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ORALITURE AS LIBERATION LITERATURE: AN EXAMINATION OF TIV MUSIC AND FOLKLORE AS INSTRUMENTS OF LIBERATION AND COUNTER-TERRORISM IN COLONIAL AND POST COLONIAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Tiv of central Nigeria like other Ethnic Minorities in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa have severally been faced with challenges of dispossession and hegemony both through colonizing forces and/or terrorizing situations. Usually colonization and these terrorizing situations go hand in hand ; hence the two ideologies have worked together from precolonial times through to colonial and even today. The Tiv who are also well-known for possessing a rich culture of performance have often used their performance modes to resist these colonizing, homogenising and dispossessing forces. In colonial times, the hegemony of British presence in Africa was transmitted through the policy of indirect rule in Nigeria which was highly resented by the Tiv people. However, since they could not directly/successfully confront the colonial authority which was represented by the Hausa-Fulani Political Class, the Tiv resorted to using songs and folklore (Folk Performance) as a means of confronting this oppressive situation. This paper attempts an examination of how Oraliture (folk-media), became instruments of liberation 'struggle' against colonial rule among the Tiv of central Nigeria and how resistance through performance culture is still a viable instrument for counter-terrorism in Tiv-land.

Introduction

Given the political and colonial history of Africa, resistance has always been a given in Africa's quest for political emancipation and development. Decolonization began with the nationalist movements in various regions of Africa and is still on-going. Decolonization took the path, for some countries, of "peaceful" negotiations for independence from colonial masters while for other countries/regions, it took the form of armed struggle. Whether through "peaceful" negotiations or through armed struggle, resistance against colonialism came also through the mediation of popular art forms, not least among them oral forms of "literature," including folk music, folk dance and popular theatre.

Among the Tiv of Central Nigeria, a people without a central government at the time of the colonial encounter, and a people whose society came to be regarded by western historians as stateless, resistance from this community... happened mainly through oral literature and performance.

Although oral traditions may not be equated to history, they have the capacity to transform historical reality into imaginative artistic form, reconstructing the past in vivid colours (Akporobaro 62). Such social historical documentation occurs when oral literary forms, such as folktales, myths, legends and lyrical poetry are woven or created around the events of daily life. Wherever there is a substantial corpus of folk media, this corpus gives a unique insight into the social beliefs, major events, characters, taboos and values of the given ethnic group or society. The oral literature and folk media of the Tiv of Central Nigeria provide just such an insight.

The Tiv, like the Ibo of Eastern Nigeria, would prove difficult to govern centrally as the British would later discover (Achebe 40). To provide context, it needs to be noted that with the take-over of government by the British colonial authorities from 1906 on, when they began to conquer Nigeria, and set up their own administration, the absence of an organized and standing structure of governance in Tiv land as was practiced in the Muslim far North, became a problem for the colonial authorities (Abeghe 7).

By 1914 however, with the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates, the impact spread to Tiv whereby, most of Tiv land was brought under colonial administration. The administration followed the normal principle of Indirect Rule which tried to find prominent local persons who could be made local chiefs! as Abeghe notes:

The divide-and-rule policy of the colonial administration affected the Tiv tribe in dividing the tribe into two administrative blocks, one block being administered in Wukari, while the other part was under Abinsi; the dividing line between them being the River Katsina-Ala (12-13).

Martin Dent, who was a colonial administrative officer in the old Tiv Division, is quoted to have observed thus;

Because of the classless society, some modern thinkers in America as well as Africa have been fascinated by Tiv political culture as a classless society resisting the stratification and class formation of modern Capitalism (Abeghe 15).

This view of the Tiv as classless, and thus egalitarian is supported by various writers, including Tseyo (1975), Jibo (1993), and Makar (1994). However, not only did the Tiv resist the social stratification and class formation mentioned above, they also resisted any “enslaving” policies of the colonial government. According to Abeghe, “Tiv hate slavery and any attempt to enslave them is always resisted” (14). Moreover,

he adds that “the idea of a small number of men trusted with legal power of making decisions for the larger number, was still seen to be antithetical to the individual freedom of the classless Tiv people” (16). The Tiv were thus set on a collision path with the colonial powers. However, resistance to oppressive colonial policies did not come only in the form of open clashes with representatives of colonial authority but also through oraliture notably, folk performances in song, dance and popular theatre. To illustrate this, we must begin with the work of one Bam Gidi, who created songs of resistance against colonial rule and those who were considered its stooges-the Hausa-Fulani.

He was an inspiring singer-politician who hailed from Mbatyav, Gboko Local Government and had emerged from complete anonymity into public limelight in the forties with revolutionary songs that did not only create political awareness among the Tiv people, but also tacitly legitimized arms insurrection against forces of oppression. (19)

Through the Hausa-Fulani, the colonial government worked to create hegemony in the Northern part of Nigeria. Responding to this situation, Bam Gidi created and sang revolutionary songs that did not only create political awareness among the Tiv people, but also tacitly legitimized armed insurrection against the forces of oppression. As Abeghe explains:

Bam Gidi introduced a kind of musical dance that was simple in style and unique in the history of Tiv dances. The dance did not involve much physical drill and for this reason, “Bam Gidi” dance...became a daily routine for people who came in large numbers... to the dance. The dance became a rallying point for the Makurdi township inhabitants. (19)

This new music/dance reached its zenith after the death of the first chief of Makurdi, a town “established” by the colonial masters with their Hausa-Fulani partners on the banks of the river Benue. This chief was not an indigene of Tiv land but was of Fulani-Yoruba extraction, from far away Ilorin, and had been installed as chief of Makurdi by the ruling colonial administration. After the chief's death in 1945, the Tiv vowed that a non-Tiv would never again be made chief in Makurdi town. Bam Gidi cashed in on this situation by creating appropriate songs that captured this resistance. The popularity of his songs was further heightened by returning ex-service men from World War II, who took on the agitation for the creation of the seat of a “Tor Tiv” (Tiv paramount ruler), as well as demanding the appointment of a Tiv indigene as chief of Makurdi. Bam Gidi's songs became a great influence on the people. For instance, in the heat of a campaign for a Tiv chief in Makurdi, Bam composed the following song which came to be known by his opponents according to Abeghe, as a “conflict encouraging” song:

*Or a de telen we ga Makondo Zaki-ee
Anom Yande, Igbe ngihelOr akela bum chenge ga.
Tiv mba ye tor sha Kano ga Waya Nyo,
Uke ya shin tar ne kuma yo Ingoholee (Abeghe, 21).*

Roughly translated, this song goes as follows;

Let no wagging tongue discuss you Makondo Highness
Anom Yande, the oracle is present
There is no need to consult by a broken pot
Tiv do not get chieftaincy in Kano Waya Nyo,
Uke's hegemony/ruler-ship over us is over spent
So let this (situation) be annulled.

Kano is a city in the predominantly Hausa-Fulani part of Northern Nigeria. Makondo was the preferred Tiv candidate for chief of Makurdi. This song suggests that at his installation, there was discontent among an opposing group to his candidature, notably, the Hausa-Fulani settlers from far away Kano. Anom Yande and Waya Nyo were probably prominent Tiv politicians of the time.

These songs were very inflammatory and inciting, but perhaps because they were sung in the vernacular, the colonial administration in the Tiv Division did nothing to warn Bam Gidi against their dangerous political consequences (Abeghe 23). In similar liberation songs in the late forties, it is reported that Bam was sour and belligerent against the Hausa (the figureheads of the colonial administration). He constantly insisted that the domination of Hausas over Tiv in Tiv land was politically inexpedient and morally wrong. This view became the inevitable corollary and thesis of the future political party of the so-called "Middle Belt region of Nigeria" in north central Nigeria, where Tiv land is situated. Even though the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) as a political party was born in the late 1940s, these liberation songs of Bam Gidi still had leverage over the political consciousness of his people long after his death.

Bam Gidi's influence can be further illustrated by the following songs;

*Hausa zer hiin Tiv; nyen yo tar er gigh;
Or kela za sha logo ga; Tor Disha;
Likye uke la chii, hingil likye i Ihyarev-ee (22).*

The words of this song can be translated roughly as follows:

The Hausa have consistently taunted the Tiv; yesterday the land shook;
No one went to his cassava farm; Chief Disha;
All the sugarcane farms owned by “gentiles” now belong to the Ihyarev people
[a clan of Tiv people].

The Hausas are known for farming sugar-cane and cassava along the Benue River valley. The Tiv associated the cultivation of cassava and sugar-cane to Hausa settlers in Tiv land. These crops were considered inferior to the cultivation of yams, a prevalent crop largely cultivated by the Tiv in the Benue and Katsina-Ala river basins of Central Nigeria.

In another song, Bam Gidi directly challenged the Hausa:

***Se hembra Ausa yo, se hembe Masalachi;
Se kpera agidigbe usha hunda tor sha agee;
Se za na Makondo-oo. (22)***

Translated loosely, the words of this song mean:

When we over-run the Hausa, we will throw down (their) Mosque
We will drag away the “agidigbe” from the palace grounds by force,
We will take it to Makondo-oo.

An “agidigbe” was a wooden musical instrument designed for calling public attention and Makondo was the preferred choice as chief of Makurdi town by the Tiv. So Bam Gidi was effectively inciting the Tiv to take up arms against the Hausa.

Bam Gidi's songs thus influenced many Tiv, and were instrumental in prompting political riots. It can be deduced from his songs that he was hardened, aggressive, vocal and bitter against Hausa hegemony. To Bam Gidi, voicing his sentiments openly in his songs was a way of mobilizing the Tiv to protect their territory. He spread these sentiments against the Hausa, and, by extension, the colonial administration, through these folk songs and in general used them to raise the level of political awareness among the Tiv.

Bam Gidi, the political folk singer died in the late sixties. He had played a significant role in the history of political awareness in Tiv land through his particular form of resistance literature; in this instance folk music accompanied with dance! “Describing him as 'one of the founding fathers of modern political movement in Tiv land,' Abeghe credits Bam Gidi with hastening 'the movement for the establishment of the Tiv Central Institution of the Tor Tiv.'” (Abeghe 27).

Resistance through Folk Dance/Music

Music and dance usually go hand in hand in Tiv folk activity. Even Bam Gidi had to invent a dance to accompany his pre-dominantly song-oriented resistance mode. In this section, we shall be looking at how the Tiv invented dances accompanied by appropriate songs as resistance folk activity.

Igoil has done a painstaking work on the cultural significance of Tiv music, which inevitably led him to a detailed study and documentation of many dances from pre-colonial and colonial days. Tiv dances and songs always offer commentary on prevailing social issues, as his study has shown. Thus, from the *Ange* dance, which he considers the oldest known Tiv dance, through the *Nyambuan* (protest) dramas, and more recently, through the *Kwagh-hir* theatre, the Tiv have always used their performing arts (oral literature) as instruments for protest. The art of story-telling among the Tiv for instance, was always didactic and indeed the new form known as *Kwagh-hir* theatre has often provided a platform “for attacks on local administration and for the expression of discontent with the social structure that has emerged; first from the policies of the colonial administration and later, from those of partisan party politicians” (Igoil 384). Hagher also finds it significant that the *Kwagh-hir* puppet theatre emerged one year after the Tiv political riots of 1959 and that between the years 1960 and 1964, when party politics was virtually unsafe for any opposition to the ruling party, the *Kwagh-hir* seemed to have served as the only social and political organization that the opposition could have (184). For this reason, according to Hagher, “The allegiance and support of the performances were for the Tiv rioters who were referred to as *adzov* (spirits). In fact, the monsters that appeared in the *Kwagh-hir* story-telling theatre were also regarded as *adzov*” (Quoted in Nyager 120).

That the Tiv recognized the need to express protest through folk performances like dance and music is illustrated by a song recorded by Roy Clive Abraham, which expresses ill-feelings about the condition of the life of the Tiv during the colonial era. This song, reproduced by Igoil goes thus:

See what has befallen me; tell me what I have done to deserve it. In days gone by, I farmed for my mother and when I was tired I rested; if I had anything to say I said it. And when I felt hungry, ate. Then there was nobody to beat me and I never had to work as I am working today. Work! Work! Work! My taskmasters grind me down; they throw stones at me when I stop work and when I have finished, I get no pay. What a life! (129)

According to Tseayo, “Political songs were the major, if not the main instrument of political mobilization. They served as the most offensive media of communication to spread political ideas throughout Tivland” (148). So it is clear that the Tiv have used

songs, and also have used dances as political tools of protest and resistance. A few dances are considered below to make our point:

The ***Dasenda*** dance was a dance that satirized the colonial police force. It was a “women-only” dance in which the dancers wore “simulated” police gear of colonial times (khaki shorts and khaki shirts, complete with pith-helmet for the lead dancer). Holding toy wooden guns, they moved around in circles “imitating” police routines. This performance rendered comments on the role of the police during the 1963 political revolts in Tiv land. For instance, they parodied the mass arrests of innocent people and the resultant terror that these actions brought on the general Tiv populations and communities. Other dances beginning in colonial times and persisting even into the post-colonial era, included the ***Kuza, Adogan, Kompeni***.

Of these, the ***Kuza*** was a dance that sought to capture the historical events of the British forced labour campaigns, in this instance in the mine fields for Quartz on the Jos Plateau of central Nigeria.

Adogan dance on the other hand, referred to the railway constructions; also evidence of forced labour by the colonial powers.

As for ***Kompeni*** dance, it was invented to capture the activities of a political group which opposed the NPC (Northern Peoples' Congress), government of the late fifties and early sixties in Northern Nigeria.

Thus, from the songs, such as that recorded by Roy Clive Abraham, to the dances which were also accompanied by appropriate songs, and through to theatrical representations as will later be shown, the Tiv were using their folk media, specifically their oral traditional performances to resist occupation, domination and oppression in colonial and post- colonial Nigeria. Indeed, what the Tiv were doing through their oral and theatrical arts is comparable to what Denis Brutus, Lewis Nkosi and many others had done in apartheid South Africa, through written drama and poetry. For example, Athol Fugard's well-known collection, ***Three Port Elizabeth Plays*** featuring comical but protest-laden entries like ***Sizwe Bansi is Dead***, is a good example of how literature becomes a tool for liberation. Lewis Nkosi's ***The Rhythm of Violence*** is another example that captures oppression in literature with a bid to highlighting injustice and making a case for liberation. As Petrilli and Ponzio have observed, oraliture covers “the various genres of oral literature, which include stories, legends, proverbs, rhymes, songs, etc.... [Thus] 'oraliture' evokes 'écriture'...The fact that 'oraliture' echoes 'écriture' also indicates that orality in the various forms of non-written literature is already writing, writing 'avant la lettre’” (47-61). Indeed, in non-literate societies, oraliture becomes the only available medium by which the people express their creative, imaginative and didactic ideas.

Resistance Theatre among the Tiv

However, the artistic use of performance for resistance among the Tiv did not start with Bam Gidi, the singer/politician. The Tiv had used theatre for resistance against the upsurge of colonialism before Bam Gidi. Theatre was used as a potent weapon in the task of decolonization, similar to the case of Ogunde in colonial Lagos, Nigeria. This was popular theatre, the type that was produced by the people as an expression of their culture. As was noted by Hagher, “One condition of the popular theatre is that since it belongs to the people it always assumes a dialectical and opposing relationship to the dominant culture.” (8)

Tiv popular theatre includes the different dances of Tiv land. In precolonial and colonial Tiv society, “every village had its own dance troupe, choreographers and singers who composed and played popular Pan-Tiv dances” (Hagher 8). In other words, dance was prevalent in Tiv society.

In an attempt to categorize Tiv dance, Hagher has identified a genre of dance which he calls “dance as social criticism”. Other categorizations include “dance as historical documentation and enlightenment,” as well as “dance as political expression.” Politics and dance in Tiv land have therefore, always gone hand in hand. For example, during the pre-colonial periods, the Tiv choreographed several dances to express Tiv politics. Again, according to Hagher, “Sometimes these political dances assumed politico-judicial functions as opposing political and social groups recruited dancers to dance and sing songs of derision against each other.” (8)

Therefore, throughout Tiv land during these periods, dance was used to regulate political conflict in the struggle to maintain the power base in the whole community (known as *Tyô*), rather than leave it in the hands of a few powerful individuals.

Similarly, during the colonial era, the Tiv, who were forcibly taken to the Plateau for mining activities, created the *Kuza* dance, as already discussed above, choreographed to express the mixed attitude of the Tiv work force against British coercion and insensitivity. The bad life in the mining areas was vividly captured. Thus, popular theatrical arts like dance were used to effectively challenge the disequilibrium in the society. With the formation of political parties at independence, these dance forms also assumed political character. The political campaigns employed dance/songs as in the pre-colonial times, to deride opponents. Thus, as Hagher says, “The significance of campaigns was the way each of the parties employed the services of dance and song to serve and advance their cause” (11).

Political differences were heightened and eventually led to the violent revolts in 1960 and 1963. After the revolts, most NPC (Northern Peoples' Congress) supporters who belonged to that dominating political party, settled in Gboko town, where a new abstract dance was created by the young men and women to signify the victory of the

masses and the people over the forces of elitist reaction, which the NPC stood for. This was a stylised dance that was markedly different from the usual energetic dances known with the Tiv and was meant to deride the supporters of the NPC. Even today, campaign trails still swell with current 'soap box dance' groups in Tiv land.

***Kwagh-hir* Theatre**

Another form of popular art that evolved as a reaction against repression and political domination of the Tiv people was the ***Kwagh-hir*** theatre, a popular theatre form practised throughout Tiv land, that possesses an affinity to Theatre for Development. It began covertly as protest drama in the early sixties in Tiv land, but developed from an earlier form of protest drama known as ***Nyambuan***. Hagher describes it as follows:

During the colonial regime, a curious theatrical phenomenon took place in 1939. This was the year of the Tiv revolt against the colonial administration...During this revolt, the Tiv people came together in groups to protest the bad government of the British and demonstrate the acquiescence and complicity of the elders. (22)

This revolt significantly used dramatic enactments with sustained plot and dialogue before an audience which got together to play music and dance. This was a drama of protest characterized by enactments that ridiculed the colonial political structure through satirical sketches. These plays qualify as popular dramas for mass conscientization. (22)

It was after this that Tiv also came up with ***Kwagh-hir*** popular theatre, whose origins were also necessitated by social discontent with existing politicosocial realities in Tiv land. ***Kwagh-hir's*** manifestation as popular art came about in the late fifties and early sixties. This emergent form derived from the story-telling tradition of the Tiv, and its practice was governed by the social, material and political conditions of the Tiv people. In the early seventies for example:

a cultural trend arose in Tivland of ***Kwagh-hir*** “festivals.” It was a tremendous move that held both social and economic implications. Economic activities, centring most on farming, were abandoned as men women and children were swept along by a cultural “revival,” as they lived to attend Kwaghir festivals...This was a tremendous phenomenon that had great influence on rural communities...it also manifested in a spate of creativity that resulted in repertoires of songs, dances and folktales. Indeed it was a revival of the old art of story-telling with the additional dimensions of music and dance. It further developed puppetry and masquerade dimensions (Nyager, n.p).

The spread of **Kwagh-hir** occurred after the 1960 revolts in which many young Tiv people lost their lives for protesting against the Northern regional government. These revolts are captured in the works of both Jibo and Tseayo, cited above. The rioters would dress in raffia costumes similar to those of the emergent Kwagh-hir actors. In these Kwagh-hir masquerade performances, the songs vividly captured the popular political mood that was prevalent. The following song is an illustration of this argument;

Refrain: *Alôm oo!*
Begha ikyô ta hwande a yiyegh
Kwagh hingir sha ha ve-oo,
Yevese za nyôr shin bar adzôv
Tor yiyegh wa kper nyôr bar shin ya ve-oo
Bar yôhôn
Mbanyam ve ger mliam
Begha ikyô mase vaan
Tor yiyegh tor yiyegh sôngom wan
Bar adzôv
Kumbur aga tyough tyough
Bar adzôv

Translation;
Hail Rabbit
The lion threw a bet with soldier ants
And the contest became hot'
He ran into the den of spirits
But the Chief of soldier ants made
a nest right into the den and brought it crashing
The animal world wailed
Lion king of the forest was left in mourning
Chief of soldier ants has slain my son
In the den of spirits
Lift high the staff for conflict

This song captures the spirit of contest between the political parties of the UMBC which the Tiv largely endorsed and the NPC which they saw as hegemonic and subversive of the social equilibrium of Tiv land. **Begha ikyô-** the lion was representative of the NPC while the **Tor yiyegh** stood for the leader of the Tiv who was J. S. Tarkaa of the UMBC. The **yiyegh** (soldier ants) stood for the Tiv masses. Thus, again, the Tiv were using popular theatre, the **Kwaghhir**, as an expression of discontent and revolt against political repression and oppression.

In Tiv political reality, popular dances and songs are always a reinterpretation of contemporary social reality. For this reason, the political temperature of the Tiv can always be determined through Tiv popular theatre, especially through dances. In the

same way, it is possible through popular theatre, dances and songs to influence the Tiv people to action.

Tiv popular theatre including the *Kwagh-hir* theatre came out of Tiv story-telling or the Tiv oral narrative tradition. It became a suitable platform for performing resistance through its songs, dances and story-lines as illustrated in the examples above. Thus, the Bam Gidi songs/dance, the *Ange* and other allied dances, and the *Kwagh-hir* popular theatre all formed a part of Tiv political resistance both in colonial and early post-colonial Nigeria.

New Resistance: The example of Popular and Culturized Afro-beat Video Performance

The author recently watched a performance on You-Tube of a video performance done by a popular Tiv-born artist known as Rapizo. The title of the song is *Tar Taver*, and credits in Google search on him described him as a Benue-born Nigerian artist whose music promotes the rich culture of the Tiv people. On further search the author found his real names to be Luke Nyam Lubem. This performance is basically a song performance with a strong mix of Afro-beat and Tiv traditional music instruments. The semiotics, aesthetic content and functionality of this performance are a matter of future study. However in this effort we wish to use a cursory examination of this (song/music) performance to illustrate the issue of functionality in Tiv performance modes and specifically the issue of resistance in Tiv performance arts as has already been discussed above. What interests us particularly in this new performance mode (genre) is its direct address to the topical issue of terrorism. The performance is basically a music/song performance but also incorporating other aspects of performance, like mime, pantomime, dance and even dramatic enactments. Like *Kwagh-hir* it is total theatre albeit on a smaller scale than *Kwagh-hir* since the masquerades are missing here and the time frame is quite minimal compared to *Kwagh-hir*.

The performance can basically be divided into three parts:

- i. There is a 'curtain raiser,' heralded by an Elder, appropriately costumed in the warrior regalia of the Tiv. He addresses the audience, basically with a well-known salute that signifies a war cry. This salute also has a standard and esoteric response. Thus;
Elder: *Aya tutu ka uno!*
Audience: *Ka se!*
Translation.
Elder: Who belongs to *Aya tutu!*
And the audience reply,

Audience: We do!

This elder, acting as a narrator now gives a preamble to the purpose of the gathering. He introduces the Artist, who is then ushered onto centre-stage for his song performance.

- ii. This then is the second segment of the performance which focuses on the Artist and his performance.
- iii. The third segment is a subdued ending of the performance with subdued musical accompaniments, which culminates in a ritual of blessing when the Artist approaches a ruling personage who blesses him in the traditional paraphernalia of a horse-tail, with him kneeling before the ruler. This also signifies the “curtain-call” as the video ends on this note.

Content of the Performance

The song

- The song is a mobilizing one. It is a call for the unity of the Tiv nation.
- The song describes current and topical political situations in the nation posing challenges to Tiv unity.
- The song criticizes but also admonishes politicians.
- The song uses an interesting analogy from folklore to satirize erring political figures. This is a clear throw-back to Tiv narrative traditions.
- (This song is about the hyena, lion and the tiger.)
- The song features a repeated refrain that emphasizes the message/theme of the performance.

The Dance

- The song composer/performer who is also the major artist is placed “centre-stage” before a podium. He dances as he sings. There is an accompanying chorus that dances stylistically, costumed to match the song-leader/Artist's costume.
- The dance is on several levels, from the song leader, to the accompany chorus members, to the musicians/instrumentalists. These all wear traditional Tiv cloth as costume. The audience also joins in the dance in the course of the performance.

The Stage

- The performance is done outdoors; village-square style. This is an arena staged performance, open-air, 'rough' (à là Brook: 1968), and improvisational.

The Audience

- These comprise all elements of a village setting; men, women, children and the elderly. In the midst of this audience stand hefty young men in black tee-shirts, also wearing dark glasses. This adds another dramatic, symbolic dimension to the performance.

The Message of the Song

The song is done basically in vernacular with a sprinkling of 'English' and Pidgin English. It is in the song that the issue of (counter) – terrorism can be deduced particularly in the refrain. We attempt a scripting and translation of the refrain to the song.

Tar taver
Alu se dzua gungur
Mom yo
Nobody will take us unaware

Translation:

The world (life) is a struggle
If we unite as one
Non will take us unaware

Other aspects of the long lyrics are also consistent with the message of unity, like in the following:

“A tree cannot make a forest”
Mbagbiden gbough mba wuan se

Translation:

A tree cannot make a forest
Those who carry sticks are killing us

An in-depth critique of this song and performance is not possible for our purpose here. However we see its relevance to the discourse of oppression and terrorism, and the issue of functionality in Tiv performance modes. A slightly modified rendition of the song goes thus:

Tar taver
Alu se dzua gungur mom
Yo, Tyo yam,
Nobody go take us unaware

Translation:

The world (existence) is hard (or is a struggle)
If we unite as one, my people
Nobody go take us unaware

It is the word 'unaware' that is our link to a discussion of terrorism, and this performance as suitable tool for counter terrorism.

We know that the modus operandi of terrorists is to strike enclaves of society unawares. Terrorism thrives on striking suddenly when victims least expect. It feeds on creating perpetual fear in the victims; thus the victims are made to live in constant fear. The goal is to cripple and cow the victim into submission through this perpetration of terror and fear. This song/performance is therefore mobilizing the Tiv people to unite to counter the situation of terror attacks on Tiv communities, specifically the attacks from Fulani herdsmen. This is adequately captured in this line in the refrain; *Mbagbiden gbough mba wuan se* (already translated above). This indeed is a reference to the Fulani herdsmen.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with various excerpts as shown above, we have attempted to document historically that Tiv performance is functional in resisting oppression, hegemony and dispossession. The Tiv have consistently used their performance art to counter oppression in the past and are still doing so today, even with the challenge of contemporary 21st century terrorism as is referred to in the performance of Rapizo.

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**FOLKLORE AS FORMALIST AESTHETICS IN WOLE SOYINKA'S
*DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN***

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Abstract.

Many African writers have mobilised and continued to mobilise their creative energies in the direction of exploiting the rich oral literary and cultural resources of their traditional backgrounds as raw materials for their literary enterprises. The trajectories of their literary skills and practice are firmly anchored on the socio-cultural landscape, feeding on folkloric elements like folktales, songs, chants, proverbs, myths, epics, legends, riddles, among other aphoristic and folkloric employments. Similarly, cultural distillates like deities, shrines, sacrifices, festivals, dances, marriages and other cultural flourishes populate and aesthesis their creative works. One of these African writers is Wole Soyinka who has consistently used his dramatic creations to question and challenge the political construct in the various pockets of power in Africa. He agreed that literature can promote development by moulding the consciousness, mentality and sensibility of the people. His argument is premised on the reformative function of social novels and drama in England in the 19th century, which had a tremendous impact on helping to inspire the social legislation that changed the face of England. The present study, which adopts formalism as theoretical ground, examines folklore in *Death and the King's Horseman* as Soyinka's artistic resources which include symbols, metaphors, parables, satire, proverbs, songs and other devices which, derived from traditional sources are used to convey his message to his readers. In other words, to borrow a word from formalism, folklore is the component part on which Soyinka's aesthetics is anchored.

Key words: Folklore, Formalist Aesthetics, Soyinka Wole, *Death and the King's Horseman*.

Introduction

Soyinka's writings have confirmed the genealogy of the African Literature in African oral aesthetics and cultural background which resonate in the literary creativity and practices of African writers. African oral resources have been exploited by Soyinka in the distillation of his themes, the construction of characterization, narrative and discursive strategies as a representation of cultural authenticity and inscription of the African world-view. Soyinka demonstrates this ancestry of the novel and drama in African oral cultures in his writing, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975). Through the deft deployment of proverbs, anecdotes, folktales, myths and other folkloric materials, Soyinka's works have successfully dramatized the tensions between tradition and modernity, continuity and mutability, and socio-political issues in African continent. The cultural particularity and authenticity in the African worldview, is what Wole Soyinka characterizes as the "fourth stage" in his *Myth, Literature, and the African World* (1976).

Modern African literature is highly infused with folklore. The oral traditions of Africa originated from the earliest history of the people and have continued to evolve according to the conditions of the times. Folklore, myths and legends developed over thousands of years and have been influenced by mass migrations. Thus, as people settled in new places, new stories were created to explain the origins of their ruling class and the society's structure. Many African writers incorporate folklores into their works, whether it is in poetry as in Jack Mapanje, in fiction as in Chinua Achebe and Ngugi, in drama and fiction as in Wole Soyinka and in drama as in Femi Osofisan.

Like Irele, Okpewho stresses the synthesis of oral and written literature in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Specifically, he identifies Soyinka's works as rich in African folklore and mythology, particularly the aspects concerning the relationships between the divinities which disclose the basic elements of African outlook on life. In the same vein, Chinweizu, Jemie, and Madubuike argue, "In his themes and techniques, Soyinka has utilized materials from African tales, fables, epigrams, proverbs etc" (84). They further aver,

His narratives have made thematic, technical and formal contributions to the African writing. Among the formal are contributions in the area of length, structural complexity, and textural complexity ... The structural and textural complexity of his narration have counterparts in short as well as extended oral narratives (27).

Similarly, Julien underscores the African oral antecedents of African drama and novel and the healthy relationship that exists between the two forms, orality and writing, when she observes that "the oral nature of drama and novel is ... a question

of narrative form, the adaptation of principles of oral narrative genres” (25). Julien affirms the oral colouration of the African literature when she further observes that “the oral nature of African novels refers to the representation of everyday conversation, or the inclusion of proverbs, tales, riddles, praises and other oral genres” (African Novels and the question of Orality (26).

Soyinka in his *Myth, Literature and the African World* posits that:

Man exists in Africa in a comprehensive world of myth, history and folklore; in such a total context, the African world, like any other world, is unique. It possesses, in common with other cultures, the virtues of complementarity; to ignore this simple route to a common humanity and pursue the alternative route of negation, is an attempt to perpetuate the external subjugation of the black continent (12).

Soyinka discusses here, the common origin of man on a global scale. The implication or deep structure in his discussion is clear: all ethnic groups in Africa exist in a comprehensive world of myth, history and mores which, if subjected to a keen and careful analysis, reveals the unity of the ethnic groups. For instance, the myth of creation in the fables of the different ethnic groups bears common motif and common imagination.

Griffiths articulates the cultural imperative and social expediency of self definition and concretization of self-identity which underscore the strategic and symbolic significance in postcolonial situations. His observation is particular to Soyinka's writing. He states:

Writing is an activity through which the African can define his identity and rediscover his historical roots. This self-defining function of the novel is ... especially, important to writers in a post-colonial situation, especially where their exposure to European culture had led to an undervaluing of the traditional values and practices (76).

It is therefore true that Soyinka is very outstanding in his espousal of the revolution in African cultural self-assertion and affirmation. Indeed, Soyinka is in some critical circles identified as belonging to the Achebe school of African letters, which is devoted to impressing on the Western mind that Africa was not a cultural tabula rasa on which Europe inscribed its culture and civilization thereby saving the continent from its primitive and barbaric nature as Europeans alleged. This Cultural Revolution is crucial particularly in deconstructing the Eurocentric negation of African oral aesthetics and the very existence of such oral forms as the epic and myth

in Africa. This denial also negatively defines and determines the western ruling attitude towards these oral forms in their interpretive approaches to the oral forms.

Cook in *Wole Soyinka: An Introduction to His Writings (1973)*, examines Soyinka's career as a dramatist. In his text, he says that Soyinka's characters are more predictable. The critic also observes that *Death and the King's Horseman* is embedded with "oral and ritual tradition as much in its form and techniques as in its content" (53). On the other hand, Sharma opines that: "*Death and the King's Horseman* does not deal with the theme of "betrayal and disillusionment"; rather it deals with rebirth and regeneration and the restoration to wholeness from frustration" (28).

This observation raises a doubt because the text addresses the theme of betrayal of trust and post-independence disillusionment. It should be stressed that *Death and the King's Horseman* is more concerned with morality and spirituality than issues of politics as Sharma would expect us to believe. If this critic had done a thorough evaluation of the role Olunde plays to save his community, he would have known that betrayal of trust and disillusionment is the major theme. In a reading of Soyinka's tragedy, *Death and the King's Horseman*, Jeyifo speaks of Soyinka's "mythopoeic" attitude to history, his constant penchant towards transforming experience into metaphysical, trans-historical mythic dimension. Osofisan, in the essay, "*Drama and the New Exotic*" ridicules the new exotic stage patronized by such playwrights as Soyinka and Rotimi and peopled by animist gods and utterly indifferent to the logic of "historical contradictions in the dialectics of flux" (22). Onoge and Darah make the same point in their paper "*The Retrospective Stage: Some Reflections on the Mythopoeic Tradition*". They dismiss as:

Mythic and retrogressive a dramatized historiography of the past where antagonistic contradictions do not exist. It is this undialectical approach plus the pre-eminence of the supernatural in the artistic representations of the past that they have termed mythopoeic (76).

Applying the materialist theory to *Death and the King's Horseman*, Jeyifo finds the play to be guilty of misrepresenting and misinterpreting the real identity of the indigenous society. According to Jeyifo: The play does not attempt to highlight the real objective differences between conflicting groups and classes in the indigenous society, what we have, instead, is a rationalization of the rule of the dazzling few... over the deceived many (133).

In *Wole Soyinka (1988)*, Barret says: "*Death and the King's Horseman* is of course about the acting out of a people's collective religious emotions and desires at a crucial moment in its politic-cultural history" (45). Barret is of the view that lots of Soyinka's

plays are dominated by the discussion of metaphysics of sacrifice. Criticising *Death and the King's Horseman*, he argues that:

Olunde's sacrifice can only be understood in metaphysical terms; the problem arises as to whether an educated intellectual at the time would behave like this, but the argument fades into the background on the consideration of the world of the plays. It has a metaphysical design, not a realistic one. It may be that this did not happen in fact, but it happened psychologically, spiritually and subconsciously (45).

Barret however, concludes that Soyinka's literary aesthetics places its emphasis on the use of the human body through dance, music, songs and chants, a reported sexual act and two deaths to complement dialogue that expresses those feelings, values and beliefs. The play's subject is also textured by aesthetic rituals. The present study, which adopts formalism as theoretical ground, examines folklore in *Death and the King's Horseman* as Soyinka's artistic resources which include symbols, metaphors, parables, satire, proverbs, songs and other devices which, derived from traditional sources, are used to convey his message to his readers.

Theoretical Framework

Formalism is a school of literary critical theory that analyzes a text based upon its structural features alone rather than incorporating biographical, socio-political, or interdisciplinary analysis. A formalist scholar asserts that everything necessary to evaluate a narrative can be found within the grammatical constructs and literary devices that comprise the piece. Formalism presented a radical shift from previous schools of literary thought in which a text was primarily considered in the context of the author.

The formalist critical approach considers a work of art as a self-enclosed entity. According to Barret, the key figures of the formalist movement included Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, and Juri Tiniyanov; these core group members promoted an approach to literature that was ordered and scientific (18). Literature, they argued, should be approached only on its own terms; there should be no external influences or considerations, such as the author's personal characteristics or the sociopolitical and historical conditions under which the text had been written (17). In short, it was a very formal and non-historical or author-specific way of considering works of literature that would not involve the personal history of the author, the consequences of the time period the subject matter was written in, nor the given tastes of the reading public or any other such external influences.

The formalists did not wish to apply any other theoretical constructs like sociological, historical, psychoanalytic to the reading of a text; rather, the text should, in their view, stand alone and be able to be understood on its own terms. To

this end, the formalists proposed a method for reading a text in such a way; literary works became machines that could be tinkered with and understood if the component parts and their respective functions were known (55).

In the light of this, we shall argue in this study that Soyinka's artistic resources include folklore, symbols, metaphors, parables, satire, proverbs, songs and other devices which, derived from traditional sources, are used to convey his message to his readers. In other words, to borrow a word from formalism, folklore is the component part on which Soyinka's aesthetics is anchored. This device is not "external invention" but a deep and primary source from which Soyinka the dramatist and novelist fashions the architectural foundation of his works for the purpose of conveying his message. In *Myth, Literature, and the African World*, Soyinka himself confesses to this truth by saying that:

I take most of my metaphors from the Yoruba worldview, the Yoruba philosophy drastically reduces the absolute dependency of human beings on the interpreters of the extraterritorial authority (23).

From the above submission, the playwright has given a convincing reason why we have to approach this research work from the point of view of formalism.

Folklore as Formalist Aesthetics in *Death and the King's Horseman*

Death and the King's Horseman is a complete satire of foreign religion and its idiosyncrasies. The play is Soyinka's adaptation of a historical encounter which took place in 1945 in the Yoruba city of Oyo. The text reflects on the traditional African society which believes in self-sacrifice, self-liberation and self-cleansing. The book proves that the phenomenon of self-sacrifice is not the monopoly of the Christian religion neither does it belong exclusively to Europe. The attempts of the white men to interrupt and put a stop to the traditional African religion met with a stiff opposition. The text is a portrayal of the cultural identity and religious tradition in Africa.

Soyinka is one of the artists whose life and work offer rich materials from African culture. He is a man deeply rooted in his native Yoruba land and a citizen of the world at the same time. The action of the play, based on a real event, takes place in a Yoruba town, some time around 1945. In *Death and the King's Horseman*, it is the ritual death of the Horseman of the community as demanded by the tribal custom for assuring the continuity of the race.

