded that the entire African debt (approximately \$200 billion) be forgiven outright and recommended that African nations simply stop paying if the World Bank and IMF do not reciprocate:

The time has come to end this charade. The debts are unaffordable. If they won't cancel the debts I would suggest obstruction; you do it yourselves. Africa should say: "Thank you very much but we need this money to meet the needs of children who are dying right now so we will put the debt servicing payments into urgent social investment in health, education, drinking water, control of AIDS and other needs. (Cited in Nkrumah 69)

Critics of the IMF have conducted studies as to the effects of its policy which demands currency devaluations. They pose the argument that the IMF requires these devaluations as a condition for refinancing loans, while simultaneously insisting that the loan be repaid in dollars or other First World currencies against which the underdeveloped country's currency had been devalued. This, they say, increases the respective debt by the same percentage of the currency being devalued, therefore amounting to a scheme for keeping Third World nations in perpetual indebtedness, impoverishment, and neocolonial dependence.

Paradigm Shift in Afro-postmodernist Thought for Nigerian Playwrights

Why there would always be the need for another phase of our literature especially drama or play is that: “Colonial literature indirectly gave birth to another phase of African postcolonial literature which could be referred to as early colonial literature” (Olatunji 347). This assertion corroborates Ashcroft B, Griffiths, G., and Tiffin, H that this the stage at which African literature: “comes into being within the constraint of a discourse and institutional practice of patronage system which...undercuts their assertion of a different perspective” (6). A good number of early plays written by Nigerian playwrights like Wole Soyinka, J.P. Clark, Ola Rotimi are typical examples of plays that were written to showcase African experience.

In the same vein in the later days that after colonialism most of the plays that were written by Femi Osofisan, Kole Omotosho, Bode Sowande, Emeka Nwabueze were seen as plays written in reactions against colonial rules. Obnoxious treatment meted on Nigerians by the imperialists were captured in the works of writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o and a host of others used their creative ingenuity to revolt against the imperialist hegemony and colonialist tendency. These writers who used their pens to debunk the perception of the colonialists that the blacks have no history. Agboola Olatunji opines that: “The European ethnocentric concept insists that Africans had no history or culture, while Africans are subverting the European centralist notion of history and re-inscribing African history” (340). In their bid to create the history for Africans they end up dominating Africa.

According to Thompson Woodson: “If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the

thought of the world and it stands the danger of being exterminated” (96-97). The abovementioned writers used their literature to retrace African history, culture and tradition. Therefore, the current generation can borrow a leaf from them and write against neo-colonialism and recolonization. Hence most playwrights have written very well on colonialism, therefore, the paradigm shift is that they should turn their searchlights to a more trivial issues like Neo-colonization and Re-decolonization. Intellectual recolonisation is necessary because we run back to the West for help of all kinds that this help has bedeviled the minds of the intellectuals in Nigeria and Africa to direct researchers and authors that they must publish internationally before they get promoted. Especially, those in the academics. If we must succeed, we will have to commence the process of recolonisation from our Universities in Nigeria and Africa at large where emphasis is placed on having publication(s) in one hi-impact journal or the other for one to get promoted from one cadre to the other. Before now, we were thinking that when we succeed in recolonising the Nigerian economy, politics, and leadership, we would be heading to progress and advancement. But the most crucial decolonisation is intellectual redeconisation. Beyond publication, we have the situation of borrowing theories from the West as part of our research which is theoretical framework. It is high time we started looking inward to recolonise ourselves theoretically. In the words of Olatunji: “The rulers become more corrupt and seems nothing is working... African literature is becoming more robust and more sensitive in its reactions to the complex neo-colonial problems in Africa” (349). So, there is the need for massive rise against African elites who took over from imperialists

or colonialists and misruling Africa and Nigeria in particular with it robust nature. He then goes further to ask: “are the rulers listening? Can they change? Would literature be able to wrest Africans free from the painful and devilish grips of the modern neo-colonial masters in Africa? Would the people be able to rise and react?” (349). Here he contradicts himself when he says literature has been:

...used to subvert the European ethnocentric concept of history so as to re-inscribe the African distorted and bastardised history. Postcolonial African literature, moreover, interrogates Eurocentric universalism by maintaining a difference that encourages decentredness and cultural plurality. (349)

The way to intellectual decolonisation, creative upliftment, artistic rejuvenation, political advancement, infrastructural development, social reformation and economic emancipation of the African nation or the Third world if one likes, is a complex one. Our ingenuities, intellectuality and economies have been, and are still being distorted and disorganized by years of domination by the imperialists/colonialists. Most of the endemics like poverty, illiteracy, corruption, disease and others that have bedeviled the black nations or third world today were as a result of neo-colonialism. In the word of Dada:

The road to socio-economic and political advancement of third world countries is a difficult, tortuous and complex one. Our economies have been and are still being distorted by decades of domination by powerful imperial capitalists as well as socialist's states. We are surrounded by diseases, poverty illiteracy made so by

neocolonialists as well as their indigenous collaborators who have been financially empowered and enthroned as our rulers by the neocolonialists, so as to perpetuate their interest.
(84)

This espouses one's mind to the fact that the neo-colonialists' interest is to recolonize the aboriginal people through the imposition of the indigenous elites as their stooges. These butts are used to actualize their aims, the recolonisation bids. If one follows their obnoxious contributions to the enthronement and dethronement of some African leaders and other Asian countries one would have no other excuse than to accept completely that as a leader in the third world, if you fail to dance to the tune and rhythm of the imperialists and neocolonialists, you are politically removed from the office. Hence, you accept to concede their interest, then you are allowed to stay in power till when you decide to leave. It is apparent that we have woken up to the reality of neocolonisation because: "The neo-colonial African experience is becoming more and more enervating as the Africa political space is becoming more turbulent and unbearable for the people" (Olatunji 349). Therefore: "The onus is on us to liberate ourselves from the yoke of socio-economic and political dependency" (Dada 84). Perhaps, which is one of the challenges that have bedeviled the growth of African nations/black nations and in general, the third world countries. Because: "The people are at the mercy of the tyrants who are forcing themselves on the people in the name of democracy, African style" (Olatunji 349). The paper presupposes that the redecolonisation of the neocolonised could be achieved properly and clearly through the act of playwriting.

Conclusion

If literature as a household name which has drama as a genre has succinctly been used to retrace African history. If drama has been used to construct the deconstructed history of Africans and Nigeria in particular. If postcolonial African drama has been used to interrogate the Eurocentric universalism. If drama has equally been used to encourage decentredness and cultural plurality in Africa. Then it is noteworthy to say that drama or play can go a long way in retracing Nigerian history and can be adopted in the fight and deconstruction of postcolonialism, neocolonialism and can be used in the construction of redocolonialism or redecolonisation. Hence, there would be paradigm shift for Nigerian playwrights who have engrossly engaged in colonial and postcolonial thematic engagements, to neo-colonial and redocolonialization themes for a better society in Africa, especially Nigeria. More importantly now, that literary scholars, dramatists and others are engaged in new vistas through Afro-postmodernist thought towards the emancipation of Africans.

Recommendations

The new generation of playwrights should redirect their minds towards the invigoration and incorporation of the way the third world countries like Nigeria can be emancipated through the rejuvenation of the African ways of life and the total rejection and repel of the neocolonialists ways of life for our development and advancement.

The upcoming playwrights should revisit the plays of Ola Rotimi, Zulu Sofola, Ahmed Yerima, ABC Duruaku, Alex Asigbo, Emeka Nwabueze, Esiaba Irobi, Emmy Idegu, Charles Nwadike and a host of other dramatists for a redirect of the minds towards the

emancipation the black nations, especially Nigeria from the whims, caprices, subjugation and subjection of the neocolonialists for a better redecolonisation.

The recommendation would be incomplete if no social comment is made about the government. Therefore, government should gear effort towards improving our local industries and encourage Nigerian citizens to patronize locally made goods as we can see copiously with the current APC government of Nigeria, in order to save most third world nations especially black nations and particularly Nigeria from perpetual economic enmeshment.

Public office holders should deviate from syphoning and diverting public funds for their personal selfish interests. The third world countries and Black nations mostly Nigeria should shun the activity of money laundering and the interest of developing their countries should take the front seat in their scheme of things.

African leaders should think seriously on reinvestments. For instance, the Nigerian government only think about how the money generated from excess crude oil can be shared. This kind of money when reinvested would help the government in curtailing the borrowing attitude of the developing nation from the agents of neocolonialism. This is because the more you borrow, the more you are indebted and the more enslavement you are.

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Festival Culture and Performance in *Ndashe*, the Kuteb Bridal Festival

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Abstract

This work examines Kuteb bridal performances to identify changing theatrical patterns occasioned by developing social factors. *Ndashe* refers to a bride among the Kuteb people of East Central Nigeria where *Ndashe* bridal festival is a core aspect of their world view. Wedding ceremonies and related performances take place all year round. The festival, often spanning from four to seven days, is structured in a way that various events take place on particular days and performed by specific players. Performances like the *Kwin kwab* (hoe clanking) and *tsin* (co-wives rivalry) are traditionally considered critical to inducting a bride into her new home. However, emerging trends reveal a tactful aversion to these performances due to cultural differences in intermarriages and the perception that the performances are sometimes manipulated by evil persons. The paper interrogates the social perception of people in Kuteb society on what these changes portend for the values these practices entrench. The study relied on observation, focus group discussions and oral interviews with various participants and Kuteb community authorities. The paper posits that in Kuteb communities, like many African societies, the passion for theatre is intrinsic to their lives but the impact of social change contends with its survival.

Keywords: *Ndashe*, Kuteb, Bride, Performance, Festival.

Introduction

A festival carries significance for the spectators' experience as a heightened state of participation and feelings of 'communitas'...the participants of a festival recognize each other as participants and

develop a group identity or group feeling, start to interact and thus enhance the experience of the event. Willmar Sauter (20)

Sauters quote above, sets the tone for discussing *Ndashe* bridal festival and its value among Kuteb. Suffice to say that, Festival performances in many African societies are foundational carriers of the values and belief system of the people from one generation to the next as many of these are not documented in books, carvings, sculpture and other related art forms as seen in some civilizations. These performances could feature in festival observances, burial rites, rites of passage and marriage ceremonies. Almost every event is linked to some sort of celebration and theatricality; thus dance, music, songs, poetry, costuming, masquerade display and wrestling are often key elements in these events. Stagecraft – the theatrical component of Kuteb bridal performances and their dynamism is at the foreground of this paper.

Bridal rites differ according to cultures and marriages are valued in many African traditions. Traditional performances are entertainment for the peripheral audience but have metaphysical quintessence for core participants. The deep meaning is understood by those familiar with the language of the performance. Traditional performances often have solemn spiritual significance, intrinsically connected to the cosmos. In Kuteb societies, the marriage institution is considered an avenue for procreation and continuity of family and community lineage. A high premium is attached to marriages that are contracted in one of the traditionally acceptable ways and particularly with parental consent. Inversely, marital unions that fail to meet the acceptable

standards such as pregnancy out of wedlock or co-habitation are frowned upon and such people are stigmatized in Kuteb society.

When the families have consented to the proposed union of their children, the event is often a major celebration that brings together extended families and entire kindred to share in the festivity. Young girls often look forward to such moments when they will get married to their suitors with dignity and the special treatment a bride is accorded following her wedding event has contributed to social control in the community. Since the belief in reincarnation is a core Kuteb belief, children born into family's are often welcomed with excitement and expectation that they may return as good old family members who had died at one time or the other. The marriage institution is believed to be the avenue through which this can be possible. Careful preparation is often made towards ensuring the observance of right procedures so that the couples, the family and the society steer clear of negative repercussions.

This work overviews Kuteb marriage rites in ancient and contemporary times with particular attention on the changes that are steadily dominating the performances. The theatrical aspects in these performances are undergoing modifications that have the potential of distorting the traditional patterns that are critical components of the festivals. The major concern of this work is to interrogate the group perception of people in Kuteb society regarding the changes arising from the abrogation of certain forms of expression in *Ndashe*, festival performances. Since perceptions are imperfect representations that can be misleading, it is pertinent to engage a systematic process to determine the individual and group impressions about the dynamics in the stagecraft and its implication for the society's stability.

The Kuteb People

The Kuteb are found in Taraba state of Nigeria and concentrated in Takum and Ussa Local Governments as well as Yangtu, a Special Development Area located on 7°00'N 9°00'E. The area shares common geographical borders with Benue state on the south and Cameroon Republic on the East where some Kuteb communities are also located. The Kuteb allude to Egypt as the area from where they migrated at about 1000 BC and reached their present location in 1510. The language spoken by the Kuteb people is also known as Kuteb language and has various dialects which are spoken among their twelve clans. A pioneer missionary who served in the region described the language as being, "full of nasal sounds, plus a great many queer sounds which one can only make by exploding the breath from different parts of the mouth" (Veenstra, 79).

A traditionally agrarian society, the principal source of income for most people is agricultural activities augmented by hunting and fishing in communities along rivers. The area lies in the Guinea Savannah band, located in the middle of the country and the most extensive ecological zone in Nigeria, covering near half of the country. The success of farming activities of the people are believed to be tied with their allegiance to *Rimam*, the creator who controls the seasons and blesses their ventures. Kuteb folk religion and social life are interwoven and the place of theatre is prominent in most events. Their folk religious leaning is set on a tripod thus - the physical world of the living, the world of the dead and the world of the spirits where God resides. These spirits are believed to watch over their families, punish erring humans and mediate between men and God (Ejwocwu, 10). The belief in reincarnation derives from this relationship and it holds that good

people who die are reborn into their families. This accounts for the high regard given to marriages and the building of families and procreation is counted as the principal gain of any marital union. In cases of delayed childbirth for new couples, prayers for fertility are common place during *Iki* festivals – an avenue that affords communion with representatives of the spirit community in form of masquerades. The festival is believed to bring about healing and rebirth in Kuteb communities.

The activities of Christian missionaries among the Kuteb, particularly beginning from 1921, significantly impacted on their folk religion and exposed them to the new religion (Ukwen 11). With the establishment of a mission station in Lupwe, Ussa Local Government, the harvest of converts was feasible especially with the establishment of a school and health facility. Many literatures have been published in Kuteb Language, like *Apura*, an elementary indigenous language learning guide for various grades of learners. By 1980, the Kuteb Bible, pioneered by Dr. Robert Koops, was launched. These were long term results of the efforts of some pioneer Christian missionaries like Dr. Kumm, Rev. C. L. Whitman, Mr. William Bristow and Miss Johanna Veenstra who served in the Takum area (Kitause, 70). These publications have significantly exposed the Kuteb people to literacy and new perceptions on religion. Expectedly, they trained priests who helped in expanding the campaign that overturned the traditional structures of folk religion and social lives of the people and gradually emptied the arena of traditional performances. The social change partly occasioned by a new orientation and the inclination to consign folk performances to the antique bin form the base of the discourse in this paper.

Ndashe (Bridal) Festival

The marriage institution among the Kuteb is highly revered. Traditionally, a marriage is expected to be a life time affair terminated only by the death of either spouse. This is why families, rather than individuals, are involved in the choice of spouse. Also, close supervision follows in the rites to establish consent of the families involved. Families are often determined to ensure that a potential spouse for their child comes from a reputable family. A young man who is known to be morally corrupt or has a questionable relationship with females is unlikely to be accepted by the family of the girl he wishes to marry. Same goes for the family of the young man who will conduct investigations on the girl's morals and whether the family has a record of marrying out decent girls or otherwise. Virginity is highly rated and celebrated in Kuteb society. The man's family usually looks forward to seeing the blood-stained bed sheet after the consummation of the marriage. Once they see it, an entourage sets off to the bride's parents' compound with songs, drumming and dances to show appreciation for the excellent upbringing the bride received. They could slaughter a goat and take the meat along to feast and celebrate with the in-laws. What is practiced among the Kuteb today is modern marriage, rather than purely traditional marriage. At least two broad types of marriages were common in traditional Kuteb societies. They are *Ufi* (exchange) and *Yezunkwae* (abduction).

***Ufi* (Exchange)**

The *Ufi* (exchange) marriage is a direct exchange of a female for a daughter to another family so as to get their female daughter for a wife. When one needs a wife, or as said in Kuteb

idiom, a drinking calabash, and has a sister, she will be exchanged for a wife for the intending groom if the girls are of the same age. If it is otherwise, he will be required to wait till she becomes ready for motherhood.

In some cases, this form of marriage is contracted by betrothal at infancy. Upon visiting a home where a baby girl is born, the parents of a young boy could book the baby as a wife for their son. This is usually done by presenting a gift of tobacco as an expression of interest. The father of the boy could express his interest in a joke: "This will be my wife". With the consent of the girl's parents, a beaded hand band is tied on her hand or neck to signify agreement. This may not necessarily be at birth, but when the girl is six to ten years old. In this case, the boy's father could say he has come to get a drinking calabash from the girl's father. If there are many girls in his house, their father could respond, "Which of the calabashes?" When an agreement is reached, the boy's father would present tobacco and a *kicwu* (representative) will be appointed to liaise between the families on matters concerning the marriage. Once this happens, it goes public and as the girl grows up, the males around her do not bother to woo; she belongs to another. Meanwhile, the boy's family continues to do farm work for the girl's father and no record is kept of how often this is done for it is said that, "An in-law's task is infinite". This could be done from time to time after the marriage till perhaps the wife is old and weak. Whenever the in-laws require assistance, the husband will always avail it.

The couple will not be in any form of contact until when they both come of age and are ready to live together. The boy's father will then approach the girl's father and say, "The gourd has ripened and I will come and harvest it". The bride is then brought

to the groom's house. In the evening, the groom will be informed, "This is your wife, take her into your room", and he obeys. Unless they are perhaps neighbours, and recognize each other, they will only know themselves by morning.

The typical feature of this type of marriage is the complications that occur when the union is not blessed with children. The disadvantaged family could demand that their own daughter be returned to them and their daughter-in-law withdrawn since their son's wife is unable to meet their expectations. This has been observed to place the victims in very difficult positions as a woman could keep changing spouses until old age if things go wrong.

***Yezunkwae* (Abduction)**

Yezunkwae, which literally means to grab and slam on the neck, is a form of marriage that involves laying of ambush by the groom and his friends to abduct a girl. The ambush could be along a route she takes to the stream or farm. If the parents have already taken bride price from the abductors prior to the event, they will only pretend to be disturbed but will do nothing about it. Otherwise, it could turn to a real fight and if the girl's father is stronger, he rescues her but if the abductors are stronger, they will take her into the groom's hut. They will then splash water onto the thatched roof as a sign that the bride has come home. Following this, any other marriage rites are observed. However, if the family whose daughter is abducted has the wherewithal, they will use some animals or money to redeem their daughter and marry her off to the person they want. In some cases, even after abduction, the girl may insist that she is in love with another

person. In some cases, she may be privy to the ambush and abduction, and may be willing to go with the man.

In any of the forms of marriage above, the rites often involves presentation of animals and some form of labour for the in-laws by the family of the groom.

Contemporary Kuteb Marriage

With the changes occasioned by formal education and Christianity among the Kuteb, the pattern of marriage customs have been modified. Consideration is particularly given to letting the couple have the right of choice. This is to the advantage of the girl whose opinion is sought before proceeding with further rites. When two intending persons express their desire to become husband and wife, it becomes an issue involving families. Both families often show concern as to the kind of family their child is marrying into. The man's family thus makes detailed enquiry of the prospective bride's background and character. Conscious effort is made to ensure a suitable choice because the continuous cohesion of the family is dependent on the quality of the wife that will hold it together. The same investigations are carried out by the girl's family to ensure that the prospective groom is capable of keeping a home.

The customary requirements are then enumerated to the family of the groom. Typically, he is expected to build a house for the parents of the bride. Sometimes, the mother gets a kitchen. However time, this has evolved to payment of cash as *ser usok* (house money). This tests the ability of the man to provide a befitting home for his prospective wife while at the same time giving a parting gift to the parents. Further items required are wrappers, under-wears and other accessories in a box for the use

of the girl when she gets married. This is often inspected and approved of by women, mostly aunts of the girl, on the eve of the wedding day. This action is to ensure provision of the clothing needs of the bride in her matrimonial home.

On his part, the groom also mobilizes his friends to work on the girl's father's farm to test his ability to work and provide the food for his family. The groom does so to prove that their daughter will not starve since she is not marrying a lazy fellow. The groom also cuts down firewood for use by the bride's mother as well as the bride's aunts whom the family may list out for him. He also pays a token as *ser ndae* (bride price) and brings a stipulated number of bags of salt. The salt is used by the bride's family as invitation to all their kinsmen to attend the ceremony. As food seasoning and preservative, the salt, the group claims, is a sign of kinship ties and readiness for consumption, thus the expression *chi kang mbae ti ndae* (partake of a lady's bridal wealth). The invitation is not only honoured but contributions towards the success of the ceremony are brought along.

In the Kuteb cosmos, female children at birth are believed to bring good luck to the family. A common expression when news is received that a female child is born as first child to the couple, the mother (referring to the baby girl) has arrived first. It is believed that continuity of the lineage is guaranteed. The baby then gets a pet name that refers to her as mother. Taiwo Makinde observes that in Yoruba culture, a woman as a child has double value and a couple who has a girl as their first child is considered lucky because they will experience blessings (168-169). Part of the token paid on the bride in Kuteb culture is used to procure certain kitchen utensils and household items for the bride to take along to her home. These utensils (plates particularly) will form key gifts

that she will offer to various members of her new household. She serves food (her first assignment) in the plates the first morning following the wedding. This is a symbolic statement of reporting for duty and formal assumption of office.

The days preceding the wedding ceremony are usually marked with preparations. Both households witness a constant influx of people and preparations. Food and assorted local drinks are prepared continuously to entertain well wishers. These will keep coming and going mostly not without their token in cash or kind as a show of solidarity. This moment is the real celebration and many will rather miss the short-lived moment of the wedding than this feast. Among the Ichen people of Taraba State, a traditional nuptial ceremony holds in the King's palace with a symbolic breaking of kola nut. Among the Hausa people also, the *sadaki* (bride price) is often announced in a ceremony in front of the compound of the bride's father. These actions symbolize agreement by members of both families and the sealing of it in the presence of the community or religious leader.

Theatricals in *Ndashé* Festival

Dance is central to festivals in Africa and Robin Horton argues that it features prominently above other art forms in certain parts of Africa (112). Dance patterns abound in Kuteb society, each with its purpose and audience and singing is prominent as well. Songs are composed for specific events with well defined the themes and the names of characters involved in the performances well crafted in the verses. Reenactment and detailed gesticulation often enhance the meaning of songs accompanied by skilful drumming.

In contemporary Kuteb wedding ceremonies, a performance often takes place when women who are married in the same family occupy the seat meant for the bride and groom and refuse to vacate until they are given a token. The bride and groom approach their seats dancing, only to discover the development. Patiently, they wait, still dancing, as the grooms' friends approach the women and engage in a usually long and tough negotiation on what to offer them as ransom in exchange for the seat. This action indicates a kind of mock jealousy over the arrival of a new wife in the family who will share their husband (brothers often address sisters-in-law as wives and vice-versa). This is often done with fun and much dancing after which the women embrace and welcome the bride. The women's negotiation could earn them wrappers instead of money. The women could also stand in the way of the bride by the entrance of the bride's room in some cases. When the bride finally steps into the house, a deafening blast is sounded from a dane gun, similar to the ceremonial military gun salute, symbolizing happiness at her arrival.

The symbol of welcome into the family in Kuteb tradition is the musical clanking of two metal parts of a big hoe used in ridge-making, along with drumming and singing. The presentation of a farming implement, the hoe, demonstrates the active farming state of the household. The act represents the bride's entitlement to a portion of the family's farmland for her cultivation. In some cases, the bride's family will insist on a new hoe, pointing out that their daughter is not an old woman. This sort of request is connected with the bride's status as a virgin especially when her parents can vouch for her character. These will then be placed on the ground for her to step upon and enter her new compound.

Her in-laws usually place some money on the hoe before the bride steps on it. The action means recognition of the bride as a full member of the household with customary rights and privileges of a married woman. The action of escorting the bride, according to the group, symbolizes an approved ceremony. This bears similarity to the culture of the Asaba people of Delta State who perform the *Ayugba* dance to escort the bride to her husband's house in the night. Some other cultures require washing of the bride's feet at the entrance to her matrimonial home (Iyeh, 19). Among the Hausa, the bride remains covered by a veil upon entering the new home until the *budan kai* (unveiling) is performed by the groom's relatives, signifying that she is welcome. Various actions common to particular societies show the honour given to women as they enter matrimony.

The bride's first duty to the family and the kinsmen in Kuteb culture is the cooking of a meal to be served many people. After the bride sets up fire for the cooking, the eldest woman in the household puts money into the bride's palms. She then holds the bride by the hand and led her to touch the tripod stones one after the other. New wrappers would afterwards be brought by the other women and wrapped around her amidst ululation as she begins the cooking.

In the few days or weeks that follow a wedding in Kuteb culture, the bride plays the role of a mime performer particularly to her in-laws until they pay to hear her voice. For the period preceding their action, she will only listen and nod answers with her head bowed, avoiding constant eye contact. The payment is often a live chicken (a pledge often suffices and is redeemed later) or a token instead of it. This symbolizes the status of a queen in a

new home and respect for her in-laws. Her value, the group claims, is emphasized by these actions.

Song compositions by various talented artistes among the womenfolk are prominent features of preparations for Kuteb marriage festivals. The songs often have didactic themes, specially composed for particular marriage events with the names of the couple woven into the songs. The varieties of these songs, sometimes by different composers, could be prayers, goodwill messages for the couple or satiric jesting. The forms of these artistic expressions also vary from songs with call and response pattern to short poetic verses said in form of prayer. Finnegan refers to certain similar examples of Swahili poetic verses in which a mother instructs her daughter as to her religious duties, her duties to her husband and household management (171). This role in Kuteb marriage rites as the avenue to inform the bride of fundamental tricks required to keep her home free of problems common to new marriages. The bride is taught respect for her husband, her parents in law, the extended family and maintaining active kinship with fellow women. An example of a song to reinforce value for the bride is follows thus:

Shaye ye pu re (3x)
Chap riki wae mba wuni re,
Shaye wow re, chap riki wae
Mba wuni sha ye nda ra sup nde topa'a

Translation

You have made the best choice (3x)
It will displease some people
You have made the best choice of wife, it will displease
some people

Young man, your choice of this woman breaks some people's hearts.

This song is a way of reminding the groom that he is privileged to have the girl as wife, especially when she has many good qualities that also attracted other suitors. This is meant to add to increase the groom's respect and appreciation of his wife. The song also criticizes the attitude of girls who choose suitors based on their wealth and turn down good prospects only to later regret.

Most contemporary marriage rites among Christians of Kuteb origin culminate in a religious ceremony in a church and a wedding reception thereafter. On the whole, marriage ceremonies are not passive events but are rather carefully observed in all detail to remind performers and observers of the gravity of the actions involved. The traditional aspects of Kuteb marriage are observable in contemporary marriage ceremonies. This suggests a determination to sustain social values that contribute to the establishment of new homes even though marriage in its traditional form had been de-emphasized. The rites emphasize the value of women in Kuteb society.

