

# Nigerian Theatre Journal

A Journal of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA)

Vol. 19.1

ISSN 0189-9562

Editor

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2019

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## Contents

1. Nipping Terrorism in the Bud in the Nigerian Space: The Vision in Irobi's <i>Hangmen also Die</i> and Ezenwanebe's <i>Giddy Festival</i> – Oja Paul EGWUEMI, PhD & Philip Peter AKOJE	1
2. Drama and Counter Terrorism in Nigeria: The Example of Yerima's <i>Hard Ground</i> – Tekena Gasper MARK	16
3. Counter-Terrorism and Socio-Political Acculturation in Yerima's <i>Heart of Stone</i> and <i>Pari</i> – Stanley Timeyin OHENHEN, PhD	30
4. Rethinking the Terror of Terrorism on National Development in Yerima's <i>Pari</i> – Chris NWARU, PhD	45
5. Cultural Renaissance or Monarchical Terrorism: A Postcolonial Reading of Yerima's <i>Iyase</i> and Osofisan's <i>Many Colours Make the Thunder-King</i> – Clement O. A. AJIDAHUN, PhD	56
6. Counter Terrorism in Yerima's <i>Pari</i> and Osofisan's <i>Morountodun</i> – Lanre Qasim ADENEKAN & Rasheed Oshoke OGAKASON	68
7. Dramaturgy of Space and Theatricality of Counter-Terrorism: <i>Farewell to Babylon</i> and <i>Farewell to a Virus of Anomie</i> as Paradigms – Adediran Kayode ADEMIJU-BEPO, PhD	81
8. Cultural Terrorism in Binebai's <i>Karena's Cross</i> : A Postcolonial Overview – Ruth Etuwe EPOCHI-OLISE, PhD	91
9. Countering Cultural Terrorism on Women in Africa: An Interrogation of Binebai's <i>Karena's Cross</i> – Ebifaghe Owei FAWEI	112
10. Counter-Terrorism and Nigeria's Security: An Investigation of Umuko's <i>The Scent of Crude Oil</i> – Cindy Anene EZEUGWU, PhD	126
11. The State as Terrorist: A Pictorial Reading of the Visual Theatre Play, “Harvest of Ghosts” – Martins Uze E. TUGBOKOROWEI, PhD	136

12. Redefining 'Religious Terrorism' and the Role of the Nigerian Playwright – Kasarachi Collins OKPEH	136
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**NIPPING TERRORISM IN THE BUD IN THE NIGERIAN SPACE:  
THE VISION IN IROBI'S *HANGMEN ALSO DIE* AND  
EZENWANEBE'S *GIDDY FESTIVAL***

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**Abstract**

Terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 and subsequent attacks on Pentagon and threats for more attacks on United State soil made it painfully clear, even to an uninformed observer that we have entered a period of history; where states authorities can be confronted in anarchical ways. In Nigeria on 20 February, 2009, a disagreement between a convoy of *Yusuffiya sect* and local police turned violent in North-eastern state of Maiduguri leading to the birth of the dreaded terrorist group known as Boko Haram. This scenario challenged the global community and state actors to declare war on terrorism and come up with counter-terrorism initiatives. What is terrorism? What scenarios can result to terrorist acts? This investigation is grounded on qualitative methodology of literary criticism of the play text: Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die* and Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*. It is also built on Marxist conflict theory of social strata. It can be established that the best form of counter-terrorism is for leaders to disengage themselves from actions that can lead to terrorism.

**Introduction**

Conflict is as old as the world of humanity, the same as drama and the act of imitation. From the conception of dramatic ideas, conflict is the vehicle that keeps that idea in motion till the stage of resolution. In fact, it is difficult for drama to take place without conflict. From the classical Greek period to modern time, drama or theatre has continued to address the issues of conflicts in human society. It maybe conflict between man and the supernatural, between man and his environment or between man and man. But when conflict turns violence between man and man, leading to destruction of lives and properties, there is often a call for caution and curtailment of such violence conflict from

man himself. Violence conflict first started when a Biblical character, Cain killed his brother Abel, since then on, violence continues to take different dimensions.

Terrorism is a unique form of violent conflict by individual, groups or state actors to achieve particular objectives, instil fear or for revenge. David Rapoport in his seminar paper highlighted four waves of modern global terrorism in history. The first, which he described as ‘anarchist’ wave of modern terrorism began in Russia in the 1880s and lasted until the 1920s. The second wave is ‘anti-colonial’ began in the 1920s and ended in the 1960s. The third wave is ‘new left’ wave began in the 1960s and continued through to the 1980s. The fourth ‘religious’ wave emerged in 1979 and continues until today (2). The earliest form of modern terrorism focused on high profile state personalities.

The 1890s is described as the "Golden Age of Assassination" in the West; monarchs, prime ministers, and presidents were struck down one after another. Most assassins were anarchists who moved easily across international borders to assassinate foreign leaders. Every 18 months a leader is assassinated in Europe. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (heir to the throne of Austro-Hungarian Empire) of Austria and his wife Sophie by the Bosnia Serb nationalist (Gavrilo Princip) at Bosnia capital of Sarajevo on 28 June, 1914 led the world into a new form of violence conflict that resulted to World War 1. According to *The Watchtower*, a religious magazine, an estimate of 10 million people was killed and 20 million mutilated (3). States also carry out the act of terrorism. Modern examples of drastic state terrorism include Nazi Germany, Stalinist Soviet Union, communist China of the Mao period, Pol Pot’s Cambodia, and several other dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. Thus, 11 September, 2001 was not the first time the act of terrorism was carried out. But the event on this day ignited a new form of international terrorism and counter-terrorism initiatives.

The concept of terrorism is difficult to define because it is difficult to differentiate terrorist from ‘freedom fighters’. The Global Terrorism Database defines a terrorist attack “as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation” (9). But this definition excludes the act of terrorism by state actors. The European Union states that terrorism as an act must include these three features:

- i. seriously intimidating a population;
- ii. unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act;
- iii. seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation (Mannik 154).

To achieve their objectives, terrorists carry out various forms of illegal activities that range from attacks on a person’s life to cutting vital services to society, and other respective threats. These include hijackings, kidnappings and other forms of criminal activity. Several sects have used violence to compel their enemies through fear, throughout human history. According to Erik Mannik:

Jewish Zealots assassinated enemies in their struggle against the Roman Empire, Assassins killed crusaders in the Holy Land, in 1605 Guy Fawkes nearly destroyed the British Parliament, and anarchists have assassinated various high-ranking officials and heads of states (153).

The terror act of 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 at the World Trade Centre in New York and subsequent attack in Washington though not the first act of terrorism on record, shows that non state perpetrators motivated by religion can use violence to pursue their goals. It is important to note that these sects can transform to other movement with the same ideology to carry out the act of violence in order to instil fear on their targets. The terror attacks of 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2003 in Istanbul, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 in Madrid, and 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2005 in London, and 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 in Glasgow, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 Boston Marathon bombing carried out by two brothers, Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, American-born Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 58 at the nightclub in Orlando, Florida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 give credence to ability of al-Qaeda; the terrorist organisation that carried out 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 attack to transform into an international network of other groups (*The Guardian*).

Typical of such affiliations is Boko Haram; an Islamic sect that believes politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims and war against not only the Muslims but also against the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The activities of the sect which involves not only suicide bombing, but also kidnapping, assassination and robbery extended to neighbouring countries shows that they use violence to instil fear in order to pursue their aim of creating an Islamic state since 2009 in Nigeria. In June and August 2011, the group attacked Police Headquarters and United Nations building, both in the nation's capital, respectively, which attracted international audience. According to Andrew Walker, "the attack on the UN compound launched Boko Haram into world news and established it as a militant group with the technical, and doctrinal, capacity to produce suicide bombs" (1). This shows that sects or groups that tend to use violence to achieve their goals cannot be underestimated. The same applies to the gang in Esiaba Irobi's *Hang Men Also Die* and assassins in Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are four major theories that have dominated theoretical argument on terrorism. These are; Psychology approach focuses on personality, psycho-pathology and psycho-social traits of a 'terrorist', Orthodox-Realism and Liberalism approach focuses on non-state actor terrorism; Critical terrorism approach focuses on state terrorism; and Karl Marx's Historical Materialism. But this investigation is grounded on Marx's historical materialism to argue the root cause of terrorism in relation to Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die* and Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*.

Historical materialism is a philosophical perspective that was developed by Germany philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) to explain the successive evolution of society and the conditions of its material life. Marx's historical materialism came into being as a criticism of Friedrich Hegel's dialectics that argued that; material world was a

reflection of a 'universal idea' or God. Karl Marx therefore rejected Hegel idea and developed historical materialism as the dialectics of historical development that cut across all societies throughout human history and struggle between these classes. Marx maintained that the history of all previously existing societies has been the history of class struggle that originated out of the existing social relations to production. Using Marx's analogy of two opposing classes in the societies, Ogunrotifa asserts that the history of man in the society has being that of:

freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones (28-29).

Historical materialism is therefore the scientific law governing human development and historical succession of society. Its fundamental idea is that,

in the social production of life, men enter into definite relations that are crucial and independent of their will. The sum total of these relations of production creates the economic structure of society, the real base, on which raises a legal and political superstructure and forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general (Marx 71-72).

Marx maintained that the history of all existing society has been the history of class struggle that emanated out of the existing social relations to production. He gave a theory of social class on the basis of which stratification or inequality in society is derived. According to Marxian perspective, the systems of stratification derive from the relationships of the social groups to the forces of production. In the stratified societies, there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class. The power of the ruling class is derived from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there, is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes. Marx used the term "class" to refer to the main divisions in all stratification system. A class is a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production. Marx believed that Western societies had developed through the following main stages: the primitive communism, the ancient society, Feudal society and the current capitalist society. During each epoch labour power required for production is supplied by the subject class, that is, slaves, serfs, and proletariat. The subject class is made up of the majority of the population whereas; the ruling class forms a minority. The relationship between the major social classes is one of mutual dependence and conflict. However, the mutual dependency of the two classes is

not a relationship of equal. Instead it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. Marx argued that social stratification divides society into two classes and the unequal distribution of wealth leads to discontent and ultimately to revolution in the society. It is this revolution that leads to the emergence of Suicide Squad in *Hangmen Also Die* and Assassins in Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*, the primary source of this investigation.

### **Causes of Violence and Terrorism in *Hangmen Also Die* and *Giddy Festival***

In Africa, the act of terrorism and assassination is not part of our communal existence. Thus, protecting another person's possession is a measured value in African mutual existence. So, the act of stealing can be traced to generations. At the stage of marriage, family members always carried out investigation to make sure that there is no trace of theft in the lineage of intended partners; either a man or the woman. This is because of the belief that 'he whose father or mother is a thief will be a thief or give birth to one in his lineage. Thus forming marriage alliance with such family will amount to ruining one's offspring in the future generations. This is evident in a conversation between Ibiwari whose son joins The Suicide Squad and Tamara in *Hangmen Also Die*:

**Tamara:** How can he? Doesn't he know what is good from what is evil? Don't you know who brought him up? Tamara! Ibiwari, we don't steal in our family. Stealing is an evil thing. It leaves a stain on your name. A stain that never goes no matter what soap or sponge you use to scrub the skin of the name of the thief. It is a shameful thing. So, as you said, go now and search hard for your black goat before night fall (62).

This claim shows that the act of stealing is frowned at in Africa and it is news when a child is found stealing or joining robbery gang. Such investigation of tracing the family lineage about possible 'bad blood' becomes inevitable. But the act of robbery and terror in *Hangmen Also Die* is the creation of the environment stricken with poverty and this necessitated the application of Marxist class revolution which is acquired through formal education and greed on the part of the ruling class. Since revolution starts from the stomach (Diala 81), an environment stricken with poverty is a breeding ground for organised crime. The Marxist theory believes that the end of capitalism which nurtures economic inequality in the society is class revolution and the unique thing about being human is that we create our world (Marx 69). The height of injustice is greedy diversion of public goods. These are the creation of man and environment that develop to terrorism. According to R. I. P.:

**R.I.P.:** (*To the audience.*) It all started at school. We all attended the same school...the, we were freshmen, fresh in the world, fresh from home and families stricken by poverty. At school, sometimes, we did not know where our next meal was coming from. So we became pregnant. Pregnant with ideas. Pregnant with dreams. Dreams and ambitions to change this nation. Change its leadership. Create a new lease of life for

its citizens. So, we formed an organisation, an organization of progressive, radical young men poised to change the world. We were called the COMRADES. Our Staffs Adviser was one Dr. Ogbansiegbe, a heavily bearded man who looked like African reincarnation of Fidel Castro (37-38).

It is this environment that breeds the criminal gang who are tools in the hand of Dr Ogbansiegbe, a political science lecturer who wants to experiment the Marxist theory of class revolution for his own selfish ego as a gubernatorial candidate to win election. The political scientist must have watched closely how the ruling class has marginalised the 'haves not' creating a deep economic gap between both classes. Though, he is one of the victims of the gang he creates the idea and thought live after him. He describes the act of terrorism as the legitimate way by the poor to overthrow a corrupt government. As political scientist who is verse in Marxist ideology and has memorised Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto from cover to cover, Dr. Ogbansiegbe is aware of the shortcoming of government in the developing countries, and sees unemployed graduates as potential revolutionaries. The heavily bearded man, who looks like the African reincarnation of Fidel Castro of Cuba, believes that the only means to overthrow a corrupt government is through violence and an act of terrorism. By giving different instances of revolution via terrorism like the Irish Republican Army in Ireland, Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya and other similar insurrection against Apartheid in South Africa that enabled black majority to rule. He succeeds in planting violence in the heart of the youngsters. Dr. Ahitophel Ogbansiegbe is gifted with oratory, and the manner he gesticulate while delivery his speech makes him an actor.

According to R. I. P., "...he had a way with words. He used words like a loaded pistol. He knew how to hit the target of your heart with his verbal bullets..." (38); no doubt his students love him. He is their role model and he uses them as a tool to target his political enemies who rigged him out of a gubernatorial election. He dreams of creating a state of anarchy using his political hammers and spanners. As a political mechanic, who was educated in the University of Moscow, in Russia, the heart of the former socialist republic where Marxist ideology was experimented, he is ideologically opposed to capitalism that supports accumulation of wealth, at the detriment of others. This is his ideas that can bring about change for a better future of the younger generation. He thus, inculcates in their mind the act of violence which can only be realised through terrorism, the negative implication of violence in the society that is in contrast to Esiaba Irobi's vision.

In the same vein, in *Hangmen Also Die*, the position of leadership has been high jacked by the old generation who do not have the interest of the people at heart. They are only skilled on how to siphon the common wealth of the people for their personal and family use. According to Acid, "the Constituent Assembly is filled with the faces of the same ancient chimpanzees" (46). The youths are not given opportunity to contribute their own quota to their own welfare. In the words of the suicide squad:

**R. I. P.:** We have no jobs.

**Acid:** Therefore we have no money.

**Dayan:** Which means we cannot marry.

**R. I. P.:** And consequently cannot have children.

**Chorus:** We are the rejects of the world.

**R. I. P.:** (*Violently.*) So, if today, we have turned to violence as the only weapon to redeem our destiny, redeem our fate, our future and our manhood. It is because... (46).

Despite the educational background of the youth, lack of job and marginalization reduce them to extreme penury. Wartimi Tamuno, who takes the gang name ‘Mortuary’ holds a first class degree in Statistics, but could not find a job after six years of graduation. Atiemie Waribo (Dayan) holds master degree in Political Science; Labomie Allagoa, also known as, Ayatollah Khomeini, has an LL.B degree and has been unemployed for five years; Tekena Iketubosin (Acid) has M.Sc. in Microbiology; and Konji Amakarama (Tetanus) is a qualified Mechanical Engineer. Same applies to the rest of the gang members.

Education is the best form of empowerment for youths; but this educational qualification could not secure a place for these youths in the society. When education is no longer capable of earning a living for the youths, it then stands in juxtaposition to what is meant to fulfil. Therefore, resulting to societal vices, such as, murderous vampires, hangmen and outlaws, whose only understanding for positive societal change is the act of violence, robbery and terrorism. Mortuary and Khomeini highlight this:

**Mortuary:** (*Demonstrating as he prowls.*) Yes, like hangmen we come, our wrists as ropes, our hands groping for your neck, our fingers itching for the grip on your neck...and once our talons find their target...

**Khomeini:** (*Wringing.*) We wring your neck like a chicken’s neck, yes, like a wet towel, (*through clenched teeth*) we twist and twist until the bone breaks behind the neck, and the spinal cord snaps behind the back, until it snaps, snaps like a twig between... (54).

It is this act of terror of the gang that attracts Dimeari despite his good upbringing as the son of the Prophetess Tamara, after years of being ‘successfully’ unemployed. He feels rejected by the society and empty. He wants to do something that would shake the world, something that will make the world realise he exists, something violent. The presence of such group in the society is not difficult for him to discover as he traces their hideout with ease. His examination as a successfully frustrated unemployed graduate and slim body earned him membership position among the Suicide Squad. This is as a result of the failure of the ruling elites to provide enabling environment, choices and opportunities for the progress of the youths and inclusion in the leadership positions. This portrays or represents state of the nation that breeds training ground for organised crime and reign of terror and anarchy.

Diversion of the state resources by the ruling class, lack of opportunities and leadership of exclusion creates an avenue for violence and terrorism to overthrow the epoch. Such deprivation is the way Fubara Igonikon (Accidental Discharge) is disengaged from the police force. After being recruited by the force with SSCE qualification, he proceeds to the University for first and second degrees. On returning to the force for promotion, D.S.P. gives reasons why he is discharge from the force:

**D.S.P.:** Because you are overqualified for this job.

**Discharge:** How?

**D.S.P.:** What am I? As I stand here so, what am I?

**Discharge:** D.S.P.

**D.S.P.:** What is my qualification?

**Discharge:** I don't know, Sir

**D.S.P.:** Fool! My qualification is G.C.E. Ordinary Level. 6 papers at 7 sitting!  
(*Laughs*) (81-82).

Fubara Igonikon becomes part of the killer squad not only because he is disengaged from the police force, but he is disengaged by someone who has not earned up to his own qualifications. The issues of having unqualified individuals in position of authorities and certificate forgery on the part of those in power are no longer news in Nigeria political space (*Premium Times*). The playwright is advocating for leadership switch in order for qualified individuals to shoulder the position of authorities. Similarly, one of Nigeria notable authors, Wole Soyinka, warns about negative implication of having unqualified persons in position of authority in *The Play of Giants*. The by-product of such deprivation is violence and terrorism. Khomeini echoes the vision of the suicide squad: "We are assassins, professional assassins, we live on blood" (80).

Another major cause of violence terror in the play is the corruption on the part of the leaders, and those holding the position of authority. One of such is Chief Isokipiri Erekosima, the Honourable Commissioner for Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs. The chief who is a thief believes that 'there is a thief in all of us'. According to Tamara the prophetess:

**Tamara:** 3 Million Naira, compensation money which the Federal Government gave to the citizens of Izon State, to balm our minds against the crude oil spillage which has ravaged our farms and wrecked our lives. This man (Chief Isokipiri Erekosima) seized it and is using it to crown himself today (80).

The chief is not only the Alfa and Omega of Izon State; he also hires seven fat witches from Bendel State to cover his criminal activities despite the havoc of oil spillage. One of such havocs is ruining the farmland, thus making it unproductive and blinding of Ibiaye which is the health implication of it. The activities of the multinational corporations ruining the environment at the detriment of the people's health without cleaning, is only normal in Nigeria. This is mostly done by oil spillage that destroys

aquatic habitat and gas that affect ozone layers which may have domino-effect on humans. Diverting the money meant for such cleaning or as compensation is tantamount to dehumanising the humanity in man and crime against humanity. The chief not only shares the money among those in position of authority that supposed to check his excesses and create an avenue for politics of inclusion, but backs his criminal behaviour with citations from *The Prince*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century political treatise written by Italian diplomat and political theorist, Niccolo Machiavelli. The treatise states that those who seek or are in position of authority does so for personal gain, and carefully consider the injuries they might do the people cumulatively so that they might win their favour in a long run. These are the injuries caused by the ruling class that deepened the inequality gap between the two classes resulting to reprisal attack through terrorism from the suicide squad.

Similarly, Osita Ezenwanebe addresses the same notion in her political drama, *Giddy Festival*; a microcosm of African political democratic experience centres on selfish political opportunism and assassination. The story centres on Chief Aggrandi, the main protagonist who is nominated as the flag bearer of the local government election under the platform of People Fortune Party (PFP). Having been aware of the level of political thuggery, assassinations, and depravity that characterised Nigerian political space, Osita's *Giddy Festival* uses the phenomenon to comment on the level of disorder and deterioration that often provide an avenue for frequent killing and instil fear not only in the minds of the political opponents, but also in the mind of the masses. The victim of such murder is dead body on a street of Jilanje, in Gabo which was carried out earlier by Ofong and Deje; the henchmen of chief Aggrandi. According to a resident of Gabo, Chief Aggrandi is given mandate by:

**Ifejika:** The kingmakers in this place, the royal fathers and mothers, the area boys and girls, the vigilante group, the party kingpins, the political godfathers and mothers, the supporters' club, the ethnic militia, the religious brotherhood and sisterhood, the fraternities and... (31).

This is the avenue that gives birth to violence and subsequent assassination in the play under the supervision of Aggrandi. It is important to note that the unemployed youths are being deprived of their place in the society, but instead hire as assailants to carry out such acts.

Another cause of violence is the high rate of poverty in Gabo. That is the reason when two residents of Gabo area Sese and Tiko, stumbled on a corpse on a street of Jilanje they focuses on robbing the dead body instead of reporting to the police or the local authority. This is noted in their conversation:

**Sese:** What business do I have with the man?

**Tiko:** The corpse?

**Sese:** You're mad. Open your eyes and see what you should see.

**Tiko:** Oh, the briefcase?

**Sese:** Good one. Isn't it?

**Tiko:** Sure. Sure.

**Sese:** (*Kicks the briefcase, out of the hand of the corpse.*) There.

**Tiko:** (*Goes and picks the briefcase, inspect it.*) Splendid. Italian stuff. Good leather, gold trimmings and.... (13)

The income gap between the rich and the poor is so wide that the two youngsters could rob the victim of political assassination of its possessions. *Giddy Festival* exposes societal decay in respect to sanctity of human life. Sese and Tiko represent the youths in any society that engage in social vice such as robbery, kidnapping and ritual killing and all sorts of violence to achieve their aim.

Similar violence often degenerates to extremism. It is that same inequality that Daniel E. Agbibo asserts that “have in part fuelled the rise of Boko Haram and the continuing conflict in the Niger Delta” (2). It can therefore be ascertain that, deprivation, Marxist ideology and corruption on the party of the ruling class has been responsible for continuous violence conflict and terrorism in Nigeria space. To nip the act of terror in Nigeria, not only corruption must be stamped out, but also the inequality gap must be reduced. This is achievable by creating an enabling environment and opportunities for the youth and leadership of inclusion.

### **War against Thought and Ideology**

The international community has been finding solution to end the act of terror in any form. The war against terrorism has been an on-going process right from the period of Anarchist (the first wave) to our time. After the assassination of then US President William McKinley in 1901, the war on terror and counter-terrorism became more urgent than never before. It was the first time states attempted to tackle terrorism globally. In the State of the Union Address on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1901 after the assassination of President William McKinley by an anarchist terrorist, The then United States President, Theodore Roosevelt states:

Anarchy is a crime against the whole human race; and all mankind should band against the anarchist. His crime should be made an offence against the law of nations, like piracy and that form of man-stealing known as the slave trade; for it is of far blacker infamy than either (Mannik 151).

In the same vain, the European nations signed an anti-anarchist protocol in 1904 that called for enhancement of international police cooperation and information sharing (Walls 23). But this attempt by states to wage war on terrorism failed because states were unable to forge consensus for joint action, which gave birth to second wave of terror also known as anticolonial wave. It was marked with the period where terrorists were mostly recognised as freedom fighters. But the third wave (new left) saw much more international collaboration in counter-terrorism activities. The UN adopted major conventions that banned hijacking, hostage taking and financing terrorist activities. But, these measures did not stamp out the act of terrorism, but instead, a more fundamentalist religious terrorism (the fourth wave) emerged. The event of 11 September, 2001, a century after the anarchist killed President William McKinley showed how the

perpetrators of the act, al-Qaeda were networked into international affiliations. Nine days after the attack on World Trade Centre the then US President George W. Bush addressed a joint session of Congress with the following words ‘Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated’ (Mannik 167). This pronouncement and the support of the international community led to the invasions and dethroned of Taliban ruled Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 under the leadership of a dictator Saddam Hussain. The invasions did not end terrorism, but instead resulted to counterinsurgencies.

Despite the fact that the sole architect of 11 September, 2001, Osama bin Ladin was later killed, it was not during the administration of George W. Bush and his killing did not stop subsequent attacks on US soil. This is because, since the attack on World Trade Centre, there have being series of terror attacks linked to al-Qaeda and its affiliations. Some of such attacks were the ones carried out by Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, an American-born convert to Islam on 1 June, 2009. Mohammad opened fire on an army recruiting office in Little Rock, Arkansas. He killed one soldier and wounded another. Muhammad, who was previously living in Yemen, claimed to be a member of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. More so, was the Boston Marathon bombing attack on 15 April, 2013. The perpetrators who are brothers learnt to make their bomb from the al-Qaida online magazine. On 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2017, a man drove a rented pickup truck into cyclists and runners on the Hudson River bike path on Manhattan’s lower west side, killing eight people and injuring 11. With these in mind, the war on terror is yet to be over. Despite US innovative technological and military prowess, they have not been able to end terrorism once and for all time.

Here in Nigeria, the fight against Islamic sect, Boko Haram has been so severe. Since 2009, the terror group has been carrying out various attacks on both the military and civilian. That is the reasons that President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration rank security as a major priority. In December 2015, after the renewed effort on counter-terrorism, the president claimed that the insurgent group has been “technically defeated”. But from then onward, hundreds of Nigerians have been killed in suicide attacks in coordinated attacks on communities in the North-East region, which proved that war on terror is far from being over. Still, on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2018, in his New Year broadcast to Nigerians the President insisted that Boko Haram has been defeated (*African News*). His claims came weeks after the approval of \$1 billion from the country’s excess crude account to fight the terrorist. The president’s claim does not mean Nigeria has made history by stamping out the act of terror and terrorist group from its soil. While other world leaders thorough out history called for renewed vigour on counter-terrorism, the president’s claim was not valid because many Nigerians continued to fall victim of the Islamic sect.

According to *Premium Times* of 3 August, 2018, at least two officers and 43 soldiers have been killed in Boko Haram attacks on military targets between 13 and 26 July, 2018 despite the presence of military special force tagged ‘Operation Lafiya Dole’. While the soldiers blamed the incidence on lack of equipment, Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, accused them of being cowardly. Does that mean that the war on terror cannot record any success? From the above explanation, it is important

to note that every terrorist organisation operates under a certain ideology. Boko Haram belongs to the fourth wave which exploits Islamic religious and other grievances to perpetrate their violence action on their targets. Similarly, the Suicide Squad hinges their ideology on Marxist theory of revolution, which is anchored on violence act of terror to revolt against unemployment, deprivation, leadership of exclusion, lack of opportunity for the youths and extreme poverty. According US National Security Strategy:

...terrorism is not the inevitable by-product of poverty. Poverty is a major cause of grievances, and three billion people are living on less than two Euros a day, this means that there is a potentially large number of people who might be recruited by radicals advocating the use of indiscriminate violence in pursuit of their aims (Mannik 168).

It is pertinent from this statement that the act of terror or the best form of counter-terrorism initiative is addressing issues that can lead to such grievances. It is Esiaba Irobi's vision, as contained in *Hangmen Also Die* that such grievances as applicable to the violence gang should be addressed with utmost urgency. If that is done, then it can be concluded that it is the best form of counter-terrorism applicable to Nigeria political space. On the same note, *Giddy Festival* addresses the issues of poverty and marginalisation in the society. Ofong takes the offer of not only a henchman for Chief Aggrandi; but he also serves as his human carriage during his campaign tour. At the end of the campaign tour, he shares his regret with his friend, Deje:

**Ofong:** Chief Aggrandi gave us nothing. Immediately after the campaign, they went in for a closed-door meeting. We waited for him patiently. The aroma food and drinks coming from the meeting filled the place... we begged for food or drink but nothing... we even ran after him, but nothing.

**Deje:** I knew it that is while I always prefer h.a.r.d jobs; h.a.r.d jobs that yield raw cash and no one can mess up with me. If I were there I would strike (53).

This ill treatment of the masses by the political elites often results to class struggle, then violence among the competing social classes. Chief Aggrandi belong to elite class; the 'haves' while Ofong and Deje belong to the 'haves not'. The conflict between the two classes often leads to violence and acts of terrorism. It is this kind of conflict between the political classes and the masses that degenerated to the birth of an Islamic sect in the North-Eastern part of the country. Chief Aggrandi in the *Giddy Festival* is likened to Chief Isokipiri Erekosima, the Honourable Commissioner for Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs in *Hangmen Also Die*. Both of them share the same qualities as corrupt political leaders that siphon the common wealth of the people for selfish gain. Thus, it is Osita Ezenwanebe's vision that unless there is a leadership switch and all forms of human exploitation of the masses is addressed; the act of violence terror cannot be nipped.

There seems to be no short-term solution to insurgencies or the best form of counterterrorism. Even when their leader is killed another leader will emerge. Because it is a battle of the mind and ideas, under the platform of religious belief, winning such battle does not depend on innovative military equipment and number of soldiers, it starts with the mind-set of the terrorist group and their ideological and religious believe. The fourth wave which Boko Haram belongs, exploits Islam as a bases for their operational guidelines. But it is important to note that religious group can exist for a long time and its ideology cannot easily be forgotten. However, there is hope and possible solutions for nipping any act of terror in Nigeria. This hope is not found in the military hardware, neither in the number of skilled military personnel. This hope is not found in monetary negotiation and exchange of terror captives with kidnapped victims. This hope is not found in using terrorism as an avenue to gain political scores; but it is found in the discovery of perceived grievances of the terrorist group and an avenue that gives rise to such grievances should be addressed. It is only then, we can end not only any form of violence and act of terrorism, but discover the humanity in ourselves.

### **Conclusion**

From the above enquiry, violence is as old as man, and conflict is found in every part of human existence especially in drama and theatre. But the act of terrorism with an intention of causing fear, destruction of lives and properties is a crime that dehumanises the humanity in our collective existence. This act is traced back to the period of anarchist, which was the first wave of terrorist act to modern period that is witnessing a much more fundamentalist religious extremism as part of the fourth wave. Terrorism can be carried out by individuals, groups or state actors to achieve their objectives, instil fear or for revenge. The terror act of 11 September, 2001, at the World Trade Centre in New York and consequent attack in Washington though not the first act of terrorism on record, show that non state perpetrators aggravated by religion can use violence to pursue their objectives.

Using Esiaba Irobi's *Hang Men Also Die* and Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*, as a benchmark and grounded on Karl Marx's historical materialism, it can be concluded that, deprivation, Marxist ideology and corruption on the part of the ruling class have been responsible for continuous violence conflict and terrorism in Nigeria space. To nip the act of terror on the bud in Nigeria, it is important to look at the avenue that gave birth to such act. It is Esiaba Irobi and Osita Ezenwanebe's vision that not only corruption must be stamped out, but also the inequality gap must be reduced, by creating an enabling environment and opportunities for the youths and minimising leadership of exclusion. That is the best form of counter-terrorism that can be used to nip the act of terror from the bud in Nigeria as a geopolitical space and to rediscover our humanity and peaceful coexistence.