Elesin is a prominent chief and the king's chief horseman. The king dies and is to be buried. According to the local law, his dog, his favourite horse and his horseman must accompany him to the world of ancestors. Elesin is ready but just before his

departure, he notices a beautiful girl at the market and decides to marry her before leaving this world. Though the girl is engaged, but nobody dare refuse the wish of the dying man.

The District Officer Pilkings learns about the prepared ritual suicide from his black sergeant Amusa who gives him the report. Pilkings orders Amusa to arrest Elesin. Amusa's action is turned into fiasco by market women and their daughters. Amusa arrives to report the failure of his mission. Pilkings leaves to command the operation himself and Jane talks to Olunde, Elesin's eldest son, who studies medicine in England against his father's will and through Pilkings's help. Informed of the king's death, he has come home to bury his father and asks Pilkings not to interfere, but in vain. While he seems to hear distant drums announce his father's death and leaves to see his dead body, Elesin is brought in, alive and in handcuffs. The shock is deep on both sides. Elesin, humiliated and painfully ashamed, falls at his son's feet, but Olunde refuses to recognize him.

In his note to the second edition of the play, Soyinka warns against seeing the play as an image of a clash of cultures, or as a cruel dilemma the District Officer would experience. He describes the conflict of the play as "largely metaphysical, contained in the human vehicle which is Elesin and the universe of the Yoruba mind — the world of the living, the dead and the unborn, and the numinous passage which links it all: transition" (145). The essence of the play is "threnodic" and the "Colonial Factor ...a catalytic incident merely" (144).

The play is basically a reflection on life, death and on the moment and meaning of the passage between them. Elesin, a man full of energy and love of life, and his friends speak about joys and sorrows of life and about the fact that the inner peace, brought by a sense of the order of the world, is stronger than the desires of earthly life, than the sadness of separation:

Elesin Oba: You all know what I am.

Praise-singer: That rock which turns its open lodes into the path of lightning. A gay thoroughbred whose stride disdains to falter though an adder reared suddenly in his path.

Elesin Oba: My rein is loosened
I am master of my Fate.

When the hour comes, watch me dance along the narrowing path glazed by the soles of my great precursors. My sole is eager. I shall not turn aside (153). Elesin Oba does not live up to community expectation at the sight of a young beauty, trying, not very successfully perhaps, to convince his friends of the purity of his intentions:

Elesin Oba: Who speaks of pleasure? O women, listen! Pleasure palls. Our acts should have meaning. The sap of the plantain never dries. You have seen the young shoot swelling. Even as the parent stalk begins to wither. Women, let my going be likened to the twilight hour of the plantain. I am girded for the route beyond burdens of waste and longing then let me travel light. Let seed that will not serve the stomach on the way remain behind. Let it take root in the earth of my choice, in this earth I leave behind (160).

During Elesin's dance of dying, however, the praise-singer expresses not only his grief but also the horseman's own hesitation. Through his voice, the king asks Elesin:

If you cannot come, I said, swear you'll tell my favourite horse. I shall ride on through the gates alone. If you cannot come, Elesin, tell my dog. I cannot stay the keeper too long at the gate (182).

Though Elesin refuses the idea, the king's fear proves to be justified. Over Elesin's and Olunde's bodies, at the end of the play, the Mother of the market is merciless: "He is gone at last but oh, how late it all is. His son will feed on the meat and throw him bones. The passage is clogged with droppings from the King's stallion; he will arrive all stained in dung" (219). The praisesinger's last words to Elesin, still alive, conclude: "Elesin, we placed the reins of the world in your hands, yet you watched it plunge over the edge of the bitter precipice. You sat with folded arms while evil strangers tilted the world from its course and crashed it beyond the edge of emptiness" (218).

In the Yoruba tradition, there is a belief that there is life after death, the world of the living, unborn and of the dead. Olunde, Elesin's son makes this known by responding to Jane Pilkings that:

My father has been dead in my mind for nearly a month ever since I learnt of the king's death. I've lived with my bereavement so long now that I cannot think of him alive on that journey on the boat. I kept my mind on my duties as the one who must perform the rites over his body. I don't know how to do wrong, something which might jeopardise the welfare of my people (37).

This statement shows that, even though Olunde is a Medical Doctor in training, he still believes in the tradition of his community. *Death and the King's Horseman* is a play that deals with religious, tradition and culture of Africa. The play preaches that culture must be respected no matter one's achievement in the society.

One can see Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* in the context of showing African culture and life in relative terms to the European, indirectly saying that each culture has about the same things as others and differences are only relative. In that classic play, Soyinka looks at concepts of honour and sacrifice in particular in terms of cultural relativism. Thus, African writers see themselves as defending their race and culture in the face of European/Western marginalisation and denigration. In the African-European/Western dichotomy, many African writers, especially the pioneer ones such as Senghor, Achebe, and Soyinka extol the humanity of Africa as superior to Western exploitative nature and radical individualism.

This African idea of law and order and superiority of culture can best be seen at play in a literary work like Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, where Elesin has to will himself to die before the burial of the dead Oba so that he will not have to interfere with the rule of succession. The action of the play is essentially Elesin's prolonged, indeed, almost Hamlet-like hesitation before killing himself as tradition demands. He is the designated scapegoat for the king's recent death, and everyone expects him to purge the collective guilt that seems to linger in the people's mind (even though the king died naturally) by accompanying the king into the afterlife. Elesin is treated as a living inhabitant of death's kingdom, a bridge between gods and mortals, and he is allowed to sleep with a young woman to create a new sacred life. His own wife tells Elesin "It is good that your loins be drained into the earth we know, that your last strength be ploughed back into the womb that gave you being" (61). This last incestuous image recalls Jeyifo's contention that every African king (or in this case, every ceremonial victim who must accompany a dead king on his journey to the afterlife) is another Oedipus, who must repeat his crimes in a ritual fashion to justify his death. Elesin allows himself to be arrested by the English police chief, Pilkings, before he can go through with his action, and his continued and ineffectual survival quickly becomes a public disgrace which is capable of affecting the tradition and even threatens to dissolve the very idea that dead and living can be united in a single person.

At first, Elesin blames Pilkings for interrupting the death-ceremony, citing the foreigner's "plan to push our world from its course and sever the cord that links us to the great origin" (20). Yet, as many critics have noted, Elesin's own will to die is very much in doubt even before Pilkings intervenes. Moreover, a sign of Soyinka's belief that the colonial side of Nigerian life is merely "incidental" to the action of the play is given when Elesin finally takes responsibility for his own failure: as he says, "First I blamed the white man, then I blamed my gods for deserting me" (27), but in the end, he has only himself to blame for the unspeakable blasphemy of seeing the hand of the gods in this alien rupture, In his world, a "blasphemy" which he sees had "turned me into an infant in the hands of unnamable strangers" (22). Elesin's delay earns him the scorn of his peers, and his son, Olunde, is especially grieved by his father's reluctance

to obey the tradition of his people. Olunde, like Obi in *No Longer at Ease*, has just returned from England, where he has been going to school, to be faced with a dilemma. Olunde feels that his father has corrupted the tradition of the Elesins by failing to die and accompany the dead king into the afterlife, just as Obi finds that Nigerian life has been corrupted by bribery and patronage. Olunde decides to take a stand against his father's weakness, and kills himself before any further disgrace befalls his family. One can say that in committing suicide before his father is able to kill himself demonstrates the heroism in Olunde. This could be compared to the English captain who has recently blown himself up with his ship in the local harbour, a gesture Olunde admires.

Regardless of his motives, Olunde's death has an immediate effect. Pointing to the apparently unnatural sight of a son dead before his father, Iyaloja asks Elesin "Whose trunk withers to give sap to the other? The parent shoot or the younger?" and accuses him of being among those who "choose to reverse the cycle of our being" (12). To be a father is, by definition, to be willing to die, in Iyaloja's mind; as she asks Elesin: "Who are you to open a new life when you dared not open the door to a new existence?" (24). When Olunde's dead body is brought in, Iyaloja tells Elesin "The son has proved the father Elesin, and there is nothing left in your mouth to gnash but infant gums" (18). As this insulting image suggests, even adulthood is denied those who cannot face the reality of their death (Pilkings, who is called a "child" by Iyaloja, is also put into this category). Overcome by guilt at the sight of his dead son, Elesin swiftly strangles himself with his own chains. This double death seems to herald a new birth, however, and Iyaloja asks Elesin's bride to think only of the "unborn" child within her. This impending birth recalls the one which is prophesied in Yeats's *The Second Coming*, a coming of some sort of messiah who will end the Christian era (and, in Yeats's theory, reinstate the age of Oedipus, Christ's counterpart). This hopeful note has prompted some readers to see hope in Elesin's refusal to carry out his family's traditional self-sacrificial role.

Moore, in his book *Wole Soyinka*, not only sees Elesin's "failure of will as allegorical of a wider African failure to stick to indigenous values, even when not actually forced to abandon them" (159), but for him there is, moreover, "no doubt that Soyinka intends a denunciation of all forms of blind colonial meddling...what is lamented", he continues, "is a heart-wound struck at more than one African culture" (157). As we can see, Soyinka refuses this to be his main theme in the play and we could then speculate on what the "threnodic" essence of the play concerns — perhaps a general theme of lost values. When Pilkings hesitates to let the courier of Elesin's message to the dead king into his cell, Iyaloja says:

White one, you have a king here, a visitor from your land. We know of his presence here. Tell me, were he to die would you leave his spirit roaming restlessly on the surface of the earth? Would you bury him

here among those you consider less than human? In your land, have you no ceremonies of the dead? (214).

Olunde's talk with Jane against the distant sound of drums announcing his father's dying contains many arguments of this kind, only expressed in a more intellectual, though increasingly passionate way. Reacting to Jane's refusal of ritual suicide as barbaric, he asks: "Is that worse than mass suicide? Mrs Pilkings, what do you call what those young men are sent to do by their generals in this war?" (195). The war, by the way, whose wounded he treated in English hospitals while to Jane in the African colony, "it is all rather remote" (192). It is evident that the theme of the play contains both African and non-African elements, though Soyinka would not probably see them as equally important. His metaphysical reflection, though deeply rooted in the Yoruba spiritual world and may be in his own personal experience, is a largely universal one, like many themes of his plays. The social, political and historical comments become, as suggested above, another, and with some readers and viewers the main theme of the play. Though describing the colonial ways of the British in Africa, it speaks about colonialism as such, and about what lack of respect means generally for the culture of Africa.

Death and the King's Horseman is a very powerful tragedy and it seems to grow from both the tradition of Yoruba tragedy and from ancient drama and Shakespeare, to quote at least two classical examples of the non-African drama. The market women form a chorus of the Greek kind, only perhaps more actively entering the action, the praise-singer and, to a certain extent, Iyaloja play similar, though more individualised roles. Elesin, of course, is a classical hero and Olunde a more modern one. Though there is not a perfect unity of place and action, both are in fact very much centred around the principal dramatic conflict, and the time observes fully the classical requirement of one day, for all the action takes place within one evening and night. At the same time, like Shakespeare, O'Casey and like the African theatre, Soyinka sees life as a constant mixture of joys and sadness and knows the importance of a comic element within the grave atmosphere of a play. The scene in which African school-girls, helping their mothers drive away the black policeman Amusa from Elesin's improvised wedding chamber, performs a lively sketch of a dialogue at the English club, is a memorable example:

And how do you find the place?
The natives are all right.
Friendly?
Tractable.
Not a teeny-weeny bit restless?
Well, a teeny-weeeny bit restless.
One might even say, difficult?

Indeed one might be tempted to say, difficult.
But you do manage to cope?
Yes indeed I do, I have a rather faithful ox called Amusa.
He's loyal?
Absolutely.
Had one like that. Trust him with my life.
Mostly of course they are liars.
Never known a native to tell the truth.
We do our best for the old country.
It is a pleasure to serve.
Another whisky, old chap? (Soyinka 38)

Within a single play, Soyinka confirms his mastery of different genres, but goes even further this time, and besides the drawing-room comedy jargon, uses what he calls a masque for the effect of his tragedy. The beginning of the fourth act is thus a variation on the 17th century court theatre genre: through music, dance, movement and perhaps some improvised word it tells the events of the ball at the English club until Amusa's arrival from the market. A very handy tool for condensing the action, it contains much comment within a small space as well. The name and the form of the genre itself, Royalty in a 17th century costume dancing a waltz and the Pilkings' first prize for their death mask, all form a powerful image of anachronism and absurdity and transform the old genre into a moment of the theatre of the absurd.

The settings and characterization of the text add colour to the message. Here, the two "camps" are distinguished. The English speak in prose and Olunde's only local image is calling his father "eater of left-overs" (203), a slip into the local idiom that only comes as a result of the outrage developed during the preceding dialogue with Jane, led in fluent and rather intellectual English, but helping him to realize fully his African roots again. The African employees of the whites speak in prose, too, but much in the other Africans' speeches is said in verse. What starts as singing or telling a story by one character often develops into a stream of poetry that the other characters join fluently and which they leave as fluently for prose. This happens especially in the market scenes (i, iii), while the last scene, set in the English house, but masters by the Africans, is said in prose. Though, however, the African characters can talk in a matter-of-fact style, there are in the play, and especially so in the last part, many moments in which the rhythm and imagery of their prose have much of the intensity of the verse parts, as some of the above quoted passages prove.

The most conspicuous feature of the African expression, both in prose and in verse, is the rich use of folklore, proverbs, riddles, sayings, similes and paraphrases, very often based on the observation of the natural world and of the cycle of human life. The rhythm and the meaning of what the Africans say are frequently strengthened by repetition of the same sentence, phrase or by development of the same:

Elesin: The world I know is good.
Women: We know you'll leave it so.
Elesin: The world I know is the bounty
Of hives after bees have swarmed.
No goodness teems with such open hands
Even in the dreams of deities.
Women. And we know you'll leave it so!
(Soyinka 56)

Soyinka's poetry grows from both the African folklore and the non-African poetic traditions and from his own powerful imagination, skill and the message he has to share. Some of his poetry in the play is dense, some more relaxing. But rarely is what is said totally inaccessible to the reader, while the readers will perhaps sometimes have to follow the rhythm and the mood rather than the complex of the metaphorically expressed meanings. The following quotation represents the moment that marks the beginning of Elesin's tragedy, and yet it is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry in the play. Seeing the young girl at the market, just before the night of his death begins, Elesin asks the women:

Elesin: Tell me who was that goddess through whose lips
I saw the ivory pebbles of Oya's river-bed.
Not even Ogun with the finest hoe he ever
Forged at the anvils could have shaped
That rise of buttocks, not though he had
The richest earth between his fingers.
Her wrapper was no disguise
For thighs whose ripples shamed the river's
Coils around the hills of Ilesì. Her eyes
Were new-laid eggs glowing in the dark.
(Soyinka 59)

Here, we have poetry printed in capital letters at the beginnings of lines and using rhythmic impulses, enjambments as well as Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron and war. While reflecting his own African tradition, Soyinka's use of poetry in drama is close to Shakespeare, Synge or Eliot. For him, too, it is a tool of expressing intensity of feeling, of deepening the dramatic effect, of refreshment. It is worth noticing in this respect that not only do the fully African characters speak a grammatically correct English, as will be mentioned in the following section, but it is also them who frequently use verse form or poetic style in their speeches, while the English speak in plain prose. The subtle message of this distinction is understood by those who know the conventions of the Elizabethan drama. Others will feel it spontaneously, subconsciously perhaps, as a part of Soyinka's comment on the two groups of his characters.

Music, song, proverbs and dance appear frequently in the play. Though they prevail in the African scenes, the fact that Soyinka uses them in the English ones, too, and the way in which he treats them in each of the two milieus suggest that their role is only partly that of elements of culture. Rather, they are again used as symbols of contrast, containing a subtly expressed judgement: the Pilkingses tango, the Viennese waltz and the Rule Britannia, played by black musicians at the English ball, are symbols of anachronism and sterility in the Europeans' use of music and dance, while for the Africans these means of expression are lives themselves.

Death and the King's Horseman has proved that the play's theme and form exceed the world of traditional African theatre. Our knowledge of African theatre and of its cultural and historical background may limit our capacity to distinguish what exactly is African in the play, but we can clearly see the presence of European elements and say that Soyinka's seemingly free, but in fact well-thought-out mixing of both is one of the key principles of the conception of the play and a powerful tool of its effect. The use of quasi-European settings and the presence of important European characters are not usual in Soyinka's earlier plays. The historical event and folklore the play draws from demanded them, but they might, moreover, reflect the specific situation in which the play was finally written in the 1970's, during Soyinka's long stay in Europe, after he had thought of it for several years.

In his conversation with Beier on Yoruba religion, Soyinka expresses his opinion on Christianity as follows:

I see Christianity merely as another expression of nature religion. I cannot accept, I do not regard the principle of sacrifice as belonging to the European world. I completely reject the idea that the notion of the scapegoat is a Christian idea. This scapegoat idea is very much rooted in African religion...I think the obsession with individual salvation... which, if you like, is on the opposite end of the axis of self-sacrifice is a very European thing. I am not aware that it occupied the minds of our people. I think it is a very European literary idea: in fact, the obsession itself is a very Christian principle. In our society, this kind of event, this process, is inbuilt into the very mechanism which operates the entire totality of society (Soyinka qtd. in Beier 35).

This truth is very glaring in the text where Soyinka uses Olunde's death as a form of sacrifice for the community. Olunde's decision to die is a demonstration of the hope his society has in regeneration and continuity. Self-sacrifice is a characteristic of Europe as it is of Africa. In the text, reference is made to a (European) captain of the

ship who blew himself up as self-sacrifice. The essential similarity between the sacrifice of Olunde and the Captain is that both carry a significant message of common humanity for the interest of their people. This sacrificial parallel could be extended to the Christian idea of martyrdom and purification. Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for the sins of all who believe in him so that they can go to heaven. Soyinka draws a parallel between Olunde's case and Christianity. Olunde's heroic action is as a result of his mission to rescue his people. One is surprised at the white woman's obtuse failure to recognize the spirituality and nobility behind Olunde's courage.

Even when Jane could not see the health of Olunde's community as a factor, she advises that he must not throw away his training. Moreover, she speaks of protecting Elesin from the consequence of a barbaric custom, but Olunde knows very well that his father's sacrifice gives him the deepest psychological and emotional fulfillment.

In the text, one can identify that there is no culture that is superior or inferior to another. Regardless of the type of culture a society is known for, it is still a culture. Cultures differ in every society; they can never be the same. It is therefore, not possible for somebody or group of people to come to a certain place and plan to change the culture of that society. The attempt by Mr. and Mrs. Pilkings to change the culture of traditional Africa is met with stiff resistance. Jane, the wife of Mr. Pilkings, describes African culture as follows:

However cleverly you try, it is still a barbaric custom. It is even worse .It's feudal, The king dies and a chieftain must be buried with him. How feudalistic can you get? (Soyinka 53)

However, Soyinka has a logical and sophisticated response to this western viewpoint, which he states thus:

My position is to believe that the African peoples live a very complete rounded self sufficient existence, both emotionally and intellectually, and that all the postulations of the European scholar are either irrelevant, in fact they have no bearing whatever... or contradict the reality of the African peoples (Soyinka qtd. in Beier 63).

Soyinka makes no mistake to alert the white community that African culture emanated from African worldview and its age-long tradition. He supports his claim by referring to the clash in *Death and the King's Horseman*:

The confrontation in the play is largely metaphysical, contained in the human vehicle which is Elesin and the universe of the Yoruba mind,

the world of the living, the dead and the unborn and the numinous passage which links all transition (Soyinka qtd. in Beier 156).

Soyinka's cosmology (the Yoruba worldview) is made up of the three worlds: the world of the living, the dead, and the unborn. Linking these worlds together is the fourth area of existence, fourth world or fourth stage which Soyinka constantly refers to as the area of transition. The area of transition is the "territory of essence ideal", the staging ground for cosmic monsters, the source and origin of life corporeal and non-corporeal. This area is to be distinguished from the numinous passage constructed on its vast surface by the sheer will of the protagonist of transition, Ogun, the first road mark. The "numinous passage" is a narrow pathway, a channel that permits inter-cosmic contact between the different worlds. It is also a channel of continuity. Essence from one area of the three worlds travels to another through the passage of transition, and the constant passage of essence through each territory guarantees continuity. The dead, for instance, influence the living and determine who among the unborn should visit the living. Furthermore, the numinous passage is the orbit of actualization for the matter and non-matter that lie dormant in the fourth area of existence. These essences of matter and non-matter travel to their various spheres through the narrow neck of passage.

Soyinka sees Christianity as an alien religion. He believes very much in Ogun which he celebrates as his own god. His firm belief in the metaphysical god, Ogun, is attested to by his statement as follows:

Ogun's history is the story of the completion of Yoruba cosmogony; he encapsulates that cosmogony's coming-into-being in his own rites of passage...And Ogun is also the master craftsman and artist, farmer and warrior, essence of destruction and creativity, a recluse and a gregarious imbiber, a reluctant leader of men and deities. He is "Lord of the road" of Ifa; that is, he opens the way to the heart of Ifa's wisdom, thus representing the knowledge-seeking instinct, an attribute which sets him apart as the only deity who "sought the way", and harnessed the resources of science to hack a passage through primordial chaos for the gods' reunion with man (Soyinka 83).

In *Reflections of Theatre Practice in Contemporary Nigeria*, Osofisan admires and affirms Soyinka's stance for his role in educating Africans to celebrate and praise their culture and folklore. He maintains that the culture should not be allowed to slip and he goes on to remark that:

You know that with the advent of Christianity these days, a lot of it has been cast more as heresy. We however owe it to Soyinka for being able to provide a window of insight, illumination into what our

culture really is or what makes us distinct as black Africans. Without his pioneer works, I don't think much of the works we have done would have existed (126).

Soyinka's close affinity to Ogun has earned him the label of an atheist. However, he does not shy away or pretend in any way; rather, he introduces himself as the son of Ogun who wants to be proud of tigrity. In *Isara: A Voyage around Essay*, Soyinka is very categorical in this confession of faith by saying:

I remember distinctly my first essay prize at secondary school – that was in my first year. My essay was entitled: “ideals of an Atheist.” Yes, I went through all these phases. I just felt I couldn't believe in the Christian god and for me that meant I was an atheist (78).

Soyinka was at a forum in Japan where the issue of African culture was discussed. He made bold to tell the world that he is still fighting the cause of reparation for Africa and after that battle, he would invite the white community to an arena where he would prove to them that they have even stolen some parts of African culture to decorate their country. He is referring here, of course, to artifacts from Africa which one can not say exactly how they disappeared to the white land. He then asserts that:

Nobody should allow any white man to set religious standards in the sense that Mrs. Pilkings is seen to be very materialistic and spiritually shallow compared to Olunde, a black man who is committed, humanitarian and organically religious. (Soyinka qtd. in Beier 52).

According to Soyinka, what they refer to as barbaric is common to both European and African cultures, which is a Sisyphean responsibility to preserve the physical and metaphysical safety of the community or the death of an individual for the sake of the society. Soyinka maintains that Olunde should be given all the treatment of a Messiah who believes in the protection of the ancestors, the living and the unborn. On the other hand, Elesin Oba's passion for materialism offends the cultural sensibility of his people. He knows that harmony can only be guaranteed through constant communion with the gods, respect for the custom and tradition of the society; however, he is found wanting in the text. In *The Critic and Society*, Soyinka allows us an insight into what this harmony of moral order entails when he says:

When society lives in a closer inter-relation with nature, regulates its existence by natural phenomena within the observable processes of continuity—ebb and tide, waxing and waning of the moon, rain and drought, planting and harvest - the highest moral code is seen as that which guarantees a parallel continuity of the species (36).

Elesin oba's thirst for mundane things could be compared to that of our modern day leaders who are in the upper echelon of society but who keep betraying that symbol of authority, trust and confidence reposed in them by the people just because they want to acquire all the things of life. The society of the Elesin loses hope in him because at the critical moment when they need him, he rejects his people. The praise singer confirms this in his statement:

You have betrayed us. We said you were the hunter who brought the quarry down; to you belonged the vital portions of the game. No, you said, I am the hunter's dog and I shall eat the entrails of the games and the feaces of the hunter. We said you were the hunter returning home in triumph, a slain buffalo pressing down on his neck, you said wait, I first must turn up this cricket hole with my toes (Soyinka 68).

The Elesin is used here as a metaphor for the level of corruption and hopelessness that has invaded the society. Soyinka's plays have been praised for their skilled combination of African dramatic traditions and themes with western structural elements.

Conclusion

Soyinka's commitment and vision as an African writer has consistently remained Afrocentric as he has faithfully pitched his literary tent with the revolutionary vanguard that has unswervingly advocated the rich folklore and culture of Africa and affirmed her distinct identity. Through his exquisite dramatization of *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), Soyinka succeeds in making an unequivocal and unambiguous statement about the universality of African way of life evidenced in its elaborate cultural practices, folklore, values and mores. Soyinka's vision is, in the words of Olaniyan, "performative and post-Afrocentric, as it elaborates and accepts a self-critical and open-ended admission of culture and tradition as process, always in a state of dynamic flux and becoming (21).

Soyinka has always been resolute in his belief that the artist is the voice of vision for his society. He has explored the implications of his conviction as a major theme of his plays, dramatizing the attempts by visionary, self-sacrificing protagonists like Olunde in *Death and the King's Horseman* and Soyinka himself in *The Man Died* (1972) to undertake a communally redeeming action. Embodied in the mythic quieter-figure of Ogun, the redemptive project fits into a wider search for self-apprehension, a key concept in Soyinka's thinking, signifying the moment of expanded awareness in which individuals and even entire societies bring the past, present and future together in a perspective which is both historically and spiritually truthful. As his personal and sometimes heroic engagement in political and social

struggles bears witness, Soyinka sees the artist as having a vital social function, apart from his creative production. In his efforts to avert the Civil War, for which he spent two years in prison, and the subsequent fearless criticism of both the Nigerian military and civilian regimes, the dramatist has striven to be a voice of his people, even at considerable risk to himself.

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MEDIA ARTISTS' REFLECTIONS ON NIGERIAN POLITICIANS: ANALYSIS OF SELECT CARTOONISTS' FRAMES

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Abstract

This paper explores the perspectives of media artists on political issues in Nigeria between 2018 and 2021. The period covers President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure as Nigeria's President, a period that Nigerians are hard hit by socio-economic crises, increased corrupt practices and ethno-religious crises. The objective is to frame a narrative of what media political cartoonists view as the method for playing politics in Nigeria within the period under review. To achieve this, the paper adopts the qualitative research method and uses the analytical design to frame a narrative from fifteen (15) randomly selected media cartoons from five (5) Nigerian media artists/cartoonist. Randomly selected cartoons from various media sources published by select Nigerian media cartoonists between 2018 and 2021 formed the units of analysis. The key research questions for this study were: What are the political media cartoons presented by Nigerian cartoonist within the period under study? What are the perspectives of the media political cartoonists in their representations of politicians in Nigeria? How relevant are the perceptions of the media political cartoonists to the realities of politicians in Nigeria? These questions are examined within the Media Framing and Agenda Setting Theories. Findings showed that media political cartoonists doubt most claims of Nigerian political leaders and view members of the main opposition party, the PDP, as obviously stranded and "displaced". Findings also showed that the PDP members who were alleged to be corrupt are begging to be forgiven their loots and be accepted to the APC for cover. Further findings revealed that Nigeria's economy is currently harsh and plagued with hunger, insecurity, inflation and many more while political leaders are spending extravagantly on social events and unnecessary foreign trips abroad. The study recommends that media audience should get enlightened by seeking information about their politicians from the political cartoons while patrons of media art work should appreciate the media artists especially those who reflect political issues by honouring them.

Keywords: Artists, Cartoons, Communication, Media, Nigerian Politicians.

Introduction

The controversy surrounding the value of art within the society has continued to create a divide among scholars. Aestheticians ask **questions** like “What is a work of art?”, “What makes a work of art useful and successful?”, “Why do we find certain things beautiful in the art?”, “Can art be a vehicle of truth?” To the first school of thought, art is just a mere duplicate of life and the society but to the second, art works go beyond mere representation to add relevance to humanity; to explain to man the nature of himself.

Plato, in the *Republic*, describes the objective of art as merely to imitate (Humphrey 103). This has supported the perception of many who consider “art for art sake”. The consideration of art as “imitation” has thrice removed reality from physical and non-physical ideas. This has reduced art to a level of inferiority even when considered on the basis of which God created the physical world. This portends that the artist cannot offer thorough knowledge because of the inferior reality of his product such as the cartoon. Consequently, his activities may be legitimately censored in accordance with the moral ideals of the state, a form of criticism which will be frowned upon by many modern philosophers on the ground that a moral judgment is not an aesthetic judgment. Plato reorganized this distinction, arguing that when one judges aesthetically, “the qualities of measure and proportion constitute beauty and excellence” (Humphrey 103).

On the other hand, Aristotle saw a closer connection between art and reality than his predecessors, and held that art is not so much an imitation as it is an expression of spiritual unity flowing from the divine. His philosophy of arts argues that art is not just a mere 'imitation' as Plato philosophized, but also a reality that is representative and therapeutic to the society. Aristotle views art as effective in enlightening the society through tragic and/or comic feelings; expressing appeals for growth and development through “tragedy” or “comedy”, which are aspects of human life (Sibley 13). Major controversies surrounding the philosophical construct of art are what should be the nature of the art object and how artistic relevance should be judged?

The divide among philosophers is applicable to the discourse on relevance of the media artists, who in this context is considered as the political media cartoonist. The political cartoonist, in the case of Nigeria, is famous for reflecting the political landscape and their players but the relevance of their artistic works is observably and hardly appreciated by the audience. Almost every segment of the country is corrupt in Nigeria; from the least to the greatest, the young to the old, Nigerians have become “fantastically corrupt” people, almost without conscience (Omisore 18). This is why

analysts and critics always blame the political elite for the country's corruption status. In the case of Nigerian media artists or political cartoonists, their representation of the country's political players between 2015 and 2021 observably shows that the activities of Nigerian politicians as shown have received more attention than ever in the history of Nigeria. The perspectives of the media cartoonists are reflected in their cartoons.

Summarily, the thrust of this paper includes: to examine political media cartoons presented by media artists or cartoonists between 2018 and 2021 in Nigeria; to find out media artists or cartoonists' perspectives of Nigerian politicians and to assess the validity of media artists or cartoonists' perspectives of Nigeria's political scene. Basic questions to unravel in this study are: what political events informed the selected cartoons presented by media artists or cartoonists between 2018 and 2021 in Nigeria? What are the media artists' or cartoonists' perspectives of Nigerian politicians? And how valid are the media artists or cartoonists' perspectives of Nigeria's political scene?

Political Cartoons

Cartoons are defined as light-hearted illustrations that employ humour, satire, caricature, exaggeration and symbolism as a subtle propaganda weapon which mobilizes the audience in harmless laughter; they entertain and advise and preach or make political and social comments. (Ajibade and Omini 53). Many papers feature political cartoons as single frames. These single frame cartoons are editorials in pictures and therefore are most often found on editorial pages. The illustrations show political or "message" cartoons from newspapers (Phrank 116).

Political cartoons are universal channels of information about politics (Udoakah 37). Political cartoons are among the distinguished types of cartoons. Others are comic strips, panels and comic books, gag or magazine, illustrative and advertising and animated. Political cartoons do what editorials do in words. They encourage the reader to develop an opinion about someone or something prominent in the political news. Sometimes they appear on editorial pages of newspapers as single drawings without captions or titles. They may support the main editorial of the day and may deal with some events in the day's news. Some political cartoons use a form of caricature to make fun of well-known people by exaggerating their physical characteristics or facial expressions; they tell a story or express an opinion, entertain, teach or comment about a person, event or state of affairs (World Book Encyclopedia 217-219).

Political cartooning can be a passionate business and a full political spectrum as they provide depth to the illustrations and enable viewers to delve deeper into the topic in question. They create awareness about the world with stories being told through the

eyes of the media. Political cartoons that appear as editorial cartoons have value in educating the citizens who are the readers. The cartoons help the citizens to recall or build new experiences. They provide the citizens with the opportunity to appreciate the reality of the situation. Editorial cartoons help the readers to search for facts, to recognize half-truths and misleading information and to acquire the ability to form valued judgment; they invite participation of citizens in the political system (Ajelabi 173-174).

The history of political cartoons varies, yet with the invention of printing and pictorial satire to a large public, artists began to make caricature of possible forms of controversy and this laid the foundation of modern political cartoon (Encyclopedia Americana 728). Great events and great figures were needed to provide the impetus which would establish conventions for the new means of expression. In the early 16th century, the Reformation of Martin Luther and Pope Alexander VI supplied these needs, and the passion engendered in theological conflicts extended the range and scope of the prints. Artistry and imagination were gained with the rise of Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1520-1569), the painter-satirist of Flanders.

Political cartoon was on its way when graphic moralities, full of fantastic invention and rollicking symbolism, as well as mythological allusions and heavy allegory came from Italy. In Italy in the 17th century, it was unsafe to be too openly critical of authority, therefore to survive, political satire had to be ambiguous or disguised. In France also, Cardinal Richelieu, who dominated the government, severely discouraged comment in caricature. His successor, Cardinal Mazarin, was less sensitive and under his regime the social and political prints multiplied, though their quality remained dull and mediocre (Encyclopedia Americana 728).

In Nigeria, Udoakah states:

...political caricature did not feature in the Nigerian press until when Nnamdi Azikiwe (a.k.a Zik) returned from the then Gold Coast (Ghana) to ? the *West African Pilot*, with Akintola Lasekan as the first cartoonist. The *Pilot* cartoons complemented written attacks on colonial policy “by belittling and puncturing the pompous power posturing of the British Empire and its feared colonial administration”. Other militant nationalist newspapers used cartoons as a part of their “media arsenal” for the propaganda war against Britain during the struggle for independence (37).

The early political cartoons and of course those of today form the melding of two elements. The first element is the caricature and the allusion. The second element is context i.e. subject matter which is widely known. The caricature will parody the

individual and the allusion will create context. So, the political cartoons will exaggerate individuals' features and bring out that individuals' inner self creating satire. Initially, these caricatures and allusions were merely curiosity and not viable artistic productions.

The Media Artist or Cartoonist and Reportorial Perspectives

Art is “the formal expression of a conceived image or imagined conception in terms of a given medium”. Identified ingredients of art include subject, form and content (Ocvirk et. al. 4). The subject concerns persons, objects and things; the form is the use of elements in constructing an art work while the content is the total message of the work as developed by the artist and interpreted by the viewer. These three elements are substance, form and technique (Akpan 23).

A media artist is an observer of nature and as such reports from an eye witness perspective. He is a processor and an organizer of artistic ingredients for a certain function and one who integrates technological, social and economic requirements, biological necessities, and the psychological effects of materials, shape, colour, volume and space (Akpan 26). A true artist is therefore one who sharpens his eyes, mind and feeling; interprets ideas and concepts through his media: painting, dance, music, radio, television, poetry, prose, cartoon etc and represents the consciousness and memory of his time (Akpan 48).

As a communicator, the media artist or cartoonist reports from an expository perspective and explains man to himself in the realm of thought and feeling and action. He functions as a poet, a television dramatist, a playwright, a sculptor or a painter. His primary duty is to share significant experience with his audience. The media of artistic expression include: architecture, art, dance, drama, literature, music, sculpture, radio, television and film (Titchner 17). In the media, the media artist professionally reports also from the perspectives of information, education and entertainment. He follows up events as they happen, draws the audience attention to what is top among stories for news and stories behind the news by informing his readers or listeners and instructing or educating the readers on political, health, economic or social issues of the day (Iyorza 48).

Thus the media artist as a reporter requires special attribute to represent ideas and views of his organization from his perspective or the perception of his organization. Iyorza states specifically:

A reporter must have a nose for news or instincts for news, must be able to generate news; must be able to have a good command of written and spoken language of his medium; must have speed and accuracy; the ability to gather news on time and write fast, so the

news can be delivered on time; must be objective in his report by being impartial, impersonal and dispassionate. A reporter must persevere, and must not be tired (should be patient in gathering news); must have the ability to establish contacts and sustain them; must have knowledge of his working tools and know how to operate them. He must be ethical in complying with every profession's rules and regulations and must be versatile, with basic knowledge in some other fields too (Iyorza 45- 47).

The media artist as a reporter therefore mirrors the society. He presents or represents issues in the society to his audience through a medium according the rules of his profession. The media artist practices the presentation and representation of societal issues in the media in his time. He summarily does this from the perspectives of information, education and entertainment using his artistic tools.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is premised on two theories: The Media Framing Theory and the Agenda Setting Theory. The Media Framing Theory was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974 as “Frame Analysis” and the theory holds that the media channels such as radio, television and newspapers beam their focus on societal issues and events and place them within a field of meaning (Iyorza and Ekwok 82-94). Thus the media presenters, producers or writers highlight the issues and make sense of events for the audience under the media framing theory. The theory fundamentally believes that the media play important roles in helping the audience to regulate, accept or form negative or positive perceptions about an event. The Agenda Setting Theory was developed by Maxwell Comb and Donald Shaw in 1972 and the theory states that the media determines the importance placed upon particular issues”. The public agenda – the kinds of issues people discuss, think and worry about - is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicize (Larson 78). As the theorists put it, mass media do not tell us what to think; they tell us what to think about. The theories are relevant to this study on the basis that the cartoonists represent their views through a channel (newspaper) and their perceptions of political issues may be influential to set the agenda for the audience.