Entrenching Social Values through *Ndashe* Festival

Family values among the Kuteb are considered paramount because the family is the foundation of the society. Families often consider good home training of children as part of their responsibility to the society. The first meal the bride cooks for the family is a symbolic test of her ability to handle the responsibilities in her new home. She will be keenly observed by the older women and she gets commendation when she does it well. This aspect inspires other young girls who aspire to marry to prepare

themselves for this part of the ceremony in order to avoid criticism when it is their turn to marry. It teaches young girls to imbibe positive values of home making.

It is common to identify a deviant person in the society and associate him/her with a family. Negative reputation is avoided by families thus encouraging and promoting acceptable moral standards and preserving societal values. Promiscuity and co-habitation is frowned upon in Kuteb society. The negative light it puts the families in question makes it a practice that many young people strive to avoid in order to remain acceptable among their peers and sustain respect for their families. Unfavorable incidences relating to co-habitation have instilled considerable social control in Kuteb society regarding adherence to the sanctioned procedures in marriage.

Ndashe festival promotes the desire to attain womanhood with the pride and respect that comes with the rites associated with the ceremony. Most girls look forward to the time when their rights are transferred from their father's house to their husband's. It is often said that *mbiya* (sister) will stay outside the fence when she visits her father's compound. This means she will not have a say until her opinion is sought on a matter. Conversely, in her own home and before her husband's family, she is entitled to certain privileges as a married woman.

The festival enhances inter-family relations as days of feasting and familiarization bring people together. Women who are married in other communities have opportunity to reunite with their parents and their mothers particularly use the time to exchange vital information about home management. They relate challenges and the experience of the mother affords her the privilege of advising her daughters accordingly.

Relationships are valued to infinity by in-laws and family ties remain intact even when the couple is old or one of them is deceased. A husband could arrange his friends to go and work on the farm of his father-in-law even when his wife is very old. This means that responsibility does not fade with age. The *Ndashe* festival rites also promote value for womanhood as observed in the traditional inquisition when a married woman dies. The activities related to the festival gives marriage contract a high status if the procedures are followed correctly and it promotes social values.

Dynamics in *Ndashe* Festival and the Implication for Stagecraft

Societies respond to the influence of modernization in various ways. The response could manifest in attempting outright resistance or adapting to the changes. This section examines bridal festival over the years. *Ndashe* festivals among the Kuteb are regular events as people contract marriages on a regular basis. In traditional Kuteb societies, prospective couples, especially the females have little or no control over the choice of spouses. These were mostly arranged by parents who particularly look out for responsible families from which to marry wives for their sons. There are significant changes in wedding procedure in the present time when compared to the ancient time. These include dating and courtship, patterned after the culture of advanced societies which has become the norm in Kuteb societies. This affords prospective couples time to study each other and make personal decision before marriage.

The pattern of these festivals has not remained constant despite a common thread that runs through them. Individual clans and in some cases families often introduce some variations in the

festival. Some marriage rites, like the clanking of the hoe as a sign of welcome, cooperation and conjugal rights, are often skipped when the marriage holds in large cities, especially when enthusiasts of the cultural rites are not present. The drama around the bride's entry into her new home is an important function exclusively performed by women to ensure social stability in the society. These two instances of stagecraft in *Ndashe* festivals are waning due to social changes, particularly the fear of negative effects on the couple. Some couples are thought to have experienced childlessness because someone took advantage of the performance to cast some evil spell on the couple. Such orientation has made some to avoid all situations that will create the opportunity for such performances in their weddings. Socially though, marriage ceremonies that skipped important rites were thought to be susceptible to having domestic challenges. The rites in marriage ceremonies such as escorting the bride to her new home and clanking of hoes are considered critical to a woman's honour. Abrogation of this and other rites are believed to rob the woman of the knowledge of her rights and privileges leading to abuse by an uncultured husband.

The gift of a live chicken to the bride to open up communication with her in-laws and other people is also not given consideration outside the traditional home setting. The action, which is a symbol of economic empowerment for the new bride, is therefore not observed. Brides who pass through this rite are thought to be prudent and imbibe a sense of diligence when they care for the animal. In most cases, the domestic animal will be a small one that will require to be reared to maturity and to subsequently reproduce. The animal will particularly be female, creating an intrinsic link with the bride's gender and the care she

will enjoy in her home until she conceives and births children. She is often expected to also give out the offspring of the animal she has reared to some of those who gave her the gift as a proof that she has been a diligent person.

Conclusion

The challenges posed by social change and the pressure on traditional human relations is not receding yet maintaining valuable social roles in the society is critical.

The perception in Kuteb society is that the relegation of observation of traditional marriage rites will be detrimental for posterity and stifle the survival of theatre as an integral part of the lives of people in the society. The rising rates of divorce in Kuteb society is believed to be the result of ignorance of social values learnt during marriage rites. If the avenue for orientation of newlyweds is truncated or skipped, the repercussion of unstable families will eventually affect the society one way or the other. Also, there are perceptions that the suspicion and distrust that leads to abrogation of some important rites are offshoots of distorted ancient traditional tenets. The theatre ought to be given unrestricted latitude to play its didactic and entertainment role and contribute to the healing of socially bruised society.

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Changing Realities and Entrenched Norms: A Case study of communication, Knowledge, Power, Gender, & Decision-making in Child Spacing Delivery Services in Nigeria

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Abstract

Demand for and utilization of women's health services in northern Nigeria are consistently low and health indicators in the region are among the poorest in the world. Access to modern contraception among women continues to be stifled by entrenched social norms. Using data from focus group discussions and informant interviews, the study explores the social norms shaping decisions about family planning among people of selected communities. Data were collected through four focus group discussions and eighteen semi-structured interviews conducted with purposefully selected community members and health personnel. The social norms which expect people to have as many children as possible remains well established. It is, however, under competitive pressure from the existing norm which makes spacing of pregnancies socially desirable. The social norm of having as many children as possible is also under competitive pressure from the emerging norm that equates taking good care of one's children with providing them with a good education, food and healthcare.

Key Words: Entrenched Norms, Power, Gender, Communication, Child Spacing

Introduction

Nigeria is among the 17 countries of Africa with contraceptive prevalence levels or adoption below 20% and a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 5.3, more than twice as many as in South Asia (2.8) or Latin America and the Caribbean (2.2) (World Bank; UNDESA).

Cleland *et al* explain that the promotion of family planning in countries with high birth rates has the potential to reduce poverty and hunger and prevent 32% of all maternal deaths and nearly 10% of childhood deaths (1015-26). It would also substantially contribute to the empowerment of women, achievement of universal primary schooling, and long-term environmental sustainability.

However, Nigeria continues to experience low contraceptive prevalence, and has the second highest burden of maternal mortality in the world, representing about 19% of the annual global deaths which represents 2% of the global population (WHO, UNFPA & UNICEF). The Northern part of Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of contraceptive use and with the highest maternal mortality burden in the world (National Demographic Health Survey). The proportion of women in the region who would want to delay or stop childbearing but are not using any form of family planning is 19%(NDHS). Studies in some parts of the region present a consistent picture of a closed, conservative society, with cultural and religious norms that encourage large family size and deter contraceptive use (Sinai *et al.* 96-108).

Social norms may therefore be an important target for family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) community in understanding the mechanisms through which social norms shape fertility preferences and contraceptive use among women, men, and couples, with the goal of preventing unintended pregnancies (Costenbader *et al* 377-389.). Interventions that influence social norms around healthy behaviours may become part of a sustainable solution to improving health status.

Meta-analytic results from mostly high-income countries suggest that social norms can strongly influence family planning behavior,

with sociocultural context significantly moderating the norms-behavior relationship (Bongardt 203-234). In the Nigerian context, there is a large body of literature on social norms, however, little is known about the effect of social norms on reproductive health, such as access and use of contraception. Yet, understanding the sociocultural context and the mechanisms through which social norms shape contraceptive use can help prevent unintended pregnancies in low-income countries. It can also help in designing strategic and positive interventions aimed at improving sexual and reproductive health and family planning behavior (Wegs et al).

Several scholars have made attempts to define and explain the concept of social norms. From a sociological perspective, social norms are conceptualized as customs, or unwritten rules that govern people's behavior in a community and are reinforced by important groups (Cislashi and Heise 407-422). Cialdini et al define social norms as what people in a group believe to be normal – a typical action, appropriate action, or both – governing all parts of human behaviour, including health behavior (1015-26). Other studies have defined social norms as 'widely shared beliefs and common practices within a particular group' are important factors influencing family planning and contraception uses (Herbert 2049-2062). Social norms define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given community or group. They are sustained and enforced by people whose opinions or behaviors matter to an individual (e.g., sexual partners, friends, peers, family members, and religious or community leaders). These individuals are known as reference groups. Individuals who do not act in accordance with social norms may face sanctions, such as ostracism or lowering of status (Lundgren, et al 201-20). social norms that can affect an

individual's or couple's decisions and behaviors around contraception and reproductive health include norms related to who has the power to make decisions; when and how many children to have; who is allowed and when it is appropriate to engage in sexual activity; and who is allowed and when it is appropriate to seek health services (Breakthrough Action).

Scholars have classified social norms under three main perspectives: (1) Social norms as behavioral regularities – which result from repeating behaviors (Heywood 23-37; Morris et al 1-13). (2) Pluralistic ignorance – where individuals think that their personal beliefs, ideas or feelings are different from others, but their public behavior should be the same (Miller, McFarland 287-313) and (3) Social norms as social beliefs – governed by the behavior of other people in a community (Prentice & Miller 161-209; Institute for Reproductive Health).

However, social norms do not exist solely as individual perceptions. They can also exist as group-level social influence, manifested in the actual (versus perceived) prevalence of a behavior within a reference group. A wide range of social norms operating at the household, community, larger society and the political environment have been identified to shape the family planning related decisions and actions of individuals; these factors also shape the consequences experienced by individuals in their reproductive health decisions and actions (de Francisco et al., 2007). Intimate, family and social relations, including intra/inter-generational relations and gender relations, shape individuals' ability to make family planning related decisions (de Francisco et al 15-31). These close interpersonal relationships are set within an intermediate circle of kinship structures and community institutions, which are, in turn, nested in an outer circle of

national, social and community institutions, power structures and ideologies (de Francisco et al 15-31). Within these overlapping spheres of influence, individuals and social groups occupy positions of relative advantage or disadvantage with respect to their access to information and other resources — including their capacity to make decisions; this has important implications for their own and others' reproductive health and rights. For instance, the meaning and value given to what constitutes an ideal family size, motherhood and fatherhood is always strongly influenced by dominant cultural norms. Similarly, social norms also create powerful ideals of manhood, womanhood, masculinity, and femininity, and they define what sexual and reproductive behaviour is appropriate for men and for women, at different stages of life. Social norms condemn or condone reproductive health-related behaviours, expectations, and decision-making processes; they also define access to resources and information, which together are necessary for decision-making related to reproductive health, including family planning.

Gender norms, a subset of social norms, are particularly important in sexual and reproductive health as they shape societal expectations of men and women and often consolidate power and resources among men and male-dominated institutions (Cislaghi & Heise 407-422). Gender roles and inequalities subsequently influence health outcomes (Heise et al 2440-2454). Interrelated social norms concerning gender, tradition/modernity, religion, social status, age, education, and employment status, are important factors influencing family planning and contraception use.

These patriarchal gender norms influence many aspects of family planning and contraception use including fertility rates; timing of

marriage and childbearing; family size; sex preference and composition of children; medical rules constraining family planning (including safe abortion); age of marriage (child marriage); contraception use (Schuler et al; Campbell et al 40-50). While factors influencing SRH-related behaviours and decisions include both those related to availability and access to services and social- and individual-level factors, the focus of this study is on the latter. This study provides insight into how social norms shape behaviours and decisions related to family planning among selected communities of Badarawa, Angwan-Dosa in Kaduna North, Barnawa and Angwan Boro in Chikun local government areas respectively. We answer this by examining individual beliefs/attitudes that influence people to have access to contraception. The results in this study can inform policies that can be scaled-up or reformulated to challenge the status-quo which can help avert maternal and child mortality. Such policies can incorporate improving women s' agency and ability to make informed sexual and reproductive health goals. Ultimately, the results in this study can help in the design of norm-focused interventions rather than individual-focused interventions in promoting better sexual and reproductive health behavior.

Statement of the Research Problem

Maximizing the benefits of family planning accessibility and quality of services has been influence by social norms. The objective of this study is to qualitatively describe social norms around four locations in Kaduna State and impact on family planning service delivery.

Theoretical Framework

The Socio-ecological model (SEM) was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The SEM developed out of the work of a number of prominent researchers: Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which focused on the relationship between the individual and the environment; Kenneth Mc Leroy's Ecological Model of Health Behaviors, which classified different levels of influence on health behaviour; and Daniel Stokols's Social Ecological Model of Health Promotion, which identified the core assumptions that underpin the SEM. The work of these and other researchers have been used, modified, and evolved into what is referred to as the Social Ecological Model. SEM represents a comprehensive approach to designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions which target the multiple influences on behaviour. According to McLeroy *et al*,

The importance of ecological models in the social sciences is that they view behavior as being affected by and affecting the social environment. Many of the models also divide the social environment into analytic levels that can be used to focus attention on different levels and types of social influences and to develop appropriate interventions. Thus, ecological models are systems models, but they differ from tradition systems models by viewing patterned behavior-of individuals or aggregates- as the outcomes of interest (pg. 355).

Social ecological model recognizes that:

- There exists an interwoven relationship between the individual and their environment. Individual behaviour is determined to a large extent by social environment, e.g. community norms and values, regulations and policies.

- Barriers to healthy behaviours are shared among the community. While individuals are responsible for instituting and maintaining lifestyle changes necessary to reduce risk and improve health in society, behavior change becomes more achievable and sustainable as these barriers are lowered or removed.
- The most effective approach leading to healthy behaviours is a combination of the efforts at all levels - individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy.

(www.balancedweightmanagement.com/TheSocio-EcologicalModel.htm).

The social ecological paradigm for health promotion provides a set of conceptual and methodological principles, for organizing comprehensive health programmes and research. In other words, the model sees human behavior as a product of the social environment (Glanz et al 243-253). This approach is supported by Scholmerich and Kawachi (17-20), definition of ecological health promotion scholarship as that which (a) acknowledges the multiple contexts, ranging from individual-level to macro-level; (b) acknowledges the mesosystems that capture the interrelatedness of these contexts; and (c) seeks to understand how this operates in these multiple contexts to affect an individual's health outcomes.

Methods

A qualitative study was conducted in selected communities of Kaduna State to explore the social norms shaping decisions about family planning. Data were collected through four focus group discussions and 18 semi-structured interviews conducted with

purposefully selected community members and health personnel. The study explored associations between descriptive norms, injunctive norms, and network on contraceptive use.

Method	Location	Profiles of study Participants	Number of Participants
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Agwan Dosa	Community members: Female 18–45 years	9
	Badarawa	Community members: Male 18–45 years	8
	Barnawa	Community members: Female 18–45 years	10
	Angwan Boro	Community members: Male 18–45 years	11
Key Informant Interviews (KII)		Facility Health Workers	8
		Community Leaders	8

		State Family Planning Programme Managers	2
Total			56

Topic guides for FGDs and KIIs included questions exploring social norms, knowledge and use of family planning, sexuality, roles and relations between men and women, reproduction, and what shapes the decision-making on matters related to reproduction. The topic guides for health and other workers included questions along the same lines, but with a view to exploring the situation from their perspective. The FGD and KIIs topic guides for community members were prepared in English and translated into Hausa (by investigators). The analytical framework provided by SEM was used to critically analyze social norms shaping behaviour and decision-making related to family planning among the people.

Study Sites

The study was conducted in four communities, namely Angwan-Dosa and Badarawa in Kaduna North, Barnawa and Angwan Boro in Chikun local government areas respectively. The two locations in each local government areas were selected based on the homogeneity of its residents (Muslims for Kaduna North and Christians in Chikun). Furthermore, these locations were also within the coverage area of health services, especially those providing family planning services.

Sampling, Recruitment of Study Participants and Data Collection

Participants for the purpose of this study were carefully selected. Community members aged 18-49 were included in this study.

Data collection began with FGDs among community members to identify different aspects of the subject, and differences in views among participants on the subject. This was followed by KIIs to obtain more in-depth understanding. FGD participants were not involved in the KIIs.

KIIs for Health facility personnel working in the local health centre of the study sites were included in the study. Key informants were also purposefully selected for inclusion in the study; they were selected based on their active FP-related role within the health system and the study community and identified through the initial stakeholder consultations. Key informants included traditional leaders, and state-level family planning service managers. Data were collected until data saturation was reached and no new insight emerged; this was possible to assess, as at the end of each day of data collection, the research team debriefed and discussed the emerging findings. In total, 4 FGDs (with 38 participants) and 18 KIIs were conducted.

Data Analysis

KIIs and FGDs were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Analysis of the transcripts was carried out using a comprehensive thematic matrix to facilitate the identification of common patterns and trends arising from the narratives, using NVivo 10 software. Validity of findings and of the analysis was further assured through interviews with key informants and also through follow-up interviews with some of the study participants in the study communities. The validation interviews were used to develop and further clarify emerging analytical themes.

Results

Findings are presented along three broad lines: knowledge of and attitudes to family planning and contraceptive use; social norms shaping family planning decisions; and participants' perceived control over or perceived ability to make reproductive decisions and choices.

Knowledge of and Benefits of Family Planning and Contraceptives

Is Family Planning Beneficial?

Women and men in the study communities consider having children very important. Key informant interviews and Female FGDs alluded to the benefits of family planning that it enables women and children to grow strong and be in good health. The women stated that using FP for child spacing allows their bodies to take a break and regain strength before the next birth. In the views of Yahaya during a FGD (2021):

Family planning is good because we are free to plan and do other things that will help our family to grow well. We can plan for the education of our children, their health and clothing. We can conduct businesses. There are some businesses that you can't engage in when you have a small child (*Rukayya Yahaya, during an FGD, Angwan Dosa, June 2021*).

Some women argued that the times were harder now, that raising children was more difficult now, and that this made it necessary for women to space pregnancies.

Most women are grateful to use FP. They know that with FP they will have good health and they will not be forced into unplanned pregnancies; or give births to 11 children. Those are things of the

past when a couple could afford to have 11 children. Giving your child good education and finding food are expensive these days unlike in the past. So, most women are grateful for the FP methods...(Asmau Abubakar, *Facility-in-Charge/Family Planning Service Provider, Primary Health Centre, Bardawa, Kaduna North during a key informant interview June, 2021*).

The above interaction clearly shows the acceptance of family planning and shows a good knowledge of its economic benefits to the family.

Is it Right to Adopt Family Planning for Fewer Children?

Looking at what is happening these days, most men and relatives believe that FP is good. These days' things are hard, there are no jobs, and poverty is everywhere; hence people have resolved to have fewer children (*Israel Adekunle, during an FGD at Angwan Boro, Chikun LGA, June 2021*).

The FGDs with men indicated that they appreciate the economic benefits and impact of family planning on the health of their wives and children. However, some of the men argued that they were influenced by the hard economic realities being experienced today in providing for their wives and children to be the key benefits for the adoption of family planning.

Looking at what is happening these days, most men and relatives believe that FP is good. These days things are hard, there are no jobs, and poverty is everywhere; hence people have resolved to have fewer children (*Israel Adekunle, during an FGD at Angwan Boro, Chikun LGA, June 2021*).

People are having fewer children these days because the cost of living is high, scarcity of land, school fees is not easy to get; that is why people are supportive of their wives to have fewer children whom they can manage to provide for..... *Musa Mamman, during an FGD, Angwan Boro, Chikun local government area, June, 2021.*

Similarly, Nafisa Idris was of the view that

In the past men wanted 10 to 15 children, but these days men are enlightened. They know how difficult it is to provide for the family, so most would want fewer children. They therefore support their wives to use family planning.....*Nafisa Idris, during an FGD, Angwan Dosa, Kaduna North, June, 2021.*

This indicates that in spite of the high awareness, most people, men are still sceptical about the use of family planning for child spacing, only to the extent that it will cut down the costs of providing for additional family members.

Does Your Religious Belief Permit the Use of Family Planning?

Some reportedly considered FP use to be a sin and against the teachings of the Islamic or Christian religious beliefs. Others mocked women who use FP after having one or two children, accusing them of being afraid of childbirth. FP opponents may also accuse women using FP of violating community norms for large family size. The Christian faithful cited this Biblical injunction that reads to justify their rejection of FP:

“And God bless them (Adam & Eve) and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Genesis Chapter 1 Verse 28) and “Children

are an heritage of the Lord, and fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psalm 127 Verse3).

Some of these religion-based FP perceptions could be inferred from these comments during key informant interviews:

Most people on the sides of the Muslims and Christians feel family planning is a western idea to slow down the population growth of their faith members. They see those promoting the adoption of family planning as working to slow down the growth of their population and as agents of the West..... *Hamza Ibrahim, during a key informant interview, June 2021.*

Health facility personnel shared concerns regarding how some men perceived the promotion of contraception — as attempts by outsiders to deny them their right to have many children, as outsiders were the ones promoting contraceptive use. The following quote highlights the importance of handling delicately any intervention to promote contraceptive use.

Many believe, especially the Muslim faithful, that FP is an idea of the American people to depopulate their people. So they are not easily convinced to adopt family planning. The use IPC has not been able to a great extent dispel these misconceptions, especially among those that are less educated.... *Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed, SFH State Programme Manager, during a key informant interview, June 2021.*

Religion plays a great role among Christian and Muslim faithful in making their choices. Among the Muslims, they claim their religion allow them to marry more than one wife. Marrying more wives means more children, as each woman would want to

have her children. -----Some claim childbirth is God given and should not be stopped by whatever means. For them, it is a commandment by God to populate the earth. This belief is so strong among Catholic faithful, that it is like a taboo to mention family planning in their midst. They vehemently opposed family planning and equate the use of family planning to committing infanticide and to encourage adultery among married couples. Even when you raise the issue of the welfare of the children as major reason for family planning, they will tell you that the giver of children, God, will take care and provide for them. We are just a pipe God is using, they will be saying..... *Steven Phoebe, during FP service provider, during a key Informant interview, June 2021.*

Some of the men believe that we are trying to reduce their family, and this is against their religion, traditions, and customs. They will say they do not believe in these modern family planning methods..... *Esther Gowon, IPCA, during a key informant interview Barnawa, Chikun LGA, June 2021.*

The above excerpt from shows how religious beliefs influence behaviour in this instance the acceptance of family planning. It goes to say that policy planners need to understand local knowledge and perceptions about family planning. This will help in designing sustainable community-based family planning programmes.

Social Norms on Childbearing, Spacing and Contraceptive Use

The social ecology model also refers to the macro system which represents the cultural context that the individual exists, including cultural norms which shape people's intentions and behaviour. Cialdini et al (1015-26) and Kallgren et al (1002-12) argue that when studying the influence of norms on human behaviour, it is useful to distinguish between descriptive and injunctive norms, even if sometimes it is empirically difficult. Descriptive norms refer to individuals' beliefs about the prevalence of a particular behaviour and about what most (relevant) others do in a particular situation. Injunctive norms, on the other hand, refer to the extent to which individuals perceive that influential (and relevant) others expect them to behave in a certain way, and to perceive that social sanctions will be incurred if they do not. This section presents findings on how social norms, both injunctive and descriptive, shape the people's intentions and behaviours about spacing and contraceptive use.

Social Norms on Marriage and Childbearing

Among people in the study communities, the injunctive social norm around marriage is that it is for procreation. Marriage is for women to bear children and the inability to do so incurs social disapproval. This notion puts social pressure on women to bear children and account for high total fertility rate. Nigeria's total fertility rate of 5.3 is one of the highest in the world (NDHS). The norms for having more children are to earn community respect or to have a child with the sex of choice. One of the respondents affirms that child preference, especially for male-child have a strong influence on FP decision-making by women. According to her:

.....it is like the more children you have, the more inheritance for them, especially when the preference for a male-child is strong in the family. For example, there is this woman that we counselled against another pregnancy because of the situation of her health, and she already has over five children. The next time we saw her she was pregnant again, claiming she wanted to have a male child. So in this kind of situation, we see that a woman would continue to give birth in order to get a male-child for her husband. Among the Christians too, the story is the same. Some claim childbirth is God given and should not be stopped by whatever means. For them, it is a commandment by God to populate the earth (*Phoebe Steven, a FP service provider during a key informant interview June 2021*).

The community norms for male-child preference also play a vital role in FP decision-making. The preference for sons appears to influence fertility and family planning norms (Brunson).

If you have only female children, you are not respected and likely to be driven out of your matrimonial home in the event that your husband dies. Your in-laws will frustrate and take everything away from you. Moreover, if you do not have male children, your husband will be forced by family members and friends to marry another woman. So, the hunger to have male child make women to keep getting pregnant, while hoping that they would get a male-child. In this case, you cannot tell a woman to adopt family planning for child spacing ...*Mercy Tyokyaa, during an FGD Angwan Boro, Chikun local government area, June 2021*.

In many settings, particularly in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, there are societal and family expectations for women to become pregnant and give birth soon after marriage (Daniel et al., 189–197).

Women are not likely to consider FP in marriage. This is related to community values that once you are married, you should start conceiving children. The women have less power to take decisions concerning the use of FP. The issue of decision-making in FP affects the younger ones much more than the older women. Therefore, women who give birth frequently are the younger women who don't subscribe to FP. We need to focus on the adolescents, rather than adults (*Murtala Ibrahim, SFH Programme Manager, Kaduna during a key informant interview, June 2021*).

Community-level fertility norms are important determinants of contraception use. The number of children desired by others in the community affects use of contraception by women (Wang et al). The women cited pressure to have more children often comes from the husband and his relatives driven by social and cultural traditions such as the belief that having many children, especially a male child secures your marriage and inheritance. Many couples see the need to have male children in order to secure their marriage and inheritance. This is related to the hopes and expectations that having a male child would secure a woman's marriage and boost her self-esteem among her husband's people and the community in general.

There is also the fear of losing one's husband to other women. There is the fear that the husband may go for other women if the woman cannot bear children, especially male child. As a result, some women keep having more children, hoping to get a male-

child. The FGD with men reveal pressure from family members that may influence the adoption of family planning. “Relatives expect the woman to bear children for the man and in the event that she is unable to conceive, relatives find ways of making sure that the man has children elsewhere” (*Abubakar Aminu, during an FGD Angwan Dosa, June 2021*).

Traditionally, when people get married, they are supposed to have children. If they have no children, the family is not respected (*Abdulkarim Yau, during an FGD at Bardawa, June 2021*).

The social norm in these communities is that if a woman does not bear children, she is termed “barren” and does not deserve to be in the marriage. In the same vein, men are also normatively expected to have children and those who are unable to, stand the risk of being labelled as infertile and subjected to ridicule. Such men stand the risk of having their wives abandoning them.

Who Makes the Decision to Use Family Planning or Not?