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# **DRAMA AND COUNTER TERRORISM IN NIGERIA: THE EXAMPLE OF YERIMA'S *HARD GROUND***

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## **Abstract**

Nigeria, the most populated country in Africa, and the supposed giant of Africa is blessed with enormous mineral reserves, yet many Nigerians are yet to benefit from the dividends of her huge mineral resources, as the country's fragile democracy is challenged by a lot of problems, most of which are as a result of poverty, hunger and starvation. This has made the clamour for resource control a prominent issue on the front burners of social discourses, and has given birth to many forms of violence and terroristic activities in the country. In the same vein, drama serves as a powerful tool for entertainment, information and education, and a means by which man is warned against acts that impede his progress and development, as well as that of the society. The foregoing is the aim of this study as this research examines the role of drama in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria, using Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* as a case study. The study employs the descriptive and analytic methodology of the qualitative research method to realise set objectives, and observes that negotiation instead of violence is the best means to seek redress or resolve dispute. The study recommends that more plays that discourage terrorism and the use of violence by extremist groups to actualise their pursuits be written.

## **Introduction**

The Nigerian nation has been bedevilled by a lot of challenges that continue to threaten its peace and economic stability, despite its huge mineral resources and place as the giant of Africa. The increasing rate of poverty in the land has made the clamour for resource control a prominent issue on the front burners of social discourses. Some Nigerians, in reaction to the economic woes facing the country, have resorted to the use of arms and other terroristic activities to draw government attention to their plights, for example, the Niger Delta militancy/insurgence, the Boko Haram insurgence, and the most recent, the Herdsmen and Farmers conflict, amongst others, found in virtually every geo-political zone of the country, and the cumulative effects of these is stagnation in the socio-economic growth of the nation, and untold hardship on Nigerians.

In the case of the Niger Delta insurgence, one can say that their fight is for resource control. In this regard, Kimiebi puts forth that, "whereas the oil produced in the Niger Delta is the life blood of the Nigerian economy; oil has failed to translate to regional prosperity and development in the Niger Delta" (cited in Emasealu and Mark 2).

This has led the youths of the region to fight government forces, go into hostage taking, carry out lethal car bombings, sabotage oil installations, and so on. In the same vein, the Boko Haram insurgents, which are deeply rooted in religious fundamentalism, are a terrorist social movement meant to subvert the Nigerian system of government in the Northern part of Nigeria through unbridled religious dogma, unmitigated terror and criminality. According to Antigha,

At its outbreak, Boko Haram Insurgency represented what Combs describes as “as synthesis of war and theatre, a dramatisation of the most proscribed kind of violence – that which is perpetrated on innocent victims – played before an audience in the hope of creating a mood of fear, for political purposes (*vanguardngr.com*).

Antigha also opines that,

the strategic end state of the insurgency is the establishment of an Islamic State in the Sahel covering parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, in the likeness of what ISIS envisioned for Iraq and Syria. Without doubt, 2011-2014 was Boko Haram’s most active and successful years. During this period, the public lost confidence in the ability of the military to defend Nigeria’s territorial integrity (*vanguardngr.com*).

In the case of the Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers clashes, tracing the genesis of the conflict, Ahmed-Gamgum observes that insecurity in the context of herdsmen and farmers relations in Nigeria dates back to when in the first instance the Fulani began to feel insecure in their place of origin and began to search for solutions outside their place of origin. According to Ahmed-Gamgum, insecurity arose amongst the non-Fulani farming communities when the Fulani arrived their communities and engaged in activities that pointed to attempts at dislodging the indigenes of the communities from their natural rights as land owners. Culturally, Fulani herdsmen are nomadic livestock breeders and in pre-colonial times, their place of origin was the Sahel and semi-arid areas of Fouta Djallon Mountains in West Africa, but threat from climatic changes and population growth made them to move to the savannah and tropical forest regions of Southern West Africa and far Northern Nigeria. Their migration into far Northern Nigeria dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and after the Uthman Danfodio jihad, they began to integrate with the Hausa and non- Hausa ethnic groups of the middle belt, especially during the dry season, when the number and menace of tsetse flies are reduced in the middle belt of Nigeria. Ahmed-Gamgum further avers that whereas, on the one hand, crop cultivation and livestock farming are both agricultural activities among local communities for the purpose of food and protein for mankind, on the other hand, the nomads specialise in livestock breeding, particularly cattle breeding; without crop production (37).

In the view of Ahmed-Gamgum, differences in climatic conditions and changes in the North propelled herdsmen to move across regions, especially from the North to the Central and then Southern Nigeria to access better grazing resources in order to ensure

quality food security for their herds. This often occurs during crop cultivation season. While driving cattle across regions, sometimes, destruction of crops occur and becomes a source of conflict between farmers who claim customary right over land and herdsmen who are regarded as strangers. The introduction of the *Land Use Act* in 1978 by the Nigerian Government was to make it easier for non-indigenes of a particular area to apply and secure land on lease in their host communities, as well as provide opportunity for natives to apply and be given Certificate of Occupancy; to lay claim of the ownership of their ancestral lands. However, most Fulani herdsmen, who are used to migrating from one place to another, did not take advantage of this. As a consequence, they lacked where they could lay claim as their grazing routes and grazing lands. Their increasing movement from place to place in the eyes of the modern law amounted to trespass and encroachment of the properties of others.

Over the years, this brought conflicts of interest on land in some places. The Federal Government of Nigeria then identified areas to be known as grazing routes and reserves. This did not solve the problem because there was no compensation, as required by law to customary land owners, and herdsmen deliberately stray out of grazing paths into cultivated lands. Nevertheless, they co-existed and from time to time traditional rulers come in to adjudicate, to ensure that whoever was found guilty paid compensation. However, at the time, when there were wild animals, herdsmen carried sticks to defend themselves and their animals against wild animals, but they now carry sophisticated guns, not to attack animals but fellow human beings, even in the face of alternative peaceful dispute resolution methods. They even justify their carrying of guns; that it is for the protection of themselves and their animals against cattle rustlers (37).

Ogbeide recounts that until recently, the conflict and subsequent clashes were confined to the North Central zone of Nigeria, pitching the Berom farming community in Plateau State against the nomadic herders; but this has since spread to the North Central state of Benue, South East state of Enugu, South-South state of Delta and South West states of Oyo, Ondo and Ekiti, resulting in the loss of lives and properties. The massacre of some hundreds of people, destruction of properties and thousands of people internally displaced have become a usual occurrence in the affected communities (54). Mikailu adds that,

the continued effect of climate change on pasture lands also forced the Fulani herdsmen to move further southwards, in search of grass and water, and has widened the scope of the conflict with deadly incidents increasingly reported in southern parts of the country, raising fears that the violence could threaten the fragile unity that exists amongst Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups (cited in Ogbeide 54).

The Nigerian Government has at various times attempted to address the terroristic activities of these groups that have continued to destabilize the social dynamics of the nation, but all attempts have not yielded positive results. In a similar vein, the Niger Delta militancy has attracted a lot attempts by the Nigerian Government and concerned groups to restore peace to the Niger Delta region but these have not brought a

lasting solution to the problem of militancy in the region. The foregoing is the purpose of this study as this research examines the role of drama in the fight to counter terrorism and restore peace in Nigeria, using Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* as a case study.

### **Drama: A Definition**

The word 'drama' is a Greek word that means 'to do' or 'to act' (action). Action in this sense means imitation or mimesis. Drama, therefore, can be defined as the imitation of human action before an audience. Aristotle (384-322 B.C), in his *Poetics*, classified different kinds of poetry based on some features he believed were unique in their composition. For Aristotle, drama refers to poetic compositions that are acted before spectators in a theatre. According to Okoh, "the concept of mimesis is essential to the core meaning of drama, and for Aristotle, the element of imitation is inherent in man from childhood" (21). She further notes that "drama is also a method of expression for the playwright, who tries to give order and clarity to human experience. It can be presented as a dialogue either on stage, television, and radio" (Okoh 21). A play (drama) is simply a dramatic composition in the form of a scripted dialogue, made up of characters, which is meant to be performed on stage before an audience. Azunwo defines a play as, "a creative and an artistic letter composed by the supposed conscience of the theatre" (the playwright), "first and foremost to the director, actors, and other members of the production crew, informing them of his current ideological standpoint, vision and positive commitment to the development of his society" (52).

### **The Dramatist and the Society**

A dramatist is a person who crafts or writes plays. Another name for the dramatist is a playwright. The dramatist does not just write because he wants to express an idea, all too often plays are meant for the society. Plays reflect the tastes, attitudes, lives, anomalies, needs and aspirations of the society, and are written with the aim of informing, entertaining and educating the masses. Drama has been described as a mirror that reflects back society to itself. As such, the dramatist is a watchdog meant to observe, document, and warn society against inimical attitudes and behaviours that can stampede and impede its growth and development. Plays should engineer the people towards social change. Thus, drama should reflect the dominant worldview and lifestyle of the age in which it is situated, and provide tangible solutions to the societal problems of its time.

Over the years drama has been used by playwrights to make constructive statements on events in the society, so as to effect positive changes in man and the society. Eboh believes the dramatist is the gadfly God attached to the state to arouse, persuade and reproach it for good (108). The dramatist therefore acts as a watchdog of society as he uses drama as a tool to effect changes in his environment. For Obadiogwu, the dramatist aims to show his own stand in his society (112). The dramatist cannot only effect changes in the society by recreating these changes through play texts; he can also serve as a visionary who can predict the future by utilising recent experiences as perspectives on both the present and the future (Dandaura 179). Hope Eghagha, commenting on the role of the dramatist in Nigeria, submits that,

because popular theatre (drama) has the capacity to reach all strata of society using a simple language, a simple method, its outreach could be the tonic the nation needs for the change in values which both the leaders and followers of the country are currently clamouring for (210).

As such, “a dramatist is able to achieve his intended aim through his play because he is a member of the society” and “his artistic sensibilities are shaped and sharpened by the socio-economic contradictions and political happenings of his time” (Dandaura 179).

### **Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Nigeria**

The word terrorism refers to any use or threat of violence by a person or a group of persons to intimidate civilians or generate an atmosphere of fear for political or religious reasons. Majekodunmi observes that from the etymological concept, the word ‘terrorism’ comes from the Latin and French words: *terrere*, and *terrorisme*, meaning, “to frighten,” and “state rule by terror”, respectively. There is no generally accepted mode of operation of terrorists; also there exists no generally accepted definition among terrorism experts. The English word ‘terrorism’ was first recorded in English Dictionaries in 1798 as meaning “systematic use of terror as a policy.” The *Oxford Dictionary* still records terrorism as, “Government by intimidation carried out by the party in power in France between 1789-1994” (129-130).

According to Majekodunmi, Walter Laqueur, a renowned scholar of terrorism, contends that a comprehensive definition of terrorism does not exist nor will it be found in the foreseeable future. Terrorism can be explained as the use or threat of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting in opposition to established authority or not, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety or fear including effects in a target group larger than immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political or religious demands of the perpetrators. The critical elements here are violent activities intended to create an atmosphere of fear in order to further an interest (130). Whereas, Adeyemo argues that terrorism can be likened to genocide, and defines it as, “the deliberate and systematic destruction in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious or national group” (cited in Majekodunmi 130).

Steward observes that terrorism does not discriminate between races, cultures or faiths. So, pervasive is terrorism with its attendant casualties that it has become a growing scourge and threat to local and international peace and security. By whatever means it is carried out, acts of terrorism most times do not affect the enemy directly; rather, innocent victims are made to pay the unsolicited price of terrorist attacks. Such victimisation often fuels emotions that are capable of exaggerating perceptions about the degree of the attack via rumours and heightened fear that spreads like wild fire. The implication of the ensuing pervasive fear is the waning of public confidence in the government’s ability to ensure their security and the magnification of the feeling of vulnerability and insecurity to the joy of the terrorists. Victims of terrorist attack are, therefore, the necessary means to the ends of publicity and widespread anxiety (cited by Mohammed and Abdullahi 3). According to Jacob Omede and Andrew Abdul Omede, the people who embark on acts of

terrorism are known as terrorists. They identify the following as characteristics of terrorism:

- Use of unlawful violence, believing that violence will usher in a better system.
- Use of unlawful and assorted dangerous weapons.
- Motivated by goals that might be political, religious or ideological.
- Secretive in membership recruitment and locations of residence.
- Fewer in number comparable to the larger society they attack.
- Have strong will and could die for the cause they uphold.
- Most times, operate as syndicates.
- Derive financial and military support from national and international loyalists.
- They are militant; use coercion, intimidation and instill fear in people.
- Their tactics involve:
  - Suicide bombing, car bombing, rocket propelled grenades, assassinations, abductions and kidnapping, disguising and hijacking.
  - Their targets are extermination of human lives and destruction of properties. These are achieved by attacking:
    - Public squares, government buildings and installations, churches and mosques, schools, bridges, police stations, military barracks and installations as well as market squares and prisons to free inmates, particularly their members incarcerated (121).

As observed earlier, the Nigerian nation is challenged by terrorist activities that have created fear, suspicion and distrust amongst the many ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian polity. Edward advances that “ethno-religious cleavages created in the past, conditions that resulted in violent sectarian and inter and intra communal clashes in several parts of the country, from the civil war, which by far was the most, is recurring in this century”; and “Nigeria’s unity has always been fragile” (cited in Mohammed & Abdullahi 5). Already, prominent religious leaders have begun calling for the division of Nigeria along religious lines. In 2013, the President of CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria), Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor declared that Boko Haram is an organised attempt to foist Islam on the secular Nigerian state; a move which in his own words amount to “a declaration of Jihad against Christians” in the country (cited in Mohammed & Abdullahi 5). Udama identifies some kinds of terrorist activities in Nigeria, thus:

- *State Terrorism*: This is characterised by systematic and massive criminally repressive insidious policies, implemented by the State through its agencies or even direct attack on the citizens to instill fear or inflict pains or cause deaths.
- *Group Terrorists*: These are groups that carry out terroristic activities against the State for one reason or the other. Some of these terrorists are faceless and their motives are beclouded by uncertainty, while some are not and their motives are well known to the public (103-106).

In the same vein, there have been attempts by the Nigerian Government to counter the activities of terrorists in Nigeria. Counter terrorism refers to all attempts or strategies by the government to prevent and combat terrorism through the military, law enforcement, business, and intelligence agencies, including attempts to counter the financing of terrorism. According to the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) of Nigeria, counter terrorism is defined as “operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to terrorism” (NACTEST 1). It also defines insurgency as, “an organised armed struggle by a group aimed at weakening the authority of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in order to force a political change through the propagation of extremist ideology, under the guise of politico-economic marginalisation”; and counter-insurgency as “the range of military, political and socioeconomic measures adopted by a State in response to the outbreak of insurgency” (NACTEST 1-2). The NACTEST is organised around five work streams, each with its key objectives and success indicators. The five work streams are:

- *Forestall*: To stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- *Secure*: Strengthen protection capacity against terrorist attacks.
- *Identify*: Pre-emption through detection, early warning and ensuring that terrorist acts are properly investigated.
- *Prepare*: To mitigate the impact of terrorist attacks by building resilience and redundancies to ensure continuity of business.
- *Implementation*: A framework for the mobilisation of coordinated cross-governmental efforts (NACTEST 2-3).

However, in spite of all these measures, the fight against terrorism in Nigeria has remained one of the biggest challenges threatening the country’s peace and stability. The Nigerian Government still faces a lot of dilemmas in its fight against terrorism.

### **Synopsis of *Hard Ground***

The play chronicles the life of Nimi, an eighteen year old boy, a militant, who drops out of school and takes up arms to emancipate his people. Things go bad when the table is turned against him, Nimi is accused of masterminding the deaths of the Don’s boys, his Master, and for this reason the Don is after Nimi’s life. His parents, Mama and Baba pay for his ransom. Mama, Baba and Nimi’s uncle, Inyingifaa, enquire from Nimi the real nature of what happened in the creek. Nimi affirms that he is innocent and accuses Kingsley, a Reverend Father, of revealing the secret that led to the death of the Don’s boys.

Alabo and Tonye, the chiefs of Nimi’s community and a crowd of people come to honour Nimi with gifts and drinks, for his efforts in fighting for the rights of the people. Alabo is disappointed when Nimi tells him that they want a revolution. Alabo tells Nimi that the world does not listen to young men in headbands, with AK47 guns from the swamp. Alabo leaves in disappointment while Tonye calls Nimi their new hero, Mama shouts at the villagers and they exist. Inyingifaa brings news that the Don has

agreed to see Nimi, after which Nimi collapses from the effects of a poisoned drink given to him by chief Tonye, while Mama is overtaken by an epileptic attack.

Tingolongo, a fearsome masquerade comes to take Nimi's life, Nimi pleads and Tingolongo warns him of his wicked acts against humanity. Nimi asks for forgiveness and swears to change. Inyingifaa brings news that the Don gave orders that Pikibo, Nimi's girlfriend, who is pregnant for Nimi be killed with the child for revealing the secret that led to the death of the Don's boys. Nimi, angered by this, decides to go back to the jungle and avenge the deaths of Pikibo and his unborn child. Father Kingsley reveals that the Don would be visiting and Mama tells Nimi that his father, Baba, would not be there to meet with the Don as he does not trust what would happen when he (Baba) meets with the Don face to face, and so he leaves money with Mama, instructing that the Don be entertained properly. Nimi says that his father has failed him and decides to kill the Don by himself. The Don visits, Nimi strikes him and discovers that the Don is Baba (his father), he screams at this realisation, while Mama collapses from the shock.

### **Counter Terrorism in *Hard Ground***

Counter terrorism as defined earlier, refers to all strategies adopted by the government and interested parties; including theatre artists to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to acts of terrorism. This study will however be limited to the role of drama in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria, using Yerima's *Hard Ground* as the primary text for analysis. This study will attempt to examine the solution provided by the playwright to counter, discourage and fight terrorism in Nigeria. However, the focus is on the causes and effects of the Niger Delta militancy, which is the thematic thrust of the play.

The first scene of the play begins with Nimi, the main character, an eighteen years old Niger Delta militant, whose life is in danger because the Don, his boss, has placed a death sentence on him, after he was accused of masterminding the deaths of his colleagues in an operation that saw them in open confrontation with the Police. His father, Baba, his uncle, Inyingifaa, enquire from him to know what really happened at the camp, and who revealed the secret about their operations to the Police, having paid a fee to rescue him from those who want to kill him, especially the Don, because they feel he betrayed them. Nimi speaks thus:

**Nimi:** I did not ask anyone to rescue me. Now, I shall be labelled a vulture. And any child with a knife can butcher me, tear me apart, or even hang me by the neck till life drips out of my body like river water, and I shall be left to die a slow and painful death. Ha, Ibinabo! They should have left me to die with my friends for the sake of the land. Huum, I smell now, like a bad rotten fish, I smell. Tamunoe!... I smell the stench of a coward in the swampy forest of green leaves and black oily soil. I smell. They shall smoke me out like they do all vultures. They shall track me down and steadily, I will be chased like a trapped rabbit. They shall fling me to the wolf boys who will spit on me first, like hungry crocodiles, their watery fangs shall await the bitterness of my flesh. Oh god! Why did they rescue

me? I should have been allowed to be shot and die for the glory of the land like my six brothers...the true warriors of the land (Yerima 9).

The above lines reveal the wild, animalistic, savage and gruesome nature of the Niger Delta militants and their lives in the creeks. Nimi knows that his life is in danger because of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of his fellow militants, and as their leader, he laments the impending consequences. We also learn that Nimi is called the Scorpion in their camp, which is typical of militants to use names of wild animals to identify themselves. Baba informs Nimi that 20 people were killed in the camp and everyone is pointing accusing fingers at him. From the words of Mama, Nimi's mother, we learn that Nimi was sent at a young age to the village to learn their language, so that he would be brought up properly, but Nimi ended up joining a militant group, which is common of most militants. Some of them drop out of school at a tender age to embrace militancy as a source of livelihood. Nimi defends his choice of joining militancy thus:

**Nimi:** There are younger boys and girls than me in the struggle. Children who believe in the cause. First, you listen to what the elders say about the struggle. Even when in primary school. You live in pain, and then it sounds right to join the struggle, first as a boy of a group, then as the eye or spy. By the time you are half way through primary school, you carry guns for the boys, and by the time you are eleven, in these days of automatic guns, you become an expert. You see people die every day. Either of hunger or just death, so it means nothing to you... (Yerima 11-12).

It is typical of Niger Delta militants to operate and justify their actions based on extremist ideologies in their clamour for resource control. They believe that fighting the government and foreign nationals through violence, is the only way for them to be heard and their goals met. This is displayed in scene two when some Niger Delta chiefs and people come to thank Nimi with gifts for his fights in the so-called Niger Delta struggle. One of the chiefs addresses Nimi:

**Alabo:** (*A well-dressed chief is standing addressing Nimi. The others look on, clapping.*) We are happy we met you at home this morning, this means Tamuno is with us. My son told us what you have done for the dream state, and how you have saved him on several occasions. I myself wanted to meet you for a proposition. To this effect, I decided to bring this little token of my gratitude. (*He hands him an envelope of money. The others clap at the point of the presentation. Nimi collects it.*) (Yerima 33).

Nimi tells Alabo that whatever he and his boys did was for the good of the people. He thanks him for the gifts and says the struggle continues. Another chief, Tonye, speaks to Nimi:

**Tonye:** It was the way you handled the removal of Chief Tomfort that amazed us all. He was a middleman who enriched himself rather than taking care of his people. As long as people like him were the power brokers, there was no future for the youths (Yerima 33).

The above statements justify why politicians are one of the targets of militants because they pretend to speak for the people with the government, but only use this as a means to siphon public wealth for personal aggrandisement; leaving the masses impoverished. Most of them even buy arms which they give to small boys to fight and die, protecting them (politicians), while they send their children abroad. Nimi, now tipsy from the effect of the drink given to him; as part of the gift items brought by the Chiefs, speaks of their activities as militants:

**Nimi:** (*Takes a sip.*) I was a little man in trenches, planning the attacks of blocking the oil wells in trenches, finding how well to kidnap Whitemen, explorers of our nation state, and making their hearts feel our pains. Little man, me? They dress in fine clothes at weekends in the cities after exploiting our oil, dancing to town in their helicopters and jeeps, to exploit our women and girls. Me, a little man? No more!...(Yerima 37).

Speaking of their anger against politicians, Nimi says:

**Nimi:** They created us. They gave us the reason to find our place... First we were errand boys, and so we got guns and money. We started to ask questions, they had no answers. We all knew what they looked like before they got into power. We dumped them. They gave us no respect, because of the crumbs they give us while they keep the chunk. Now we listen only to the people. We fight only for ourselves. Our lives in our pockets. Our songs are for ourselves, not for any hero who feels we smell of poverty. (*He breaks into a war song and dances.*) Oh, my blood boils, I long for the smell of the swamp. Breaking up this country is our next agenda (Yerima 37).

Nimi's submission underscores a major characteristic of terrorists, which is to topple government, undermine its authority, engineer civil war or influence regime change. Chief Alabo tells Nimi that he believes in the Niger Delta cause and wants to put money into it, but asks Nimi if they will succeed. Nimi tells him that they will succeed more if he gives them more money, which they would use to buy more weapons, employ more boys, get more gadgets, feed the poor, and he (Alabo) shall be a great donor, a humanitarian, a philanthropist and a fervent believer in the Niger Delta cause. He will have their protection, and no man, born of man can harm him. Nimi's adds that:

**Nimi:** As long as people all over the world have started talking about it, then we have started to succeed. For now, this is the only way we know how to achieve what we want. Shed our blood and shed theirs too...(Yerima 38).

Chief Alabo is disappointed and he responds to Nimi:

**Alabo:** Have we not learnt anything? We must go beyond blood, blood, blood. That was why I turned to you when I was told about you. I thought you would be our new source of hope. Now I am confused. You cannot always wait to be wasted. How many more great men, men of vision must we lose? Death is not working. The world does not listen to young men in head bands, with AK47 guns, in the swamps. They will call them terrorists, guerrilla fighters, and both words mean killers, not heroes to them (Yerima 38).

Chief Alabo later leaves in disappointment. His opinion, which represents the authorial voice, is a clear condemnation of violence as a means of seeking redress. The scene later ends as Inyingifaa comes to inform Nimi and Mama that the Don is coming to see Nimi tomorrow night, and urges them to prepare for his visit. Coincidentally, Mama is under an epileptic attack, while Nimi collapses from the effect of a poisoned drink, which one of the Chiefs gave him. This further complicates the plot and also accentuates the reason why the Niger Delta militants do not trust traditional rulers and politicians.

Chief Alabo's position is further supported in Scene Three, when Tingolongo, a fearsome masquerade, representing the gods, dances in, while Nimi is in a trance, and warns Nimi to stop his terroristic activities and the killing of innocent souls. Tingolongo recounts how Nimi and his boys killed two men in its shrine, who had ran in for protection, burning them alive. It tells Nimi that they have desecrated its shrine. Nimi begs Tingolongo to spare his life, and says the Don, who they regard as their god, calls men vultures. Nimi and Tingolongo retell the gruesome deaths the men suffered in the hands of Nimi and his boys:

**Nimi:** We did not want to kill them in the shrine. We drove them until they ran in, after two days they got hungry, and one sneaked out to look for food. The boys caught him, and hacked him to death, removing his head from behind as he sped. In the wildness, my boys ran into the shrine, pulled out the second man.

**Tingolongo:** The way you killed him offended even the gods.

**Nimi:** A stick was pushed through his anus until it came out in his bowels. We then dragged them back into the shrine, and burnt them. It seemed the best way to dispose of their bodies at the time. Forgive us, oh great one, it was the struggle (Yerima 45-46).

Tingolongo tells Nimi that the Niger Delta struggle will take them all if they do not allow the heartbeat of their brother control their hot blood. It asks Nimi if they are sincere to each other and the cause, and the people, and says:

**Tingolongo:** ...The gods need the people! When you kill them all, who will worship us? Who will pour libation at the shrines? Who will sing our praises? Huum? You have become a disease which robs the children of the swampy fields of their future, instead of giving them life. Childish fool! (Yerima 48).

Nimi begs for forgiveness as Tingolongo says it is tired of taking innocent souls, cut in their primes in the name of a foolish struggle and leaves sparing Nimi's life. After this, Nimi sees a woman carrying a child. She is wrapped in a white cloth stained in blood. She walks close to him and reveals her face. Nimi screams when he realises it is his girlfriend Pikibo, and wakes up from the dream. At the same time, Inyingifaa brings news that they have found the vulture in the camp, and it was a Police spy living in the camp with Nimi. He adds that the Don gave order for it to be killed, as they first hung it by the neck with a string of wire, after which they cut its skin, slicing it out of the body, piece by piece, so that it could feel the pain of all the lives it had sold out to die. He also adds that the vulture was pregnant, and since the child of the vulture is also a vulture, they cut out the unborn child and beheaded it. Nimi later finds out that the vulture and the unborn child are his girlfriend Pikibo and his unborn child. He screams and eventually collapses at the knowledge of this reality. This reveals not only the brutality of militants and their unforgiving nature, but also lets us know that the wicked also cry. Nimi, who has been killing others without remorse and mercy, has been made to taste and feel the pains and brutality he has been inflicting on others.

In Scene Four, after confessing to Father Kingsley, his father's brother, and asking for forgiveness for wrongly accusing him of being the spy who gave information to the police that led to the deaths of his boys, Nimi decides to kill the Don. The final scene showcases the Don's visit, with Nimi slitting his throat in a swift attack, only to realise that the Don he has killed is his father, Baba. His mother collapses because of the shock of this reality. This final scene further reiterates Chief Alabo's warning and that of Tingolongo that violence is not the best option to seek redress. Nimi ends up losing all the things he cherished the most— his girlfriend Pikibo, his unborn child, his father, and his colleagues killed in the raid by the Police. Amidst these, he also lost his peace from the moment he enrolled into militancy; suffering from psychological tortures and the nightmares of dead souls, and he may likely lose his mother, who may not live long after realising that her son killed her husband right before her eyes.

Although Nimi succeeded in killing his arch enemy, the Don, the rippling effects of this patricide will live with him for the rest of his life. The play therefore ends on the note that, "he who lives by war, would die by war." In the play, all those who were directly or indirectly involved in militancy lost one thing or the other, which shows that militancy may bring some rewards, but the losses outweigh the gains. The play further tells us that the enemy of our peace is ourselves, close to us or within us. The Don, who

was after Nimi's life, whom we thought was somebody far away, was his own father. What an irony! It also points to the insincerity, greed and distrust on the part of the Niger Delta militants, as one can find many breakaway militant groups, springing out on a daily basis, all claiming to be fighting for the Niger Delta cause. More like the case of a house that is divided against itself, it cannot stand. Furthermore, because of the several terrorist groups that claim to be part of the Niger Delta struggle, like a faceless beast, the government is often confused on which group to engage with, in trying to work out modalities for negotiations and peace.

### **Conclusion**

Terrorism is now a global issue and a threat that challenges world peace and stability. World governments have adopted and are rethinking new strategies to counter the activities of terrorists and Nigeria as a nation is not left out in this fight. All with the aim of creating a country and a world where the lives and properties of people are secured, which is necessary for man to thrive, and to ensure the peaceful co-existence of the members of the human community as they interact with one another. Terrorist groups may sometimes appear faceless but are not, because they are organised under clearly defined structures of leaderships and sponsors. While the pursuits of some terrorist groups may appear good, the means to attain or actualise these pursuits is where the problem lies, because of the violent, extremist and anti-government ideologies that govern their operations.

To win the fight against terrorism is one of the top agenda of the Nigerian government, and in realising this objective, it has adopted a lot of counter terrorism strategies through such agencies as the military, law enforcement, business and intelligence agencies, in order to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to terrorism, but the fight is far from over. In the same vein, drama exists to entertain, inform, and educate man and the society; as such, it discourages man from acts that are inimical to his progress, and encourages those that will ensure his survival, growth and development in the society. The foregoing is the aim of this study as this research has examined the role of drama as a counter terrorism tool in Nigeria, using Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* as a case study.

The study observed that negotiation instead of violence is the best means of seeking redress and settling dispute. The study recommends that more plays that discourage terrorism and the use of violence by extremist groups to actualise their pursuits be written. These plays should not only be written, but should be performed for the Nigerian audience to see and learn from.

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# COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ACCULTURATION IN YERIMA'S *HEART OF STONE* AND *PARI*

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## **Abstract**

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o says, the writer, "must be a writer in politics". This is an authoritative positioning, also in line with the Marxists' maxim that the writer, in the arts and in the theatre more particularly, must be read, or seen to be contributing committed and concerted commentaries to the day-to-day socio-political issues prevalent in their geo-political environment. Against this background, the typical contemporary Nigerian dramatists stand out in their commentaries through their works, toward the social, economic, political and communal acculturation and reengineering of the Nigerian space. This paper examines the themes of anti-terrorism and socio-political acculturation in Ahmed Yerima's *Heart of Stone* and *Pari*, against the background of the overwhelming national challenge of growing insurgencies, terrorism, and impunities, in various parts of the Nigerian geo-political space. One-on-one interviews, case study analysis and focused group discussions, are largely employed, and data collected, subjected to content analysis. The selected Yerima's works are instructively contributory to the socio-political acculturation and conscientisation of the Nigerian polity against the ills of terrorism and growing insurgencies in the society.