Methodology

This study adopts both qualitative and analytical research methods using content analysis to address the research questions. The population for this study includes the total number of political cartoons published by Nigerian political cartoonists with the print media but a sample of fifteen (15) from five (5) media political cartoonists in Nigeria was randomly selected. The five (5) media artists or Nigerian cartoonists whose works will be examined include Mike Asukwo who currently works with *Business Day* Newspaper as Chief Editorial Artist, Mustapha Bulama, a specialist in

political cartoons and children's book Illustration; also a graphic designer and visual facilitator who joined *Daily Trust* Newspaper as a comic strip artist in 2000 and Awosiyan Segun who works with Cartoon-World Communications Limited. Others are Bennett Omeke who is a cartoonist with *The Punch* newspaper's "Viewpoint" section and who favours simple, high-contrast, single panel illustrations with bite and Dada Adekola who is cartoonist editor at *Vanguard* Media Ltd. The media political cartoons selected for content analysis are those published between 2018 and 2021. The analyses are premised on the pictorial and textual contents of the frames as observed as well as frames of the media cartoonists' discourse from the dialogue texts. The study examines the discourse in the political cartoons as perceived by the media cartoonists and weighs them against the realities on ground in Nigeria's political scene as such perceptions are capable of framing realities on Nigerian politicians in the minds of the media audience.

Analyses of Frames on Select Nigeria's Issues

PLATE I



Source: <https://talkhealth9ja.com/>

PLATE II



Source: <https://www.thesparkng.com>

In Plate I, Nigeria's Labour Minister, Mr. Chris Ngige has been in the news for controversial labour related matters with various unions including the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). The above cartoon is an off-shoot of Ngige's reaction to Nigeria's medical doctors' mass migration to Saudi Arabia, Europe and America in search of greener pastures and better working conditions. In the bid to water down the controversies generated in public quarters by the mass exodus of these medical doctors, Ngige said "Nigeria has surplus doctors." Although he did not specify the doctors he referred to, the cartoonists sarcastically presents a caricature of spiritual healers (doctors), native doctors, patent medicine retailers and traditional medicine sellers or herbalists. From the above presentation, Asukwo doubts Ngige's claims of surplus medical doctors in Nigeria when most of them are moving in droves to other parts of the world. Again,

the presentation mocks the Minister's alienation from the reality surrounding the medical doctors' exit to foreign countries or his sense of propaganda intended to (mis)inform the public.

In Plate II, there is a surge in the number of defections from one party to another in Nigeria and in recent times. State Governors, ex-state governors, former ministers and a host of politicians in Nigeria have been moving from one party to another. Most defections have occurred between the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC). From the year 2015 when the APC took over power and became the ruling party till date, Asukwo's presentation actually reflects that the APC are on top of the bunk while the PDP are beneath. The cartoonist presents Nigerian politicians as “trans-rodents”. Rodents are naturally destructive and this is reflected in the above cartoon where they have destroyed their party (the PDP) and are seeking to switch over to the ruling party with a promise to be “honest”. Asukwo views Nigerian politicians as destructive and unfaithful, impatient and greedy to always want to be where they can be comfortable irrespective of the will of the people.

PLATE III



Source: <https://www.thesparkng.com>

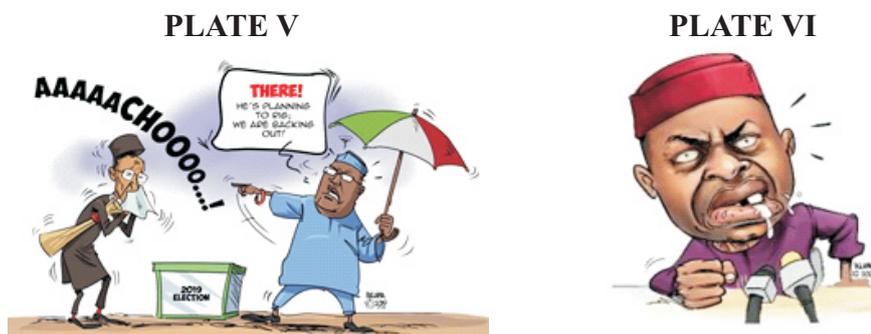
PLATE IV



Source: <https://howng.com>

In Plate III, Asukwo's presentation in the cartoon is partly a continuation of what is happening to political defectors in Nigeria. The All Progressive Congress represented by the President Buhari beams a search light using a telescope to search for politicians in opposing parties who were suspected to have looted from the nation's treasury in the previous dispensation. The cartoonist's perspective is that the ruling party is wooing members of the opposition party with debt forgiveness, freedom from litigation and mild punishment if they should defect to the ruling APC. The cartoonist's frame also shows that members of the opposition are obviously stranded and “displaced” especially within their party the PDP, and are begging to be forgiven and accepted to the APC for cover. The frame also shows that the umbrella (symbol for the PDP) has a problem.

In Plate IV, Nigerians have widely criticized President Muhammadu Buhari for being ineffective in leadership so the cartoonist, Asukwo, presents the reason as the President's putting of square pegs in round holes (Unqualified political office holders in sensitive offices). The cartoonist position has been widely shared by most public media commentators. The President is obviously confused but there are calls from several quarters that he should change his “cabinet” even though this has met a brick wall.



Source: <https://africacartoons.com> Source: <https://africacartoons.com>

In Plate V, rigging of elections in Nigeria has been viewed widely as a recurrent decimal and the cartoonist, Bulama, represents this position in the PDP's earlier accusations of the APC's ploy to rig the 2019 general elections. The cartoon reflects a clandestine body language of the President, represented by his handkerchief and incantations “AAAAACHOOOO”. The cartoonist perspective lends credence to the fact that the activities of the All People's Congress (APC) and the President's refusal to sign the transmission of electronic result to law prior to the election was one of the calculated efforts of the APC to rig the 2019 general elections.

In Plate VI, Femi Fani Kayode (FFK), a former Aviation Minister under the PDP government that preceeded the APC in 2015 had put up a tour to selected PDP states and their governors, including the Governor of Cross River State, Professor Ben Ayade, and everyone suspected he was up to some political games. After a tour of some of the governor's projects, he delivered a press conference and one of the journalists asked him who was “bank rolling” him and he got upset, hence the show of rage in the cartoon above. This cartoon is without words but speaks volumes about FFK's anger. He replied by abusing the journalist from Gaurdian Newspaper and humiliated him, stressing that he came from a rich home and was rich enough to cater to his bills. The cartoonist's perspective here is that the politician in question acted quite irresponsibly by growing annoyed before a public that he owes a sense of accountability, probity and transparency. Many politicians in Nigeria would't want to be questioned on activities that would bring them to public ridicule.

PLATE VII



Source: <https://www.bbc.com>

PLATE VIII



Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com>

In Plate VII, Bulama captures and represents the feelings of Nigerians who were drowning while the President's daughter, Hanan was wedding her heart-throb Turad in an elaborate wedding that attracted dignitaries within and outside the country. Given the hard economic reality in the country; the hunger, insecurity, inflation and many more, the President was spending a huge amount of money entertaining guests from all over the world. The cartoonist's perspective is that the President was less concerned about the plight of his citizens.

The cartoon attracted a lot of negative criticisms against the cartoonist but a BBC report said the cartoonist said he never meant any harm on the President's daughter's wedding but intended to reflect Nigerians' feelings at a time the number 1 family was celebrating her daughter's marriage. Bulama said he was seriously abused on Social Media for putting up the cartoon even though some of his fans praised and asked him to continue with the good artistic work. The criticisms from both high and low cadre of persons in the society made the cartoonists to appreciate that his work of art is widely seen by many and may propel the leaders to consider improving the economic situation of the people.

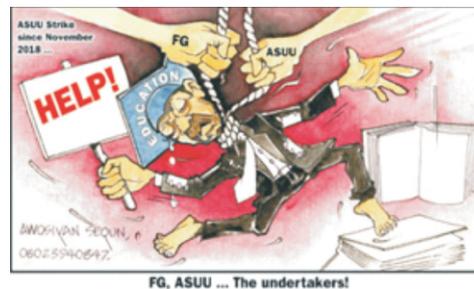
In Plate VIII, financial autonomy for local governments in Nigeria is one of the political issues in recent times. The controversy is built around the question of who should control local government allocation, the local governments themselves or the state governments. Before now the states controlled and determined the amount to reallocate to the local governments after receiving financial allocation from the Federal Government. In the process, the local governments complained that what gets to them was only a fraction of the amount originally allocated them by the Federal government. Consequently, the local governments attributed their inability to initiate and execute projects at their levels to the end. Finally, the Federal Government signed the local government financial autonomy bill. The cartoonist, Awosiyan Segun represents the greed of state governors and their “wish” or desire to still control the meager local government fund despite the huge financial allocation to the states. The cartoonist therefore presents the state governors as greedy, wishful or covetous, with ulterior motives behind their desire to control the local government allocation in addition to the state allocation.

PLATE IX



Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com>

PLATE X



Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com>

In Plate IX, election campaigns and promises are always quite enormous during electioneering periods in Nigeria but the fulfillment of these promises by political office holders is hardly achieved. The campaign promises have become a mere ritual and routine for politicians during manifestoes at campaign rallies. The cartoonist represented his view prior to the 2019 general elections and shows the uncertainties and dilemmas of the common man and electorate. Segun reflects the feeling that even the common man does not believe in the promises of Nigerian politicians. The cartoonists also shows that the electorates have learnt very fast from experiences of the past that the political office seekers and holders can no longer be trusted on their campaign promises and this development is partly responsible for voter apathy in Nigeria.

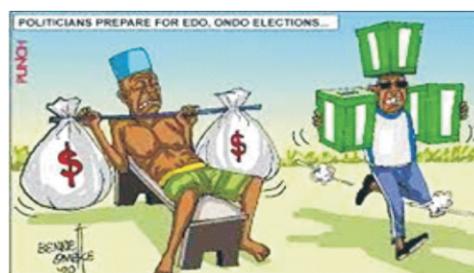
In Plate X, the issue of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike in Nigeria has assumed a political dimension as presented by Segun in the frame above. It is a political issue that affects educational development in the country. Nigeria has a long history of ASUU strikes. In the cartoon above, Segun views that the educational sector is “strangled” and can possibly be murdered by the consistent Federal Government - ASUU face off. The cartoonists presents the educational sector as being in dire need of help and survival from the political tussles of the Federal Government and ASUU, whom he tags “the undertakers.”

PLATE XI



Source: <http://www.punchng>

PLATE XII



Source: Facebook

In Plate XI, President Buhari's anti-corruption war in Nigeria has been criticized for being lopsided. While the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria is battling out cases of looters at the judiciary, the cartoonist, Bennete Omeke views that cases of looting and re-looting are rising in Nigeria. The cartoonist therefore views the litigations against looters and the prolong process of adjudication between EFCC and their culprits as distractions to performance of duties. Also the cartoonist presents to us the view that the EFCC's focus on fighting looters in court is a ploy by the Federal Government to distract the public so that the inherent politicians can loot even more.

In Plate XII, although the cartoon above focused on the preparation of the Edo and Ondo elections of 2020, the cartoonist has presented a typical scenario of preparation for elections in Nigeria. The view of the cartoonist is that politicians prepare for elections in the country with money and thugs. The cartoon above shows a typical Nigeria politician warming up with money bags in dollars and asking that the “boys”, (the tugs) should be ready. This is a further reflection of what happened during the Edo and Ondo elections in 2020. It further reveals that the lack of money in circulation in Nigeria can be attributed partly to politicians hoarding of money preparatory to elections.

PLATE XIII



Source: Twitter.com

PLATE XIV



Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com>

Plate XIII presents another political issue that rent the Nigerian political atmosphere between 2018 and 2019 and this was Nigerians' criticisms of Ex-Governors who are receiving jumbo pay (in Millions of Naira) while serving as Senators of the Federal Republic and another jumbo pay as pension from their states' allocation. The cartoonist's perspective is reflected in both textual and pictorial discourses in the above cartoon. Omeke represents the stress surrounding Federal Government's derivation of revenue to fund monthly allocation, the burden of financial expenditure by the state governments amidst the excitement of the Ex-Governors to receive their share irrespective of the plight of the Federal Government, the State Governments or the citizens. The cartoonists view is that the Ex-Governors are not only contributing to financial hardship in the country, but are also insensitive to the plight of the common man.

In Plate XIV, Dada Adekola represents the much rumoured idea in Nigeria that bandits in Nigeria migrated from Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone and Libya but were imported in 2015 prior to the General Election that was contested by former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Buhari and others at the National level. Many citizens have alleged that the bandits were hired to scare the PDP led Government and to cause national political mayhem in the event that the APC failed to win. The APC government won the elections at the Federal level and in some states but seven years later, the activities of the bandits in terms of kidnapping and killings has even aggravated. The cartoonist could not ascertain the reality of this allegation, but the presence of the bandits especially in Northern Nigeria and their persistent evil acts have compelled him to view that the bandits and their nefarious activities may have been tolerated by the Federal Government with the intention of keeping them around for the 2023 general elections. This is quite revealing as the cartoonist expresses this in the words “he wants his contract renewed.”

PLATE XV



Source: <https://cartan.org/free-speech-campaign/>

Press freedom has been a debate on the front burner in Nigeria's political scene. The impact of the press and the media on corruption among Nigerian politicians appears to be enormous. The activities and comments of citizen journalists on social media eventually led to government's advocacy for an anti-social media bill, shut down of Twitter and suppression of press freedom in Nigeria. Dada Adekola perceives in the above frame that apart from the passage of the Freedom of Information bill, the efforts of civil organizations and journalistic bodies to fight for attainment of press freedom in Nigeria is further frustrated by the Nigerian Senate because it is not ready to support the process.

Findings and Discussion

Findings reveal that media political cartoonists doubt most claims of some Nigerian Ministers such as the Labour Ministers' claim that Nigeria medical doctors are still surplus in the country when most of them are moving in droves to other parts of the

world and some information from the Information Minister, Lai Mohammed. Political cartoonists view Nigerian politicians as destructive, unfaithful, impatient and greedy; politically promiscuous, ready to switch over to any party that is at the peak and can make them enjoy the “national cake”. For instance the APC politicians are viewed to be enjoying the “national cake” while some PDP politicians are watching enviously. Others are crossing over already. This is exemplified in Nigerian political defectors from PDP to APC including the likes of the former Akwa Ibom State Governor, Senator Godswill Akpabio, Governor of Cross River State Professor Ben Ayade, former Aviation Minister Femi- Fani Kayode and many others from all regions of the country.

Findings also reveal political cartoonists' view that members of the main opposition party, the PDP, are obviously stranded and “displaced” and are begging to be forgiven their loots and to be accepted to the APC for cover. They also see the Nigerian President as unqualified to govern and wrong in his choice of qualified political office holders to man the appropriate portfolios. The cartoonist perspective also lends credence to the fact that the activities of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the President's refusal to sign the transmission of electronic result to law prior to the election was one of the calculated efforts of the APC to rig the 2019 general elections. Another cartoonist's perspective inferred from findings is that Nigerian politicians are not ready to be transparent and accountable to the public and would not want to be questioned on activities that would bring them to public ridicule.

Political cartoonists, as findings show, also hold the view that Nigeria's economy is currently harsh: hunger, insecurity, inflation and many more while political leaders are spending extravagantly on social events and unnecessary foreign trips abroad without recourse to the suffering masses. The political cartoonists view state governors as greedy, wishful or covetous, with ulterior motives behind their desire to control the meager local government financial allocation in addition to the state allocation during the debate on allocation control. The politicians are equally deceptive in their campaign promises and this development is partly responsible for voter apathy in Nigeria.

Finally, findings reveal how political cartoonists view the Nigerian political class, who, together with ASUU is “strangling” and seeking to murder the educational sector that is in dire need of revival and funding. The political cartoonists also view the litigations against looters and the prolong process of adjudication between EFCC and their culprits as distractions to performance of duties: focusing on fighting looters in court while the ruling party politicians are relentlessly looting the public treasury. Political cartoonists view politicians' preparation for elections in the country with money and thugs as ploy to rig elections. The politicians are suspected

to have a pact with bandits especially in Northern Nigeria, preparatory to the 2023 elections, which is responsible for the lack of political will to declare them “terrorists” and wipe them off the land. The same Nigerian politicians, as findings reveal, are working tirelessly to suppress press freedom in the country.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study set out to identify media cartoonists' cartoons on Nigerian politicians, to demystify the perspectives of the political cartoonists on Nigerian politicians and to establish the level of relevance of the political cartoonists' works on Nigerian politicians to reality. The study found out that a lot of political cartoons were focused on politicians because their activities of corruption, banditry, political thugs during elections and imbalances in the leadership styles of the APC led Government. The study also found out that all political cartoons on politicians within the past three years portray the politicians in negative light as corrupt, greedy and insensitive to the plight of Nigerians. Findings revealed that the cartoons were found to be relevant in reflecting the reality on ground in the country.

This paper concludes that the corrupt nature of Nigerian politicians actually necessitated the artistic ideas of the political cartoonists. The corrupt practices of the politicians gave the media artists the news to inform the audience and enlighten them on the techniques and methods of corrupt practices among politicians in Nigeria. From the perspectives of the political cartoonist, this study also concludes that Nigerian politicians have been most corrupt in terms of looting, sponsoring kidnappings and banditry. The politicians are greedy and completely insensitive to common Nigerians' plight. The works of the artists are true reflections of the society.

This study therefore recommends that the political class in Nigeria should retrace their behaviours and desist from corrupt practices that would bring them to media limelight by cartoonists because such artistic communications not only ridicule the corrupt personality of the politicians in public domain but also mock their integrity in a manner that they (the politicians) cannot sue. Secondly the media audience should seek to get additional enlightenment on political issues in the country by seeking information about their politicians from political cartoons as they present details in an entertaining but critical manner. Finally patrons of media art work should appreciate the media artists especially those who reflect political issues while organizations should encourage them by giving them more awards of honour.

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THE IMPERATIVE OF IDEOLOGY AND THE GENDER QUESTION: THE DIRTY-FISTED FEASTING ON TEXTUAL PRODUCTIONS

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Abstract

In the discourse of gender issues and the artists involved contrived liberation therein, there exist palpable inarticulation of the existing political space they are placed. And because of this unresolved problematic, whether consciously desired or unconsciously placed, they invariably serve as conduits of the subject they are interested in resolving or creating to resolve. The danger here for the feminine gender in this whole contrived 'liberation' drive is the furtherance of the already complex noose around the jugular of the feminine by furthering the concern around their subjugation and strengthening the potency of patriarchal domination. This paper therefore lays bare these problematics and the complexities of the art produced through dramatic texts and discourses for purposes of strategic reversal of thematic concerns and approaches that would guarantee the feminine gender being seen and placed as a subject and not the 'Other' in the scheme of things.

Keywords: Femininity, Ideology, Masculinity, Hegemony, Patriarchy, Feminism, Counter Hegemony.

Introduction

It would be pertinent to have a cursory appraisal of the historicity of the feminist crises from the beginning that necessitates the discourse on how it would be resolved. The subordination within gender is always placed at the terrain of patriarchal tendencies and invigorations that strengthen the stranglehold through several relationships in society. It is in some instance referred to a male relationship by which domination, to the power relationship by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways (Bhasin 3).

Mitchell, a feminist psychologist, uses the word patriarchy “to refer to kinship system in which men exchange women” (24). From another parameter, Walby “... defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (20). It will be instructive therefore, to discuss patriarchy as a system and not reduce to biological determinism where men and women are placed according to nature with the different roles to suit such or as it were, 'every man being in a dominant position and every woman subordinate' (Walby

20). Aristotle propounded similar “theories” and called males active, females passive. For him female was “mutilated male”, someone who does not have a soul. In his view, the biological inferiority of a woman makes her inferior also in her capacities, her ability to reason and, therefore, her ability to make decisions. Because man is superior and woman inferior, he is born to rule and she to be ruled. He said “the courage of man is shown in commanding of a woman in obeying” (Walby 8). Hartmann looks at the link between patriarchy and capitalism and argues that “patriarchy links all men to each other irrespective of their class. A woman's work benefits both capital and her husband. Hartmann defines patriarchy as a set of relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them, which in turn enable them to dominate women. The material base of patriarchy is man's control over women's labour power”(95). As for liberal feminists, their stance bears a traditional outlook, with the believe that men and women are not necessarily different and therefore should be accorded same rights, but acknowledging the centrality of men in the lives of women, recognizing the desire for a social system that gives value to and gives encouragement towards diversity in all segments of society. Conclusively, “they advocate legal and economic reforms in society that will uplift women and ensure their active participation in all spheres” (Fafa 86).

As stated earlier, the base of it all is that the question of patriarchy and subordination of the woman is a systemic issue and not other determinations which may without doubt serve as variables in the discourse of the subject anyway. Therefore, a conversation in this instance must view possibilities of mediation towards an attempted resolution of the subject within the context of relationships based on domination and subordination and all the characteristics of tools that aid such. The starting point being the question of aesthetic/ideology. Because the discourse is hinged on textual production, the question of the author also plays a vital role in further espousing the ideological imperatives. Foucault has this to say; “The coming into being of the notion of “author” constitutes the privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences” (Davis 263). While in his theory of Literary Production, Marcherry, attests that:

When that state of consciousness we call ideology enters the literary text it takes on a different form. Ideology is normally lived as if it were totally neutral, as if its imaginary discourse gives a perfect explanation of reality. However, once ideology is worked into a text all its contradictions and gaps are exposed (Cited in Selden 456).

Ideology has always been a contentious phrase as a result of its elusive physical and material existence. This has constantly constituted a shrouded discussive arena due to its seeming immateriality, and therefore placed within spaces of a consciousness

that is false. Ideology has a life and has the components of contestation within any literary, visual collective. Within these contraptions that constitute literature, Hall, argues that the mental frameworks-the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the representation-which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works. For Lukacs, "Ideology" is a projection of the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie, which functions to prevent the proletariat from attaining consciousness of its revolutionary position. Ideology determines the "form of objectivity", thus the very structure of knowledge, while Frankfurt School, and specifically, Gramsci bases his on his crude application of hegemony, but hinged it on base and superstructure with the later dependent or determined by the former, and his prison notes and the evolution of the 'hegemon'. The question of relative autonomy of the supposedly determined 'superstructure' of literature, law, religion as depending on some rigid foundations, becomes very problematic and moves from the rigid stance of reflection to one of mediation where life exists within this so-called superstructure. For Williams, he prefers to lean on the concepts of totality and hegemony.

When you wake up in the morning, and look in the mirror, what do you see? For most women, regardless of their race or nationality, see a woman who sees her strangulated self staring her in the face. That is the problem in these struggle regardless of the variant the gender chooses to drive the discourse. As a result, there is already a restricted strangulated ideological space that blocks the understanding of the issues and their complexities. In a lot of cases, what is seen is the aesthetically feminine. The concern here is that, male or female, what you should see is the aesthetically human without giving credence to the isolated gender specification. The gender specific is necessary only to avoid isolating the biological differentiations. Here again, we are enmeshed in a linguistic dullrum. The heritages acquired by the would-be artist or activist from the parameter of gender may not see the restricted language corner he/she is placed. The disquiet of language of expression becomes an issue. Generally gender and feminism are encapsulated within the prism of Western cultural interpretations and evolved from another cultural difference and muddled by an admixture of the linguistically *albino*, the deciphering of meaning becomes a problematic. The artist herself/himself may not articulate concretely the complexities of contestation of dominance in this quagmire and would/should not expect the recipient in the third of fourth divide to easily decipher or articulate the desired meaning supposedly resultant.

The discourse and the critique of the emasculated 'Other' is a deliberate arrangement of strengthening the potency of tools of accumulation of capital and patriarchy via the media, textual productions, seminars in academic common rooms and halls, struggle towards affirmative actions that would constantly oil the conduits of

patriarchy and hegemonic and 'legitimate' control and domination, the Television programmes, *Radio Talk* shows, Newspaper advertorials, documentations, Conferences, Politics that are sponsored and processed by same hegemonic activists, and therefore making common the strategies that are supposed to break the shackles of strangulation consciously or unconsciously. The carriers of aesthetics, ideological engagements of feminism are the carriers of tolerable aesthetic gab paneled in the variants of these ideologies. The market women selling onions at the market square do not have such presences and so, whatever is supposedly gained is passed forcefully down her throat as attempts at liberating her.

The power play of ideology within texts and literary production and its role in shifting consciousness of would-be authors attempting to espouse ideological specifics and the unprepared position of hinging on another. There has been an unarticulated understanding or an arrogant neglect of the recipients because of the believe that the emasculation cannot be called, or as a matter of fact sheer ignorance of the ideological complications bedeviling the ideological contestation that are enshrined, or carried away by the commodification, very conveniently of aesthetic/ideological stranglehold. This, in what Benjamin (1969) terms "Absolute" hegemony within the ruling-class block, however, remained of course with the urban bourgeoisie', vicious one at that, determined to maintain the supposed democratization and the consistent crises of authority between the recipient of the arts and the author. The reader assumes participatory role to give him credence in the forceful injection into his consciousness the whole idea of a decider of the production of the art. Surreptitiously injecting machineries of control and dominating vice grip that looks very much like a radical revolutionary ice cream! This was easily espoused what Benjamin attempted to rake out regarding authenticity and the none in the reproductive processes of probable religious artifacts, or one-off paintings produced by artists for their patrons in an aural preservation in the last century.

Clinging tenaciously to these murderous iron grip, feminists' ideological illusion with false aura of radical feminist defenders are convenient hiding places for the Illahs, Agunloyes and the Yerimas, Hagher percolating the supposed defenders of the omen. Too far away in distant periphery until when needed to oil the conduit pipes of one distorted approach to an ostensible radical feminist ideological stance or the other, directionless, oiling the cheer leaders, populating the scholarly spaces and serving as academic thugs of this quaint dangerous concussive 'absolute' hegemonic consciousness shift. While in reality, the text should move beyond the 'University common rooms' to the desired receptors of these alignments of feminist group leaders. In all these contradictions of absolutism, Eagleton, refereeing to Spivak's literary productions at the center of American scholarship, laments the absence of the subaltern native as a viable audience. To repeat, then, this commodification and inward turning of post-colonial theory has impacted upon its stylistics, contributing

to its degradation into what he calls an "hermetically private idiom." Thus, while Eagleton's trenchant Marxism causes him to portray this problem in rather oppositional, simplistic terms, it does, however, position him to ask what we think is the most incisive question of this review: to whom, in light of her knotted, baffling style, is Spivak speaking?" (Eagleton 5)

The relationships between the speaker and audience still retain in crucial values, for those who are even privileged or have the privilege of speaking and those who have access to hearing. The huge spiritual chasm between the mouth and the ear, symbolically creates the question of place of enunciation and further still its reception and the place of reception. And also the complications of the privilege of hearing what is heard when the former is transcended. It is the reason for which the local artists desperate for recognition towards one ideological variant of feminist discourse or the other, some settling for whatever their art seem similar in parts, to pretentiously make believe of ideological battle due to its novelty and the rave of the moment. Or the confusion of the oppression of the subordinated groups of the populace and reducing it to specific ideological coloration without knowledge of distinguishing the tools of anti-hegemonic with myriads of feminists, of claims that are the most dangerous.

This is also expressive within Ideological imperatives where the 'opening glee' grinds analytical, scholarly, discourse into a gratuitous static halt when we erroneously, albeit deceptively or intellectual laziness and subordination of the consciousness of the reader or recipient in a wasted verbosity as evolved within the context of such presentation, in the *Encrypted Mosaic: Culture, Patriarchy and Health Behaviour(s) in a Modernizing Nigeria (University of Jos, Inaugural Lecture, 2015)* John Illah, was of the view our libraries as dead pieces of literature that do not give space for any ideological choices, not necessarily deliberately, but taking refuge deliberately in a concocted Igbo/Igala/Igberra/English tirade serving as shield, but largely expressing the difficulty in deciphering and participating contextually in ideological and shielding from critical perusal, variants of contradictory ideological vituperations, bringing dialectics of scholarship within analytical spaces to a brick wall, where it uncritically concludes that, "...one might upgrade his consciousness to the present, thereby enriching the encrypted mosaic"(9), because as he claims; "Many Nigerians continue to derive and drive their identity construction through the residual maze ..., with mutations, "... always taking place in language, diet and attire" (24-25).

This the author links with the existing relationships which he adduces as patriarchal and that even knowing the fact that the supposed elite class that was created by colonialism, with mold of values of the West and estranging itself from their heritages-problematic as this is, because one cannot detach oneself from his

heritage(s) no matter how hard he tries, and not taking into cognizance the introduced socio-economic society by colonialism, and treating patriarchy as a static construction, lodged and receded, anytime it becomes needed, turning societal dynamism on its head. Hear another argument; “They do not undertake many of the harmful traditional practices because they clash with their modes of Western life, but lodged somewhere are vestiges of patriarchy, as evident in the media, their ideological apparatuses” (32), alluding to a universal appeal to early marriages, gender discrimination, and child labour, as acceptable “... cultural imperatives” (33); again turning societal differences and these alluded cultural imperatives as static and hidden in some museum for reference and on its head. To resolve these supposed cultural issues, the author concludes that; “It is necessary, therefore to deconstruct culture to make it amenable, or less inimical to appropriate health behaviour(s), or still, less tolerant of harmful traditional practices” (34).

Here, there is even more confusion where culture is seen as 'encrypted' into some stranglehold where it waits for the carver to evolve a shape suitable for the immediate functionality, in the first instance, and secondly disregarding the muddled consciousness evolving from a dual or triple consciousness to even 'feacified' into a more stinking essence that makes meaning even more disquiet for recognition. Neither does this conclusion recognize the special difficulties of being male when we specify the gender unarticulated terrain of untenable rhapsody. Further still, the suggested area of resolution by the author viz; De-commissioning patriarchy that hinges on legislation, based on the directive principles of the 1999 Constitution ... All cultural values and practices with “phallogocentric intent” should be sanctioned out of festivals, carnivals and fiestas ... No event shall present, promote, condone, garnish, and employ a language riddled with patriacial discriminations ... A discussion should be initiated with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jamatu Nasir Islam (JNI) to force clergy to demythologize and amend their sermon in similar vein” (35-36).

Sadly, these are institutions that are structured to uphold patriarchal tendencies and are particularly not in tandem with specific cultural imperatives surreptitiously injected into the socio-political processes of society. Neither does this argument take into cognizance existing cultural presence that may be stampeded out of existence to evolve something new and dysfunctional for peculiar societal development and progress. Neither does it take caution to the fact of who makes these relevant legislations and their consciousness in relation to the supposed issues at stake? Are these not tools of hegemonic infractions that make common sense the feeling of recognition, and therefore even more vicious requirement for continuous emasculation and normalizing them in the invigoration and reification into the destructive cultural appropriation of William's selective tradition? (Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 1978). Or as concluded, a reform of academic curricular

that is seen as, patrimonial in spirit and unscientific in parts, most likely to reinforce rather than contradict notions already received at home...Note the gender relations in Achebe's celebrated *Things Fall Apart*, Clark's *Song of a Goat* or still Sofola's *Wedlock of The Gods*" (Illah 37).

Would we in attempting to resolve the above, isolate the proponents of patriarchal patrimonies condensed in the male gender, or subsume the posture of masculinities covered by only the feminine gender that relies on the already existing spaces of the lonely part of freedom/liberation, riding on the craft of same patriarchy, beggarly? The school system itself is, according to Althusser (in spite of its limited starch) is an ideological apparatus and therefore a very convenient conduit for imperatives of the hegemon, only deriving more complex invigorations. And several instruments like the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board of Technical Education (NBTE), Universal Primary Education Board (UBEB), to effect the de-commissioning is not to articulate their function either deliberately or unconsciously to achieve an ideological specific of the "encrypted mosaic" (sic). Or as further suggested, depending on 'Judicial Oversight', 'Increased Advocacy: Social Media' and conclusions;

encrypted mosaic of the mind, as cultural archetypes, continues to teleguide our behaviour, even though materially, we are disconnected from it. It has residual power to pre-dispose us to conduct our health behaviour(s) in a particular way ... harmful traditional practices are linked to our cultural identity, and this is enshrined in patriarchy..."(40).

These traditional practices and cultural identifiers are too generalized and give an unacceptable analytical space for a 'correct' approach in addressing them. When we allude to 'our culture', it is false and misleading in tagging them Nigerian culture, and when engaging in premises of resolving these contradictory areas by suggesting particular strategy not only limits engagements but pandering an alien 'mono-ideological' imperative with a dirty-fisted ideological rendition of the deceptive and impossible, rather straight-jacketing several cultures to the dictates of a single ideology that would help shroud meaning, grinding discourse to a permanent halt!

These generalizations are too simplistic for they do not give credence to the existence of the *almajiri* phenomenon neither do they rake deep to understand the intricacies and complexities of the reasons for these existences. Rather, they exacerbate existing superficial unscientific conclusions required for the cleansing of conduits for a complex hegemonic inclusion into the tools for invigoration. There is a looseness in its commonality, vaguely put, surface level with a package of clichés and rhetorically empty, not consistent, a reduction of articulate value system and concerned with

being politically correct rather than a discourse in candor. What exact value do we discern from these conclusions regarding ideology and aesthetic qualities? Eagleton attempted and concluded sources in this direction but still failed to explain away aesthetics even in its deformed status, "... bourgeois aesthetics is bourgeois ideology, but it still retains some value; but not, apparently, as aesthetics; "... does Eagleton dismiss aesthetics-as the theory of art and beauty-as a misconception, and substitute the aesthetic as ideology as the only valid way of regarding aesthetics? Or, does he accept aesthetics as theory in principle, and only offer to examine it from another angle, viz. aesthetics as ideology?" (13).

For Eagleton, there is the temptation to conclude that his philosophy of art and beauty is irrelevant as his approach, but for real, Eagleton is concerned about revolutionary aesthetics which he may consider revolutionary ideology. The contestation is whether aesthetic and ideology are one and the same thing. For critical engagement, their usage could be interchangeable. For deciphering radical aesthetics, it becomes a strand of ideological suppositions that could be regarded as aesthetics and therefore radical aesthetic ideology.

Ideology is variously described as: involving the introjection of the law; encoding emotive attitudes relevant to the reproduction of social power; involving performative discourse; involving universal subjective responses; mystification and legitimation; involving the identity of subject and object; feeling at home in the world; thought which conceals its limits by eternalization and universalization; being a matter of sensuous representation; being primarily a matter of feeling; felt certainty; being incarnated in everyday life; both pertaining to feeling and requiring social practices; mediating between the affective and the practical; being a matter of signs, images and representations; involving the semiotic mark of an erased violence; self-delusion; being at home in the world (15).

Moreover, as Eagleton explains, during the same period that the work of art was dissociated from specific social functions (those of religious worship, glorification of the state, patronage, etc.) and became a commodity to be bought and sold on the market. In these conditions, it becomes possible to reflect upon the work of art as something that does not receive its value from religion, the state, one's patron, etc., and to theorize that value in some other way, the obvious ways being that either the work of art is an end in itself, since we no longer use it for anything else, or that its value is related to our feelings about it, since our possession of it essentially involves enjoyment (19).

It is these contradictions that are carried into another level of discourse of gender and patriarchal concerns as exemplified by Agunloye, embedded within a literary textual document. For the literary textual document of *More than Dancing* (2003), the

contradictions meted out by the playwright smirks of deliberate offerage of supposed gender concerns of the starting point to the ruling hegemony drooling under the political statement of former Vice President Atiku and former President Obasanjo who are glowing under the conduit of women to the attainment of their political desires as expressed at the preface, and the squirming 'feminine' happiness under the vituperations of hegemonic 'selective tradition'. Dancing from the beginning to the end under the clutches of *almajiri* versus the master's relationship of master-servant realization within the specific ideological stampede. Hear these;

I was putting finishing touches to the manuscripts on the computer when the National Television Authority (NTA) showed the National Vice President Alh Abubakar Atiku, at the PDP victory party on the 26th. of April 2003 at Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja; while making his speech, he declared that women voters at the just concluded elections were three times more than men voter nationwide. He then promised to compensate women for their dedication, commitment and selfless efforts, with increased representation in governance. President Olusegun Obasanjo also reiterated this appreciation and promise when he made his own speech (iv).

The underbelly of this tirade and its deceptive floweration is so clear even to a most uncritical mind of the unapologetically naïve recipient that should not convince an articulate mindset, yet it was taken hook line and sinker by the supposed defender of a course that is meant to lead and counter a complex structure of the dominant in the gender tapestry. Further still, in her drive towards defending the question of 'freedom' from patriarchy, Agunloye in her play *More than Dancing*, orders the women to:

“Think about your future. Think about the future of your daughters. Women are equal partners with men in governance ... Return to your homes” (2).

The concern for daughters is not an issue in itself but where is the place of the sons? The first statement contradicts the following line that attempts an equation of both genders in party politics and at the end asked the women to return home! Is this to subtly say that the place of the women should be at home rather than the pulpit? The question of legislation being absent in the treatment of women in the socio-political sphere and politics in particular, may be important, but quest for the humanity of all is beyond legislation. Without transcending these simplicities, you would already be subordinating the women and making them depend on 'handouts'. You would be subscribing to a 'given' with all its political and hegemonic manipulations. Besides, since the absence of women in governance is alluded to, who does the legislative tinkering? How would the women be involved in this legislative altering to suit their purposes?

It is imperious to constitute profound interrogations of ideological spaces before delving into issues of analyses of texts, regardless of its origin and authorship. As always, authors delve into play production albeit to propose a position within the socio-political and economic space and sadly in doing so, miss out the real guiding principle that inform the creation of a piece of art, be it literature, painting or the visual imaging generally. These principles may have their own bases and clinging tightly to rules of the game backing its protective rules and regulations. Tinkering/tampering of attempted ideological corpuses in order to actuate explanations that suit dubious self-clinging positions, not only smirks of scholarly deception, but evolves a hiding space of financial accumulations and the help of cheer leaders seeking a clinging to make cheap returns. As Eagleton cries out, regarding the commodification of ideology, in this instance feminism and the woman question in its entirety.