A husband’s approval of family planning has been shown to be a pivotal determinant of women’s contraceptive use, especially in highly gender-stratified populations (Kamal & Lim). Fertility in northern Nigeria is driven by gender power imbalances, fostered by patriarchal social structures in which women have limited autonomy over most decisions, including those affecting marriage, health and fertility (Cleland et al, 149-156). Men are often the final decision-makers on important household matters, including those related to household purchases, family health, family size, and education of children. As the decision-makers in the household, men ultimately play an important role in the choice, approval or disapproval of contraception for child spacing

(Rimal et al 433-450). To further understand the process through which men, women and couples make decisions about family planning, we asked the participants who make the decision about using contraceptives and whether it should be the husband's or the wife's responsibility to use them.

In several communities, women are not allowed to have a say in decisions-making. The woman can't leave the house without the consent of the man, even for the sake of accessing healthcare services. So, decisions to use or not to use family planning or healthcare services are reserved for the men. Women have to depend on the men. In most cases women also have to depend on the men for payment of these services if need be. Lacks participation in decision-making and income generating opportunities for women make them completely powerless, much dependent on men to access and use FP services and products... (*Murtala Ibrahim, SFH Programme Manager, Kaduna, during a key informant interview, June, 2021*).

Entrenched patriarchy bestows on men the status of the head of the family and the sole decision-maker of the household; not only do the men and their families uphold and operate within this framework, but the entrenched patriarchy also operates such that women themselves measure and express their freedom of choice within this acceptable framework.

A man makes the decision. Men can be enablers or barriers to women accessing and using of family planning. For example, after health talk, a woman would say let me go and talk to my husband. After some time, a woman would come back, and you ask

her why? She would say her husband do not want her to have family planning. For most of the women, that is the situation with them. Unless the man accepts, the woman can do nothing (*Steven Phoebe, Matron @ Gittoe Aris Hospital & Maternity, a Family Planning Service Provider, Barnawa, Kaduna South, during a key informant interview, June, 2021*).

Maryam Abubakar, an IPCA during informant interview also shared her experience of men's attitude towards family planning in the communities where she worked as follows:

The attitude of men towards family planning is not encouraging. While some support it, others reject it even if the woman is willing. They will say we want to stop their wives from given births. Some will even say it is against their religion or tradition to do family planning. That is why many women who want to have the family planning prefer having it implanted in their body so that their husband will not detect it (*Maryam Abubakar, an IPCA during a key informant interview, Bardarawa, Kaduna North June 2021*)

Another health worker further stresses the power of men in family planning decision-making given the fact the women need their consent and money to pay for the products and services. The influence of men on the ability of women to access FP could be deduced from this comment:

... the woman needs the consent of the man, and even the money to pay for had to come from the husband. For example, after counselling a woman, she will tell you she does not have the money to pay, that she will have to tell husband to give her money to pay. So, you see, the man or husband play a very vital role in the use of family planning

by women. Some do want the woman to do and will claim they do not have the money... *Steven Phoebe, Matron @ Gittoe Aris Hospital & Maternity, a Family Planning Service Provider, Barnawa, Kaduna South, during a key informant interview, June 2021*

Phoebe Steven also commented further on the influence of men in family planning choices by women as follows:

So, you see that men have influence, whether they have money or not and can determine the choice of a woman to use family planning or not. Some do not want their wives to do it. Some women may want it, but some men will not have it because they want their wives to have 5-6 children. (*Phoebe Steven, FP Service Provider, during a key Informant interview, June 2021*).

These comments show that the desire for large family size, desire for a specific number of children or a particular gender and the sense of accomplishment that this derived from having many children constitute a barrier to family planning. Thus, injunctive social norms on marriage and childbearing have a major influence on the intentions and behaviours of men, women and couples about spacing and contraceptive use.

Influence of Social Networks on Family Planning

Men and women relied on the actions and experiences of important others (descriptive norms) to inform their own intentions and actions; the important others influencing contraceptive decisions and choice included family and close friends, and the traditional leaders. Women's attitudes to

different forms of modern contraceptives were informed by experiences of friends and family members:

The rejection of contraceptives for child spacing by some women and to some extent men, is largely due to fears arising from myths and misconceptions surrounding it. For example, some will tell you 'Ah! my friend said she put one, like the IUD (a particular contraceptive) and saw it travel from her uterus to her chest'. Some will say my friend told me contraceptives do not work. So, they will be saying things that are not right about the use of contraceptives. Edmond Phoebe, Matron and Service Provider at Gittoe Aris Hospital and Maternity, Barnawa, during a KII.

Most people say that cervical cancer is brought by the injectables, so for fear of the cancer, most women would opt to stop the use of contraceptives (Munirat, Female FGD, Angwan-Boro).

If you take pill for long, you may not be able to get pregnant. My friend took it and she was unable to get pregnant and it became a big problem between her and the husband..Hanatu Abubakar, Female FGD , Angwan Dosa.

For the men, the use of contraceptives reduces the pleasure of sex with women using it.

In some cases, when we have sex with a woman who has had an IUD, for example, sex is not enjoyable, because you feel your penis touching it. It has sex less pleasurable. Besides some of our women experience long menstruation, some add or lose weight in the process of using it, and it affects us as husbands...Felix Eni, FGD Angwan Boro.

Again these misconceptions show how deep local perceptions and beliefs influence health-seeking behaviour among participants

Discussion

Consistent with the theory of planned behavior, we found that a positive attitude and positive outcome expectations about the spacing of pregnancies alone are not enough to shape decisions and behaviour; the prevalent social norms and one's beliefs about one's capacity to act also operate concomitantly to affect decisions and actions. The findings above show, and we discuss further in this section, how social norms shape the agency and actions of individuals, and how at the same time, broader changes in society, the social interactions between agents and their agency also shape the social norms, both maintaining and reproducing or transforming them.

The Multifaceted Influence of Social Norms on Child 'Spacing Decision-Making

Findings clearly show that participants have knowledge of the importance and benefits of child spacing for their economic and the well-being of women and children. However, the ability to translate this knowledge into decision-making for sustainable family planning practice is failing. Social norms affect their ability to translate their knowledge of the benefits of family planning into practical terms. Social norms around couples having large family size, male child preference and patriarchal norms that concentrate decision-making at the domestic, economic and health realms in men's hands, are major constraints. Our findings also reveal that these social norms also constrained men's agency in the reproductive realm and by the very hegemonic patriarchy

that privileges men. These findings are consistent with Lockwood (1-32) and Price & Hawkins (1325-36) study that use of contraceptives and other reproductive health services is not merely a matter of knowledge and rational choice but is mediated by social norms and power relations based on gender. They are also consistent with the large body of sociological literature supporting the view that couples' reproductive decisions are negotiated within gender-based power relations and within the context of local social norms and health systems (Oppong 35-56; Dixon-Muller 269-82; Renne 343-53; & Rylko-Bauer 479-82). In spite of this study findings of men's dominance notwithstanding, many caution against a universally tyrannical representation of men's roles in the reproductive realm, arguing that such a representation is both inaccurate and unhelpful (Lockwood 1-32).

Conclusion

While the social norm which expects people to have as many children as possible remains well established in the study communities, it is under competitive pressure from other existing norms which make spacing of pregnancies socially desirable, and from emerging norms on what entails taking good care of one's children occasioned by the current economic realities. The latter is changing: the focus on investing in and providing children with a good education. People increasingly recognize that they should only have a small family size that they can afford to educate well. The current economic realities are bound to weaken or disrupt the existing social norms for large family size. This may witness emergence of a new shift in what constitute an ideal family size, thereby creating opportunities for men and women to challenge and reconfigure social norms on childbearing and family planning.

This paradigm shift provides ample opportunities for sexual and reproductive health workers to work with and make use of existing and emerging social norms on spacing and caring for children in their health promotion activities. The current campaign approach should focus on promoting an ideal family size in which children become the object of parental investment. We argue that the current economic hardship are capable of triggering social change on matters related to family planning practice, and aspirations for freedom and a better life offer an opportunity to intervene to change social norms, including but not limited to those affecting reproductive health, for the better; this opportunity should be leveraged to achieve sustainable change.

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Professional Theatre Management, the Panacea for Cultural Promotion in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture

Enis Kofi Bini

Abstract

The Bayelsa state Council for Arts and Culture is a government owned cultural institution established by law for the preservation, promotion and presentation of the rich cultural heritage of Bayelsa people. Most arts councils in Nigeria are being managed by non theatre experts. This is because of employment of non theatre arts graduates in the civil service or as a result of political patronage on the part of the governor who appoints the director. The effect of this is inefficiency as the persons so appointed do not understand the artistic requirements that will push for maximum output by the artists. This paper takes a critical look at these issues as it discusses theatre management and cultural promotion in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. It is recommended that the Bayelsa State Government should always appoint a well experienced theatre manager as Executive Director of the council and the appointments of the different heads of departments in the council should be seasoned theatre practitioners who are well trained. Also, this study has lent voice for the call for emergence of professional theatre managers in various arts council with emphasis on the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture.

Key words: Arts, Theatre Management, Cultural Promotion, Bayelsa

Introduction

The Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture is a government owned arts and cultural institution saddled with the responsibilities of promoting the arts and cultural heritages of

Bayelsa people as prescribed in the Edicts of the council and by extension the Cultural Policy for Nigeria 1998. Since the inception of the council, several directors have been appointed to direct the affairs of the council so as to give direction on how to carry its responsibilities of preservation, promotion and presentation of the rich cultural heritage of Bayelsa people but with little consideration of a professional theatre manager.

Most arts councils in Nigeria are being managed by non theatre experts. This is as a result of employment of non theatre arts graduates in the civil service or as a result of political patronage on the part of the governor who appoints the director. This has been the fate of many government owned arts councils in Nigeria. This attitude on the part of government is one of the numerous reasons why most arts councils do not carry out most of her obligations as required by law. For instance, it is an aberration to appoint a theatre artist as the Chief Medical Officer in any clinic or appoint a theatre artist as the Chief Judge of state. But it is very common for government authorities to appoint non theatre experts to be Executive Directors in arts council or critical arts institution owned by government.

Therefore, this paper discusses professional theatre management as the panacea for massive cultural promotion in the council.

Brief Concept of Management

The word “management” is derived from the word manage which simply means to control or oversee, guide and be in-charge of something. Hall Light defines management as:

The process of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling men, materials,

machines and money so as to ensure the optimum achievement of objectives (10).

This definition is clear that management includes the efficient carrying out of operation and the design that ensures the smooth accomplishment of the aims and objectives of a business organization. For any organization to thrive successfully, be it government or private, it needs serious and effective management strategies to achieve its aims and objectives. This can be achieved with a professional managerial structure. An eminent authority in management principles, Edward Brech, defines management as:

A social process entailing responsibility for the effective and economic planning and regulation of the operation of an enterprise, in fulfillment of a given purpose or task (3).

Thus, management is the function of a group of persons or board of directors who are appointed in a firm or an institution be it private or government owned, to manage the enterprise. Therefore, management is mainly concerned with the determination and execution of the whole policies of an organization.

Many scholars and renowned authorities have given different conceptions of management geared towards the ability to manage available resources, be it human or capital, in a given organization with the aim to get good results that will propel or enhance growth. Management as a profession and field of study is very crucial for today's society.

Managerial experts have concluded in recent times that the lack of skilled, knowledgeable and purposeful management is basically responsible for management failures in many arts organizations.

Everyone who occupies any managerial position always performs the same functions with slight difference, possibly as a result of the peculiar nature of the environment and organization. In support of this view, Muyiwa Awodiya asserts that:

Management both of arts institutions and of business organization has a respectable history in many countries. From the different cultures and societies there was however, a universal definition of management which puts the manager at the center of the economy (72).

It applies to managers in all kinds of organizations and societies with maybe slight differences. Every manager gathers the efforts of a number of people in his or her organization to achieve a common goal through elements or processes such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, leading and motivating.

Planning: According to Chinedu Nwachukwu, this is mostly considered as “the first function of management” (37). This is because it gives a direction to what is to be done concerning the business.

In management several authors hold the same opinion that the concept of planning is the lead position or priority. Okoronkwo Igwe, opined that “The process of determining in advance what is to be done, includes: clarification of goals, establishment of policies and mapping out of programs for the organization” (5). From the various assertions, it can be seen clearly that planning has a significant role to play in any enterprise and it is also seen as the first approach in any organization because it gives a sense of direction and purpose.

These various opinions attest to the fact that planning is based on future preparation which things to be done and methods to achieve them. A good plan of action in management enhances productivity, reduces risk and emergencies. It avoids crisis and constitutes standards of judging performances while at the same time deciding advanced methods of action that will determine the likely obstacles to the implementation of the set goals, how they can be avoided, who is suitable to the plan that need to be consulted and the time and resources needed for the implementation of the plan. Odeyemi sums this up as follows;

Management at the appropriate level is supplied promptly with information concerning deviations between plan and information. In this way, the necessary correction can be taken before it is too late (46).

Considering the opinions of these scholars in relationship to the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture, the Council sees planning as an integral aspect of management and theatre practice. The director meets regularly with the management of the Council to discuss and plan activities that will be carried out within the year, stage performances, carnivals and festivals that the council will attend. This process of planning enables the council to draw out its budget, how to raise funds and the schedule for preparations on how to achieve the set goals of the councils within the stipulated year. The management, most times, involves the unit heads of the various departments who make meaningful contributions on how to achieve the set goals.

Organizing: Organizing as an integral part of management simply means the art of gathering the necessary inputs for production. It is the creation of an intentional framework or structure of rules for people in an enterprise or an organization. This entails the assemblage of all human and material resources in an orderly manner. Hall asserts that:

The organizational chart is the blue-print of the company's internal structure, a record of the formal organization relationship, lines of communication and flow of authority and responsibility with the hierarchy. (59)

Celestine Nwachukwu adds "That organizational chart is a visual device that shows the various departments and how they relate to one another. This emphasizes the interrelatedness of jobs and offices in any establishment" (70).

Joe Agbato sees organizing as "Who will do what with whom, when and why so as to achieve the organizations desired end, goals and aims" (6-7). Agbato's assertion is enforced in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture as responsibilities are well coordinated and distributed to various divisions and units as a means towards the actualization of the set plan of the Council.

Staffing: Staffing is the determination of competent human resources or personnel to be employed to assume responsibilities that are necessary for the achievement of targets. Responsibilities are structured and allocated to staff that can or are fit to carry out such duties or responsibilities.

Characteristics

The Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture has staff strength of about two hundred and eleven workers and presently over

thirty guest artists who are mostly Theatre Arts graduates. These workers are drafted to various units within the Council to function.

Directing: Directing is another vital aspect of management that plays a supervisory role. It is through directing that the human resources of any organization are supervised for effective and good performances that achieve the set goals of any organization. This primarily has to do with influencing the behavior of personnel to meet or accomplish organizational goals.

Directing as a basic function of management is well applied in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. The director supervises and gives instruction to all departments of the council. The director ensures strict compliance to all directives given to various departments as an approach towards implementation and actualization of the set goals of the Council.

Leading: Leading as a function of management ensures that resources of an enterprise or an organization are effectively utilized for the achievement of pre-determined goals, aims and objectives of the organization. Leading unifies the structure of relationships to get work done for effective or efficient results. This is what Temitayo Odeyemi calls “a process of influencing and inspiring subordinates to perform duties willingly, competently and enthusiastically” (109).

Therefore, a leader must be well experienced, knowledgeable, intelligent, friendly, mature and creative. These are some basic characteristics which are important aspects of effective leadership.

Leading, in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture, lies primarily in the hands of the director who is at the helm of affairs

in the council. All directives and information come from the directorate before they are passed to the various departments of the council. The director ensures that government policies as stipulated in the edict are carried out in the discipline of erring staff and the implementation of the core mandates of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture.

Motivation: Nwachukwu defines motivation as “an internal psychological process whose presence or absence is inferred from observed performances” (181).

This has to do with the workforce or labor which is the driving force behind worker’s actions in an organization. It compels, induces and maintains behavior of workers. For Lilian Nosiri, it is “a feeling of belongingness in a group or identification with the goals of the group. It is seen as the pattern to affect underlying effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction” (229).

Motivation is a determining factor in human behavior. For a management to achieve desired results, the management must be sensitive to the operational needs and desires of workers. According to Agbato, “Motivational behavior is goal-oriented behavior i.e. behavior resulting from internal drives”. (66).

Odeyemi notes that:

The recognition of ability is a vital form of motivation. Minus financial conclusions, a word of appreciation, or giving of further responsibility to an employee had a stimulating and encouraging effect which the promise of financial reward might not achieve (5).

With motivation, human behavior and attitude towards jobs is shaped by the satisfaction of their urges, aspirations, drives and needs. The achievements of planning in any organization or

enterprise lie in the hands of the workers. So they need to be inspired and motivated.

Controlling: In management, controlling acts as a parameter in appraising the personal performance of workers. It corrects the performances of workers to ensure that everything concerning the organization conforms to what has been planned. In controlling, standards are set; performances are measured against standard, feedback of results is critically analyzed and deviations from the set standards are corrected. In a nutshell, controlling as an aspect of management determines whether an assigned job was done. To Agbato, it is “the activities managers undertake to assure that actual outcomes are consistent with planned outcome” (7).

Without proper controlling mechanism, there will be chaos and absence of successful management. Therefore, control constitutes a vehicle for the provision of the means to consciously know what is going on in an organization. Cole further asserts that “Controlling ensures that the traveler knows how well they are progressing along the route, how correct their map is, if any, they need to make to stay on course” (225).

A professional theatre manager should be conversant with the various skills to manage either a theatre or cultural institution. Herman Glaser asserts that “Art and cultural administration is based on the skillful ability to procure resources and spend them effectively for a set goals and objectives in a position to produce the socio-political dynamics and flexibility which are essential for democratic” (31).

In the case of Bayelsa Arts Council, since its inception, the council have produced directors which some are core theatre arts practitioners while some are not. The appointments of non

theatre experts have hindered some aspects of cultural promotion because some of these administrators lack interest, the requisite knowledge of arts administration and cultural promotion. The Edict of the council have laid down the responsibilities of the council and how it should operate but many aspect of the edict is being ignored lately because of lack of professionalism on the part of management who are not theatre professionals.

Some of these directors became directors or managers of the council as a result of their number of years spent in the service. Working in arts council or any arts institution for a stipulated number of years can hardly make one a professional theatre manager because a theatre manager must undergo some fundamental training on management or theatre in general. The present management team of the council, some are people with work experience and not trained theatre professionals and out of

Brief History of the Council

The creation of Bayelsa State on the 1st of October, 1996 by the then Head of State, General Sani Abacha, marks the emergence of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. With that development, staffs of the Rivers State Council for Arts and Culture who are Bayelsans were transferred to the newly created Bayelsa State with effect from 6th October, 1996. These staff moved to Yenagoa the state capital, to form the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture.

The Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture was a parastatal under the then Ministry of Information and Culture but presently under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Officially the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture edict was signed into law in

May, 1998 by the then Military Administrator, Navy Captain, Omoniyi Caleb Olubolade. The Council is saddled with the preservation, promotion, presentation and development of the rich cultural heritage of the Bayelsa people.

The Council started without a well constituted leadership to run its affairs. The most senior staff was given the mandate to run its affairs until 18th of November, 1998 when the Commissioner for Information and Culture, Mr. Paul Orieware appointed Mr. Bekewuru Benedict Ballard, a trained theatre arts graduate from the University of Calabar as director. Mr. Ballard, before his appointment was teaching drama and creative arts at St. Jude's Girls Secondary School, Amarata Yenagoa. Mr. Ballard held brief until 30th March, 1999 when Lt. Col. Paul Edor Obi, who had taken over from Navy Capt. Omoniyi Olubolade as the Military Administrator of the state, appointed Chief Simon Ambakederemo as the first substantive Executive Director of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. The same day, a ten-member board with Mr. Bronzuk C. Ikuli as chairman was also inaugurated. With this development, Mr. Ballard was redeployed to head the Performing Arts Division.

In June 2000, Chief Ambakederemo retired, having put in the mandatory thirty-five (35) years of service in the civil service and the board was dissolved. On the 22nd of August, 2000, His Excellency, Chief DSP Alamiyeseigha approved the appointment of Mr. Barclays Foubiri Ayakoroma, a Theatre Arts lecturer from the Department of Creative Arts, University of Port Harcourt as the Second Executive Director of the Council. Barclays Ayakoroma's tenure ended on the 1st of December, 2009. Others who became Executive Directors of Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture are: Mr. Ineye Johnny Dudafa (21/01/2010 –

16/02/2016), Mrs. Payeboye Festus-Lukoh (09/10/2016 – 15/01/2020) and Mr. Andrew Ebi Krifagha took over from Mrs. Payeboye Festus-Lukoh on the 15th of January, 2020 as Acting Executive Director of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture till date.

Cultural Promotion

Cultural promotion deals primarily with the dissemination of cultural aesthetic for massive appreciation and preservation of culture. Also, the Cultural Policy of Nigeria, defined culture as “the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenges in their environment which gives order and meaning to social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization, thus, distinguishing a people from their neighbors”. The Cultural Policy of Nigeria, 1998 is a detailed document that guides the cultural sector in Nigeria on the preservation, promotion and presentation of Nigeria’s diverse rich cultural heritage. Also, it gives direction on administrative structures that enhances cultural promotion in Nigeria. To successfully implement, the policy advocates education through the performing arts, fine art, crafts and through the establishment of parks and sites, monuments, mass media, museums, literature (oral or written) cinema, film, music etc.

Every society have their peculiarities and characteristics that distinguished them from others. Bayelsa State have various ethnic groups like; Ogbia, epie/atissa, nembe etc. These groups have distinct cultural orientation with few similarities to each other. The Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture has been at the fore-front in cultural promotion of the rich cultural heritage

of the Bayelsa people. Irrespective of the different ethnic groups like: Epie/Atissa, Ogbia, Nembe, Ijaw et cetera, the council over the years has done justice in promoting the cultural heritage of Bayelsa through dance, drama, festival, music, traditional dresses, masquerade, carvings, sculpture, weaving, cuisines, internet, social media etc. These rich cultural heritages have been placed in the world map of culture because the council has taken the cultural performances of Bayelsa to global platforms in the United Kingdom, China and France. These tours outside the shores of Nigeria brought many accolades to the staff of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture who are seen as ambassadors of the state.

Traditional Dance; Dance has been an important medium which the Bayelsa Arts' Council has adopted to showcase the rich cultural heritage of Bayelsa people. These dances have their originality deeply rooted in the culture of the people that have passed them on from generation to generation. Also, these dances are creative and well-choreographed expressions used to tell stories embellished with songs as a means of entertainment for different occasions. These dances cut across the various ethnic groups of the state as a means to promote our cultural heritage. These dances include: Ngu-sei, Culture, Dou, Akorlor, Agbekor, Ateli, Segibo, Intercessor's dance, Ekegene, Alisco 1&2, Effi-excerpt et cetera. These traditional dances are embellished with traditional indigenous music.

Drama: Dramatic expressions are used by the Bayelsa State Council for Arts Culture to project our culture and traditions. As a means of education, information and entertainment, our traditional values are dramatized through plays and sketches to tell our stories. Most of the plays are published and unpublished

plays like: *Akassa You Mi* by Ola Rotimi, *Dance on His Grave* by Barclays Ayakoroma, *Mangrove in the Desert* by Ineye Dudafa et cetera. Ijaw playwrights and literary giants have over the years adopted the use of drama as a means of promoting our rich cultural heritage. Recently, we witnessed the collaboration between Nollywood, Hollywood and the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture in the movie “Oloibiri” as directed by Curtis Graham and produced by Rogers Ofime. This movie tells the story of the Ogbia people, her culture and exploitation of their resources by the Anglo-Dutch company, Shell Petroleum Development Company.

Music: Music is an integral part of theatre. Music has been a veritable tool in promoting our rich cultural heritage. As part of entertainment, the Bayelsa Arts Council over the years has adopted music as a means to promote culture. The council achieved this with the setting up of the Glory Beat Band which has composed several traditional music albums with the sole aim of promoting her cultural values, beliefs and rhythms.

Traditional Dresses: Traditional dresses are used to promote our rich culture in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. In every performance, the council ensures that our traditional dresses are used as costume as a means to project our traditional fabrics and way of dressing. Few years ago, the Bayelsa State Government assented bill legalizing the compulsory wearing of traditional attires every Friday by all public servants in the state.

Internet/Social Media: The use of internet technology and social media in recent times has been a veritable tool in the promotion of the rich cultural heritage of the people. The Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture during Barclays Ayakoroma’s tenure adopted the internet method of promoting the cultural

aesthetics of Bayelsa. The creation of the arts council's website made it possible for people all over the world to see and appreciate the arts and culture of the Bayelsa people. Log in to www.bayelsaarts.ng.com. The public relations unit is in charge of Internet/Social Media in the council.

Conclusion

This research critically examined professional theatre management and cultural promotion in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. Professional theatre management will unfold the hidden potentials of the council. The Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture has lived up to her responsibilities in terms of cultural promotion which is the core mandate of the council. The number of laurels won in the various National Festival for Arts and Culture (NAFEST) has made the council to be adjudged to be the best Arts Council in Nigeria.

Findings and Recommendations

It has been revealed that professional theatre management has been an issue lately in the running of the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture. The lack of professionalism has hindered some growth in the council as a result of lack of knowledge and requisite skills that will enhance massive promotion of culture in the council.

The appointment of Executive Director in the Bayelsa State Council for Arts and Culture should be based on professionalism. Only trained theatre arts practitioners or experts who have requisite knowledge and experience in theatre management should be appointed by the Governor.

The appointments of managers of the various departments in the council should be made of theatre graduates with vast knowledge on other areas of the theatre. Presently, out of nine managers in the council, only three are trained theatre artists in the council.

Since the council operates under the civil service, senior officers who have worked for at least twenty years in the council should be encouraged to have a minimum of Diploma in Theatre Arts from recognized institution as a criterion to become an Executives Director of the council.

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**Exploring Terrorism in Nigeria: Iyorwuese Hagher's
Mulkin Matasa as Paradigm**

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And

Bem Alfred Abugh

Abstract

This paper discusses ethnic terrorism in polarised Nigeria highlighting different reasons as been responsible for the uprising of this deadly insurgency. The paper establishes the fact that in most cases, the struggle for the control of resources, political factor, religious fundamentalism, intolerance, and many other reasons are responsible for the emergence of different sects in the country. The paper identified the Boko-Haram sect as well as the farmers/herders as the most recent and deadliest terrorist groups that are truncating the peaceful coexistence of the country. To successfully discuss the subject matter under review, the paper uses Iyorwuese Hagher's *Mulkin Matasa* as paradigm to show the functionality of drama and how drama can be used to draw attention to ethnic terrorism in Nigeria. The paper unravels the polarised nature of Nigeria and the contradictions that characterise the country, which cut across the diverse interests of groups. The paper concludes that, drama such as the one discussed herein, has the potential of bringing forth workable ways of ending many of the lingering crises of all kinds across the country which has continued to mar the growth and development of the nation.

Key words: Discerning, Ethnic Terrorism, Polarised Nigeria and Drama.