## **Introduction**

From the pre-colonial days the Nigerian nation, like any other nation in other parts of Africa and indeed, the world over, has been bedevilled by one form of civil crisis or the other: inter-tribal and boundary rivalries, civil protests against colonial or local authorities, struggle for independence, and religious conflicts that sometimes turned uncontrollably violent, are a few cases in point. The immediate post-independence political intra and inter-party conflicts also took their tolls on the nation's unity, peace and tranquility which eventually degenerating into the major Nigerian Civil War in the late 1960s; and then of course, the subsequent political crises that birthed various military interregnum, and then, the era of bomb-blasting in the anti-military intervention days of NADECO are all terror testimonials of varying proportions that have been a prevalent intrusion in the development process of the Nigerian nation. Incidentally, the situation has not abated since then. In fact, colonial complexities have not made the situation better as the neo-colonial structures that took the place of what the imperialist left behind became an off-shoot of new and exacerbated forms of civil and violent terror crises.

According to Akinola, some key contributors to the various crises in most African countries, beyond the issues of ethnicity, are

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

The crises have however manifested in divers forms such as large scale armed robberies, high-profile kidnapping, oil bunkering and hostage taking of oil company nationals, religious intolerance-induced violence reminiscent of ethnic cleansing and genocide, which finally birthed the dare-devil boko-haram insurgency. This has also brought about the regime of suicide-bombing and massive bombing of public institutions and buildings, market places, religious worship places even while worshipers are gathered therein. This had been inter alia, alien to the Nigerian society.

Nigerian dramatists have over the period, showed their concern and empathy with these terror incidences that have bedevilled the pre and especially, post-colonial Nigerian State. From socio-political debacles, ethno-religious conflicts to economic doldrums, from military interregnum to the civil society and mass protests, various Nigerian playwrights have captured these moments through various approaches and styles of dramatic presentation and representation. This is in tandem with Ngugi's posturing in believing that a writer must be a writer in politics. He posits that:

a writer responds, with his total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, he registers, with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society (Ngugi 51).

Over the time, the dramatists have continued to interrogate the contradictions and imbalances in the society through their works.

It is against this background also that Ahmed Yerima represents the Nigerian crises and terror incidences by way of socio-political and civil commentaries, historical narratives and sometimes, satirical parodies of the status quo. This is his medium of conscientising the general polity comprising of the authorities who advertently or inadvertently create the background environment for the crises, the perpetrators of the terrors who on their own take advantage of the situations created for them, and ultimately, the direct and indirect victims of the insurgencies. Yerima has very creatively been able to graphically capture the various essences of these insurgencies in various areas of the nation chief of which are: the insurgencies arising from the oil crises in the Niger Delta, as illustrated in his *Little Drop* and *Hard Ground*, and that of the boko haram in the Northern part of Nigeria, as graphically illustrated via his *Heart of Stone* and *Pari*.

This paper interrogates the theme of anti-terrorism and socio-political conscientisation and advocacy particularly in Yerima's *Heart of Stone* and *Pari*. It looks at the extent to which the plays illustrates, represents, parodies and tacitly conscientises against the issue of mindless violence, high-profile kidnapping, and mass destruction of innocent lives and properties in the guise of unguided religious biases, social discontent, and political marginalisation on one hand, and their attendant ill-consequences on the ordinary citizenry who becomes direct victims of these onslaughts, on the other hand. In *Heart of Stone* and *Pari*, Yerima, through the model of realism, provides a succinct understanding to the psychological and sociological implications of the boko haram insurgencies and faith-induced mayhems on its direct victims, relations and the entire nation at large, therefore confronting the nation with the sole option to jointly condemn the acts regardless of religious, tribal or socio-political sentiments or rationalisation.

### *Heart of Stone*

The plot of *Heart of Stone* is built around the character, Musa who incidentally gets caught in the complexities of religious conflict of beliefs and intolerances that exist in the Nigerian nation especially in the Northern part. Musa epitomises a young adult Muslim adherent and bigot whose initially subtle but eventual violent indoctrination, brain-washing and convictions in the Islamic faith engages him like a magnetic force toward the blinded genocidal adventure against innocent Christian adherents which happen to include those of his kith and kin, through suicide-bombing. Incidentally, he is part of the secret plotting and eventual execution. In the process, members of his household including all the guests and celebrants of the Church marriage solemnisation event of his ex-fiancée, groom, ministers and all, perish. Only his present fiancée, Amina and his grandmother, Kaka Patu, escape death because of their unplanned absence from the bombing scene. Musa vacillates at the last minutes and runs away therefore narrowly escaping death by death by the suicide bombing mechanics to which he had enrolled. He however is arrested in the end and still eventually destroys himself through suicide by the ingestion of rat poison in his detention cell at the point he is to be taken away to be executed at the firing squad.

The play's opening, though a sub-plot, provides a background understanding to the network of the family relationship surrounding the play's main tragic character, Musa. Yerima, through this opening sub-plot, explores the sub-theme of feminine gender marginalisation in the typical African traditional setting through the dialogue between Kaka Patu, Musa's maternal grandmother, and Achief, Musa's paternal uncle. Regardless of Kaka Patu's courageous assertiveness of her feminine authority, rights and privileges in the family, Achief still brings to bear, the relegated second-rate position impression the typical African men place their women in the traditional family setting, even to the point of questioning the ancestral rights of Seluma – Musa's late mother and Patu's own daughter:

**Patu:** But not with my daughter. She is not happy. And I suppose now dead, she is one of our ancestors.

**Achief:** Is she? You cannot say that. She was a daughter in this family. A mere vessel. But she tried, at least, she gave us a son.

**Patu:** So, my daughter does not qualify? Now she is just a common vessel, even though she is buried in your ancestral land. The family black stone rests on her grave like any other member of this family but she is not an ancestor. She cannot share in the goat they eat and wet her throat with the *burukutu* offerings because she is just a common dead woman vessel.

**Achief:** Ah ah! I did not say so...

**Patu:** No wonder she cried like a baby in my dreams, her shroud stained, cheated even in the land of the dead. No wonder!

**Achief:** Woman, you try my patience.... Keep to your part of the family duties. You are our wife.... When your husband died, I told you to take one of his brothers and marry him. Did you? ... You felt too good for me, so you interpreted our tradition to suit your selfish purpose. See what you have become, a wasted, spent old widow, untouched, crying all over the place seeing ghosts in broad daylight. Um (Yerima 12, 13).

The play reverberates with the hate-temperament and socio-religious frustrations of Musa and his clandestine cohorts. He demonstrates this hatred and frustration towards the Christian sect even amongst his own kin when he storms out of the marriage event preparation of his ex-fiancée, Gladys, because of his misunderstanding and misrepresentation of their songs. This is illustrated in his dialogue with Amina, his fiancée:

**Amina:** Musa, why? Why did you leave that way? You got everybody worried.

**Musa:** You heard the pastor, didn't you?

**Amina:** I did. But what did he say? It was a prayer, Musa. What is happening to you? Why?

**Musa:** You heard the song? Didn't you?

**Amina:** Yes and what about it?

**Musa:** Who do you think is the Satan who fell into the smelly gutter of well?

**Amina:** No one, just Satan. Musa, it is a song.

**Musa:** A song, eh? Satan don fall for gutter, march am, march am. That's me. That's us. The song is saying that all Muslims are siblings of Satan, who should be trampled upon. We? Who did we ever hurt? I mean who are the peace-loving cursed docile illiterates? Us!...

**Amina:** Us?

**Musa:** Yes... us Muslims. All their songs... all their prayers insult us. They brand us as the children of the most evil spirit, the devil. Shetani! They want hell fire to burn us to smithereens. And yet they want us to be one. To be friends. They say we worship the same God. How can? I swear I will not go for the wedding if this is the kind of songs they will sing at

the wedding. Even their prayers are so militant, aimed at us described as blind ‘gambari’, beggars’ children of the devil (Yerima 38, 39).

Musa’s pent-up hatred and dastardly insurgent mayhem activities are further exposed through Kaka Vero’s dialogue with him when he storms out:

**Vero:** ...When Gladys came home one rainy night crying, saying that you had broken off your engagement to her because she was your sister, I knew the reason was that you had become the pure believer and suddenly we had become filthy kaffirs to you. Yes?

**Musa:** Yes, Kaka.

**Vero:** The sad experience broke Gladys’ heart. I sent her to live in Abuja with our relatives. And now she has been able to forget. She has met a man. Her type. Please let her go.

**Musa:** Yes, Kaka she can. I have no objections at all.

**Vero:** So when the prayers started, and you looked down at the kneeling couple and you walked out, I knew that knowing a little about how related we were, was dangerous for the soul. I will not rest well in my grave if I don’t tell you... when you became a teacher in a Koranic school, and suddenly we became dirty pigs... unbelievers in your sight. From the day I saw you as a little boy join a group of Almajiri to force a car driver to a stop and with your mouths you drew fuel from his car after beating him up for refusing to recite the Fathia; and as I watched, it first appeared like play to me, but in a frenzy of madness, you all ran towards our church, poured the petrol under the doors while the other wild boys broke the church windows and threw in burning rags into it... our eyes met, in one flash, I saw those red beady eyes of stones...

**Musa:** I am sorry. It was what we were told to do. The Ustaz had said Allah had decreed it. We were used...

**Vero:** When my maternal cousin’s house, Bitrus house was burnt in Koghum village in Wang District of Jos, with all five members of his family burnt alive, again, it was another trip of madness. Millions have died after

**Musa:** I am sorry.

**Vero:** The very words the political and religious leaders said...We have never spoken about it until tonight. But I always knew that there was some seething anger burning in you in your quietness. Your deceitful gentle nods. And what happened tonight...

**Musa:** Tonight? Yes, speak, Mother

**Vero:** Confirmed my fears. As I watched you stare at us with those same eyes that saved me in the church hidden by the frightening beard, and the redness of your eyes, and as you looked at the pastor as he prayed, I knew that the playful madness was back again.

**Musa:** Yes... (Yerima 41, 42).

Yerima explores the theme of blind hates and religious intolerance resulting from tribal and religious stereotyping, high-profile hypocrisy amongst the privileged middle and upper classes of the religious and political leadership. These are the major sources of crises, insurgency, uprising and socio-political discontent amongst minority tribes and general masses in the polity. This is given breadth in the expressions and narrations of Musa when he is finally incarcerated and waiting for his execution. His dialogue with Sheik Sani, the Koranic School teacher and Chief Imam, speaks clearly:

**Sani:** To which God have you just prayed?

**Musa:** To the one true God, Allah,

**Sani:** Then what are you doing here.... What are you doing here in prison, praying to the one true God? The Police Commissioner called me. He asked me to speak with you.... They want to know if that is what I taught you in my Koranic school.

**Musa:** And what did you say to them, Sheik? That you taught me all this?

**Sani:** I denied it vehemently...

**Musa:** You denied me, too?

**Sani:** Not so bluntly... but yes. As a man of God, I have a lot at stake. As Chief Imam of the State, a lot of responsibility is placed upon my shoulders.

**Musa:** ...I am sorry Sheik Sani...my great teacher (Yerima 54).

In the subsequent lines, Musa in response to the Sheik's probing for his gang's reasons for going overboard, goes ahead to express his discontentment, disappointment and a sense of betrayal, which he and his cohorts feel, about their leaders:

**Sani:** What happened to you? What happened to the best boy in my Koranic school?

**Musa:** He grew up. And as he grew, so did his perception about life. He started to see and feel things differently. He no longer believed those little stories about right and wrong, and how Allah lived in Heaven. And how piety guaranteed us a ticket to paradise. He became amazed at the capacity of man to be evil, and wondered if God indeed lived with us on earth anymore. He grew up, Mallam, seeing the dark hearts of men...

**Sani:** You are angry.

**Musa:** I am, Mallam. I should be! I must be!

**Sani:** Why?

**Musa:** I stand before you a used tool for dredging water from the earth. A dreg of my grandmother's *burukutu*. A spent spirit, uncared for even by faith itself, and a living carcass ready to meet his maker.

**Sani:** I sense bitterness, a deep, seething melancholy in your words. May Allah...

**Musa:** *Kai, Rankaidede.* Don't say one more word. It is better for me to die with you as my Koranic school teacher in my head. Rather than see pretension stand before me. You see why we kill even our own?

**Sani:** What?

**Musa:** Why even those who call themselves spiritual fathers, leaders of the *ja ma'a*, those who wrapped their heads with well-shaped *Rawani*, with well-manicured fingers and beard, and know the Holy Qur'an by heart, you see why we do not spare them in the judgement of death?

**Sani:** No.

**Musa:** Because it is better to be truthful with God. Hypocrites all! Dukaku! (Yerima 54, 55, 56).

Why not justifying Musa and the hate-infested arsons, genocides and insurgencies of his lots, Yerima through these lines however unveils the underlying roots of the uncouth vexations and heinous activities part of which is the hypocrisies and pretensions of the religious leaders.

Meanwhile, a violent-end prediction has always hung on Musa's head right from the deathbed last words of his great-grand father, as he is told through his own uncle, Achief and Musa's own late mother. in her appearance in Musa's grand-mother's dreams. Like an albatross and the sword of debacle, Musa deftly and, ironically dances toward that dismal end. So he does not take heed to any wise counsel that should lead him to a rather peaceful and worthy life. He evades all attempts by his elder kin, including that of his fiancée – Amina, to advertently and hopefully save his soul from the imminent devastation that hangs over his head.

Through some strategic characters in *Heart of Stone*, namely: Kaka Patu and Kaka Vero, as chief amongst the protagonists, and Achief, Musa and Sheik Sani as the antagonists, Yerima employs the realistic style in laying bare the day to day hard and bitter socio-cultural realities that dominate the Nigerian polity, especially as they relate to the predominant mayhem caused by the dreaded religious insurgents and deviants, the underlying ethno-religious factors that fan the ember of violence and its attendant consequences manifested in unjustifiable loss of innocent lives and properties. *Heart of Stone* is a lesson in advocacy and acculturation in a national anti-hate, anti-religious bigotry, anti-ethnic and anti-religious intolerance, and of course, anti-terror campaign.

Yerima in *Heart of Stone* maintains poetic justice in that he sufficiently ensures that the vices of insurgencies, terror and attendant bitterness and hatred are presented in very clear terms as evil to society. Musa's defence in his dialogue with Sheik Sani in detention, not withstanding, he in the end at least shows remorse and some humanity through his fear of death, which he himself had inflicted on others so wilfully and unemotionally. He evades death by the same suicide bombing he had been part of plotting, and eventually subscribes helplessly to the same suicide by rat-poison rather than dying by the more violent state-sanctioned death by firing squad. Therefore, this paper argues that, *The Heart of Stone* is a classic representation of a realistic advocacy against religious bigotry, intolerance and ultimately, insurgency.

## *Pari*

*Pari* is Ahmed Yerima's profound realistic statement again, another contribution to the anti-terrorism advocacy in Nigeria, very pertinent in the campaign in showcasing the psychological effects and tolls of the senseless activities of the boko haram religious insurgents in the mindless mass kidnap of hapless school girls from the haven of their secondary school. A case in point largely referred as the creative raw material for *Pari*, is the kidnap of the Chibok school girls in a Northern Nigerian Girls Secondary school in 2014, and till date, the safe return of the entire number of the girls reportedly kidnapped is shrouded in government bureaucratic and political propaganda complicity.

### **Background to *Pari***

Over 250 innocent school girls, all identified to be students of the Girls Secondary School, Chibok, a village in Borno State, Nigeria, were kidnapped in one fell swoop a few days around their Secondary school leaving certificate examination, by the boko haram insurgents to an unknown destination but within the vast forest of Sambisa, also located in Borno State. This attracted a worldwide outcry and condemnation against the boko haram Islamic extremist group, and a lot of political pressure was on the then Federal Government of Nigeria led by Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to deploy the State power to have the girls released. However, till date, no one is certain how many of the girls are still alive, how many actually escaped, how many have been officially released and how many are still in the camp of their kidnapers. All of that remains shrouded in government officialdom and political bureaucracy. Secondly, the kidnap of the Chibok School girls also helped to reveal that there are numerous other women and children that are also in the cruel haven of the Boko Haram insurgents of whom their fate till date is not certain.

It is against this background that Ahmed Yerima based the plot of *Pari*. The story of *Pari* revolves around the escape of one of the kidnapped Chibok School girls, called, Hyelapari, (*Pari* for short), through the assistance of her forced, or adopted husband there in the camp of the boko haram insurgents, who also escapes with her. The play opens while *Pari*'s mother still passionately laments the loss of her only daughter, and wishes, prays and vows to do anything, including abandoning the Christian faith of which she had been a strict adherent, to have her daughter restored to her alive. She even decides, the husband's stance, notwithstanding, to rather switch to the Islamic faith in the hope that the god of the religion of her daughter's kidnappers would likely be more understanding and sympathetic to her plight and answer her prayers.

The plot takes an anti-climactic dimension when suddenly Hyelapari finally shows up in her parent's home, through a government representative channel, beaten into a psychological wreck, and turned a mother of one. This is not close to fulfilling the long-time dream and hopes of her mother and father. In an even stranger circumstance, *Pari*'s estranged 'husband', Ibrahim, also shows up. In the wreck that *Pari* has become, the only reality she now knows is that of her attachment to her said husband and child. All efforts her relations make, especially her mother, not to leave with Ibrahim at the point that family members make arrangement to whisk him away is aborted as she insists that they

are both inseparable. Pari and the child finally leave with Ibrahim, leaving her parent, and other family members helpless and hopelessly heartbroken.

*Pari* is an emotion laden piece that vividly, again using the realistic model which literarily represents the common day-to-day slice-of-life on the script or on the stage, illustrates the heart-rending pains and untold trauma experienced by the parents and relations of the kidnapped girls, in their waiting process for the release of the girls (daughters and wards), on one hand, and the psychological and physiological degradation and dehumanisation to which the kidnapped girls themselves were subjected. Even when some of them become free either through escape or by eventual release, they are never the same again having been put through forced family way, brutalised, forcefully Islamised, radicalised and completely disoriented. All of these experiences are encapsulated and well epitomised in the *Pari* that finally escapes the boko haram insurgents' den in the play. The play provides its version of the real incident that happened through the narrations of *Pari* to her parents:

**Tada:** (*Pari's father.*) Tell us, *Pari*, what happened from the last time we saw you in school on your visiting day, two years ago?

**Pari:** It was a dry night in school. Everything went on normally. We had dinner and we were preparing for prep...then all of a sudden, there was commotion. Gun-toting men, about two hundred, entered the school. There was no light in school, so the darkness helped their cause. We were frightened to the bones. Then they started to gather us together towards the gate. Some girls were lucky, they were able to escape at the time, but I was petrified... frozen with fear.... After a little distance from the school, we got to the place where vehicles were parked, and we were hauled into them like cattle. After some distance, we drove into the Sambisa forest (*Yerima 35, 36*).

*Pari*, in the above narration, gives a clear, pictorial representation of the sequence of the actual incident of the kidnap in Chibok. The play provides a realistic reportage of the actual incident. *Pari* goes further to enlighten her parents on her subsequent experiences:

**Ama:** So what happened after?

**Pari:** Hell broke loose. We were really scared, and the hooded men melted our very resistance. Then one day, they said we all had to get married. We resisted it. One girl who screamed her refusal was blindfolded and before our very eyes, she was killed. Petrified, we gave up everything. Then they started to rape us. Some of us died from the pain. Some died from the air raids, and some just died of heartache and pains. Those who lived or survived like me were living carcasses from the world beyond (*Yerima 36*).

Through these lines, Yerima recreates the brutal brazenness of the terrorists, and thereby further creating awareness to the insensitivity of the reign of impunity, and at the same time appeals to the sentiments and psyche of his audience and readers, and by implication, that of the Nigerian populace, about the evils of terrorism.

The dilemma of Ama, Pari's mother, in deciding to dump her erstwhile Christian faith for that of Islam, even when not forced to do so as in the case of the kidnapped girls, is a further illustration of the frustrations, confusion and overwhelming desperation into which the parents and relations of the direct kidnap victims are plunged by the incident and the after-effect of having to wait endlessly and hopelessly for the release of their children. At the play opening, Tada, Pari's father, happens on Ama, praying and reciting the Islamic prayers, and expresses dismay thus:

**Tada:** Jesus, Ama, what is this? There must be madness here tonight.

**Ama:** This is morning, not night. You can see that I am praying to Almighty Allah.

**Tada:** Almighty who? We are Christians, remember... I mean, you, a church worker, dressed up in their dark clothes. Speaking in their forceful tongue, with their harmful mind. On a prayer mat... But why Agnes? Or do you also have their name now?

**Ama:** Khadijat, named after the first wife of the Prophet.

**Tada:** Khadijat? I reject that name in...

**Ama:** I accept it. Remember, as the elders say, play begets play; madness and fear beget bad fear, the type that makes a woman desperate, empty, and ready to give up anything for her child. Those who took my daughter have plunged a spear of painful fear into my soul... forever.

**Tada:** Ama!

**Ama:** Leave me alone, let me talk. Our people say that, a dead child is better than one that is missing. So long as Pari... my only seed... is out there, I am desolate... like the cursed arid desert... (Yerima 7, 8).

Pari's mother, Ama, in the above lines, painfully bares her heart brokenness and hopeless frustration in the course of waiting endlessly for the release of her child, which also illustrates the sentiments of the parents and relations of the real victims of the Chibok School girls kidnap saga. As Tada continues to express his helplessness and frustration with Ama in her decision to dump her faith, Ama insists and expresses her decision and desperation further:

**Ama:** ...I want my child back. I will do anything to have her back. And if Jesus is going to allow this to happen to me, then I am done with him. I shall remain with the Prophet until I find my poor lost child. He must understand... I will try to find Pari through the language of the angered... the language of those who took her...

**Tada:** Um...

**Ama:** There must be a God out there. Their God. He must be alive and well. He must... because he must have been, when he guided them to where they took those girls. So I figured it out. I just need to find a way to talk to him. Reach him, speak his language like they do, wear his hijab like their women do, beg him... kneel before him, grovel, if I have to and by whatever other means they used when they broke into the Chibok School, dragged those poor girls out, loaded them into trucks and drove them out like prized princes. All I am saying is that I will do anything to have my daughter back... (Yerima 14, 15).

In the midst of these hopeless expressions of frustrations and desperations, Pari eventually suddenly shows up as the Local Government Chairman himself brings her to her parent's house, veiled. Meeting the mother at home, Ama does not recognise her child in that the Pari that comes home, standing before her is very different from the one that was taken away from them two years ago. She is a shadow and carcass reflection of the Pari that was kidnapped along with the other girls. Pari has become a psychological wreck, violated, abused and dis-oriented. This is bad enough to the point that her beloved mother who had been so desperate, anxious and expectant of her return even dares to reverse her wish and prefers that their prayer for her return had not been answered. The following dialogue bares it well:

**Ama:** They have changed my child.

**Tada:** How?

**Ama:** That girl is not my Pari.

**Tada:** It is alright. All she needs is rest.

**Ama:** You think so? Maybe we should not have asked God to bring her back. What He gave us back is a shadow of our precious princess. You need have seen how she drove all the government officials out. She kept screaming, "Go and bring back the rest of us. Give them what they want and bring them home. The girls are dying each day". Then in one sweep, she ran to the kitchen, carried the pestle and drove even the chairman out. She is not the same I swear! (Yerima 34).

In the play *Pari*, the author raises some questions inadvertently: should this brazen kidnap terror have happened in the first instance in a country where there is a purported government in-charge of the security of lives and properties? Why terrorise these hapless and innocent school girls, waste their lives, truncate their dreams and also consequently subject their parents to the psychological trauma they went through? What crime did they commit to deserve to be direct victims of these acts of mindless terror? For the losses of these innocent children and their parents, are there ever going to be commensurate reparations given to them by the authorities? Are there ever going to be official retributions on the terrorists? Who pays for all this?

The play in a sub-theme also provides a copious illustration of the heinous destruction of lives and properties that are consistently carried out by the boko haram

insurgents, beside the incessant kidnappings, especially as targeted against churches and those that worship in them, and the constant sorrow they subject the direct victims of these dastard mayhems. For example, as part of efforts in craving the return of Pari and her mates, prayer sessions are held in her parent's house. On one of such occasions, the family had prepared meals for the entertainment of 'the brethren' that will come for the prayers. The prayers never holds and the food is never eaten as news come instead, that there has been a bomb-blast in another location where some clergymen and other adherents familiar to them are all killed:

**Luke:** May Ubangiji bless this house. I am sorry that no one will come for the prayers today.

**Tada:** Why?

**Hanna:** Then you have not heard the news.

**Ama:** Heard what?

**Luke:** The dreaded boys attacked, burnt and killed thousands of our church members in Mubi and Uba. They burnt down the churches... killed even the pastors.

**Ama:** Jesus!

**Luke:** ... Sister Vero escaped. She was home, having just lost her pregnancy... but Reverend John gave up the ghost while gallantly fighting for Christ...

**Tada:** Fighting for Christ?

**Hanna:** Those who saw him killed said that he was slaughtered after he was asked to recite the *Fatiha*, and instead, he recited the Lord's Prayer.

**Tada:** Jesus!

**Luke:** Right there, he was killed (Yerima 19).

The above dialogue illustrates in clear terms, the brazenness of the unchecked impunity of the terror insurgents.

In a very subtle way, the play *Pari*, parodies the ineptitude and inertness of the authorities, in their inability to check these terror activities and safeguard the lives and properties of the citizenry; the characters resorting only to their faith in the God of their religious beliefs including those of the traditional religion as represented by the soothsayer, the Shaagu, for their consolation, hope and salvation. The individuals take their fate in their own hands as the government and its security agencies have completely failed in their civil and social responsibilities to the people. There is also a parody and subtle indictment of government and their political agents in their roles in fuelling the era of brazen terror. This is well illustrated in the confessions of Ibrahim, Pari's forced-husband:

**Tada:** But many died through your actions. You did not shed a thought for the innocent children... the scared women... whose hearts had become misshapened by fear. Many died.

**Ibrahim:** We knew. That is the character of war. Many always die in every struggle... or what you call insurgency. But one thing was clear to us, many die, no matter what you do.

**Tada:** And the government? They deny knowing about you. The former local government chairman says you even killed four of his brothers.

**Ibrahim:** Did he really say that? Well, this is a different story from what really happened. The irony is that they created us, nurtured us for their own good at first... and after they dumped us. Where did we get the arms? Where? From them, the military and black market. Where did we get the money we spend? Who fuelled our anger? Who? See how well they lie now that they do not know how to quench the fire they selfishly lit. Pity (Yerima 47, 48).

Through this conversation, a subtle searchlight is beamed on the high-profile hypocrisies of government officials in the manner that they are knowingly or covertly instrumental to these acts of terror in the first instance but now posing pretentious and politically intoned sanctimonious dispositions as though they are as alarmed and mummified as the general public and direct victims of the acts.

*Pari* ends on a very sad hopeless note in that the said recovered school girl from the kidnap saga, erstwhile lost to her parents, is actually never recovered from the trauma of the unfortunate incident. She never recovers her education that has been earlier truncated by the kidnap event; her violated innocence and virginity are never recovered; and she finally separates from the tender loving care of her dear parents into oblivion with his violator and kidnapper. So, what happens next? What hope does her future hold, her parents, and the other victims like her still being held by the terrorists in Sambisa Forest? Does she become emotionally stable again ever? What about the terrorists themselves, will they ever be caught and punished? *Pari* concludes, not providing answers to these puzzling rhetorics.

## **Conclusion**

Indeed, the state of insecurity of the Nigerian polity has been sufficiently re-created in these Yerima's plays: *The Heart of Stone* and *Pari*, as represented in the mindless kidnap of hapless citizens – especially women – and innocent school girls, suicide bombing of public institutions, churches, lives and properties, especially as has trended in the Northern region of Nigeria for a number of years now: the reign of terror and impunity that has persisted, leaving the inhabitants of that section of the country in constant fear, uncertainty and trauma, paralysing businesses, abusing the faith and religious freedom of others and destroying churches and the people that worship in them.

This paper, through a comprehensive analysis of the two plays: *The Heart of Stone* and *Pari*, by Ahmed Yerima, has revealed the conscientisation and acculturation effects of the two plays. The paper argues that these effects are succinctly exemplified through the dialogues, and the unquantifiable psychological trauma inflicted on the direct victims of the terror and their direct relations and on the psyche of the entire nation's populace. The paper further argues that the realistic approach of the plays, in bringing

these haunting socio-political issues to bare, more than the awareness it recreates, also provides a provocative platform for one to begin to interrogate the system, putting the authorities on the hot seat until lasting solutions are proffered to halting the mindless madness.

Nigeria presently does not look good in the face of the world map with the boko haram terror, the Fulani herdsmen, (both in the Northern parts), and then the Niger Delta agitators in the South-south, still very much pervading and haunting the polity. Dramatic contributions like Ahmed Yerima's *The Heart of Stone* and *Pari* provide a wakeup call to the effect of making a bold statement in exposing the real issues: the forgotten and unhelped victims, the unstoppable and unscrupulous terrorists, and above all, the hypocrisies, pretensions, and ironically and sadly too, the seeming helplessness of the Nation's political and religious leadership in the face of this whole impunity saga. The two plays indeed, are an authoritative illustration and contribution to the anti-terrorism and socio-cultural acculturation advocacy in Nigeria as argued in this paper.

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# RETHINKING THE TERROR OF TERRORISM ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN YERIMA'S *PARI*

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## **Abstract**

Effective protection of lives and properties is the primary duties of every responsible government. Therefore, the incessant killings and terror targeted on Nigerians by terrorist is a great threat to national security and development. This paper critically examines the effect of Boko Haram terrorism on Nigerians as represented in Ahmed Yerima's *Pari*. The overwhelming feeling of fear and anxiety on the family of Tada was caused by the calculated use of violence against the citizens in order to attain goals that are religious or ideological in nature. The main objective of this work is to explore the terror and confusion of terrorism and its devastating effect on the lives of the affected Nigerians using the Ahmed Yerima's *Pari*. Using the content analysis method, the paper explores the courses of terrorism and exposes how such family terror poses a threat to national development. It recommends that parents, religious leaders and government through its various agencies should work together towards combating the Boko Haram terrorism.

## **Introduction**

Divergent views emerge on the rationale behind Boko Haram Islamic insurgency in Nigeria. Some see it as an attempt to Islamise the secular Nigerian state, while some believe it to be an attempt to change the status quo in order to concretise the perceived dominance of the Northerners over the rest of the country. Sanni Oluyemisi notes that in Northern Nigeria, Boko Haram terrorist activities have resulted in the deaths of numerous individuals, the destruction of communities and displacement of families, and the closure of schools and abduction of teenage girls as part of their fight against Western education (51). The 2014 invasion of Chibok Girls High School in the north-eastern part of the country, which led to the kidnap of over 250 girls, continues to generate public and academic curiosity. Eme Innocent and Ibietan Jide opine that, "parents who have been displaced and have teenage daughters may experience fear and be reluctant to send their children to school" (14). Displaced parents experience a variety of challenges that hinder their financial support of and personal commitment to the education of their children. This paper discusses terrorism in Nigeria using Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* as an anchor. The psychological effects of this insurgency on various stakeholders are unquantifiable (Aliyu, Ravichandran, and Nor 315), which is going to be our departure point because its impacts are still unfolding. This study explored the experiences of displaced parents, their children and the psychological trauma effect on them.