Rather than doing the academic scholarly engagement, dependence is heaped on ethnic, chronistic and primordial delineations that shroud the real ideological specifications that would wholly interpret the work of arts that should enhance scholarship. The artistic write-up hides conveniently within the structures of the text/script which would engender financial gains and accolades within the comity of scholars. Isn't that what Eagleton accuses Spivak in her bout in the conundrum of American spaces, and claiming to be writing for the peripheral, subaltern Indian downtrodden? What bothers critic and her effective title of 'Can the subaltern Speak'? Beyond the speaking by the subaltern, who enables them to hear in the first place or even understand what echoes resembling their predicaments muttered at the centre at the detriment of their peripheral uncomfortable subordinated spaces? Or would this backdrop enable an understanding of these unclear echoes of jeremiads that claim to be in their interest? The critical engagements therefore serve as a ruse in the discourse of a parameter that is strange and unfelt. Regardless of the hitch and blockade of understanding of ideological reproductions from the center, would it be correct to accept the likely interpretation of symbolic imaging of women's place perpetually being at home and not venturing out? What some cultures within the African cultural cosmogony term as *kule*, a situation of being tied at home away from the prying eyes of likely anarchists. That would at the end of the day evolve unacceptable structures of subordination more vicious than what is being contested. Here again, if these apprehensions are surmounted, the text, especially the space that is our concern from the academy, becomes a hiding place for irrelevances and seeking boosters of our common disqualifiers in our socio-economic daily relationships and survival. The text itself becomes a central hiding place for all commers in attempts to dialogue in defense of particular cosmogonies in spite of the realization of the all-round *chuku chuku* (hurting thorns) that would without question do us tremendous harm from point of views of our subordinated positions and consciousness, regardless of our ideological delineation. What results when we

studiously intend to squeeze into the text these facets of ideologies? Does the content injected within the text still maintain its meanings?

If it doesn't, how would the author circumvent the stumbling blocks to satisfy built-up perceptions intended to be injected therein? Or would it be conveniently understood as the desirous in the first instance and taking cover in the articulate Marcherry's conclusions regarding ideology, and pretend to be a victim of 'scraggy' scholarly dispositions of the Marcherys? Avowing that:

When that state of consciousness we call ideology enters the literary text it takes on a different form. Ideology is normally lived as if it were totally neutral, as if its imaginary discourse gives a perfect explanation of reality. However, once ideology is worked into a text all its contradictions and gaps are exposed (Cited in Selden 456).

What part of the content gets bruised or as a matter of fact distorted to still keep the intended perception? Would the exercise still be worth its craved desires? If the content is permitted to stay in spite of distortions resulting from the structure of textual production, what then is left? What is left would, to a large degree conform to the provision of what the text provides, and if so, the content of the produced creative work would have lost its bite, and therefore becomes impotent and maybe a danger to the consciousness of the ideological concerns expected, into something else that may derail the intended consciousness shift from the beginning. The creative artist, within form and content would have compromised, where his/her imperative having been deliberately compromised and betrayed. And if still there is realization of this compromise, in production and its process and the work still goes undeterred, the intention from the beginning is therefore filled with *ojoro*. Therefore, the would-be holder of such supposed tenacious ideological disposition is intellectually fraudulent. This is so, because no ruling hegemony would allow for space to be a bullet to itself, except of course a conduit running the errands of paymasters that would only populate the pocket and evolve a mirage of academic champions. That it goes on as publication, it means the whole work has been integrated into the dominant system and served as channels for the dissemination of the continuous stranglehold of dominant purveyances. Therefore, any text must be seen as ideologically suspect from the beginning before venturing into reading its content because the content would inadvertently be lined with booby traps, thorns and mines along the way waiting to explode and do a consciousness damage to an unthinking unguarded recipient of the ideological death trap. In any case as Moi exclaims in her seminal presentation regarding the subject matter. She says;

If feminist criticism is characterized by its political commitment to the struggle against all forms of patriarchy and sexism, it follows that this very fact of being female does not necessarily guarantee a feminist approach . . . A female tradition in literature or criticism is not necessarily a feminist one (120).

Reading her article Titled; “Challenging the Master's Craft: Nigerian Women Playwrights in the Theatre of Men” Agunloye, in defense of her anti-patriarchal stance argues that:

In African society being a wife is nearly as bad as being a slave or a bond woman. By paying the bride prize, dowry or bride wealth, the husband acquires a wife as his possession. This means that she is voiceless, choiceless, hardly allowed to participate and lacks direct access to welfare services, she lacks control over decisions of her home, her finances, her body to a large extent, her reproductive system. The power relationship is tilted in favour of the husband (145).

And that:

Others write in order to re-wright the negative stereotypical portrayals by male writers. These male writers adhere to the time worn cliché that 'women are inferior to men'. Their perception of women epitomizes the social stratification of our traditional society, and this group of writers must realize that society is dynamic and not static and therefore writers in the Nigerian theatre must yield to period dialectics (164).

This later position contradicts the whole write-up and its leaning on 'reconstruction of tradition' as espoused forgetting that the whole subordinated situation of the women is systemic and a process of an evolution of alternatives. And attempting to nip tradition in the bud by implication, for purposes of 'liberation/emancipation/equity bound society only end up statifying the binding cosmic order that holds society together and evolving some strange phenomena that further invigorate the subjugation. It is this great concern that Ewwierhoma, in her discourse titled; “The Rising Profile of Irene Isoken Salami and the New Nigerian Women-Centred Drama”, concludes that;

It is expected that from history, propaganda and surface treatment of the economic bases of the Nigerian polity, Salami will begin to focus on the cogent ideological factors, which colour the happenings in her society and present proactive forward-looking, non-reactionary textual and contextual women (37)

Fundamentally therefore, Agunloye's arguments towards deconstructing patriarchy for the purpose of feminist aestheticism and ideals-evolving an equality based societal relationships, there is a gross inarticulate understanding of meaning of the whole traditional essence that holds society together. From the linguistic derivative, rhythm, beats and other paraphanelia of music rendition of the wedding songs that are supposed to see and place women as subordinate and a celebration of patriarchy, a complete downgrading of the 'aural' imperative is executed and whatever aesthetic/ideology would be new and ceases to hold societal cosmogonies together, evolving something unrecognized, unknown and even more dangerous than a society adrift without foundation very like little children playing casket designs on shifting sands.

Ideology, Meaning and the Text

It is unarguable that inserting ideological positions into the text takes in several excess baggage and turns into something else unintended from the beginning by the author, creating other meanings. In the process, there is a population of other ideologies as presented within the structures of the text to create a myriad of contested meanings that the reader would have to contend with in choosing (if he is capable of doing that), a position that would by extension shift his consciousness (considering the concoction of several ideological sighting spaces that have now taken his in the confused admixture). This is because the recipient also has his own desires to contend with, and muddled with the new 'consciousnesses' taking refuge in the text (with unforeseen formatted unconscious/conscious 'tinkering'/tampering/changing), contextual content reformulations and spacious reversals. The intellectual position of the author, the language of presentation and powerplay regardless, accessibility to the recipients without the third party conduit, understanding the hidden meanings even when by chance it has been heard, responding desirously to shrouded meanings that have been heard, and the independent decisions that may affect the consciousness shift within the three divides-the author, the text, the recipient and the waiting hammer stick of what Althusser terms State apparatuses which insist on conformity; 'Ideological State Apparatuses' and the 'Coercive State Apparatuses, is hugely contended with. This embedded ideological formation is what concerns Oyewunmi Oyeronke.

In a paper titled "Is Gender Yet Another Colonial Project?", Apusigah, critiques Oyewumi's proposal and contends that there is a desperation to reduce the potency of a critical discourse of feminist approaches between the West and Africa. The discussion however cautions "... against an essentialized relativist position for its potential dangers. These dangers include the premature foreclosure of discourse, culturalization of gender, 'karicaturization' of opposed views, romanticization of ethnic culture and the simplification of difference" (24), but clarifying that Oyewumi's thrust worries about the undue generalizations of cultures within the

African situation, resulting in gross misrepresentations of African cultures, with different historiographies from the West. Oyewunmi hinges her claim on the fact that "...both Western and colonized Africans employ structures and frameworks that are alien to and as such distort local realities while imposing meanings that limit and misrepresent African experiences (24). She argues that:

At the core of the problem is the way in which business is conducted in the knowledge-producing institutions; the way in which the foundational questions that inform research are generated in the West; the way in which theories and concepts are generated from Western experiences; and the way scholars have to work within disciplines, many of which were constituted to establish dominance over Africa and all of which have logics of their own quite distinct from questions about the social identity of scholars (22).

Oyewumi's concern has been expoused much earlier by Benjamin in his "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", specifically in his chapter *Illumination*, that art has lost its 'aura' as a result of mechanical mass reproduction, which was formally domiciled within a specified arena which has evolved into reproductions that reaches a great number of people, losing their singularity and aura attached towards different interpretations. His argument that the loss of authenticity towards a democratic reading frees people from the stranglehold of art and capitalist cultural industry, as against most colleagues of the Frankfurt School. He still believes that culture here has been transformed into an industry, commodifying art, enabling oppressive ideologies reproduced and disseminated with "New Media such as phonographs, epic theatre, and especially film and photography, not only destroy art's "aura" but demystifies the process of creating art, making available radical new access and roles for art in mass culture"(3), and creating a participatory or collaborative role for the spectator, with a successful position when it is engaged with critical observation. Therein lies the worries of Oyewunmi, where the spectator is given the false impression as a creative collaborator and surreptitiously injecting culture specifics of control and domination in the arena of recognition and making common sense in a complex selective tradition.

In furtherance of this potent novel phenomenon of contextualizing the gender question is King's conversation in her article titled "Labour Outcry: Female Voices Speak Through Dramatic Performances," she succinctly drives towards Oyewumi's concerns. She opens her discourse with the following:

Nature naturally has endowed women with the privilege of being nurturing spirits. They as carriers of generations and preservers of posterity, experience a connection between them and the child

(children) they bear. Women's child-bearing capacity has given them a unique opportunity to procreate by delivering a new generation of hope, value, leadership and civic institutions” (254).

In spite of an emotional outcry in stating the obvious regarding the place of woman in the scheme of things in relation to the male gender in a rather lengthy expression, she adds that:

The metaphorical analogy of using the biological synthesis of a woman especially when in a pregnant state is simply as symbolic mode of experience even when reconstructing social reality. On the expected day of delivery (EED) a woman in labour experiences birth pangs that often time is accompanied by screaming and outcry. This outcry is often a non-verbal form of communication that is speechless yet voluminous with enough rendered nuances. Such renditions are often shrouded in meaning (King 254).

Women writers in Africa, critics and gender scholars are enunciating towards the protest against the oppression of her gender and a unique activity for emancipation which would not alienate women from their social and cultural realities. Critically therefore, Osita avers that “whether in the name of Ifeoma Achilonu's “Motherims” or Obioma Nnaemeka's “Negro-Feminism” or Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie's STIWA (Social Transformation Including Women in Africa)” (188), this trend pervades.

It is against this backdrop that Agunloye's character expressed this;

INIKPI: Mama Nigeria, Greetings to you. I dance in celebration of my victory years ago. I remember today how I offered to lay down my life ... my life meant nothing to me in the face of all the challenges that confronted my father and our people. I am happy I had the courage to do it, difficult though it was (16-17)

MAMA NIGERIA: Well done. *Gimbiya* Amina. Indeed, you deserve our commendations. You are a trailblazer. We congratulate you for being victorious in several battles, conquering cities, opening up trade routes...

Strangely, all these heroine past have been of the privileged class in the protection and reproduction of their class ideals and even more contradictory idealizes patriarchy in the icon of fatherism as the influence of her actions to save her race itself and mediator of her actions and supposed quest for equity of representing them as ideal system for the justification of the feminist concerns.

Sadly De Beauvoir falls into the same stereotypical faculty by encouraging "... women to strengthen their "masculine" rational faculties and critical powers, to exist as a *pour-soi*, that is, a transcendent subject who constitute her own future by means of creative projects (Donovan 130). However, De Beauvoir fully recognized that this moral choice was fraught with anxiety, since "women's independent successes are in contradiction with her femininity, since the "true woman is required to object, to be the Other" (Denovon 246), and stating with great concern that:

Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought" (xvii). Women are defined and differentiated with reference to men and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute; she is the "Other". Simone de Beauvoir links women's identity as Other and her fundamental alienation to her body—especially her reproductive capacity. Childbearing, childbirth, and menstruation are draining physical events that tie women to their bodies and to immanence. The male, however, is not tied down by such inherently physical events ..to decline to be the Other, to refuse to be party to the dead (xx).

But King feels that taking advantage of the supposed biology and its effect on the feminine gender, and turning it into a tool of reinterpreting the value of women in their procreation abilities that male cannot directly contribute in its labour processes becomes vital. King's exposition clearly appreciates Oyewumi's worries regarding the violence perpetrated on the revered traditions that is the guiding principles of respect for womanhood in the first place, and the space that it is emanating from that dictates of western ideals of feminism, tampered with, through its research and scholarly engagements in art production. This revibrates in "Interview with Zulu Sofola" by Onuora Ossie Eneke discussing her position in relation to the quest for patriarchal overthrow for liberation. Hear her;

So there is no time when our women sat at home and folded their hands, and just cooked and bore children. They had a profession. In addition-look at participation in the life of the community-no matter how small, the female has an important role to play. You go into the community at large. We have priestesses to date. Christianity has not given us a priestess, but we have priestesses in our own tradition. We have women ruling segments of the political sector of the community. So our clamouring that we want to have a voice in the government of the land is a contradiction of the reality (57).

From another perspective, attempt to evolve strategies of mediating the patriarchal question to address patriarchal domination is the father-daughter relationship as presented by Nyager in her article titled; "The Father-Daughter Binary in the Future

Deconstruction of Patriarchy”, are several attempts to situate the gender issues concretely within the structures of the indigenous so as not to lose its counter hegemonic value. In this novel approach, it is first and foremost, to understand the complexities innate in the discourse where Azodo in her article titled “Indigenous Feminisms: Introduction in African Feminisms in the Global Arena insists “... Women must understand that gender politics is closely associated with the politics of class, ethnicity and race”. Again she posits that:

Indigenous feminist theory promotes gender equality, and aims to erase gender discrimination, combat social injustice, militate against the silencing of women, their subjugation, marginalization and invisibility. It allows the questioning of one's own cultural practices and implies unparalleled activism and privilege in shaping communal lives of men and women” (Azodo 3)

This would effectively instigate the localization of the activism for the purpose of fighting inequalities existent not only for the feminine gender but for the subordinated classes in general. Suggestions as to the dismantling of patriarchy as alluded by feminist critics to view this phenomenon as a “... fundamental and universal state of male domination ..., and therefore is a daunting challenge and should involve the commitment of both men and women as they bring fresh perspectives to the table for the deconstruction of patriarchy”. Nyager captures the essence of transcending the complexities and specifically taking advantage of the “... combined efforts of father-daughter relationship in facing and challenging patriarchy constitutes a ray of hope for the future deconstruction ...”(137). Projecting this relationship in Sefi Ata's *Everything Good Will Come*, and Malala Yousafzai's *I am Malala*, Nyager identifies “... an emerging trend as daughters are mentioned, sensitized and enrolled in activism by their fathers. This attitude holds much potential for the future and/or current efforts at deconstructing patriarchy...” (138). Sounding even more critical in engaging these complexities towards a revolutionary mediation is the specification of the 'voice' as a significant strategy for diminishing subjugation, she concludes referring to Malala that:

A speech (voice) is symbolic of power in patriarchal society: to speak is to possess meaning; to have access to the language which defines, delineates and locates power. To speak is to become a subject. But for women to speak is to threaten the system of differences which gives meaning to patriarchy (9)

In furtherance to these concerns of mediating these complexities of gender, Sackeyfio laments that; “One of the sad and debilitating legacies of political, economic and cultural domination of African peoples by Europeans is the confusion

over naming oneself to reflect ethnic, ideological and geographical realities as a mask of “Otherness” (235).

Sackeyfio makes reference to Akin Aina who notes that 'The African Feminist movement consists of an ongoing process of self-definition and re-definition; broad based membership, and a resistance to the disastrous and misrepresentations by Western global feminisms' (236).

In *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, Hooks describe the feminist movements as a response to inequality where (67), individual women came from these relationships (with men) angry. And they used that anger as catalyst for women's liberation”. The development of various waves or strands of feminisms, across space and time tend to converge to produce a singular feminist narrative centered on the cause of women's oppression and the power associated with men and masculinities” (Arndt, 2002). Scholars like Hooks, 2004; Boonzaier, 2014; Ratele, 2008; 2013; 2018; Shefer et al, 2007, have argued that for a positive progress in seeking equity and humanism of the genders, feminist scholarship should not be exposing toxic masculinities but rather drive towards a development of positive masculinities through the involvement of men, particularly young men, within the feminist engagements. And because several stories regarding men and women are hinged in Western hegemonic stranglehold, discussing and measuring gender issues according to western ways of knowing, there is a legitimization of neo-colonial forms of domination. That is the reason for the lament by Shefer that; “A Western-centric, universalist feminism has resulted in a rigid understanding of hegemonic masculinity that is situated within a rigid moralistic binary of victim and villain”.

At the end, in spite of the utility by Agunloye of dramatic forms to conceptualize her thematic preoccupations of women liberation, equity and justice, the critical question that leaves a gaping wound, which has been left unattended to, is the complete abstraction of the male gender and subordinating them in the process. Further still, the socialization of boys and girls to complete the equation is clearly lacking. The place of the man is extremely critical in any gender discourse however minute, and most importantly, the girl-child and the boy-child. Here is where King very scholarly evolves a connection symbolically in the child-bearing (girl-child and boy-child) process with its spiritual aural cosmic meeting points and Nyager's father-daughter binary, both instances not discounting the procreative essences of the African cultural milieu as a convenient alternative and all-embracing equity build-up in the systemic problematic that is the subordination of women, than hinging them on reactionary renditions that would exacerbate the concerns laid out in the first instance.

Fundamentally, evolving praxis that goes beyond theorizing or conceptual verbalization in textual production which by extension commodify feminism in a grossly inarticulate renditions textual infiltrations, serves as an extremely potent strategy for objectifying the feminine gender. Paternalizing and being immigrated as a conduit through several strategies, through primordial essences to sit on the high table and dishing out crumbs to the underprivileged threatens the existential subjugation, becoming even more dangerous than the male-female bind that is the problematic through fist-cuffs of evolving another complex relationship of domination and subordination in intra-gender relationships, opening up another vista of punches more complex than exist, looking back at the future of egalitarianism for all societal members for equity and humanity.

In pursuance of seeking humanity and equity for the feminine gender, it is absolutely instructive to articulate the fact that there exist a common denominator of subordination and a dominant patriarchal hegemony, but it is equally instructive to note that this domination is not necessarily a male-female tussle over control but a systemic occurrence where it has become common sense that patriarchy is invigorated and sustained. So, to evolve an equitable system that would guarantee the humanity of all sexes require a systemic counter hegemonic structures because, society itself is under the stranglehold of subjugation inclusive of the boy-child, girl-child, male or female. The mediated solvency must evolve a strategy that is beyond overthrow of patriarchy but colluding with masculine and feminine subjects for this complex process. The shift in consciousness therefore, should be seen to involve all parties rather than throwing fist-cuffs taking cover in the belly of textual production bedeviled by its obvious latent contradictions. For it will be problematic to comfortably draw a line between the specificity of the African variant of feminist disquiet and the dominating Western denominator carried in an ideological apparatus of the text both in production and performance that would fundamentally evolve into a strange ideological imperative of overthrow of patriarchy/liberation that is lost to the would-be recipient of the art and the artist who carve out the creative confusion, and a continuum of neo-colonial invasion, contrived within the anti-patriarchal boxing bouts.

Conclusion

The masculine/patriarchal/male folks have had supposed control and subordination on the female gender, concerning itself with the dread and the flight from women, 'a culturally idealized form, the common sense about breadwinning and man-hood. It is exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent. It is pseudo-natural, tough, contradictory, crisis-prone, rich, and socially sustained'. Threatened by varieties of collectives that are guised within the politics of repositioning the female gender, are attempts being made by scholars in the structures of dramatic productions at a counter hegemony or consciously or

unconsciously maintaining the status quo stereotypical premises because, in the midst of these numerous ideologues representing structures that explain away strategies of control and subordination are interests, values, financial, and self-recognition, that use the common denominator as bases for self-aggrandizement and maybe likely counter hegemony without a threat to the aforementioned. It becomes important, therefore to rake out and identify genuine interests for equity and the rights of women to quality education and level playing field devoid of handing down 'rights' and 'privileges', and an attempted feminist supremacy. Therefore, attempts at a discourse on the relationships between the sexes in cultural productions and acceptable parameters for interaction situated concretely within culture specifics or better still, a meeting point for all the varieties of gender concerns, still with cognizance of the specific of Nigeria. This surfaced level or non-existent articulation of critical academic grip, devalues such as we may without fear of contradiction state, rendering such discourse as fist-cuffs in a boxing arena when decency provides such or if not at a motopark infested with uncouth, dirty fisted thugs doing damage to the serious concerns of subjectifying not only the feminine gender but humanity in general, sadly renders conclusively, as one or group of feminist ideologues/artists encountered, whose English or whatever linguistic 'fore-drops' or 'back-drops' are utilised, due to dreadfully low articulation of the subject of concern and other scholarly subjects for that matter, with a deformed dramaturgy and a prose where utilized, awfully pompous, recondite, claustral, inflated, euphuistic, tautological, solecistic, sesquipedalian, heliogabalian, occluded, obscure, jargon-ridden, empty: resplendently dead.

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**PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN OROKAM COMMUNITY OF
BENUE STATE, NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA.**

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Abstract

An archaeological excavation is often times, a follow up of an archaeological Reconnaissance which may have resulted from an accidental discovery or scientific investigation of an archaeological site. An archaeological excavation on the other hand is hardly conducted in isolation, without involving the inhabitants of the community of Interest especially in terms of oral interviews, tour/research guides and interpreters (as the case may be). Sadly, in this part of the world, some archaeological reports hardly see the light of day as they are shelved and remain unpublished manuscripts. If they eventually get to be published, they are not made available to the host community where the research took place. Now, this is an anomaly that Public archaeology tries hard to curb.

This paper is a report on an archaeological excavation that was conducted on an Iron smelting site in Orokam, Benue State, North Central Nigeria, following a previous reconnaissance of the site. This effort however was a slight deviation from the usual pattern where the main involvement of the communities would be only during oral interviews and after interviews were conducted, every other research team was 'imported' from a location outside the community being investigated to carry out the research.

The aim of this paper therefore is to advocate the engagement of host communities in archaeological activities to enable cooperation of both parties in order to achieve more successful archaeological researches. Its objectives include creating awareness (public archaeology) for the discipline, which is still saddled with the problem of 'lack of awareness; Bringing to light the economic benefits of involving members of host communities in archaeological activities. With the involvement of these host communities, the suspicion and hostility that accompanies most archaeological

investigation in Nigeria would be reduced to the barest minimum, if not totally obliterated. The method used in collection of data was the use of structured and informal interviews with relevant stakeholders as well as the documentation of the information obtained from these interviews.

This paper therefore has highlighted the importance of the involvement of host communities in archaeological investigations and its potential in changing the way archaeological investigations are carried out in Nigeria holds a lot of merit.

Keywords: Archaeological excavation, Economic impact, Host communities, Orokam, Benue State, North Central Nigeria.

Introduction

Archaeologists concern themselves with retrieving material remains of past human activities through excavations. These remains (artefacts) are collected not as an end in themselves but as a means of obtaining information about their makers, the lives they lived and how they related to the environment. Artefacts are collected so that meaning may be 'abstracted' from them. These material remains or objects are seen as containing, reflecting or saying something about the people who produced them. (Andah and Okpoko 1). It was with this same theme in mind that researchers set out to Orokam Iron slag mound in Benue State, North Central Nigeria. This paper is a report documenting the economic gains and knowledge benefits of archaeological investigation in Orokam Benue State, North central Nigeria and advocates for the involvement of host communities for the benefit of the researchers and the inhabitants of the area. It also warns that there is the danger of the sale of these heritage/artefacts to anybody who can afford their price (who may not necessarily be archaeologists) which has been a problem for practising archaeologists in Nigeria and poses a huge setback to the discipline.

In this research however, in addition to the proper academic research team comprising a Professor of Archaeology, one academic staff of the Department with a Ph.D in Archaeology, one non-academic staff of the department whose area of specialization is Cartography at Masters level, the researcher and three (3) labourers selected from the village, the host community was highly involved at almost all levels; from the Chief and the council of village elders, to the tour guides, local security team (vigilante), the chef, the accommodation team and the traders; all of them highly valuable in the chain of archaeological investigation. Each participant from the village was based on the recommendation of the Chief and elders who serve as custodians of their cultural heritage.

Furthermore, in the course of the research, they showed high interest on discussions about archaeology, which prior to the study they had no knowledge about and group

adopted from the village had an economic benefit for their participation and the involvement of these tiers inadvertently led to a smooth and successful excavation session in this area. Infact, some of the youths volunteered to join the team due to the perceived sense of pride that archaeological inquiry had exposed them to during reconnaissance.

In as much as the aim of involving the villagers in the research was not totally financially inclined but more for the purpose of Public archaeology, the economic benefits and additional knowledge which they gained was an added advantage for them because they benefitted financially from the services they rendered to the team. The method used in collection of data was the use of structured and informal interviews with relevant stakeholders as well as the documentation of the information obtained from these interviews. The scope of study was Orokam, Ogbadibo Local Government Area, Benue State, North Central Nigeria where archaeological reconnaissance and excavation lasted for six weeks and three days. The research team lodged in accommodation facility within the area, patronized the local eatery, used local means of transport in the area and bought some field equipment from their local market, therefore, providing room for economic benefit for the inhabitants of the study area.

Study Area/Tradition of Migration

Benue state , North Central Nigeria was created in 1976 and lies between longitude 7° 40' and 10° 00' E and latitude 6° 30' and 8° 24' N. It is bounded by five states namely Nasarawa to the North, Taraba to the North-east, Cross River to the South, Enugu and Kogi to the South-west. There is also a short international boundary between the state and the Republic of Cameroon along the South-east border (Kwanga and Kerenku 1).

What is today designated Idomaland lies south of the River Benue with a population that has been estimated slightly over one million by the 1991 census figures. It is the area of land located within the broad valley of the Benue valley of the Benue River and the Cross River basin. The main thrust of the land is a continuous belt of territory which stretches from southern banks of the River Benue to the northern fringes of Igboland. This territory lies within latitude 6°30' north and longitude 8° east and covers a total land area of approximately 5,995 square kilometres (Okpeh and Ochefu).

It is important to briefly describe the geographical location of the study area-Orokam which shares boundaries with Otukpa and Owukpa, all in the western parts of Benue State. Orokam is not made up of people from one father but constitutes different clans namely; Ihuru, Oko, Aiona, Akoh, Agboriko. Inamu came from Igalaland, Oko from Ugboju (Otukpo), Agboriko migrated from Nsukka. But *A'ona* is the head who came

from Otukpo as a result of the fight between him and the Tiv people of Benue State (Abah, Pers. Comm). Oral tradition has it that he lost his brother and was advised by the Otukpo people not to avenge the brother's death but he went ahead and killed one Tiv man and ran to his present location with little occupation; he was only a hunter. The first place he settled is called *Uture* which literally means “covered with an indigo tree” (*Indigoferatinctoria*). The local name of the indigo tree is *Uri*. Perhaps, he meant he was shielded by this tree, hence the name “*Uture*” (Sunday, Pers. Comm). This version of the oral tradition has been corroborated by (Apeh 63) who reports that the Orokam area of Idoma land appears to be rich in games. A tradition suggests that Inamu was a fugitive, together with OkpoOga of Okwoga. He settled near the Elemedu River in a place he called Aroji. There, hunters from the Idoma and Igbo country joined him for mutual protection and they combined and formed one community. Inamu who seems to be instrumental in combining them, went to his native place Idah to acknowledge the Attah and be given a title, Och'Orokam. However, some Ai-Oko informants explain their migration and even separation from Owuna bird totemic kindred between 1655 and 1715. They claim that Oko originally came from Kwararafa and settled in areas within Apa II, in the northern fringes of Igala land. Under pressure, due to political instability in Igala land, he moved down south. He left in a hurry not to be caught up in the war and thereby missed his “brothers”, the Ai-Inamu and Ai-ona. Fortune re-united them in their present Orokam homeland when Oko came into the area for hunting. (Apeh 63). This version has been criticized on the basis that it seems like a ploy by the Ai-oko to legitimize their stay in their present location. Yet another variant of this tradition posits that Boju (Ugboju?) people claim to come from Apa under the leadership of Oga. Oga's grandson, Ejeba finally brought them to Boju. One son, Oko (the ancestor of Ai-oko) then moved south, married an Ibo woman and founded Orokam clan. These various versions notwithstanding, it is glaring that Orokam is made up of a combination of people with diverse histories of migration/origin from ibo land, igaland and they did not migrate together at the same time or under one leadership. This makes a very interesting twist in the study of these people, historically and archaeologically.

Aerial Reconnaissance/Excavation

Aerial photography plays an increasingly important role in Archaeology. It is used as a search technique for land and underwater sites, as well as buried sites. It is one of the most efficient means of performing a survey, particularly in inaccessible areas. (Joukowsky 47)

Owing to its numerous advantages and effectiveness, it was adopted and applied by archaeologists in the search and location of archaeological sites and features for the study of human societies. Similarly, when applied archaeologically, reconnaissance (which can be on the ground or from the air), has the same aim of obtaining all

possible information and characteristics about a people before further investigation is carried out. Sharer and Ashmore have defined archaeological reconnaissance as a systematic attempt to identify archaeological sites.

On the other hand, excavation is method of removing objects and uncovering stationary features that have been concealed by later deposits. It involves the removal of levels in reverse order to the way they were laid down, gradually revealing each successive stage in the history of the site. The main objectives of excavation are as follows; to uncover the position of objects (as well as floral and faunal information) and the location and floor plan of the structure, and to record them on a horizontal plan by position and depth measurements and to meticulously record these as well and finally to relate such data to the total environment of the site and to assess its relationship to other sites in the area (Joukowsky 159). Excavation is the principal but not the only means by which the archaeologist gathers data about the past, mainly from beneath the ground surface. The basic goals of archaeology which are a) to reveal the three dimensional patterning or physical structure in the deposition of artefacts, ecofacts and features; and b) to assess the functional and temporal significance of this patterning, that is, to answer such a question as where were the tools of stone, clay, leather, wood or metal, plant remains and animal bones found relative to one another and relative to house remains or other areas (butchery site, farm site, religious or burial site etc) in which they were used (Andah and Okpoko 100). In spite of its usefulness, excavation should be applied with caution because as aptly put, excavation is destruction (the site can never be put back the way it was before it was excavated). (Joukowsky 161).

Economic Benefit of Archaeological Investigation on the Host Community (Orokam)

Generally, in the course of archaeological investigations, emphasis is laid on studying the cultural remains of the people under study and the most commonly used means of getting the required information would be through oral interviews as well as an ethnographic study of the inhabitants of the study area (or the closest inhabitants to the area of interest), archaeological reconnaissance, archaeological survey and (or) excavations to obtain as many artefacts as possible, after which the information obtained is reported.

However, these archaeological reports are bereft of the specific economic gains that host communities may have benefited from these investigations. This brings to mind, some salient questions; how many archaeological reports have specified the economic gains that host communities get from archaeological investigations? How many studies have documented the knowledge communities' gain from archaeological inquiry? It would come as a shock to note that such academic enquiry seems limited in this part of the globe hence, the need for this preliminary report

documenting not only the economic gains by the host community but also the knowledge that they garnered from the archaeological investigation in Orokam, Benue State, Nigeria. This report is deemed necessary for the public, archaeologists and academia to further encourage the involvement of members of the communities where these investigations take place, albeit with a lot of caution. This is because its potential will change the way future archaeological investigations will be carried out in Nigeria.

This can also be referred to as Public archaeology. As currently understood, Public archaeology involves cultural resource management, educational outreach projects, community-based projects (like the investigation in Orokam) or community led archaeology projects often times, geared towards the regeneration of economies and civic society, sustainable development initiatives, entertainment industries, and even efforts towards conflict resolution (Gould and Burtenshaw). All these speak to the discipline's accountability to the public and encourage a view that the discipline does not harbour intrinsic merit, but exists to serve various communities.

In August 2012, a report into the economic value of various international monuments by the Monza and Brianza Chamber of Commerce made headlines around the world with its claim that the Eiffel Tower was worth €435 billion to the French economy but the nature of this report does little to address the day-to-day operations of archaeologists working on sites unlikely to grab the world's attention in such a way. Reports such as the one described above are many and as stated, they are devoid of the inherent points which address the daily operations of the archaeologists as they toil. Not all archaeological investigations make headlines and not all of them grab the world's attention but that equally does not mean they should be ignored (Koreich and Sterling).

According to Gould and Burtenshaw, the linkage of archaeology with economic development conjures up conflicting visions, and many in the field see a contentious relationship between the two. Typically, archaeology is seen as contending *against* the development of land for economic purposes — whether for the construction of houses, exploitation of minerals, building roads, or any other use of land that threatens the archaeological record.

It should be borne in mind that when discussing archaeology and economic benefits, the grants/financial support that are obtained to carry out these archaeological investigations play a significant role as they are geared towards the development of the researcher as well as the development of the community as well. Through these archaeological investigations, positive changes (covering social, cultural, economic, and environmental) can be generated. These changes such as employment (be it long or short term) and exposure to other cultures can go a long way in casting

archaeological investigations in good light because as stated earlier, sometimes, these investigations are regarded as being against them as a result of the 'destruction' it causes. Some of these communities see the archaeologists as people that come to erode their culture to their own benefit and to the detriment of the people and their community (which to a large extent is true because after the investigations, communication between both parties tend to cease whereas a follow up report after the publication of the research findings would have been appropriate).

Public Archaeology

The term “public archaeology” can mean many things but it is not the aim of this paper to exhaust the different definitions of Public Archaeology. In the words of Lea & Smardz, the term is used to describe those projects and programmes designed to enhance popular knowledge of and appreciation for archaeology. Though a relatively new aspect of practicing archaeology in Nigeria, it is a discipline that has come to stay, no doubt. Archaeologists are increasingly using the discipline for purposes of education, community cohesion, entertainment and economic development, which is a good step in the right direction of fully integrating archaeology into the heritage management of places and communities.

At its April 10, 1996, meeting the Society for American Archaeology Executive Board adopted the principles of Archaeological Ethics which are: i) Stewardship ii) accountability iii) commercialization iv) public education and outreach v) intellectual property vi) public reporting and publication vii) records and preservation (SAA 451). A brief explanation of these ethics as they relate to the state of ethics in Archaeology in Nigeria would be appropriate at this juncture for a better understanding especially for non-archaeologists.

The archaeological record, that is, in situ archaeological material and sites, archaeological collections, records and reports, is irreplaceable. It is the responsibility of all archaeologists to work for the long-term conservation and protection of the archaeological record by practicing and promoting stewardship of the archaeological record. Stewards are both caretakers of and advocates for the archaeological record for the benefit of all people; as they investigate and interpret the record, they should use the specialized knowledge they gain to promote public understanding and support for its long-term preservation (SAA 451). Stewardship is thus concerned with the responsibility of caring for and the long term preservation of archaeological records, collections, materials and sites (which cannot be replaced as it were) by practicing and promoting stewardship, promoting public understanding and support for the long-term preservation of these archaeological finds. In Nigeria today, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) is tasked with this responsibility and the National Archives spread across the different parts of the country are equally abiding by this ethic. It is important to add that the different

departments of Archaeology in Higher Institutions in Nigeria are also practising stewardship as they care for, and preserve finding obtained from their archaeological excavations.

Responsible archaeological research, including all levels of professional activity, require an acknowledgment of public accountability and a commitment to make every reasonable effort, in good faith, to consult actively with affected group(s), with the goal of establishing a working relationship that can be beneficial to all parties involved (SAA 451). Accountability therefore, requires and involves the acknowledgment of the public and a commitment to consult actively with affected group(s). Again, the departments of archaeology have so far, practiced this level of accountability as they consult with the stake holders in the communities where they go on archaeological excavations.

Commercialization entails the discouragement of the sale of archaeological finds/objects by archaeologists and non archaeologists alike especially for private use or personal enjoyment as this result in the destruction of archaeological sites and of contextual information that is essential to understanding the archaeological records (SAA 451). To this effect, the NCMM in collaboration with the Archaeological Association of Nigeria (AAN) have put in great efforts in discouraging the sale or privatization of artefacts.

Public education and outreach is concerned with Archaeologists reaching out to, and participating in cooperative efforts with others who are interested in the archaeological record, with the aim of improving the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the record. Archaeologists should particularly make efforts to engage/involve the public for their support for the stewardship of the archaeological record; explain and promote the use of archaeological methods and techniques in understanding human behaviour and culture; and communicate archaeological interpretations of the past. These public groups include students and teachers, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups who find in the archaeological record important aspects of their cultural heritage, lawmakers and government officials; reporters, Journalists and others involved in the media as well as the general public. However, Archaeologists who are unable to undertake public education and outreach directly are enjoined to encourage the activities of others who are involved in these activities (SAA 451). As it were, the current state of archaeology in Nigeria can be said to have abided by this ethic so far. Infact, this paper is an attempt at engaging the public for the support of stewardship of archaeological record as it is believed that it would reach out far and wide.

Intellectual property discourages the erroneous notion of archaeological records by archaeologists as personal property. It is rather encouraged that a researcher may

have primary access to original materials and documents for a limited and reasonable time, after which these materials and documents must be made available to others (SAA 451). Now, this is a challenge that is still being overcome in Nigeria because unconsciously after an excavation or an archaeological research, the researcher keeps the materials to analyse and interpret and report/publish. For diverse reasons, this may take longer than expected and before long, they become “personal properties” if care is not taken, thereby denying other scholars the opportunity of using such important archaeological materials/documents as well. Within a reasonable time, the knowledge of archaeologists gain from investigation of the archaeological record must be presented in accessible form (through publication or other means) to as wide a range of interested publics as possible. The documents and materials on which publication and other forms of public reporting are based should be deposited in a suitable place for permanent safekeeping. An interest in preserving and protecting in situ archaeological sites must be taken in to account when publishing and distributing information about their nature and location. (SAA 451) It makes no sense to go out into the field, carry out reconnaissance, research and document the coordinates of the sites, if possible go ahead and excavate only to keep the information garnered in a box and away from public reach/knowledge. That would best be described as wasted efforts! Although many archaeologists are guilty of this crime, there has been a paradigm shift in recent times as the ethics of archaeology come into play and are being followed to the latter now. Using the different departments of archaeology as examples, all researches are now published and taken to the communities that the research was undertaken.