Introduction

Nigeria as a nation is a conglomeration of different Ethnic groups. The nation has over the years been put under siege by different violent conflicts orchestrated by different terror groups. It is regrettably appalling to note that, the country has not been able to take advantage of her multi diverse nature for the growth and development of the Nigerian society.

For several years now, the uprising of the Boko Haram activities in the North East region of the country as a terrorist group has actually crippled and grounded the country's development. In recent past and a continuous rise in the dreaded Fulani herders terrorist activities within the middle belt region of the country and by extension to some of the regions in the South-South, South East, South West, North East and North West regions of the country has called for serious attention to issues of ethnic terrorism, which has seriously permeated the country in the last decades.

The persistence of these violent conflicts over a relatively long period of time in Nigeria left a preponderance of the people (scholars in this context) to wonder if this case scenario is about conflicts of interest, conflicts of values or conflicts of identity.

Nigeria has in the last two decades witnessed severe terror attacks on her citizenry in virtually all parts of the country. The point to note here and very fundamentally is the fact that these terror activities within the Nigerian context have emerged taking different terror approach and dimensions ranging from coordinated armed assaults, rocket attacks, assassinations, kidnapping, use of improvised explosive devices, car bombings, use of child/female bombers, use of military uniforms and vehicle attacks on the high way. These activities within the Nigerian space

are conducted and coordinated by groups like the Boko Haram sect which is a terror group based in the North, the Tiv Militias in Benue State, the Bakasi Boys in the East, the Niger-Delta Militants in the South-South, the Oduduwa cult group in the West, the faceless Fulani herdsmen and many other terror sects under different guides have continued to unleash terror on innocent citizens in Nigeria.

The activities of these sects are ongoing in many communities in the country and the attacks on several communities like Dabchi in Borno North, Borno Central, Kajuru, Sanga, Jamaa, Kauran, and Chukun local government areas in Kaduna state, Guma, Logo, Gwer West, Gwer East communities in Benue state, Miango, BarkinLadi and other communities in Plateau State are all examples of places within the Nigeria space that have been affected by this terror activities inflicted on the Nigerian citizens by these sects with whatever name. More worrisome, is the recent form the insurgency have taken, the situation where innocent school children are being kidnapped recklessly by these bandits in different locations of the country without recourse to the principles of human rights and living.

According to world index rating of terrorist activities globally, Nigeria is rated the third in the series following the rising profile of terrorist activist in the last one and half decade in the country. No doubt, all regions of the country have received their own fair share from the terrorist activities in the country. In any case, the North eastern region comprising of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe are the worst affected by these terror activities in all aspects of life and living, this is because a good number of citizens within this region are region are displaced and made to flee from their places of abode to find succour in internally displaced camps in search of

new means of living. The same is replicated in other regions of the of country where citizens are forced into leaving their communities, farms and so on to find new places of living for survival. This unfortunate circumstance has brought untold hardship on so many communities and Nigerian citizens all over the country.

The above case scenario provides a baseline for us to also note that ethnic terrorism is expressed through various means such as: individual behaviour, exclusion and hostility accompanied by stereotyping, intolerance, prejudice and discrimination at all levels of engagements are possible reasons for escalation of terrorism in any country of the world and Nigeria in particular.

In the face of the foregoing, Akinola provides a perceptible example of the possible blowouts of terror activities in any nation of the globe. He notes succinctly that

Colonial heritage through resource exploitation, and inabilities of ethnic nationalities within African states to negotiate the terms of their statehood, inept political leadership, poverty and alienation, misrule and corruption and 'sit-tightism' has predisposed African states to the intrigues of violent conflicts (265).

The case scenario in Nigeria has made it possible for the creation of unity of consciousness and consciousness of unity amongst citizens despite ethnic lines so as to reduce the increasing level of terror activities in most regions of the country if not all.

To this end, the functional role of drama which is a branch of literature is employed. Ngugi WaThiongo provides very succinctly the role that literature (drama) and the writers play in reshaping and transforming the society. Here are his memorable words

Literature cannot escape from the class power

structures that shape our everyday life... whether or not he is aware of it, his work reflects the one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society. What he can choose is one of the other sides in the battle field, the side of the people or the side of those forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Everywriter is a writer in politics. The only question is whose politics (xi).

This shows that literature (drama) and writers (playwrights) have the power to transform the society and make viable comments on issues that affects mankind. It is in the light of the above that he paper examineslyorwueseHagher's *MulkinMatasaas* a viable play that could effectively aid in the discernment of ethnic terrorism in polarised Nigeria and enhance national unity.

Defining the Concept of Terrorism

Terrorism as an act is as old as man himself, it becomes increasingly difficult to stomach the deluge of delusory self-defence suggesting that terrorism does not exist in the world. Terrorism exist in the world, many countries of the world and Nigeria in particular have been prone to this dilemma called terrorism. The word terrorism is gotten from 'terror' and it implies the act of instilling fear in somebody. All the terrorist activities that have been taken place around the globe uses the instrumentality of terror to unleash fear on a people and demand for what they are yearning for. Brian Whitaker cited in Bharucha, aptly define terrorism as; "Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub

national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” (4).

This definition shows that a threat of violence used as a means of pursuing political aim or coercively cower groups or individuals is an act of terrorism. Suffice it to say that, the use of explosives and indiscriminate shooting of persons as well as killing of non – combatant targets to violently push a political motive is clearly an act of terrorism.

The first act of terrorism was the French revolution, the French mafias believed that the act of terror was the only way to initiate revolution and demand for social justice from the structures that supposedly dehumanizes the masses. These group of French revolutionist believed that fighting Guerrilla operations must be to destroy the government, government agencies like the police, military and the citizens that stands on their way to achieving their self-desired agenda. This trend of events metamorphosed into Russia in the sixteenth century. The Russian government on her part adopted a secret police. This secret police were meant to project and protect the interest of the government. The police adopted the terror approach of constantly instilling fear in the citizens and making them submissive to the dictates of the government.

Terror remains an indispensable instrument in the hands of terrorist group(s) who wants to use fear to molest the people. One thing of note however is that “terror” is a technique and “terrorism” is a belief in the value of terror. This implies that terror is employed by a terrorist group(s) who uses all the will power in their hands to undo a people. In an encyclopaedia of Terrorism and Political Violence, John Richard cited in Robert and Oladeji explained that: “ideology and ethnic nationalism have been the

two major engines of modern terrorism” (258). He takes the argument further by adding that “authorities on terrorism have identified state sponsorship, ethnic conflicts and religious fanaticism as the most likely sources of future terrorist violence” (258). Suffice it to say that ideology and ethnic nationalism is the driving tool that instigates a people for taking up arms against one another. The ideology of a particular sect might not go well with the ideology of another sect. This point of divergence in the views and values of groups often triggers a clash of interest that leads to acts of terrorism against other ethnic nationalities.

Throughout the world’s history, all the terrorist activities that history had recounted were built on ideology, ethnic nationalism and religious fanaticism, in Nigeria, the case is crystal clear, all the terrorist activities of varying sects been witnessed in the country thus far, are built on the above mentioned factors. In this same document, Robert and Oladejipresent a graphic illustration of what permeates terrorism. “Indeed, countries experiencing the highest level of terrorism are often among the economically and socially most advanced nations in their region or in the world” (258). This graphic presentation is quite true of all the nations witnessing terrorist activities. In the case of Nigeria, the country is the sixth largest producer and exporter of crude oil around the globe and the struggle for resource control have given rise to the emergence of the terrorist attacks that the country has been witnessing in recent past. The same document says “terrorism is a form of conflict and most people enjoy conflict for its own sake” (266). One is inclined to believe this position that terrorism is a form of life and that most people enjoy conflict. In the face of these reoccurring terrorist activities in Nigeria and the number of lives and properties lost, one would expect that the activities

would have naturally come to an end. But its continuity is a clear indication that most people enjoy conflict.

It is worthy to note that terrorism as an act comes in different shapes and forms. Several factors are responsible for the widening and continued activities of terrorists. Factors such as, ethnic identity, religious fanaticism, unemployment, lack of basic social amenities, uneven distribution of political offices, the increased gap between the rich and the poor, corruption and above all a failed system have continued to linger on thereby giving the aggressors the liberty to continue their criminal act. Once the system is made better, the country will witness relative peace in all parts of the nation. But this can only be achieved when the leaders are willing to make sacrifices beyond self, tribe, ethnicity and religion.

Thematic Thrust of *MulkinMatasa*

Playwrights are sensible people who continuously understudy society so as to reflect same in their works. In this play, Hagher looks at the theme of unity in the face of ethnic crises between the Uke people and the Lobi people in his crave for peace in Nigeria. It is imperative to note that Hagher in *MulkinMatasa* uses fictional characters to call for peace and settle the ethnic base terrorist activities that have lingered on for a long time between the Tiv people of Benue state and the Fulani herdsmen. In a conversation that ensues between the commandante, ArdoDanjuman and Tor-chembe discussing the root cause of the conflict between the two tribes, the Commandate, after carefully listening to the later, advises them in the following words:

Commandante:... Fellow compatriots, on my left and on my right stand our collective shame and disgrace. The past corrupt administration encouraged our people to fight over tribal and religious afflictions to cover their pathetic ignorance of the arts of leadership, governance and statecraft. Africa has come of age; we must begin to utilize the collective wisdom of the world to govern and lead Africa better. Here are two brothers fighting over land and water given freely to us by God. Global warming has intensified desertification. Corruption has put a spin on everything and exacerbated conflicts, poverty, disease, population displacement, economic dislocation, human capital flight, massive poverty, breakdown of law and order and death. Together... we shall solve our conflicts and live together. We need both the herders and cultivator farmers. We shall with one resolve push the Sahara and Kalahari deserts out of Africa and make the whole of Africa green again. We shall modernize our farms and make cattle and crops breeding a joyful occupation once more. My brothers and sisters this is our moment to make peace and to push Africa forward... (17-18).

In view of this aberrant ethnic terrorist activities that have displaced several thousands of people, left women and children volatile and prone to rape and abuses of all kinds; farmlands destroyed, properties worth billions and above all several hundreds dead. The commandante's speech is a clarion call and as a social mobilizer, infusing in the people a new hope for a better Africa and Nigeria in particular. The lines are not just meant to stimulate the masses, to rise up above the social structures that

fuel this crisis, the lines are a motivation to all and sundry, urging the people to shun violence and embrace peace.

The commandante is to visit Kalahari community and restore the peace that has been lacking in the community. In the same instance, Tor-chembe and ArdoDanjuma who are the representatives of the two conflicting communities holds brief as they reassure their people of peaceful co-existence. Tor-Chembe tells his people that:

Tor-Chembe: My Lobi people, we are gathered here in peace with our former enemies the Uke people. We are no longer to fight. Today, we have a government that listens, that hears and cares. We were fighting for water to drink as the past administration brought draught through neglect. All Lobi people should bring out our arms; we are brothers and friends with the Uke again, what do you say Ardo)... (19).

ArdoDanjuma in response to the treaty that Tor-Chembe has proposed is quick to agree by calling on his people in the following words:

ArdoDanjuma:All Uke warriors bring out your arms; let us surrender violence to reason. At least we have a government that listens. For the first time since creation, the leader of Africa is visiting us here in the Kalahari... without peace between our two tribes and with the kerero the metabele the shona or kalanga we will not develop. Constant conflicts have reduced our people to serfdom, to human pets and indentured servants (19).

From the above dramatic dialogue, it is imperative to note that the two communities in the world of Hagher's fictional creation are a reality in some Nigerian societies just like the on-going terrorist activities in the country. The play *MulkinMatasa* is a dramatic parable that calls on citizens to be patriot and shun any kind of unrest that will undermine the peace and progress of the nation. In like manner, Tor-chembe says: "We have agreed to end our rivalry over scarce water and land and instead agree to access, allocate and share in a peaceful atmosphere (19). Ardo takes it up by stating that "No longer shall our people watch in impotent fury, our wives and daughters carried away by the rich and powerful town dwellers" (19). Tor-chembe agrees further that "Never again shall the ruthless, dominant and domineering elites sneer us at. These people exploited our weaknesses, as we fought and killed one another while they fly in private jets, shared tax-revenues and grabbed our land (19-20). The above conversation shows that the people can actually discern their ethnic differences and build a unified nation devoid of terror.

The desire to educate the masses on the need to live in peace with one another made the Commandante in his assuring words to the people's welfare to emphasize that:

Commandante: Fellow compatriots, chiefs and leaders of the Kalahari region of Africa, we have come here to give you assurance that this revolution has come to usher protection, justice and equality to all of us. No African should shed the blood of his brother over anything that can be assessed, shared and enjoyed. Our revolution became necessary because it was not possible to change the corrupt African political system through the ballot box. We seek not to lead a

conquered people, but a convinced people. We are prepared to lead by example to show Africa that fine leadership is a revolution in thought and deed... the first lesson of our revolution is to overcome old prejudices and discover new experiences (23).

The above speech ushers in the consciousness of unity and the unity of consciousness. The people are made to understand that credible leadership is that which shuns all prejudices and discovers new experiences. In trying to discern ethnic terrorism in Hagher's dramaturgy, the Commendante sees the act of giving out young girls to marriage as the violation of the fundamental human rights of citizens. In his words:

Commendante: My people, our revolution cannot be complete without the full emancipation of women from slavery and oppression... My daughters I give you freedom over your lives. I give you each your dignity, honour, and right over your bodies. Your bodies are yours alone to make personal decisions about whom you want to share with. This is a fundamental human right. It is a highly prized part of your self-esteem and treasure. This revolution will defend your honour and the African prestige hidden between your thighs. Asmau, Dooshima and all women of Africa, the revolution will give you free education to your highest potential, restore your economic rights and power, you are today on equal footing with men at all levels and before the law. Africa cannot be free and cannot make progress until the last woman and girl child are free... (23-24).

The marginalization and molestation that women face during volatile conflicts is what propels Hagher's condemnation of such

unlawful acts. In Nigeria today, the women are so prone to all forms of molestation. In the last four to five years, over two hundred and fifty girls were adopted by the Boko-Haram sect at Chibok local government area of Borno state. Till date, majority of those school girls have not been released. This is what Hagher, is frowning at, he tries to open a new vista where women and young girls will be respected and highly valued. He upholds the value of women even in the face of conflicts and alludes that they should be protected at all cost if the nation most moves forward. In the Benue valley today, several women have been molested and made prey to the herdsmen. This terrorists rape women and devalue their fundamental human rights.

Hagher strongly advocates that the rights of women should not just be protected but every woman or girl should be made free from any bondage that puts her down. Peace and conflict management motif is the thrust of Hagher's *MulkinMatasa*, as well as the creation of credible characters such as the Commandante whose leadership quality is geared towards uniting the people and bringing back the lost memories that have been shattered away by greed, corruption and endless conflicts in the country caused by acts of terrorism. In another instance, the Commandante encourages the masses never to give up but to ensure that all the leaders who have left them to their fate are brought to book. He re-enforces the pillars with the following words:

Commandante:...To fully move forward, we shall have to swiftly deal with our sad and unfortunate past. We have to carefully review the charges against the past leaders.... All citizens will try them in the public square.... All those found guilty of corrupt enrichment, abuse of power, anti-people politics, and immoral acts

would face the death penalty by the guillotine. These communities will no longer exercise a death sentence by firing squad. Jerry Rawlings style; it promotes militancy and puts power in the barrel of the gun. The hangman's noose is too primitive and too colonial... lastly, I must warn that this revolution has been peaceful up to this point. But from this moment we are prepared to shed blood, any amount of blood, of enemies of the revolution. The guillotine has arrived and his sharp blades have been hungry for rivers of blood of those who will taste our resolve. We are all in this thing together... comrades, compatriots Aluta continua (24-25).

Interestingly, Hagher through the character of ArdoDanjuma stresses that "... Power is an aphrodisiac, keeping cattle is having power over cattle and not men" (26). In the instances cited from the play, one could understand that drama has the potency of creating social consciousness that is geared towards informing the society about the odious issue of ethnic terror and how it could be discerned. The connotative meaning of the above speech is evident in the continued raids that some communities in Benue, Taraba, Kaduna, Plateau, Kogi, Bauchi, Gombe, Maiduguri, Yola and Ekiti have been witnessing in resent past. These raids are not worth it, the government knows what to do, but they have folded their hands and allowed these herdsmen to continually perpetrate this evil on innocent citizens. Herein, the masses are made to be aware that, to tend cattle is to have power over the cattle and not over men. This explains why some states are calling for anti-open grazing ranches so as to restore peace in the country. The reality is that, if ranches are established, all cattle will be under watch

and there would not be blame games that this people kill my cattle and I want retributive justice.

Conclusion

The pattern of conflict that has engulfed Nigeria is one fuelled by multiple parties and interests. These multiple parties include war lords, politicians and civilian dictators who use violence and conflicts to further their agendas and strengthen their hold on power. The Boko haram sect, the Niger Delta insurgents as well as the armed Fulani herdsmen across Nigeria who constantly send waves of terror on communities and citizens are just a fodder used by these multiple parties. Nigeria as a nation has evolved into a militarised society where regions are terrorized by militias, armed herdsmen or war lords. Suffice it to mention that, unresolved conflicts that border on ethnic and religious differences abound in our land and these invariably create room for militias to breed effectively.

Hagher in this creative oeuvre pokes the conscience of our world and its ethical structures. He projects a moral vision and heralds a vanguard that arouses our sleeping faculties and demands for justice and hoping to make us realize the damage our demi – gods and civilian dictators have caused to our nation. Haghers MulkinMatasa lucidly presents an observation of our experiences as a nation by revealing truth aimed at teaching and correcting social anomalies and calling for justice. Iorwuese Hagher believes; “The writers business is to confront the gods of our society. In the process of confronting the omnipotent gods creatively, consciousness is born... the contemporary writer as artist, must encounter the oppressive omnipotent forces of modern day,

whether these are military or civilian dictatorships, the gods of apathy, materialism, corruption or exploitative power” (41) The above presents the writer as conscience of society as well as a rebel who uses his art to champion a rebellion against these forces. It therefore means, when a nation pays attention to its writers, it will find means of understanding itself and recreating itself will occur naturally.

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Greening the Arts: Arnold Udoka's *Inyene* and the connections between drama and human ecology

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Abstract

The Earth is in peril. Climate change, plagues, conflicts, environmental degradation and drought now stares the human race in the face. Over the years, changes in climatic conditions have intensified a near-desperate quest to salvage the remnant of humanity from the now-existent eco-crisis. This paper investigates the relevance of literary drama to the eco-challenges of sub-Saharan Africa. The objective of this study is to x-ray the thematic importance of Arnold Udoka's *Inyene* in the discourse of ecology and the environmental crisis now confronting Nigeria. The paper finds this dramatic text as one of such literary discourses that interface with a scientific phenomenon such as ecology. It thus recommends that the subject of ecology and the crisis of the environment needs to be re-evaluated to embrace the contributions of the arts, especially drama.

Keywords: Ecopedagogy, Ecocriticism, Drama, Conflict and Ecology

Introduction

Climate change, global warming, ozone depletion – all these have become popular clichés that have characterized various global summits aimed at confronting the environmental challenges of the 21st century. Nations of the earth have risen in one testament – The Earth's Charter to forge a common cause aimed at addressing a reality that stares all in the face – a human race under peril due to the absolute disregard for nature. The first paragraph of that document reads:

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must stand together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations (echarter.org).

Natural and man-made disasters of catastrophic magnitude now ravage the entire globe. From flash floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, forest fires, draught, hurricanes, erosions, desert encroachments, air and water pollution, oil spills, every part of the earth shares in one sad story or the other. In Africa, humans have to grapple with the twin-devils of both natural and man-made disasters as well as conflicts and their attendant natural consequences of hunger, destitution, disease and poverty.

Amidst these realities is the question of the role of drama in addressing the ecological concerns of the earth. As stated by Chauduri, ecological victory will require a transvaluation so profound as to be nearly unimaginable at present and the arts and humanities, including drama, must play a role (Chaudhuri). McKibben equally adds his voice to this believing that playwrights, poets and artists need to create works which will place climate change deeply in the imagination (Ashden). Drama holds the

power to help us see “something about ourselves” by touching some parts of our identity construct. Theatre is life – a reflection of who we are and what we do. Humans cannot be disconnected from the environment and hence, theatre needs and ought to reveal the common reality of the earth – the home of all human beings. This is more apt as “our human identity and the identification of what we refer to as nature, are now forever intertwined and dependent upon one another” (McKibben 11).

The Green Theatre Theory

To understand the relationship of theatre and nature one must first refigure the relationships between ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ that all humans inevitably inherit. Modernist traditions of European ‘enlightenment’ pitched nature and culture, ‘man’ and the environment against each other in what Kershaw says has turned out to be a potentially disastrous opposition (12). Nature is human and humanity forms the whole ensemble that nature represents. Since theatre is life, then it only amounts to the fact that all human life is theatricalised and dramatised, including, crucially, its interactions with other species and the environment. The performance paradigm was thus a major generative force of an age of ecology that emerged in the final five decades of the second millennium (Kershaw 14).

The concept of the “Green theatre” is such that is shrouded in a lot of complexities owing to the fact that the word “Green” is not easily collocated. The green terminology spans across several disciplines from medicine to politics. We have heard of the word – The British Green Party, Green Capitalism, Green Consumerism, Green Theory, Green Socialists, Green

Ecology, Greenpeace, Green shirts, The German Green Party, The American Green Party, The Green Economy, etc.

However, the concept of 'Green' today has developed into a universally understood notion that non-human nature is given status, and that to protect it, the concept/ideology has come to include socio-political ideology. The traditional Green theory includes a critique of growth, environmental concern, scientific ecology, philosophical holism and the granting of status to non-human nature (Wall 29). Wall in his study reveals that in seeking to solve environmental problems, "Greens" have been forced to consider human affairs and embrace a set of political, economic, and cultural principles. "Any description of Green demands an exploration of approaches to human society. Solving perceived ecological problems undoubtedly demands a transformation of attitudes and institutions" (Wall 29). The world's economy as it stands today is largely driven by forces that put both man and nature under peril. Gaseous emissions from industries and exploitation of forest reserves can only be checked by an absolute change of not only attitudes but also of institutions that perpetuate this trend. Green theorist Schnaiberg supports this crucial element by reminding us that "all environmental problems are social problems regarding both their causes and effects" (17).

Based on the foregoing, we can safely state that the contemporary Green movement is not only an environmental movement but also a socio-political movement. Heinlein's study of proto-environmental performances in contemporary Western Theatre traced the history of this movement to the summer of 1962 when marine biologist Rachel Carson, previously a noted author of marine life books, stated the following:

As man proceeds toward his announced goal of the conquest of nature, he has written a depressing record of destruction, directed not only against the earth he inhabits but the life that shares it with him. The history of the recent centuries has its black environment passages. Now to these and others like them, we are adding a new chapter and a new kind of havoc, the question is whether any civilization can wage such relentless war on life without destroying itself, and without losing the right to be called civilized (Sale 3).

Today, more than fifty years after, the world is stunned by the truth of Carson's prediction. Humans now turned predators are preying on their own kind as conflicts ravage the entire globe. The quest for life's natural resources has been a major catalyst for war and other genocidal killings especially in Africa not to mention the complete disregard for the environment in the wake of continued plunder of natural resources.

No doubt the state of affairs calls for a social revolution and drama is one tool for such a revolution. The socio-theatrical work of Augusto Boal – *Theatre of the Oppressed* puts him as the philosophical forerunner to contemporary Green theatre. Boal validates performance as a weapon for social revolution, a means by which identity can be initiated (14). Contemporary Green practitioners have always sought for revolutionary change not only in behaviour but also in the structures that give ambivalence to nature and the whole concept of a safe earth. Green theatre therefore presupposes a performance that is socially relevant and

maintains its efficiency as a tool for creating widespread socio-ecological change (Heinlein 25).

For Gare, the world lacks stories or narratives of sufficient power and complexity to orient people for effective action to overcome environmental problems, to relate the multiplicity of social and cultural forms implicated in or affected by environmental destruction. Though, environmental problems are global yet there is need to formulate stories, craft performances and write plays about the lives of people and the history of societies in terms that Gare says will enable them to be understood in context of and as part of nature (45). The environmental challenge in many parts of the Third World especially Africa is not the same with developed nations. Gare's argument that global capitalism dominated by transnational corporations and financial institutions, and controlled by a new international bourgeoisie has exposed some of the most basic cultural structures on which Western European civilization in general and modernity in particular have been based is quite timely (114). If this be the case, then there is a need for a new kind of civilization – a Green civilization that is not only trans-historically and culturally relevant but also challenges this global hegemonic culture of transnationalization. This challenge can only be met when people are oriented in practice and in their daily lives to pursue the pathway of creating an environmentally sustainable civilization and drama as stated earlier is one such weapon that has the potential to meet this challenge.

Already, there are contradictions in the global quest to solve the world's eco-crisis. The concept of sustainable development seems to globalize environmental problems and consequently implies that only global solutions should be sought

for 'local' eco-problems. This partly explains the seeming eco-hesitation by African critics to the global eco-crisis as conceptualized by the West. Africa today stands on the wrong side of the divide in the futile attempt to globalize the eco-crisis. While the continent continues to writhe in pain of the worst kind owing to a degenerating environment orchestrated by decades of exploitation of natural resources to fuel developed economies, increasing poverty has no doubt exacerbated bloody conflicts, genocide and terrorism. This trend no doubt puts the respect for life and nature in utter disregard. Maathai Wangari, a renowned African environmental activist was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in recognition of her efforts to halt deforestation in Kenya. For her, "peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment"

(<http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/contemporary-01.html>). She was arrested and jailed severally by Kenyan authorities for her doggedness in challenging the very institutions that encouraged the continued plundering of Kenya's forest reserves. It is quite ironic that in Africa, those who challenged the forces that perpetuate eco-degradation have been met with stiff opposition. Nigeria also shares a similar story in Ken Saro Wiwa who was summarily executed alongside eight others by the then military authorities for daring to challenge the continued devastation of the Niger Delta ecosystem by oil merchants. Since then, this region which holds the key to Nigeria's survival has not known peace.

African efforts at sustainable development have been targeted at fighting poverty by enriching scarce resources. For Africa, the only way to guarantee peace which is one of the goals of sustainable development is by meeting the needs of the current

generations without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. This was the motivation for Wangari when she founded the Green Belt Movement that succeeded in planting 30 million trees in an effort to halt deforestation in Kenya. For her, “people are fighting over water, over food and over other natural resources. When our resources become scarce, we fight over them. In managing our resources and in sustainable development, we plant the seeds of peace” (<http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/contemporary-01.html>).

Glover’s analysis of Escobar’s work captures the current contraptions of sustainable development which he says are: 1) a ‘saving the world mentality’, which promotes the global at the expense of the local; 2) a belief that the world’s poor create environmental problems, but which ignores how capitalism creates poverty in the first place; 3) a faith that capitalism’s market structures can resolve ecological problems (54). To overturn these structures and engender a pathway for development that is Africa friendly, drama is and should be seen to be in the forefront to secure an environment of peace that guarantees the wellbeing of all peoples of the earth.