## **Boko Haram**

Since 2009 the Nigerian state has been under the throes of the deadly terrorist activities of the Islamic sect formally known as "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad" (Association for Propagating the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad). The sect, popularly dubbed Boko Haram, meaning Western civilisation/education is forbidden, claims to be on a mission to Islamise the Nigerian State. Roman Loimeier observes that with Saudi support, Islamic activists in Nigeria formed an organisation called the "Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reestablishment of the Sunna," or "Izala" for short. Over time, Izala became the key driver of Sunni radicalism in Nigeria. By the late 1990s, however, Saudi funding and active proselytisation, coupled with the fact that a majority of Nigerian Muslims are Sunni, overwhelmed the Iranian effort (143).

Salafi Sunni ideology became the driving force of radicalisation in Nigeria and neighbouring countries. Boko Haram is the most recent, albeit more deadly, reiteration of radicalism and terrorism in West Africa. The kidnapping of schoolgirls in 2014 is unfortunately an ominous omen of West African terrorists' future plans and the terror associated with this wicked act is explored in Ahmed Yerima's play, *Pari*.

### **Ahmed Yerima's *Pari***

Ahmed Yerima is a director, playwright and scholar. According to Yerima:

*Pari* investigates the Northern Nigeria crises from the prism of a family thrown into despair by the loss of their only daughter. In simplified language and engaging dialogue, the play examines the complicity of religion, government and individuals in the Boko Haram menace in a way that tugs at heartstrings (75).

The Chibok girls that were kidnapped in Borno State, attracted a worldwide outcry against Boko Haram, the Islamic extremist group that held the region hostage (Yerima 1). In Yerima's play, Hyelapari is a major character and one of the girls kidnapped. The play is titled *Pari* which is part of the name Hyelapari. A playwright's mission is to see and think of the best way to convey the message of the play, stimulating questions of moral choice and the resulting consequences of the choices made while conveying the target or intended emotions of the play. A playwright, therefore, probes into the very intriguing human nature, fearlessly and with a magnifying glass, honestly showcasing the meaning and mystery of life. However, this paper is not a study on the person of the playwright rather it investigates the terrorist attack in Northern Nigeria and the terror and trauma on the affected families as anchored in the play, *Pari*.

Further inquiry according to Innocent Chiluwa and Presley Ifukor revealed that "the teenage girls abducted in 2014 by Boko Haram from Chibok were 276 and apart from 103 girls who were rescued by the Nigerian army in 2016, the remaining girls are yet to return home" (269). Following this incident, displaced parents may show higher anxiety for their teenage daughters than for sons. Researchers have suggested that parents exposed to terrorism experience insecurity, deprivation, fear, and emotional instability that induces reluctance in them to send their children to school (Imasuen 291).

The presence of terrorism is a significant risk that impacts negatively on formal education, social living, development, and psychological well-being of children. According to Idrissa Ouili, there were significant gaps in schooling activities and educational attainment for children internally displaced compared to those who did not experience armed conflicts, even when they lived in the same region" (167). Hence, advocating for a school-based re-orientation for children living in conflict-ridden environments can serve as a remedy in the fight against insurgency.

### **Causes of Terrorism**

Boko Haram's recent kidnapping of schoolgirls in northern Nigeria has focused the world's attention on Islamic radicalism and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel countries. Although the growing terrorist threat in Iraq and Syria has replaced coverage of this extremist group on the front pages of international newspapers, Boko Haram remains a deadly force that must be confronted. Like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Boko Haram threatens to spread its violence beyond the borders of its base country.

Sogo Angel Olofinbiyi and Jean Steyn, writing on causes of Boko Haram terrorism, opine that:

more importantly, the widespread assumptions about the cause of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria have made it difficult for many researchers, particularly those that have shown a high sense of research interest, to have a clear-cut understanding of the root cause of the crisis (135).

However, Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova opine that the causes of terrorism may not be ignorance and poverty:

The fact is that members of terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas are neither poor nor uneducated, so calculated attacks tend to have severe economic damage. Viewed as a conflict resolution mechanism, terrorism can be broadly viewed as a strategy deployed by individuals, either singularly or in groups, to resolve disputes. The basis of such disputes could be based on distributional issues (e.g. of political power, income, wealth) or merely existential – based on religious conflict – or have a foundation in the historical past causing persistent conflict (121).

To the extent that terrorism is caused by distributional issues such as income inequality, the analyses of Krueger and Maleckova above, for example, raise doubts about terrorism being caused by ignorance and poverty, as they find that some terrorists are well-educated and typically not members of the poor society. On the other hand, Barros, Faria, and Gil-Alana aver that, "poverty in Africa is associated with terrorism"; and it is mediated through condition of low political and economic freedom (59).

In the play, *Pari*, Ama, the mother of the kidnapped girl, Hyelapari, laments on the level of poverty associated with them and the locality where they live which is capable of contributing to the existence of terrorists in that region.

**Ama:** Indeed, poverty is a curse from the gods. Since I got married to my husband twenty years ago, it has been one suffering after the other. Not a day of happiness. I never liked that cheap school, you know? But for my husband, it was cheap enough for his pocket. I wanted my only child to go to one of those schools where there is so much security, even the angels of God would struggle to enter. Not to that cheap dark school with dark environment, so that dark gun-tottering souls can just drive in trucks in the darkness of the night where children fall prey to them as animals forcing them into slavery. This country is dying gradually, through corruption everywhere. I tell you, someone somewhere is benefitting from all this madness. And I ... we the poor in soul and pockets, are the ones suffering for their greed. (*She starts crying.*) How can God just turn His back on us? What did we poor mothers ever do to Him? Why won't He just let us smile for one second of our miserable lives? Where is God's compassion? (31).

It is believed that in the past decade, Muslims who trend toward radical ideas have identified domestic and foreign factors as drivers of their radicalism. The domestic issues included unemployment, poverty, poor economic conditions, hopelessness, regime repression and corruption, injustice, inequality, and massive violations of human rights including against women and minorities. In support of the public opinion, Ibrahim, one of the terrorists in the play narrates to Tada and Ama, how he joined the Boko Haram:

**Ibrahim:** It all started the night my mother was buried. I regretted her death more. I blamed myself for her death because it wasn't that I was away when she died. I was there ... useless ... but I was just a dead person there. She needed food and medicine ... and none was within my reach ... so I watched her ... with tear-filled eyes, I watched life ebb out of her veins ... then her eyes closed ... her heart stopped beating ... and she was gone. After her burial, I tried to find a taste to my mouth. I did not cry, I could not cry and I did not even try. Even if I had, there would be no tears. My friends, Zaki and Yakubu, had begged me to join them (46).

**Tada:** Join who?

**Ibrahim:** The jihad. The Sunna Lidda'Awah Wal-Jihad.

**Tada:** Boko Haram?

**Ama:** Who?

**Ibrahim:** Yes. Young men living in hopelessness, angry at nothing in particular. All smoking and drinking. Then when we were thoroughly soaked in everything, the talk started. They sounded so wise so profound. At the end of the day, between the women and drinks, talks and dreams, I felt I

could do something. What it was, I did not even know. All I knew was that I was angry at everything (46).

Also, foreign factors include perceived anti-Islamic policies by the US and other Western powers, continued Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and the suppression of Palestinian human rights and freedoms, the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, drone strikes that result in civilian deaths, as well as western lukewarm support of democratic uprisings and coddling of dictatorial regimes. Sunni-based terrorism, whether in Africa or the Middle East, has principally resulted from warped interpretations of religious "jihad" by poorly educated and ideologically motivated clerics and recruiters following Salafi/Wahhabi ideology. These teachings invariably begin with the premise that Muslims and non-Muslims who disagree with these interpretations are "unbelievers" or "kafir" and "apostates", who must be killed.

Nakhleh Emile notes that Nigerian terrorism did not develop in a vacuum. As stated earlier, competing historical and ideological narratives, Saudi proselytisation, and active recruiting by "religious radicalisers" in the past two decades have paved the way for radicalism (14). However, some terrorists that were termed religious radicals realised that they were deceived, even as Ibrahim (a terrorist) shares his experience with Ama:

**Ama:** What about Allah?

**Ibrahim:** What about him? Him, too. We had predicaments strewn all over... and god stood silently by. We were ready to burn and blow up the sky where we believed he lived in smugness and allowed life to pass us by. Even after a while, the promise that we would go straight to aljana faded. With time, the aljana we believed was what we created. It was nowhere but we stood. We were the gods in the aljana we created. With guns and bombs, even allah was afraid of us. (*In whisper*). Or so we thought (47).

Prima facie Boko Haram's motivations appear to be religious. However, considering factors such as the dismal socio-economic conditions that prevail in the northern region, the epicentre of the sect, a religious explanation alone is reductive.

The alarming socio-economic inequality and deprivation manifested in pervasive poverty across the nation, but particularly in the northern region is accentuated as one of the main factors that predispose the teeming disenfranchised and jobless populace, particularly the youths in the region to take arms against the state. Fundamentally, Boko Haram terrorism pivots on the growing anti-state tendency in Nigeria, a state arguably losing its legitimacy as a result of her inability and failure to meet the political, social and economic needs of its populace. These factors, according to Jacob Omede, may not actually be the causes of unrest in Nigeria. Omede sees these factors as symptoms, shadows and not the substance.

Why unemployment if we may ask? Who is to provide the jobs? And why are they not providing the jobs? The answers may be found in corruption, misappropriation of public funds and lack of quality education, bad governance,

and etcetera. Corruption, lack of good or bad governance, ethnic superiority and domination of one community or person by the other as well as the rest others mentioned above are all moral and values problems (Omede 315).

The effect of the above mentioned attitude is particularly on the youths of today with their wrong/false or negative values. Such values include hard work, discipline, respect, honesty, truthfulness, integrity, love for one another and respect for law and order. These have given ways to excessive quest for materialism, apparent worship of money, taking side with the powerful even when they are wrong, lack of patriotism, tribalism and ethnicity

### **Consequences of Terrorism in Northern Nigeria**

The speed with which evil is growing in Nigeria and the merciless ways that lives of innocent ones are being wasted are worrisome. People are burdened on a daily basis with psychological and emotional trauma resulting from gory sights of lifeless and mutilated bodies of loved family members, close associates and colleagues littered on the streets, public squares and everywhere. The cost of terrorism is manifested in the life of Pari as she laments:

**Pari:** Yes, Father. In two years, your little girl became a woman ... and then she became a mother. One was a girl and the other a boy. When my eyes fell on her helpless naked body, I cried. Then I became afraid for her. How was she going to survive this wicked world which uses girls for sacrifice? What `if she grew and was raped? What if ...? Slowly, I tore off a long piece from my hijab ... and with my hands, I strangled my own child. I buried her in a shallow grave by the stream. With my gasping breath, I tied the well-fed brother to my back and continued on my trip to find you both in Chibok. When I got to your old office, I was told that you had left for your hometown, Askirau-Uba. They took me to stay first in a refugee camp, where I was able to receive treatment and gain back my health. Today, they came for us. And we were brought here. Did I do right, Father? Did I? (40).

With the coming to the scene by Boko Haram, the insecurity situation in Nigeria seemed to have assumed higher and more complex dimensions. A part from the frequency and intensity of deadly attacks and carnages, insecurity situation in Nigeria cuts across cities, towns and villages that there is hardly anywhere to run to for cover. Lives and properties are not safe for urban dwellers as well as for the rural dwellers. People live in apprehension almost every day. These crises have heightened tensions and insecurity in Nigeria and they have assumed a frightening dimension.

In addition, one of the effects of terrorism is the shattered and devastated lives that the young girls were exposed to, especially the life of the eponymous character, Pari, who narrates her ugly experiences:

**Pari:** Two years. For two years, I lived my life with him... dodging bullets and bombs. He taught me how to clean his AK 47 gun, how to cry and how to muffle tears and pains with honour. He even showed me the dark shade of death and the clownish face of life. We would run barefooted for miles, sometimes we even played foolish roles of princess and prince scuffling food that was liberated from the attack front. Most times, in-between movements from one camp to another, we scrounged the bins for food or begged forcefully from people too scared to die. And in moments such as that, our heartbeat measured the distance between our miserable lives and quick unmourned deaths. (*Kneels before Ama and Tada.*) Father, Mother, for two years I have known no other life than that. I grew up five years each passing year. I am no longer the Pari who left here. I am a forced-to-ripen woman now. This is Ibrahim's girl, Khadijat Hijab number two hundred and ... (68).

Terrorism potentially has adverse impacts on economic growth, investment, and tourism. Terrorism incidents worldwide usually result in massive destruction with injuries and casualties. Most terrorist groups have the tendency to physically destroy productive assets as well as redirect resources away from productive uses (OECD 2). The indirect costs that are not usually measured include the emotional toll suffered by the victims, friends, relatives, other survivors, and the community at large have focused more on the direct economic cost such as expenditures on direct attack, to financial markets, national security, and supply chain, which are calculated from direct approaches such as cost to property, productivity loss, and human (Barth et al. 26). Businesses associated with the location of the event usually suffer setbacks.

African countries have experienced a high economic cost due to the activities of Ansaru and Boko Haram. These two groups have been linked to Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and have waged a brutal campaign against military, government, and civilian targets including Christians (START 3). For developing countries, such as, Nigeria and Kenya, it makes the investment environment unfriendly as investors shy away because of compromised safety and weak national security, which affects economic growth.

The potential threat to investors' confidence in the economy can deter investment, as most investors are risk averse, posing a fear of not being able to remove their investment. The economic cost in Africa is far beyond the direct outlay, because terrorist incidents can deter future investment in affected countries, reduce Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and deter economic growth (START 3). For example, Boko Haram, located in the northern part of Nigeria, has the highest poverty rate in the country and has remained relatively unsafe as it is the region in Nigeria experiencing the highest number of terrorist incidents – making it difficult to attract FDI.

Since the emergence of this sect in 2002, human lives had been lost to their attacks in thousands. The Vanguard newspaper put the death toll at more than 12,000 with more than 8000 injured or maimed and thousands of other innocent Nigerians displaced (*Vanguard*). The killings have continued unabated until recently that they are being gradually overcome. Their escalated activities created widespread insecurity among

Nigerians, increase tensions between various ethnic communities, interrupt development activities, frighten off investors and generate concern among Nigeria's northern neighbours (Eme and Ibieta 12). According to Okpaga, Chijioke and Innocent, between 27 July, 2009, and 17 February, 2012, Boko Haram had carried out 53 deadly attacks (81).

In fairness, insecurity is not a problem that is unique to Nigeria. It has geographical spread across the globe. The United States, United Kingdom and many countries face the challenges of insecurity within their borders on a daily basis (Adejumo 1). The difference between these nations and Nigeria according to Adejumo is how they manage the threats.

### **The Terror of Terrorism**

Nigerian children affected by the Boko Haram insurgency still face the psychological effects of direct exposure to terrorism. Incidents of terrorism, family displacement, and loss of family and friends may have long-term, broad effects on children's development. The goal which Boko Haram seeks to achieve in the northern Nigeria is to reject western education and stop children from going to school. To achieve this goal, Boko Haram deployed violent tactics that include forceful abduction of students from hostel, and killing of children in their hostels. They also destroy school infrastructure through bombing. Also, Valarie Thomson concludes that, "Boko Haram seeks to create psychological disturbance, enthrone the Islamic Caliphate, and establish Islamic schools based on Sharia law in North Eastern Nigeria" (49).

Aside from the amounts of life disruption such as orphan refugee, school or home damaged, as well as social disorganisations were other associated risk factors that may increase adjustment problems for children. However, if a child in the formal operational stage is out of school, is displaced, and begins to witness violence, the child may become doubtful, exhibit negative behaviours, become unconstructive, lack self-reliance become pessimistic about life and his or her environment, and begin to exhibit negative attitudes toward schooling and positive attitudes toward violence. Boko Haram insurgency is not and cannot be unconnected with wrong moral, values and religious education. In as much as the Nigerian leaders are not justified due to bad governance, the Islamic militants (Boko Haram) are also not justified. Using wrong approach to correct the wrong done is double tragedies that can be catastrophic.

### **Recommendations**

Religion refers to the belief in the existence of a god or gods; and the activities that are connected with the worship of them. Nigeria by constitutional provision is a secular state. By this it is meant that there is no one nationally accepted religion or way of worship. Everybody is free to practice any religion of choice provided the rights of others are not infringed. Religious crises in Nigeria that had been budding since attainment of political independence is now assuming a crescendo that must put all hands on deck to get it strangulated. And the best way to do this is conscious and correct religious education. Salawu observes that, "the loss of lives due to ethno-religious crises since political

Independence is estimated to be over three million including psychological and material damages that cannot be quantified" (351).

Adherents of any form of religion are to respect the sanctity of human lives. No one is permitted to take another person's life except when in battle or in self-defence. In addition, God is the ultimate and has the ultimate power. He can fight battles for Himself without any human assistance. Killing one another is not of God it is wickedness, arrant wickedness and must stop.

Apart from religious fanaticism, in Nigeria, for selfish gains, some politician gathered some young boys, trained them and supplied ammunitions for them as political thugs. Therefore, politicians' will be under the watch-list of government and citizens as the also share the blame of terrorism as revealed by Ibrahim Ahmed in the study text:

**Ibrahim:** (*Gives a wild laugh.*) Did he really say that? Well, this is a different story from what really happened. The irony is that they created us, nurtured us for their own good at first ... and after, they dumped us. Where did we get the arms? Where? From them, the military and black market. Where did we get the money we spend? Who fuelled our anger? Who? (*Chuckles.*) See how well they lie now that they do not know how to quench the fire they selfishly lit. Pity (48).

The members of the Boko Haram (terrorists) were disappointed because according to Ibrahim (a terrorist) they never bargained for such denial and disappointment by their sponsors (the Nigerian politicians).

## **Conclusion**

This study was designed to gain deep insights into how such terrific experiences among this group of children, parents, and society at large affect the families and the nation. As a result of terrorism and insecurity, many Nigerians live every day in tensions and suspicion. Many productive lives have either been lost, displaced or living in constant fear and pain of the loss of loved ones. Foreign investors due to the sordid security situation are scared away from Nigeria which has further increased the unemployment ratio as well as the overall economic outlook of the country in present times. The nation's educational institutions are not spared either as institutions of learning are equally points of targets and attacks of terrorists and other hoodlums. Terrorism and insecurity are symptoms of poor moral values and religious education. These life threatening activities frustrate economic and technological transformation keeping Nigeria in a perpetual state of economic dependence, loss of productive human resources and general apathy and discontentment. Unless this situation is checked and reversed, Nigeria will remain perpetually dependent and underdeveloped.

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# **CULTURAL RENAISSANCE OR MONARCHICAL TERRORISM: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF YERIMA'S *IYASE* AND OSOFISAN'S *MANY COLOURS MAKE THE THUNDER-KING***

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## **Abstract**

This paper is a critical analysis of two Nigerian plays with a view to examining, first, the preoccupations of the playwrights with cultural renaissance in their bid to project the indigenous African culture as a response to the prejudices and the negative predispositions of the colonialists and their apologists who have, for several decades, been denigrating the African culture as barbaric and uncivilised. The paper also examines the monarchical terrorism tendencies depicted in modern African plays. It x-rays these terrorism tendencies inherent in the monarchical superstructures of African culture to ascertain whether they are manifestations of African cultural renaissance or an attempt to project the African cultural traditions as intimidating and terrorising. The plays examined are Ahmed Yerima's *Iyase* and Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*. The features of cultural rebirth and terrorism are intricately interwoven in the plays. While Ahmed Yerima's play depicts the Benin history and culture, Femi Osofisan's play portrays Yoruba culture, myth and history. The theoretical framework of the paper is based on the postcolonial theory, which is critical among other things, of all forms of internal colonisation. The conclusion is that the plays examined exhibit cultural renaissance and monarchical terrorism. The theatre, therefore, becomes a veritable platform to project African culture as well as to condemn all forms of cultural terrorism inherent in the indigenous African culture.

## **Introduction**

Theatre remains an indispensable and a veritable platform deployed by artists globally to ventilate their ideological dispositions, and also to capture the societal essence. Every artist demonstrates and exhibits his theatrical capabilities and dramaturgical skills and adroitness on the stage either to express his angst against certain societal inanities or to affirm, uphold or comment on some contemporary issues. The theatre has thus been seen from time immemorial as a monumental edifice with its pedagogical, reformative, corrective, cautionary, satiric, prophylactic and psychotherapeutic functions in addition to its socio-cultural and revolutionary roles in society. The theatre is no longer a seeing place but a theatrical coven and an intellectual séance where the creative and the dramatic skills are enflamed to provoke the Thespian in individuals into action with the abiding mystical incubation of the Muses, the cynosure and the guardian spirits of the theatre.

The theatre is the meeting point for a ritualistic intercourse between the dramatist and the director, a socialising agent and a propagandist platform for critiquing and protesting against the ills of society.

In Apartheid South Africa, the theatre of Ibsen Kente and Workshop 71 became a revolutionary tool for dismantling the obnoxious apartheid system in South Africa. The protest and radical nature of the theatre, even though it was under undue pressure from the Apartheid government in South Africa, became one of the inevitable instruments that vehemently tackled both the reign of terror and the agents of terrorism in apartheid South Africa. Although these troupes were reduced dramatically because the theatre was under censorship, their performances were impactful, fierce and pugnaciously intimidating. Even the post-Apartheid theatre in South Africa, as shown in John Kani's *Nothing but the Truth* and Athol Fugard's *Valley Song*, has become a veritable platform for addressing emerging post-apartheid issues such as reconciliation, land dispossession, xenophobia, and so on. The place of the theatre, therefore, in tackling socio-political issues including terrorism cannot be easily over-emphasised.

In an attempt to deconstruct the Eurocentric view of African culture which has long been branded as barbaric, demonic and uncivilised by the colonial masters and their apologists, some African artists have seen the theatre as one of the channels through which they can respond to their critics by demonstrating the richness and the lushness of African cultural heritage on stage. African culture, like any other culture in the world, is the identity of the Africans; it is the expression of their indigenous and traditional beliefs, and the embodiment and compendium of African norms, taboos, religions and philosophies. That is why the contemporary African literary works are fused with oral traditional elements such as proverbs, traditional and folk songs, proverbs, festivals, incantations, chants and panegyrics. The works of Femi Osofisan, Ahmed Yerima, Olu Obafemi and Niyi Osundare, among others are sumptuously imbued with traditional oral elements to project African culture (Ajidahun 94-103).

### **Conceptualising Terrorism**

With the recent upsurge in global insurgency and terrorism, which has continued to pose like an intractable and untameable dragon with very devastating, irremediable and irreversible shattering consequences, African artists have begun to deploy their works and indeed the stage to protest against the insidious, weird, bestial, senseless and the inhuman nature of terrorism in society. Ochuwa traces the rise in global terrorism to globalisation, which has made the modern society a global village (177). By implication, the political, economic, environmental and social structures become vulnerable to terrorism.

Terrorism can be conceptualised as a violent act carried out by individuals or group of people to brutalise and dehumanise the innocent or their perceived enemies either with the intention to subdue them or to exterminate them for reasons best known to them which can be religious, ethnic or political. Richardson is of the view that terrorism is a carefully planned violent attack on innocent and unarmed citizens to achieve some political objectives (28-30). Similarly, Bjørgo opines that terrorism deploys fear, violence, and force to frighten their targets who are mostly non-combatants in order to coerce them to do their bidding (1).

Also, Norries et al. are of the view that terrorism is “the systematic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals” (6). Nassar also supports the political tag given to terrorism by Norries et al. (6). In the work of Ochu and Ologetse on terrorism, they assemble a catalogue of verbs used in the definitions of terrorism. Some of them are : premeditated, coordinated, calculated attack, intimidate, disrupt, endanger, cause kidnap, destroy, seize, manufacture, possess, acquire, transport, supply, use, interfere, threaten, murder (35). Terrorism, unarguably, is a calculated and premeditated attempt to murder, maim, and subdue a perceived enemy, an opponent or the innocent ones to score a political, religious, economic or personal point using physical or verbal violent acts and weapons of destruction.

Terrorism can also be described as a ferocious war launched indiscriminately against religious and political opponents with a view to threatening and frightening them to submission. Terrorism can both be a political and religious weapon. While the Boko Haram uses terrorism as an Islamic agenda to enplace Islam and displace other religions and also fight against Western education which is seen as a by-product of Christianity, the militants in the South-South of Nigeria use terrorism to fight government against the systemic environmental degradation of their land and the general apathy of government to the welfare of the people of the South-South, Nigeria. While the terrorists in the Northern part of Nigeria deploy bombing, mass kidnapping, maiming, slaughtering and beheading of innocent citizens including government security operatives, the militants destroy pipe installations and often resort to bunkering and kidnapping of expatriates to feather their nests. Both terrorists use sophisticated weapons although the Islamic extremists appear more daring and classy in their weaponry. Besides, the current menace of the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria is an act of terrorism as they deploy AK-47 rifles and other deadly weapons to kill and maim farmers who dare to protest against the destruction of their farms by the Fulani’s cattle. The media is awash with the reported cases of the attacks of the Fulani herdsmen against farmers and villagers in which lives and properties have been lost.

Zimmermann provides a typology of terrorism by categorising it into: political terrorism, pathological terrorism, international terrorism, sub-state terrorism, state supported terrorism, ideological terrorism, ethno-nationalist terrorism, religious-political terrorism and single-issue terrorism (9). Although some of the categorisations overlap, this paper will utilise the state terrorism typology as depicted in Femi Osofisan’s *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*. The typology does not adequately capture the essence of cultural terrorism depicted in Ahmed Yerima’s *Iyase*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper adopts Marxist criticism as its theoretical framework. Most Marxists such as Ngugi wa Thiong’O, Ayi Kwei Armah, Amilcar Cabral, Omafume Onoge, Chidi Amuta and Femi Osofisan see this critical theory as an invaluable literary theory that can be deployed as an ideological and subversive weapon to critique texts with potential Marxist inclinations. This is because creative works are perceived by Marxist critics as outputs of a belief in the stratification and social structure in society. The fundamental components of Karl Marx’s ideology are labour, alienation, commodities, exploitation and class

conflict (Ritzer and Stepnisky 52-54). According to Karl Marx, man is not just a social animal but also an animal that can become transformed into a peculiar individual in society through labour. “The transformation of the individual through labour and the transformation of society are not separable” (Ritzer and Stepnisky 53). In a capitalist society, the masses who constitute the labour force and who are exploited for the transformation of society, are thus alienated from their “productive activities”, “fellow workers” and “human potential” (55). This exploitation leads to dissatisfactions and frustrations among the masses.

Capitalists are more interested in “extracting maximum productivity” from workers without paying attention to their welfare, comfort and fulfilment in society. The commodities are the focus of capitalists rather than the workers. The dialectical concern of Karl Marx was to resolve this contradiction of labour and the social conditions that are incongruous. That is why Abrams and Harpham draw a correlation between the “mode of material production” and the “class structure of a society” (203). The structures of a capitalist economy place the economic base in the hands of a few, and that is why capitalists deploy force, violence and tyranny to subdue and oppress the workers who are usually the masses. Karl Marx was greatly concerned with the imbalanced distribution of wealth and power. The result, therefore, is an interminable class conflict between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. While the bourgeoisie possess wealth and understandably, power, the proletariat then become the object of oppression, victimisation and tyranny. Such class conflict often gives room to aggression and anarchy. In an attempt to revolt against the despotism of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat lament and protest against all forms of inequality, mental and physical incarceration and torture that dehumanise them in society.

Marxist Criticism, therefore, becomes appropriate here because it forms the basis on which monarchical terrorism as conceptualised in this paper is situated. Both Edaiken and Shango in the texts under study symbolise the bourgeoisie in society today, while Iyase and Gboka and the masses in Shango’s village are the proletariat. In the light of this, the paper interrogates Femi Osofisan’s *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King* and Ahmed Yerima’s *Iyase* from the class conflict perspective. The paper looks at the issue of terrorism engendered by class struggles in both texts to determine whether or not it is for cultural propagation.

### **Textual Analysis**

Ahmed Yerima in *Iyase* demonstrates his dramatic adroitness and literary adeptness and skilfulness by exhibiting the cultural endowments and the indigenous values of the Benin people. The play is a product of research, literary creativity and dramatic ingenuity of Yerima as it, unambiguously, depicts Yerima as an artist who deploys theatre as a tool for cultural propagation. The theatre to him becomes a veritable platform to display the cultural heritage of Benin people. The play shows the religion, values, proverbs, aphorisms, class conflicts, belief system, philosophies, myths, history, taboos and the organisations of their religious and traditional systems. *Iyase* qualifies to be called a historical, sociological or anthropological dramatic text as the audience will be glued to their seats to learn about the richness of Benin culture. For instance, the incessant

reference to Ogun by Iyase as the ancestral god of the Benin people on whom Iyase relies for vengeance shows the universality of Ogun as a deity that is popularly worshipped in Africa and beyond which Soyinka discusses in *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Soyinka uses this text to deconstruct the Eurocentric view of African culture as uncivilised and barbaric.

Soyinka justifies the richness of African culture by citing the universality of African pantheon gods like Ogun, Shango and Obatala who are worshipped in Brazil, Cuba and other parts of the world. Besides, Soyinka shows in the book African belief in the cyclical nature of the universe that is the belief in the world of the unborn, the world of the born and the world of the dead. That is why Omosefe, Iyase's mother can freely relate and communicate with the ghost of her dead husband even though she is blind. The banter between Omosefe and the ghost of her late husband, Osaretin, which is a flashback device, enables the audience to know that "Iyase has been cursed and the curse is approved by the hysterical Ogun under the influence of palm wine" (Ajidahun 156). The ghost of Osaretin reveals this when it tells Omosefe that,

he was cursed at the point of my death. I raised the sword of *Ogun ukpokpo o re a yaaro* ere, the path clearer to the shrine of Ogun., Red hot, by the bellows of fire I slit my own throat. As I sipped, I cursed him... both of you. My slit throat oozed like palm wine. My blood mingled with palm wine, and Ogun got drunk and assented to my dying wish (39).

We agree that through dialogue, linguistic devices such as code mixing of English with Benin dialects and code switching from English to Benin dialects, stagecraft, costumes and props, the play is a vast and wanton exhibition of the cultural richness of Benin tradition. However, we are not comfortable with the depiction of Edaiken, an Edo prince and also the heir apparent to the throne of Oba of Benin, whose authority is absolute and unquestionable and whose decisions on all issues are final and incontestable. We are convinced that the activities and actions of Edaiken in the play qualify him as a terrorist from postcolonial perspective.

Postcolonial critics, according to Habib, decry all forms of internal colonisation having been liberated from the several decades of colonialism with its grave and almost irredeemable consequences (272). Texts that are analysed from the postcolonial perspective condemn the literary works that support any act of domination by any individual or ethnic group over another. Iyase, the tragic hero in *Iyase* is depicted as a helpless character that has been destined and fated to end tragically by the gods. He is like a pawn in the hands of the gods epitomised by Edaiken. Edaiken, the Edo prince, is accused by Iyase of sexually violating his third wife, Ivie ravenously and with impunity.

Since Edaiken, by the Benin tradition is untouchable, his sacrilegious action is condoned by the tradition, and that is why his action cannot be sanctioned. Even Oba, the father of Edaiken agrees that his son's action should be seen as, "a misguided abuse of a privileged lust of a prince" (32). Even when Iyase tells Edaiken to apologise to him, Edaiken refuses and says, "I can't" (45). Edaiken thus boasts of his imperial powers when he tells Imafidon:

I am the son of the home leopard. I do not allow antelopes for lunch to jump and dance in the face of death. I am the Omo n' Oba soon to be. When I say breathe you breathe, when I say die you die, when I say leave you leave (46).