Records and preservation is more concerned with the preservation of, and long term access to, archaeological collections, records, and reports. The use of collections, records, and reports in the researches carried out by students, colleagues and others should be responsibly done so as to encourage the care and preservation of these archaeological records (SAA 451). Again, the NCMM and National Archives are charged with the responsibility of preserving these important records and such documents are properly catalogued and filed for use by researchers and the public. They also task departments, institutions to register any ongoing researches so as to have a current list of their records.

Given the destructive nature of most archaeological investigations, archaeologists must ensure that they have adequate training, experience, facilities, and other support necessary to conduct any programme of research they initiate in a manner consistent with the foregoing principles and contemporary standards of professional practice (SAA 451). In Nigeria today, such trainings are ongoing and this has greatly improved the standard of archaeology as a discipline today.

These principles (though not exhaustive), have helped to keep practicing archaeologists in check as they go about the task of preserving our heritage. The move towards public archaeology, counsels archaeologists to work inclusively, placing a high priority on educational and developmental activities with local communities in order to share the means of production of historical knowledge and promote the conservation of heritage. (Lesley, Fordred Green et al 366).

Limitations of Public Archaeology

Public archaeology is still saddled with the problem of 'lack of awareness' as public awareness is still at its lowest ebb especially going by the type of media that is engaged. Sadly, archaeology and public archaeology is only still being taught at University levels and not in Primary or secondary schools which should have been the best place to start. The use of mass media has been advised such as talks being given in schools, on Radio, Television, through Newspapers and the likes but how far has this impacted the discipline? With the exception of radio, the mass media may not have been most effective as not everyone has access to Television sets in the village. However, some other methods have been suggested such as recruiting local people as field researchers, conducting field site tours, organising exhibitions of research results field public lectures and low cost publications. These methods are very important because typically, in most archaeological researches, the villagers are engaged only as labourers. They are hardly ever informed by the archaeologist of the objective or aim of the research prior to the research neither are they informed of the findings obtained from the research after the whole investigation. Ultimately, it means that archaeologists in this regard have failed to inform, train and or educate the local people and have subsequently, failed in meeting the many ethics of Public Archaeology. Consequently, very little is known about archaeologists and what they do. In many cases, the failure to recognise the importance of engaging villagers in the whole research process has only succeeded in alienating the people from their own cultural heritage instead of retrieving, studying and preserving it for them and also making them aware of the dire need to protect and preserve their heritage by themselves. In order to change the narrative, researchers and archaeologists alike are obliged to inform, train and seek to educate the local people so that they can become aware of the significance and importance of the archaeological materials that are in their vicinity and the historical and cultural ties which link them to these remains. This will in turn create some sense of ownership among the villagers and then make them conserve and protect these archaeological remains.

With the non implementation of some of the ethics listed above, there is bound to be negative impacts such as the destruction of archaeological sites, distortion of information, looting of archaeological resources, low public knowledge and loss of identity and abandonment of indigenous knowledge systems. (Kwapnoe and Matoh 75).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the result of this study shows that villagers who are the custodians of their cultural heritage were valuable in the chain of archaeological investigation. They benefitted financially from the services they rendered to the team, and they showed high interest on discussions about archaeology, which prior to the study they had no knowledge about. Some of the youths volunteered to join the team due to the perceived sense of pride that archaeological inquiry had exposed them to during reconnaissance.

It is important to quickly state here that this exposure to archaeological knowledge on their cultural heritage will inadvertently prevent further destruction of archaeological/heritage sites (which has been a major setback for the discipline) by construction of infrastructure, roads, dams etc. and the best way to prevent such recurrent destruction of archaeological sites would be to foster an emotional link to their heritage. 'When will you people come again', they asked?. This question may not be unconnected to either the financial gains or the cultural pride they perceived about their ancestors having knowledge of iron smelting. This research has further revealed another dimension to the relationship between host communities and archaeologists which was hitherto hostile, owing to the fact that the archaeologists were perceived to be destroyers of their landscape who were believed to be taking their sacred information outside their vicinity for their own gains and not for the benefit of the village and this has resulted in tension, and lack of trust on the part of the villagers. This subsequently led to refusal of permission to the researchers by the host communities. This was experienced by the researcher when the council of elders refused to grant permission for excavation on the basis that it was a taboo to dig a hole and leave it empty without burying anything. After much explanation, permission was only granted when the researcher paid for goats and other requirements needed for some kind of traditional rites to be performed.

While this paper advocates the involvement of host communities for the benefit of the researchers and the inhabitants of the area, it also warns that there is the danger of the sale of these heritage/artefacts to anybody who can afford their price (who may not necessarily be archaeologists). Again, this has been a problem for practising archaeologists in Nigeria and poses a huge setback for the discipline.

The experience from this study is a pointer to i) the dire need of proper funding of archaeological investigations if the discipline needs to be appreciated. Funding of archaeological researches with support from the government or availability of grants (not personal funds) is pertinent considering the depth and time frame of these researches. This would enable a more concise report at the end of the research. ii) the need for archaeological investigations such as this to be understood in rural communities where most archaeological relics are embedded. It is easier to carry out

such investigations and researches in the villages which have been untapped and not tampered with giving a novel information to the public at large and iii) the need to inculcate the ethics of public archaeology while carrying out these investigations. Carrying out an archaeological research that involves excavation does not just entail going to speak to the elders and custodians of the culture and digging up a site. There has to be the inculcation of the ethics of public archaeology which have been reiterated in preceding lines.

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A CONSIDERATION OF SOYINKA'S *KONGI'S HARVEST* THROUGH THE LENS OF FOLKLORE AND SATIRE

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Abstract

Having read much of the criticisms on Soyinka's works, it appears scholars have not carried out much research in the area of folklore and satire in *Kongi's Harvest* thus, making this task worthwhile. To fill this gap, this study analyses the play with emphasis on folklore and satire, and looks at it from the point of view of its African cultural background. The paper is anchored on Culture Reflector theory enabling these researchers to consider folkloric materials like myths, rituals festivals, and other devices which convey the thematic thrust of the play. In his search for universal and humanistic values in Africa, Soyinka's exploration has taken him into the rich cultural territory of folklore for the purpose of confronting the profound meaning of existence. It is against this background that this study attempts to examine the play in the true perspective of its cultural base and analyse it from the point of view of folklore as the aesthetic foundation. The study looks at how the dramatist incorporates folkloric materials into the fabrics of his artistic productions to bring out the message. The research employs a textual analysis using satire, putting into consideration the folkloric elements and relied on related published and unpublished works, Articles, Newspapers, Conference and Seminar papers. The study concludes that the erosion of morality can be rectified through cultural rearmament- folklore and satire.

Keywords: Folklore, Cultural reflector, Satire, Myth, Festival, Culture, Dictatorship.

Introduction

African oral resources have been exploited by Soyinka in the distillation of his themes, the construction of characterization, narrative and discursive strategies as a representation of cultural authenticity and inscription of the African world-view.

Soyinka demonstrates this ancestry of the novel and drama in African oral cultures in *Kongi's Harvest*.

In the early societies, culture, through its doctrines embodied in folklore, myths and rituals, served as a force of socialization and cultural control. This is achieved through informing the people about cultural structure and expected cultural behaviour. The gods are portrayed as ever present on the periphery of human affairs to ensure compliance with cultural, moral, social, and religious laws and meting out punitive measures against rebels and defaulters. However, the pressures of modern life have eroded the moral and cultural sensibilities of people, thereby culminating in a situation of inhumanity to man. Literary writers like Soyinka believes that the situation can however be rectified with a re-introduction of cultural and moral values. The African folklore and mythical repertoire become useful in this respect. There is a need for a moral and cultural re-armament to prevent a total collapse of the modern world into a state of anomie worse than that experienced by Europe during the dark ages.

Soyinka's artistic forms like drama, prose and poetry in this regard are used to present folklore and mythical repertoire in a more permanent form. These artistic forms also serve as propaganda machineries through which traditional cultural practices are disseminated to the world at large. These forms succeed in illustrating and simplifying the message of folklore and myth showing how relevant they are to modern life. As a dramatist, Soyinka is definitely a product of his cultural background as well as his socio-political milieu. He has relied on the elements and materials from his background.

Soyinka's works mirror African institutions and society as a typical social environment where humanity is debased and dehumanized. In most of his works, the playwright uses folklore – myths, rituals, festivals, songs, proverbs, folk tales and other verbal arts to ridicule his characters for their undoing in the society. He uses satire as an artistic mode of expressing the social reality in contemporary Africa. African society for him is obviously a chaotic one where dreams and aspirations of people remain unrealized. He has seen with shock and disbelief the endemic corruption, moral decadence and political problems that have become part and parcel of the African society. In his artistic works, he satirizes the absurdities of his society, thereby making political enemies of dictatorial leaders, a fact which has twice earned him jail sentences in his native country, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework: Cultural Reflector

This study is anchored on the cultural reflector theory which states that 'expressive culture and folklore texts reflect back elements of culture' (Jeana 1). Jeana states that Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski developed the idea and later proposed

cultural anthropology. Culture reflector theory is relevant in analyzing texts that are embedded with folkloric elements such as myths, legends and festivals among others that reflect culture and tradition. These folkloric elements reflect cultures; they are culture reflectors. Boas regarded myths as cultural reflectors and he used them 'as sources from which he extrapolated ethnographic details about kinship terms...' (Jeana 1). In essence, reading these works containing myths or other folkloric elements enable us appreciate the culture in which the folk elements exist. For instance, a particular myth may be connected to a specific culture and the myth serves specific purposes or functions and gives explanation to why certain things are the way they've been. Gurel agrees that folklore is a pervasive, integral and significant aspect of social existence and that its documentation and study can provide important insights into the essence and dynamics of culture and behaviour (1).

Synopsis

In *Kongi's Harvest* two African rulers, Oba Danlola and Kongi, are antagonistic to each other, with each of the rivals representing certain facets of alternative leadership value-systems. What is being presented is, in essence, the aftermath of a confrontation between a modern dictatorship and a traditional, hereditary, monarchical system. This play is about dictatorship on the African continent. It must be emphasized that dictatorship has been difficult to dethrone in Black Africa. There are a thousand and one forms of dictatorship - from the crude and blasphemous to the subtle and sanctimonious. Thus, dictatorship is seen, by Soyinka, to be a representative African phenomenon. The projected nature of dictatorship can best be defined by an examination of the twin figures of Kongi and his superseded opponent, Oba Danlola. The manner in which these two figures are deployed within the text contributes to a process that defines dictatorship and the system it has replaced. By contrasting the alternative leadership-models, Soyinka enables the play to operate as a dramatic forum; as a forum for the consideration of the values that underlie actual and temporal authority. The figure of Kongi, as the title of the play suggests, means dictatorship.

In the text, Soyinka achieves a satiric definition of the figure by selecting key targets and attacking them using wit, parody and ridicule.

Satiric Revelations

One of Soyinka's weapons is satire. He is greatly concerned about the well-being of his community and his plays are a keen dissection of his society and a ritual carrier of the sins, maladies and political injustices. Soyinka endeavours to correct the follies through ridicule. *Kongi's Harvest* is a comedy that ridicules dictators. The play depicts the conflict between the obstinate, old traditional king, Oba Danlola and Kongi, a megalomaniac and power drunk epileptic president of Isma and the

eventual downfall of both. Soyinka's satire is incisive and witty. Kongi, who is fashioned on self-styled dictators like Nkrumah and Dr. Banda of Malawi, is intentionally portrayed as a petty figure in the play. Soyinka also incorporates a traditional myth or ritual to heighten the satire. In *Kongi's Harvest* the New Yam Festival is symbolically significant and meaningful. Soyinka is incensed with the hypocrisy of religious leaders, the ineffectuality and sheer apathy of the intellectuals, with the new men in power and the bourgeois that is stupidly contemptible and cynical. The Reformed Aweri Fraternity in *Kongi's Harvest* represents spiritual and intellectual repression and are ineffectual, effeminate and lacking in virility. They submit themselves to enforced starvation and are asked by Kongi to dispute a matter on which a decision is already taken by Kongi himself.

Soyinka ridicules all forms of social deviation in the play just to ensure that there is a change in the society. Thus, in *Kongi's Harvest*, Soyinka uses the eponymous character, Kongi and some African leaders (the Giants) as caricatures and symbols to explore his themes of lust for power and man's inhumanity to man. The playwright loathes the activities of these dictators and exposes the various atrocities.

Soyinka also creates anti-heroic characters who manifest the oddities of absolute rule as we have in the modern day dictator and traditional ruler in *Kongi's Harvest*. *Kongi's Harvest* portrays despotism and tyrannical rule as a common phenomenon in post-Independent African states. We can see that all the forces of power-play and antagonism are evident. In *Kongi's Harvest*, for example, the burden and effects of the power-play have badly affected people like members of the Segi/ Daodu coalition and their allies in the character of Oba Danlola and his retinue. Kongi is presented as a man caught in antics, manipulations and power tussle. This of course, is a clear manifestation of Soyinka's disgust with despotism and dictatorship in Africa. According to Soyinka, "there are a thousand and one Kongis yet to be dethroned in Black Africa". Jeavan is of the opinion that:

'President Kongi in *Kongi's Harvest* parodies modern megalomaniacs, who, having been addicted to the irresistible taste of power with the attendant glory and prestige, starts monopolizing all its symbols and roles (5).

By comparing himself with 'Christ, Kongi wants his name along with the forthcoming harvest festival to mark the beginning of a new calendar with everything else dating from it' (Jeavan 5).

It is laughable as President Kongi monopolizes everything in the state and equates himself with God. He desires to use his name to mark the beginning of a new calendar, in the same manner as seen in the Christian calendar. It is again ridiculous

that State bodies work hard towards elevating their leaders to a godhead stature. For instance, the praise song of the Carpenter's brigade ridiculously compares Kongi to Christ by calling him a saviour whom they will labour for:

For Kongi is our father And Kongi is our man
Kongi is our mother Kongi is our man
And Kongi is our Saviour Redeemer, prince of power...
and for Kongi We're proud to live or die! [*Soyinka* 65]

There is a dose of satire in Danlola's remark:

Will there not be six times at the least
when we must up and bow To Kongi?
These are no bones, To rush an old man
After a crown that falls off his head
and Rolls into a gutter. (*Soyinka* 55)

It is worthy of note that Kongi's image-boosting strategy is not just directed at impressing the outside world but to poke fun at the stupidity of the president's so much lust for power that he is happy being equated with Christ. He thus creates an attractive coat in which he hides his monstrous form. In it, he ridiculously assumes a wide range of postures to the correspondents for a positive representation abroad. Such sensational captions help to create the desired effect:

A Leader's Temptation... Agony on the Mountains...
The Loneliness of the Pure... The Uneasy Head...
A saint at Twilight... The Spirit of the Harvest...
The face of Benevolence... The Giver of Life... (*Soyinka* 39).

An image of a pensive and devoted leader is thus sold out. But no one at home is fooled. Even in granting reprieve to spine prisoners, he resorts to propaganda. The propaganda machine works as efficiently and consistently as the network of coercion to keep everyone conforming to the ruler's will. They execute their job recklessly. The Carpenter Brigade thus spits fire on all opponents; for they have sworn to die in spreading "the creed of Kongism" (*Soyinka* 65). Those who are too slow to accept Kongi and his government have their heads crushed with their heavy mallets. Even those people supporting Kongi's hold on power are not exempted from his wrath or suspicion. The Organizing Secretary, takes scrupulous care in organizing the Harvest. No one is then free from tyranny, persecution and tension. In such a situation, it only takes a little slip for one to lose one's life, one's freedom or a visible part of one's body. This is an instance of man's inhumanity to man that African leaders perpetrate and which Soyinka tries to expose to the society as a whole.

Kongi's pervasive spy network is again quite interesting. The spies who are ridiculously presented as stooges often peep in through the broken wall of his backyard many times in just one day.

The Big Ear of the man himself
Has knocked twice on the palace gates –
'Twice in one morning – and his spies
Have sneaked in through the broken wall of my backyard,
where women throw their piss
As many times today' (*Soyinka* 49).

Kongi's powerful spy network can be likened to Big Brother's in George Orwell's *1984*; Big Brother unleashes terror and agony on the people.

Hence, the freedom of speech and association is suppressed and people live in perpetual fear. This is the season of anomy which Kongi has introduced to suppress his people. Imprisonment and death are unleashed to repress those who fail to understand and behave themselves. Inyang is of the opinion that:

"New offences are continually being created. Charges such as treason and communism are easily trumped up against whosoever they desire . Those present at Segi's and Daodu's protest are easily charged with treason"....
The jail is thus only one step towards the grave; for ignoble death is the ultimate fate of every detainee. One's struggle to hold on to life by escaping through the prison walls earns a life pension for whoever succeeds in bringing back the fugitive, dead or alive.

An Aweri supports this desperate and sinister move which characterizes Kongi's reign when he says:

And the radio has put out a prize
Upon his head. A life pension
For his body, dead or alive.
That Dear child, is a new way to grant Reprieve.
Alive, the radio blared,
If possible; and if not, DEAD! (*Kongi's Harvest* 62)

The Secretary and the Fifth Aweri testify to this regime's inhumanity to man in his statement as follows:

Secretary: You don't know how he hates those men. He wants them dead – you've no idea how desperately

Fifth Aweri: I do. But tell him he can kill them later in detention. Have them shot trying to escape or something. But first demonstrate his power over life and death by granting them a last minute reprieve. That's it, work on that aspect of it. The drama of a last minute reprieve. If I know my Kongi that should appeal to his flair for gesture (*Soyinka* 30).

Certainly, Kongi's statement evokes concern in us and it goes on to show how crude and ruthless a leader can be. If Kongi is taken as a symbolic representation of African leaders, one can then say that the playwright is criticizing African leaders' use of brute force to achieve their political ambitions.

Kongi's surprise attack campaign strategy is laughable and elicits the playwright's mockery. Kongi does his best to perpetuate his glorious image as a leader that is totally committed and engaged in the country's development, thus justifying his clamping down on his detractors who are seen as elements of social retrogression.

The Use of Folklore- Rituals, Festivals and Myth

From another dimension, in *Kongi's Harvest*, it is the festival of the New Yam to be presented to the spiritual head of the tribe who does it every year. The action of the play hinges on the formal presentation of the new yam, the symbol of a leadership that has been authenticated. Kongi insists that the Oba, who normally would have the traditional prerogative of receiving the yam, formally present the new yam to him. The presentation has two functions: the new era of Kongi's harvest would be opened, and, in the process, the new authority would also be legitimised. Kongi's concern that the ceremony should take place is indicative of his attempt to remove any suggestion that he is a usurper of collectively-sanctioned authority.

Soyinka symbolically uses the yam festival to explore the themes of domination and lust for power which is characteristic of African leaders. It is common among the African leaders especially the military rulers, to adopt Kongi's style of sending detractors to detention camps. Politicians in the current political dispensation detain people who are not in their camps (Political Parties) and free those who belong to their parties who equally commit the same offence with those they perceive as enemies.

Thus, Soyinka reflects the political strategies adopted by African leaders as seen in the Play. In a bid to monopolise power - to become both Political and Spiritual leaders, Kongi demands that the new yam be handed over to him, an act that is symbolic of usurpation of the Isma land and political control of the people. Though the plan fails, Soyinka uses the attempt to explore the power desperation of African leaders. It is also a literary device to criticize African leaders who over-reaches themselves with power. It is noteworthy that Soyinka uses the festival to:

show the tyranny and dictatorship behind Kongi's intentions through Kongi's demanding attitude... Kongi is only doing so to gain the complete submission of the people and become the authoritative figure (lynlyn)

The New Yam Festival is again used as literary device to explore African leaders' obsession with power when Kongi receives the New Yam as a reprieve to release the five prisoners and further insists, dictatorially that he wants one of the escapees arrested dead or alive. "The breaking of the negotiation shows Kongi's true colours... He cares more about his power" (lynlyn) and less about democracy and people's welfare.

Soyinka has equally shown that folklore - Harvest Festival - is observed to mirror the exchange of power when a leader receives the new yam from a former leader. Interestingly, folklore has been used to express the theme of power, again, when Lynlyn says that the drum is a representation of traditional values especially the Yoruba culture and when people dance and get interrupted, Lynlyn believes that the abrupt stoppage symbolizes the obstruction of power.

Kongi, although shown to be in an obviously strong position, continues to see himself as constantly under threat, from both the traditional forces and the relatively enlightened faction led by young Daodu. Kongi's continuing attempts to legitimise his leadership, which has its attendant dehumanizing effects, provide the major satiric targets within the play. *Kongi's Harvest* is a microcosm of the contemporary political situation. The modern replacement for the traditional authority is also a kind of dictatorship. In *Kongi's Harvest*, though the king's power is curbed, his spiritual and moral grip is retained.

Soyinka detests dictators and the brutality associated with them. The traditional ruler, Oba Danlola and the usurper Kongi are well-endowed with modern equipment and methods of coercion. Soyinka's traumatic experiences as a victim of his country's military regime have left indelible scars on his psyche. Suppression of the rights of individuals is unpardonable for Soyinka. He respects a regime which recognizes an individual's right to sovereignty.

Owiko adds that "The self-imposed political leader Kongi has put Obas Sarumi and Danlola in detention as a way of depriving them of their traditional power". He is of the opinion that the kings do not like Kongi for his tyrannical and oppressive rule and to "curtail their opposition, Kongi employs the machinery of government to arrest and incarcerate them".

Since folklore is a term for the body of traditional customs, rituals, superstitions, stories, dances and songs, it has been adopted and maintained within a given community by processes of repetition not reliant on the written word. We can say that no other drama concept fascinates Soyinka more than ritual drama. This playwright therefore uses folklore- myth and ritual as conventional technique for thematization. It is through this concept that he interprets the society in his creative theatre enterprise. It is these challenging forces that compel Soyinka to engage in a theatre practice that seeks harmony between man and the cosmic forces around him. A critical study of Soyinka's major plays reveals that ritualism is the canvas on which he paints his theatre instructions in striking colours to affect humanity, using the Yoruba mythology. The quest to discover a meaning for life provides the general framework upon which Soyinka envisions his aesthetic theory of morality and ritual archetype.

Conclusion

All considered, Soyinka uses ritual as a channel of theatrical expression via language, plot structure, songs and music. Even though Soyinka has constantly come under heavy attack over his ritual theatre concept whose process of realisation is often considered as a turgid and esoteric hindrance to meaningful theatre communication, he continues to insist that ritual theatre is the medium for social change because the mode of its perception and representation has always been elastic and accommodative.

Through the use of satire and folklore, Soyinka downgrades and ridicules the temporal powers that have inflated themselves to incredibly monstrous proportions. Symbolically, the play suggests that the traditional world built by black Africans has crashed and the new one that is being constructed to replace it is not only strange and incomprehensible but has also lost its moorings right from the foundation. Soyinka perceives the lack of disciplined and responsible leadership as the bane of politics in black Africa. Soyinka's commitment and vision as an African writer has consistently remained Afrocentric as he has faithfully pitched his literary tent with the revolutionary vanguard that has unswervingly advocated the rich culture of Africa and affirmed her distinct identity. Soyinka uses his cultural background to elevate and reaffirm the customs and traditions of his people through the medium of folklore. This study provides an incentive for Africa's imaginative writers to engage their creative potentials in addressing the social ills of their communities as well as proffering solutions that can lead to the social transformation of Africa.

The study enables us to appreciate the aesthetic dimensions of folklore as artistic communication in Africa and to see folklore as a means of reflecting on social and cultural issues, thereby, appreciating the literary ways in which African writers use folklore to express cultural messages; it provides a platform for literary critics to

appreciate the dynamic capacity of culture to symbolically express fundamental beliefs, values and sense of aesthetics in contemporary African society; the use of folkloric materials by Wole Soyinka represents the writer's enormous contribution towards the celebration of African drama for aesthetic reason.

Finally, one can learn a lot of lessons from this discourse. First, authors can use oral resources to distillate themes, construct characters and to represent cultural authenticity. Moral decadence, man's inhumanity to man and similar vices can be corrected using folklore and satire.

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COMEDY OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIAN DRAMA: A STUDY OF OSOFISAN'S *WHO IS AFRAID OF SOLARIN?*

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Abstract

The ideology of any play should be to present openly and as objectively as possible ongoing issues within the community for the purpose of entertainment, affecting positive change, informing and educating. Essentially, the play must relate to the society as it treats the common man and the common events and happenings within the society. In this study, the focus is the representation of the corruption that has permeated the nation in a comic form in the selected work of Femi Osofisan. Through the use of pun, sarcasm and wit, certain Nigerian playwrights have taken it upon themselves to address the growing vice of corruption within the nation. Femi Osofisan, one of the leading second generation playwrights in Nigeria boasts of many such works chiefly amongst which is *Who is Afraid of Solarin*. This play adequately and comically captures the corruption embedded within the public offices in Nigeria. The paper thus recommends that proper platforms should be put in place to address and thereby curb the issues of corruption in all its forms.

Conceptualisation of Corruption

Corruption is a common word used by both adults and children because it is found in every aspect of Nigeria; business, schools, markets and government and non-governmental organisations. This monster called corruption has now been nick named in most Nigerian languages especially in the three major languages! Ndokwu (2004) says: the Igbos call it *Igbuozu*, the Yorubas call it *Egunje* while the Hausas call it *Chuachua*. People no longer frown or feel ashamed to engage in corrupt practices! *Chuachua/Egunje* or *Igbuozu* is now acceptable and it is possible to hear someone openly complaining that there is no *Chuachua*, *Egunje* or *Igbuozu* at his or her place of work and as such a person might quickly resign if he or she finds another work where there is opportunity for *Chuachua*. It is as bad as that. Notably, Ndokwu only explain a certain aspect of corruption which is bribe, and not corruption in its full holistic concept.

Corruption is a global phenomenon. It is not the exclusive preserve of any nation, race or section of the world but transcends national boundaries and frontiers and symbolizes phenomenal universal unwholesomeness politically, Aluko opined, this menace has led to situations like slow movement of files in offices, police extortion of toll fees, port congestion, queues at passport offices and petrol stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities, among others (Dike, 2005, Iheanacho 2004, Oliyide and Odeku, 2002 and Oloja 2002 in Aluko, (65).

Government officials further still corruptly enrich themselves by converting Government money in their custody to their own use, force citizens to pay bribe money, and citizens also induce the officials with bribes to get whatever they want from Government or company offices. Though corruption is found in every society, it is very common in Nigeria, and no one seems to be free from it either as a doer or as a victim.

Corruption is a social problem found in various “degrees and forms in all but the most primitive societies”, (Staats 55). Ekiyor in his broad view of corruption defined it as the unlawful use of official power or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and/or any other person at the expense of the public, in contravention of his oath of office and/or contrary to the conventions or laws that are in force (10). It is very unfortunate that this menace knows not any time nor period; it happens anytime or period of any nation's history. Gould and Kolb in support of the above, contend that corruption is not a characteristic of any one period in political history nor of any one country (78). It is endemic in both authoritarian and party systems of government. Further still as an evidence that the history of corruption is as old as the world, Scott is of the view that corruption 'must be understood as a regular, repetitive and integral part of the operation of most political system' (ix). Another view about corruption is that it is intentional. This view was heralded by Brooks who believed the corrupt official knows his duties “but it is neglected or mis-performed for reasons narrower than those which the state intends” (86). He went further to say the difference between a corrupt official and inefficient one is that “the corrupt official must know the better and choose the worse (but) the inefficient official does not know any better”. He further maintained that “in either case, the external circumstances may appear to be closely similar, and the immediate results may be equally harmful”.

Corruption still as a common phenomenon found not only in the so called developing countries and societies, but also in the developed societies such as Europe, America, Japan and the former Soviet Union regardless of their structural and cultural differences. Some authors have argued that corruption is prevalent in third world countries however, evidence has shown that corruption is even prevalent in developed countries and each country be it in developing or developed world devices suitable method to deal with corruption. For instance, a U.S multinational construction firm according to Kimes was quoted to have said that:

fighting corruption and bribery, CEO Allan Boeckman helped developed a cross industry sharing programme of best practices, along with a set of strict principles to follow. Fluor uses a combination of an ethics hotline for reporting crime, an open door policy to encourage managers to consult with executives for

guidance, anticorruption training sessions, a “zero-tolerance” policy for infractions and overall transparency in its operations to minimize inappropriate behaviour (21).

The above quotation confirms that a society without corruption would not have put in place an anti-corruption training session. This further proves that corruption does not know boundary, culture, society and that there is no human occupation that is immunized against its practices. Adebayo explains corruption via faulty recruitment of employees exercise in the Nigerian Public service, he says:

one of the banes of the Nigerian Public Service is the recruitment of mediocre or totally unsuitable candidates in preference to candidates of high merit. The reasons for this ugly situation can be traced directly to nepotism. Corruption plays only a little part and is generally prevalent in the recruitment of every junior employees like messengers and clerks. In this category of recruitment, the recruiting agents are generally officials of lower-middle rank who see an opportunity of making some money on the side by collecting little bribes from applicants (30).

Though this situation is reprehensive, it might not be the heart of the matter, the selection of unsuitable candidates that usually undermines efficiency and lowers performance in the public service occurs in the recruitment of higher grades of staff. However in the above scenario, we see nepotism, a dimension or form of corruption in Nigeria at work in which a special form of favouritism is used by office holders to prefer their kinfolk and family members that may not be qualified at the expense of candidates of high merit. Amundse opined that corruption happens when one is exempted from the application of certain laws or regulations or given undue preference in the allocation of scarce resources (9).

Corruption we all know does not yield to easy definition, thus writers' definitions have been varied and divergent. Akinseye attempts at describing it as 'mother of all crimes' and identifies four forms of corruption as bribery, prebendalism, graft and nepotism. EFCC a commission that deals with economic issue through Ngwakwe defines corruption from economic perspective as follows:

the non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with objectives of earning wealth illegally either individually or in a group or organized manner thereby violating existing legislation governing the economic activities of government and its administration (100)

From the various foregoing definitions of corruption, one can see that there is hardly consensus on the meaning of the term. However, one thing that is certain about those various definitions is that they lack precise elements that constitute corruption. Nonetheless they all have enough indicators as to conducts that might be “judged as corrupt and the distinguishing element of such conduct is some moral failing or depravity” (Ibrahim 16).

No doubt, corruption is the unethical or illegal advantages procured through official position. Akanbi, the distinguished former chairman of ICPC classified corruption in Nigeria into three categories, these are:

- I. street level corruption which describes corruption in administration as shown in day-to-day experiences of the citizens in their interactions with officials.
- II. business corruption that occurs among low to medium sized business with or without active connivance of the equivalent public sector official; and
- III. high level corruption, which involves huge sums of money in high power centres in finance, public service and administration.

Petty corruption headed is highly visible, pervasive, endemic and in some cases institutionalized. This institutionalization of corruption according to him, is possible because of the poor standard of ethics which is of course a function of other social malaise like greed. Stiglitz, J.E in his own view, argues that corruption is systematic, a continuous cycle of deliberate initiative erected by those in authority and beneficial to politically structured groups (133). This group markets liberalization and privatization. The emphasis emanates from 'ethnographic observation of transiting economies and natural resources of dependent economies. Stiglitz further maintains that these reforms respond to the vested interests of the 'corrupt elites as this was obvious during Abacha administration in Nigeria. Stiglitz draws special allusion to the instrumental bureaucrats who have been compensated at the cost of nation's revenues.

Although corruption is systematic Egwakhe opined that the institutional agents' extortive (extractive) corruption contexts are perfectly distinguishable and independent, thus, less difficult to authentically specify the order of casualty or precedent between the perpetuator and the beneficiaries (57). Bureaucratic structure gave birth to extractive corruption. Critical observation reveals that the state or some state agents benefit most from extra-legal transactions in the name of the state. This kind of corruption unfolds when institutional decision-makers exploit the

government power they are equipped with, to tailor and sustain their self-interest, power, status and wealth. The agents' extractive behaviour unfolds towards evading the iron cage of the law thereby instituting conditional reciprocity between the agents and the law breaker.

Obasanjo (2004) as reported by Afolabi (2007) enumerated the various forms of corruption to include fee fraud (known as 419), money laundering, unconventional and fraudulent trade practices, misappropriation or diversion of funds, kick backs, under and over invoicing, bribery, false declarations, abuse of office, and collection of illegal tolls. Other contextual meanings include the impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principles, and an unauthorized use of resources for private gain. Adigun by way of contextualizing corruption within the territory of public service listed such factors as pervasion of public rules and misuse of official power for selfish motive, and the frustration of electoral process to make free and fair election impossible. Other forms of corruption to him are the deliberate refusal to declare one's assets on the assumption and expiration of public office and of course using one's official status to prevent the administration of justice which is common by the executives (past and present) of different capacities in Nigeria (52).

In the word of Akinyemi, corruption was described as “the acquisition of that which one (as a member of society not public official alone) is not entitled' (22) . Doig described corruption to be any use of official position, resources or facilities for personal benefit, or possible conflict of interest between public position and private benefit. This, of course, to him involves offenses of misconduct in public offices and is also covered by a variety of internal regulations (36). Lastly, El-Rufai made corruption to cover:

a wide range of social misconducts, including fraud, extortion, embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, influence peddling, bestowing of favours to friends, rigging of elections, abuse of public property, the leaking of official government secret, safes of expired and defective goods like drugs, food, electronics and spare parts to the public, etc.
(15)

To round up this conceptualization, the words of Alanamu (2009) will be useful. He says corruption is like a disease that can cause total pathology for an organization, and in relation to society, corruption can affect the economic, social, political and the moral aspect of the society as it is the case in Nigeria. A typical case is recorded in the first quarter of 2018 in the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) over the mysterious loss of thirty-six million naira (N36,000,000). Working on the move to ease the registration procedures of prospective university students, the then head of the board, Oloyede sought to eliminate the use of scratch card. He thus instructed that

inventory should be made on the scratch cards so far sold. On one of such inventory visits to Makurdi office of JAMB, a sales clerk, Philomina Chieshe told JAMB registrar and his team that she could not account for N36 million she made in previous years before the abolition of scratch cards; she claimed a mysterious snake swallowed the money. Arguably, that is the height of corruption and it sparked a lot of traffic on the social media. There are other acts of corrupt practices that characterised the Nigerian public sector such as James Ibori who was found innocent of corrupt charges only to be judged guilty and sentenced overseas. Another is the former Governor of Bayelsa, Mr. Alamiyeseigha who had to disguise as a woman to escape the reaching hands of foreign justice. Millions have been lost and things left undone due to the level of corruption in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework (Formalism)

Formalism was born mostly in the 1890s, came to prominence in Russian letters during World War I, established themselves institutionally through the restructuring of academia after the Communist revolution. According to Selden, Russian Formalism is a “convenient label for a loosely knit group of critics whose signal role for contemporary literary studies can hardly be overestimated”. It is a school of literary criticism that concerns its approach with the structural purposes of a particular text without the influence of external factors such as culture authorship and contents. It focuses on the modes of composition, genres, discourse and forms of a particular text. This is why it is “more closely related to structuralism which Wadsworth traces the influence of structuralism on formalism and tags it “Saussure's influence” which “is seen in the Russian formalists' argument that literature is a systemic set of linguistic and structural elements that can be analysed; self-enclosed system that can be studied not for its contents but for its forms” (41).

It represents a radical departure from the previously dominant mimetic and pragmatic theories but located and rigidly rooted in the yardstick objective literary appreciation. Thus Russian Formalists separate the view of literature as an emanation of the author's soul, as a socio-historical document, or as a manifestation of a philosophical system that explains or bears message about the author. In this way, their theoretical orientation corresponded to the aesthetic sensibility of modernist art, in particular Futurism, with which the Russian Formalists were initially closely allied. The attention of formalists is basically to dwell on the nature of language in a work.

The general and vague usually brings together the most diverse works “dealing with poetic language and style in the broad sense of these terms, historical and theoretical poetics, studies of meter, sound orchestration and melodies, stylistics, composition and plot structure, the history of literary genres and styles, etc.”, (Selden 2). On language composition, the formalists believe that everyday language unlike realism,

is just ordinary. They believe that “literary language is different. It deviates from the expected using all devices an author has power to manipulate to make what is familiar seems strange and unfamiliar;” (Wadsworth 35). Similarly, there is a difference between reality and its representation that is, story and plot. This concept attempts to describe the significance of the form of a literary work in order to define its literariness.

For instance, Femi Osofisan's *Who is Afraid of Solarin?* should be interpreted as a literature material pure within its deployment of language used, the unity of plots and other elements of a drama. No reference should be made to interpret it as a cultural play or a philosophical work that celebrates Tai Solarin.

Extensively, the operating icons of the formalist according to Wadsworth include Form, Diction, and Unity of these elements to know the fitness of such work as a standard artistic composition (46). Copiously, form is the whole that is produced by various structural elements working together. “Form grows out of the work's recurrences, repetitions, relationships and motifs-all the organisational devices that create the total effect. Diction involves a close reading of meaning to the denotative and connotative essence of language use. Formalist critics push on story's language to reveal meanings that are not readily noticed in an effort to find suggested meaning rather than explicit ones. Unity implies the relationship of different elements and the contribution to the totality of the work”, (Wadsworth 46). Among the leading scholars of the movement is Mikhail Bakhtin. His works featured the special concepts such as dialogism, heteroglossia, polyphony and carnival.

Synopsis of *Who is afraid of Solarin?*

Femi Osofisan's *Who Is Afraid of Solarin?* is an adaptation of Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, though the style, theme and language of the play are altered with a view to heighten the humorous effect of the entire play. The Government Inspector ordinarily appears Nigerian the way it reeks of corruption, insincerity and concealment of truth and diversion of government funds. Osofisan has however, increased the humour and raised other issues in the play, which relate directly to the Nigerian political system and the entire Nigerian society at large.