A Brief Synopsis of Arnold Udoka’s *Iyene*

Iyene – an Annang word for wealth is used as a metaphor for the abject poverty in the midst of plenty (rich country, poor people) that has become the lot of the Niger Delta. The play which is a dance drama explores the lack of sensitivity to the environment which lays the golden egg, the neglect of corporate social responsibility and the breeding of a culture of vulturism. There is also a depiction of the futility of violence, and other strategies which undermine the search for peace in the region.

The play calls for restraint and understanding on the part of the multinational corporations, and the compassionate intervention of the educated elite amongst Niger Deltans to resolve the knotty issues. *Inyene* is also a token of hope, a prophecy that the people's wealth would be truly theirs someday soon.

The play centres on Inyene, who was born in a riverine environment but left for the city to become a successful businessman who later returns to assist his people. He comes home to Bawkeng only to find that many of his kinsmen and women have either died due to confrontations with oil merchants or diseases arising from the effects of environmental pollution. Preba, one of the women who challenges the guards of the oil expatriates is shot in one of the many protests by the people.

However, Inyene has a different idea. He initiates a dialogue with the oil merchant, Adam Smith and this move pays off as the people are able to reach a mutual agreement on how to end the conflicts and halt further pollution of the environment.

The play ends with Adam's workers emerging with all sorts of cleaning equipment to sanitize the environment. Using the leafy branches in their possession, the women and the men join in cleaning up the environment. Adam walks up to the gas flaring pit and turns it off. With the aid of the workers he connects the gas flaring pit to several cylinders.

Ecological Issues in the Play

From the play, four typical issues are identified as common sights of eco-degradation in the Niger Delta. They are: gas flaring, soiled fishing nets, oil spillage and conflicts between natives and oil industries. The flaring of gas in the Niger Delta has continued

unabatedly for several decades. Apart from the huge economic loss to the Nigerian state, it has impacted heavily on the quality of air in that region. The people's livelihood is tied to the environment and when the waters are soiled with oil, their means of survival and collective well-being is cut off. Oil spillages are now common occurrence in the Niger Delta and on each occasion, the devastation brought to both land and water-dependent animals is quite considerable. One of the characters in the play – the priest encapsulates the importance of the environment to the people thus:

For all these, our gods and ancestors, we are grateful. Let the rain come in its season. And let the sun shine in its season. And our waters; may they continue to bear all manner of water animals. And may the fishes they bear not tear our nets. May these waters continue to run free to our shores and keep our swamps green in peace all year round (2).

The ideal is what the priest prayed for. The Niger Delta is rich in sea food and other water resources. The ideal Niger Delta is environment is ever green and the tranquil nature of the fields makes it a peaceful habitat both for humans and animals. The ambience of its forests, waters, creeks and canals resonates with the sound of eco-wealth but all of these are now threatened due to the exploitation and other oil related activities since pre-colonial times. The priest in the play captures the impact of ecological disasters now plaguing the Niger Delta thus:

We were very happy people until one day, a strange and violent tide swept from the depth of the ocean to our shores. None of us knew what type of dam to build to stem that tide. Its winds were so destructive that even the ramparts of our shores were blown

away. Where then do I as a priest appease our gods?
In the water or the land? It is now a curse to claim
Bawkeng as a homeland. The pain in our souls
degenerated into fear, indignation, poverty and
death. Who invoked this despoliation on our land?
Who? In Bawkeng that strange and violent wind
changed us to the proverbial rich land with poor
people...(23).

In the play we also see the height of impunity and indifference to the plight of the local natives. Oil spills have just been discovered to have littered the entire community and all the oil merchants care about is the profit. The conversation between the foreman, the workers and the engineer reveals the intent of such exploitations and displays the global hegemonic economy which prefers profit above any other humane consideration.

Foreman: Master, master
There is a mistake
The oil is flowing
But on the ground.
On the water
And the farmland

Workers: There's an error
Error error error
There's an error

Engineer: Oh no! Oh no!
But it's no one's fault
Oil spillage
Is no big deal
There are other waters
For the natives to fish

There are other lands
For the natives to till
The oil flows well
That's all I need
To make my money back... (26)

In movement three, there is a depiction of the consequence of resistance. The people's revolt has often been met with fatal response by government agencies and private personnel hired by the oil merchants. Preba, a woman who mobilized others to protest against the ecological disasters caused by the oil industry was brutally shot and killed by the security guards at the gate. This was captured in the priest's lamentations shortly after saying:

For challenging environmental crisis,
Preba was killed.

Demanding for practices to maintain the health and
survival of life, Preba paid with her life.

For seeking the reordering of the relationship between
nature and community,
Preba lost her life.

Her ecological consciousness to regenerate the land of
Bawkeng and reduce the death toll occasioned by the
oil spillage and gas flaring condemned her for
elimination (35).

The scenario above proves that the fight against eco-degradation especially when this affects the free flow of proceeds from exploration and exploitation has come with its consequences. Many lives have been lost and are still being lost due to the crisis in the Niger Delta. However, there is a glimmer of hope as can be seen from the play. The return of Inyene in movement five appears to lift the spirits of the downcast people of Bawkeng. As he enters to hear the tales of woe, the

masquerades enter bearing the following inscriptions on their wide masks: “spirit of death, spirit of famine, spirit of drought, breathe and die, drink and die, on Kyoto protocol we stand” (47). These inscriptions spur Inyene on to confront the reality of eco-degradation that has cut off the livelihood and survival of the people. He bares it all to Adam Smith, the oil merchant saying:

We are dealing with environmental degradation and pollution here. These constitute the dispute. It’s not all about money. My people protest the way and manner you throw your master on them. That’s all! We must find solutions to these mishaps and poverty (50-51).

This is the central message of the play – the clean-up of the Niger Delta and the amelioration of poverty that has become the lot of the majority of the inhabitants of the creeks. Eco-degradation as indicated by this play breeds poverty and when the people become desperate, they will agitate. In most cases these struggle takes a violent dimension.

Legal Conventions for Eco-Sustainability

In the play – Inyene, one of the inscriptions borne by the masquerades reads: “On Kyoto protocol we stand”. This presupposes that there are legal frameworks that ought to guide the way humans treat the environment. One of such is the Kyoto protocol. Over the years and at several international conferences, meetings have been held to streamline activities that pose a danger to the earth especially by the developed West. These conventions have also inspired individual nations to enact environmental laws to protect their environment as may be applicable to their peculiar circumstances. Environmental law in the opinion of Barau is a framework for achieving ecological

sustainability. These include laws, pacts and penalties to guard, govern and guide individuals and institutions at local and global levels to stick to ways that favour the environment (101).

The Kyoto protocol to the United Nations framework convention on climate change is one such pact that seeks to engender a safe earth that guarantees the future of generations yet unborn. This convention was adopted in New York on the 9th of May 1992 by 39 western industrialized nations with a fully grown market economy or transiting to same. The objectives of this protocol are: to achieve enhancement of energy efficiency in relevant sectors of the national economy; protection and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases; promotion of sustainable forest management practices, afforestation and reforestation. Others include the promotion of sustainable forms of agriculture in light of climate change considerations and the encouragement of appropriate reforms in relevant sectors aimed at promoting policies and measures which limit or reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Under this protocol, each party is expected to minimize adverse social, environmental and economic impacts on developing countries. (United Nations Framework Convention on climate change).

Another convention on climate change is the Montreal protocol of 1999. This convention also aims at taking precautionary measures to control equitably total global emissions of substances that deplete the ozone layer, with the ultimate objective of their elimination on the basis of developments in scientific knowledge. The convention further acknowledges that special provision is required to meet the needs of developing countries, including the provision of additional financial resources and access to relevant technologies. (United Nations Environment Programme). These

conventions stipulate that the reality of global warming needs a concerted and practical approach especially by the industrialized West to arrest the threat. Countries such as USA, Japan, China, Britain and a great deal of Western Europe emit more greenhouse gases than the rest of the world put together. This is a consequence of their massive industrial activity and hence, there is need to sign a pact that will ensure that there is a process of eliminating these carbon emissions. However, more than fifteen years down the line since these agreements were made; gas is still being flared all across the Niger Delta. The entire region is a cauldron of burning fuels by mostly western oil companies with no practical steps to end such emissions.

In Nigeria, there are laws and policies that have been enacted to somehow give impetus to the drive to arrest the threat of environmental degradation and ecological drift that the country has been going through in the last half a century. Nigeria presently has twenty eight legislations that serve as an instrument for environmental protection, planning, pollution, prevention and control. Section 20 of the 1999 constitution for example makes it an objective of the Nigerian state to improve and protect the air, land, water, forest and wildlife of Nigeria. Section 12 establishes, though implied that international treaties (including environmental treaties) ratified by the National Assembly should be implemented as law in Nigeria (Environmental Law Research Institute).

There is also the national policy on the environment drafted in 1998 by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA). The goal of this policy is to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria through: securing a quality of environment adequate for good health and well-being; conserving and using

the environment and natural resources for the benefit of present and future and generations; and restoring, maintaining and enhancing the ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere to preserve biological diversity and the principle of optimum sustainable yield in the use of living natural resources and ecosystems. Other ways through which this policy intends to achieve sustainable development include: raising public awareness and promoting understanding of the essential linkages between the environment, resources and development, and encourage individual and community participation in environmental improvement efforts; and co-operating in good faith with other countries, international organizations and agencies to achieve optimal use of transboundary natural resources and effective prevention or abatement of transboundary environmental degradation (Federal Environmental Protection Agency).

A return to the full implementation of these international treaties, laws and policies is what the play – *Inyene* calls for. This is significant especially now that the world is moving to the era of sustainable development with a focus on cleaner and renewable energy. With the fall in oil prices, a major catalyst for the crisis in the Niger Delta, Nigeria remains on the wrong side of history if practical steps are not taken to diversify the economy and ease the tension that oil politics generated over the years. At the moment, there appears to be no end in sight to stop gas flaring in the Niger Delta. Oil spills continue to become the daily experience of the people in this region. *Inyene* calls for a stop to gas flaring as indicated at the end of play.

Conclusion

This paper x-rays the intricate connections between dramatic arts and the subject of human ecology. As the world grapples with the realities of its helplessness in the hands of a warming planet, arts has begun to question its stake and relevance in the field of science. The issue of agitations and crisis within the Niger region of Nigeria has continued unabatedly and playwrights in the last decade have found the parameter of ecodrama as a subject of enquiry and engagement. Udoka's *Inyene* is one of such literary discourses that stake its relevance in this area.

Recommendations

- Nigeria and indeed the entire globe hangs on a precipice due to the exploitation of the earth's resources and its attendant consequences. Therefore, she must continue to seek and domesticate its strategies to deal with her ecological problems.
- Government at all levels, groups and individuals must continue to seek avenues of dialogue and engagement to resolve all areas of conflict within the Niger Delta.
- The subject of human ecology and the crisis of the environment is no longer the exclusive preserve of the sciences as the arts and drama in particular has continued to interrogate and interface with this area of study in recent times. Hence, there is need to further re-evaluate the curricula within the field of literary drama to embrace this growing and engaging subject area.

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Child Soldiers in Armed Conflict in Northern Nigeria: Analysis of Visual Representations in *Beast of no Nation*

Betzoom Muopshin

Abstract

The resultant effect of violent conflict is the conscription of children from 7 to 17 years of age as soldiers. An estimated 300,000 children across the globe serve as members of armed groups or state military, these children are often required to carry weapons and act to protect the ideology for which they were conscripted. Africa has about 40% of the global number of child soldiers; this phenomenon has created a disturbing image of conflicts in Africa. This paper analyses the place of visual filmic representations in explaining the effects of war on children especially those forced to carry arms. The paper submits that violent conflicts can erode the future aspirations of these children, distort their education and intensify human rights abuse. The paper, therefore, proposes an international unified policy that will ensure the rights of every child is protected in a conflict.

Key Words: Child Soldier, Violence, Conflict, Conscription, Resultant.

Introduction

Violent conflicts have characterized much of humanities history, from medieval ages, the First World War, the second World War and Post-Cold War, man has been in conflict with himself, with others and with his environment. Disagreements between one party and another, one country and another usually inform these conflicts. At the receiving end of every conflict however, are women and children who are the most affected, there is also great humanitarian needs and disasters.

In war torn regions, girls are exploited as sex slaves, or used as suicide bomb carriers. The boy child on the other hand, is trained as a soldier, forced to carry weapons and kill “ the enemy”. Child soldiers are a common feature of wars in Africa, from Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and many more, the consistent use of child soldiers in violent conflicts have been the image of the African child and a source of great concern to humanitarian organizations and the international community. Temitayo Oyewole, examines the disturbing figures of child soldiers, she states that:

Statistics show a steep increase in the active participation of child soldiers in contemporary armed conflicts. With recent Academic literature to be as high as 300,000 and rising. Africa is estimated to account for about 40% of this number with about 120,000 or more children involved in armed conflicts as both active combatants and support staff, aged between 7 and 17 years of age. (8)

In Nigeria, recent activities of terrorist particularly Boko Haram has seen significant rise in the kidnap of school children, who are either married off to terrorist, used as human bomb carriers or conscripted into fighting. These children are either forced or indoctrinated into an ideology that supports and legitimizes violent conflicts. These children either become figures on television or film or statistics in the aftermath of these conflicts, their names, and identities swallowed up by a war of which they a victims.

Film has over the years reflected our society, with its unique abilities of combining visual and audio, film has the capacity to transmit cultures and history, create change and project

identities. This paper intends to analyze the child soldier in Nigeria through the images of Cari Joji Fukunaga's *Beast of no Nation*, with the intention of bringing to bare the images that reflect the reality of the child soldier and the urgency of a unified policy to protect children in conflict areas.

Synopsis of *Beast of no Nation*

The film *Beast of no Nation* is about a boy named Agu who possesses immense talent but is later forced to become a child soldier. It opens with Agu telling the audience about the situation in the buffer zone where he and his family live, and his ingenuity as a child to create something with his "imaginary TV" which he finally sold to a soldier. Agu's childhood and innocence is shattered when the war eventually comes to his family's small village, Agu's mother and sister are able to leave with the UN Peace keepers but Agu is rejected by the taxi driver who said he cannot carry him, but charges a huge amount of 70,000 to carry the mother, his little brother and a sister. Agu is forced to stay behind and "protect the land" with his father and other men in the village. When soldiers attack the village, Agu's father and other men in the village are shot and killed, Agu and his brother attempt to escape but his brother is shot and killed, leaving Agu who helplessly runs into a nearby bush.

Agu attempts to hide but is soon discovered by soldiers who force him to join their rebel force, As part of his initiation, Agu is forced to kill a man with a machet with the commander consistently reminding him that men like the victim are responsible for his father's death, and Agu must avenge his family by killing these men. Agu befriends a mute boy named Strika, together they face the challenges of the war. The commandant

rapes Agu and the other boys, but Agu says nothing for fear of being killed by the commandant. The flood of war ravaging their country erodes his childhood and innocence.

The commandant receives a call from the supreme commander of the army to travel to a certain city. While there, the commander orders the second in command, to take over as commandant of that battalion and orders the commandant to take over as his security chief. An argument breaks out between them. Meanwhile Agu and the other boys ravage the breakfast set before them, a sign of inadequate feeding and constant hunger. The commandant takes them to a hotel where a prostitute shoots the 2IC in a plan orchestrated by the commandant. The owner of the establishment and the prostitute are killed by the soldiers and the women taken as hostages.

The battalion now fights as rebels and soon their ranks dissipate. With hunger and frustration Agu admits that he thinks the war is far from over. Agu realizes that his friend Strika has been shot, and he is forced to carry him. He later covers Strika's dead body with leaves and mourns his friend. The battalion resorts to digging for gold. They are hungry and disease is ravaging their camp. Rambo revolts against the commandant and the boys follow him to surrender to the United Nations soldiers. There, Agu once again sees the soldier that he (Agu) sold his imaginary TV to for some plates of food. At that moment, the childhood he had lost flashes before his eyes and he realizes what the war had turned him into. Agu and other children were rehabilitated in a camp. Rambo tries to persuade them to go back to war, but he refuses. Agu finally opens up to his caregiver, symbolizing the beginning of a process of healing, the process of becoming a boy again.

The Child Soldier as Portrayed in *Beast of no Nation*

Terrorism and violent acts stem from years of discrimination, corruption, lack of good governance and eventually frustration. Conflicts tend to be sometimes based on ethnic differences and competition for access to resources and power. Some conflicts also have religious backing.

These conflicts have rocked nations in African, from the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970, the Sudanese civil war and crisis in South Sudan, the apartheid in South Africa, to Islamic extremism in Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania, Mali and Nigeria. The list is endless. Amid all these wars and conflicts are trapped innocent children and helpless women who are mostly consumed by violent acts, hunger, starvation, migration, and abuse. Cary Joji Fukunaga captures these situations in the film, *Beast of no Nation*. The film opens with a narration from the main character Agu. He reveals the situation of the conflict around him.

Agu: It is starting like this, our country is at war and we are having no more school, so we have to be finding ways to be keeping busy.

(Excerpts from *Beast of no Nation*. 2015)

Agu's narration above reveals a very important fact about the effects of war in a country: education is cut short. According to UNICEF, one in every five of the worlds out of school children is in Nigeria; about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5- 14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6-11-year-olds regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education. In the northern part of the country, the picture is even bleaker with a net attendance rate of 53 percent. States in the North-East and

North–West have female primary net attendance rate of 47.7 percent and 47.3 percent, respectively, meaning that more than half of the girls are not in school.

The prevalence of illiteracy in Northern Nigeria is driven by various factors, including economic barriers and socio–cultural norms and practices that discourage formal education. “The impact of insurgency in the North-East presents significant challenges, 2.8 million children are in need of education–in-emergency support in three conflict-affected states (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe). In these states, at least 802 schools remain closed, and 497 classrooms are listed as destroyed with another 1,392 damaged but repairable” (www.unicef.org).

Discussing the gravity of the situation, Ekereke Aniefriok Silas states that:

More than 29 students and a teacher were killed after gunmen attacked a boarding school in Baga community of Borno as well as 42 students and other staff of Government secondary school in Mamudo, Yobe state leading to the closure of the schools. In October 2012, over 40 students were murdered in cold blood in Federal Polytechnic Adamawa state. In July 2013, a school dormitory was doused in petrol and set alight in North–Eastern Yobe...Those trying to flee the flames were shot...The attack left 46 dead, mostly students. Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) based in Kano, states that around 15,000 children in Borno state, North–East Nigeria have stopped attending classes since February 2013, most of the children are in primary schools while more than 50 of 175 state schools have been destroyed. (2)

Two incidents that shook the country and attracted international condemnation were the kidnap of schoolgirls in Chibok and later in Dapchi. Two hundred and seventy-six female students of Government secondary school Chibok, Borno state. This act by the terrorist group Boko Haram, generated an outcry and the birth of the “Bring Back Our Girls” group, which demanded a quick response from the government in rescuing the girls. The outcry prompted the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, to release a video on YouTube in which he claimed that girls are not supposed to go to school but should be married off instead. On February 19th, 2018, another one hundred and ten girls aged 11-19 were kidnapped by the Boko Haram terrorist group from Government Girls Science and Technical College Dapchi. Unlike the Chibok schoolgirls, the Dapchi students were released with the exception of Leah Sharibu whom the terrorist claim refused to denounce her religion and accept Islam.

Many schools have remained closed due to terrorist activities in the Northeast. Many children now live in IDP Camps where non-government Organization’s and the federal government try to provide schooling.

Psychologically, all displaced people are affected, but women and children are more at risk of being recruited by terrorists to join their ranks and serve as bomb carriers with the promise of better living conditions for a member of their family. In some quarters, it is the promise of reward for eternal life by carrying out Allah’s will. Cary Joji Fukunaga captures this situation in his film *Beast of no Nation*. After the war reaches Agu’s village, his father tries to get Agu, his mother, a brother and sister out of the village, but the driver refuses to take Agu with them. Agu’s father, brother and grandfather are killed, leaving Agu to run for

his life and hide in the forest. He is later discovered by a group of rebel fighters consisting of children between the ages of 7-16. This group recruits Agu and trains him to become a fighter.



Plate.4: Commander of a rebel group discovers Agu in the bush. *Credit. Beast of No Nation*



Plate.5: Young boys trained to shoot with a gun. *Credit. Beast of No Nation*

Nigeria is currently facing a challenge with its youthful population, Monica Akokunebe opines that:

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with a current estimated population of about 187 million of 82.6%

youth dependency ratio within the age cohort of 0-14 years (42.79%) and 15-24 years (19.48%) has greatly outnumbered the working age adults, however the growing youth demographic is faced with limited educational opportunities, unemployment, the HIV/AIDS/Ebola Crisis, communicable and non-communicable diseases, war and other forms of violence, 'Youth bulge' in the Nigeria population pyramid has revealed that the large size of young persons who are dependent increases the likelihood of violent conflicts when being recruited as child soldiers.(303)

Child soldiers are usually children under the age of 18 who are conscripted or kidnapped or forced to become members of a rebel group, armed political groups, regular or irregular armed forces. They are used in combat where they serve as scouts, laying mines and explosives they also serve as domestic labour and are engaged in sexual slavery. Following Agu's story in the rebel camp, the audience is introduced to trainings, and initiations. During this initiation process, a grave is dug, and newly recruited members are asked to lie down in it symbolizing the death of a former self and resurrecting as a new person, a soldier, dedicated to a task. Theorist, Ferdinand de Saussure in his semiotic theory, exposes the connections between signifier and signified. The signifier is the image used to stand for something, while the signified is what it stands for, in the image below the empty graves; burial and resurrection are signifiers, signifying the death of an old self and the beginning of a new life.



Plate.6: Young recruits under go initiation process. *Credit. Beast of No Nation*



Plate.7: Recruits are shot at to complete the initiation process. *Credit. Beast of No Nation*

In Agu's case, the commandant uses deception to make him surrender to a cause. The commandant assures Agu that the group kills those who are responsible for his family's death. Joining them thus would mean exerting his revenge. The commandant's words to Agu clearly show the use of persuasion and deception by terrorists to recruit members:

Commandant: Agu, you are going to kill this man, you are going to kill him today. He is strong, you can do it, Agu come so when you are chopping wood lift it up high, high, up, high, then when you are ready, you come down slow, well, well into the flesh, you have chop melon before? But this is not a melon this is hard, so you must split am good. Agu these are the ones, the dogs that kill your father. (Excerpts from *Beast of no Nation*. 2015)



Plate.8: Commandant instructs Agu to kill a prisoner. *Credit. Beast of No Nation*



Plate.9: Agu's cutlass splits prisoner's head. *Credit. Beast of No Nation*

The images that follow show how Agu is finally conscripted into a life of bloodshed and murder. In VOA's documentary titled "*Boko Haram: A Journey from evil*" the processes of recruitment into the terrorist organization Boko Haram is similar to what is seen in *Beast of no Nation*. Young boys and girls are targeted, they are either kidnapped or conscripted and indoctrinated into fighting a noble cause for 'Allah' who is against any kind of Western influence, hence their targets are Western institutions and moderate Muslims, and these children are used as suicide bombers and combatants. The girls are used as sex slaves or married off to terrorists. Punishments for offenses are usually lashes with a cane or death. In her analysis of the situation, Monica Akokunebe notes that:

It has been estimated that 300,000 young soldiers between ages 10 and 24 are currently risking their lives in armed conflicts. Hundreds of thousands of children are conscripted, kidnapped or pressured into joining

armed groups...The proliferation of lightweight weapons has made it possible for children under the age of 10 years to become effective soldiers... about 40% or 120,000 child soldiers are girls, the demography of armed conflicts and child soldiers have been prevalent among the ethno-religious groups called Boko-Haram and Shittes who have been recently kidnapping and recruiting the boy and girl child for suicide bombing in the Northeast geo-political zone of Nigeria, Almajiris (Koranic School Pupils) are understood to be the biggest recruiting ground .(304)

The United Nations High commissioner for refugees, states that 278 children-143 boys and 135 girls, were recruited in the North-East; twenty-one girls were used in suicide attacks by Boko Haram. The United Nations verified the killing of 244 children-109 boys and 135 girls most in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. Sixty-five of them were killed in 13 suicide attacks carried out by children. Since terrorism broke out in the North-East of Nigeria, civil normalcy has ceased, towns and cities have been characterized by intermittent suicide and car bombings, attacks on villages and towns, destruction of schools, banks and government institutions, abduction and kidnap of boys and girls, and killing of civilians in their homes as well as clashes with the military.

In videos posted by insurgents or captured by civilians, terrorists are usually seen in armed vehicles carrying semi-automatic rifles, shooting down through a village or City Street, in the midst of this chaos are children, shooting without a care who their bullets hit. As we progress into the film, we are confronted with images of rape, death and sickness. The young boys finally leave and surrender to the peacekeepers, but not without major consequences. The often psychological fallbacks of child soldiers

leads them back to the war they tried to run away from, this is coupled with the lack of available therapist that should offer psycho-social therapy to victims at IDP camps or healing centers. Many of these children are often shunned by society and treated as perpetrators rather than victims that they are.

Conclusion

The effect of violent conflicts in African societies today has hampered development and stunted growth. The destruction of infrastructure, and disruptions to economic and educational activities abound. The most disturbing however is the conscription of children between the ages of 7 to 17 to serve as child soldiers in various rebel groups. This phenomenon does not only pose a threat to the immediate concern of security but a future concern about the ability of these children to cohabit with other members of society without relapsing to violence. Film helps us understand issues, it has ability to evoke emotions and speak directly to the viewer, the film *Beast of no Nation*, enables the viewer to participate in the struggles of the child victim, and his hopelessness in the face of terror, pushing forward a call to action to mitigate the occurrence.

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Social Experience and Political Realities in Soyinka's *A Play of Giants* and Mulwa's *Redemption*

Pomak Frank Tengya Ph.D.

Abstract

This study investigated the roles and functions of drama as an instrument of social commentary in Nigeria and Kenya. Drama has been widely acclaimed as a positive medium for mirroring society hence the popular belief that drama is a representation of life. This powerful attribute of drama has been deployed by playwrights across different epochs to make constructive commentaries on the happenings within their various societies with the view of effecting positive change. As a result of the significant role of Drama in the society, it has become increasingly important to write and act drama using a method that is understood by the people. The study sought to investigate how David Mulwa's *Redemption* and Wole Soyinka's *A Play of Giants*, serve as utility carriers of literary responses to the problems concerning the African continent. This study was premised on the supposition that social, historical and political realities in Kenya and Nigeria form a creative reservoir of the two countries' drama. A close examination of the playwrights from the two countries reveals the socio-political temper in the two societies. The article sought to highlight the extent to which the playwrights successfully use drama as a means of communication, even though there are different forms of literature in existence. This is important because, the work of an artist in whatever form usually has a universal appeal. The theoretical framework for this research was based on the Theory of the Avant-Garde and Political Theatre Theory. The theories added impetus to the work as it aligns with the concept of social drama. The methodology that was employed

in this research basically revolved around the analyses of the primary texts and library and internet research to add depth to the line of thought. The choice of the playwrights is purposive and is based on fact that one of the playwrights is a Kenyan and while the other is a Nigerian. The choice was also on the fact that all the playwrights had experienced colonial and post-colonial governance in both countries. The period of the writings also is a factor that influenced the choice.