This statement portrays Edaiken and the tradition that he represents as terrorists who deploy threat and create fear in the heart of their prey. Although, Yerima appears to be portraying the personality of a typical Edo person and indeed the Omon'Oba monarchy as dictatorial and repressive as a reflection of the typical Benin tradition at least for the education of the audience, Yerima's theatrical enlightenment has shown that such a culture that justifies and exults the bestiality, the voluptuous concupiscence and the barbarity of Edaiken is promoting terrorism and savagery. Edaiken and the Benin monarchy parallel the recklessness and the brute force with which Bashorun Gaa administered the Old Oyo Empire especially during the reign of Alafin Adegolu which Adebayo Faleti condemns in *Bashorun Gaa*, as barbaric; and of course the shameful end of Bashorun Gaa shows that the Oyo people do not support Bashorun's reign of terror. It also matches the reign of terror of Efunsetan Aniwura, the second Iyalode of Ibadan as captured by Akinwumi Ishola in *Efunsetan Aniwura*.

Efunsetan in history has been described as a despotic and an autocratic political leader who used her wealth and power recklessly as shown by Karl Marx to decapitate any of her erring slaves. She also got capital punishment under Aare Latosa the king of Ibadan in 1874. Akinwumi Ishola faithfully documents this as a warning to future tyrants just as Wole Soyinka shows also in *The Bacchae of Euripides* where Pentheus is depicted as a terrorist but who is also punished at the end. Even with the defilement of Iyase's wife, the gods withdraw their support from him. Eventually, Omosefe, Iyase's mother is manipulated by some metaphysical forces to kill her own son that she loves. This is reminiscent of the death of Pentheus in the hands of his mother, Agave. How do we justify the complicity of the gods in an act of this nature? Regrettably, Omosefe says, "What have I done? What have I done? By the gods, I have killed my own" (64). Yerima thus speaks through Omosefe: "I warned you against the wrath of the Benin people" (62). Yerima wants to show his audience the untameable, murderous and deadly wrath of Benin people as an aspect of their culture which in any sane tradition and society is condemnable. Rosalind Asquith says that, "theatre is the mimetic representation of action: it mirrors life" (in Craig 87). This is also in line with Aristotelian concept of theatre. Yerima gives an incisive function of theatre in Nigeria which is to:

- Entertain the people who come to see the performances.
- Educate the people who come to see the performances.
- Document the happenings within the society of those who come to see the performances.
- Criticise the happenings within the society (Yerima, *Culture, Drama...* 127).

Yerima in *Iyase* has creditably used his theatre to entertain, educate and document the happenings in society, but he has not criticised this weird Benin culture that makes

some individuals ruthless gods whose political and religious leadership in Benin society cannot be challenged. Edigun, in the play, who provides the Oba with spiritual backing wants Omosefe to tell her son, Iyase, that, “He must remember that the Oba is a spirit and a god. Our task in Einmwin, the land of the sacred spirits, is to protect him” (55). In other words, the Benin tradition deifies their Oba and conceptualises him not just an Oba but as a spirit and a god. This paper, therefore, challenges the institution of the Benin monarchy, whose Oba possesses both physical and metaphysical powers that enable him to reign with absolute authority. This is descent to totalitarianism and fascism.

Femi Osofisan’s *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King* is a play in which the traditional Yoruba culture is lavishly expressed on stage. First, the play is an enactment of the place of Shango both as a historical and a mythical figure in African and indeed Yoruba cosmology and his human and ontological duties. The play also shows African belief in the ability of Yeye Iroko to give children to the barren like Oya, the favourite wife of Shango. Besides, we encounter the popular African belief in Oya, “the daughter of the river” (159) with “immense treasures of the river and the sea. Such riches no human eye has ever beheld” (161). The African belief in destiny is also shown when Alagemo attributes Oya’s barrenness to predestination. According to Alagemo,

It was what she chose as her beauty, when she was coming to the world. She chose opulence and beauty and the children who could have accompanied her fled to other women, especially to the daughter of the forest (166-167).

Besides, the play is replete with Yoruba proverbs, idioms and riddles to show the wealth of African linguistic repertoire. Some examples of proverbs from the text are stated below:

**Igunnun:** When an elephant walks by, does one still ask-is that a passing breeze? (152).

**Alagemo:** A forest rat, we are told, does not just run into the open in the afternoon, unless something is chasing it! (175).

**Oya:** If the witch cried last night, and a child is found dead this morning, shall we still search blindly for the cause of the death? (216).

We find examples of riddles in the text. A riddle is a puzzle that is concocted to generate a clever answer. It belongs to the folklore recitative poetic genre. It is used to enhance the aesthetics of the play. Some examples of riddles, from the text, are stated below:

**Ant:** What looks at the valley, but never steps into it?

**Alagemo:** The mountain!

**Ant:** What is long, but has no shadow?

**Alagemo:** The road.

**Ant:** What is it that always stands, and never sits down?

**Alagemo:** The tree.

**Ant:** Listen: my father's fruits cannot be plucked, and yet when they fall down, they cannot be gathered.

**Alagemo:** Dew drops.

**Ant:** My father has an unusual servant: you cut off his head, you cut off his feet, but his belly sings and summons the village together!

**Alagemo:** The drum!

**Ant:** He was told to stay near the fire, and he had no complaint. But when he was told to take a bath, he screamed that death had come! Who is he?

**Alagemo:** Salt! (209).

Femi Osofisan gorgeously weaves together elements of oral tradition including the indigenous Yoruba songs in addition to the elaborate use of myth, costumes, proverbs, chants, riddles, incantations, panegyrics to popularise his African theatre as an exemplification of an indigenised drama. Apparently and undoubtedly, Osofisan, in this text, intends to showcase the depth and the opulence of African cultural heritage on stage.

However, we are swayed that the thematic thrust of the play focuses more on terrorism, as it is copiously depicted in the belligerent and despotic rule of Shango. In *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*, Osofisan explores the issue of dictatorship in an allegorical manner. Osofisan rewrites and recreates in a profound dramatic form the myth of Shango, the thunder king of Yoruba folklore. Shango, the focus in the play has a strong desire to transcend childhood and become a full-fledged and self-sufficient adult free from the influence and control of his legendary father, Oranmiyan and his mother Yemoja. Shango wants to surpass his father's achievements. How will he achieve this? Iggunun, the narrator, through divination tells Shango to go and marry a river, a forest and a mountain. If Shango can succeed in achieving all these, then he will definitely surpass his father.

The play therefore sets out to answer the riddle: how can a man marry a river, a forest, and a mountain? Right from the outset, Shango knows that he is out for a dangerous adventure. But he is very boastful of his conquests even when Iggunun tells him that he cannot pay the price. Shango replies, "What! You call me Shango and say, something is impossible for me to do" (154).

Iggunun suddenly metamorphoses into Alagemo and agrees to serve Shango to fulfil all his three desires. Alagemo agrees to assist him because Shango is responsible for his deliverance from the Odon tree where he has been kept as a captive. Shango is depicted as a soldier, an artist and a ruler of men. With the assistance of Alagemo, Shango succeeds in marrying a river (Oya). Oya is heiress to the unquantifiable treasures of the river and the sea. With this, Shango has fulfilled his first desire.

Shango goes ahead and marries a forest (Osun) with the help of Alagemo. Osun is the daughter of the forest, the god of fertility. But Shango's adventures are not welcome by Oya and Shango's two generals, Timi and Gbonka. They accuse Shango of neglecting the serious affairs of the state. Oya even tells Alagemo: "Now it is time for him to return to the serious affairs of State" (176). Shango is not satisfied with two wives. He is bent on marrying the third wife. Because of this, he has no time for the affairs of the State but for fresh nuptials. But his bid to marry a mountain is resisted and opposed

by Oya, Timi and Gbonka. This foreshadows an impending conflict and confrontation. In a conspiracy that is hatched by Oya and the two generals, Osun is accused of infidelity with Alagemo. Both of them are consequently banished from Shango's palace. While Osun goes back to the forest, Alagemo is sealed up in a cave. Before Alagemo goes away, he puts a curse on the land.

Consequently, the whole of Igbeti people rise up against Shango because of neglect and poverty. Gbonka reports this to Shango and says: "The men are angry, Kabiyesi, because their families are hungry, and they can't feed them" (215). Instead of empathising with the plight of the people, Shango directs his Generals to attack the people. In rage, Shango orders Gbonka and Timi.

**Shango:** Get back

**Gonka:** The men are no longer listening to us!

**Shango:** Order them

**Timi:** They won't obey?

**Shango:** Use your incantations?

**Timi:** Against our own citizens?

**Shango:** Then draw your swords

**Timi:** Against our own soldiers?

**Gbonka:** Kabiyesi, we're talking of our own kinsmen! Of our Soldiers and citizens! How can we turn our weapons and charms on them?

Shango, like Carter-Ross of *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, Iyeneri of *Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*, Abiodun of *The Chattering and the Song*, Kongi of Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest*, is presented as a ruthless, wicked and rash ruler. He lacks compassion and love for his people. After sending away his close assistant, Alagemo and his second wife, Osun, he now wants his two Generals to stop the people's rebellion through any means even if it means killing them. This is typical of African rulers who use life ammunition to attack demonstrating students and freedom agitators. Many University students and members of the public have been attacked and killed by unknown soldiers and through what they call accidental discharge. This is what Osofisan seeks to satirise.

Shango allows himself to be intoxicated with his powers even though with only a fraction of Alagemo's. Alagemo, in a conversation with Osun after they have been expelled from Shango's palace imagines what men will do if they have the power that he has:

Imagine such a power in the hands of evil people! Rascals interested only in their own ambitions! Politicians scheming for power. Generals with their eyes on the throne! A rogue, with his eyes on someone else's wife! Can you imagine the chaos that will fall on the world? (198)

Man is thus portrayed as selfish, ambitious and careless with power. There is no reason why Shango should be particularly interested in surpassing his father's achievements by marrying three wives at the expense of the State. His Generals want

more conquests, an opportunity for them to loot, extort and terrorise the people while the common men are languishing in abject poverty and famine. This is typical of our rulers who are only concerned with amassing wealth, storing money in foreign accounts and pursuing useless ventures at the expense of the State in order to enrich their pockets.

Shango, in his bid to achieve his ultimate ambition, commands his two Generals to attack each other since they have refused to attack the people of Igbeti. In the fight, Gbonka kills Timi and cuts off his head. Gbonka, in a dramatic manner, turns round to challenge Shango. He gives him seven days to surrender his crown. Shango falls and later hangs himself while his wife Oya stabs herself and dies. Shortly before Shango dies, he recounts his misdeeds and the root cause of his tragedy when he speaks to Alagemo:

I have been corrupted by unwitting acts of injustice! And the memory of my disgrace by my generals stands between me and my authority. I longed for power, I wanted to be greater than my father, but see how far I have fallen (230).

This is a warning to tyrants and dictators who soon get drunk with power. Shango therefore fails to achieve his third desire in life to marry a mountain and be greater than his father. The vision looks good but the mode of realising it is questionable and morally wrong. Shango wants to achieve his vision through the path of injustice and wickedness which the Mother Earth opposes.

### **Conclusion**

Ahmed Yerima and Femi Osofisan have demonstrated consciously their conviction and belief in deploying the theatre to advertise and promote African culture. Yerima in *Iyase* elegantly depicts the Benin traditional cultural values and beautifully portrays the image and the personality of Benin people. Osofisan on the other hand, in *Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*, gracefully presents lavishly, the affluence of Yoruba culture. This is one of the aesthetic features of Osofisan's drama. Ogunbiyi eulogises the originality of Osofisan's drama when he says that,

Osofisan has sought to reshape traditional Yoruba mythology and ritual in the light of the contemporary realities, to squeeze out of old myths fresher meanings, in the belief that Man, in the last analysis, makes his own myth. Not content to merely expose the ills of the society, he has dared to provide us with glimpses of his vision of a new society (245).

Olaniyan further commends the dramaturgy of Femi Osofisan when he says that Osofisan's works can be regarded as, "skilful appropriation and re-interpretation of indigenous performance form, a fine-tuned materialist revision of history, and a consummate dramaturgic sophistication" (248).

However, the Benin culture as portrayed in *Iyase* possesses elements of terrorism, and Yerima, implicitly appears to have endorsed this weird culture. His silence cum ambivalent position on the despotic and tyrannical nature of Benin monarchy is tantamount to his endorsement. Terrorists globally have no qualms and remorse for the

evil done and their dastardly actions are unquestionable. Yerima ought to have killed Edaiken, but he spares him to justify the injustice that is characteristic of the Benin Culture, but rather he kills Iyase, the victim of the cultural terrorism.

However, we do not spare Iyase who dismembers his wife, Ivie for her act of infidelity, and then sacrifices her to Ogun. While we agree that Iyase like a man in any culture of the world has the right to be angry at this sacrilegious act of Ivie, Iyase's anger and his resort to killing his wife amount to an act of terrorism. While we commend Osofisan for being faithful to the Yoruba myth of Shango by killing Shango and Oya for their acts of terrorism, we are not comfortable with the death of Iyase and his mother, the victims of injustice, while Edaiken, the terrorist lives on. This is a tacit endorsement of terrorism which this paper condemns under any guise. The theatre, therefore, becomes a veritable platform to express indignation against any act of cultural or monarchical terrorism.

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# COUNTER TERRORISM IN YERIMA'S *PARI* AND OSOFISAN'S *MOROUNTODUN*

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## **Abstract**

Globally, terrorism has posed as a bane to human existence and development especially in developing countries where such menace seem abound despite various approaches deployed by security agencies and personnel to counter terrorism. It is no news that Nigeria is bedevilled with various acts of terrorism, especially those threatening the unity and peaceful co-existence of the Nigerian people. Activities of Boko Haram insurgents, armed herdsmen, and Niger Delta militia, among others, have become threats to lives of Nigerians and the nation's economy. It has also resulted to divisions among tribes and ethnic-nationalities in the country. As a result, Nigerian playwrights, having understood the functionality of the art of playwriting in the society, adopt the medium as a tool to express their thoughts, ideas and visions of tackling the hazard. Using analytical method of research, this paper explores how Yerima and Osofisan discussed in the selected plays, *Pari* and *Morountodun* respectively, the menace of terrorism and counter terrorism. Furthermore, the paper interrogates the approaches and platforms suggested by the playwrights to ensure possible subjugation of the plague in Nigeria. The paper concludes that individuals and government should be responsible and responsive to their social obligations to help counter terrorism.

## **Introduction**

Since it has been argued that the nature and events in a society influence its arts, Nigerian playwrights, having understood the functionality of the art of playwriting in the society, adopt the medium as a tool to express their thoughts, ideas and visions for tackling hazard like terrorism in Yerima's *Pari* and Osofisan's *Morountodun*. This brings us to agreement with Obafemi that their works urgently deal with contemporary social problems in Nigeria with the aim of raising mass awareness of a positive alternative for addressing the social decadence (24). Playwrights most times articulate historical, political, cultural,

social and religious issues, and emphasise their position by questioning and proffering probable solution to societal issues.

The contemporary Nigerian playwright bears a mark of ideological commitment and patriotism in his plays. The thematic concerns of his plays invariably reflect the historical and socio-political situations especially that of topical issues like terrorism in Nigeria. It is no news that the country is bedevilled with various acts of terrorism, especially those threatening the unity and peaceful coexistence of the Nigerian people. Activities of Boko Haram insurgents, armed herdsmen, and Niger Delta militia, among others, have become threats to lives of Nigerians and the nation's economy. This menace, therefore, has also resulted to divisions among tribes and ethnic-nationalities in the country. To this end, this paper examines the approaches highlighted by Ahmed Yerima and Femi Osofisan in *Pari* and *Morountodun*, respectively, to help curb, if not contain the menace of terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Nigeria**

Nigeria, right from independence, has been rocked by one form of terrorist attack or the other, but compared to the current trend of terrorist attacks rocking the nation. The damage has been more devastating than that of previous times. Terrorists in Nigeria never openly lay claim to their deeds, but in some cases, like the Independence Day car bomb explosion in 2012, they do. Nigeria and Nigerians have low tolerance level and little or no sympathy for terrorist attacks or terrorism, even when the attack is aimed at the government by an insurgent group. The reason is based on the fact that the victims of such attacks are the masses who also happen to be victims of bad and corrupt leadership, not forgetting the fact that an average Nigerian man or woman loves to live out his or her life to its fullest, no matter how hard the situation of life may be. As a result of this, any terrorist attack that results to loss of life, especially innocent lives, is condemned by Nigerians at all levels. However, some terrorist organisations hide under the guise of religion to unleash terror attacks on the Nigerian populace; an example of such is the Boko Haram group in North Eastern part of the country, which has so far claimed lots of lives and destruction of properties.

Ameh Akoh notes that, "there has been a growing concern over the increasing trends of violent crimes and terrorist activities especially the use of improvised explosive devices by criminal elements" (264). For keen observers and discerning minds, terrorism is predominant and is not a new trend in Nigeria; it is conducted by those that wield the power either legitimate or illegitimate at one time or the other and in different places. Udama argues that acts of terrorism are being carried out at homes, in government and private offices, and on the roads either by government officials or private individuals. Many terrorist acts go unnoticed and the victims suffer and endure in silence without the power to react (105). He adds that, "the preponderance of terrorists' activities in recent times especially in the northern part of the country does not mean that it is limited to that section of the country alone" (106).

Terrorism in Nigeria have come a long way and have been carried out by different individuals, groups, locations and at different times. While some people are the main target of the terrorists, some of the victims are not the main targets but to draw out

attention of others. Most people resort to terrorist attacks when they fail to achieve their goal through dialogue or their inability to win the people's mind over to their cause through verbal persuasion or conviction, or when military victor cannot be attained. Terrorism which has been classified by some social scientist as the "weapon of weakness" is unfortunately what most aggrieved Nigerian people, especially those in politics, resort to in order to win the target populace over to their side. While the key players sit back at home, they employ the services of unemployed youths in the society to unleash terror in its worst form on selected victims. Most terrorist attacks are localised and the immediate victims killed or kidnapped irrespectively of the number involved is of no importance to the terrorists.

Terrorism is almost a part of human condition. Terrorism is a weapon of coercive intimidation designed to make established authority and government to submit to demands. It is often undeclared covert warfare and it has plagued mankind for centuries but today it has moved beyond simple assassinations and bombings. It has multiplied its lethal capabilities many times and is capable of killing thousands of people at a time and threatens the entire nation. The phenomenon of terrorism has become a major concern of the international community and of nations around the world, because of its accelerated frequency and with more brutal methods and tactics, causing far wider casualties and destruction. Terrorism is the aggression practiced by individuals, groups or states oppressing human beings' religion life, money and honour. It includes all forms of fear, hurt, threat, killing without right, banditry and all actions of violence and threatening committed by individuals or collectively aiming to frighten, hurt or risk people's lives. Also it includes environmental damage and destruction of public and private utilities. Ekaterina therefore explains that "terrorism is the form of violence that most closely integrates one-sided violence against civilians with asymmetrical violent confrontation against a stronger opponent, be it a state or a group of states" (5).

Without doubt, terrorism has suddenly become a serious challenge Nigeria has been grappling with. The contemporary Nigeria society is engulfed by terrible acts of terrorism, be it kidnapping by the Niger Delta militants or bomb attacks by members of the Boko Haram sect. These acts of terrorism have seriously caused untold hardship to the Nigerian populace. The haemorrhagic acts of the Boko Haram and Niger Delta militants in Nigeria warrants an exhaustive discourse on terrorism and counter terrorism in Nigeria. Ate points that for the Nigerian nation, the threat of the terrorist activities of Boko Haram has brought to the front-burner issues of core interests of national security in her foreign policy with her immediate neighbours (2). In recent times, in Nigeria, there had been several killings of innocent civilians by the Boko Haram sect, most especially targeted killings of Police and Army security forces and bombing of police stations.

Nigeria is currently experiencing a new wave of violence which is terrorism conducted in different forms, means and places. These includes bombing and killing of persons and targeting certain persons and places such as worship centres, living homes, commercial buildings, telecommunication masts, government installations and infrastructure, kidnapping as well as depriving people of their legitimate entitlements. Udamu supports the fact that, "these terrorist activities are carried out by non-state actors and do not exclude politicians and government functionaries including security agency

that ought to protect lives and properties” (110). It can be argued that the environment in which Nigerians live and their experiences of governance practices could be contributory factors to the emergence of terrorism. It is this that gives groups the initiative to take on the Nigerian State because of its perception as unjust, demeaning to the citizen, without guarantees of individual safety and security and exploitative. There is a widespread disenchantment with the Nigerian State arising from its failure to meet its obligations to the people and the perception that State policies are implemented to advance private interests for personal accumulation.

The new trends of bombing portend danger, even though it was foreseeable, and avoidable. To them, in the history of terrorism, bombing is a grotesque weapon of resentment. And from the view point of terrorists, it remains an effective strategy for invoking lawlessness and bringing any government to its knees. Egun-Amu argues that unlike robbery and kidnapping, which are directed at individuals, and are intended to surgically extract money/material gains from victims, bombing is directed at a state, and it derives from spite, malice, vindictiveness, and is aimed at causing damage and mayhem (34). The ability of government to deter, defeat and respond decisively to terrorist attacks is one of the most challenging priorities facing nations today. Nigeria is no exception to this situation as terrorism, a hitherto alien phenomenon in Nigeria, recently emerged as the leading national security issue, attracting many and varied comments in contemporary national discourse, terrorist attacks recorded in the country include drive-by-shootings, bombings, use of improved explosive devices (IEDs) as well as suicide attacks. In response, a number of measures, both passive and active, have been instituted by government to defeat this threat.

It has recently become more difficult for governments to defeat insurgencies, as in a more globalised world, cooperation, arms supplies, training and fund-raising are not limited to an insurgency’s particular territory of operation. The Nigerian government has adopted a number of legal measures in the wake of Boko Haram’s terrorist activities, including the 2013 proscription notice, which officially declared the acts of Boko Haram and *Ansaru* illegal and labelled them acts of terrorism. In the short term, countering terrorism within the framework of the law remains a major challenge in Nigeria. However, the situation is likely to improve in the long run in light of several on-going initiatives by governmental and non-governmental organisations to build the capacity of the security and intelligence agencies, although funding remains a major challenge.

### **Exploring Approaches to Counter Terrorism in Ahmed Yerima’s *Pari***

Written in 2016, the play presents a dramatic account of one of the dreadful acts of Boko Haram insurgents specifically in Chibok, North-East, Nigeria, where over two hundred (200) school girls were abducted in April 2014. Through a family, comprising Tada, Ama, and Hyelapari (the victim), Yerima explores and comments on the menace of terrorism in Nigeria. He uses these characters, and later Ibrahim (a member of the insurgent) to capture the participation of individuals, community, government, and even religion in the inhumane act. According to Yerima:

*Pari* investigates the Northern Nigeria crises from the prism of a family thrown into despair by the loss of their only daughter. In simplified language and engaging dialogue, the play examines the complicity of religion, government and individuals in the Boko Haram menace in a way that tugs at heartstring (Blurb of *Pari*).

Apparently, Yerima believes that various attacks from the killer group are instigated and corroborated by the aforementioned social forces. Although he never emphatically claims they have conscious relationship with them, he observes that they carelessly provide them with the platforms to exhibit their horrendous projects. It is therefore imperative to explore Yerima's exemplification of the complicity of the significant social components on the subject matter, as this will make us understand his ideology and submission on how to restrain and conquer the Boko Haram insurgents.

Yerima indicts the Nigeria government of neglecting her responsibility of protecting lives and properties of the citizens by questioning their lackadaisical attitude towards provision of adequate and reliable security in the country. He argues that the attitude towards this crucial duty provides the terrorist group with the gateway to perpetrating their awful acts. This position is best captured by Ama, while expressing her displeasure on the level of insecurity in the government owned school where her daughter, Hyelapari was abducted:

**Ama:** ... I never liked that cheap school, you know? But for my husband, it was cheap enough for his pocket. I wanted my only child to go to one of those schools where there is so much security even the angels of God would struggle to enter. Not that cheap school with dark environment, so that dark gun-tottering souls can just drive in trucks in the darkness of the night where children fall prey to them as animals... forcing them into slavery. This country is dying... gradually, through corruption everywhere. I tell you someone is benefitting from this madness (31).

Apart from insecurity, Ama's voice is used to highlight some inadequacies of the Nigerian government such inadequate power supply and conspiracy of some government officials on the issue. Ama believes government is not responsive to the cause and as such, she becomes hostile in her conversation with Kalagu: a local government chairman, who brings with him, the abducted child:

**Kalagu:** I want to see the mother of this house. We received a paper from Chibok Local Government that your daughter, Hyelapari Shettima was one of the girls kidnapped from the Government Girl Secondary School, Chibok on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014. Is it true? (*Ama does not answer.*) Please, answer Madam (29).

**Ama:** I am tired of answering these same questions every time. For two years now, your men have asked me the same questions. I am beginning to feel that you are thinking that our cries are for nothing (30).

Ama seizes the meeting to register her disgust towards the delayed government intervention on the abduction, thereby creating the platform for government officials, individuals and groups to redirect rescue efforts into money making enterprise. She bitterly explains this after accepting Kalagu's plea for her identity and relationship with Hyelapari:

**Ama:** Our daughter whose name you just mentioned has been missing for two years. And government has done nothing. The last local government chairman was useless to our cause. He played with our matter until he was removed disgracefully from office. His wife was a bigger clown. She invited us, including the teachers, in order to share blood money to us. How much is my daughter worth? We hear that even some, who do not know how we feel, who have never stepped one foot here, afraid of being kidnapped, go all over the world, taking photographs and begging for money in the name of our daughters (30).

The character makes us realise the complex nature of corruption in Nigeria through the practice of some citizens who exploit such horrible event to perpetrate their unholy acts. Corruption without doubt, is a bane to our development as a nation. However, it is a microscopic representation of other social problems such as unemployment and poverty, which are undoubtedly and equally serving as veritable platforms for the Boko Haram insurgent to recruit innocent citizens into the group. Yerima explains this aspect using the character of an escapee terrorist, Ibrahim, who recounts what informed his membership of the group to Tada and Ama:

**Ibrahim:** It all started the night my mother was buried. I regretted her death more. I blamed myself for her death because it wasn't I was away when she died. I was there... useless... but I was just a dead person there. She needed food and medicine... and none was within my reach ... so I watched her ... with tear-filled eyes, I watched life ebb out of her veins... then eyes closed... her heart stop beating... and she was gone.... I could not cry and I did not even try. Even if I had, there would be no tears. My friends, Zaki and Yakubu had begged me to join them.

**Tada:** Join who?

**Ibrahim:** The Jihad. The Sunna Lidda' Awah Wal-Jihad

**Tada:** Boko Haram?

**Ama:** Who?

**Ibrahim:** Yes. Young men living in hopelessness, angry at nothing in particular, all smoking and drinking, then we were thoroughly soaked in everything and the talk started. They sounded so wise... so profound. At the end of the day, between the women and drinks, talks and dreams, I felt I could do something. What it was, I did not even know. All I knew was that I was angry at everything.

**Tada:** Sad indeed. What about options? You could have refused to join.

**Ibrahim:** What options? The poor and the forgotten do not have much option. You either die poor or you live poor (46).

Having realised the prevalence of high poverty rate in the country specifically in the northern part of Nigeria where they operate, members of the insurgent exploit the situation to cajole hungry, angry and helpless innocent youths into their group. Ibrahim's case is just a fraction of several cases of such. The region according to statistics has the highest poverty rate compare to other regions in the country. This cannot be dissociated from the uncontrolled growing population and limited resources from state governments and parents to cater for the basic needs of the youths and their children respectively. As a result, parents send their male children to Islamic school and neglect them, expecting them to fend for themselves.

The playwright, Ahmed Yerima created reliable voices through Ama and Ibrahim. The former represents the victim while the latter belongs to the abductors or insurgent. He uses these characters to extrapolate politics of government, individuals, and religion in the uprising. Yerima however projects and emphasises religion as the major cause of the terror. He implicitly posits that religion could be used to counter or thwart terrorism. This can be seen in the opening and the closing scenes of the play. In the introductory scene Yerima presents us with his voice, Ama, who becomes a Muslim convert after her daughter's abduction by the Boko Haram insurgents. Just like the identity given to them by media reports, the playwright portrays the terrorists as Muslims who are propagating the cause of Islam. Ama affirms this when Tada questions her faith having started praying as a Muslim: "This must be madness... speaking in their forceful tongue, with their harmful mind" (8). Ama responds thus:

**Ama:** All I know is that the dreaded village masquerade of Mbalala dances to the sound of the drums his followers play. From now on I swear by Allah, this is what I want to do. I believe it is the right thing to do. If you take what is mine forcefully, and claim that is right in the sight of a god... your god... and you get away with it, then I want to know why? I want to know what language your god understands (9).

This voice gives us further insight into the sentiment shared by Ahmed Yerima about religious colouration of the identity of the Boko Haram group. Ama tells us more that she is unperturbed with using "the language of the angered... the language of those who took her" (14) to pray for the return of her daughter. She continues:

**Ama:** There must be a God out there. Their God. He must be alive and well. He must...because he must have been, when he guided them to where they took those girls. So, I figured it out. I just need to find a way to talk to Him. Reach Him; speak His language like they do. Wear His hijab like their women do. Beg Him...kneel before Him, grovel if I have to and by whatever other means they used when they broke into the Chibok school (14).

From the foregoing, the playwright apparently shares the sentiment of indicting religions in the unholy act, despite the fact that reports have it that the terrorist group kill and abduct without considering any religious affiliation. This is to say it will be wrong and unjustifiable, if not defaming that the group represent any religion specifically Islam as mentioned by the playwright's mouth piece, Ama that, "I became a Muslim like the abductors of my daughter" (24). Again, in the closing scene, Yerima embraces religion as a measure to curtail possible chaos that may arise in the process of conveying Ibrahim from Askirau-Uba to Darak. Through Ama, the playwright plays politics of religion making Ibrahim a Christian convert. He clearly confirms his preference for Christianity as Ama calls Ibrahim and proclaims that he must "change his faith to find salvation" (66).

Although, Tada is shocked with the pronouncement, yet, he does nothing to stop the process. In fact, Ibrahim, who is projected as an extremist equally succumb too easily to the proclamation and becomes Abraham, having made to realise that he can only 'live', if such change occurs. This is captured thus:

**Ama:** Good, so listen well, this time your life depends on it. Recite the Lord's Prayer which I taught you yesterday.

**Ibrahim:** What?

**Ama:** The Christian *Fatiha*

**Ibrahim:** Our father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. thy kingdom come...

**Ama:** Very good. Indeed you learn fast.

**Ibrahim:** Mother, will your God save me?

**Ama:** I don't know. But if He brought you this far, I suppose He has a purpose you. He also likes to save lost souls. Here, you can keep my small Bible. Now you are a Christian (67).

The above dialogue projects that Yerima's shares religious sentiment in giving his narrative of the event at Chibok. He reveals this through Ama, whom we empathise with because of her experience with the insurgents but suddenly begins to create opposing identities for the two major religions in the country. The playwright projects Christianity as a pathway to salvation while he ridicules or condemns Islam by identifying it with the Boko Haram terrorists. The identity representations however dissociate us from the implied author whom he created to render his voice on the causes and possible ways to subjugating terrorism because events have shown that victims of the insurgent are not solely Christian faithful. This implies that the playwright should not pretend that Muslims are never victims of the terrorist acts thereby making the insurgency appear as religious war.