The impending visit of the Public Complaints Commissioner to the Local Government gets the Council Officials jittery and apprehensive of what will become of them if the reputedly strict and no-nonsense commissioner should really visit and discover all their fraudulent acts just like that. Their meeting in Gbonmiayelobiojo's sitting room at the beginning of the play is thus to find a way to forestall the occurrence of such a dangerous visit. Various options are considered and weighed thoroughly before they agree to send for Baba Fawomi, an Ifa Priest, to help them use spiritual powers to cancel the visit of Solarin, the Public Complaints Commissioner

whose name alone sends shivers down the spines of every one of them. Baba Fawomi only plays on their intelligence because it is obvious he has no power of divination as he claims to. Yet he is smart enough to keep all of them following him and he is the one who discovers at the end that Isola is only a fake and not the real Commissioner. Isola, like Hlestakov, plunders them so much when he discovers that they must have mistaken him for a very important government personality. He collects so much money, promises to marry Cecilia and elopes before the truth is discovered.

Osofisan however blows up what appears to be subtle sense of humour in *The Government Inspector* as he throws everybody into raucous laughter by the satiric characters, situations and statements he creates. Lanrele says, "If Gogol's *The Government Inspector* is comic satire, *Who Is Afraid of Solarin?* is tragic satire". (75). The humour in the play is achieved through various means as the creation of caricatures of Nigerian politicians, wrong use of English words and the extremely amusing manipulation of Baba Fawomi, the Ifa Priest. It is amidst the tears of laughter that the audience will catch some reverting statements about the level of corruption of the local council officials and this makes Lanrele to further comment that Osofisan is "a playwright who is fond of covering the realities of our social and political life with mock laughter"(78). The academic background of the Price Control Officer for instance is revealed in a most humorous manner:

PCO: . . . No sir, that's not how it happens in Political Science! Ask anyone in the Faculty. They'll tell you about me before I withdrew from the University with the Senate's advice. . . (13)

The fact that the speaker is a University dropout thrills the audience to laughter, the salient truth that this is the breed of leaders who rule the country has been exposed and that is the way each one of them rattles on about his situation and personality. Hence, *Who Is Afraid of Solarin?* raises the vital issue of leadership as the problem with Nigeria, and indeed the whole of Africa. Where leaders are made of school dropouts and religious whores, to say they are corrupt will then be an understatement. All the council executives in the play are caricatures of their equivalents in real life. Mrs. Mailo typifies the half-illiterate, half-educated Nigerian woman politician who prides herself on her influence and family heritage while the types of Miss. Animasaun throws morals to the dogs and uses 'bottom power' to get whatever they need. Gbonmiayelobiojo, the Council Chairman is no better in his speech and manners. The Chief Magistrate who should be the foremost person in uprightness and law keeping is most profane and immoral among the lot. Oriebora, Pastor Ifagbemi, Lamidi and Lemomu are all absurd and queer characters who have greed and gain as the reasons they do whatever they do in the play.

In creating these seemingly purely Nigerian characters from *The Government Inspector*, the confirmation is made that an adaptation is more of a work of expertise and skill rather than that of imitation. Much as *Who's Afraid...* follows Gogol in terms of story line and characterization, it equally carves a niche for itself as a play with its own significance and style.

Sociology of the play

The word sociology comes from 'society'. The sociology of a play can be referred to as the influence of the play on the society. This play therefore can be related to the Nigerian Society which happens to be our main focus. Horton and Hunt (25-26) observes that sociology is especially interested in customs, tradition, and values which emerge from group living, the and way group living in turn, is affected by these customs, traditions and values. Horton and Hunt further noted that sociology is interested in the way groups interact with one another and in the process develop an institution. Sociology is concerned with many social phenomenal rating from social stratification culture, mass media, law, and crime, religion, sex and gender, politics, education, the internet, health and so on.

The theatre of Osofisan is often the melting point of various issues of social, political, historic and mythical concerns. The totality of his works reveals a deep concern for the effectiveness of the machinery of running society that is intricately linked to its source. Jeyifo comments that there is remarkable similarity between the structure of many of the plots of Osofisan's plays and the symbolic structure Prototypical dilemma tale of traditional African folklore (89).

Aside making jest of individual politicians, *Who Is Afraid of Solarin?* is a statement on the Nigerian government of the time, the government policies and their insincerity of purpose. The Councillor for cooperatives jokingly asks the Councillor for Education:

CC: And what of you; is it the burden of plunder from the UPE buildings project that keeps you stunted?

Later, the playwright supplies an information in the footnote that:

The Universal Primary Education project started by the Federal Nigerian Military Government in 1976 is to make primary education free and compulsory for all Nigerian children. The programme became controversial because of the enormous costs and allegations of official corruption involved in the exercise (Osofisan 7)

While *Who Is Afraid of Solarin* is not a chronicle of the bad policies of the Nigerian government of the time; it mentions two central ones; the Universal Primary Education project mentioned above and the Operation Feed the Nation, another failed project of the same government. Hence, in the midst of jesting and mock laughter, salient national issues are brought up and they eventually become thought provoking.

Isola is discovered to be “fake” just when it becomes too late and the real Public Complaints Commissioner arrives. The Public Complaints Commissioner for Ogun, Oyo and Ondo States of Nigeria when the play was written was Dr. Tai Solarin, a man known for his sternness and severity where justice and obedience to the laws are concerned. The play was written to honour him hence the titling of the play after him though he, like the Inspector in *The Government Inspector*, is a faceless character. In the world of the two plays therefore, true and conscientious people do not exist in the physical but in the imagination, a kind of voice of conscience scourging the corrupt officials for their graft and misdeeds.

Who's Afraid of Solarin can thus be read as a critique of the Nigerian government and leaders of the time considering the way the play tackles the dual issues of corruption and unqualified leadership with precision. The significance of this ample treatment of leadership issues in the play lies in the fact that the same handling is traceable to Osofisan's other plays, adapted or otherwise.

Causes of Corruption in *Who is Afraid of Solarin*

John Ajodele enthused that corruption can be blamed on poverty, greed and an insatiable appetite of people to accumulate wealth. This was reported by Onongha (36). Greed indeed is a major helping hand for the menace called corruption. Wood (2005) as cited in Onongha described greed as an inappropriate attitude toward things of values built on the mistaken judgment that my wellbeing is tied to the sum of my possession (37). Greed, he continued can take the form of acquisitiveness being inordinately concerned with amassing goods. Doubtless, Onongha goes further, this phenomenon is evident in the lives of many African leaders as they assume office. Services to their country or community fades into the background while self-serving becomes the ultimate pursuit to them indefatigably.

Olujobi (1999) as reported by Afolabi, in attempt to state causes of corruption categorized wealth producing resources into two broad areas namely tangible and intangible. The former consists of man, money, materials, and machinery, while the latter are made up of time and information. He referred to man, while citing the work of Drucker and Easton, as both custodian of other resources, and also the only active agent of production. Conversely, man to him is regrettably, the only active agent of theft of other organizational resources in his custody (67).

From the foregoing, Afolabi justifies dealing effectively with potential problems of employee theft in an organization. Reviewing the causes of employee theft, he came up with the followings:

- a. Motivation: certain habits which predispose individuals to steal include high personal debts, excessive gambling, peer group pressures, excessive use of alcohol or drugs and living far beyond ones' means. This is obvious in the lifestyle of Gbonmiayelobiojo whose lifestyle is beyond his means.
- b. Equity: employees who are exploited by way of poor wage remuneration are likely to steal. It can be argued however that corruption cuts across remuneration barriers since among those who started being corrupt early in life, are some who still find it convenient to subsidize their living through fraudulent practices, when they attain higher socio economic positions in life. It is also sad to note that some of the most corrupt individuals in Nigeria are actually the very top public officers who are indeed very well remunerated. Examples include the characters in *Who is Afraid of Solarin*
- c. Management attitude: if management encourages godfatherism in the work place, or does not respond to crimes promptly and decisively, corruption will thrive in the organization. The education system and the legal system as portrayed in *Who is Afraid of Solarin* is a good example
- d. Societal value system: Nigerians accord a lot of respect to material wealth regardless of how it has been acquired. Little attention is paid to morals, and it is often said that "if you cannot beat them, join them"; since it is generally believed that the end justifies the means. Getting a job is not the question of merit but of connections. The few among the citizenry who get themselves enriched through fowls means, are also always under pressure from their friends, and relations to share out the loot thereby perpetuating the vicious circles (67).

Social corruption is found in almost every society. Social corruption is shaped by a range of structural factors, such as geographical location or citizenship status, and are often underpinned by cultural discourses and identities defining. For example, whether the poor are 'deserving' or 'undeserving'. In simple societies, those that have few social roles and statuses occupied by its members, social corruption may be very low. In tribal societies, for example, a tribal head or chieftain may hold some privileges, use some tools, or wear marks of office to which others do not have access, but the daily life of the chieftain is very much like the daily life of any other tribal member.

In *Who is Afraid of Solarin*, corruption is another bane that permeates the civil service environment. Corruption amongst leaders, amongst politician, among the masses (humans) and the church. Femi Osofisan establishes the effect and causes of

corruption within the society. **Corruption** occurs when resources in a given society are distributed unevenly, typically through norms of allocation, that engender specific patterns along lines of socially defined categories of persons. That is exactly what happens in *Who is Afraid of Solarin* There is misallocation of funds and the masses are at the receiving ends of this unequal distribution of wealth.

Consequences of Corruption in *Who is Afraid of Solarin*

In the Nigerian society today, there is the issue of corruption within the states of the nation. This issue is getting controversial as some of the so-called civil servants and public servants like judges, ministers, house chairmen and commissioners who are seen as the pillars of government as Femi Osofisan rightly portrayed them. The above-named are seen in the characters of the chairman, Judge, councillor that serves as the setting of the play. The masses in the society are the likes of the houseboy of Gbonmiayelobiojo. In the play; Osofisan exposes some consequences of corruption that can be related to the society:

1. **Mismanagement of funds;** there is massive mismanagement of funds within the country and that account for the economic recession in the country. There are several unfinished projects like that of the UBE (Universal Basic Education)'s classrooms and others unfinished projects
2. **Embezzlement:** like in the play, the elder statesmen have been controversially reported to have embezzled large amount of money from the national treasury.
3. **Loss of dignity:** The chairman and the other councillors could not stand tall and proud for they lost their dignity the moment they decided to involve themselves in the game of corruption

The Satirical Element of Corruption in *Who is afraid of Solarin*

Every play has its own aim and objectives, the mind of the playwright is expressed through the themes of the play and the message of the play has its objectives which are majorly those things that the satirical elements in a play stand to gain or aim at achieving. Satire as a whole has the major aim of correcting, the voice of satire is change.

The play is didactic in nature such that it teaches the audience and readers certain acceptable ways to live life. Osofisan expresses that:

This play is a mirror of what we do, and fail to do- deliberately magnified of course, but only in order to increase the shock, the awareness of the peril we continue to run, all of us, by preventable choice (5).

The intention is merely to expose the ills of what we consider to be conventional in our country. In Nigeria for instance, it has been observed that wherever people are, corruption abound, most especially in public offices. Rather than fight this cankerworm, everybody tries to get their own share and the spread of corruption expands infinitely. They do this in a desperate bid to feel secure and self-sufficient while trying to ascend the ladder of social status. They appear to have no care particularly who is the victim of their exploits and corruption. No one is innocent of this. Hence, by doing this, they make democracy become the first causality. Femi Osofisan's style of writing usually makes an artistic point by incorporating entertainment elements of humour. Humour in the play is used to speak about the corrupt attitude of people towards their subordinates and the masses. The Public Complaints Commissioner (Tai Solarin) made reference to this attitudinal defect in his words at his arrival.

The conclusion of the play has no resolution mainly because it is extremely bent on creating myriads of pictures of the terrible and pitiable state of affairs in the country. This is done with a view to leaving messages in the hearts of the audience or readers, messages to be pondered upon in order to drive them to push for revolution or change.

Conclusion

It is believed that the theatre has made itself available as an apparatus for healing the ills of the society. It has provided the crucible inside which men can be restored to sanity and also heals the madness of inhuman nature in their mind. The theatre has always been playing a constructive role in the society, especially in safeguarding the life and rights of the young and minors. It is in this direction that many playwrights and actors have given themselves to theatre for the society or political theatre. Hence, theatre and theatre practitioners are inseparable from the society with their roles as tool for social, cultural, political, economic and total emancipation.

Findings of this research work, reveal the prevalence of bribery crises and corruption in the Nigerian society, its causes and consequences on the Nigerian citizen at large as typified in Femi Osofisan's *Who is afraid of Solarin*. Based on the findings of the study, it is apparent that bribery and corruption is a dreadful act that has eaten deep like a cankerworm into the growth of the society and thus tends to amputate the life and future of the young and minor, specifically, as it affects the youths and early grave for talents. Consequently, the research critically examines the possibility of curbing bribery and corruption in the Nigerian society, using Femi Osofisan's *play* as a parameter. It is therefore pertinent to state that the theatre is a veritable tool in restoring normalcy to the society, as showcased in this research work. To this end, this study is aimed at investigating theatre as a tool for curbing corruption in Nigerian society.

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COSTUMES AS VIABLE TOOLS FOR CULTURAL PROMOTION AND IDENTITY: *WAPTOER* FESTIVAL AS A PARADIGM.

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Abstract

Costume is a very important aspect of a performance presentation, as it gives out the interpretative meaning of the physical appearance of a performer. It is therefore, highly symbolic and cannot be over-emphasized. This paper outlines the aesthetic nature and significance of the Kwalla Costume during the *Waptoer* festival performance. Many people have different conceptions and interpretations on costume. Some see it as fashion, and others as a medium of shelter, while others see it as an enhancement of the human culture and its identity. Costumes constitute important visual element in the performing arts which enhances and blends with the script to give enormous credibility to a performance. This paper, employs the qualitative research method via the instrumentation of participant-observation and analyses. By participant-observation instrument, the researchers take part as audience in the course of the festival while the technical details of the festival is analyzed through photographs, which serve as primary source. While, relevant texts on festivals from articles in academic journal, monographs, textbooks and internet sources serve as secondary sources. This study uses functionalism and performance theories. These theories are selected due to the fact that they are extensive and cover everything that has to do with a unified whole (society) of which the *Waptoer* festival is a good example. From this research, it is crystal clear that African traditional festivals and their accompanying paraphernalia (Costumes) have potentials to attract tourist and promote cultural identity. This work aims at revealing the possibility of constant creativity in costume and its functionality. The researchers recommend that

costumes and other festival elements should be revered as they are the means of a people's identity. Again, costume designers should do more research on costume in order to know its usefulness, relevance and the identity of a given group of people.

Key words: Costume, Festival, Culture, Identity and Performance.

Introduction

Costume can be seen as a distinctive style of dress of performers that reflect their class, gender, profession, ethnicity, nationality, activity and so on. People wear clothing to project their ethnicity as well as their social or financial status. People who come in contact with people dressed in a certain way receive instant messages and impressions. Costume is a visual element that characterizes a festival performance and it is also a personal element of a performer, because it is difficult to separate a performer from his/her costume due to the fact that the costume instantly projects the appropriate characterization of the performer. Costume also adds aesthetic values to the overall effects of a performance. (Douglas 9).

Culture on the other hand is the sum total of attitude, customs and beliefs that distinguish one group of people from another, transmitted through language, materials, objects, rituals, institutions and arts, transferable from one generation to the next. This means that culture cuts across all dimensions of life as practiced by a people in a given setting and within an age. The culture of a people means a lot to them, their lives and beliefs are expressed as they live and go about their everyday businesses. Culture defines accepted ways of behaving for members of a particular society. However, this varies from society to society, which explains why there is a collective conscience in every given society, which transcends the wishes, aspirations and choices of individual and controls, or at least moderates their behaviours. This shared collective conscience is then passed down from generation to generation. It also explains why costume is seen as symbolic and carrier of information as it concerns a group of peoples and identity. It gives expressive and explanatory information of the wearer, as an aid to his/her status/position and identity within a performance or the society he/she hails from.

Conceptualizing Performance

Kofowarala and Lateef make the point that; “most performing arts are either a celebration of life or an entertainment or sometimes a representation of imitation of life or something larger than life” (39). The term performance has become extremely popular in recent years in a wide range of activities in the arts, in literature, and in the social sciences. Since it requires high popularity, its usage has grown too. Turner has this to say:

Performance is no longer easy to define or locate. The concept and structure have spread all over the place. It is ethnic and intercultural, historical and history... Performance is a mode of behaviour, an approach to experience; it is play, sport, aesthetic, popular entertainment, experimental theatre and more... (13).

Turner maintains that the word performance also includes ritual, reading and worship recitations activities like catholic mass and other religious and ritual activities within a specific period of time. The existence oral performance is, unlike written literature, depending on a performer who composes certain songs on specific occasions or imitates an action of a character. As such, their product is regarded as performance because of its nature (56). The writer can stop to ponder and re-arrange his paragraphs or sentences while an oral performer has no time to reflect and he is always composing under the pressure of sustaining an active communication process between his audience and himself. Turner noted that, our everyday activity is performance. This is basically so because as humans, we play roles or positions that are known or unknown to us. Each of these performances has definite, limited time span, most times in an organized performance of activity, where a set of performance takes place; performance can also be seen in ritual and religious rites (57). Doki explains in other words that performance is the “Symbolic expression of religious convictions that are usually performed at traditionally prescribed times. Such activities as prayers, reading recitation sacrifices, exorcism, dancing, fasting and feats often play an important part to religious and ritual songs”(37).

The remarks above are referring to the kind of performances that mostly take place around religious centres and grounds, where devotees make incantations, sing songs, pray and perform ritualistic acts. Doki further affirms that performance of ritual songs can reassure worshipers that their faith in their religion is justified. It is to be understood therefore, that the main means of oral performance is through singing, dancing and the display of costume among others.

Theoretical Framework

Functionalism is a theory that sees the society as a complex system, whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability within a given society. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. A common analogy popularized by Herbert Spencer (2012), presents these parts of the society as 'organs' that work towards the proper functioning of the 'body' as a whole. Some of its characteristics are as follows:

1. It looks at society through a micro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole,
2. It believes that society has evolved like organism,
3. It also looks at both social structure and social functions of the society and
4. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes the effort to impute as rigorously as possible to each feature, custom, or system.

Functionalism theory in this study is used to analyze the significance and ways of sustaining the continuity of the performance through the ritualistic repetition of the *Waptoer* Festival and its artistic presentations of the costume during performance. The analysis through the theory yielded information important for understanding and identifying the various types of costumes within the performance community.

The Historical Antecedent of the *Kwalla* People

The *Kwalla* people are inhabitants of Qua'an Pan in Plateau State, North Central Nigeria. Qua'an Pan Local Government was carved out of Shendam Local Government on the 3rd of May, 1989, by the then Ibrahim Babangida regime. Qua'an Pan has two major tribes, the Pan and the Goemai. The Pan people of Qua'an Pan descended from Koffiar who migrated from parts unknown to present day Qua'an Pan. In the course of Koffiar's migration, he eventually settled on top of a hill in present day Koffiar. His offsprings decided to continue the migration in search of arable lands on the plains below the hill. They settled in various areas including present day Doka and Kwa. In the course of the migration, one of Koffier's children got tired at a certain location and declared "*Dum mak*", which means, "the journey is enough" in the local dialect. This formed the basis of the name of present day Doemak. Daffiar also had a pair of twins who continued migrating and eventually settled in present day Namu. This is why Namu is known as Jep Jan, which means twins in the local dialect.

Qua'an Pan is located in the Southern region of Plateau state. The Local Government area is bordered to the North by Bokkos, Mangu and Pankshin Local Governments areas, to the East it shares borders with Shendam Local Government and to the West and South by Nassarawa State. Qua'an Pan has eight districts, namely: Bwall, Doemak, Dokan Kasuwa (Jagatnoeng), Kwa, *Kwalla* (Kwagallak), Kwande (Moekwo), Kwang and Namu (Jepjan). The Local Government headquarters is at Ba'ap. The LGA is under the Plateau South Senatorial District and Mikang/Qua'an Pan/Shendam Federal Constituency. At the state level, it is divided into Qua'an Pan North and Qua'an Pan South State Constituencies.

Various dialects are spoken within Qua'anPan. They include Mernyang, Doemak, Bwall, Jagatnoeng, Kwagallak and Goemai. Other minor dialects include the Nteng, Garam and the Njak. Qua'an Pan also celebrates numerous cultural days and festivals. These include: *Pantong*, *Waptoer*, *Shikam*, Doemak Day and Pan Cultural Day. The Pandam Game Reserve is located in Namu, Qua'an Pan. The tourist attraction has a diverse collection of exotic animals and plants. There is also the famous Lardang cave located in Kwa. There is Latok waterfalls in Doemak that slowly runs all year round. Natures beauty is also expressed in the form of the range of sloping hills bordering the northern part of Qua'an Pan.

The people of Qua'an Pan are predominantly farmers and also engaged in other trades like, blacksmithing, metal works, hunting, trading and fishing. The main crops cultivated in commercial quantity include Yam, Cassava, Rice, Groundnuts, Guinea Corn, Beans, Palm Oil, Shea Butter, Groundnut, Bambarra nut and Olive Oil. Qua'an Pan has numerous large markets, which operate on market days which vary among districts.

Concept of Culture and Festival.

Culture has ramifying effects and impact on the life and living conditions of human beings all over the world. This accounts for the multiplicity of its definition and notions to the extent that British foremost culture theorist from the materialist school, Williams, in his book, *Keywords*, asserts that: "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in English language" (76).

There is, to a large extent, a common, global ground on the perception of culture, with regard to the fact that, and as summarily implied by Harambos and Holborn, that Culture determines how members of the society think and feel. It directs their actions and defines their outlook on life (98). Culture defines accepted ways of behaving for members of a particular society, but this vary from society to society, which explains why there is a collective conscience in every given society, which transcends the wishes, aspirations and choices of individuals and controls, or at least moderates, their behaviour. This shared collective conscience is then passed down from generation to generation.

Festival is a common phenomenon that is observed all over the world. As a matter of fact, there is no community or society in the world that does not observe what we call festival especially in the African society. Festivals therefore, are part of our lives and the things we do on the face of the earth from time to time. It is most times a period of celebration, unification, merriments, jubilation, entertainment, magical display, to mention but a few. This is why Awaolalu and Dopamu postulate that: "festival as a religious phenomenon is functional to social cohesion and solidarity... festivals are concerned with social relations, they give balance to the social, political, religions

and everyday life of the town where they are celebrated” (11). In a similar view, Omosade and Adelumo also observe that:

Festivals are observed by adherents of traditional religion. They mark important social and religious events in the lives of the people and they culminate in series of performances, entertainment, merry-making, rites, and ceremonies. In a sense, festivals are the most joyful and the most important social and religious activities in the West African traditional society (153).

Every society that celebrates a festival especially in the African society is usually based on one particular reason, be it in honour of a god/goddess, legend/hero, agricultural produce/harvest, occupational festival, or based on historical event, which has occurred in the past within the community where the festival is being observed. This assertion is justified by Ikibe and Ikibe as they postulate that: “festivals are public celebrations by communities to commemorate special events like harvesting of crops (e.g. new yam festival) and appeasement of various gods against enemies in time of war” (88).

Furthermore, festivals are events that take place from time to time. That is to say, they are re-occurring events, which most times are observed annually in the communities where the festival is being celebrated. Although there may be many festivals in a society within a year, nonetheless, each of these festivals are periodically celebrated as peculiar dates are being assigned to each of them. This is why Kofi opines that: “festivals are rituals which occur at regular intervals and which have their purpose as the expression of beliefs held by a particular community” (71). In the same view, Heritage Dictionary also defines festival as “an occasion for feasting or celebration especially a day or time of religious significance that re-occurs at a regular interval; an often regularly re-occurring programme of cultural performances, exhibition or competitions” (108).

More so, festivals perform the role of exhibiting or showcasing the aesthetics of the cultural heritage and tradition of the people where the festival celebration is taking place. During the festival, viewers are exposed to the values, norms, culture, and tradition of the people. Through this, we are able to know more about their dressing, the kind of food they eat, their ritual aesthetics, their language, and so many other things that have to do with their culture and traditions. This is why Aremu asserts that: “festival is the conglomeration of rites and rituals. It therefore, exposes the values, norms, culture and traditional ethics of a particular community or society in Africa” (11).

Festival gives a people great opportunity for re-union. That is people from the community who may be far away from their land come back home to observe these festivals from time to time and this in turn helps the people to re-connect with one another. It also strengthens their love and unity which fosters a peaceful co-existence between one another. Festivals also bring about development for the community where it is being celebrated. Most times, it also improves the economic status of the society as it involves the influx of people from all over and as a result of their presence in the festival, these visitors fall in love with the cultural aesthetics of the people and are always eager to buy one or two things that reflect the culture and tradition of the people they have come to celebrate with. A good example of this is the Osun Osogbo Annual Festival in which people from all over the world come to celebrate and this in-turn improves the economic status of the community and society of Osun state at large.

Festivals have always been encapsulated within the culture of the people as a cultural indicator and identity. It plays a prominent role in the traditional society. In addition, cultural festivals have been described as an embodiment of philosophy and wisdom, ethical, social and cultural identity of a particular culture. In a typical traditional society, festivals have come to play- roles in the dynamism referred to by Ambibola as “No living culture is static in African cultures, especially in modern times, thus passing through rapid and sometimes violent changes” (7).

Descriptive Analysis of *Waptoer* Festival of Kwalla People.

The *Waptoer* festival originated from rituals of cleansing the land and for showing gratitude to the gods of the land for life and sustenance. According to Turner ritual is “a prescribed formal behaviour for occasion, having reference to beliefs in mystical or non-imperial beings or power, a corpus of beliefs and practices performed by a specific cult association” (159). Ogunbiyi further clarifies that:

In ritual, man attempts to communicate directly with the supernatural, with the world that forces his control. Communication he may make to the priest or the medium is not to that person but through him to the spirit and it is through the medium that the supplicant is addressed by the spirit (183).

Ritual is therefore, a means of communication between the spirit world and that of the physical. These are the activities involved in the sacred aspects of *Waptoer* festival which is usually shown to only few selected people according to the tradition of the land. *Waptoer* is an annual festival that involves people gathering to worship, celebrate and socialize. Underneath it all is the most important aspect of the ritual of cleansing. The people of Kwalla are a religious set, they believe strongly in the power of their gods (*Komtoe, Dangshag, Mangap, Dayiem*) and thus worship them.

Waptoer festival is an annual celebration in honour, worship and remembrance of their heroes; heroes who led the fight for freedom and foundation of the Kwalla heritage. Years after the Kwalla people started the *Waptoer* festival which usually comes up between the month of February and March of every year but circumstances do bring about changes in some cases. Typical example of this situation is the global Covid 19 health pandemic that affected the whole world. The festival never took place on the said period of time. The festival usually takes 7 days within the month of March involving lots of developmental activities.

The festival programmes drawn from 2018 *Waptoer* event organized by the organizing committee are as follows:

Day 1

- 6.00 a.m.** Booming of Guns at the town square
- 8.00 a.m.** Cleaning of Each Palace Ground by Youths
- 8.15 a.m.** Public Mobilization by Women Round the City
- 9.00 a.m.** Dance Competition at the town Hall, Kwalla, Qua'an Pan
- 10.00 a.m.** Opening of Exhibition at the King's Palace

Day 2

- 10.00 a.m.** Traditional Games Competition and Distribution of Prizes at the King's Palace Ground.
- 12.00 p.m.** Farmers' Empowerment Programme
- 2.00 p.m.** Debate Competition at the town Hall, Kwalla, Qua'an Pan
- 3.00 p.m.** Children Social Programme and Musical Fiesta by Kwalla Youths at Kwalla Palace Ground Qua'an Pan

Day 3

- 10.00 a.m.** Seminar on **Self-Reliance through Agriculture for a Secured Tomorrow** at the Town Hall, Kwalla, Qua'an Pan
- 2.00 p.m.** Presentation of Trophies and Awards at the community town hall, Qua'an Pan

Day 4

- 9.00 a.m.** Procession to historical sites by kings, Chiefs, Eminent Personalities, Youths and other People
- 3.00 p.m.** Visit to Hero of the Year

Day 5

- 9.00 a.m.** Display by Cultural Group
Traditional Prayer on top of the Rocks and rendering of Kwalla local Anthem
- 3.00 p.m.** Royal Banquet/Recognition of sponsors and supporters of *Waptoer* festival

Day 6

Grand Finale

- 9.00 a.m.** Visiting Dancers Beginning from Sectional Basis amid Drumming and Dancing ending at Kwalla Palace Ground
- 11.00 a.m.** Break/Cultural Displays
- 12.00 p.m.**
- 2:00 p.m.** Homage by Groups, Clubs, Associations, Chiefs at the Kwalla Palace Ground, Qua'an Pan
- 2:00 p.m.**
- 2.30 p.m.** Presentation of Bursary Award by Kwalla National Association.
- 2.30 p.m.**
- 3.00 p.m.** Congratulatory/Goodwill Messages/Speeches
- 3.00 p.m.** Musical/Social Entertainment

Day 7

- 10.00 a.m.** General display of dances, costumes, local artefacts and general fanfare
- 12 Midnight** Display of fireworks.

The Essence of Costume in *Waptoer* Festival Performance.

Costumes in festival production communicate a lot of information about the character to audience in a non-verbal but distinct form. Eze opines that:

Through the use of appropriate costumes, several other things are established such as the time and place, the occupation and lifestyle, the culture of a group of people, the economic and social status, the mood and atmosphere, as well as gender and age of actors, as well as the period of the play (240).

Costumes are worn to pass across signals or information of a character about themselves to the others; at the appearance of a character, messages and impressions are passed to the audience about that character and this message can be related to preconception which forms immediate judgment. To support this; this wonderful element of performance is very vital for the success of any production as they have the capacity of transforming a character and getting them assume understanding and interpretation of art works. To support the assertion, Ezeajugh maintains that; “for the stage actor and actress, costumes transpose him or her role, and illuminate the character both for the impersonate and the audience” (83).

Costume design in theatre performance is the conventional usage of clothing to better the overall appearance of a character in a particular performance, depicting a particular class or personalities, historical period, status and occupation. Costumes help contrast one group with another, separating minor characters from major ones,

being represented within the performance. “Costumes are not only limited to the cinema, theatre or musical performances; but used in most theatrical events and performances” (Phyllis 7).

The various enactments during the *Waptoer Festival* performances are performed with elaborate costumes with beautiful colours. This differs from one group to another, while the audience watch and enjoy each performance. They are also either in the *Kwalla* traditional costume or wearing clothes that are free and comfortable to participate in any performance of interest.

Visually, performer and costume are perceived as one in the *Waptoer* performance, they merge into a single, image on stage. The *Waptoer* day is a day of various costume display. The costumes are a wide range of beautifully hand knitted clothing, used for aesthetic purpose. The *Kwalla* costumes are in different shapes, colours and sizes indicating position and status, gender, occupation flamboyance or modesty”. The *Kwalla* people's costumes take two to three months mostly to complete a set. The costume is accepted by the entire *Kwalla* nation all over the world. At the age of maturity of one's child, the father of the boy will get one for his son as a gift; indication that his son is now mature enough and responsible to take a wife and be among the men when need be. The fabric used and the style made on the boys costume is an indication of the social and material affluence of the boy's family and background. For the ladies, it attests to the kind of family background they are coming from and the extent of support she can render to her future family when married and settled (Dabah Dung'an Livinus. interviewed). As mentioned earlier, on performance day which is the day of *Waptoer* , it is a day one can also call the costume day because on entering the arena, singers and dancers go round and round the imaginary circle to warm up and to attune themselves. Each artist is wearing a costume that either proclaims his clan or the wealth and position of his family.

The importance of costume in festival performances cannot be underestimated. This is because it transforms actors from what they were and what they are portraying on stage. This attribute of costume prevails in the celebration of the *Waptoer* festival of *Kwalla* people of Qua'an Pan, Plateau State. The major characters and their characteristics are portrayed through the transformative power of costume, so also other characters that were used for the realization of the celebration.

The following are the forms and styles of costume used in *Waptoer* production:

Special Costume (Manggap): These costumes are specially designed for characters from the Metaphysical realm. They are not ordinary humans and as such, special costumes are designed for them to make them unique. This will make them different from all the other characters. In the production, a special costume is used for abstract characters. A white free flowing gown with attachments to enhance fluidity in dance

movements and to create Meta physical appearance. The masquerade's regalia and his handler's fortified costume are also examples of special costumes known as *Manggap*.



Plate 1: The masquerade in his majestic display of *Manggap*
Source: Dakup Mitong

Class Costume: This costume reflects the various strata or rather stratification in the economic status of the people in a society. It helps to define the class and distinguish the wealthy, from the poor. It projects characters of the higher class such as kings, chiefs and other important personalities in a festival and by so doing, distinguishes or differentiates this set of characters from the lowly characters. It also lays emphasis on the major and important characters in a festival. Kings, chiefs and dignitaries' costumes can be classified under this form. High class materials are used in costuming of these characters. The materials used for these costumes depict high social status and class in Kwalla land; this makes it effective in characterization and interpretation of the *Manggap* costume.



Plate 2 shows commonly acceptable costume of *kwalla* people known as *Ngodo/swei*
Source: Dakup Mitong



Plate 3 shows '*Waapmantak*'/swei made of cotton and mostly used by the elites during any cultural celebrations and special day of the people.
Source: Dakup Mitong

Occupational Costumes: These costumes as in *swei* are used to distinguish the various professions in the *Kwalla* society. They are worn by performers to showcase the various groups and societies they represent while on performance. Examples are the farmers' costumes, hunters' costumes and several others.



Plate 4 shows the costumes used by professional dancers of Kwalla people based on the subgroups they represent.

Source: Dakup Mitong

Day- to- day Costumes: These are reflected in ordinary people. They involve normal costumes worn as regards to the daily activities of the people involved. This means, these costumes are what performers wear on day-to-day and everyday basis. They are also known as casual costume or *swei* costume of the people. This form of costume is seen within the spectators. They are the general costumes of people of the community.



Plate 5 shows the array of different day- to- day costume *swei* of the Kwalla people.

Source: Dakup Mitong

Celebration Costumes: These kind of costumes or regalia or adornment depict happiness and joy. Such costumes are always bright and attractive and are used for felicitation, festivals, marriages etc.



Plate 6 depicts celebration costume to showcase their dance group known as *Gya-Dajang* dance.

Source: Dakup Mitong



Plate 7 shows the images of performers on celebration as enhanced by their costumes known as *Gyafeer* and the horns are called *feer*.

Source: Dakup Mitong

Conclusion.

Festival involves the coming together of people to celebrate a particular historical event peculiar to their society in honour of a god or goddess, hero or legend, agricultural produce or farming, and in respect to a particular profession in the African society. *Waptoer* festival promotes peace and unity amongst the people and also foster societal development. It also serves as an avenue for re-union amongst the people who are opportune to only see themselves during such festive periods.

Waptoer festival gives room to foreigners who are passionately in love with the African culture and tradition to partake in the non-sacred processes of the festival. The regular celebration of *Waptoer* festivals helps to promote the cultural heritage of the *Kwalla* people to all nations and tribes of the world. It also helps the *Kwalla* society to pass on this cultural heritage to their children and grandchildren from one generation to the other as it reflects the cultural aesthetics of the people and their total way of life. *Waptoer* festival has also contributed greatly to the work of art in the *Kwalla* society especially in the academic world where different scholars have had several deliberations and write-ups on the festival and have also used it as an instrument of enhancing the successful outcome of their literary works. It is through this medium that many people have come to discover the beautiful aspects of *Kwalla* culture and traditions. There is therefore, no doubt that *Waptoer* Festival performance must be guided and protected jealously and transferred from one generation to another.

In conclusion, Costumes generally, in the *Waptoer* festival add to the aesthetic embellishment of the festival performance. These were once hand knitted fabrics but are now produced by machines. The costumes help give an insight to who is who within *Kwalla* nation, through the design on it. For instance, the costume help differentiate a priest from members of the community. It also helps in indicating clans, status, positions, and class. It has gone a long way in revealing the possibility of constant creativity in costume, its meaning, function and purpose within the *Kwalla* people. In view of the above strengths, making a good performance requires a deep understanding and working knowledge of the art of costuming. The costumes used in *Waptoer* festival are culturally rooted in the tradition of Qua'an Pan *Kwalla* people.

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EVALUATING THE ISSUE OF DECEPTION IN FEMI OSOFISAN'S *MIDNIGHT BLACKOUT*

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Abstract

Deception, betrayal, and cheating in marriage and politics are rising. People have often been encouraged to uphold the whole truth at all times. Therefore, Nigerian literary dramatists always urge the citizenry to follow and monitor their leaders with open and sincere mind, and the leaders to stop betraying their trust. Trust is essential for any social and political relationship: people trust others and share their lives with them because they do what they say they are going to do. People learn to trust and accept others because they mean what they say and they say what they mean, because they are found trustworthy! Thus, trust is a thread that weaves people, relationships and nations together. This article therefore examines the reality and *concept of deception in Femi Osofisan's Midnight Blackout*. It analyzes the life of major characters and their relationships with one another. It identifies patterns and techniques of deception, betrayals, cheating and lying. The conclusion is that deception is a barrier to truth, happiness and social harmony, and that the way forward is for all to embrace truth at all times.

Introduction

Nigeria possibly lives in an absurd world of deception. Incidents of deception pervades its common experiences today. In almost everywhere, the face of a Nigerian is easily construed as a cunning man. This is because deception is widespread. It is reflected in broken promises, in business transactions, in public service, in worship places, in marriage and politics. All these point to the reality of a nation trapped in self-deceit. In such a nation, those being hailed and held as heroes and smart are most likely those who cheat, defraud and scam. The results of such deceptive dispositions are clear for all to see.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about deception is its failure to recognize the various dimensions it may be expressed in veiled forms. The truth, however, is that each person is closer to the reality of deception in different aspects of life than often thought, and it may be so hard to wipe away anytime soon. Presently, being scammed by someone very dear, someone truly. is accepted as common. Though, people are often urged to uphold and believe the truth, the whole truth at all times, however, appearances versus reality is a common theme used in Nigerian drama presently: in which some characters are not what they claim or seem to be. As the saying goes, "the more you see, the less you understand, and that "truth is bitter and scarce".