Key Words: Social Revolt, Politics and Play Writing.

Introduction

African playwrights like other writers on other continents have over the years battled with the difficult social, cultural and political narratives that have held the vortex of the African continent in a firm grip. Different writers from the continent have found ways of re-writing the complexities that define Africa as a continent and Africans as a people in their written works. Achebe (2012) in *There was a country* opines that the writer often has two choices; to either face the daunting task of struggling to write about the inequalities and problematic issues that define our world or to turn a blind eye to the many problems that are constantly stifling humanity. Achebe goes further to advocate that writers most especially those from Africa cannot afford to shy away from the social, cultural and political dynamics affecting the continent. It is in line with this assertion that we look at two plays by Wole Soyinka and David Mulwa and their mastery and depiction of the social and political issues that have become a constant source of worry to commentators and scholars on the African continent.

Wole Soyinka and David Mulwa have written great works of drama whose styles of deployment are of tremendous literary

and social significance (Iji, 1996; Outa, 2010). They have contributed immensely to the development of African literature especially in the areas of African drama and theatre and a lot of critical attention has been paid to their works by African and European critics (Obuh, 2009). However, little research has been done in terms of comparing the distinctive dramatic styles of these playwrights in Africa drama. The researcher deliberately chose the two plays mentioned above, in order to examine the satiric themes and styles treated by Soyinka and Mulwa, so as to highlight the social perception involved in those plays and their perspective(s) about the events that are continually reshaping the African continent. This chapter therefore concerns itself with the etymology of the dramatic styles and thematic preoccupations; this is a comparative analysis of the two plays and their stylistic approach.

The style of drama has been influenced throughout its history by certain cultural pressures (Turner, 1979). Some of these cultural pressures are influenced locally or nationally while others are external pressures that have helped to shape the cultures as a result of constant human interaction (Chatterjee, 1987). That is, social pressures including political, religious, philosophical, and socio-economic constraints, have helped to create specific dramatic constructs. If a reader can identify some of these specific traits, she or he will be able to make distinctions between different plays. For example, it is possible to discuss the characteristics of an eighteenth-century dramatic style. This discussion could be further refined by differentiating between French and English plays of the period or by distinguishing the dramatic traits of romantic plays, from the expressionist or the absurd plays.

Dramatic style of a given period or an ideological movement is generated by a number of different influences. Firstly, a reader can identify a particular style based on information that is presented in a play. A reader can assume that a play captures some of the essence of truth about a particular period. That is to say, writers from different periods or with different ideologies construct the dramatic world in different ways. What is 'truthful' about the world to one generation may not be so for successive generations (Brecht, 1935). Often through their plays, writers attempt to answer specific existential questions such as 'What is truth?', or 'How do we construct reality?' (Trotsky, 1923). The answers to these types of questions differ depending on scientific, religious, and cultural beliefs of the periods in which they are being asked. Despite these ideological differences, all playwrights have the same means of expression available to them. Writers and performers rely on the codes of communication to reveal meaning (Akanji, 1994). Sound and visual images are the two main communication modes used in the theatre. It is the way that playwrights and performers manipulate these codes that generate different plays and different types of performances. Dramatic style results from the way in which a play is presented in the theatre. It is the way that a play is directed and acted, as well as the types of scenery, costumes, and lighting that are used, which helps to influence the style of the production.

Playwrights are affected, consciously or unconsciously, by the conditions under which they conceive and write, by their own socio-economic status, by personal background, by religious or political position, and by their purpose in writing. The literary form of the play and its stylistic elements are influenced by

tradition, a received body of theory and dramatic criticism, as well as by the author's innovative energy. Auxiliary theatre arts such as music and design also have their own controlling traditions and conventions, which the playwright must respect. The size and shape of the playhouse, the nature of its stage and equipment, and the type of relationship it encourages between actor and audience also determine the character of the writing. Not least, the audience's cultural assumptions, holy or profane, local or international, social or political, may override all else in deciding the form and content of the drama. These are large considerations that can take the student of drama into areas of sociology, politics, social history, religion, literary criticism, philosophy and aesthetics, and beyond (Benjamin, 1936).

To qualify the above paragraph is the statement of wa Thiong'o (1981) when he avers that the literary works of any writer is most times influenced by his environment, and the social powers that govern that society. In other words, he is saying that no writer writes or exists in a vacuum, and that every work of art is influenced to a greater extent by the society from which the writer of that work originates. This goes to say that the style upon which a playwright deploys while writing is most times influenced by the events that permeates his society and therefore his worldview. Brecht (1935) in his seminal work Writing the truth: Five difficulties alludes to this fact when he states that the playwright must arm himself with the truth at all times because he is a citizen of a society that is always in combat with itself and with other forces that make up the components of that society. Brecht encourages the playwright to possess the courage to write the truth in a manner that it would sound pleasurable to the oppressors within the society; this can only be possible based on

the style of writing that the playwright chooses to use as a means of hiding the truth in plain sight. It therefore goes to say that style as a basic component in writing is very important in the realization of the aims of the playwright (Bennet, 2005).

Summary of Soyinka's *A Play of Giants*

The drama is a social commentary about the nature and form of postcolonial African leadership, Soyinka created a play of four messianic characters. It is a social commentary on the political and social confusion that thrives at the highest level of governance on the African continent. The play also highlighted the hypocritical nature of the western powers and the international organizations. It is an absurdist play that satirizes the despotic nature of African leaders and their western cronies. The playwright did not make any effort to hide the identity of the leaders in question as he explained in the preface to the play (Soyinka, 1984: iii). The real life characters include:

- (i) Benefacio Gunema: Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea
- (ii) Emperor Kasco: Jean-Baptiste Bokassa of Central African Republic
- (iii) Field Marshal Kamini: Idi Amin of Uganda
- (iv) General Barra Tuboum: Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire

Kamini the host is the central character in the play. Soyinka focuses on the abstraction and absurd nature of the character of Idi Amin. The play also points an accusing finger on some Western sycophants and apologists. Most of the characters are satirical caricatures; Soyinka did not spare any of the leading world powers of the cold war era in this satirical master piece. He points out the total lack of decorum and abuse of trust and power by the western nations who intentionally sustain their puppets in

power across the African continent. The play is a disparaging statement about the true character of the western world powers as established through the characters of their representatives and also through the depiction of the Western journalist (Gudrum) and the Professor.

Soyinka depicts the African leaders in their complete absurdity, drunk with power, mad men with no concept of politics, economics or diplomacy and worst of all, no bearing on the ideals of leadership. The play mirrors the inhuman nature of some leaders and their lack of understanding of political and social economics and problems. The treatment of the Chairman of the Bugaran Central Bank by the monstrous security personnel loyal to Kamini is a pointer to the excessive abuse of power by most African leaders.

Soyinka also paints in another light, the shameful role(s) of the American and Russian diplomats as cold war realists who are scrambling for the soul of an innocent continent. He paints an imagery of greedy western diplomats who do not care about the plight of the African people and nations, as long as their political and economic interests are served. The play is an absurdist trademark with very little humour; the use of satire as the driving style was aimed at exposing the excesses of these real life personalities. In terms of the techniques and the structure of the play, it is a play that is written in two parts; a clear avant-gardistic trend of moving away from the conventional method of acts and scenes.

Summary of Mulwa's *Redemption*

David Mulwa wrote *Redemption* as a commissioned play for the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK). The play is

targeted at the church, the family and the nation generally, he challenged the members of the society to embrace the message of change, growth and trust in the values of the church, the community and the power of the individual to invoke change in the community. It is a play that centres upon the issues of religious hypocrisy, political power and misuse of religious and parental authority. The play reflects on the role(s) of the youth in a world that is torn apart by greed and selfishness. The play reflects the quest of the playwright for a redemptive force among Kenyans and Africans alike for unity and good neighbourliness.

The story in the play revolves around the hypocritical activities of Archbishop Muthemba and the autocratic and uncompromising attitude of Pastor Mutema. The conflict between them evolves as a result of the unscrupulous activities of Muthemba who ordained himself an Archbishop and formed his own congregation to the chagrin of Pastor Mutema an orthodox Evangelist and a faithful crusader of the old church. The two of them (Muthemba and Mutema) are locked in a battle to win the congregation from the valley; their children on the other hand are in love with each other (Rebecca and Antonius).

Mulwa introduces a new dimension into the conflict of the story when the mother church sent a young and rather well educated Pastor Manela to take over from the old crusader (Pastor Mutema). The coming of the young pastor ushered in a new era in the play. It created an imagery of the New Testament whereby sinners were once again not banished but welcomed back into the household of God upon repentance and deliverance from their old ways. This we see in the character of Katika the gravedigger who was banished from the church by Pastor Mutema. The

introduction of the young pastor (Manela), also serve as a new challenge to the Archbishop Muthemba.

The play is set structurally in three movements with scenes to attach to each movement so as to help in organizing the storyline as it unfolds. It is a drama of emancipation, introduction of the redemptive power of truth and liberation and a message to the Kenyan and African people at large that for progress and unity to take place in our communities, we need to stop fighting among each other, and allow progressive ideas to take root in the “valley”.

Dramaturgic Analysis of Soyinka’s A Play of Giants and Mulwa’s Redemption

In analyzing the dramaturgic aspects of the two plays, the researcher considers the setting of the plays, and prominent events around the world during the period of writing the plays and how these events might have influenced the direction and style of writing by the playwrights. The researcher looked at how the characters and events in the play are shaped by the predominant forces within the social and political environment of the playwright during the period of writing the various plays. Nnolim (2009) believes that the issues and presentation style(s) that a playwright or any writer in the literary world adopts as his method(s) of creative presentation are greatly influenced by the predominant socio-cultural and political factors in his/her immediate society.

Based on Brecht’s concept of period-dialectics, it is important to note that both plays were written within the period when the whole world was still trying to recover from the effects of the cold war. As a result of this the tussle for power and control that was

a major feature of the cold war era could still be felt in many other ways of human endeavour, and since drama as an art form thrives on the representation of social issues and discourses, the template of most of the plays written within that period were influenced by the effects of the cold war and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and the shift in economic and cultural indices of humanity (Esslin, 1980).

The playwrights (Soyinka and Mulwa) relied a lot on the use of dramatic elements to create imagery and expand the metaphoric relevance of their plays. In terms of deployment of language, both plays were written in plain English language. The use of English as the language of communication is a deliberate act of accusing the role(s) of the imperialist and their educated African partners of exploiting the African continent both in terms of natural and human resources.

Wole Soyinka's A play of giants reflects a savage portrait of a group of dictatorial African leaders in an embassy in New York City, close to the United Nations building. The play is written to show the resemblance between the recent historical characters/African leaders who were known for their authoritarian rule. These include Macias Nguema (Late) of Equatorial Guinea, Emperor for life Jean-Baptiste Bokassa of Central African Republic, Life President Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo and the Hero of Heroes, Field Marshal El-Haji Dr Idi Amin of Uganda (Soyinka, 1984).

It is true that no African play has ever carried such a large cast of archetypal anti-people characters (Soyinka, 1984). They are ruthless and find no room for freedom of human expression and rights. They mismanage the resources of their various countries with the aid of their western imperialist friends. The playwright

makes no pretensions about the focus and intentions of the play, to write back about the illegalities of African leaders and their partners in foreign lands. Through the dialogues, we see a true picture of the atrocities and injustices that leaders unleash on their followers. Soyinka creates the insensitive nature of the African leaders. This trait is seen in reality in all the African leaders, as portrayed in the character of Kamini and the other characters in the play, Each has his own peculiarities and idiosyncrasies. The metaphor of having four major characters is a pictorial reality that tells the absurd story of leadership in sub-Saharan Africa.

What happens at the end of the play is that the central figure, Kamini, becomes an individual hero suffering by himself through his own lusts, faults and excuses. Each of the leaders is seen in the light of Kamini's plight and tragedy, in a desperate attempt to hold onto power they all fall out with their followers and international allies. The plot is a linear plot that develops as the events in the play unfold and it is further developed through the use of satire. From the choice of style and the use of language it is clear that the post-civil war popular political satires of Soyinka are clearly in response to the cries of the critical agency and of the readers thus debunks the earlier defence of "bourgeois situated literature" by Soyinka.

In the political satires, Soyinka moves away from the extreme intellectual use of English language and intimidating dialogue to an accessible English and penetrable dialogue. The popularity of the satires is attested to by Soyinka (1981) in his description of the reactions of the Military Governor, the representative of the Visitor, to a performance of Opera Wonyosi that he thought was attacking the military, on the occasion of a convocation

ceremony of the University of Ife. Contained also in the account is the identification of the university cooks and staff of Parks and Gardens with the preoccupation of the play and the play itself. We also must note the reaction of General Sani Abacha to the play The beatification of area boy and the declaration of Wole Soyinka as wanted in Nigeria (Soyinka, 1999) as attesting to the popularity of the play. Beyond this, there is a clear wall of difference between the canonical plays and the post-civil war political drama in terms not only of language but also of plot structure, setting, figures and motifs from oral tradition and *mis en scene*. The only thing that audience members enjoy in the canonical plays is the spectacle and not the knowledge of the meaning. In the case of the post-civil war plays, readers are now able to gain access into the primary level of meaning of the plays. In other words, they could make headway with the ordinary meaning of the texts without the service of the critics. With the understanding of the primary level of meaning of texts, they could on their own go about processing the deep and deeper connotative meaning.

Mulwa on the other hand has equally written a number of plays that are largely satirical in form and content. As an accomplished stage and screen actor who started acting at the tender age of 7years in 1952, he has grown in leaps and bounds since then. Mulwa is also a stage director per excellence who is well known across the Kenyan nation as a man of the theatre. His reputation as an actor made him one of the prominent adjudicators of the Kenyan National Schools Drama festival. He has been on the bench of adjudication since 1975 up to 2005. As a prominent playwright, he has written a lot of plays among them Redemption, Glass houses, Master and servant, Buriani, Ukame,

Mkimbzi, Daraja, Champion and a host of other plays. Most of the themes in his plays revolve around issues of good governance, social change, greed and injustice.

Thematic Depiction of Religion and Hypocrisy in the two Plays

In most plays, the underlying reason for writing is to pass a message to the society. Most times the playwright uses a coded means of unveiling his message to the target audience. Soyinka and Mulwa have used drama as a means of heading and passing the coded or subliminal messages in their plays. It is therefore left for us to decipher the themes from the plays. A theme in drama simply means the underlying message, the subject matter or the issues that the writer is trying to project to the readers using the vehicle of drama. From the reading of the two plays the following themes seem to have formed the crux of the discussions in the two plays though there are some sub themes like those of greed and human suffering, corruption and human suffering.

Struggle for Power and Control

The quest for good leadership is one of the key issues in both plays. As playwrights who are both resident in two regional super powers in sub Saharan Africa, it is almost certain that the issue of leadership would feature prominently in their plays. Soyinka's play A play of giants revolves around the theme of leadership and the quest for power, authority and recognition by the four super characters; these are basic features that most leaders are always willing to acquire. He (Soyinka) is questioning how and why the characters have been able to entrench themselves in power for so long after they have been exposed for the monsters that they are. He observed in the introductory notes to the play that at

different points during their rulership, these leaders were supported by western super powers because of the economic gains that they (Western powers) stand to gain from the continuous stay in power of the said rulers. He opines that:

...this certified psychopath was sustained in power at various periods by group interest and ideologies as varied as those of Great Britain...the United States, the Soviet Union, the Organization of African Unity, Cuba, Libya, the PLO and Israel not to mention the vociferous support accorded him by the cheer leaders among the intelligentsia of the African continent and the Black Caucuses of the United States...(p.vi)

Riding on the crest of such support from the continent and beyond, the leaders misuse the trust of their followers and want to gain total control over the people in all aspects of their daily lives; one of the characters Gunema sums it all when he says:

...but I have not finished. Beyond la responsabilidad, beyond politics lies- ah – power. When politics has become routine, organized, we who are gifted naturally with leadership, after a while we cease to govern, to lead: we exist, I think, in a rear space which is –power....(p.2)

To further add to the arrogance with which these leaders rule over their countries he (Gunema) goes ahead in another conversation with Kasco when they said:

...impossible! Jamas, never! My friend, you are not unhombre ordinario. Like me and our comrade the emperor Kasco, we are not ordinario. Why you think we rule our people? Some people are born to power,

others are—cattle they need ring in their nose for us to lead....(p.11)

Emperor Kasco then supports Gunema by saying:

...there are persons, individuals who are born with the imperial sign here (he taps his forehead) on head. Me, I think – de Gaulle, Robespierre. But the prime, the leader of them all in history, in all the world history—the sans pareil of all time is Napoleon Bonaparte!...(p.11)

Looking at the same theme of leadership and the misuse of power and trust in Mulwa's Redemption, he (Mulwa) has been able to use the political skirmishes within the church as a way of creating imagery about the leadership struggles within the larger Kenyan society and Africa as a whole Mulwa captures the deceit of the leaders through the word of one of the characters Archbishop Elton Muthemba in Page 43 when he says:

Take this thing about the superstition in this valley. These poor people believe in witchcraft and their infernal traditions. So how do you get them to church? Get them paying? You stand there and encourage them. Let them go to witch doctors as long as they are in church tomorrow and singing and dancing in expiation: you see you let them leave their lives and come to you on Sundays for a little spiritual uplift and everybody is happy. It is this that that fool of a pastor didn't see. Every Sunday it was thunder and brimstone...so I saw the crack in Mutema's citadel and I moved through the wall and right into the heart of his congregation: I offered them a new spiritual lease!!...(p.43)

Mulwa continued with his expose of the crooked ways of the leaders when Muthemba says:

...genius is seldom understood. What I mean is, in this battle for the pockets, purse and souls of men, you must allow these fallen creatures certain religious fringe benefits. Okay, so a man has gone and sinned. What do you do? You hold a private confessional and tell him it's alright. That's why our Christ died. Go and sin no more, if you can help it...(p.43)

The passage above sheds light on the activities of some of the leaders across the African continent who most times fails to invoke the laws of the state for the development of the society, simply because they are calculative and looking for how the breakdown of law within the society would benefit them. Mulwa concretizes the corrupt nature of leadership in the conversation between the Archbishop and his sly political accomplice Mr. Chilulu:

CHILULU: Especially for men like you and I, Archbishop. You never know when some disgruntled element of mortality might pop up from the darkness and demand retribution.

ELTON: Retribution from an archbishop!! Are you out of your political head?

CHILULU: My friend, when I used to be a lawyer I used to think it is impossible. And then your good tongue and prayers put this political cane of authority into my hands in that grand alliance...what did you call it now?

ELTON: The marriage of the opposites, earthly Caesar hand

in hand with the One Above!

CHILULU: Yes. And now I know. You and I are yoked together in common fortune. My political enemies are your religious enemies, my friends, likewise. It is not safe to assume that your collar will always protect you. Take that as a warning...

From the conversation between the two characters above, the playwright has been able to create an imagery of the dirty connivance and corrupt activities that goes on between the political leaders, and their partners in the religious circles, at the detriment of their political and religious followers, the main textual understanding of the conversation and the specific choice of the religious and political personages is that the social, cultural and political ways of the people in any society are most times controlled by the religious and political leadership found within that society. Therefore the choice of the prominent institutions (religion and politics) is a clear pointer to the thematic message in the play.

Between Soyinka and Mulwa's plays, we can clearly see an insightful link between the sensitive institutions within the society and the problem of leadership. Nguema one of the super characters in A play of giants tries to explain to his fellow leaders that he uses voodoo to control the minds of his people, therefore engaging in the dark religious arts for the sake of accruing unwanted control and power over his people. Archbishop Muthemba in Redemption on the other hand, connive with the lawyer turned politician (Chilulu) to rob the poor people in the valley of their lands while hoodwinking them in the name of religious redemption. In essence, the two playwrights used the imagery of leaders who are ready to go the extra mile to acquire

excess powers at the expense of their followers. They are therefore using their art form and different styles of presentation to create the imagery of bad governance and the quest for excess power and total control.

International Conspiracies

Most of the major African writers (novelist and playwrights alike) from the era of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi aa Thiong'o, Ola Rotimi, Francis Imbuga, Ayi Kwei Armah, Peter Abrahams, Ebrahim Hussain, Athol Fugard, Nadine Gordimer and a host of new playwrights writing out of the African continent have constantly reflected the theme of international conspiracy in different forms. Most of these playwrights are seen as postcolonial writers because they have constantly protested against the issue of imperialism and neo colonialism on the African continent. It is for this reason that most of what is considered as African drama or African literature in general is viewed as protest literature; protest against colonial invaders, protest against African leaders, protest against imperial or neo colonial forces and also protest against the lived experiences of the human condition within the continent and the activities of the outsiders who have decided to remotely control the activities of the various African leaders. Ogude (1988) alludes to this when he stated that:

...but to the African writer, "protest" implies something much more sinister than the mere human act of confronting normal human existential problems. The painful memory of slavery, the humiliation of colonialism, the disarming but invidious power of neo-colonialism, the whole sense

of impotence, of total impotence, these are the historical realities that have inspired, or rather tortured the African imagination...(p.7)

Bates Besong (1993) agrees with Ogude when she opines that:

...the power of the writer is not always enough to change the political and social situation of his time but his art can become a fighting literature; he can write works which are artistically profound and politically correct. He can write works that show how his world is and could be...
(p.18)

From the above, it is clear that there is a quest upon which most African writers have embarked upon because every literary work is a protest literature from the character of Tom Stockmann in Ibsen's An enemy of the people, to Hamlet in Shakespeare's Hamlet and Okonkwo in Achebe's Things fall apart, The Sculptor in Soyinka's A play of giants and Pastor Mutema in Mulwa's Redemption. All the writers are trying to breach a gulf between the various experiences of the universal human condition. In the same vein the two playwrights in this chapter are protesting against the uncompromising choices that have been placed before the African by the western governments in cohorts with their African conniving partners who masquerade in the cloak of leaders and redemptive saviours of the suffering masses across the African continent. Such acts of defiant protest can be seen in the bold representation of the western journalist and diplomats at the Bugaran Embassy in Soyinka's A play of giants. The depiction of the cold war scramble by the American and Russian diplomats and the appearance of the Secretary of the United Nations at the embassy is a clear depiction of the neo-colonial or

imperialist scramble for the soul of independent African countries. Soyinka captures the behaviours of the western powers clearly in the play and how they conspire with western educated African academics to set the various African leaders who have fallen out of favour with them on the path of destruction. The conversation between Kamini and the Russian and American Diplomats is a testament to that fact:

2nd RUSSIAN. Dr Life President, I wish to assure you, at all times...

KAMINI. Yes, always you assure Kamini. Always you assure life President of Bugara, but still, you stage coup. Your KGB take care of my security, not so?

US DELEGATE. Perhaps I may come in, Field Marshal Dr El-Hajj. You need be in no fear that the US government will recognize these rebels who have taken over-whoever they are. As far as my delegation is concerned, the head of state of Bugara is right here in this embassy standing before me. My delegation will certainly make sure that Your Excellency address the Assembly tomorrow as planned and of course, the proposal which we were bringing to Your Excellency regarding your life size statue, remains in force, we have given it our unqualified support. The only condition we attached to our support was that the statue of our own nation-founder, George Washington be given appropriate...

KAMINI. (Swinging the gun dangerously to and fro). You hear? Always... you Plan coup, you telling World

Bank, no loan for Kamini. Is the fine trick of superpowers, we know, when you call conference and everybody is making talk at conference tables, you are undermining talk and giving weapons to all sides. When you are making disarmament talk, you are making more atom bomb...you think Kamini big fool...

The dialogue above from page 61 of A play of giants sheds some light on the theme of international conspiracy, that is, how the super powers consistently conspire to bring down leaders from the third world. To add to this level of conspiracy Soyinka goes ahead and exposes the role(s) of the international academics in the whole saga in the following dialogue between Professor Batey and the Russian diplomats:

2ND RUSSIAN.

Yes. A common butcher, we knew him. We had close studies of him sent regularly by our own men, not just western reports. But in any case, we did not create him- the British did. They sustained him in power, backed by the Americans. Then they disagreed. The pupil had more than mastered the game of his masters. So we stepped in to fill the vacuum...but you sir, what about you?

BATEY.

What about me?

2ND RUSSIAN.

Come, come professor you are not naïve. You have visited Bugara. An intellectual, you have met many Bugaran colleagues. Progressives, committed to the cause of socialism- authentic socialism, not

rhetorical. You have spoken with them. Sometimes, surely you speak to them one day, only to learn that they have disappeared the next?...did you really believe it was all western propaganda?

BATEY.

You claimed it was! You shouted it loud enough in the United Nations.

2ND RUSSIAN.

What was the word you used, professor? Opportunism. It is our duty to discredit the western press when it tries to discredit the instrument of our policies. The western powers do the same- why not? But what about you? You are here to write a speech for this er...heroic leader. But what of the peasants and workers he has destroyed at will? You write speeches on their behalf?

BATEY.

He is a product of the economic and historical conditions of our people on the continent. There is no such thing as monster- you, if nobody else, should be the first to acknowledge that. You know it is colonial history which must bear full responsibility for all seeming aberrations in African leadership.

2ND RUSSIAN.

I see, you have promoted these views among the survivors of the Kamini's policies in Bugaran villages and towns?

BATEY.

No, I had no opportunity to...

2ND RUSSIAN.

On your next visit perhaps, You see, professor, we also believe that there are

no eternal virtues. Like honesty, it is fiction, or intellectual honesty, its later, bourgeois refinement. But our position and yours...what shall we say?...

From the ensuing conversation, it is now clear that both the international academic community most especially African intellectuals in Diaspora and the leaders of the super powers have all in one way or another conspired to keep the dictators in power across the continent for their own economic and socio-political gains at the expense of the suffering masses across the African continent.

Mulwa makes the same sad analysis on the roles of the international organizations in the continuous suffering of the African people in his play Redemption when he silently linked the activities of Bishop Muthemba and his political friend Chilulu to a Donor agency outside the shores of the African continent. Unknown to the Donor agency (the mother church) the money they sent was used by Muthemba and Chilulu as a means of generating more income and power for themselves at the expense of the poor and wretched souls of the people of the valley. It can therefore be safely said, that the international donor where hoodwinked into financing a criminal scheme against the majority of the innocent landowners in the valley. We can therefore say that metaphorically, the international organization means all foreign donor agencies who usually send money to their African counterparts money under the supervision of the governments for development projects that are never carried out, rather the government and their political allies share the money among themselves while the primary beneficiaries suffer.

An example of this conspiracy can be found on page 51 of Redemption:

ELTON. Remember how I started? Plan A

CHILULU. ...how can I forget? You, a leading elder of the church holding the old pastor to ransom, telling him you had to be paid for advisory services rendered.

ELTON. The man flew into a rage! Called me names and grabbed me, well he bit the dust!

CHILULU. It was you that bit the dust!!

ELTON. We both rolled on it and after that, parted ways. I did my research; found there's no branch of Church of Christ Reborn anywhere in Africa. So I applied abroad to the Mother church, received an enthusiastic license and started Christ Reborn...but I needed money. And that's how you came in.