### **Exploring Approaches to Counter Terrorism in Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun***

Morountodun, literally means, 'I have found a sweet thing' revolves around the legend of Moremi of Ile-Ife. The play dramatises the Agbekoya peasant uprising in the then Western Nigeria in 1969. In the play, Osofisan recreates the Moremi myth of struggle and injustice in order to meet the contemporary need of the Nigerian society; peasants struggle, therefore, is the main conflict of the play. This conflict is between a peasant

community in revolt against an oppressive state authority. The peasants are fighting to surmount the forces of exploitation and injustice perpetuated on them by this ruling class. This conflict is causing a serious concern for the authority which finds it increasingly difficult to contend. Osofisan has recreated the myth of Moremi in this play to portray how such cultural heritage could be employed to serve contemporary social need. The play opens in a rather non-formal *rehearsal* setting in the “Dressing area” with “a flurry of activity: actors making up, trying costumes, reading script, rehearsing gestures, miming some of the actions in the play. Director then emerges to give a resume of the play, which is about the Agbekoya uprising, in which ordinary farmers rose up and confronted the state.

However, before the play really starts, Titubi, the ‘spoilt’ daughter of Alhaja Kabirat (the head of the market women) storms into the theatre with her group to disrupt it. The activities of the theatre group in portraying the predatory nature of the bourgeoisie class, which her mother represents, might have become a big threat. She is arrested in the process by Superintendent Salami, symbolising the repressive state apparatus, who challenges her on putting up a showdown on the peasant revolt currently raging in the area against her class instead of proving her gallantry in the theatre and seeking to destroy it. He succeeds in convincing her on the need to crush the rebellion, and wins her alliance. Thus, she decides to collude with the police by serving as a decoy to infiltrate the peasants’ territory to trap their seeming intractable leader. What turns out as Osofisan’s recreation of the ancient Yoruba mythology by invoking the myth of Moremi, as he links Titubi with the legendary Queen of Ile-Ife who risked her life to save her people from the menace of Igbo by serving also as a decoy. The ploy is to have Titubi put into prison where she will be freed by the rebelling farmers when they attack the prison to release their members who are captured by the government forces. Titubi sets upon this ‘heroic’ mission. The rebelling farmers eventually attack the prison and free her with their captured members. She follows them to their camp, settles and interacts with them, only to discover to her disgust their plights for taking up ‘arms’ against the state. Rather than betraying the farmers as planned she veers and subscribes to their cause and identifies and joins forces with them, “committing class suicide” and becomes rechristened as Morountodun, meaning, “I have found a sweet thing”, and transfigures into a spokes-woman for the oppressed.

Stressing on the character of Titubi, Osofisan projects a courageous woman whose love for her community knows no bound as she voluntarily submits herself to embark on a dangerous quest to help forestall peace by acting as a decoy in order to help bring the rebellious militias to book. This is enshrined in the following conversation.

**Titubi:** Salami! (**Superintendent** stops, without turning round.) Salami, suppose I do volunteer?

**Superintendent:** (*Turns now.*) What?

**Titubi:** I said, suppose I offer to fight the peasants?

**Superintendent:** You are not finished with your pranks for tonight?

**Titubi:** It’s their leader you have not been able to capture, isn’t it? That’s why the war drags on?

**Superintendent:** Well-

**Titubi:** (*Hard.*) Yes or no?

**Superintendent:** Well, yes.... And no. Their leader proves elusive, but-

**Titubi:** But?

**Superintendent:** He may not really exist.

**Titubi:** He may not exist! A phantom leader!

**Superintendent:** I mean... there may not be just one leader, maybe a group of Leaders....

**Titubi:** But someone leads that group?

**Superintendent:** Actually...

**Titubi:** You are a liar, Salami. You know he exists. And you know his name. You admitted it in your interview with the press last week.

**Superintendent:** Okay, so I admitted it. They call him Marshall.

**Titubi:** I can bring him to you (14-15).

This portrays the strong will of women in contributing to tackling acts of terrorism bedevilling the society. As such, people who are strong-willed in embarking on such quests should be given a chance to deliver to the society in their own capacity towards engendering counter-terrorism in a conflict inflicted society. The play also captures the heroism of women in tackling terrorism, as Titubi stands her ground to be used as a decoy to bring down the rebels. This is revealed in the lines below.

**Titubi:** Give me two weeks. Give me only two weeks.

**Superintendent:** This is a dream? (*Rubbing his eyes.*)

**Titubi:** Two weeks. And I will bring him here, on his knees.

**Superintendent:** (*After a pause.*) What do you want?

**Titubi:** Can you arrange for me to be captured?

**Superintendent:** What!

**Titubi:** That's all the help I will require from you. (15)

Again, this shows Titubi's readiness to help combat terrorism. This is likened to the assistance rendered by community members through divulging information about terrorist group hideout and operation to security agencies and personnel as well as willingness to partake in condoning terrorist activities. Such act of bravery has enhanced the fight against terrorism the society. Furthermore, in the play, Titubi is arrested in the process by Superintendent Salami, depicting the suppressive state apparatus, who dares her to put up a confrontation on the peasant revolt, rather than demonstrating her thoughtfulness in the theatre and seeking to destroy it. This is captured in the following lines.

**Superintendent:** (*After a pause.*) All right, girl. I am going to call your bluff. An idea has just struck me. Follow me... to prison.

**Titubi:** Prison?

**Superintendent:** Yes! That's where it is all going to begin. Come, I will explain it all to you. (*The Superintendent leads Titubi into the cell followed by the warder.*) You Understand?.

**Titubi:** Yes. I will wait (16).

The above reveals a strategy to have Titubi put into prison where she will be freed by the rebelling farmers when they attack the prison to release their members who are captured by the government forces. The rebelling farmers eventually attack the prison and free her with their captured members. She follows them to their camp, settles and interacts with them, only to discover to her disgust their plights for taking up 'arms' against the state. This demonstrates how security personnel can work with volunteers to help tackle terrorism, especially with ones that are much familiar with the embattled terrain. It further aids in deciphering adequate information with regards to the motive behind terrorists agitations and mode of operations in the society. Furthermore, Titubi soon became curious as she discovered the anguish that fuelled the rebels struggle. The following lines project her lamentation.

**Titubi:** That was when I began to ask questions. I saw myself growing up, knowing no such sufferings as these. With always so much to eat, even servants feed their dogs.... Yet here, farmers cannot eat their own products, for they need the money from the market. They raise chickens, but must be content with wind in their stomach. And then, when they return weary from the market, the tax master is waiting, with his bill.... It could not be just.... In our house, mama, we wake to the chorus of jingling coins. And when we sleep, coiled springs, soft foams and felt receive our bodies gently. But, I have lived in the forest among simple folk, sharing their pain and anguish (66).

The above lines connotes that some acts of terrorism are product of class struggle and dominance of the ruling class over the poor or less privileged. Titubi's presence in the rebel's camp is a strategy that can help tease out vital information to security agencies about terrorists motives if deployed to counter terrorism. More so, Osofisan's advocacy for collectivism in this social revolution is signified in Titubi's handing over the gun to Marshal with the optimism of forming a new coalition for the progress of the masses for which cause they are fighting. The following lines reveal thus:

**Titubi:** (*Laughs, but shrilly: she's overstretched.*) Mama, our life itself is not important. Nor all these glittering tinsels we use to decorate it.... Ask your friend Salami. He knows the truth now. In another week, he will be asking to negotiate. He won't be in such a hurry to order the massacre of children... for there is no way you can win a war against a people whose cause is just. As long ... (*She's beginning to falter now.*) ... as ... long as the law remains ... the privilege of a handful of powerful men ... ah, I

am tired ... Marshal! ... you didn't believe me, did you? You never believed I was sincere?

**Marshal:** Titu, I ....

**Titubi:** Take the gun. (*She hands it over to him.*) Let a new life begin (70).

We can deduce from the above that Titubi who served herself as a bait to bring down the rebels became convinced that the government cannot win a war against a people whose cause is just. Hence, there is need to apply wisdom in handling such critical cases of terrorism. At the end, Osofisan favours a compromise agreement, a round table negotiation between the revolting farmers and the government. Thus, negotiation is perceived as another means to combat terrorism especially when the terrorist activities are getting out of hand.

### **Conclusion**

In this discourse, we examined Ahmed Yerima's *Pari* and Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* as a panacea for thwarting terrorism, especially in reference to the wave of activities of the terrorism orchestrated by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram group in Nigeria. In the play texts, both playwrights explore the complicity of government and individuals on the menace of terrorism, which we believe is apt to understanding how same approach can be deployed to counter terrorism in the country. Issues of insecurity, corruption, unemployment, poverty, greed, infidelity and others are emphasised as foundations and factors responsible for the terror acts. Obviously, government and individuals are major culprits in this regard as we have examined in the paper. We, however, observed that if adequate measures are taken by the concerned parties towards curbing the identified social maladies and administrative ineptitude, there will be a breakthrough in containing the insurgency.

However, the paper disagrees with Yerima's claim of religious compromise in the Boko Haram menace. We believe that this position is an assumption that cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt, as experienced in the play. Rather than making logical exemplification of his claimed complicity of religion, what we experience is just a hypothesis which to us is an ideological representation of religions. On this note, this paper concludes that individuals and government need to be more responsible and responsive to their respective social obligations in order to counter and contain terrorism.

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# **DRAMATURGY OF SPACE AND THEATRICALITY OF COUNTER-TERRORISM: *FAREWELL TO BABYLON* AND *FAREWELL TO A VIRUS OF ANOMIE* AS PARADIGMS**

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## **Abstract**

That the Greeks gave us the *theatre* as “a seeing place” since the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC is no longer contested, because it is a space; space, according to the *English Dictionary*, being “of unlimited or generalised physical extent or a bounded or specific physical extent”. Consequently, several scholars, including Peter Brook, have come up with diverse definitions and perceptions about the space of performance. Theatre is “an act of arts and an art of acts”, since several acts and arts collaborate to ‘terrorise’ the audience into accepting the point of view expressed on stage, the space. Whereas terrorism is a method which can be used by any group or person and for any kind of motive, terrorism equally involves unlawful and typical random acts of violence or the threat of such violence employed by an individual, group, or government to achieve political goal, counter-terrorism is all about measures intended to combat or reduce terrorist activities. This paper argues that Nigerian playwrights and dramatists have created drama of counter-terrorism to pass warnings to the public about the contestation for the Nigerian space by many groups or individuals. The theory of social change and the literary theory of Eagleton are used in looking at two plays which dwell on the theme of counter-terrorism, from different perspectives. The paper concludes that the dramaturgy of Bode Sowande and ‘Diran Ademiju-Bepo has helped in charting a survival agenda to counter the terrorism of contestation for space.

## **Introduction**

Man naturally loves space because it is the essential and sustaining element of his existence. After all, he grows within a space called the womb and comes out into the world to encounter another space that will help him fulfil his destiny and exits into another space that serves for his resting place until eternity. Wole Soyinka and many other prominent scholars in theatre, Anthropology and Archaeology have done quite a commendable job on and around space, starting from the seminal work by Soyinka, *The Fourth Stage*.

But why think seriously about space at all? It is because space is of time; unlimited or generalised physical extent; or a bounded or specific physical extent. If this were not so, Peter Brook would not have documented his experience of theatre in *The*

*Empty Space* being the fulcrum of theatrical expression itself. Taking off from Brook, therefore, theatre thrives on space, that is, space as in time, unlimited physical stretch or a specific place with boundaries. The playwright also uses his dramaturgy to create space and a semblance of a 'new world' for the characters, a world in which everything works, in which there is no shadow of electricity or water failure, in which characters 'play' as they are creatively interpreted in role playing by actors, under the artistic guidance of a director. The director equally uses space to create *mise en scene*, that theatrical ambience within which he dumps the cast to narrate the story for the delight or pain of an audience, which Patrice Pavis describes as,

the synchronic confrontation of signifying systems, and it is their interaction, not their history, that is offered to the spectator and that produces meaning... all signifying systems, in particular the utterance of the dramatic text in performance. *Mise en scene* is not an empirical object, the haphazard assembling of materials, the ill-defined activity of the director and stage team prior to performance. It is an object of knowledge, a network of associations or relationships uniting the different stage materials into signifying systems, created both by production (the actors, the director, the stage in general) and reception (the spectators) (24-25).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The social change theory implies what Peter Ekegren, in his contribution to methodological debate, and to illuminate the ways in which different readings of a single text are created and defended, describes as the offshoot of the structuralist debates of the 1970s in which the field of textual analysis has largely remained the preserve of literary theorists (8). Social scientists, while accepting that observation is theory laden, have tended to take the meaning of texts as a given and to explain differences of interpretation either in terms of ignorance or bias. Ekegren further avers that social theory covers one kind of *intentionalism*, that is, a kind of understanding that claims that the meaning of a text is to be located in the author's intentions. Here, in the teleological mode of reading, the author's intentions are supposed to be closest to fulfilment in his last text, in the light of which his intentions and, in the same move, meanings in earlier texts are identified.

Through the critique of these different themes or notions, notable for their fundamental denunciation of the text itself, Ekegren will argue that it is necessary instead to consider the text *in its own right*, with what flaws it may have, such as, for example, gaps, inconsistencies, ambiguities, and in so doing laying bare its meaning-producing structures. Accepting the text's *incompleteness*, two things will be accomplished. It will be possible to see how the text is a necessary condition of existence for the production of multiple meanings, and it will also be possible to understand how different readers, belonging to different schools of thought, may seize upon alternate meanings in the text and thus produce divergent interpretations when reading the same text.

On the other hand, Ifeanyi Ugwu opines that the idea of change is central to revolutionism and reformism but while the former implies the use of force, may involve

violence, disorder, suddenness and anti-democratic principles, the latter is democratic and does not require violence or abruptness (2). Reformism and revolutionism (the practice of or “support for” social or political revolution) are processes of change but they differ in their modes of operation. Reformism refers to “any doctrine or movement that advocates social or political change in a gradual manner, within a democratic framework rather than a revolutionary change (*Chambers* 1028).

### **Reality of Space and the Immediacy of Theatre**

Realistically, space has achieved a presence of being, like movies, “an emotional immediacy that seems unmediated – simply there, without a history, without apparatus, without anything actually between us except the story” (Kolker xvii). In the greater scheme of things, space means so much to the theatre artist, whichever side of the pendulum he belongs. From the playwright, the designers, to the director – we all interpret the script within a space. The script or play text therefore becomes the reference point of all theatrical activities that take place. However, between the text and production, there is a certain terrorism that has to be countered, a terrorism which Pavis, in his seminal discourse on the nature of the relationship between text and performance, describes as *mise en scene*, the bringing together or confrontation, in a given space and time, of different signifying systems, for an audience (29). According to him, the audience see a performance which is more or less comprehensible, in which the text is only one of several components, others being the actors, the space, the tempo (24). It is in this light that we see the playwrights hereunder studied having dexterously demonstrated great creative ingenuity in employing and exploring space through their dramaturgy and theatricality.

One finds a semblance of the Nigerian space in the two plays in discourse, as we explore both texts. Olakunle Thompson and Remi Aduradola, quoting John Macionis, contend that while war involves conventional warfare, terrorism uses sporadic and random acts of violence to cause fear (1). W. B. Worthen also contends that that,

the meanings of modern drama cannot be fully seized without considering how those meanings are produced as theatre. For in the theatre, drama can speak only through the practices of acting and directing, the construction of the material space of the *mise-en-scène*, and the arrangement and disposition of the audience (1).

### **Textual Explorations of Change, Rebirth and Terrorism in *Farewell to Babylon***

Change is at the heart of Sowande’s drama and he has pursued this with a difference of approach from the vision and enthusiasm of Kole Omotoso and Femi Osofisan. For instance, Olu Obafemi has argued that, while Osofisan is impatient with animist metaphysics in art, what he calls ‘superstition’ and ‘mystification’, Sowande is deeply committed to the search for an ‘equipose’ between materialism and metaphysical reality (260).

Sowande also embraces the mytho-ritual, in the search for social liberation through collective action but from both the materialist and spiritual dimensions as

perspective. This vision, he has defined as ‘Spiritual Nationalism’ enunciated through Onita’s philosophy of spiritual socialism in *Farewell to Babylon*, according to Olu Obafemi (261). The same philosophy comes to the fore in *Sanctus for Women*, which explores the conflict between the economic and the spiritual; capitalism and ‘communitarianism’; and the individual versus the group, here represented by the Iroko and the spirit of wealth. Social regeneration, an offshoot of social consciousness is the music that rebirth and liberation can help to nurture.

*Farewell to Babylon*, Sowande’s third play reveals, at a more intense level, his political commitment and a conscious blend of theme and technique. As an experiment in the proposed alternative model for society, *Farewell* comes as a dramatic statement on the theatre of communal liberation through the mechanics of indigenous African thought and participation on the one hand, and a social revolution for radical change. As a sequel to *The Night Before*, *Farewell* seeks a rebirth from the moral decadence and degeneration which was rearing its ugly head in the larger society, away from the four walls of the university campus, a sort of haven. False values versus an ideal society form the central plot of the play, in search of rebirth through collective action of the intellectual and the masses to bring about social regeneration. This is achieved through the story of four former student leaders – Moniran, Nibidi, Onita and Dabira – brimming with the Marxist enthusiasm of overthrowing the oppressor, represented by Babylon, vividly portrayed in *The Night Before*. They all undergo a metamorphosis after their graduation from the ivory tower, confronted by the realities of the outside world.

Moniran gives an indication of this realisation when he says to Major Kasa, his military ally:

**Moniran:** There is a dream and there is a reality. The reality now is Babylon and at its head is the Field Marshall. The dream, my friend, the dream is change: the taste of pain and release. And that needs discipline (*Farewell... 70*).

Disillusioned by the social structure, Onita joins the farmers’ movement for the simple reason, as he puts it: of

**Onita:** Learning from them. The decadence of my life mixed with the freshness of what they have to offer may give my future a new meaning (77).

Although he is a visionary, he rejects the notion of heroism or a messiah in the face of Babylon. In an exchange with Moniran, now the ‘Octopus of the Special Department’, he declares:

**Onita:** Why do you want to make a hero of me? I am no hero. I do not want to be a hero. Not a messiah. I sincerely want a new way of life. A simple life. Look at the state of the nation, the aggressive materialism. As a man, all I saw for us was chaos. And then, I discovered the farmers (79).

In his desperate bid to avoid a messianic posture, Moniran undergoes an internal turmoil about his revolutionary intention and ends up a traitor in Onita's estimation because he has become the administrative head of a bourgeois military dictatorship. He is later to stage a *palace coup d'état* against the same regime he serves in, an act which can never be taken as a total revolution for which the masses yearn, but rather an act of terrorism. It is obvious that Sowande in this play has brought to the full glare of the audience, the superstructure made up of the military, the political, the business and the intelligence elites involved in the crass, aggressive materialism that have come to characterise the power elite represented by the Realm, in this contestation for the Nigerian space. Only a socio-spiritual regeneration as an ideology could bring salvation.

The Farmers' Movement on the other hand typifies the corps of indigenous revolutionary elements who sustain the ethos of spiritual communalism of prosperity and equal distribution of wealth and cultural liberation in an animist bond with the earth, giver of life. Oduloju, son of the movement's head, Dansaki, enthuses, quoting from Onita:

**Oduloju:** ...the earth should symbolise the egalitarian principle of human existence... Earth guards gold. Earth yields food. Either in food or in mineral, there should be no such thing as poverty, except only when the yield of the earth and the work it demands are not appreciated. Value therefore the things of the earth and let the farmer and the technician have their due in equal appreciation.

The dramatic technique employed by the playwright ensures the audience's participation in the thematic exploration through the devices of pantomime, direct communication, music, songs (both ritual and pentecostal), dance, traditional praise chant, parody, caricature and the theatrical marriage of mime, dialogue and music with folktale (for example, Mr. Tortoise and Elephant). The intention here is to reveal his ideological leaning and the political statement in the play from the two worlds – one of the farmers, the other of the ideologues – created by him. Sowande in *Farewell* shows theatrical maturity in the handling of the theme begun in *The Night Before* as part of his own contribution to the theatre of revolutionary alternative.

Sowande's dramaturgy comes to the fore in this play about the choices a playwright can make when projecting an ideology. Such choices emerge within the theatre's systematic ways of putting the drama into play. Not only are these practices specific to a given moment in history, they also have a manifestly *rhetorical* dimension. The theatre works to claim a certain kind of meaning for the drama by claiming – even legitimating – a certain kind of experience for the audience as significant. The rhetoric of theatre, that is, frames a relationship between the drama, stage production, and audience interpretation, and it is within that relationship that our experience as an audience takes place. The experience one gets watching *Babylon* is that of a theatricality of space as the entire drama comes out within the prism of counter-terrorism.

### **Synoptic Overview of a Text for Social Change: *Farewell to a Virus of Anomie***

The creation of life and all around it are appreciated through the scenic beauty. Scenery has a real or imagined line that marks the limits. It exists within a particular space, which means a particular scene can be distinguished from another. Theatre is an environment for expression; space whether natural or derived as a platform for that expression through creative imitation. Peter Brook sees theatre as an empty space, as aforementioned, with a capacity for an 'actor' and 'audience'. Michael Etherton sees drama as, "a process of social development in a way we represent ourselves and our society to ourselves" (62). The role of drama is to creatively unfold the problems that bother the human society, to raise consciousness and provoke positive change.

*Farewell to a Virus of Anomie* is a parable on life, love, politics, choices, and the ultimate triumph of individual wills in the face of the new ideology of our time: individualism and survivalism. Abdulsalam describes the play as capturing the lives of some university undergraduates on campus, namely Ahmed, Lara, Koby, Kesh, Zainab, Major (ID), among others (4-5). Ahmed and Lara are lovers, but both cannot enjoy intimacy because Ahmed has lost his sexual prowess to a campus secret cult group called Brotherhood of the Wasps (BOW), of which he became a member to gain power of belonging. Ahmed's emptiness makes Lara really dissatisfied and sad that she seeks for means to restore his manhood. Kesh, a member of BOW, employs Major (ID), another cultist, to rape Koby in return for a past favour, simply because she turns down his love advances. Ahmed, however, admits his problem and expresses the willingness to be restored. This leads to the formation of a resistant group by three female friends: Lara, Koby and Zainab, called, the Amazing Grace Sisters (AGS), with the aim of revolting against the secret cults on campus and helping victims of their nefarious activities who have become subject to their torture and penalty. Ahmed is finally rescued from secret cultism and his conscience restored by the AGS, as well as other cultists who were willing to break free from the clutches of the fraternities.

In one of the sub-themes, Koby's father, a retired but not tired Commodore, is one of the leaders of the political party whose headquarters suffers a bomb explosion which leads to many casualties. After his daughter is assaulted by a rapist, he invades the University campus with law enforcement agents to arrest her assailant, while the students who refuse to surrender their arms are seen as rebels, and perpetrators of kidnapping, militancy, insurgency, terrorism, armed robbery, assassins, pipeline vandalism, violence, and the likes. The police arrest and charge them before a special tribunal, which finds the guilty and sentences them to seven (7) years imprisonment. Koby and ID (Major) get married later after graduation, without knowing they shared a past together. On their wedding night, in the course of their intimate moments, the groom discovers a scar on his bride's thigh, which leads her to unfold a dark part of her past she would have loved to forget, as she narrate her ordeal with a rapist back in school, to which ID subsequently confesses being her masked assailant. ID moves to end the marriage which has hardly begun as he pleads for Koby's forgiveness, as according to him, his past will haunt him for ever in the marriage:

**ID:** I am quitting ... You cannot forgive me for the pain I have caused you. So, I will not bother you. I am turning back from here.... The honeymoon had turned sour before it started ... Yes, not too late... to turn back... (67).

The play ends as Koby is faced with the choice to forgive him or not, as she already loves him, coupled with the realisation that he deflowered her through the rape act, blaming the system on campus for making him a victim.

**Koby:** It is, my love. It is too late to turn back...and I have forgiven him... I mean you. We can always push the past behind us.... I loved you and still love you, in spite of all that has happened.... Love heals all, my dear husband. With love, the virus of anomie has been captured and buried... (68).

**Dramaturgy of Space and Theatricality of Counter-terrorism: *Farewell* and *Anomie***

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the main objective of this presentation is to show that theatre presents itself as an ideal space for the dramaturgical experimentation of the quest for social change and reorganisation of the society, predicated on the contestation for space by different groups as evident in the two plays. The desire for a revolutionary change of the society compels some individuals to take on the messianic garb to challenge accepted norms and values such as the inviolability of the gods or the mafia. Sowande's *Farewell* is a drama of revolution as can be seen in the ideological pursuit of the characters, who graduated from the university with lofty dreams of how to liberate the society from the shackles of neo-liberalists, but whose dreams are later shattered due to the imperative of coming to terms with reality. The Utopia built while ingesting Marxist revolutionary mantra in the university soon dissipates before their very eyes like a pack of cards as they realise it is not easy to confront the oppressors. *Anomie* for instance argues that if the country must rid herself of the virus of moral decadence, corruption, oppression, prostitution, money laundering, secret cultism, kidnapping, terrorism, illegal possession of arms, killings, rape, and the likes, there must be a revolution. The social regeneration earnestly desired by the society is at the heart of this revolution.

For one, "Babylon" literally represents oppression; while the other, "anomie", is semantically and semiotically suggestive of anarchy and terror. Both plays feature the campus of a university in their theatricality of space and dramaturgy of terrorism, albeit, for *Anomie*, some events unfold outside the four walls of the campus; while in *Babylon*, the space created is in the 'real' world, after the utopian postulations on campus. Whereas the lead characters in *Farewell* do not belong to a campus cult, but are bound together by their Marxist beliefs and alliances, the protagonists in *Anomie* clearly bestride the world (space) of the fraternity on campus and in the outside world, going by the words of the Tribunal Chairman:

**Tribunal Chairman:** The menace of secret cult activities and the illegal importation of arms and ammunition into our campuses and staff quarters

have for some time in the recent past, been giving the authorities serious concern. The wanton impudence and clinical finesse, with which these brutes operate, if condoned by any administration, will not only be tantamount to the existence of a parallel government but also spell doom for the entire country.... Armed robbers and insurgents terrorise innocent citizens with their state-of-the-art weapons on the streets that nowhere is safe from them. Now, the ivory towers, citadels of learning and character, have been turned upside down, feet dancing in the air, by these nefarious cults which operate at night. Gone were the days when we sailed in broad daylight... (*Clearing his throat*) (*Anomie* 64-65).

These two worlds collide in theatrical *mise en scene* to give the audience a clear promise of how to counter the prevailing terrorism against the vulnerable group of victims, both on campus and off campus. The cultists use violence to seek power in *Anomie*:

**Ahmed:** ... I joined the cult because I wanted power but I had poverty. I acquired the power alright and was instrumental to the woes of many of my colleagues... (59).

While a former ally in *Farewell* uses the terrorism of a military coup d'état against the regime in which he is serving, in an attempt to liberate himself. The duo of Thompson and Aduradola contend that:

In Nigeria, terrorism was used in the establishment of the colonial states; likewise the indigenous people that occupied the pre-colonial states also countered this act used by the colonial hegemony to occupy their territories. While the tactics used by the British against the indigenes could be a conventional warfare, the indigenes in some circumstances used terror attack. It should however be noted that modern terrorism in Nigeria was first witnessed during the Maitatsine movement in 1980 led by Alhaji Marwa Maitatsine who is believed to be an immigrant. From his base, he made sure that his ideology was felt in the Northern states of Sokoto, Kano and Borno elicited the "justifiable" anger of the uprisings in Kano.... Though the difference between the two is that while terror was used by the indigenes against the colonialists in some communities, it was used by the group to spread an ideology (4).

From the above, it can be argued that the two plays in study portray tacitly, revolutionary ingredients of oppression, injustice, class segregation and discrimination, and violence to qualify for the contestation for the Nigerian space. The history of terrorism in Nigeria, therefore, is long and tortuous, to provide the ready raw materials for Sowande and Ademiju-Bepo's dramaturgy. The dramatic conflicts involving the diverse groups in the two play texts are replicas of the campaign of terror which we witness all around us in the real world.

## Conclusion

In the words of Maximilien Robespierre, talking about how the Latin word, *terrere*, acquired its modern form ‘terrorism’, during the reign of terror in France in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, ‘...terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a special principle as it is a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country’s most urgent needs’ (Thompson and Aduradola 3).

This paper has examined the issues of social inclusion, which encompass integration and re-integration of the victims, the vulnerable population in our society who have been caught in the war, in the sporadic and random acts of violence which had caused fear and enthroned a reign of fear and terror. The members of the cults who renounced their membership are re-integrated back into the society to spend their energy in positive direction while those who refuse were and were caught in the acts, are sentenced to a period of incarceration. Moniran however suffers from social exclusion after seeing his co-revolutionaries face the reality from dream. The popularity of terrorism the world over notwithstanding, this presentation concludes that counter-insurgency provided by the two playwrights can be an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of terrorism.

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# CULTURAL TERRORISM IN BINEBAI'S *KARENA'S CROSS*: A POSTCOLONIAL OVERVIEW

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## **Abstract**

The Postcolonial theory emerged from the literature of oppression and resistance, which focuses on colonial experiences of the colonised. The Postcolonial discourse is the beginning of the movement towards redefining, reformulating and reconstructing the colonised self, the marginal status of women and the literature exploring it. This paper therefore argues that Ben Binebai's *Karena's Cross* should not be understood only as a mono-dramatic and literary text, but as a Postcolonial text which treats the issues of cultural terrorism on subaltern woman by a patriarchal society under the guise of tradition and cultural practices. These patriarchal terrorists wearing the cloak of neo-colonialism have refused to let go of their patriarchal psychology, but doubly exploiting the subaltern woman and placing her under the shadow. An analysis of the impact of the cultural practices on women and their effects on the lives of most third-world women are examined. An analysis of the impact of the cultural practices and their effects on the lives of most third-world women is carried out, using this play. The paper advocates that a fair playing ground should be allowed for effective impact on the communal, national and global scenes for both sexes, breaking down the cultural, political and historical barriers for the voices of the subaltern woman to be heard. The paper concludes with the various strategies that women can employ to counter cultural terrorism in their homes, communities and nation at large.

## **Introduction**

When we talk about cultural terrorism, our discourse focuses on the means of terrorism, the terrorist and the terrorised. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in human history, but has been part of human existence that took a new dimension in the mid-1990s and it has since become part of our lives as it increases daily. Terrorism is the use of violent tactic or technique of psychological/physical manipulation to stir up unnecessary separation among the people within a community or against other people or community in order to effect the desired change. Terrorism has a complex and multidimensional nature, so has no universal definition. However, the definition of Walter Lacquer shall be looked at. To him, terrorism is the

Use or the threat of the use of violence, a method of combat, or a strategy to achieve certain targets... it aims to induce a state of fear in the victim, that is ruthless, and does not conform to humanitarian rules... (43)

This act or threat of coercion or violence to achieve whatever aim of partial or permanent intimidation and subjugation is caused by many reasons among which is religion, racism, oppression, financial and political gains, relative deprivation, and defeating globalisation among others have now become an integral part of social behaviour in the world over several decades.

Culture can be defined as the set of shared spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of human experiences that is created and constructed within social praxis (Ertürk 8). Culture, therefore, represents the totality of the way of life of a given society, and it stands for habit, for some kind of instinctive activity whose rules are inscribed, legitimised and imposed on a community or the society. It is a known fact that all societies represent the social formation and arrangement of the people who share these have their own cultural beliefs, norms and practices that guide them, shape their values and motivate them to actions that might be unreasonable to themselves as well as observers. These beliefs, norms or practices become terroristic tools used against the female gender, thus, “reducing them to sub-human assets belonging to men” (Wadesango et al. 11). Since these cultural practices are not frowned at and questioned, they are taken as a principle among the people and, therefore, persist in the society. Serapin observes that, “terrorism is not justified by any group identification or affiliation, but that culture underpins and influences terrorists’ thoughts and actions” (62). In other words, culture plays an essential role in spurring and sustaining violence.