The idea of deception, lying and cheating in Femi Osofisan's *Midnight Hotel* is weaved around a character, Professor Juokwu - the mastermind behind intricate scheming. It is through him that readers are able to visualize how badly the virus of deception can affect and ruin those being deceived, as well as portraying its consequences due to their gullibility and flaws. Deception is found early in the play when Prof. Juokwu uses his acclaimed scientific discovery, the “midnight blackout”, to hypnotise his wife; suggesting that he is just using his wife's love, trust and loyalty for his own personal and sensual needs. The “ncholokoto” game is another esoteric blackout technique, the Professor devises and uses in order to cheat. Further, it analyzes each of these characters and how they relate to these themes. Juokwu's true intention of deceiving and manipulating those close to him or relates with him allows the people to see just how cunning, deceptive and manipulative the Professor is. His level of betrayal clearly indicates that he is aligning with the devil by sneaking around and hiding secrets from those considered as his close allies: the family, secret lover and friends. This is because he goes out of his ways to deceive and betray other characters. This suggests that the erudite Professor may be an exact opposite to what he is known and ought to be – a distinguished scholar, man of principles, honor, integrity and excellence – without anyone actually being aware of what is happening around them. The Professor and his antics make a case for Nigeria's national life, criticized for its deceptive proclivity.

Further, characters are deceived in a way individually or collectively through manipulating their sensibilities and emotions. Each character's vulnerability is tested by Juokwu actions. He operates as a covert operative. The only people he seems to suspect most are his friends, family and colleagues. One character that is constantly deceived and manipulated by Juokwu's hypnotic solution is Obioma, his wife, the woman he vows to love, cherish and honor. Obioma appears naive and blinded by trust and let her love for Juokwu overrule all her thoughts and sense of discernment. She allows him almost convince her that she is insane, when all along he is deliberately manipulating her. It means that those deceived often lose faith in their ability to determine what appearance is, and what reality is, and what deception ought to be. Nigeria experienced a most devastating form of betrayal and deception during the period of military regime, which according to Nkom, brought about “widespread and deep-seated loss of faith in the Nigerian state by the vast majority of Nigerians” (439).

A Background

Femi Osofisan's *Midnight Blackout* (1994) is a sequel to his *Midnight Hotel* (1985). Both plays tell the story of Nigeria under military rule. The plays wage crusade on falsehoods and deceptions, such as phantom coups under military tyranny. It is set in a Hotel, a Brothel described as “den of rubbers”, depicting Nigeria as morally bankrupt and decadent at twilight of the night of the decay, reaching its climax at

midnight. Instability characterized the period when various military regimes, particularly, under Babangida and Abacha, embarked on prolonged and endless transition programmes which have collectively stalled the Nigeria's democracy and even threatened its corporate existence. In those years, the country experienced deepening political, economic and social upheavals caused mainly by failure of leadership and governance. Characterized by pervasive poverty, corruption and highhandedness in both public and private sectors, Nigeria witnessed great turmoil resulting in ever greater hardship for the vast majority of the people.

The hardship inflicted by harsh economic conditions was further compounded by the frustrations caused by the apparent futility and seeming illusive political transition programmes initiated by the regimes in power. In pursuit of ill-conceived agenda, the regimes unilaterally and arbitrarily embarked on programmes of social and political engineering that raised so much dust. For example, Babangida imposed a two party system based on the ideology of 'new-breed' politicians and a new political culture. He went further to annul the June/12, 1993 general elections which was widely acclaimed free and fair. Such an unpopular action became a grand conspiracy that fooled and deceived Nigeria and her people. Similarly, Abacha became notorious for mercilessly looting national wealth and desperately sought to metamorphose from a dictator to a civilian president. The regimes continued the manipulations of sensibilities of the people which created and reinforced doubts about the sincerity of those in power. While such political impasse deepened and social tensions remained endemic, the nation kept sinking into uncertainty and cynicism. Thus, both *Midnight Hotel* and *Midnight Blackout* raise national questions, which are: can Nigeria achieve greatness through falsehood and deception? The use of midnight imagery, so it seems, alludes to Nigeria's dark days, not only of military regimes, but also civilians known for broken campaign promises.

Lying, in Nigeria appears to be a flourishing industry and every facet of national life seems to be affected to it. Political parties and governments in power are quick to make promises they do not intend to keep. There are many other deception techniques being used in religious circles and commercial product promotion, advertisements and marketing. Even the seat of power is often indicted of peddling propaganda and falsehood. The Presidency is often embroiled in lying controversies, particularly regarding the health of Nigeria's Presidents or their private life. For instance, late President Yar'Adua's illness and death were shrouded in secrecy, blatant lies and denials. Allegations of lies credited to former President Olusegun Obasanjo made him a subject of literary narratives. As central character in Wole Soyinka's recent book *The Republic of Liars*, Obasanjo gets greatest attention and punches. Soyinka describes him as "...a vast, multifaceted quillwork of fabrications, contradictions... a shameless liar" whom he has no respect for. Elsewhere, Yinka Odumakin, a political activist describes Obasanjo's book *My Watch* as "a package of

lies”. Similarly, General Godwin Alabi Isama's *The Tragedy of Victory*, according to the author, is intended to correct “Obasanjo's military lies”.

Thus, in drama, as in real life, characters are bound to be deceptive: they act and behave in order to conceal and not to reveal their true intentions. They could hide behind a facade of truth and honesty while being the complete opposite in reality. Sometimes, the biggest deception happens with friends than foes and as a story progresses, it becomes clear that the deceptive character is really never truthful to anyone else. It means Femi Osofisan may be using the characters of his play *Midnight Blackout* symbolically to signify life's appearances, realities and deceptions. In this regard, Professor Juokwu may be the most impressive master of deception in Osofisan's drama. He plots with consummate sophistication, carefully manipulating his wife into believing that he has been faithful. His understanding of the human psyche is phenomenal, as his ability to orchestrate complicated and premeditated scenarios on a foundation of falsehood. According to Ponsonby, Lying, as we all know, does not take place only in war-time. Man, it has been said, is not “a veridical animal,” but his habit of lying is not nearly so extraordinary as his amazing readiness to believe. It is, indeed, because of human credulity that lies flourish. But in war-time the authoritative organization of lying is not sufficiently recognized. The deception of whole peoples is not a matter which can be lightly regarded (1).

Deception and Betrayal in *Midnight Blackout*

Midnight Blackout unfolds with a Narrator, the Bandleader who accounts for events and circumstances that give rise to the development of the plot. The play is set in a dilapidated quasi-elite house, representing Nigeria's State House and Seat of Power. Therefore, *Midnight Blackout* is a critique of the acts and arts of governance as a social contract between the leadership class and the citizenry. In this light, Osofisan employs a marriage motif as a social institution where partnership under acceptable terms and conditions and defined responsibilities, are often grossly violated and undermined by falsehood, deceit and intrigues.

Governance is construed as a marriage of convenience, hardly based on sincerity of purpose, but self-serving and questionable goals. The setting therefore, depicts a steady crumbling of state institutions: the seat of power, the machinery of governance, and people in government. They are all almost on the brink of total collapse. The play attributes this to executive rascality in leadership, as Professor Juokwu demonstrates in his role and character, as a technocrat, scholar, and head of a family. The pure camouflage of Messianism can be identified as the bane of Nigeria's leadership quest. Leadership positions: public offices and resources have often been used for wrong intentions. The leadership class often camouflages under the auspices of white-elephant programmes, policies and projects which end up in failure. When such programmes fail, it is the state and its leaders that fail without admitting it.

The Sapomatic musical band possibly derives from the homonym Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the General Ibrahim Babangida's military regime. The band symbolizes the poor citizenry, trapped in a garage; depicting their low social status. The Sapomatic band is a congregation of the masses who always become the sacrificial victims of harsh economic conditions caused by bad government policies. The recurrence of the SAP theme in the play signifies hardship, distress, depression and a general atmosphere of despondency, which emerge to become almost permanent features of social life. Thus, Osofisan lampoons Babangida's economic policy that required that people should starve and possibly perish today in order to survive tomorrow. However, the insincerity on the part of the leadership, which never sacrifices or starves itself of the basic need of life, contradicts and negates the essence of the programme. Some of the devastating effects of that programme on national life were inflation and hardship that made life miserable for the citizens. Perhaps, the widespread practices of bribery and corruption appear to have been nurtured and institutionalized, as palliative measures that people thought could cushion the biting effects of that programme.

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) is a loan facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) embraced by leaders of most African states in the 80s and 90s, who believed it was a sure way to the 'promised land'. Unfortunately, the performance of SAP has generally been rated poor. However, one of its enduring legacies is the perpetuation of a dependency culture that now comes in form of foreign aid or donations. A support programme could come in form of technical or financial aid. In like manner, overtime, the citizenry has learnt to depend and rely on government which increasingly proves incapable of good governance. Consequently, expectant economic prosperity, political stability, technological advancement and social harmony have remained elusive. Oche Ogaba has noted with concern the manifestation of the effect of SAP on the high cost of living and the rising unemployment, and underemployment rates. Some characters in the play lament over the ravaging SAP scourge.

CHINWE: ... maybe you don't want your degree again, but, me I don't want to lose my job...not in these days of SAP! I can't forget what I suffered before I got here and I certainly don't wish to go back to that.

JUOKWU: ...We lecturers, we are an extinct race!...Nobody care anymore for knowledge. They say it is the age of SAP, and we must all join in the orgy of national looting! Professors must burn their books and turn to contractors (9).

It means that, SAP is a smokescreen; a scam and a looting machine that drains the nation's resources and bleeds the economy to death. Through this dialogue, Osofisan raises a major point of concern in national life. Whether as a student, an applicant or a worker, the notion of surviving and living by questionable means appears to have been ingrained in the people's psyche. Because of this, a good number of citizens resort to illegitimate and fraudulent practices as means of livelihood. To the elites, in either private or public sectors, looting, bribery and Advance Fee Fraud are common practices that yield instant material and financial prosperity. At lower levels, armed robbery and banditry are the common survival strategies in practice. Hence, there is always a surge in criminality and insecurity.

Events in the play happen on the occasion of the launching of the musical album "Midnight Blackout". In the usual Nigerian fashion, launchings are turned into profitable businesses. Thus, the band's expectations in that regard must be high, especially for a people that are perpetually poor. SAP measures have necessitated self-surviving instinct initiatives of the lower class that is unable to access basic amenities and social welfare.

All they have is their labour, talents and will, which they have to mortgage at cheaper price in order to survive harsh economic crunch. This is perhaps what the play refers to as the "African SAPOMATIC experience". It is an agonizing experience that compels the Sapomatic Band to play in public and social centres, to eulogise and massage the ego of the rich to earn peanuts.

The problem associated with launchings and other fund raising events include the fact that donors or benefactors could be people of questionable character, particularly politically exposed persons with unexplained sources of wealth. Such wealthy individuals are often the untouchable sacred cows of the land. In some cases, the society showers them with fabulous chieftaincy titles that further reinforce their social status and relevance. They become demigods that enjoy absolute attention and protection. Thus, in the play, Osofisan probes a culture of primitive accumulation public wealth.

The economic downturn inflicted by SAP further encourages corruption in public service as portrayed in the character of Chinwe. Though a mere house-girl, yet she perfects her art of taking bribe from her principals in order to run their errands. Her services become commercialized. In a dialogue that ensues between Chinwe and the Professor, a deal is reached and sealed with bribe.

JUOKWU: ...And I suppose madam also gave you some money...
CHINWE ... It's true sir...without the money, I swear I would never have....

JUOKWU: ...How much did she give you?
CHINWE: ...Ten naira Sir!
JUOKWU: ...Here, take this twenty naira at once...you will forget about madam's ten naira...just take the twenty naira, and in future you will bring my letter directly to me...okay? (20)

The point here is that corruption is initiated and perpetuated by the ruling class which is supposed to be shining example for others to emulate. During the Babangida era, Nigeria is believed to have experienced higher point of corruption in both public and private institutions. Civil servants enjoyed monetary gratifications. Similarly, M. J. Dent's study has indicted Gowon's regime of corrupt practices. This was rampant according to a report during the Civil War, when Gowon was unable to halt the tide of corruption that flowed at both federal and state levels.

Aper Aku's accusation against the corrupt practices associated with Gomwalk's government of the then Benue-Plateau State, is one among the many corruption scandals that rocked that regime. Indeed, bribery and corruption have given Nigeria a bad name.

According to Dowden,

Corruption is such an important part of the Nigerian political scene that politicians can be quite open about it. Ahmed Sani, the governor of Zamfara state, admits to taking money when he held a senior position at the Central Bank. He said it was given to him by Abacha when he brought cash from the bank to the presidential villa ... Internationally, the word 'Nigeria' has come to mean corruption and dodgy dealing. The country regularly appears top of the list of the world's most corrupt countries, according to Transparency International. Nigeria is also home to the famous 419 scams named after the law that is supposed to ban them. Corruption pervades Nigerian life so broadly and deeply that it is hard to imagine life in Nigeria if it were suddenly to end (445, 446, & 447).

Because of its deeply rooted base in private and public life, the ongoing war against corruption, under Mohamadu Buhari administration, is facing stiff resistance and criticism from some quarters. The process is viewed by many as rather too slow, selective and uncoordinated.

However, the charges of corruption against some high profile politicians and public office holders, and the trial they face, have only come timely to affirm government's commitment in waging and winning the war against corruption. And the calibre of

eminent personalities involved assures all that the era of “sacred cow immunity” tradition may be over. It is against this background that the play attempts to link the causes of corruption to bad and failed economic policies and programmes of government. In the spirit of the philosophy of the *Midnight Blackout*, Osofisan's play views SAP as a diversionary strategy created by government to buy time and attention as a justification for prolonged stay in power.

Similarly, other than the primary purpose of good governance, and where that fails, a government in power could adopt various tricks in order to consolidate its grip on the levers of power or to divert attention. For example, it could create a phantom state of insecurity; it could embark on programmes and projects that have little or no impact on the people. The Buhari led All Progressive Congress (APC) government has been criticized of wanton blame- game that seems to focus more on casting aspersions on successive governments than providing good governance.

The dichotomy in the partnership between the leadership and the followership is portrayed in the marriage of Mr. and Mrs Juokwu. Though, their marriage is founded on three key values: love, trust and fidelity, however, one finds in the couple, particularly the husband, utter failure to keep the matrimonial vows. The love that he is supposed to be exclusively reserved for his wife is arbitrarily shared out to other women. It means that Mr. Juokwu spends less time with his wife and family. In like manner, this analogy applies to the social contract engagement in politics between the people and their political leaders. In politics and governance, those in power are presumed to be representing a collective interest for the common good. However, conflict arises when such collective interest and common good is at variance with the personal interest of those in power. Within the context of Nigerian political system, the individual interest is often bent on shining alone, thus, the collective interest becomes a conduit pipe by which position, wealth and influence are amassed. As soon as this is achieved, those in power become incommunicado for the period that their tenure lasts.

Thus, as the play illustrates, the scientific discovery of Professor Juokwu – the “midnight blackout”, which he uses to hypnotize his wife in order to pave way for his extra marital affairs is a pointer to the treacherous schemes employed by the Nigerian leadership class. It is important to note that while some of the schemes could appear sophisticated and mysterious, as in the case of the “midnight blackout”, the same may not be said of others. The *ncholakoto* game is one blackout technique that looks simple and ordinary but seems heavily loaded with coded meanings and messages. Osofisan uses the midnight blackout imagery to suggest darkness, ignorance, illiteracy, inexperience, naivety and the like. It also suggests some negative values associated with the midnight blackout, such as deceit, cheating, distrust, suspicion, and betrayal. The blackout motif in the play is what makes all the actions possible, giving birth to a blackout leadership concept and style.

As the play postulates, a blackout leadership style simply means that the citizenry/followers should be left in the dark while the leadership class go about their criminality using state powers and resources at their disposal. Without the blackout, this concept presupposes that the actions of the leadership class would not be possible. Ignorance blindfolds the minds of the people, so that they can neither see nor know what happens around them. Knowledge therefore is the first antidote to the blackout leadership style. As it happens in the play, Professor Juokwu puts his wife to sleep, and in that unconscious state she becomes totally unaware of her environment and what may be happening around it.

Similarly, Chinwe explores the ignorance of her masters to accomplish her love escapade with Okoro. However, a ray of light that later illuminate the victims' dark ways to see and understand events comes through Iberibe and Akubundu. Their effort to light the way for others to follow, is largely informed by the desire to pursue and protect their personal interests. Iberibe blackmails Professor Juokwu, whom he considers arch-rival in a relationship tussle over Obioma. Akubundu, on the other hand, reveals Juokwu's scandalous affairs with the former's wife in order to salvage his political ambition from jeopardy. Indeed, this is a political attitude that is common with power seekers and holders.

Though some may consider this style of politicking with governance as being smart and effective in practice, however, the playwright seems to argue that it grossly violates core values and principles of official oath of office. This oath centres on fidelity and true allegiance to the needs and aspirations of the people and the state to discharge one's responsibilities according to constitutional provisions, for the wellbeing of the people. Within this premise, the play satirises the fallacy, not just of marital fidelity, but goes further to interrogate the betrayal of political mandate in governance. However, the root cause of this incessant culture of betrayal in leadership functions and responsibilities has been traced by Awodiya. According to him, it originates from the inception of the Nigerian nation as either a colonial or an independent state, on false foundation (122). Osofisan sums it up when he says the inability of our leaders and their advisers to understand and cope with their responsibilities is a lesson for all from this cyclic repetitive failures of our governments (44-45). Do leaders in Nigeria have the humility to acknowledge and accept their flaws? What mechanism does the nation's political system provide for monitoring and evaluating performance of public office holders?

Distrust and suspicion give room for vigilance and surveillance. Obioma constantly and closely monitors the movement of her husband's mails to uncover his hidden love affairs. It is a sign of breach of trust that ridicules and desecrates the marriage institution arising from her bitter experiences of another turbulent marriage with her late husband, Mr. Johnson. He, according to the wife, epitomises promiscuity and

betrayal. The late Johnson in this context represents past generation of the nation's leaders who indulged in political prostitution and failed to deliver good governance. It set a precedence of unbroken tradition of impunity, executive rascality that persistently undermines public trust and mandate.

The fall out of this is that, the present husband, Professor Juokwu, faces crisis of integrity and credibility. Political leaders make it inevitable for the people to see them as opportunists, sycophants and traitors. Awodiya has also observed that the ruling class in Nigeria is reputed for double speak and failed promises, fraud and deception. Thus, the journey into the future is still crisis-ridden (122).

As husband and head of a household, and as Professor of medicine, Juokwu is charged with enormous leadership responsibilities in the family and the university which are important entities. He is to manage people and resources. Unfortunately, his rank as Professor, role and character as husband and leader is characterized by a double life of deception, falsehood, cheating and betrayals as represented by obsession of playing *ncholokoto* game. It is a game played by two opponents. Though it has clear rules that guide the conduct of players, however, cheating is often used to defeat an opponent. Like the game of *ncholokoto*, politics and governance in this play are portrayed as activities that involve intrigues, scheming and manipulations, not just of the machinery of governance, but also of the psyche of the subjects of governance, the people.

The dialogue bellow explains that there are more that happens beyond people's knowledge and understanding in the game of politics.

- JUOKWU:** ... Come I've got an idea...we're going to play!
IBERIBE: ...Play *ncholokoto*! At this hour... well, I warn you, I don't know how to play at all. Never played *ncholokoto* all my life...knitting too! Ah, *ncholokoto* has changed a lot since I went away.
JUOKWU: It's emergency situation, my friend! A crisis! My wife has found out everything about my mistress... So this is the only way to counter it, because she is already on the war path! Let's play *ncholokoto* ...use your head my friend! How else will I deceive her? (71)

Here, Professor, Juokwu uses *ncholokoto* game as another blackout technique to blindfold and fool the wife from knowing about his secret love affairs. It amounts to infidelity and betrayal of trust and love. Certainly, it is expected that part of the family resources must be channelled towards servicing and maintaining his mistress, a surrogate wife. Chinwe too, habitually siphons and diverts meals to provide a food support programme for her lover, Okoro.

The result of this acts will not only affect the welfare of the Juokwu's household, but it will also jeopardise the relative peace, tranquillity and the understanding that keep the family together. Further, other lovers such as Iberibe and Okoro begin to creep into the house to actualize their love escapades through that crack on the walls.

Professor Juokwu may have been cast in the image and likeness of General Ibrahim Babangida, former Nigerian military head of state, reputed to be a master juggler and dribbler with political power and even became known as “Maradona” and “the Evil Genius”. Though a military dictator, but his regime had the civilian coloration that making it appear to be democratic. He was even addressed as President. Such deception went a long way to cover up his dictatorial excesses that would have attracted strong public criticism.

The life and times of Obioma seem to remain in perpetual grief. The previous marital infidelity of her late husband, Johnson, coupled with Juokwu's extra marital affairs, provide sufficient grounds to warrant her loss of confidence and overconfidence in marriage institution. Again, she finds herself in good position to revenge by yielding to Iberibe's advances. However, she opts for forgiveness and reconciliation. This gesture is perhaps born out of deeper understanding that infidelity is an inherent human weakness that can be overcome with time, good counsel and willingness to change. Nevertheless, the aspect of her character that requires attention is whether such lukewarm attitude and spirit does not allow her emotions, personality and dignity to be easily manipulated. Why does she find it difficult to resist the amorous advances of men who come not only to woo or seduce her but to possibly exploit her? She is a major casualty of men's betrayal and deception as her life remains a shadow of reality and truth that she desperately seeks to embrace.

The major dramatic devices in *Midnight Blackout* include humour, irony and music. The comic interest in the play is stimulated and sustained through the irony of events. Underlying the irony is the fact that Professor Juokwu's new discovery, the “midnight blackout” technique of hypnotizing his wife turns out to act against him at the end of the play. It loses its potency when Obioma discovers the secrets and plans her trick that suddenly turns the heat on Juokwu. The sudden appearance of Akubundu at Juokwu's house becomes an ironic twist to the denial of the latter visiting his mistress that night.

Through the content of Juokwu's letter to his mistress, recovered and brought to the notice of Obioma by Akubundu, Obioma becomes more aware of her husband's secret dealings. Through its tone and content, the letter expresses feelings of praises, admiration, and affection, addressed to Mrs. Akubundu, the mistress, while derogatory remarks are directed at Akubundu and Obioma. Other than the oral

testimony of Mr. Akubundu, the letter is an actual proof in evidence of the relationship between Juokwu and his mistress. Juokwu, who condemns late Johnson's method of recording his affairs in a diary using coded language, ironically becomes a victim of similar folly. The attempt by Juokwu to catch the said unknown man who visits his wife results into an ironic revelation, as the culprit turns out to be his student, and the lady being visited is Chinwe, their house girl.

Conclusion

Throughout the play deception and betrayals are driven by envy, rivalry, greed and ego. Through deception, characters desire to control their destiny, others and the future. However, as proven by Professor Juokwu and to some extent by Iberibe, Akubundu and Chinwe, deception can temporarily aid personal plans, but in the long run it is an uncontrollable force capable of destroying individuals and institutions. Those who do not participate directly in acts of deception and betrayals also suffer from it. The characters in *Midnight Blackout* find themselves entangled in cobwebs of deception, falsehood, betrayals and a life of suspicion. While several deception techniques have been identified, the icons of these deceptions and betrayals are clear. For example, the play itself is named after a deception technique, the “midnight blackout”. It is a scientific hypnosis. *Ncholakoto* game stands for cheating and stealing. SAP is a metaphor for corporate scam designed and touted by multinationals. Its appearance tends to suggest prosperity but its reality leaves its victims wallowing in poverty and adversity. The play portrays Professor Juokwu as lying machine. Thus, the only way forward is truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

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COMMUNITY THEATRE AS A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY CONSCIENTIZATION: THE SAMBAN COMMUNITY THEATRE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This paper is based on the Theatre for Development (TFD) project embarked upon by the 3001 students of the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, ABU, Zaria in Samban Loko community, Jaba Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria in 2012. Although it is about a decade since the project was executed, Contemporary challenges such as lack of potable water, poor refuse disposal systems and management, lack of access roads, poverty and low level of awareness on health issues, and children delinquencies, impel this reflection. Thus, the thrust of this paper is not only to show the significance of TFD but to state the extent communities can network and galvanize efforts, through self-help to socio-economically empower themselves in the face of daunting challenges that might have been foisted on them by bad political leadership. The paper tries to reiterate the social relevance of theatre in the society as well as discards the perceived notion that theatre in its entirety is for entertainment alone and cannot serve any other purpose. The research adopted the “homestead” and historical approaches as its methodology and concluded by recommending that TFD should be deployed as a strategy for community conscientization, management of conflict, as well as the revival and sustenance of indigenous cultural heritage in Nigeria as its nature is participatory and its aims for a collective action for change. Furthermore, because it is an alternative development communication strategy; a medium of communication that transmits development messages.

Introduction

Several communities are seeking the escape from poverty and oppression in order to gain control of their local level development. Development does not begin with things. Development begins with people, their orientation, their intelligence; the cultivation of their skills their culture and everything about a human person. Drama has the power to reveal situations to people. They see the complex problems they are passing through. They begin to understand, going through these problems to seeing the solutions. Community theatre becomes one of the viable tools or strategies to achieve that. Community Theatre practice has not only survived but is playing an important role in development. Community theatre practice has been described as the whole range of activities organized by theatre and development workers to

mobilize and conscientize the rural and urban dwellers, so that they can confront their social, economic and political challenges and solve them. In this regard, the Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), now National Orientation Agency (NOA) Community Theatre Training Manual quoted in Akinwale states that community theatre could be used to initiate theatre workers, development agents and villages/other communities in the practice of theatre for conscientization, and mobilization and also to raise the political consciousness of the Nigerian people and to galvanize them to participate in political debates that would eventually shape their lives and to mobilize them to be self-reliant (252).

Theatre for development (TFD) has been given different names by different practitioners in different places. It has been tagged Theatre for Integrated Development (TIDE), Theatre for Rural Development (THIRD), Community Theatre for Rural Development (CTHIRD), Popular Theatre or Popular people's theatre and Theatre for Development (Abah 3). However, the point to note is that community theatre is that which can be made to do anything for the community, if only to doing it. Perhaps, this is why Eregare posits that community theatre is a democratic theatre; a theatre for the people and by the people. The issue that informs its conception are those that are common and of general concern to the people of a given community referred to as the target community (27). Thus, community theatre comes across as a therapeutic venture which diagnoses both the objects and subjects of a given community, conscientizing them to be sensitive to the object of the target community (Osuya 69).

Considering all these inputs, Tfd is hereby defined as a theatre approach that seeks to make possible development education and action from the perspective of the 'people' through the use of familiar cultural and democratic forms. Development education and action here refer to an ideological process from within that represents the aspirations of the people. It is not imposed from outside but it could be facilitated or negotiated subject to the will of the people, and it is based on people's knowledge and the limits of their means of production. In few words Tfd allows people to interrogate, debate and negotiate their social existence in their own context and pace, using their known popular theatre forms.

It is in this light that this paper reflects on the Tfd field experience of the researcher in Samban community and its implications for development in that community and other developing areas of Nigeria.

The Social Relevance of Theatre

Many have perceived theatre and its entirety as only for entertainment and that is cannot serve any purpose. This unpleasant notion about theatre can be traced back as far as the classical period. Whiting observes that:

To the Romans, theatre was a little more than a degraded pleasure; a project by slaves for the titillation of their masters. To the Early Church, theatre was an evil to be crushed along with thievery and prostitution. To many entertainers such as strolling players and television comedians, theatre has been regarded as a means of carving a living through a few jokes and antics to catch the momentary fancy of the general public. To some parents, theatre is evil bound to wreck the personality of a child who succumbs to its lures.

The observation by Whiting shows the negative attitude people have towards the theatre as an industry and as a means of learning even in the past.

During the medieval era, after the church has lost its grip of theatre and secular theatre became dominant, the church described theatrical events as paganism. Actors were seen as idol worshippers. From the Classical periods through to Restoration and English renaissance, women who acted on stage were branded as prostitutes; some were even stoned to death, (Brocket 17). This shows clearly how theatre has received bad publicity through the years. Playwrights, dramatists, theorists and practitioners have over the years tried to correct these wrong impressions but have not succeeded. These negative impressions about theatre have thus trickled to these modern times and many see theatre as an affront to development a case which is rather the opposite. Theatre is integrated in the social life of the African. Theatre plays crucial roles in the social life of an individual and his/her community.

The foregoing arguments and positions will reiterate the fact that theatre is essential to our socio-cultural, political, economic and social lives as a people. Theatre has been seen and described over the years as a potent social force, (Kerry 36). It is the collective and public nature of theatre that has made it such a strong factor of public force. Theatre plays relevant roles in the development of the individual and society at large. Through theatre, many sensitive issues, which otherwise may be too dangerous or delicate to discuss openly in the society, can be explored. Playing the role of a different character allows people to say things that would not be possible in their own voices (Asante 58). Humour which is an aspect of theatre can sometimes help to share difficult or sensitive issues in ways that do not cause offence. Theatre therefore, must be incorporated in the daily activities of every community because it serves as a voice to the vulnerable in the society. Osofisan in his book *Literature and the Pressures of Freedom*, (2001) outlines good reasons as to why a community or an individual should imbibe theatre and its studies in their way of life. Osofisan clearly states in his work that, "theatre has been proven to be a means of building and enhancing community relations and national cohesion in Africa" (87). This assertion he backs by the fact that, Africans have a kind of theatre which is more popular and

central to the community. Popular theatre takes the people's own culture and turns it into a performative art and is given back to the people for their appreciation and enjoyment. Mda defines popular theatre as; '*peoples'* theatre, speaking to the common man in his language and idiom and dealing with problems of direct relevance to his situation' (33).

A peoples' theatre should concentrate on awakening the latent capacity of the people to take part, and to make their own decisions, and to organize themselves for common action. The interaction between the performers and the community members to whom the performance is presented is always seen to be a mutual one, especially in community theatres. The interaction brings a kind of cohesion and affinity between the performers and the community folks. Theatre thus becomes part and parcel of a people's cultural heritage and common culture. These forms of indigenous theatres found in the people's cultural heritage according to Abah, have the elements of education, preservation and conservation of the people's values, as well as the promotion of knowledge of all forms (446).

Theatre serves as bond that brings people together as one people. Theatre productions have been used in diverse ways to put an end to conflicts among warring communities. It helps bring together antagonistic groups through discussions and theatre games. Osofisan gives an account of how Soyinka through his play *The Beautification of the Area Boy* brought a lasting peace among two warring youth groups in Kingston, Jamaica. By this, theatre has been seen as a social force for releasing tension among disparate groups by acting as a congenial means of dialogue (90).

In the theatre many people come together and work together to achieve a common goal which is meant to have an impact on some other people (audience) an actor join hands with other actors and other professionals before their product (play) can be ready for consumption. This in effect brings out teamwork and personal development of an actor as described by Wagner (79). The artist by virtue of his profession has to learn to work with others, negotiate his ways among conflicting desires and erratic personalities and yet harmonize all these into one single product, one collective vision (Arnold 28). It can be appreciated from this fact that theatre nurtures and produces individuals with a sense of team-playing and collective responsibility in the society.

TfD: Historical Perspectives

The origin of community theatre can be traced back to the very beginning of man. In the beginning human beings found themselves confronted by an environment which they could not understand. They felt hunger and needed food; they felt the harshness of the weather and needed shelter. For food, they tried out fruits, lesser animals and

other things they found edible. For shelter they turned to caves. They needed to move about and these things were not readily available anywhere. The need to create shelter and the need to grow food arose. However, there were no tools to do them. The stones were too heavy, sticks were needed to turn the soil or kill animals. They broke the stones or got sticks out of branches, they used communal or collective labour, their hand movements, their strokes on wood or stone were complemented by vocal sounds (grunts) from these actions, speech and movements (i.e. rhythm and dance) was born.

As the collective rested at the end of the day, they amused themselves by re-enacting their experiences. Soon they found the exercise effective in teaching the young ones and in addressing issues of concern to the collective. The practice survived and came enlarged taking on other issues that posed difficulties to the community. This gave birth to rehearsal and theatre.

Community theatre, is taking theatre to where it all began among the people, (Okwori 15).

Theatre for Development practice has come to assume different names in different places. Depending on the approach, objective and level of participation, Tfd is also commonly known as Community Theatre, Popular Theatre, Applied Theatre, Participatory Theatre, Township Theatre, Street Theatre, and Theatre for Social Change. Theatre for Integrated Development, Theatre for Community Action, Theatre Community Empowerment, Guerrilla Theatre and other Boalian categories of Theatre of the Oppressed such as Forum Theatre, Rehearsal Theatre, Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre and Legislative Theatre etc. the list is endless! Despite these varying approaches, these different forms of Tfd often strive for community advocacy, empowerment and community development in its broadest sense.

Therefore, it is in its reformulation as a format practice, as a tool, deliberately selected by a group of intellectuals and development workers for the acceleration of the modernization process in the rural and urban areas, that TFD has acquired its relevance.

In this context, Tfd is traceable to the activities of Freire and Boal. Eregare asserts that:

Popular theatre for development could be said to have originated from the works of Latin American Adult educators Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. Freire whose theories are found in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is primarily concerned with the theory and practice of revolutionary education. Boal's theory is found in his book,

Theatre of the Oppressed. Both men were concerned with how to make the people active participants in the process of changing their lives (28).

Mda sees the concept of TfD as a “theatre of conscientization” thereby agreeing with Freire's philosophy of participatory education. He asserts that theatre for conscientization aims at bringing about social change to the community or people concerned (180).

Explaining the foregoing conscientization strategy further, Ojekhota notes that:

This type of education is one in which a group of persons; through dialogue, come to realize the concrete situation in which they live, the reasons for this situation, and the possible solutions. The learners (participants) through the process are more involved in the real act of knowing rather than being given a ready-made view of social reality (113).

Asiama sees TfD as an avenue where community members get the opportunity to identify their own problems and issues that concern them and through discussions and consultations lay down strategies to overcome them (595). The framers of theatre for development see theatre not only as a literary art but as a medium of communication which employs other literary elements like songs, mimes, dances and dialogues to cause a change in behaviour.

In Nigeria, Community Theatre for Development was first experimented with the coming of Michael Etherton from the University of Zambia to ABU, Zaria, where he had established “*chikwakwa popular theatre*”. Michael Etherton had also taken part in shaping some of the campaign plays for *Laedza Botanani* in Botswana, Southern Africa. He introduced Drama as a course in ABU, Zaria in 1975 with community theatre as its focus. The Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria's “*Samaru Projects*” has reverberated several TfD campaigns in Abuja, Benue, Lagos, Jos, Obudu, Benin, Ekpoma, Kwara, Ekiadolor to mention a few. These campaigns arose out of the desire to respond to needs, frustrations, conflicts, dreams, sufferings and the majority poor. Thus, the popular theatre seeks to return the theatre to the people so that they can use it in analysing their reality, raise their consciousness, and discard their fatalistic attitude towards life and to make them rediscover their worth. This also would help them realise that they are masters of their destiny. To a large extent, they have been fruitful!

From the foregoing, it could be said that TfD in Nigeria has come to stay, for people to use to think and act on the problems of their community. In fact, Illah affirms, “theatre can now be used as a participatory tool to ensure the sharing of ideas and the

changing of attitudes towards sustainable development (6)". For optimal results, Tfd practitioners must employ certain modes which are relevant to people's mode of artistic expression in order to conscientize them towards social, political development. In this connection, Ushie opines that:

It is believed that, an effective sensitization and conscientization of masses towards taking a positive action in solution of an identified community problem will require the use of theatrical languages and style which they understand. The use of song, dance, music, masquerades and mime are traditional expressive and communicative idioms, which people are used to and will respond to any time (26).

The point being made is that if development activities are conceived and initiated by the people using idioms and symbols that are intelligible to them, they are more likely to correspond to their needs and desires.

The process of Theatre for Development (Tfd)

The process of community theatre distinguishes it from conventional theatre. The nature of theatre for development (Tfd) is said to be of two main kinds; either the performance is prepared outside the community and 'dump' on the community or the performance is done with and performed by/for the community. In describing the dual nature of Tfd, Byram and Kidd opine that:

The first type is that which is created out of researching in the community but performed by the outside artist. The second type is that which is investigated and created with the community and performed jointly by the professional artists (outsiders) and members of the community (insiders). In both cases, the presentations take place in the community itself, and the venue does not require any special requirements of the theatre (20-22).

Theatre for Development (Tfd) often employs the use of music, drama, and dance, puppetry, found within the community. Tfd dwells on indigenous community materials which are recycled into different forms. It presents the opportunity for the indigenous art forms of a community to be used for development purposes. Because of its democratic and fun nature, it can be used both to investigate and probe issues within the community as well as to stimulate discussion on issues to find solutions. Tfd therefore plays a critical role in identifying and discussing community based issues.

Practitioners in the field have come out with a chain of process around which a typical Tfd project may revolve. These process are research, reporting back, creating the story, rehearsing the play, performing the play and after performance discussion. It is necessary to note that evaluation and impact assessment are also part of the process but always lie beside the normal project period. The evaluation normally happens sometimes after the whole processes have been completed.

I. **Research:** the process of theatre for development starts with research. This kind of research is 'informal' in that it is not structured and does not have a clear cut procedure. During the research stage, the facilitator becomes conscious with the beliefs and cultural practices of the lab site. This stage promotes direct interaction and communication between the facilitators and the community. This is where the researcher immerses himself into the cosmology of the community under study. Material and information learnt or gathered during such research provides:

- Messages upon which the play will be created.
- The way the play will be performed.
- The venue which the community feels more suitable for the play

When a facilitator and a theatre team go into a community, they become a part of that community therefore it is appropriate to dress in a manner that is in line with the communities.