CHILULU. It was simple. Had the Mother Church publish our poverty and the malnutrition of the Children abroad with S.O.S blazing across the headlines!! Well the money came rolling in.

ELTON. Lots of it!

CHILULU. Rags today-

ELTON. Riches tomorrow! (they laugh, pause)

CHILULU. That money never got there! The poverty and malnutrition are still there, Archbishop.

ELTON. My friend Chilulu I'm surprised at you!! Rome was not built in a day! I have no intention of transforming my congregation of peasants into millionaires overnight! That way I will lose the congregation. At least not until plan B is completed.

CHILULU. Plan B?

From the conversation above, we could see a clear indictment of the political class and the religious leaders, in the race to get international grants or aids in the name of development interventions yet none of those monies are ever used for the development of the common people in the society. It shows the greed of the African religious and political leaders who act in line with their foreign donors and sometimes cohorts. The playwright (Mulwa) use the play as a way of highlighting the sufferings of the people across the continent, how development funds are been diverted to individual pockets at the expense of the people. This aspect of social injustice and human pain and suffering are major thematic flags in African literature, they create the automatic lifeline upon which the imagination of the playwrights get the essential materials for the production of their art. Soyinka and Mulwa have both tapped into this reservoir of human sufferings and experiences to get continental and universal themes for their plays.

We can see that though the two writers lived and wrote their plays on different axis and corners of the continent (Africa); they still have a way of connecting through the social, political and cultural issues that they discussed through their dramas. This is because they are all custodians of the cultural and social lives of the people, meaning their custodianship is not only to their immediate social environment alone but also to the wider environment. As a result, a playwright can write his/her play using social, cultural and political resources from other countries as subject matter. Therefore, it is possible to relate the various themes to events across the African continent and also to events across the world.

Dramatic Representation of Political Issues in the Plays

One of the major issues in modern and postmodern drama is the representation of political issues by playwrights. The popular style of writing in terms of political drama most times is satire. Most plays written in this epoch are targeting specific political-social issues that need to be addressed by the political elites within the given social context. In the case of A Play of Giants and Redemption, both plays are a subtle political commentary on the African situation as the playwrights informed us in their prefaces to both plays. As social commentators, they used their plays to write the truth in a satirical manner, for both writers having written in different literary genres, drama remains their preferred mode of communication and this is because of the flexibility that the dramatic art form gives to them to give life to their imaginations for the benefit of changing their societies.

Soyinka and Mulwa have both provided a template for discourse on the issue of political responsibility and development both by the followers and the leaders in any given society. Using Africa as a focal point of origin, developed as a result of their knowledge of the political experiences and histories of countries on the continent, they separately choose to highlight the travails facing the continent in terms of poor political leadership using different styles and writing approaches in their plays. From Soyinka's classical ambiguity in terms of use of language which seems surprisingly simple in this text, to Mulwa's direct satirical approach, they have dissected the issues of political greed, to international conspiracy and human suffering. The major reason for writing is to create a high level of political and social consciousness among the people so that they can see the dialectics of political change and demand for improvements in

the way(s) they are being governed and also so that they can challenge the international community to stop playing politics with the fate of the African but rather stand up and be counted. We can therefore read the plays as political commentaries because of the political undertones that formed the foundations for the subject matters of the plays. From the monstrous assemble of four African dictators and their lapdogs in the Bugaran embassy overlooking the United Nations building in downtown New York in Soyinka's A play of Giants, to the cold yet wilful struggle for power between the Aged one and Archbishop Muthemba at the beginning of Mulwa's Redemption and the subsequent conflicts between the young Pastor Manela and Pastor Mutema and Archbishop Muthemba, it is clear that the stage for a high political drama is set and the playwrights both gave us a beautiful interpretation of the existing political climate across the continent in both plays. Both of them showed us, distinct political situations of leaders who feel they are untouchable and are therefore willing to hold on to power even when it is clear they have fallen out with the people. A case in point, is the struggle by the four dictators in Soyinka's A Play of Giants to hold on to power and be remembered by all means and so the idea of the Statue to be placed at the United Nations Gallery for public display.

We see flashes of the political commentary and scathing satire throughout both plays, an example is the sudden political outburst of Professor Batey at the Bugaran embassy when he joined issues with the coup plotters:

BATEY. ...you slave, you sacrifice. You devote your entire existence, day after day, hour after hour, with no rest, no let up, no distraction. From a hundred tribes,

tongues, cultures, religions, animosities and suspicions, you weld a single, united people. Deprived, reviled, sabotaged and subverted by outside forces, from whose hands you have wrested your people, put an end to their centuries of domination sometimes through force of arms...the invader is driven out, but is the battle over? No. you discover that the greed is still in their eye and they bring new, camouflaged weaponry to bear wresting from your hands the fruits of your people's labour. Eternally vigilant, sifting through the deceptions of diplomacy and traps of preferred friendship, you ensure that the wolf of yesterday does not parade before you as the sheep today. And sometimes even the people you serve must betray you; that is the unkindest cut of all...

The long winding speech by the professor is a political statement on the irony of political struggle and betrayal that has become a constant feature in the political circles across the African continent. He painted the sordid imagery of the various stages of political and socio-economic struggles of the African, the diplomatic conspiracies that have become a permanent characteristic of most African governments.

In Redemption, we equally find dramatic imageries of the political commentary that runs unhindered throughout the play. Mulwa discusses the political scenario from the church to the family and the larger society using the simple imagery of the conflicts within the church as the template for the discussion. Mulwa have craftily created imageries of political conflicts and lobbying between individuals in the work place as can be seen between The Aged one and his ambitious assistant Bishop

Martin, we also witnessed the same politics between Pastor Mutema and Archbishop Muthemba. The playwright constructs different conflicting scenarios that are laden with heavy political innuendoes for the readers to grapple with. A deep look at the conflicts within the play-text reveals a sarcastic laugh at the political situation in Kenya during the Moi era and also the laughable political and military dictatorships that had taken hold of the African continent.

The Plays as Statements in Social Revolt

The different movements and theories in modern theatre constitute a revolt. Revolt, although looking to overthrow a particular political or cultural movement, does not intend to disrupt the notion of society as the primary organization of human existence. Some excellent work has been done exploring the relationship between revolt and modern drama. Robert Brustein's classic The theatre of revolt: An approach to modern drama (1964) explores three different types of Modern Theatrical Revolt; Messianic revolt occurs when the dramatist rebels against God and tries to take His place—the priest examines his image in the mirror. Social revolt occurs when the dramatist rebels against the conventions, morals, and values of the social organism—the priest turns the mirror on the audience.

Existential revolt occurs when the dramatist rebels against the conditions of his existence—the priest turns the mirror on the void. Brustein (1964) points out that each of these revolts takes place within the play's content, not necessarily in the relationship between the playwright and his text. A play's protagonist enters into a battle with conventional notions of religion, culture, or self. Brustein finds examples of his theory by tweaking traditional

interpretations of modern classics and does not regard a play's experimental style as a prerequisite for a certain type of revolt. It is therefore along this line of thought, that the two plays in this chapter would be discussed as revolt plays, because of the styles that the playwrights used and also because of the activities of some of the characters in the plays. In terms of the structural styles of writing, the two playwrights used two different approaches in structural construction for the plays. Whereas Soyinka divided the play into three parts instead of Acts and Scenes as advised by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, Mulwa used movements for his own play. This goes to show that the negation of the conventional acts and scenes by both playwrights is actually a deliberate act. Considering the epoch when both plays were written, the strand of structural revolt in the dramaturgy can be explained.

Both plays were written in periods when both countries were under repressive regimes. In Nigeria, General Mohammed Buhari had just toppled the democratically elected government of Shehu Shagari hence political structures within the country were all suspended. In the case of Kenya, the country was still under the repressive rule of the Daniel Arap Moi's government and so most playwrights and writers generally had to find softer methods of advocating for a better society. From the two plays, one could see the subtle objection to the problems within the two societies, the advocacy for change and pure satire that is evident in both plays is a testament to the revolting nature of the playwrights who are both on a quest for change within their societies.

One of the major features of a social revolt is the ability of the writer to write in a manner that would not belittle the efforts of the present regime. Brecht (1935) opines that in such situations

the writer should adopt the following method to get his message across to the target audience:

...Nowadays, anyone who wishes to combat lies and ignorance and to write the truth must overcome at least five difficulties. He must have the courage to write the truth when truth is everywhere opposed; the keenness to recognize it, although it is everywhere concealed; the skill to manipulate it as a weapon; the judgment to select those in whose hands it will be effective; and the cunning to spread the truth among such persons. These are formidable problems for writers living under Fascism, but they exist also for those writers who have fled or been exiled; they exist even for writers working in countries where civil liberty prevails... (p.1)

It is therefore clear from the above advice by Bertolt Brecht that for the writer to write the truth in a repressive environment or state, he/ she needs to develop the means of concealing it from the claws of the agents of the oppressive regime. For Soyinka and Mulwa as writers in a postcolonial era in Africa, they had to find a means of writing about their frustrations with the leadership and the followers in their respective societies. The creation of imagery and metaphoric representation of the events in the plays presented them with the best means of “concealing” and passing their coded messages across to their target audience.

Both playwrights (Soyinka and Mulwa) employed the use of satire as a style of writing; this helped them in concealing their social and political messages in the open (Eagleton, 2012). Their stylistic choices aided the development of the story lines and the deployment of the messages. Like most playwrights and literary writers, the two playwrights, used drama a literary device as the

platform upon which to demand for social and political change in their societies.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the playwrights though from different societies have written about the peculiar problems that have remained inimical to social and political growth on the African continent. They have projected the social and political issues of leadership, international interference and corruption among the various African leaders. They have alluded to the connivance of the African leaders and their western collaborators. Other playwrights also exploited the ideas of political and social realities on the African continent.

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Negative Portrayal of Female Bodies in Contemporary Nigerian Musical Videos: A Dialogue

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Abstract

The video arts have over the years performed a pivotal function of reflecting and prescribing remedies to societal issues. This position has over time been the elemental doctrine of the industry. In Nigeria today, the use of naked female bodies in musical videos by Nigerian singers poses a challenge as it projects a negative influence on the teeming young population that watch the debased presentation of female folk. But the question is, to what extent do these videos influence the society? The idea is that video art should not only entertain and create pleasure but should serve as a tool to instruct and positively influence its audience. Therefore, it has become a pertinent responsibility of the professionals and performer alike to work collaboratively in tackling the stance of the functional relevance of the video arts. The paper concludes that contemporary Nigeria video makers should rather imbibe a deliberate positive attitude towards content creation with a view to redirecting the mindset of the society, by a way of debunking the notion that female bodies are a coherent means of garnering attention to their music creations.

Key Words: Negative Portrayal, Female Bodies, Musical Videos

Introduction

The Nigerian music industry is very popular as it has become a leading entertainment source among young and aged people. The

musical pieces are categorized into different genres among which includes; Hip-hop, Afrobeats, Reggae, R&B, Blues, High-life among others.

Video has become one of the most powerful means of enhancing the art of music in Nigeria. As an art form, it is considered the “mirror” of the society because of the significant role it plays in strengthening the society. Film, which musical videos are a part of, generally informs, educates and entertains. Other roles include advertising and strengthening the ties of the society. It is a medium of communication and information dissemination. It keeps the people informed about the happenings around them and the world allover. Film has strong socio-cultural impacts upon the society, due to its inherent ability to reach larger number of the public. No doubt, it is widely used as a tool for awareness creation.

However, the image of women in contemporary musical videos is already taking a different dimension, rather than positive portrayal, women are gradually turning in to scenic elements as musical video makers, instead of employing elements such as; lighting, proper scenic design, sound among others to beautify their videos, have resolved to the use of the female bodies mages, highly represented in an un-dignifying manner to cover up for their lapses in role play and other scenic aesthetics. These Nigerian musical videos portray the feminine characters as objects of sexual gratification, vulnerable and inferior, mere work of art, good for visual satisfaction. Though Particular reference will be paid to “Asake 2:30” and DJ Spinal Dis Love featuring Wizkid and Tiwa Savage for the purpose of this study. The above artist are all Nigeria artist. Asake is a Nigerian Afrobeat Singer and songs writer, DJ Spinal is a Nigerian disc Jockey, record producer, song

writer, label executive and media personality. Wizkid is a Nigerian singer and song writer. He is also a prominent figure in the modern day Afrobeat music scene. While Tiwa Savage is also a Nigerian Singer, Songwriter and actress. She is also refers to as the Queen of Afrobeat.

Female gender have been negatively portrayed to serve the purpose of attraction in the aforementioned Nigeria musical videos. They are seen mainly as objects of beautification, The female character in the music videos obviously presents the gender as an object of mere aesthetics and complete definition of nudity. These female characters are seen in skimpy cloths accompanied by exaggerated erotic dances. To further buttress this show of shame, some female characters are even represented in their birthday coats (naked) all for the purpose of attraction. In a quest to justify this immoral portrayal of the female characters in Nigerian musical videos, a name is given to them “vixen” fondly called video Vixen” they have reconstructed their thinking to the fact that only erotic looks can gain prominence in the industry. These descriptions given to the female gender in these music videos are disturbing and the influence is always on the negative as the female children are forced to grow in line with what they see while the male children perceive what they have seen as the principal formation for attending to the opposite sex. No wonder, Mbachaga D. Jonathan and Ukuma T. Shadrach explains that “the idea is that our art must not only entertain but also establish a reputation that precludes its dismissal as an unserious profession. This image question, no matter how successfully eloquent it has been argued has continued to rear its ugly head at times’ (81). Hence, the entire industry’s approach toward female representation on stage needs repositioning.

This study therefore, aims at adding to the body of publications geared towards correcting the ills against the feminine gender. This is against the backdrop of women imaging; as some of these Videos have given a kind of coloration to women that is fast becoming a recent normal. This careless portrayal is blamed on the female gender as they indulge in un-dignifying activities such as half naked dress or as far as appearance without clothes on (complete Nudity) which culminate in to what Okpokwasili Agatha refers to as, female gender treachery. In her words

with the rate women have thrown caution to the wind in their ways of dressing. Nudity among women has become the order of the day. The line between decency and nudity is becoming fuzzy. Our women especially our young girls prefer going almost naked on the street than dressing decently. They even coined an adage for it in Nigerian parlance “using what you have, to get what you want” (152).

This mindset depicts how far women can go to satisfy their inclination. Their reason for doing this according to her, may not be farfetched from what a French female philosopher Simone De Beauvoir, said in her book “the second sex” that men see women as a “sex being”. A being whose singular objective is to satisfy the whims and caprices of her master, man. She further states that.

“Our clothing reveals our essence to the world. It tells the world our stories, our inner thoughts, our aspirations, who we are then and who we want to be. Our dressing reveals the sum total of our personality. In dressing, we equally exercise our freewill and show the world how to address us. One of the easiest ways to identify yourself with a group that you wish to belong to is to dress like them (153).

With the rapid development Nigeria as a country is facing especially in the areas of technology, craft and fashion which the film industry is highly inclusive. Most of what we are witnessing today is the products of Westernization brought by globalization which obviously, is the driving force. Video makers no longer see it fashionable to continue the traditional way as the attention of the audience is drifted away from the conventional aesthetic appeals obtainable in the traditional theatrical elements. W.B Worthen in his essay Brecht attacks the bourgeois notion that the theatre can be divided into two kinds of art, as though drama were either instructive or entertaining. Worthen stressed that; "Brecht dialecticizes these categories, showing that they define one another and therefore, exist within one another, that realistic plays (performance) after all not only entertain their audiences, but also offer an image of the world, a kind of instruction"(919)

Dress for example, which is a major element known as costume in the industry, used to tell; local, period, mood, time of the day among others has gradually deviated from these roles. Dressing in the Nigeria or the African way is no longer fashionable among the female characters portrayed on our musical screen today. Hence the video makers are in competition with the western world at the detriment of our moral values. The situation Okpokwasili, Agatha observed that, it has sparked mixed reactions in the society. In her submission; "Some see it as prostitution but the perpetrators see it as "trend" a fashion trend that promote moral degradation. It is even more worrisome when women expose parts of their bodies which ordinarily should be covered (164). This worrisome development is a major characteristic of the contemporary Nigeria musical video.

Conceptual Clarifications

To what extent do our videos influence the society? The idea is that our videos must not only entertain but also establish a reputation that precludes its dismissal as an unserious profession as rightly pointed out by Mbachaga (81). The following questions are pertinent: What is Video? What is it for? How does it work? What can it teach us? What effect does it have on human behavior? These fundamental questions are considered with a view to form the basic concept of video as espoused in this paper. Video is an electronic medium for the recording, coping, playback, broadcasting and display of moving visual. It is a work of visual art that stimulates experiences and otherwise communicates ideas, stories, perceptions, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere through the use of moving images. According to Abone, Clementina (23) visual elements of cinema need no translation. They give the motion picture a universal power of communication. Films are also artifacts created by specific cultures which reflect those cultures and in turn, affect them. The Federal Republic of Nigeria National Film Policy (2000) posits that the film is a unique means of communication. Its visual bias gives it the most universal appeal and impact" (page 1, section 1.1). Abone (23) extols film the silver screen, as one of the most important weapons by which the character of a nation, its image, identity, its culture, its peculiar sounds, politics, economy, its aspirations and achievements are impressed on the popular mind throughout the world. The film's strange and wonderful quality lies in the ability of the film makers to create, innovate and exhibit something that exceeds, beats expectation and imagination. Film are produced by recording actual techniques and other special effects. They are series of

individual frames but shown in rapid succession the illusion of motion is given to the viewer.

Negative Portrayal of Female Bodies in Nigerian Musical Videos

The idea of musical videos coming in to the Nigerian music industry was warmly received and was thought to be a game changer in the sense that, high expectations were placed on the industry in terms of correcting the misrepresentation given to the image of the black man by the foreign entertainers. In view of this, Emelobe Emeka Dibia observes that, it is disappointing to note that “a great deal of home videos produced in Nigeria portray women as prostitutes, objects of ridicule and so on” (211). There is not gain saying the fact that, the Nigeria Musical industry is also trading the same path. Rinre Aminu observes that; “To promote their songs, artist and video producers will go the extra mile for them to hit their goals, sometimes forgetting the goals of a good music video which is to be able to put together performance and delivery which exhibit beauty and a unique concept” (14) . The writer further explains that most popular appearances on music videos today are “women”, having a lot of them in a video means good marketing and promotion. Ayakoroma mentioned this when he said: “The emergent privately driven video film industry arrived the scene with unfortunate thing; the industry became a jungle where anything could happen as far as those who funded the productions went smiling to the banks” (6). These women characters in most of the musical videos exhibit a lot of undignifying characteristic, rather than portraying the women in their strengths, potential abilities and their artistic capabilities. Rinre states that; Nigerian music industry could be argued to rely

on representation of women to satisfy the sensual view of the audience in order to make more profit.

The select videos for this study represent most of the general tendencies that are typical of the representation of women in Nigeria Musical videos. Hence Ayakoroma Barclays states that,

it is very imperative for filmmakers to understand that they bear the responsibility of being their countries image makers, nationally and internationally. He adds that “Rather than portraying women as perpetually shallow minded, nymphomaniac, illiterates and incapable of rational judgment and tied to the man’s apron strings (2)

Judging from the above therefore, proactive action should be taken and well defined measures put in place to rectify this stereotypical state of affairs of women especially to show a proper image of the country, nationally and internationally.

On the contrary, one thing so certain that distinguishes and explains the difference in appearance and presentation of women in music videos of the 70s, 80s and even the 90s, for example, is that video makers depended on originality. Originality here is hinged on the basic performance elements such as special effects, scenic design/location, colour, costume and makeup among others. Gordon Graham buttressed on this when he mentioned G.W.F Hegel who is most closely identified with a cognitive theory of art. In his remarks, Hegel tried to see the philosophical importance of distinguishing between the fine arts, given different account of their nature and value thus: “The five arts he distinguished are music, painting, sculpture, poetry and architecture”, he further opined that art in the modern period is effectively dead” (52). On this view, Gordon (3) in his book titled

Philosophy of the Arts; an Introduction to aesthetics. Answers very fundamental questions; What is Arts? And what makes the art valuable? In answering these questions, quoting Hume, he argues that the important thing about art is “its agreeableness”, according to him, the pleasure we derive from it is a matter of our sentiments, not its intrinsic nature. Whereas, the contemporary video makers adopts what is been projected by the western world. Female artist of the 70s, 80s and the 90s made use of their cultural and traditional practices in the music, they blend there cultures into their music. But on the other hand, the present generation is trying to copy how women are presented in the western world, especially African-American women. According to Ikamara Larasi (106) Western world music industry presents women especially African-American women as ‘Gold Diggers’ and sex offenders. The Nigerian music industry having copied must of these stereotypical behaviour from the Western world, presents women in ways that devalues the reality of things.

A Critique of Asake’s 2:30 and DJ Spinal’s Dis Love

As earlier stated, film is a unique means of communication, it is one of the most important weapons by which the character of a nation, its image and identity is showcased to the world, The film's strange and wonderful quality lies in the ability of the film makers to create, innovate and exhibit something that beats expectation and imagination rather than stereotypical portrayals.

The choice of these two videos is just a standpoint to discuss the immoral tendencies in the contemporary Nigeria music industry, and how it has become a cover-up for film makers.

Ahmed Ololade Asake known professionally as Asake is one of the fast rising Nigeria super star who rose to prominence in 2020.

According to tonpeak.com, 2:30 was a follow-up to his previously heard single “Yoga”. The song was written by Asake and produced by Blaisebeat and magic stick. The song is a boastful portrayal of Asake’s personality bringing to clear terms what he is capable of, ranging from his wealth, strength and connection. It was released early 2023.

Taking a critical observation of the contemporary Nigeria Music Videos, there is a complete deviation from the real essence of music video as must often, the lyrics of the songs are in opposition to the videos which originally are supposed to serve as complement. Just as in the lyrics of the song 2:30;

Tranquility tranquility
I no get time to de form activity
Ko le kalas, I de find stability
Like Abacha money long infinity
What’s the chances
What’s the probality
To see a better version of me with agility
No you can’t fake reality.

And in another verse you hear something like;

“You can call me Mr. money”





Screenshots from Asake's 2:30 video

All the above are lyrics from the song 2:30. However, taking a closer observation of the music video, there is a complete

disconnect on what the song is saying and the projection of female characters in the song. While Asake in his lyrics counts his achievements, connections and ability to command respect and total submission. The female characters are rather portrayed as mere sex object. This is evidenced in the erotic dances, sensual dress display, to mention but a few. Sexism has influence the cultures of today's Nigerian youths and it has given a new meaning to the images of women in music and films. On the other hand, Oluseye Desmond Sodamola, professionally known as Spinall. (Dj Spinall) is a Nigerian disc Jockey. Who first gained prominence in 2004, while working as a Radio DJ at Ray-power 100.5 FM. His song Dis Love featuring Wizkid and Tiwa Savage, was released July 2019. The song talks about love as well as the ability to spend money for it.

Judging from the lyrics of the song, it shows clearly that the feminine gender is reduced to the point that money can get her do anything. This misrepresentation is evidenced in the video in different forms. Also the fact that the female characters are paid to accept such roles and present themselves naked for the purpose of 'beautification and attraction' in the videos, is a loud voice in consonance with the lyrics of the song.

In the song, one will find lyrics like:

Baby girl I love you
Sit down on it.
Baby girl come whine up on it.
I know you love this beat,
Sweet melanin
Oh, you could be my sweet seniorita

This verse basically has reduced the female gender to nothing but a mere sex toy, who is remote controlled by money. Once money

is involved she is ready to satisfy man's sexual whims. And to further portray the woman as an inferior being and lacking in wisdom, rendition of empty and fake adjectival nomenclatures, as obtainable in the lyrics above "Sweet Melanin" my Sweet Senorita to make the female being feel important and act in consonance. In another verse.

American girl come whine up for me
My Jamaican girl come whine up for me
Ojota girls come whine up for me
My Caribbean girls come burst up for me.





The lyrics above, demonstrates clearly that, these girls are from every Corner at the beck and call of the man who has capacity. This no doubt shows that, they are called only when they are needed.

Using these two music videos as a hinging point, the female characters in the contemporary musical videos in their erotic

dances and sensual dresses or completely nudity will proudly perform to the lyrics that have portrayed them as good for nothing but sex tools.

Umoh also called “prince of Love in an interview with Nigerian Tribune, once said that most lyrics in contemporary music were not conveying any positive message but were selling because of their beats or the artists. In this light the downpour of nude female artists in recent videos could be attributed to attention seeking. In the same vein, Rev. Fr. Pius in the Nigerian Tribune had said that such a trend had not added any value to the nation and female gender as well. But that such trend is a sign of people who are not proud of their culture, and still mentally colonized by believing that everything that is Western in nature is good. It is therefore, disheartening to accept the reality in the contemporary Nigerian music industry, where the feminine gender is not seen from the creative point of view but rather, an object used by the male gender to make their ends meet.

Conclusion

Video as an art form should depict the society in reality and in doing this attract people to move towards the right ideas as well as pushing for a change in the society. Video here is used to compliment music which is a vital tool to confront social ills highlighting the prevailing problems that are affecting Nigeria as a Nation, as well, entertain the populace, however, the recent portrayal of these women characters in most of the musical videos exhibit a lot of un-dignifying characteristic, rather than portraying the women in their strengths, potential abilities and their artistic capabilities. The Nigerian music industry could be argued to rely on representation of women to satisfy the sensual view of the

audience in order to make more profit. If our music videos are allowed to become suicidal instruments in the minds of the audience, then it is rather unfortunate.

Recommendations

Film, known to be a vehicle that project and promotes the societal ideology and identity, if not properly checked can drive home a lot of negative influence. To this end therefore, the National Film and Video Censors Board, set up by Act No. 85 of 1993 should step up in its responsibility as enshrined in the law to classify and ban all videos depending on vulgarized female bodies to attract attention of the audience.

Worthy of mention is the film makers themselves, rather than blindly following the so called 'trends' in the western world's music, attention should be withdrawn to the basic tenets of video making in Nigeria as observed in the paper.

It is also not out of place for video makers and the academia to embark on sensitization campaign, to first of all create awareness on the idea of vulgarizing or objectification of female bodies in our contemporary music videos. Hence use different media in recasting the minds of artists and actresses and the general public toward accepting products with genuine artistic values.

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Realism in Poetry: A Study of Selected Poems in Moses Tsenongu's *sun the Male Born Moon the Female*.

Sombo, Kator Benjamin

Abstract

This Paper examines realism in poetry and repudiates the notion that realism is not applicable in poetry but only in drama and prose. Content analysis is used in exploring the poems and analyzing their contextual meaning. Evaluating the poems from the theoretical perspective of realism, the paper submits that Tsenongu's poems are expressive of realism. It asserts that these poems exhibit realism of subject matter and technique. The poems are therefore ultimately works of realism and need to be understood in this light. In the final analysis, the paper concludes that: realism of subject matter and technique are clearly identified in the poetry of Tsenongu as his poems discuss contemporary social issues like; polygamy, greed, gossip, lack of love, ancestral support, poverty, and jealousy.