Cultural practices, therefore, consciously and unconsciously have promoted negative thinking, propagated hatred and violence in the society, and they range from child/forced marriage, female genital mutilation, son preference, female infanticide, honour killing, early pregnancy, wife battering, sexual abuse, widowhood rites and prostitution, among others (Cassman 128, 130; Coomaraswamy 8; Nussbaum 8; UN 3-4; Wadesango et al. 123-124). Terrorism has become concretised by the approaches and means in cultural practices that is why Rachelle defines it as, “the practice that inflicts immense psychological and emotional pains and sufferings...” (130).

These prevailing cultural practices in different parts of the world have contributed immensely to the various forms of terroristic acts carried out on women; their bodies have become the battleground for the patriarchal society who uses violence as a tactic to subjugate, displace, dislodge and marginalise them, and cause devastating psychological and physical ripple effects on the society. But in this case, the issue of terrorism is culturally/religiously inclined against women, who in various parts of the world have been socially predisposed to endure multifarious experiences owing to oppressive rules against women due to the timeless culture of patriarchy: a culture that is a socially constructed phenomenon which enforces notions of sex and gender that equate to male supremacy and female inferiority, and also institutionally allow all men to oppress all women (Bhasin 3; Gamble 302; Sultana 1). Patriarchal inclinations and views on the relationship between men and women and how they are generally treated

emanated from religion, looking at the relationship between Adam and Eve, which symbolises how many religions view women (Darvishpour 55). These views ultimately caused all forms of abuse against girls/women: as they are social constructs which engender abuse. Religions, as is noted, have therefore become a source of social control, while culture underpins and influences terrorists' thoughts and actions thereby legalising abuse/terrorism. Since cultural beliefs/practices are linked to patriarchy, women become the subject of this cultural subjugation. Cultural terrorism, therefore, is the systematic and structured use of cultural beliefs/ practices to oppress, exploit, marginalise and violate women. According to Shihada, "women are victims of patriarchy fortified by religion, traditions and culture" (167); because patriarchal thinking shapes the values of our culture, male dominance and women subjugation by any means necessary is used to sustain the trend, hence it supports, promotes and condones coercion, violence and abuse of women.

These terroristic acts have made the woman unimportant, invisible, un-respected and silenced, so that she is unable to speak about her experiences in her family. But because the subaltern woman has the urge to speak and be heard, she struggles to be independently minded, educated, and strong-willed, strive to do things on her own and make choices regarding every aspect of her life. It is in this light that this paper shall analyse *Karena's Cross* in the postcolonial Nigerian society.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The colonial ideology was based on the doctrine of cultural, political and economic hierarchy and supremacy in all aspects of the people's existence, but the *postcolonial ideology* came into existence in order to help the oppressed, voiceless and marginalised groups gain freedom from various forms of exploitation. The postcolonial theory is seen as establishing intellectual spaces and representatives for the subaltern people to speak for themselves and in their own voices, producing enabling atmosphere to remove the imbalances between the colonisers and colonised.

Within the postcolonial theory, the subaltern theory emerged as a response to the question of silencing and subjugation of the marginalised, oppressed and voiceless people. Gayatri Spivak's *subaltern theory* draws an inspiration from Edward Said's "Orientalism", which refers to "the way, in which the West dominates, restructures and spreads its authority over the Orient with the justification that their culture and values are superior" (3). Said further explains that the vision of the Orient are mere re-presentations, ideological constructions anchored in a specific perspective and with an inherent agenda (7). Gramsci, on the other hand, refers to the subaltern as, "unrepresented group of people in the society" (55). The oppressed subjects or more generally subaltern were subjected to a consciousness of being inferior, so were made to carry out orders according to the terms and norms of a more powerful 'other' in which they exist (Moretona 8).

Spivak sees the subaltern studies as an avenue through which the subaltern, whether as individual or group, can be liberated, experiencing and articulating themselves, rather than being spoken for, known but represented by those who exploit them. They should be masters and inventors of their own voices because allowing others

to speak for them will, according to Spivak re-inscribe their subordinate position in the society. She argues that:

Subaltern is not just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie.... In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference.... They are the groups (outside) the hegemonic power structure (de Kock 45-46).

The hegemonic power structure in this case is the male dominant structure and society, where women are accorded the secondary position and given inferior roles that have no meaningful position.

Spivak basically emphasised on 'the third world' women's struggles and experiences and that there is no space from which they can speak because their voice and agency are so embedded in patriarchal codes of moral conduct and the British colonial representation where she is treated as a victim of barbaric culture that are impossible to recover:

Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works through domination... In certain society... certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are influential than others... (Said 7)

Gramsci posits that once a society is not totalitarian, the citizen are dominated and imposed on by the ruling class who create and maintain the social institutions, in other words certain and any type of cultural enterprise and practices will thrive in the society and among the people. Spivak's major aim on the issue of the subaltern women is to ultimately save them from the burdens of indigenous patriarchal tradition and subsequently empower them. According to her,

the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernisation (102).

The question then is how can the subaltern woman free and disengage herself from the double nature of subjugation of the colonial power structure and the patriarchal cultural terrorism practices in Nigeria?

### **Experiences of the Subaltern Woman in *Karena's Cross***

From time immemorial, women have been seen as the fabric of human existence, but the predominance of patriarchal system in the third world countries means that women are still perceived and treated as structurally subordinate to men as victims of cultural practices, which are used to terrorise and keep them under perpetual fear and subjugation. According to Karena, the Owe-ama community was "a village in which men freely and physically inflicted injuries on the body of women for little mistakes" (3-4). These acts

are justified and condoned by the hegemonic patriarchal power structure. In *Karena's Cross*, the Nigerian society continued to thrive on the colonial period and the postcolonial era too, since it encourages patriarchal culture that makes it very difficult for the subaltern woman to express herself. But Karena spoke, challenged and fought for herself and by extension, other subaltern women, in spite of the ordeals she went through. The subaltern Karena suffered doubly as a girl-child in her father's house and a married/widowed girl. All these happened because the Owei-ama community is a totally patriarchal society where the male defended their custom as a symbol of integrity of their community's cultural identity. Nemughan, Karena's father, is the head of the clan and his family carries out both domestic and religious functions, which he forcefully enforces,

**Karena:** ... A village in which law was culture,  
Culture was law and the makers  
And custodians of culture  
And law were the men.

It is a village where women  
Lived at the mercy of men.... (3)

Nemughan is the first female in Karena's life who forcefully and trickily dominated her through a cultural condition instilled on women from childhood.

**Karena as Nemughan:** My daughter every  
Age has its ceremony.  
As our customs demand  
You will soon be circumcised.  
We shall celebrate your circumcision  
Ceremony to make some money  
For the family and you will  
Thereafter be given out in marriage (5).

This negative inhuman cultural practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is fortified by economic, social, moral and ideological factors as a result of the patriarchal mentality to dominate women and consolidate the patriarchal image of women as sex objects (EL Sadaawe 65). A tortuous painful barbaric practice that lies on the heart of cherished tradition, values and honour (Rachelle 128), all for the "benefit of men" (UN 3).

**Karena as Nemughan:** I promised but I don't want you  
To get pregnant in school.  
The circumcision will deactivate  
The sexual urge in you and prevent you  
From promiscuity so that you  
Remain peaceful within yourself.  
That way you will not fall prey

To those sex-crazy dragons.  
Trust me after the cutting exercise you  
Will rest until the wound is healed  
Before you go to school (12).

Women are being treated as the “other”, as “marginal” and as “fairer sex” and the psychological reasons behind this, is to completely subjugate them under patriarchal dominance and utilise their servile existence whenever needed. Adrienne Rich says that,

patriarchy is the power of ideological political system on which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, religion, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which female is everywhere subsumed under the male (57-58).

From the above, it therefore means that only the male have the right of existence, the women are parasites, hence, have no independent existence. That is why Spivak says that, “the sexed subaltern subject has no space from which she can speak” (307)

**Karena:** ... A village where men were the only  
Lords and voices of the land (4).

According to de Beauvoir,

...Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man.... And she is simply what man decrees: thus she is called ‘the sex’, by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him, she is sex – absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man, and not he with Deference to her; she is the incidental, the in-essential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is Absolute, She is the Other (16).

We see that sex is a dehumanising tool that the patriarchal class uses as instrument of power against women whether by force or by consent. The woman lacks control over her sexuality as a result of rape, an act of forcefully having sexual intercourse against the will of the woman; it therefore showcases male domination over women by force (Brownmiller 209; Kambarami 4).

Karena becomes an epitome of sexploitation as institutionalised by her father, husband and the entire community. Her father giving her out in marriage at a tender age, her husband Daubri raping her in the presence of other young men and the community not punishing the offender rather accepts him as an in-law, all these show the acceptance of women as mere sex object and a show of “triumph of manhood”, a conscious process by which “all men keep all women in a state of fear” (Brownmiller 5).

**Karena:** ...The storm of

Collective villainy  
Fell upon my virgin life at  
Owei-ama and frustrated it.  
I became a helpless  
Puppet dancing to the strings of destiny.  
I lived in constant fear, frustration  
Humiliation and hardly remember  
My dream of life before marriage. (19-20)

The issue of rape is invariably connected to the concept of women as property which the man uses as basic weapon of force against women. This becomes legalised once the woman is married and “paid for”:

**Karena:** ...it was the belief  
In Owei-ama culture that  
Women were possessions of men. (3)

**Karena as Nemughan:** You women are empty possessions.  
Training you is waste of money and time.  
When you get married, no one  
Will know you are still my daughter.  
My name will be lost. Why must  
I waste my money training you? (6).

The woman, as a legal wife, automatically becomes dehumanised because she is treated like a piece of property that can be used and discarded at will.

The ancient barbaric tradition of marrying young under-age girls, who have not attained puberty to older men, is prevalent in many societies, Nigeria inclusive. Even with all its attendant consequences, most people have turned deaf ears to it.

**Karena:** ... I lost my husband from the day  
I was forced to marry him.  
I was dehumanised by his people  
Even before he died (2).

**Karena as Nemughan:** Karena

**Karena:** Papa.

**Karena as Nemughan:** Do you know you are thirteen years old now?

**Karena:** Yes papa.

**Karena as Nemughan:** Good. What I am about to  
Tll you is very important.

**Karena:** Say it papa.

**Karena as Nemughan:** I love you, my daughter.  
You are my pride.

A great source of my daily happiness.

**Karena:** Thank you papa.

But you have not told me

Why you called me.

What is it papa?

**Karena** as **Nemughan:** My daughter every

Age has its ceremony.

As our customs demand

You will soon be circumcised.

We shall celebrate your circumcision

Ceremony to make some money

For the family and you will

Thereafter be given out in marriage.

**Karena:** Father, what about my education?

I am just thirteen how can I

Get married at this age

When I know nothing about men?

**Karena** as **Nemughan:** Karena,

Your education is not important.

All your sisters were given out

In marriage less than thirteen years.

They are in their husband's houses

Taking care of their husbands and children (4-6).

Child marriage breeds other things that are not palatable to human beings, more especially as they are not matured enough to hold a home. These things psychologically and physically destroy the victim, building them into monsters, misfits or even morons that can be pushed around.

**Karena:** On the day I was discharged from the

Clinic I was told to prepare for

The post-circumcision ceremony and to be married

To my father's friend.

I realised that my father was a man

Who did not set empty traps.

From his promise to train

Me I was circumcised.

From circumcision I found myself in

The village clinic, from the village clinic,

I returned home to be married to a man

Old enough to be my father.

Love, pride

And dignity of womanhood

Collapse for the triumph of greed

Empowered by culture (14).

These girls become bond, living under the spell of magical powers especially when there are resistance from them. El Sadaawi says that women are “treated with all sorts of magic or traditional rituals, including exorcism until all the participants reaches a trance-like state” (89).

**Karena:** ... I vowed not to accept  
The forced marriage  
Despite the rape because it  
Was not inwardly driven.  
I cried in gruelling pain until  
I slept off.  
The next morning I was hungry  
So the old women under the  
Pretext of being nice prepared me food.  
After eating I had no inner and  
Outward steer to resist the  
Marriage proposal anymore.  
My resistance died  
Through the ritual way.  
They used African magic on me.  
I was not better than a glove-puppet.  
A human vegetable because  
I was not in the right  
Biological frame of mind... (17)

These manoeuvres are carried out by other women who act as eager collaborators as well as devout guardians of patriarchal mores and values in order to avoid conflict and assist in further subjugating their women folk. This is worst of the terroristic methods – subjugating the woman by the woman.

**Karena:** ... My husband’s sister from the city  
Came, bought me clothes and  
Promised to take me to Benin to stay  
With her for some time before  
Returning to the village.  
My dark, dry and dead world  
For once experienced regeneration (29).

**Karena:** ... Make up and jewellery by my sister in-law  
Who vividly unveiled herself as  
An international sex contractor  
And was to be taken to Italy for prostitution,

Mainly to satisfy her sex exploitation.  
My sister in-law has put on infamy  
For human trafficking, particularly for  
Sexual exploitation. She has set up  
Fashionable channels and networks for  
The easy and unnoticed flow of  
Trafficked persons. I was tricked  
Into *modern day slavery*:  
An underground or gorilla economy  
*To undergo another round*  
*Of physical and psychological*  
Terrorism and cruelty in the  
Hands of my sister in-law... (32).

The subaltern female is forced to accept and be what she never desired to be: a voiceless creature, a workaholic, an object and a property.

**Karena:** The old women took me to  
A bathroom for the circumcision.  
A woman with big buttocks  
Carrying a weight I can't struggle  
To lift and throw away  
Sat on my chest. Two other women  
Held my two arms backward  
And pressed them down while others  
Held my two legs down with resolute force.  
The woman who did the  
Circumcision sat on my lower abdomen.  
Six of them held me down to do the  
Circumcision. I shouted madly, I bled and  
Fainted several times.  
It was the cruellest  
Breed of genital cutting (12).

**Karena:** ... I was forced into a polygamous home.  
A home where the husband is the lord  
And wives voiceless creatures.  
A home where the good, the bad  
And the ugly hearts are brought  
Together under the umbrella of a husband.  
A home where the individual spirit is  
Placed against the cooperative spirit.  
My co-wives envied me disdainfully  
And didn't care about me.

I was the youngest and smallest  
In the harem of wives.  
It was such a home where I was abused  
As a child, as a woman and  
As a wife and as marital colleague.  
My life was a voluminous book of tragedy  
Every day was a page of that book  
That punished my soul... (18-19).

To compound her state of voicelessness, the woman is given most of the worst jobs, even when the work is undervalued. These women are the producing class, while the men are the expropriating class. They do this to please their men since they are not allowed to think independently, playing the role of mere shadows and pleased to live with their men and carry out a lot of household duties that come under the category of unpaid labour (Spivak 248).

**Karena:** ...It was such a village in which women  
Only go into marriage;  
Where women were culturally  
Prepared to take care of  
The husband and the children.  
While they toiled all day in  
The rain and under the sun sweating  
To produce food on the table, men  
Only sat to taste and reject food not  
Palatable... (4).

**Karena:** ...Three months after my marriage  
I was involved in carrying palm wine jugs  
To the town from the forest  
And to the point where the palm wine  
Was distilled into native gin.  
One afternoon I fainted while  
Carrying a bigger jug of palm wine  
To the town from the forest... (19).

The subaltern female is worse off because with all the travails she goes through, she is not spared from physical assault by the men folk. The beating of women is acceptable in most societies because it is seen as a method of discipline for an erring woman, either for not preparing food on time or refusing sexual advances even for unreasonable issues. According to Herbert, wife battering is the “violent acts – sexual, psychological and/or physical assault – by an assailant against his wife and/or partner by inducing fear and pain” (Herbert 1; see also Ruether 31).

**Karena:** ... It was a village in which men freely  
And physically inflicted injuries  
On the body of women for little mistakes;  
... and even mercilessly  
Beat up their wives for  
Cooking an unsavoury food... (3-4).

**Karena:** I didn't mean to offend you my lovely husband  
(*She kneels down to beg Daubri*)  
Daubri opened his wide palms and  
Slapped me thunderously. I was punched,  
Brutally headed and brushed down  
With ferocious and electrocuting kicks....  
I was beaten mercilessly with  
Demonic detestation.  
I groaned and fainted.  
Neither my mother in-law nor people  
Living around us came to my rescue.  
I became a punching bag  
In the marital ring of Daubri... (22-23).

African culture is patriarchal and patrilineal in nature (Khumabo & Garbus 27); that is why it is anti-woman. The woman is subjected to traumatic situation that is life-threatening and damaging because of her natural and biological composition. The menstruating woman is stigmatised and regarded as impure because menstruation is seen as a taboo, she is barred and banned from performing certain basic duties especially her marital duties (Buckley & Gottlieb 6; Delaney 80; Douglas 34). These women are most times made to live in complete seclusion from their husbands, homes and even communities until the menstrual flow has subsided. They are considered as perennially threatening polluters of men (Ortner 86; Rosaldo 38), until she cleanses herself after the cycle in order to claim her 'dubious' privilege.

**Karena:** ... The marriage lasted for four years.  
One disgusting and  
Dangerous experience  
I had was that each time  
I had my menstrual shed:  
The periodic discharge  
Of blood and mucosal tissue,  
I was regarded as unclean,  
Forbidden from cooking for my husband,  
Forbidden from staying anywhere near  
Him and asked to sleep outside  
My husband's house.

I slept alone at the veranda of  
 My husband's house  
 Where I was exposed to constant cold  
 And terrors of the night.  
 One fateful night when I was sleeping  
 A strange hand touched me  
 It was not as soft as the breeze  
 Blowing that night.  
 When the hand touched me  
 I realised that  
 I was about to be raped by two men.  
 I shouted so they ran away while  
 I ran into my husband's abode.  
 Instead of sympathising with me  
 I was accused of pretence,  
 That it was a calculated attempt  
 To despoil the tradition of  
 Observing the monthly flow  
 Outside my husband's abode.  
 So I was asked to do  
 The ritual of cleansing the desecrated house... (20-21).

Whether as manifestations of jealousy, resulting from exclusion, resentment or ambivalence, the truth is that it is another avenue of men controlling women.

The worst of the cultural terroristic patriarchal acts carried out to further subjugate the woman and permanently silence her is the widowhood rites. It is one of the most heinous forms of cultural violence perpetrated against women. This practice debases, dehumanises, defaces, dethrones, disinherits and denies the woman her rights and dignity (Landa 22; Rodriguez 109; von Struensee 20).

**Karena:** ...My mother-in-law and  
 Accused me of killing her son.  
 Anyone that tried to exonerate  
 Me was joined in the murder charge.  
 What do you expect?  
 In the leopard's court of justice  
 A goat is always pronounced guilty.  
 The day my husband's body was  
 To be committed to mother earth,  
 The allegation that I  
 Killed him intensified.  
 The elders of the family then resolved  
 That to prove my innocence,  
 I must drink the water with which my

Husband's body was washed...  
That was another challenging  
Moment of my life.  
To prove my innocence  
I must drink the water  
To reject the barbaric  
Demand of the elders would mean  
I killed my husband...  
It was a hard choice in a hard circle.  
But I managed to drink the water.  
Everyone thought I would die but  
I survived... (25-27).

According to Umorem Umorem, a widow is subjected to these indignities, but a widower is not (3). The question is: Why is this so? Once a man dies, the wife loses her identity, but regains it if she remarries her late husband's brother. Widow's inheritance is a practice whereby a widow is passed on to the next surviving male relation against her wish. This according to customary law systems is because the widow is seen as a property of dead husband's family (Amnesty International 8; Gunga 109).

**Karena:** ...On the day my husband's asset  
Was shared nothing was given to me.  
His new block building which  
He completed with the sweat of  
Our hard labour was taken  
By his elder brother.  
I was also shared like a property to  
This elder brother of  
His who was in union  
With his mother to accuse  
Me of killing Daubri.  
I lost my marital sovereignty  
And self-determination... (27).

The woman is denied any entitlement to property ownership, rather she is dehumanised, debased, reduced to nothingness and treated like a piece of property that can be used and discarded.

The subaltern female is subjugated by patriarchal hegemony, forced to keep silent and not speak of all the atrocities in their families especially as they are excluded from having any meaningful position from which to speak. This silence is the result of the failure of interpretation and not a failure of articulation (McLeod 195); it aids the keeping of the secrets, promotes denial and physical/psychological trauma.

**Karena:** ... My glow as a woman of

Self-respect faded very  
 Fast and died. I became an  
 Object of ridicule, powerless and voiceless,  
 Emotionally traumatised  
 By the brutalities,  
 The criminalising campaign,  
 Blackmail and rejection from  
 My husband's family.  
 As a widow I experienced  
 Deprivation, subjugation  
 And humiliation.  
 I was avoided like a  
 Plague and detested like  
 The most horrible witch in the world.  
 They called me a witch, a barren goat  
 And murderer.  
 The pressing wind of my marital tragedy  
 Blew every day and every minute.  
 I experienced marriage in  
 All its inglorious ways.  
 I gained consciousness from the  
 Drinking of the water with which my  
 Husband's corpse was washed.  
 My heart was filled  
 With pain and hatred  
 Towards those who abducted me (27-28).

### **Countering Cultural Terrorism in *Karena's Cross***

The woman's consciousness has been awakening by the Subaltern theory; hence she tries to resist these patriarchal terroristic acts that subjugate her. This resistance in her makes her to take certain decision that will either make or mar her. Even when they obey their men, these women have a voice within them, a voice of opposition and dissatisfaction, but the patriarchal order suppresses her not to speak and if she speaks, she is not able to be heard. However, since the subaltern female has her own consciousness, she tries to resist these patriarchal terroristic acts that subjugate her.

**Karena:** ... I was determined to fight against  
 Owei-ama culture even with  
 The last strength in me believing that  
 The cruel barriers of life would be cut  
 down for me to realise my dreams.

One evening when my father went  
 In his canoe of wives and friends to a

nearby village to pay the dowry for his new wife,  
I felt it was an opportunity for me to  
escape to anywhere to actualise  
My destiny to be an educated  
Working class woman.  
I packed a few things and thought I was  
escaping successfully. But ... (8-9).

This resistance in her makes her to take certain decision that will either make or mar her. The refusal of a widow to remarry the late husband's relation is treated with contempt and the society considers her as a living example of nuptial ingratitude (Spivak 135).

**Karena:** ... I rejected the family decision  
To marry me over to  
My husband's elder brother.  
I am a woman with dreams,  
Dreams that can light my world.  
So, I was not in a hurry to run away.  
The hen that has children does not  
Run fast (28).

The subaltern female has the capacity to articulate things well, making her stand clear and known before the patriarchal order who seem not to be interested in listening to the woman's resentments nor ready to decode the message and accept it.

**Karena:** ... It was such a loathsome culture which  
Underdeveloped women for generations.  
A culture manipulated by male dominance,  
A tradition in which women's right and dignity  
Got constantly abused. A barbaric culture  
Which needed a storm to uproot  
From the face of the earth.  
I have taken so much of its tempest  
And now I am determined to take  
The tempest of my  
Own creation to Owei-ama (34).

Since the subaltern female desires to speak and be heard, she has to struggle to be educated and to make choices regarding all aspects of life. So, she should be given a level playing ground to develop her potentials to speak and be heard, and even contribute her quota to the society.

**Karena:** ... That fateful day I escaped the  
Exportation to Italy

A young handsome man  
 Whose name is Daniel  
 Met me and saw me  
 Crying when I was coming  
 Out from the supermarket.  
 He asked me to tell him my story.  
 I thought he was one of those  
 Charlatans fate had directed to me.  
 I became more and more scared  
 Of people who came around me.  
 In the past, every attempt  
 I made to trust people brought  
 Me troubles and tribulations.  
 So I initially refused to talk to him.  
 But when he pressed harder and further  
 My mouth betrayed me.  
 I started narrating my tribulation  
 Agonisingly with red hot tears.  
 Despite the fact that  
 I had lived a miserable life  
 Dr. Daniel passionately took me home.  
 He cleaned me up and cleared  
 The spiteful scars of cruelty  
 That crept into my face  
 And heart and married me....  
 Darkness is defeated each time  
 You do what is good for someone.  
 My husband defeated my darkness  
 And spread the light of glory upon me.  
 My dark shadow of yesterday vanished.  
 Not only did my husband facilitate my  
 Training up to the university as a lawyer, but  
 He was also there for me as a faithful,  
 Loving and caring husband....  
 I now work in a famous legal chambers... (35-37).

The subaltern female should not depend on intellectuals who they believe “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves...” (Prov. 31: 8); instead, a way should be devised for them to freely speak for themselves, to develop their potentials in spite of whatever “hazardous circumstances that might violate her dreams, will and existence based on the violence she goes through” (Evwierhoma 6) in order to triumph over their impediment.

**Karena:** ... Histories are not made and told  
 Without human experiences.

Stars do not shine  
Without great achievements.  
No song is sung without its lyrics.  
When a king's palace burns down,  
The re-built palace  
Becomes more beautiful.  
You have heard my story.  
The story of women disempowerment,  
Marginalisation and oppression.  
But do you just sit there and allow  
Culture and law instituted by  
Men and women destroy you?  
Disadvantage is not disability.  
It is only socially constructed.  
I realised my strength when  
I was thrown into the hot pool of water.

Hope does not kill;  
I struggled to live to get  
What I wanted despite the obstacles.  
The tide will turn if women  
Stand in opposition to it.  
My father and my husband's cruelty  
Taught me wisdom and  
Offered me great strength.  
I refused to be defined by the narrow  
Sensitivity of Owei-ama about women.  
A society that saw women as poisoned  
Fountains of life. That I am trapped  
Inside a female frame  
Of physical architecture  
Does not make me less than a man.  
No mortal can change who you are  
As programmed by God.  
My story is a story of struggle  
Against the mortal flood of oppression... (42-43).

## **Conclusion**

Spivak's subaltern theory is used to critique patriarchal and phallogocentric ideology and hence very relevant in most societies, as this view has helped salvage the woman from cultural terrorism and the patriarchal order which does not allow her to speak. Her theory became a spring board upon, which most women stood to demand for cultural negotiation: whereby the positive elements in a culture are emphasised and the later demystified. After all, culture is not static, and its dynamic nature aids the society in

moving forward, harnessing positive elements to advance human rights and gender equality as well as liberating the productive forces of women for self-actualisation and national development.

The changes in the culture allow the 'once' subaltern female, who is determined to speak make her position clear to all as well as make her choices that will usher in a new voice, a new image and a new dawn that will set her free in order to enjoy its fullness in future. All these are seen in the character of Karena in Binebai's monodrama, *Karena's Cross*.

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# COUNTERING CULTURAL TERRORISM ON WOMEN IN AFRICA: AN INTERROGATION OF BINEBAI'S *KARENA'S CROSS*

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## **Abstract**

Nigeria is swamped with several acts of violence emanating from political, ethnic, religious, tribal and cultural practices which have created problems for the society. However, long before the very popular acts of terrorism spread in Nigeria, certain traumatic and frightening situations have been on-going, among which is women subjugation. In recent times, it is rampant, trivialised and without concealment in Nigeria. It has ascribed oppression, lack of self will and slavery at all levels. A handful of counter-terrorism theories have emerged towards women liberation and several other methods adopted by committed feminist writers countering the threats posed on women, drama is one of such methods. This paper examines the calculated creative input of playwrights to reprimand the various acts of terror on women in the Nigerian space. The paper engages a literary methodological approach to interrogate Binebai's *Karena's Cross* essentially, to drive home several concerns about issues of terrorism rooted on cultural practices harmful to the female gender orchestrated by the patriarchy. The investigation reveals the several negative practices that are deep seated in culture, aimed at advancing male dominance and inequality in society. It recommends the creation of a strong theatre culture in Nigeria, to key into the influential social discourse and clarifications imbedded in drama. This will be a worthy proactive defensive move for the disintegration of such customs and traditions. It concludes that women must also develop a large heart to confront those issues that question their very existence. Only resilient women with the inclination to rise and be free can counter terrorism against the female gender.

## **Introduction**

Terrorism has eaten deep into all spheres of human existence, it suggests primarily the issues of pain, trauma, hate, and stimulates violence from the individual or group victimised. From the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present time, terrorism has become a word on the lip of every Nigerian and the world beyond. The more attempts we make to give an acceptable definition of the term terrorism, the more we realise that consciously or unconsciously we have been terrorised and have also terrorised others and the more complex the term becomes. According to Antonia Ward, "terrorism remains a contested term". As true as this statement is, certain features and acts dominate the various attempts made to define terrorism. Hence, Jenkins' view will provide an insight to the discourse.

In his word, "...terrorism is violence or the threat of violence calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm – in a word, to terrorise – and hereby bring some social or political change" (cited in Kegley 28).

The above definition captures the harmful effect of terrorism which makes it an issue of national and global consideration. Therefore, whatever causes pain and fear to an individual, a body or group but benefits the initiator is an act of terrorism. How then could cultural practices be linked to terrorism? Culture is an aspect of human society that an individual cannot avoid; it provides the foundation of human existence and every living being has a form of identification; in language, dressing, food, norms and so on. Spencer rightly observes that:

Culture is fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that Influence each member's behaviour and his/her Interpretations of the meaning of other people's behaviour (258).

Consequently, the culture of an individual holds the most vital aspect of such an individual's life, as its practices turn out to be the very first set of laws a person is subjected to and as such, form the basis for human operations. Favourable to some and cruel to others in its offers, so long as such an individual or group exists, the law or ordinances must take its full cause. This have short-changed and limited certain people, deny them of their right, their will and liberty over themselves. What this means is that, the oppressed is forced to accept situations presented hook line and sinker. Any attempt to go contrary, the same cultural laws will be evoked. This is very typical of the African woman's experiences. Thus victimisation and physical abuses that often have women stuck in the margin increases. According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) "in a patriarchal society girls and women are often discriminated by culture" (Mattebo et al. 4). Cultural practices initiated by human turn out to be in favour of the male folk in its approach and technique, male dominant society, indiscriminate violence and abuse of women and their human right. These cultural manifestations are the underpinning influences of female oppression, subjugation and other forceful conditions organised and adopted against women in various levels which qualifies its practices as terrorism. Within the context of the word, terrorism is any act that promotes women exploitation, crush their strength, dignity and silence their voices, living others to decide their fate without their consent in all spheres of society. This is a point Shihada makes that, "women are victims of patriarchy fortified by religion, traditions and culture" (167). Promoting female subjugation and a male dominance society, is further built upon from Okolo's vivid representation of what religion entails:

Religion for the traditional African is an inseparable dimension of his life. He is deeply religious. His traditional religion has important claims on his beliefs, conduct, attitudes and feelings (18).

Okolo's submission on religion strongly shows that indeed the culture, religion and tradition as enumerated by the scholarly opinion of Shihada, combine to re-create a woman's world in a negative sense and projects a social imagery that is terribly harmful to women. Most interestingly, some women are inclined towards self-actualisation thus, struggle and resistance is demonstrated. It is on this basis that the selected text, *Karena's Cross* shall be examined.