II. **Reporting back:** information analysis is usually done when members of the research team return to base. During this stage, they prioritize the issues and work out a drama based on the issues or problems identified in the field. There must be a process of sifting and identifying which problem had the right to go first, which issue has precedents, which must be given the utmost priority. Information gathering can lead to so many problems and discoveries that must be addressed but the catalyst has to be careful as to what a felt need is in order not to address issues in a play of about thirty minutes. Failure to address the felt need of the people will constitute the imposition of prejudiced ideas on the people which may breed apathy.

III. **Creating the story:** material gathered during the research should give a clear picture of what the position of the issues of concerns are in the village. It may include stories of individuals, families or sections of the community showing concrete testimonies of how they relate to the issues. The story created is fiction. But it is built on actual life experiences that the community for whom and with whom the play is being developed will recognise and sometimes even identify with it, depending on how well the dramatization is done.

- IV. **Sketching the Play:** improvisation is the basic tool in TfD however, it is always important to have a sketch of a dramatic piece. In sketching the skit, select the themes as discovered during the story creation stage. Create skits in scenarios to allow for proper improvisation. After sketching the scenarios, examine situations in the story that will be accepted by the people. The facilitators should think about situations and characters that will reflect the themes. The facilitator should also try and work with images that will not directly tell the people what the situation is, but will force them to think. Putting the ideas into scenarios is a kind of mapping the storyline in a book. After which the play can be ready for rehearsal and performance.
- V. **Rehearsing the Play:** this is where the facilitator schedules with the casts (community members) on the days they think will favour them to come for rehearsals. It may be at their leisure time but it depends on the facilitator to let them understand the concept of the play and also the timeframe of the project. This is the most difficult and discipline part of a TfD project because it is based on improvisation and has to be rehearsed well to bring out the characterization and also bringing out the working theme clearly. The rehearsal is made open to the community members, because during that time, some give out comments that might be of help to the facilitator. TfD rehearsals must be done in the open and allow criticism. As much as possible, allow members to exchange ideas, experiences and roles as this will help them to develop their minds and skills in creating critical awareness and behavioural change-thus creating a learning process.
- VI. **Performing the Play:** the performance serves as a catalyst for probing the minds of the people involved in the community project as the audience. It must, therefore be as brief as possible unless it contains comic situations and dialogue that will sustain the interest of the audience. It must be nurtured in such a way that leads to discussions, and it must encourage audience participation. A suitable venue and time that will facilitate community participation must be a critical concern to the facilitator.

Community Theatre Project Experience at Samban Loko Community.

This project was executed by the 300L students of the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, with this writer as a facilitator. The intention of the experiment was to expose the students and other facilitators to the practice and processes of TfD through problem identification and the exploration of viable means of solving it within a target community.

The people of Samban are occupying a geographical location of Jaba LGA of Kaduna State, Nigeria. It is about 150kms from Abuja the capital of Nigeria, about 190kms from the state capital of Kaduna State and about 35kms from Kafanchan. It is surrounded by villages such as Kwoi, Nok, Chori, Fori, Angwal and Ankung.

The Samban people have a formidable repertory of dances, songs, instrumental music, masquerade and cultural modes. The various occasions of childbirth, circumcision, courtship, engagement, marriage and funerals are always noted for the concentration on the cultural highlights of the Samban people's cultural mode. The strength of imported religion has not deterred the Samban indigenous people from what the community holds in awe and respect.

The Samban people are ardent farmers and they proudly harvest their maize, groundnut, cassava, yams, soy beans, rice, karkashi (local draw soup) cocoyam, ginger and fonio (acha) during the harvest season.

They are good at promoting and developing their cultural heritage and traditions through their various traditional performances which have been passed from generation to generation. Some performances had to be revived by the youths to ensure continuity and to retain their ancestral culture.

The Samban community theatre project was fashioned after the Zimbabwe community theatre experiments and the ABU, Zaria workshops (this writer was part of the Samban community theatre experiment as a facilitator). Hence, the “inside – In” or “Homestead” approach, in which practitioners first live within a community for a certain period of time, before embarking on any dramatic presentation was deployed. The advantage of this method, according to Osofian, is that the time of being resident in the community not only helps acclimatize them to the people's immediate problems and traditions but the community itself has an opportunity to know the outsiders and develop some trust in them (5).

Community Research:

Traditional courtesies are very necessary for the success of a participatory research process in Nigeria. After the courtesies to the Dagachi of Samban Loko and the Madaki, the research commenced with discussions with some representatives of the Samban community. Students were divided into ten groups to go for a transect walk; each group having a specific area to cover. The transect walk was one of the participatory learning approach (PLA) tools used in the research stage, to enable student-participants have access to first hand picture of what the village looks like, their main economic stay, their life patterns and also afforded us an opportunity to interact with a cross section of the people. This was led by some members of the Samban community. Later on, students were taken to some homes in the community

to live there for their period of stay in the community. This technique used in the community research is the “homestead approach”. By this, the students associate freely with the community, live with them, eat with them, share in their daily activities, while at the same time observing and respecting their traditions and values. This homestead approach helped to build rapport, trust and confidence as these are crucial processes to acceptability and participation.

While we were on the transect, we had the opportunity to do key informant interview and group discussions all of which gave us information that the people of Samban community indicated grow ginger and palm wine hence, they drink a lot. It was also gathered that the clinic is far from the village and also poor health facilities in the clinics, inadequate water supply, poor refuse disposal systems and management, lack of access roads, poverty and low level of awareness on health issues.



Plate I: A prominent sculpture in Samban Loko.



Plate II: Poor Drainage System in Samban

The play creation process

To prioritize the information gathered, an approach called the “*mapping*” was used where representatives of the community were advised to draw a map or ‘*picture*’ of their community either on the ground or using a marker and cardboard paper. A man from the community volunteered to draw the community map after an explanation of what a map is, as one of the PLA tools to the people. When he had completed the drawing with inputs from members of the community, he sat back. Thereafter, argument was generated because others were of the opinion that he has failed to capture some features. In the process of interrogating the map by the community members, they extensively discussed how the issues came about, their effects, what can be done and their consequences. This process was used to enable the people to critically understand the problems and strategies that may be used to overcome them. The completion of the map was certified when the community members all agreed that the map was a fair representation of their village. By making the analysis, the community came to a consensus as to which problems are of priority.

The story evolved from the sensibilities of the people and the scenario kept changing according to the changing perspective of the community. In the process of the story creation, personal life stories of people in the community were used to illustrate the identified problems. In a conventional theatre, performances are considered the most important focus of a theatrical activity while in community theatre, rehearsals assume greater emphasis. This is because the emphasis of community theatre is on the process. In the rehearsal process, the community members try out how to play the characters and dramatize the story. As they do so, they increase their understanding and awareness of the issues at stake there by getting empowered and Conscientized



Plate III: Samban community map

The performance

The performance took place at the village square under a mango tree. The performance was attended by the Hakimi (district head) Dagachi (village head) of Samban Loko, the Madaki, the Sarkin Samari, Sarkin Noma, the *Tir Ham Queen* (Miss. Samban), masquerades, and other members of the community which comprised of men, women and children. The students alongside the villagers sang and danced from the indigenous language of the people; Jaba. Almost immediately, more community members came out of their houses to watch the performances.



Plate IV: Tir Ham (Miss. Samban) and other community members before the performance.



Plate V: Masquerades in Samban Community



Plate VI: Masquerades in Gyration before the Performance.

Scene 1: depicts a family. The mother comes back from the farm and discovers that there is no water in the house to even cook. She calls her children and sends them to go and get water from the well so she can prepare dinner for the family. After a while, they come back complaining that they couldn't get even a drop of water. She informs them that they will have to go to bed without food that night since they could not get water in the house. They woke up at the middle of the night and could not sleep because of hunger.

Scene 2: opens with mama Gyonza, a widow advising her son to be of good conduct so he can make her proud. She unties a knot from the tip of her wrapper and gives Gyonza some money to go to school. Immediately, he finds his way to a relaxation spot to meet his friends so they can together to gamble, smoke, drink and enjoy themselves. He gets drunk and his friends realizing he has money on him beat him up, took away all the money given to him by his mother. Lying helplessly on the ground, he manages to stand up not knowing what next to do.



Plate VII: Performance: Mama Gyonza advising her son

Scene 3: opens with a commercial motorcyclist taking a sick boy to the clinic. Another motorcyclist was also coming, facing his front. In an attempt to dodge potholes, the two motorcyclists collide resulting in a fatal accident. The sick boy being taken to the hospital sustains serious injuries. He is immediately rushed to the clinic. On arriving there, the nurse informs them that the doctor has gone out and there is no any form of first aid she can administer to the child. Before they could think of other options, the boy passed away.



Plate VIII: Cross section of community members watching performance with rapt attention

The 2012/2013 Samban Community Theatre field work had successfully involved the inhabitants of the community as they were active participants from the research stage to the follow through stage. The process of this field exercise gave the people the voice and the privilege to be part of reconstructing the various problems that affect them as a community. It has really demonstrated the fact that as a community, they can be of help to themselves. Though they may not be able to solve all the problems but at least they can provide some sort of “temporal relief” against their one-sided attitude to heavy reliance on government for the provision of social amenities and dividends of democracy.

The field exercise received a lot of commendation; revealed through the various vote of thanks from the Dagachi, Madaki and the Tir Ham. The exercise truly proves that community theatre is a theatre of social engagement, theatre that seeks primarily and is committed to bringing about actual change in specific community. This reiterates the fact that community theatre and theatre generally goes beyond the limit of mere existence but projects into a limit where minds meet and are prodded to react towards a given target to better the people's lives. Okwori reiterates this when he says:

Theatre can do more than entertainment. It can go beyond fiction to intervene in reality because it based on it (119).

Conclusion

The authors view is that theatre, in any society, should be considered a simple activity concerned with people trying to understand their world. The author tried to demonstrate that theatre is consciously designed to influence people's minds, and to either change or maintain their perception of the world. This is why the author strongly hold that a government can only ignore the potency of theatre in promoting development especially at the grassroots level at its own peril. Therefore, the role of theatre in bringing development cannot be overemphasized- theatre's ability to break through language and cultural barriers; ask its audience to think about what they have seen; challenge them to face up to aspects of their lives that they try to ignore; challenge societal beliefs, forces and to mould the mind while entertaining that makes it such a vital medium of development, mobilization and communication.

This paper tries to examine the fact that Tfd is a viable tool for community awareness, using the Samban Community Theatre as an experimental fulcrum. The effectiveness of the theatre medium in such a campaign lies in its ability to create a social linkage between cultural and social life with artistic reality (Asagba 46). This was successfully displayed in the Samban community theatre project. Based on this success and compelling socio-economic challenges, especially in 21st century rural Nigeria, this paper recommends that:

- Tfd should be included as one of the strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) in Health, Educational, Environment and other matters in Nigeria.
- Tfd practitioners/ experts should be immediately included in the vision 2030 project of the government in Nigeria so that they could help design mobilization and sensitization campaigns especially at the grassroots level for the realization of the dream as Tfd is a strong weapon for consciousness awakening. It encourages every member of such an audience to become highly perceptive and consequently begin to fashion out enduring ways of integrating more meaningfully into a systematically ordered society. Opposed to being passive in the dissemination and acquisition of knowledge, it encourages proactive approval to acquiring development in the life of a people.
- Tfd should be deployed in managing the seemingly persistent ethno religious herder-farmer conflicts over land resources across of Nigeria. Tfd relies on the storytelling form, masquerade, traditional dances and music of the people of the chosen society to thrive. Because these art forms are familiar, the people respond to them spontaneously and the forms, therefore, become very good means of mobilization.

- Most festivals in Africa have become or are being extinct. The obvious reason being that people have taken to watching films and other interesting programmes on the television as they sit comfortably in their luxurious chairs at home. Again, most traditional folk singers have left the scene, taking the traditional musical instruments with them. What is left is no more than the hard –metals instruments of America which our youths are seriously infatuated with. TFD practitioners should resuscitate the Movement for Popular Theatre Alliance (MPTA) by partnering with donor/ development agencies, with a view to reviving and sustaining the cultural heritage of the diverse people of Nigeria

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THEATRE AND PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

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Abstract

The whole essence of governance is for government to meet the fundamental needs of the governed. In facilitating this, Theatre artists in various climes have utilised their crafts to address both the leaders and the led on the importance of good governance in guaranteeing people's welfare and development. Several studies have discussed the socio-political relevance of theatre with scant attention paid to the topicality of good governance on the African theatre stage. This paper was therefore designed to explore the contribution of theatre to good governance in Africa with the view to identifying its potential and operational environment. Pierce's Pragmatism and Bacon's Theory of Performance served as the framework while the interpretive design was used. Content scanning of 50 drama texts and productions purposively selected for their relevance from different parts of Africa was conducted. Findings showed that the African theatre stage has strong potential to facilitate good governance but it is bedevilled by limited access of the vast majority of people to quality theatre productions, wrong targeting of the audience with relevant messages, low knowledge of practitioners on issues relating to good governance and unfavourable production climate. The paper then concluded that with the enormous potential of theatre in facilitating good governance, stakeholders should ensure unfettered access to quality theatre productions, more target-specific performances for the leaders and the led, practitioners should learn more about good governance while there should be an improvement in the operational environment for theatre to thrive.

Keywords: Good governance, African drama and theatre, Drama in society, Performance

Introduction: Conceptualising the Issues

The origin of theatre is both contentious and multi-dimensional in nature as no one can say whether it originated in one location and spread to other locations or it originated from different locations at relatively the same time or at different points in time from one society to the other. However, there is a consensus on the likely origin of theatre across the world. These are the ritual, the mimetic and the rhapsody. Ritual origin as articulated in Frazer's seminal work *The Golden Bough* amplifies that theatre evolves from rituals of the people. The Western theatre which is traceable to the City Dionysia festival, the African theatre traceable to the Passion of Abydos in

Egypt and rituals from other societies; particularly in Asia and Africa are pointers in this direction. Most rituals involve singing, dancing, and invoking the higher beings which subsequently leads to tutelage in the art of singing, dancing, storytelling and dramatic enactment. Religious institutions sustained the officials of these rituals for a very long time until they could no longer do so. This forces many of the talents to move their acts away from the religious space and seek solace among the people who take over their sustenance. That was how the hitherto religious acts became secular and full-fledged performances that entertain, educate and criticise both the leaders and the led in the societies. Up till today, most theatre artists cut their creative teeth from their religious base either by drumming, acting or singing in the church, shrine or mosque.

The proponents of mimetic theory like Aristotle, Plato and Shakespeare hinged their positions on the fact that man is an imitative animal and that imitation is part of our being. That partly explains why children imitate their parents and the adults they see around in their play-making. Characters in the children's play are the known faces around them in their homes, schools and other social platforms. The proponents believed that theatre evolved from the initial act of imitation of animals and the process of conquering them by early hunters during their victory dances.

The foremost occupation of the early man is hunting and gathering fruits and seeds. In the course of hunting, he comes across animals, and, with stones, sticks and clubs; he subdues the animal and takes it home to his people for feasting. As a result of the success recorded in the hunting expedition, they dance to give thanks to the supportive gods that make the hunting expedition successful and imitate the movement of the animal and that of the hunters. The dance is spiced up with singing and chanting which is used to invoke the benevolent spirit for more success. From this act of invocation, it became a form of relaxation for the hunters and other people who constitute the audience. It gradually evolves into a full-fledged performance that continues to mutate and change in structure and contents up till today. It is this imitative functionality that is carried forward to include the mirroring of society by theatre artists who generate their contents from the society in order to show the society the way it is. What Shakespeare called "holding a mirror up to the nature". That explains why most modern drama and theatre reflect on happenings in their societies and treat topical issues emanating from there.

The Rhapsodists believed that theatre evolved from the art of storytelling which can be found in nearly all societies. It is the tradition of telling stories of events and happenings of the past to orientate the younger generation. This is one of the media of transferring knowledge and information from one generation to the other. This group believes that the evolution of theatre is traceable to the storyteller who eventually introduced singing, dancing and movement to spice up his story. This act of

storytelling could be best appreciated from the moonlight stories of the past in which children in villages and countryside congregate before the storyteller under the illumination of the moon to learn different stories that are entertaining, instructive and historical in nature. As story sessions become highly engaging, the storyteller demonstrates and enacts some of the acts in the story and gradually involves his audience in the role-playing process.

In different parts of Africa, the theatre has emerged from the aforementioned three sources. It has been used to entertain monarchs and important personalities in societies before graduating into a commercially viable enterprise where professional theatre groups perform to entertain, educate and promote cultural consciousness. Most of the plays of the traditional performing groups are didactic in nature. From that period around 5th century BC till date, theatre has been on a roller coaster of helping man to understand self and others, to grab the rationale behind our existence, our interaction with the seen and unseen forces and how an injury to one can subsequently become an injury to the other. It has enabled the practitioners to educate, heal, build and strengthen societies. The ability of drama to serve humanity in different ramifications has been identified by the Pragmatists and the Marxists who believe that any work of art like theatre should serve other social functions apart from mere aesthetics. While entertainment is a key function of theatre, it should not be the only one. Examples abound of how theatre has been utilized in different areas. We have theatre in education and educational theatre that take care of the educative functions of theatre whereby theatre is used as an aid to facilitate the teaching and learning process.

The environmental theatre which was created by Schechner before its adoption by the environmentalists focuses on how theatre can be utilized to address challenges relating to the environment. Many climate change activists are using it to educate people, particularly those in the rural areas on what they need to do to contribute positively to climate change. Brecht and Piscators' political theatre is known for using the platform of theatre to effect positive social change. Paul Freire's pedagogy which emanated from Brazil and was popularised in South America contributed significantly to the popularity of Theatre for Development (TfD) with a process and methodology that appealed effectively to the masses and unlettered. It is used to mobilize, sensitize and conscientize community members and open their eyes to health and developmental challenges that they may be facing and the available community resources that could be channelled towards addressing such challenges. Through TfD, many communities have been equipped with adequate knowledge and skills needed to take their destiny into their hands and fix their problems instead of waiting endlessly for the government. Through TfD projects, many communities now have access to potable water supply, a good waste disposal system; trained voluntary health workers who manage minor illnesses and diseases, and construct

good road and school facilities to provide much-needed education for their children and wards. In the area of social justice, there are performance activists who use drama and theatre to promote social justice, equity and fair play. Through theatre activism, issues relating to discrimination like race, gender, economic status and religious affiliation have been illuminated and the call for equity and social justice amplified.

Moreno's Psychodrama took theatre to the realm of science as it becomes a useful tool for treatment and healing. People with emotional challenges found comfort in participating in this therapeutic theatre. Theatre is equally one of the tools being used in psychotherapy whereby people with similar social and emotional challenges converge, interact and assist one another in solving identified problems through playing and performing. Applied drama/theatre as an emerging concept has allowed researchers and practitioners to use the medium of drama and theatre to perform more functions than mere entertainment. Through applied drama, community members have been educated on difficult subjects on different socio-economic challenges they face.

As a work of art, theatre; "influences the mind, the nerves, the feelings, and the soul. It carries messages of hope, hostility, derision and moral rebuke. **It can fight material and spirited evils**" (Emphasis mine). (Adeniran⁴). Governance-related challenges are among these material and spirited evils that theatre has a strong potential to fight. The utilitarian nature of drama in different areas of human endeavour has been identified from time immemorial. That is why Tyson, (See Johnson 1) explains that "theatre and human experiences are always in a symbiotic relationship, a give-and-take phenomenon" (3). Apart from the religious purpose, theatre in Ancient Greek is also a political platform for both the artists and their audience. Participating in the City Dionysia festival in Athens is both a religious and political obligation to all citizens. This is because it provides a platform for both the leaders and the led to collectively develop a common understanding of society's acceptable norms. Plays were used to promote state-sanctioned virtues and condemn mutually identified vices. Theatre is used to educate the citizen on the affairs of the state, the challenges that leaders face while piloting state affairs and the responsibilities of citizens to the state. While theatre was used to make the citizens better in fulfilling their obligations to the state, it was also utilised to admonish the rulers on corresponding consequences when they do things that are in antithesis to the well-being of their people.

Global Approach to Theatre and Good Governance

Using the platform of theatre to interrogate good governance is as old as the discipline itself with many plays and performances remaining conspicuous over the ages. Good governance is an offshoot of an effective and efficient political process

that pave way for the right people to mount the saddle of leadership in society. Good governance cannot be achieved if the political process is faulty. That explains why many of the early dramatists concern themselves with plays that address socio-political issues. There is no way we would discuss good governance without mentioning the political theatre of Brecht and Piscators with a play like *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* and many other plays aimed at facilitating an improved quality of life for the masses and serving as an enabler for a change in the status quo. Shakespeare addressed the governance issue in *Coriolanus*, and Arthur Miller in *The Crucible*, to mention just a few. Like the description of other works of art by Barzun, "beyond the potency to dignify and exalt a civilization or political system, theatre can equally weaken or destroy it. It could also precipitate a revolution or betray a struggle by the way citizens are sensitized and tuned". The need to use drama as a tool for promoting good governance brings up the nexus between what Cantalupo (Ameh,) describes as the power of performance and the performance of power. The power of performance is the ability of theatre to entertain, educate, orientate, conscientise, heal, build, organise, diagnose and facilitate positive change while the performance of power is about the actors in leadership positions who 'perform power'. They are the power holders whose speech, deeds and action determine the survival, security and well-being of millions of people. People in government in Africa with their penchant for misrule are the actors in the performance of power. It is important to find out how many questions these actors in the performance of power have been made to answer through the African stage. To what extent has their deeds and misdeeds escaped the authorial lens of African theatre practitioners? The answer is; very little. Factors that are responsible for limited interrogation of the leaders' stewardship and their impact on the vast majority of the people will be articulated here.

Perhaps one of the reasons that contribute to the paucity of plays with good governance-related themes on the African stage is the limited knowledge of the practitioners on the concept of good governance. Many of them do not know what constitutes good governance and how it places much expectation on the rulers who must not only be fair and just but must be seen to be so. It expects rulers to have the well-being and security of their people as the top priority. He must not only be driven by the passion to rule but must be well equipped with the nuances of governance. Good governance cannot be achieved by the novice in the corridor of power who thrives on try and error in piloting the affairs of the state. They must understand the needs of the people and know the mechanism for meeting those needs. They must be equipped with strong decision-making skills as decisions they make have a ripple effect on thousands if not millions of people.

However, the reality in Africa is that many of those who found themselves at the helms of affairs are what one can describe as 'the accidental public servant' to borrow Nasir El Rufai's term. These sets of people accidentally found themselves in

leadership positions without adequate preparation. Their knowledge of people's needs is low and they have a vague idea about how to positively impact people's life. That explains why the continent is currently faced with myriads of socio-political and economic problems. People do not feel the impact of governance, yet they hear billions being spent daily within the corridors of power. Most governments in Africa continue on a spending spree for self-aggrandisement with little effect on the life and living of the citizenry. Any survey on the availability of good governance in most of the countries in the continent will automatically provide a negative result as people tend to lose faith in the electoral process that brings leaders to power. Institutions that are supposed to support the provision of essential services to the people, and promote equity and justice have all failed in their obligations.

From Tripoli to Accra, Johannesburg to Bujumbura, a spate of unmet needs are evident with inadequate basic amenities necessary for even growth and development of the citizenry. This is not surprising considering the low level of resistance faced by those that have captured the political space in different countries in Africa since independence. The majority of the people seem to have either resigned to fate or waiting for a miracle to happen. The journey to Eldorado would remain a circuitous one in the continent if people continued to show a lukewarm attitude to the political process and care less about who rules. Good governance is not the absence of democracy because democracy is just a necessary but not a sufficient condition for good governance. This means that democracy must be present before we can talk of good governance but democracy alone will not guarantee the socio-economic wellbeing of the people and save them from insecurity if there are no conscious efforts by both the government and the governed to play their roles towards an egalitarian society.

It is convenient to put all the blames for the lack of good governance at the doorsteps of the leaders but the simple truth is that both the leaders and the led are culpable as contributors to the problems associated with good governance in most countries in the continent. Without the collaboration and support of the governed, misrule will not continue to thrive. What right does a supporter of 'stomach infrastructure' who wants gratification before casting his or her vote have in condemning the government and accusing it of not doing the needful? What right does a person who corners the benefits meant for the young and vulnerable in his community has to complain about bad governance? The person who took a loan without the commitment to pay it back and considers it as his share of the national cake, a trader who cheats his customer with half measure, a civil servant who spends 75% of the office working hours watching movies or other pastimes, a parent buying examination results for his wards and teachers demanding gratifications in whatever form from their students are all accomplices to bad governance.

All of them have no moral justification to condemn their leaders for not meeting the people's needs because they have equally failed woefully in their responsibilities as good citizens of their respective countries. To whom much is given, much is expected. It is a truism that society gets the kind of government it deserves. Those governing Africa are not from Mars but from among the people in Africa and when we condemn them and agitate for their replacement, who are we replacing them with? The saints from outer space? No. Those coming would equally be among the people. A person who is in the habit of cheating the system will not behave otherwise on assuming a leadership position. It must be clear to all of us that good governance cannot be achieved where the leaders are good and the followers are bad. It takes two to tango.

An Overview of Theatre and Good Governance in Africa

With the extent of decadence being experienced in Africa, theatre artists are supposed to be one of the key watchdogs that will continually keep the leaders on their toes and mobilise the led to demand for good governance. It is however sad that the voice coming from the stage remains mere whispers. Almost all countries in Africa are at the receiving end of bad governance. Issues ranging from poverty to violation of human rights, high rate of insecurity and economic mismanagement have continued to impede growth and development in the region. The persistent civil unrest, internal crisis and political agitation by different groups in most of the African countries are traceable to bad governance.

Thus, good governance is expected to stabilize the region, proactively abate present conflicts all over the continent and prevent future occurrences. (Asefa & Chiao-Huang 11). Many dramatic enactments before, during and after the apartheid regime in South Africa are geared toward ensuring good governance particularly to protect the people from the oppressive governments who see them only as numbers. From *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* to *The Island*, *Egoli*, and *Job Mava*, South African theatre has pitched its tent with the mass of the voiceless. It fights their battles for them and keeps the government on its toes. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona use their plays to satirise the inhuman treatment being meted out to the blacks in South Africa during the Apartheid period. Theatre in South Africa is not merely for entertainment but essentially to proactively protest bad governance including oppressive and anti-people policies. However, in recent times, the number of productions that are committed to social discourse particularly interrogating the performance of government in the provision of welfare and securing the lives and properties of the people compared to other forms of performances largely aimed at entertaining the audience is negligibly low. The audience on the other hand tends to prefer entertaining performances to didactic and conscientious productions.

In Nigeria, the Alarinjo theatres that perform in palace courts in Yoruba land before moving into the streets changed their focus from ritual and edification to entertainment of rulers and the general public. They entertain as they move from village to village and market to market singing, dancing, chanting, displaying acrobatic skills and subsequently enacting playlets. They were the primary source of entertainment in those days and many believed that they were the ones that metamorphosed into the erstwhile Popular Yoruba Travelling with the advent of late Hubert Adedeji Ogunde on the Nigerian stage in 1946. However, Adedokun, 21, believes that 'Alarinjo was a precursor of the contemporary theatre, not its ancestor'. Whether one begets the other or not, what is clear is that one started before the other and during the period of operation of the latter, the former is still in existence performing in rural villages and big cities in king's palaces and market places while the former utilised town halls and school halls for their performances that were largely indoor as opposed to the *Alarinjo's* outdoor performances.

Both the Alarinjo theatre and the Yoruba travelling theatre practitioners in Nigeria have utilised their performances to speak truth to power in the past. There were masquerade performances that criticise the reign of terror of many tyrants. Many of these performers suffered untold persecution and prosecutions for speaking against the rulers. The same goes for the dramatists of the Yoruba travelling theatre tradition. With his plays like *Strike and Hunger and Bread and Bullet*, Hubert Ogunde's theatre was banned severally by the colonial government for using his performances to attack various policies that negate the spirit of good governance. He equally attracted the wrath of the then Western region government with his play *Yoruba Ronu* and was subsequently banned. This ban attracted outrage from opinion moulders and social commentators. One such condemnation describes the act as a blunder that, "makes a farce of our claim to good government". (Clark 62).

Another theatre practitioner who believes that theatre has a significant role to play in political emancipation and good governance is Adunni Oluwole who happened to be the first female theatre company founder in Nigeria. Her theatre company, First Actress Party was utilised to promote her political ideology. However, on realizing the fact that she is not making as much impact as she expected in using the theatre to effect change in the status quo, she disbanded her troupe and formed a political party known as the Commoner Liberal Party in 1954. The formation of a political party by Adunni was with the view to confront the ` government of the day's evils of nepotism, disunity and victimization (Clark 82). With these two that stood out as committed artists during the period are a handful of other dramatists who also produce plays to address governance-related issues but they are aggregately in the minority compared to a large number of theatre practitioners that were making waves during the period.

There were equally few literary theatre performers who used their place to engage the government of the day on issues relating to governance and the welfare of the people. From *A play of Giants* and *Kongi's Harvest* to *Opera Woyosi*, and *Jero's Metamorphosis*, Soyinka has continually demonstrated the tragedy of bad governance orchestrated by undemocratic elements like the military and their civilian counterparts and how oppression, subjugation and wanton corruption have remained their official pastime. Apart from Soyinka's plays, other plays that have attempted to awaken the consciousness of government to the adverse effect of bad leadership and the need to do the right thing which can lead to the greatest good for the greatest number are Osofisan's *Once Upon 4 Robbers*, *Midnight Hotel*, *Aringindin and the Night Watchmen*, Sowande's *Farewell to Babylon*, *Circus of Freedom*, Ukala's *Villainy*, *Placenta of Death* and *Break a Boil*, Harry Hagher's *Mulkin Mata*, Akinwumi Isola's *Aye Yewon Tan* and *Saworo Ide*, *Faleti's Eye Atoka* and many others.

Other plays that attempted to question, subvert and show the way forward in dismantling the existing political structure and replacing same with a more acceptable one include Wole Soyinka's *Requiem for a Futurologist* (1985), *From Zia with Love* (1992), and *The Beatification of Area Boy* (1999), (1992), Ola Rotimi's *If... a tragedy of the Ruled* (1983), Esiaba Irobi's *Nwokedi* (1991), Tess Onwueme's *The Reign of Wazobia* (1992), Ahmed Yerima's *The Silent Gods* (1996) and Emeka Nwabueze's *A Parliament of Vultures* (2001) among others. A close look at Soyinka's numerous satirical sketches of the sixties and early seventies clearly articulated the fact that the Nigerian first republic politicians often demonstrated a lack of respect for democratic norms. Femi Osofisan's *Who is Afraid of Solarin* exposes the attenuation of the democratic prospects through greed and other social ills. It is worthy of note that most of the Nigerian plays produced from 1980 to the present day contain more radical approaches to revive and rejuvenate the Nigerian society in particular and Africa in general and save it from imminent total collapse.

It is regrettable to note that, all the aforementioned plays and others in their like have not been able to significantly influence government policies as those at the helms of affairs rarely watch those plays. Most of the theatre practitioners also lack the push to take the battle to the front door of the political officeholders. The wailing and lamentation through the plays are mostly accessible to the masses that have not been empowered to do anything about it. There is limited interaction between the theatre artists and those occupying leadership positions and when plays are specifically written to target the leaders, they are rarely in the theatre to see such productions.

The situation is similar in Kenya where, apart from productions that are produced in indigenous languages that are largely social drama, production and adaptation of foreign social drama remain the order of the day. The operational environment leaves

nothing to be cheered about as practitioners tend to operate in a precarious environment. The national theatre was designed as a recreation centre to produce plays that are largely for entertainment purposes. The few exceptions are the Kenya classics like Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, *Black Hermit* and *Ngahiika Ndeenda* ('I Will Marry When I Choose') Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*, *Aminata*, *Shrine of Tears*, *Man of Kafira* and the *Burning of Rags*. (Nderilu). In *Black Hermit*, Ngugi addresses issues relating to poverty, gender, and nationalism from both colonial and post-colonial government perspectives and how the government has failed the people in these areas.

In *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Ngugi and Micere summarise the lack of good governance from the perspective of the colonialists who fail to adhere to the basic principles of rule of law and protecting the rights of the citizen to a fair trial. It shows how ludicrous it is for the European to preside over an African case in an African court. The play clearly articulates the roles of politicians and religious leaders in circumventing the will of the people and perpetuating evil against them. The unending conspiracy of the elites in supporting bad governance due to their greediness and self-centeredness continues to hunt Africans today several years after the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya. (Aformeziem 1-5).

The popular theatre, the Theatre for Development and the festival theatres in the country seem to border themselves more on social interactions than focusing on issues relating to good governance. It is a theatre of pastime and reflection on what is right and what is wrong in the area of social interaction. Even from the Tfd projects that spread across the country, little is achieved in calling the leader's attention to issues relating to good governance while more success is recorded in mobilizing people to take their destinies in their hands and utilise available resources for their wellbeing. The message is usually that people should ignore the government and take ownership. This has made people in government to be more relaxed since the people are satisfied with usurping the leaders' responsibilities. The takeaway from Kenya like other countries in Africa is that using theatre to address issues relating to good governance usually takes the back seat.

In the northern part of Africa, theatre artists and practitioners in the region have identified the power of the stage in facilitating good governance. "After years of being silenced and censored, North African youths are turning the theatre into both a tool for dissent and as a way to share their individual experiences of the events, speaking freely for the first time and keeping the momentum going" (Jay, 4). Theatre and national festival plays are being used to discuss political and social issues including good governance-related issues, particularly in Egypt and Morocco. Jay, also provides an insight into the revolutionary tendency of the North African dramatists and how they have been able to utilise their performances to

constructively engage with both the government and the governed on issues relating to the fundamentals of good governance (1-6). In Egypt for instance, Sondos Shabayek's *Tahrir Monologues* x-rays the high-handedness of the security operatives during Hosni Mubarak's regime and the challenges that those who participated in the revolution faced during the period. In Tunisia, *Macbeth, Leila and Ben: a Bloody Story* by Lofti Achour, and the Algerian play *Feraoun* written by Boussahel Abdelmalek are typical examples of committed productions that interrogated issues relating to good governance in that part of Africa. This indeed is like a drop in the ocean as identifying theatre productions with a focus on good governance in the northern part of Africa remains a daunting task. It is worthy of mentioning that theatres that address good governance are more visible during the revolution and violent struggles rather than to prevent the breaking down of law and order. Revolution tends to unite both the theatre artists and their audiences in using the theatre platforms to air their views and condemn bad governance that has impoverished them for long.

Although democracy and governance-related challenges abound across Africa, the number of committed dramatists to articulate the challenges associated with it and proffer solutions to myriads of governance-related problems the continent is facing is still infinitesimally low while the impact being made by these productions is equally insignificant as the continent continue to play second fiddle to its counterparts in other parts of the world as far as good governance is concerned. Clueless despots and dictators are found in large numbers and their security apparatus seems to be potent enough either to debar or stop African dramatists and theatre artists from questioning their governance style and the untold hardship it has brought on the people.

Popular theatres in African countries continue to adopt the same operational framework. From the Alarinjo performers of Nigeria to Ghanaian Concert Party, The South African Musical Theatre, University drama groups like those from Ibadan (Nigeria) Makerere (Uganda) Chikwakwa (Zambia) and Chancellor 80 College (Malawi), The Free Travelling Theatre of Nairobi (Kenya) and The Creative and Performing Arts, Kenyatta (Kenya), the focus is to produce topical plays for the entertainment and enlightenment of the people with history, morality and cultural values being the major focus of such productions. To ensure that power of performance has a favourable impact on those saddled with the performance of power, it is important to review previous attempts aimed at using theatre as a tool for promoting good governance.

From the aforementioned, it can be argued that the dramatic agenda is not in sync with the developmental agenda necessary for improving Africans' quality of life judging by Osofisan's frustration about what was achieved in facilitating positive

change and promoting good governance in the polity and the millage yet to be covered. According to him;

Nothing that we believed in has changed. There is still no social justice that ought to be, which must be. No society can be happy which is divided among classes where some people are enjoying life and some others, the majority are suffering. What we are after, is that government should create an enabling society where people will be sure of employment, good healthcare when they are sick, adequate shelter, education for their children, portable water, light and so on, We are a society that can do all these things. We have money, we have resources. So why are we still where we are? It is because we have allowed some people to get away with villainy, with betrayal. (Ebika 39)

Osofisan's frustration shows that previous efforts on the African stage have not yielded the desired result. We are not yet out of the wood as good governance remained a mirage in most countries. Whatever has been achieved collectively in this direction is just like a drop in the ocean. While many themes and subject matters have become largely over-flogged on the African stage, issues of corruption, nepotism, miscarriage of justice, skewed electoral process, and impoverishment of the vast majority remained a no-go area for most theatre practitioners.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is an urgent need to utilize theatre to facilitate good governance, via a movement, a conscious effort by practitioners to massively use theatre as their weapon to facilitate the change they and the society desire. It is only then that we can feel the impact of theatre on good governance in the continent. For the majority of theatre practitioners to be able to key into this project of using theatre to promote good governance, they will need to be trained on issues relating to good governance and how theatre could be utilised to achieve this. If and when we can mobilise the critical mass necessary for this very important assignment, it will be important to focus as much on the followers as we do on the leaders.

Most of the previous efforts have aimed largely at the ruling class leaving their accomplices among the followers unattended to. Good governance is a collective effort and we must speak to the conscience of the leaders and the led in the same magnitude for everyone to play his part. Another important step that we need to take as theatre practitioners are to ensure that performances meant to promote good governance among the ruling class is taken to them in their comfort zones instead of waiting for them to come to the theatre to see such performances. We should unambiguously package the messages to facilitate effective communication. Waiting

for those in power to come to the theatre may be like *Waiting for Godot* and when they cannot access messages meant for them it becomes an exercise in futility.

Let us take our messages to their offices, and their homes and craft our contents in ways that will meet their needs. Staging a two-hour play may be good but a 15-minute performance that goes straight to the heart of the matter may be preferable for this category of people who usually have busy schedules. In doing so too, we must ensure that we speak with them and not to them. Our performances should be interactive and we must ensure that they understand our messages. We must speak in the language that they understand and in doing so, a little bit of advocacy will be a valuable asset.

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