Keywords: realism, contemporary society, Nigerian poetry, technique, and subject matter.

Introduction

Realism ordinarily refers to the tendency of art to mirror or get close to reality. It is a term used in philosophy, art and literature. According to the New Age Encyclopedia (15), this concept originated in France in 1850 as a reaction against romanticism and idealism that were common during the century. These theories, however, soon ran out of general acceptance because they were considered to be too subjective. Realism found its way into literature shortly after the French revolution and it is

used in two senses. It refers to a conscious literary/aesthetic movement and a pattern of writing that depicts "real life situation" with the primary goal of "rendering" the objective reality of human life (317). This concept is also viewed by the online encyclopedia as verisimilitude of narrative (whether or not a story is believable) or verisimilitude of characterization (whether or not the characters are believable).

The major focus of these views is the writer's attempt to present the reality of everyday life in a way that readers can feel or "see" with their minds' eyes the picture of what the writer is presenting and believe same in relation to actual experience.

Realism succeeded romanticism and the major traditions of romanticism included character sketches, slave narrative, short stories and poetry. Realism, when referring to the official aesthetic movement however included very little poetry as its major literary forms, consisted of novels and short stories. When applied as a broader term however, realism can include poetry from any era that follows the philosophical tenets of the realist movement.

Early exponents of realism, which is generally said to have reach its zenith during the 18th and 19th centuries include George Eliot, William Dean Howells, Hanore de Balzac, Stephen Crane, Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Daniel Defoe, Emile Zola, Henrik Ibsen, Mark Twain. These writers were novelists who believed that literature has to be understood not just by the educated class but also by the common people. They, therefore, championed the course of writing in a simple language that depicts everyday life (David 6). Characters also involved common populace as market men and women, fathers and mothers,

labourers and such lower classes of people as against the emphasis on royal personages or the nobility.

Thus, David also states that novels like Middlemarch by George Eliot, The Rise of Silas Lapham by Dean Howells, were said to have depicted enough details about common place occurrences {7}. The emphasis on believability and commonality of experience was basically informed by the prevailing philosophy of the time. The century is said to have shifted focus from collective experience to the individual as autonomous being. As such, attention was on characterization, presenting characters as close to nature as possible in motive, temperament, needs, feelings and cultural behaviour. Issues such as politics, occupational conflicts, and family affairs were common themes.

Realism has been classified into different types. Asoo, following George Becker, identifies the following: "realism of subject matter, realism of technique, realism of philosophy, Surrealism, magic realism, critical realism and social realism and Neo-realism" (25). Realism of subject matter, the first in the categorization, is explained to refer to "what" can be regarded as "literarily realistic". It concerns the issues raised that can be considered as real. Quoting Becker, Asoo gives the major distinguishing features of this type of realism. The first is visibility. This means that it emphasises contemporary issues that can be seen in our day to day dealing of life. Above all, it deals with themes that are "popular, social and modern" (26). This has to do with issues that are not imaginative but common and attestable to the generation in question.

Another type of realism explained here is realism of technique. This is said to focus on the "how" or the "form". This concerns the style of writing that distinguishes realist writing from

other writings since realism is a reaction against other literary forms. The approach to writing here is the major concern. The basic departure from the older method is identified as technique of observation as against the former method of invention. By this technique, it is meant that a realist writer should detach himself from his work and stand as an observer. This enables the writer to be impartial which the prerequisite for objectivity is. All these qualities are essential in separating a realist work from others.

In this regard, Becker is said to have identified an important dimension to this style of writing which he calls the "cross sectional presentation" (Quoted in Asoo 29). This refers to different samples of similar events. Such a collation gives better understanding of the authenticity of the issue under consideration than a singular case. Asoo also quotes Guy Maupassaut as supporting this view in these words "to give an exact image of life, one must carefully avoid the use of exceptional events" (29). What this means is that the realist work emphasizes the ordinary. On the beginning and ending format of a realistic work, it is argued that it should begin at once and deviate from the practice of denouement by being "less emphatic" (30). The intent of the realist is to make the work believable rather than a commentary. It is worthy of note that by the end of the nineteenth century, realism in the pure sense seemed to have undergone changes to a new form called naturalism. In naturalism the focus is on natural factors in explaining characters' behaviour. In this wise, factors as heredity, history and environment become prominent.

Significantly, these two divisions of realism are in concert with Damian Grant's classification though using different names. According to Grant, two kinds of realism are conscientious and conscious realism. While the former concerns itself with the

subject matter or "what", the writer writes about, the latter is concerned with "how" the writer presents his vision or the style of writing (Qtd in Asoo 24). This is variously called realism of content and realism of presentation respectively. Socialist realism is another form of realism that receives attention in contemporary society. The features and reason for its popularity are already discussed in this work.

Moreover, magic realism is the kind of realism that takes as its subject matter the practice of extra-ordinary powers. In this mode of writing, magical elements are blended with the physical life. The result of this is always a harvest of mysterious events that cannot be explained using normal life parameters.

As a literary theory, realism has its distinguishing features. The first important quality of a realist work is objectivity. This means that a realist work should present issues fully and without prejudice. A realist writer normally does not allow sentiments to becloud his/her vision. S/he presents the work without taking sides and allows readers to pass their judgment on issues raised. According to Bucher and Manning, a good realist work must concern "...people, their problems and their challenges. The characters *should* be believable and their language and actions should be appropriate" (1). Appropriateness here indicates that the language should match the age, sex and social status of characters and the situation. The action should be moderate to befit the cause and situation. Thus, exaggerations are not entertained. As stated earlier though realism was more common in fiction, it was still visible in poetry. In an online article Caitlyn Lowe points out the features of realism in poetry while distinguishing them from romanticism thus:

Both realist and romantic poets concerned themselves with external aesthetic, but poems of the Realist tradition described the world as it actually is. For example, in 'Intimations and Immortality from Recollections of Childhood' William Wordsworth describes the scenery of his youth as looking like it were. 'Appareled in celestial light, the glory and the freshness of a dream'. This presents a standard dreamy romantic view. A traditionally realistic view appears in Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 130' when he explains very honestly 'My mistress eyes are nothing like the sun' (16).

The above argument shows that, right from time, poets were realists too and they used the genre to describe or reflect the world as it actually is. The quotation also makes a distinction between romantic poems and realist poems. While the former led to dwell on sensory experience of the natural world, the latter describes subjects from contemporary, everyday life perspective usually focusing more on the than on sensational events.

In general, realism in poetry rejects lofty ideals and prefers objective, true to statements. Lowe illustrates further that:

Wordsworth makes imaginative, spiritual statements in 'Intimations' such as 'the soul that rises with us,' our life's star, hath had elsewhere its setting/and cometh from afar'. 'Shakespeare's Sonnet 130' however explicitly rejects such imaginative illustrations in the lines 'I love to hear her speak, yet well I know that music hath a far more pleasing sound.' The speaker states that though he loves his mistress's voice, he acknowledges the truth

that her voice does not objectively compares to music (22).

It is clear from this illustration that realism is not only sustained in fiction but also in poetry where it still retains its basic concern with both ugly as everyday events. In this paper, however, the researcher concentrates on realism of subject matter and technique as they apply in Tsenongu's work. This implies that emphasis is on forms and features of realism that are not peculiar to the novel and as they are presented in Tsenongu's selected poetry.

In the post-independence period, Nigerian literary artists have been credited for their commitment to addressing issues that affect their people. This form of literary scholarship, often referred to as art as propaganda as against art for art's sake, has produced volumes of literary works-including poetry-that, revolve round peculiar challenges of the people in their day to day activities. The different phases in the development of Nigerian written poetry show how poetry always take up social issues of the time it is written. From the works of Nigerian pioneer poets like Dennis Osadebay, Emitan Brown, Olumbe Bassir among others, the poetry has been sensitive to prevailing social circumstances. In this work however, I have excluded these poets and started with the group after them to bring my purpose into clearer context.

Thus following Joe Ushie's survey, three generations of Nigerian poets can be identified. The first generation belongs to the pre-independence days and post-independence era. This generation is said to be part of the struggle for independence. Femi Osofisan observes that they "participated side by side with the politicians (Qtd in Ushie 1). Their poetry shows a link with their

cultural tradition. Though in terms of form, it did not show much difference from the European style to which it was heir. The major voices of this period were Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo, Gabriel Okara and J.P. Clark Bekederemo.

The second generation poets are the pre-civil war and post-civil war poets. Their poetry demonstrated unreserved fury on the state of their society. The handling of socio-political issues that later led to the civil war and the effects of the war all filled the poetry. Nepotism, tribal and religious sentiments, segregation and marginalization became issues of public concern. While the poetry demonstrated revolutionary tone, it showed a clear leaning on the oral tradition. It explored the rich cultural characteristics of Nigeria's divergent multi-ethnic groups conveying the social, economic and political intrigues of the country. Issues such as bad leadership, military high handedness, moral decadence and economic stagnation which culminated in civil war were clearly illustrated (Obafemi 5-7).

The recourse to oral performance sets the tone for the poetry which later generations followed. The second generation is therefore not only a link between the first and third generation but also defines the style that the poetry was later identified. This quest for identity was partly informed by the revolutionary philosophies of Frantz Fanon, Fidel Castro and others. Members of this group include Niyi Osundare, Odia Ofeimun, Tanure Ojaide, Onuora Ossie Enekwe, Femi Oyebode, Harry Garuba, Catherine Acholonu, Femi Fatoba, Funso Aiyejina and Femi Osofisan.

The third emergent generation of Nigerian poets, as identified by Olu Obafemi "began to flourish in the late eighties and is justifiably impatient with the exponential rate at which chaos and incoherence manifest in poverty, injustice and squalor,

have overtaken the country" (12). Poetry then reflected the ethos of pervasive corruption, desire for change in leadership, economic pattern, life style and attitudes. The poetry took the form of social reform crusade, while demonstrating in convincing details, its sensitivity to infringement on the natural environment. Members of this group include Tanure Ojaide, Femi Oyebode, Olu Oguibe, Afan Akeh, Ogaga Ifowodo. Remi Raji, Joe Ushie, Isiaba Irobi, Onodkome Okome, Uche Nduka, Chiedu Fzanah, Chin Ce, Ushman Shehu, Kemi Atanda-Ilori, Idzia Ahmad, Sesan Ajayi, Sola Osofisan, Nnimmo Bassey Toyin Adewale- Nduka, Obu Udeozo, Eddie Aderinokun, Kayode Aderinokun, and Maria Ajima among others. Bolajoko Aliyu identifies such environmental conscious poetry (ecopoetics) to include "Ojaide's *Delta Blues and Home Song* (1997), Ifowodo's *The Oil Lamp* (2004), *Ikiriko's Oily Tears of the Niger Delta* (1999), *Bassey's We Thought it was Oil but it Was Blood* and *Kpakiama's Salute to our Mangrove Giants and other Poems* (2008)" (327).

This progressive engagement of literature with prevailing social issues affirms Ruth Finnegan's assertion about African literature that: "it is obvious that any analysis of African literature must take account of the social and historical context. Clearly, a full examination of any one African literature would have to include a detailed discussion of the particularities of that single literature and historical period" (48). Going by this view, it is obvious that Nigerian literature generally and poetry in particular has largely been a response to social and political circumstances affecting the people. What is implied in this assumption is that the "particularities" of the literature have always been engendered by the reality of the different periods and stages of the country's development.

Accordingly, such a literature-one that engages with several socio-political issues-lends itself to varied theoretical interpretations and analyses. One of the theories that can be deployed in its appreciation is realism. Since the poems of Moses Tsenongu focus on the condition of the ordinary people with much bias on the Tiv cultural heritage and the changes that time has imposed on it, the poetry can be subjected to realist analysis.

Exploring realism of theme and technique in Moses Tsenongu's *Sun the Male Born Moon the Female*.

Published in 2006, this poetry anthology is deeply rooted in Tiv culture. This cultural resource, not only shades light on the worldview of the Tiv people, but also provides the ideological framework for understanding and appreciating the realism in poetry.

These poems are conceived from this traditional religious act underscoring a deep symbolic connection between the poet who seeks, like the spiritualist, to cleanse his community. The poet priest takes his immediate Mbakough society (which could be any other society) as the patient with varied ailments. Compared to the seriousness of the abnormality, he takes the patient to "The river of his ink for the redemptive rites" in which the poems serve as "his invocations and incantations at the ford of the river" (x). This points clearly the relationship between literature and the society. It is apparent that just as the poet is inspired by the society so the poet hopes his writing would sear the society into living right.

Thus the poet delves into the maladies of his society in the first poem of the collection titled "Memories of Stepmother" (poem I) which has as its realism of subject matter as: "the plight

of the orphan". As the title of the poem indicates, the poet persona recalls with disappointment the malicious behaviour of his stepmother who would rather have the dog, "Bingo to eat first/Before I had my share/If it was a lucky day (2). So having food to eat was not a normal occurrence for the orphan. This points clearly to the fact that he often starved. The poet wonders at such wickedness which would elevate a dog over a human being by posing the following rhetorical questions:

Did I ever for once win the contest?
Nor were you ever tired of reminding me,
Nor have I ever stopped wondering what really it was
That always made Bingo the dog so much better than
me (2).

Bingo is a popular name given to a dog in Nigeria especially among the urban lower class. These are people who ordinarily have little to eat. They often have little to offer the dog. Consequently, the dog eats leftover food and even faeces. It is, thus, instructive that even Bingo gets preferential treatment over and above the orphan in the poem.

This illustrates the real situation, as it is obtained, in many parts of our society. Many step-mothers enslave their step-children and may even say that they were not responsible for the death of the children's mothers. The realism of technique which is also known as realism of presentation is obviously presented as the poet reports issues through the persona as objective as possible. The poet shows this in "More Memories of Step-mother" (poem 19), where the same question is posed to the orphan: "you told me that it was not you who killed my mother in Mbajir" (50).

In these two poems, the divisiveness inherent in polygamy is dramatised. The root of this maltreatment of the innocent child

which nobody speaks against is polygamy. The orphan, though for no fault of his, is a victim of jealousies unleashed in a polygamous family. In a sane environment, people recognize that man is mortal and would empathise with one who is bereaved. Yet, it seems the contrary in the case of a polygamous situation where the new wife or even the co-wife takes delight in ill-treating an orphan.

In terms of technique, the dog, Bingo and the unnamed orphan are symbols of deprivation. Yet in comparison, the orphan occupies the lower position in the hierarchy. Again, "Bingo" "food" "pillow" can be regarded as images. They are the things considered more valuable by the owner than the orphan who is a fellow human being, despite his "cute" stance and efforts at pleasing. These three things are ironically images of the orphan's insecurity as any careless handling of them by him means disaster. Furthermore, the poem illustrates the irony of human experience. This is expressed in the behaviour of the stepmother who allows the dog to eat before a human being where the reverse ought to be the case. In fact, were the child's mother alive, bingo would not occupy such an elevated position.

In the next poem titled "Why is Boji Gum?" (poem2), the poet hints at the reality of music and dance, these two related phenomena being natural and universal. Beyond this, however, several techniques are deployed to link the poem to Tiv oral lore. Good music is normally accompanied by dance. In Tiv folk saying the snail (shell) referred to here as "ankyoor" is acclaimed as the best dancer. The shell of the snail is cut round at the opening and the remaining part is used as play object. The pointed end is held in-between the fingers and the thumb and skillfully thrown in the smooth dry soil where it spins round in a dancing fashion. In the

poem, the simile "see how they wriggle kpirididi like ankyoor snail'¹ (4) conveys the dexterity and mastery with which the dancers dance while the "kpirididi" is an onomatopoeia.

Earlier in the poem, Boji Gum is said to be in a hurry to reach the arena of the dance having been prompted by the lure of the "song" and abirim. The image of "...a lioness after the cry of her cub in the thicket" dramatizes Boji Gum's deep identification with the group and spiritual link at least musically. This is the reality of theme: "the communal musical spirit" Thus the sense of contentment which music brings is expressed in the Tiv chorus that is normally sung at the climax of an intensive dance session: "when we die some day, dance would die.!" (8). On the other hand, realism of technique is seen in how poet presents the music and dance in a dramatizing style (that is music and dance which is performance).

In yet another poem, the poet raises a fundamental question on human behaviour that places a moral burden on the society. Under the title "If I Die Today" (poem 3), the poet declares:

If I die today, I know who and who
Would mourn for pleasure and pretend that they grieve
For a while and proceed with life as though
It was I who knew not how to live

These enemies in disguise will pretend mourning "with a shake of the head" and shower encomiums on the deceased as though they really loved but lost him. He recalls "what praises they now heap on poor Tako's name" and regrets that the same pretense will be extended to him when he too dies.

Ordinarily, this is what obtains when people die. Some seem to mourn but in their minds, they are happy that their

enemies have fallen. Although the issues raised by Moses Tsenongu seem so mundane that not many Nigerian writers write on them, yet they are philosophical issues that have challenged man over the years. The poem is a denunciation of the Tiv adage that or doon lkyom (a dead being is good). This means that even if one was not good while alive, people accept that he is good when he dies since everything, good or bad ends with death. Beyond this adage, the poet expresses disdain for the fact that the traditional communal love often expressed in the saying that one should be one's brother's keeper has been lost. This is what the poet describes in his preface as "lethal abandonment of true love and maniacal cultivation of greed"... (xi). Instead, people are cruel to others when they are alive. Yet when they die, the same people begin to mourn as though they had cared for such people. It is evident that it is the absence of love that leads to man's inhumanity to man.

Interestingly, the poet deploys humour in treating this serious topic when he says that "But since I love to frustrate folks who are foolers I will neither die nor faint: that is their punishment". It is laughable that this punishment the persona wants to give to his ill-wishers is one he does not have control over. Yet, the pains he feels having known exactly the "souls" that would want to become heroes over the burial arrangement" makes him to say this. Though it is a wish he cannot accomplish, making the statement enables him to express his pent up anger. Finally the poet ties the poem to its cultural setting. As noted by Nyitse and Iorhii, "the poet makes use of the speech pattern of the Tiv which he translates literally by saying "as though we did not wish them death when they prospered"...instead of the normal English rendering of "as though we did not wish them dead" (200).

Hence the verbal features of Tiv give the poem a realistic background.

It is worthy of note that realism of theme in the above poem is: "lack of love" which focuses on issues whether good or bad. It is therefore, instructive that the poet condemns the pretense of human beings even in trying times as death of seeming neighbours.

In the poem "Even Awua Anyila Agbadu" (poem4), the persona expresses disdain on the subject of gossip. It is unfortunate that some people have made gossip and rumour mongering their stock in trade without caring for any detail or true version of the stories they carry about. In this poem, the persona sheds off every iota of civility conveyed in euphemisms in his language and comes out in what many can refer to as vulgar language. Words such as "shit" "anus" "egg-meal farts" are illustrative of this anger-laden language. This style, however, enhances our understanding of the deep pains one feels when falsehood is being spread about one even by those that supposedly pose as friends.

The tongues that lick shit

From anus to anus and toilet to toilet
Seeking to rubbish Tsenongu
Bothered me close to insomnia
The smelly tongues fresh from the thousandth tumbler of
beer,
That lap about with drunken glee
From rottenness to rottenness
Hopeful on diffusing my dynamite
Kindled heartburns in my breast for a breath. (10)

One does not need to read in between the lines to defect the poet's bitterness with the repetition of "the tongues"¹ "The smelly tongues" "The Forked tongues", it also reveals his mood of anger, disgust and condemnatory mood all of which reflect impatience with such persons.

The persona soon realizes the obvious truth thus: "Till I remembered Golozo's colossal quotes Even Awua Anyila Agbadu is subject to gossip". This shows the truth about the society where idleness is not regarded as a serious aberration. In fact, one can decide to do what one wants but one cannot choose what would be said against one by others who may not be better or behave differently in a given situation as the person being criticized.

Furthermore, the use of actual names gives the issues discussed a biographical slant. The reference to Golozo's oral poetry reinforces the realist leaning of the poem. Tarker Golozo is one of the greatest Tiv oral poets renowned for singing about social events in Tiv land. He lived between 1928 and 2002. It is one of his wise admonitions in his songs that makes a consoling impression on the persona when he remembers it that "Even Awua Anyila is subject to gossip." This means that no one, no matter how highly or lowly placed is immuned to gossip. The realism theme in the poem is: "Gossip and Rumour mongering" and the realism of technique is how the poet uses the persona (Tarker Golozo) to reinforces the reality of technique in the poem.

Similar in content to the above poem is the one entitled "Those Who Do Not Wish Me Well" (poem 6). Here, the persona laments the spate of blackmail in our society. Many people instead of demonstrating their goodness through worthy actions, turn to blackmailing others. These ill-wishers "overload their enormous mouths" with heavily condimented tales" about others.

This metaphor "condimented tales" refers to untrue stories which people fabricate and add all manner of lies just as condiments are added to a soup to make it delicious. So is falsehood dressed up to make it to have a taste of truth. Tsenongu became an object that such blackmail has reached a high peak (azenger). However, as the persona ignores the detractors and rums to go in his determination to reach his destination, he hears a "booming bang" marking the fall of these detractors.

The onomatopoeia used above is significant to proof the realism of presentation and contribute to the musical quality of the poem, it also signifies that tables are turned against evil doers. This leads to the theme of retribution. It is a natural law that every evil has its punishment that cannot be avoided. While the issue of retribution is common to all humanity, it is the manner in which it is tackled that shows realism. Tiv worldview holds retribution sacrosanct and is celebrated in terms that are embedded with the people's idioms. For example, there is a saying in Tiv that: " ka kwagh u ulee la u sunda ye" which means that it is what one sows that one reaps The results of such actions may be reaped by the person that committed the crime or the person's offspring.

Furthermore, the poet raises alarm in another poem "They Desire to Scrape my Head" (poem 5). Though the poem does not directly refer to a particular group of people, it can be inferred that it is mischief makers or probably enemies from his home front that are the subject. The poem itself deals with poor judgment and its attendant extreme punishment even when guilt has not been established. The persona voices out his plight thus:

Certain persons desire to scrape my head
With a piece of broken bottle
They desire to scrape my pate with a blunt blade;

But where my guilt has camped, they do not tell (12).

This paints a picture of injustice and persecution. As noted by Nyitse and Iorhii, "In days gone by in Tiv land, only prisoners had clean shaven heads and it is said that this was usually achieved by using crude shards of bottle" (200). The persona's complaint shows that he is being oppressed for an offence that has not been legally and morally established. Consequently, he keeps "...crossing rivers in [his] chest" on a daily basis. This metaphor shows how deeply he involves in thought. His comparison of "the world of yore" with the present is a blatant comparison of the present moral dearth with the past and his preference for the latter, hence his call to his mother's people. In Tiv land, a person is said to have two homes: his father's home and mother's home. Now that the persona senses danger in his part of the world which he describes as "agina smallpox" he calls out for his "great matri clansman" to rescue him.

The reference to "agina - smallpox" here is instructive. It was a disease that plagued Tiv land and probably Africa leading to many deaths as it had no cure. The incident is a known historical occurrence and due to lack of cure, there was resignation and hopelessness. The "agina" which is still discussed by elders who experienced it is adopted by the poet to symbolise coercion, persecution, and many other forms of injustice. The head referred to here is also metaphorical. This could be the persona's channels of progress which the enemies want to block. The persona wants Hambe Ingye to add his voice to that of "ancestral support". This is because in time past, the ancestors were believed to possess the powers to call even witches to order and where a misfortune was because of guilt, the land could be cleansed through the agency of the ancestors or elders. The persona's mood is,

therefore, clearly that of melancholy arising from resignation to his fate. The recognition of the role of ancestors here expresses the African worldview and shows the poet's adherence to reality. This adds a stamp of realism-on the poem. The use of language in line 5, "Every day I keep crossing rivers in my chest" shows transliteration from Tiv language meaning worrying or analysing a tedious situation which is bereft of solution. The reality of subject matter as seen in the poem above is : "the ancestral support" and the realism of technique is seen in the use of language in line 5 .

Again, the value of music and dance is reiterated in another poem, "The skills of the Koroso Dancer" (poem 9). Naturally, dancing is a significant mode of entertainment in traditional and modern societies. This is because of its role as medium of providing relief. Accordingly, the poet hopes to "... simplify life's seeming puzzles/With the rhetoric of rhythmic feet (20)." He believes that the act of dancing, apart from its physical and therefore/ mental value as exercise is both psychological and emotional balm. Hence:

I desire to lure a thoroughly insecure world
Away from the terror of assorted hungers
And cultivate laughter at last
On fronts, hitherto unfertile for its germination. (20)

It is needless emphasizing the fact that dancing warms up an ordinarily cold and unhappy atmosphere and kindles happiness and Joy.

Indeed, the universality of dance is apparent. The "Koroso" is said to be Hausa dance which is being appreciated by a Tiv poet. This is so easy because dance is part of every cultural group and has the same effect irrespective of language barrier. This is why the poet asks rhetorically in line 17 who can lend him the skills of

the Koroso dance to enable him respond to the combined rhythm of the "winding note of the tubular instrument" and hyena hide drum. The poem's diction is apt as it gives credence to its cultural setting that reveals not only dance but also agriculture as shown in the image of "cultivate".

The ability of the poet to bring such relief to a saddened and sterile world reminds readers of the priest. Thus, we can refer to him as the poet priest who takes his case to the door steps of elders and youths alike in the poem "Of Elders Nowadays," (poem 10). The poem is an admonition on the dignified conduct expected of elders as custodians of every society. Elders are expected to avoid gossip and unrestrained talks against people. Rather, they should settle misunderstandings arising from these. When eating with younger people, elders are expected to leave the last bit of food in the dish for the younger ones. With this traditional etiquette in mind, the poet advises everyone calling them "brothers and sisters" that "...when we begin to approach our walking sticks, we should avoid hunting about with our tongues" as much as we should "not still be scrambling with youths for the last mould of food in the bowl. Elders who involve in these acts cannot assert their authority and therefore, fail to uphold and inculcate moral standards in the youths.

This is another universal truth because any society with elders who have no sense of decorum is lost. This poem raises the issue of "greed". Though the realism of "greed" as subject matter is overblown, it is especially significant here because of its link to the elders. Thus "walking stick" in line 13 is a metonymy because walking stick is normally associated with elders. This device gives the ordinary word a fresh outlook.

It is expected that the elders would give assignment to the youth and sit back to supervise and advise them. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case in present day Nigeria as elders are seen struggling for positions with youths in politics and traditional settings. When they get the positions, they seem to be above any form of advice and law. This type of system is bred by greed, which undoubtedly, has eaten deep into the society. Such attitudes cannot enhance progress and need to be checked.

Conclusion

Realism as a style presents or insist on art to project a 'likeness to life', mirror or get close to reality. It is a conscious literary /aesthetic movement and pattern of writing that depicts real life situations with primary goal of rendering the objective reality of human life. Moses Tsenongu in his poetry clearly presents situations that bother on real life issues and shows the nature of relationships that we can readily connect to in our everyday situations. The realist writer normally does not allow sentiments to becloud his/her vision. Detailed descriptions and imagery in Tsenongu's poetry show clear environments and characters in his poetry are as real to life as we can relate to.

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