### **Conceptualisation of Terrorism**

In scholarship diverse outlooks have been put forward on the concept of terrorism all in an attempt to give a clearer understanding or insight to the ideas behind it. This is necessitated by the various areas of life its activities are displayed. During the French Revolution in the 1790s, as a result of the several acts of terror the term terrorism was first coined and used by the French revolutionaries on their rivals. Wisniewski defines terrorism as, "... violence against peacetime targets or in war against non-combatants" (230). There is a common agreement with this definition and that of Stern which affirms terrorism as, "an act or threat or violence against non-combatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidating or otherwise influencing an audience" (20). These definitions can be further captured in the *Nigerian Terrorism Act* of 2011 that terrorism means: an act which is intentionally done and results to all or any of the following:

- May seriously harm or damage a country or an International organisation
- Is intended or can reasonably be regarded as having been intended to seriously intimidate a population
- It involves or causes, as the case may be, an attack upon a person's life which may cause serious bodily harm or death (section 1.2).

A complex phenomena that has become frequently in use because of the devastating condition it lives on its victims. *Merriam Webster's Deluxe Dictionary* notes terrorism as "... the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion" (1906). This is very metaphoric of the Nigerian woman's fate. The African Union (AU) on the definition of terrorism notes thus:

Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to any person... calculated or intended to: (i) intimidate, put fear, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or (ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or (iii) create general insurrection in a State (cited in Oyeniyi 2-3).

On this study on terrorism, the medical profession is not left out, it states that "terrorism is the intentional use of violence-real or threatened-against one or more non-combatants and/or those services essential for or protective of their health, resulting in

adverse health effects in those immediately affected and their community, ranging from loss of well-being or security to injury, illness, or death” (cited in Gregor 29).

Taking the aforementioned definitions into consideration in the Nigerian space, Africa and the world at large, terrorism is all encompassing. As long as the use of force, intimidation and any kind of violence is used for the attainment of one’s selfish goals, it is an act of terror. On this backdrop, kidnappers, ISIS militia group of the Northern Nigeria, militants of the Niger Delta region of the Southern, armed robbers, female genital cutting/mutilators, child marriage, rapists, child trafficking and several other acts of intentional injustices, can be comfortably grouped as terrorism.

### **Counter Terrorism**

Counter terrorism focuses on proactive measures, strategies, plans and ideas that could help to control or curb the causes of these inhuman practices that reduces the quality of life and silences the voices of its victims. These counter terrorism or anti-terrorism measures could come from the individual terrorised, a group, a non-governmental organisation or the Government in a terrorised space. In most cases, anti-terrorism strategies are conceived of in physical terms involving the use of guns. However, there are other major counter approaches such as diplomatic moves and creative interpretation of life. A case in point is that of South Africa. After the denouncement of Apartheid by the International community, in 1961, South Africa was forced to withdraw from the British Commonwealth by Member States that were against the Apartheid system.

Also, a selective economic sanction was forced on the country in 1985, a sanction which isolated it from other countries. This was an anti-terrorism strategy against the racial policy, by the government of the United States and Great Britain. These are instances of diplomatic moves.

Creative interpretation of life by dramatists, such as, Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona commendably added their voices through creative representation of life in South Africa as an anti-Apartheid means. Leshoai has this to say about *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, one of the finest South Africa plays that served as anti-terrorism strategy during the Apartheid regime:

Though there have been plenty of books, films and documents in the past twenty years outlining or illuminating different areas of repression and distortion in South African life caused by apartheid, the recent season of plays by or involving Athol Fugard at the Royal Court provides the first sustained attempt in the struggle to show British theatre audience the terrible effects of the regime in human terms, reaching into the most personal areas of life (125).

These among other measures mounted within and outside the environment of terror in South Africa, led to the dismantling of the marginalisation in South Africa in the early 1990’s. The implication of the above instances is to further establish that to counter terrorism combatant confrontations involving the use of arms and ammunitions should be played down and the root causes of the struggle or hate is resolved.

Consequent on the above, it could be posited that even the prevailing Boko Haram insurgency can as well be tackled by engaging dramatic representation. We will agree with Feltman's opinion on attempt to proffer solution to the growing act of terror and insecurity created by the Boko Harams, when he posit that: "to bring an end to the Boko Haram threat in the Lake Chad Basin region, affected countries must address the root causes that contributed to the emergence of the group, including the social, economic and political grievances of marginalised communities" (www.news.un.org). Feltman is speaking from the aspect of dialoguing and identifying the cause of the Boko Haram's struggle. In the words of Rasaki, "struggle is HATE... when a people are oppressed long enough, they grow to hate and fight themselves" (Ogoh 25). A statement that we could also hold as the root cause of the fast globalising feminist movement and other agitating groups eager to break free from exploitation. Based on the foregoing, the concept of terrorism, its attachment to culture and counter terrorism have been examined to provide a moving picture of the selected text, Ben Binebai's *Karena's Cross*.

### **Theoretical framework**

This research will be framed theoretically by the feminist theory, from the perspective of Barbara Berg. According to her:

It is the freedom (for a woman) to decide her own destiny: freedom from sex determined role; freedom from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to convert them freely into action. Feminism demands the acceptance of woman's right to individual conscience and judgment. It postulates that women's essential worth stems from their common humanity and does not depend on the relationships of her life (cited in Okoh 7).

This theory is known to fight patriarchal system and is of the opinion that women are entitled to their liberty and every decision concerning their existence. It calls for a space to determine what happens and how it happens to a woman. It requires the free will for decision making on the several issues touching womanhood. It demands annulment of inequality, oppression and all aspects of social reality that places preference on men in their relationship with women, which promotes gender based discriminatory assessments that affect the female folk. The theory is applicable to this paper because it portrays the wish of women to be free.

### **Synopsis of *Karena's Cross***

*Karena's Cross* is written by Ben Binebai, a monodrama swamped with many themes touching women from all works of life. Geographically, it is located in the Niger Delta province of Nigeria. It tells the story of Karena a girl child discriminated against by the culture of Owei-ama (male dominant society). Karena's several experiences of subjugation and brutality in her natal home orchestrated by her father Nemughan into another cruel face of life in polygamy is vividly reflected in her story of early marriage, female genital mutilation and a forced marriage to Daubri after rape with no sanction meted out to him, as well as teenage widowhood at the death of Daubri. At this

devastating moment of her life, her late husband's sister comes with the idea of taking her to Benin for a better future.

An idea that seems to be a dream come through to the young Karena but only to find out that it is a ploy to send her off to Italy for prostitution. She rejects the offer with the determination to break free from exploitation. In her quest to improve on life, fate leads her to Daniel. Karena gains freedom and change of fortune through her encounter with Daniel a medical doctor who later becomes her husband. Her marriage to Daniel marks a turning point in her life as she gets another opportunity to obtain a formal education and becomes the first lawyer in Owei-ama. Together with her husband she transforms her world as she courageously wrest control over the several issues of exploitation on her womanhood and that of other women in Owei-ama. Upon her found courage she triumphed over repression, attains freedom and brings justice to all the oppressed women of Owei-ama land.

### **Harmful Cultural Practices on Women in Africa**

With inhibiting laws and practices that encourage inequality and promotes all acts of women's slavery, education was an exclusive reserve for men and since the words of men are law, the fate of women is hinged on them. Therefore, a practice such as female genital mutilation is a must for every girl child of Owei-ama, whether willingly or forcefully as the case of Karena the heroine of the play. Alongside early marriage at the age of 13 and the troubles of widowhood at the age of 17, after been forcefully raped by Daubri the man she is betrothed to. An act of violation of a woman's self-will and dignity make light of on cultural grounds that Daubri the rapist has her father's blessings to have her as his wife; hence, his action does not attract any form of punishment. Karena says:

**Karena:** ...A village in which law was culture,  
Culture was law and the makers  
And custodians of culture  
And laws were the men.

It is a village where women  
Lived at the mercy of men... (3).

These words are a manifestation of the inequality between the female and the male folk powered by culture and have become the mode of operation, Ideally, Karena's father should have been her first wall of protection. He should have defended her interest, dreams and aspirations but is rather opposing and forcing the cultural laws on her against her desire to be educated.

**Karena as Nemughan:** Your education is not important.  
All your sisters were given out  
In marriage less than thirteen years.  
They are in their husband's houses  
Taking care of their husbands and children (6).

Obviously, Karena is not the first girl whose education has been thwarted against her wish. Such words from a father can be really painful and frustrating. He further says:

**Karena as Nemughan:** You women are empty possessions.  
Training you is waste of money and time.  
When you get married no one  
Will know you are still my daughter.  
My name will be lost. So why must  
I waste my money training you? (6)

Women in this context are seen as inferior to men and treated with disdain, good to meet sexual needs only. As rightly noted by Fagbolu, “women were thought to be mentally socially and psychologically inferior to men, therefore they had little or nothing to contribute when it came to decision making” (29). A very negative ploy targeted at women and is been expressed culturally, politically and even religiously. Hence, Bressler posits that, “they must also reject the notion that marriage is a woman’s-ultimate goal... they must reject that women are mindless weepy, passive, helpless creatures who must wait for a man to come and make their life meaningful” (cited in Azunwo and Kalio 110).

While the teenage girl is thinking of a better tomorrow, her father is busy trading for his selfish interest in the name of fulfilling cultural conditions.

**Karena as Nemughan:** My daughter every  
Age has its ceremony.  
As our customs demand  
You will soon be circumcised.  
We shall celebrate your circumcision  
Ceremony to make some money  
For the family and you will  
Thereafter be given out in marriage (5).

The young heroine, Karena, is subjected to this inhuman, deadly and barbaric act of genital cutting as custom demands and her description of is vivid:

**Karena:** The old women took me to  
A bathroom for the circumcision.  
A woman with a big buttock  
Carrying a weight I can’t struggle  
To lift and throw away  
Sat on my chest. Two other women  
Held my two arms backward  
And pressed them down while others  
Held my two legs down with resolute force.  
The woman who did the

Circumcision sat on my lower abdomen.  
Six of them held me down to do the  
Circumcision. I shouted madly, I bled and  
Fainted several times.  
It was the cruellest  
Breed of genital cutting (12).

Judging from this scenario, one would be tempted to ask the question of who carries out the ritual of genital cutting on the young girls, is it not the same women? It becomes clear that *Karena's Cross* also portrays intra-gender terrorism. This simply affirms the level of slavery these women have been subjected to. It speaks of lack of choice and voice. This is reminiscent of the negative practices in culture, which its beneficiaries have refused to abolish despite the several attempts made by Government and non-governmental agencies. Tied to the belief that the mutilated genitalia is what arouses sexual emotions and discontent in women and in an attempt to tame these ones, such harsh treatment is meted out whereas, their male counterparts with complete sexual libido goes on to marry as many women as they wish in the process of exploring their sexuality; a practice that has claimed the lives of several young girls who lack the power to bear its torture and brutality. This has as well left some infected with terminal diseases contracted through the process of genital mutilation. In the words of Ifijeh:

...of concern is that the law is not new in many states where laws were passed criminalising FGM/C several years ago, and FGM/C is still practiced openly in those states with enforcers of the law and even governmental officers looking the other way, as they do not want to be caught interfering with cultural and religious practices (19).

This has affected women on the area of marriage, on the realisation of the same men that such women who undergo the act of circumcision cannot meet the sexual demand of their spouses, a cultural condition that has multiplied the sorrow of victimised women.

While trying to comprehend the pains of circumcision, she is confronted with the issue of child marriage. According to Awogbade, child marriage “is a common practice in Nigeria among both Christians and Muslims, but notably with higher prevalence among the Hausa Muslims of Northern Nigeria” (3). In the case of *Karena* at the age of thirteen all strategies including rape is adopted to have her submit to the brutality of *Owei-ama*. She becomes an object of sexploitation. As *Karena* puts it:

**Karena:** ... the worst form of suffering is  
The one that has no known  
Time of cessation.  
The storm of  
Collective villainy  
Fell upon my virgin life at  
*Owei-ama* and frustrated it.

I became a helpless  
Puppet dancing to the string of destiny.  
I lived in constant fear, frustration,  
Humiliation and hardly remember  
My dream of life before marriage...  
Life become dark and frustrating (19-20).

This is the chief form of subjugation women are forced into in our society, the issue of rape floods the media on a daily basis. So, many young girls are suffering its trauma and pain as we speak. As portrayed by the playwright, *Karena's* rape speaks for the several forms of rape cases trivialised. Since the concern is on the issue of marriage as established by cultural laws, a man can have a woman raped and at worse marry her. A very crafty and unfavourable law, which lives her with no better choice:

**Karena:** ...from my circumcision I found myself in  
The village clinic, from the village clinic,  
I returned home to be married to a man  
Old enough to be my father.  
Love, pride  
And dignity of womanhood  
Collapse for the triumph of greed  
Empowered by culture (14).

As a point of fact, these teenage girls begin to live a false life because they have been entrapped in marriage brought upon them by the selfish passion of a group of people via culture. Void of mental, psychological and emotional preparedness. The future turns bleak, clouded with uncertainty and fear of the unknown. Overman submits that, “when a woman is deficient of the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge...” (iv). All the women in *Karena's Cross* suffer this traumatic absurdity of subjugation and accept to live and die in it. They were mentally enslaved with the knowledge that their voices would never be heard in the history of existence with the collapse of their future and the triumph of greed and selfishness as *Karena* berates it as being “...empowered by culture” (19). She expresses her emotional as well as psychological displeasure over her marriage in the following lines:

**Karena:** My marital emotions were not propelled,  
They died but my human  
Emotions remained active.  
I became a full-time housewife  
After my father has collected dowry  
From emissaries sent to  
Him by my abductor husband.  
What came as a surprise to me

Was that I am an *Ayoro*,  
The latest bride in the  
Company of seven older wives (18).

Karena bears different crosses in the text showing the Africa woman's plight within her culture. If culture is our pride, can a girl child/woman who has passed through the fierceness of its practices still profess it? It is absolutely not possible. In the midst of this terror, the dreams of Karena remain fresh, unlike other women who completely surrender to the prevailing oppression of those obnoxious laws.

**Karena:** My story is a story of struggle  
Against the mortal flood of oppression;  
It is a story of vision and mission.  
A story in which I, a thirteen-year old girl  
Struggled through the storm to  
Develop and own a voice.  
I fought against a war of  
Inferiority because I was  
Never born to be inferior.  
I fought to illuminate my world  
Because I was not born to be in the dark...  
My world depicts a cross of  
Suffering and a cross of rejection,  
A culture-imposed suffering.  
Karena's cross is the cross  
Of all oppressed women (43).

Through the character of Karena, the playwright affirms women's stance against tension and repressive systems of government that suppress women in decision making process at all levels of society. From the analysis of Ben Binebai's *Karena's Cross*, we see women represented by the vocal female character, Karena, as people under finely tuned treat, thwarted and subjected to traumatic, emotional and psychological conditions, under the dictate of patriarchal slavery. The several ordeals of Karena reveal the terrorist tendencies that should be dislodged from cultural traditions. Starting from the inhuman cultural practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), to the case of rape to forcefully pull her into the marital circle at the age of thirteen and Karena laments over her predicament:

**Karena:** I vowed not to accept  
The forced marriage  
Despite the rape because it  
Was not inwardly driven.  
I cried in gruelling pain until  
I slept off.  
The next morning I was hungry

So the old women under the  
Pretext of being nice prepared me food.  
After eating I had no inner and  
Outward steer to resist the  
Marriage proposal anymore.  
My resistance died  
Through the ritual way.  
They used African magic on me.  
I was not better than a glove-puppet... (17).

Having entangled her in this cultural web, she is forced to accept her fate in marriage and suffered more at the death of her husband.

**Karena:** The day my husband's body was  
To be committed to mother earth,  
The allegation that I  
Killed him intensified.  
The elders of the family then resolved  
That to prove my innocence,  
I must drink the water with which my  
Husband's body was washed....  
It was hard choice in a hard circle.  
But I managed to drink the water.  
Everyone thought I would die but  
I survived... (26-27).

This cruel practice is still on in most African nations, including Nigeria. One would think that Karena's torment would end at the death of Daubri, her husband; but it continued in other forms. She is confronted with widow inheritance, being regarded as a property of the family:

**Karena:** On the day my husband's assets  
Were shared nothing was given to me.  
His new block building which  
He completed with the sweat of  
Our hard labour was taken  
By his elder brother.  
I was also shared like a property to  
This elder brother of  
His who was in union  
With his mother to accuse  
Me of killing Daubri.  
I lost my marital sovereignty  
And self-determination... (27).

The woman is treated like a baton passed on from one athlete to another in a relay race, and her chances to be a part of her rightful entitlement is dependent on denial of dignity. The dreams of a young girl are shattered living her with an identity that infringes more pain on her. She summarises her experiences in a few words:

**Karena:** My glow as a woman of  
Self-respect faded very  
Fast and died. I became an  
Object of ridicule,  
Powerless and voiceless,  
Emotionally traumatised  
By the brutalities,  
The criminalising campaign,  
Blackmail and rejection from  
My husband's family.  
As a widow I experienced  
Deprivation, subjugation  
And humiliation.  
I was avoided like a  
Plague and detested like  
The most horrible witch in the world... tragedy  
Blew every day and every minute.  
I experienced marriage in  
All its inglorious ways.  
I gained consciousness from the  
Drinking of the water with which my  
Husband's corpse was watched.  
My heart was filled  
With pain and hatred  
Towards those who abducted me (24).

In all the nations of the world where crisis is prominent, the terrorist tendencies experienced by the people over time, especially those in the minority can be considered as some of the major motivational factors that provoke revolt and other forms of violence proclivity. As portrayed by the dramatist's uncompromising stand, the salient issues raised in the play are aimed at restructuring cultural extremism and adds its voice to the struggle for women's liberation.

### **Conclusion**

Having considered the textual analysis of the selected text, the Owei-ama (male dominant) culture which is a symbolism of a typical African culture is unacceptable and

too sentimental in its methodology. It also lash out the limitation placed on the girl child's education, female genital mutilation, forceful as well as early marriage strongly empowered by culture and the mental, physical and psychological dislocation of womenfolk. *Karena's Cross* reveals the fact that men are out to dominate their world which is why women exploitation prevails. However, this could not have been achievable if not for the cultural affiliation. In view of the above, to curb female oppression and attain liberation from their male counterpart, particularly culturally implemented acts and traditions that only hold sway on women and have them reduced to a disadvantageous situation should first be abolished. Just as *Karena* gives a voice of liberation to all women in Owei-ama, women in Nigeria and generally in Africa can also displace the several institutions that hinder their existence and self-actualisation as the play advocates.

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# COUNTER-TERRORISM AND NIGERIA'S SECURITY: AN INVESTIGATION OF UMUKO'S *THE SCENT OF CRUDE OIL*

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## **Abstract**

Terrorism is one of the emerging realities in Nigeria that has become a near permanent feature of the nation's contemporary history. Its emergence in different shades has made the security challenges posed by it a big issue globally. Thus, the emerging discourse on counter-terrorism is a phenomenon of incredible importance to the research on possible and probable ways of conflict resolution in Nigeria. Contemporary trends associated with conflicts and terrorism point to the fact that they are bent on going nuclear if adequate measures to counter them are not put in place, hence the urgent need to address its increasing menace in Nigeria. The study adopts the literary research methodology while leaning on the Theatre for Development (TfD) to advance the research. The paper examines the ideal of counter-terrorism, and how theatre can be used as an agent of re-organisation, change and re-orientation with a view to exposing the ill effects of crime and terrorism and proffer possible ways of conflict resolution. In tackling this scholarly concern, the paper will investigate Eni Jones Umuko's *The Scent of Crude Oil*. The paper identifies the fact that terrorism poses a threat to domestic and regional security which is compact and multidimensional in nature. The study therefore recommends the mode of sensitisation via the theatre as a potent and viable channel for conflict resolution and to counter terrorism in Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Shuddering over the increasing incidences of crime in Nigeria, Kelechi Ogbonna and Lucy Onaivi are of the opinion that, "the spate of violence and insecurity witnessed in Nigeria in recent times have woken up conscious efforts by every Nigerian to seek for safety and proffer solutions to the nation's dilemma" (200-219). The spectre and challenges of perceived terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria is indeed a topical issue and it has been with us for a long time but has gained ascendancy with the activities of the militants in the Niger Delta region which started in the 70s, the Maitatsine religious upheavals in the North in the 80s to the ideological issues of Boko Haram insurgency and increased herdsmen attack in various parts of Nigeria. Terrorism is one of the emerging realities that is forcing itself into the national history of many contemporary states like Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroun among others. The emergence and internationalisation of this menace has made the security challenges posed by it a big diplomatic issue globally. Thus, the emerging discourse on counter-terrorism in the country has become a

phenomenon of incredible importance to the research on theatre in contemporary Nigerian drama. It is drawing an increasing attention as a topical challenge in relation to human and material security, due largely to the effect of gradual collapse of basic security of lives and property within the Nigerian space and legal boundaries. Insecurity in Nigeria has taken various forms and dimensions, in the major zones in Nigeria adopting their own manifestations which are peculiar to them. As Cindy Anene Ezeugwu avers,

in the northern part of the country, cattle rustlers' frequent invasion of villages and undue encroaching into people's farm lands for grazing and the hostile attacks on communities, ethno-religious conflict, and extremist invasion and attacks are quite prevalent. In the South Western region, ritual, thuggery, and armed banditry hold sway, in the South East, cyber fraud, armed robbery and kidnapping, are prevalent while in the South-South zone, drug and child trafficking, militancy, pipe line vandalism and oil theft, prostitution, witchcraft cleansing and kidnapping are on the increase. In the middle belt, herdsmen attack and cross border bandits operate with ease (82).

The antecedent consequences of all these forms of violence and terrorism include the generation and spread of violent conflicts as well as proliferation of poverty, diseases, bloodshed and loss of lives and property, human dislocation and displacement. It also has numerous numbers of intra state conflicts and ethno-religious conflicts. This is more so in Africa where religious intolerance and ethnic divide fuelling these violent crisis through terrorism has become one of the most urgent security and developmental challenges in Nigeria today with no definite means of resolution in sight. The uncontrollable widespread proliferation of illegal firearms globally and in Nigeria in particular is a worrisome trend with its antecedent outcome of injury, death, maiming and displacement of people (men, women and children).

Violence and conflict have continued to ravage many parts of Nigeria in varying degrees and the Boko Haram menace which is biting hard across the length and breadth of the Northern region with its antecedent upsurge of bomb blast and suicide bombing seem not to be reducing while the casualties are daily increasing. The implicit assumption is that not much have been done by the past and present government in tackling the problem of terrorism besides calling for investigations that never get to see the light of the day, making promises to fish out the perpetrators and moving soldiers to the terror prone area without equipping them with state of the art weapons that will help them combat crime and terrorism and bring them to an end.

Despite all these incidents of bombing, there is also a deepening socio-economic insecurity and concern that poses a threat to the individual wellbeing of Nigeria citizens thereby making lives unbearable to many people. The youths both graduates and non-graduates, are not being gainfully employed and this scourge is making many of them restive thus, they resort to all manner of vices like thuggery, cultism, drug addiction, rape, kidnapping among others. This scholarly work therefore sets out to examine the place of theatre as a panacea to counter terrorism in contemporary Nigerian dramatic

literature using Eni Jones Umuko's *The Scent of Crude Oil*. The research identifies the fact that terrorism poses a threat to domestic and regional security which is compact and multi-dimensional in nature. They often come with other broad security and societal issues such as violence, criminal activities, proliferation of arms, governance issues among others. In the words of D. O. Ogabi, "such acts have serious implications on human rights and humanitarian activities" (9-10).

A 2017 World Health Organisation (WHO) Report avers that about 320,000 Nigerians have died as a result of conflicts in various forms. While a shocking finding as reported by Small Arms survey year book of 2014, stipulates that about 2% of the firearms in Africa (600,000) are thought to be in the hands of armed groups and insurgents. It is indeed quite shocking that it is just a relatively few number of weapons that is bringing such devastating destruction in various parts of Nigeria and this phenomenon goes to highlight the lethal capabilities of violence if not well checkmated.

The issue of porous borders between neighbouring countries has made it difficult to squarely address the spread of crime. In Nigeria, besides being one of the direct causes of deaths, the effects of conflict and terrorism are far reaching when considering its economic cost and upheaval. After the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States of America in 2011, it became crystal clear that contemporary terrorism is no longer just a theatre of the absurd, as it seems that they are out to kill, maim and destroy as many people as possible and kill even themselves as in suicide terrorism. In the same vein, we are wont to investigate and interrogate its threats to global security in contemporary times. The technological shift and change occasioned by security resistance and its relationship with suicide bombing in Nigeria constitutes one of the most pressing challenges to national peace and stability, hence the urgent need to address it.

In Nigeria, the issue of counter-terrorism is an emerging trend and it became prominent with the emergence of Boko Haram sect in 2009 and its intrusion brought about mega terrorism and as at 2018, simultaneous bombings in Borno, Taraba, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Kano, Plateau, targeted at unsuspecting Abuja, among others, have been recorded with a daunting casualty rate. The act of suicide bombing often targeted at group of persons, churches, mosques, market places, motor parks and public places have over the years steadily and gradually broken local boundaries to form new links with other dreaded terrorist organisations across the globe, with the acts breaking new grounds and barriers in intelligence monitoring and gathering as well as perfecting expertise in the usage of hyper- sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. In Nigeria, as in many other developing countries, political elites, religious fundamentalists, illegal immigrants among others, remain some of the sources of social insecurity to the nation.

Some school of thoughts have at different times hinged the reason for the emergence of terror activities in Nigeria on political, ethnic, religious and socio cultural considerations. Many politicians use powers allocated to them to brutalise and intimidate the people who they are meant to protect at any slightest provocation. They also use state power as a means of primitive accumulation of wealth at the expense of societal development. Some other group hinges it on socio-economic line, while others see it as a by-product of leadership failure. The researcher is of the view that there is an urgent need

to reassess and address the rising threats to lives and property and work out ways to help cushion the poor living conditions of many Nigerians.

This study, therefore, will investigate the role of the theatre as a viable mode to counter terrorism in Nigeria. Given the fundamental traits of terrorism which seeks to maim and annihilate people, this paper proposes the avenue of Theatre for Development (TfD) as an alternative plan and measure to sensitise people on the dangers of insecurity and the need to embrace peace. Jonathan Mbachaga views drama as a “participatory art that allows deep exploration through an informal context of communal get together and interaction” (45). The investigation will also enable us to explore possible ways of using the theatre as a positive and functional channel that can be used in stemming the rising tide of terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Considerations**

The study leans on Theatre for Development theory to advance its cause. The theory essentially enjoins dramatists and theatre practitioners on the need to use the theatre for the development and transformation of man and the communities. It also seeks to use theatre in mobilising the people towards engendering positive change in the society. As Ugwu and Ashver aver, “Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire are credited with this theory and it emphasises the conscientisation of the people, creation of a conducive atmosphere for sharing experiences, educating the people and inducing a desire for change” (80-81).

The theory aims at empowering people both at the grass root level and in the urban areas through the avenue of the theatre on how best to live together with a view to impact on their well-being positively. It also seeks to create awareness and to get the government to listen to the oppressed and the downtrodden masses and their plights in order to proffer solutions to them. Theatre for development enjoins the community leaders and stakeholders of the communities to act as mediators between the theatre for development participants, the people and the government. This entails that theatre for development practitioners will carry out researches bothering on the needs of the communities, and work hand in hand with the leaders towards finding a lasting solution to their problems by sensitising the communities through the use of the theatre.

### **Counter-Terrorism and the Nigerian Theatre**

Chandan observes that, “certain training programs or rehabilitating programmes have changed human attitudes and behaviour; hence, reorientation is capable of rebuilding the cracked walls of peace and stability in the nation” (234). Counter-terrorism has become the yardstick and measures adopted by many institutions, groups and persons for addressing and responding to the security challenges of the developing countries. It also seeks to find adequate and acceptable measures necessary to overhaul the threats of insecurity, crime and conflicts in all forms in Nigeria using the theatre. This is borne out of the fact that the rate at which terrorism is spreading if not countered will spell doom for the nation. Kelechi Ogbonna views the theatre as:

an art by which the people recreate their environment and live in it. The very many ills and malaise of the society, the violence and denials, nepotism and

anarchy, the class structure and social injustice are the rich-stone of which dramatists coin and develop their art to sustain and solve the problem of man and his immediate space (39).

Dramatists like Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, Ahmed Yerima, and Femi Osofisan, among others, have emphasised the historical significance of violence in the period following several global upheavals, during which playwrights and dramatists expressed strong concern and anxiety over a world that seemed incapable of long-term peace.

Until recently, the need to reform and redefine our security measures has been perceived narrowly in the context of institutions and establishments like the Nigeria Police Force and the military alone, thus terrorism in different forms in Nigeria has become expansive and more encompassing. Therefore, a growing recognition and acceptance that theatre can be employed as an effective tool to expose the ills of terrorism, especially when it is viewed from the human-centred perspective through proper sensitisation have arisen. In analysing the efficacy of theatre in conflict resolution, it is of essence to understand the broader context of its function, ability and mode of implementation with a view to fostering lasting peace, unity and restore confidence among people from different ethnic divide. Countering of terrorism in Nigeria tends to adopt a common fix for all approach which is easily discernible by the terrorists. Such measures often lack the dynamics and proper contexts of effective terrorism policing.

Dramatists throughout the ages have used the theatre to draw the attention of their audience on the need to fight injustice, rise against war and to educate them on moral and social and societal issues. The Greeks used the theatre to educate the masses on the consequences of disobeying the gods; and the Romans used theatre to promote their empire. The medieval era used the theatre to propagate the virtues of Christianity, while the Elizabethans used theatre to entertain and celebrate the royalty. Modern theatre arose as a response to industrialisation and social issues and till date, theatre has been consistent in mirroring the society.

It is obvious that a society riddled with violence and conflict is a danger to that society; ethnic conflicts, diverse interests and religious sentiment pose a serious threat to the unity of our heterogeneous nation. Nigeria is fraught with maladies of different dimension. The theatre has over the years have tried to mediate between man and society (conflict resolution) through education, entertainment and sensitisation. It has functioned as a mouthpiece for the oppressed and it has awakened the spirit of ensemble and unity in man and his society. Theatre and the Nollywood film industry can help to restore peace by gainfully creating a source of employment for the Nigerian youths who as a result of unemployment get into all manner of vices including all manner of crimes in order to sustain themselves. This situation is captured by Ifeyinwa Ozondu thus:

Every production process of a given movie, engage at least 85% of Nigerian youths, from the technical crew to actors, marketers, producers and other crew members. The industry has reduced the unemployment in the country by engaging the youths usefully in the process of film production... most stories in the Nigeria movies link to either our culture or the situation of the country (576).

The inception of theatre in Nigeria through the elite clubs in Lagos in 1866 and the professional theatre organisation, a revival of the theatre by Hubert Ogunde, was an essential tool used to fight the shortcomings of the government. Theatre through the channel of stage drama exposes and satirises the faults and vices of the society. Ray Emeana posits that, “the theatre is a tool for change, it sensitises individuals on their conditions, in the society and strives to better their condition and enhance mass transformation and orientation” (49).

### **Textual Analysis of *The Scent of Crude Oil***

*The Scent of Crude Oil* centres on a fictional Nigerian community, Esidi in the Niger-Delta region, blessed with natural resources but is filled with selfish leaders, greedy and lazy youths. The play opens with the youth election. Tafa, a jobless University graduate vies for the position of the youth chairman against Maku-Maku, a notorious kidnapper and illegal oil bunkerer. Maku-Maku and his friends, Jugunu, Pelele and Aluta are lazy and greedy youths known to have been terrorising and bullying the community through illegal oil bunkering and kidnappings. When it becomes apparent that Tafa who has genuine plans to positively transform his community is the preferred choice of the people in the election, Jugunu instigates a revolt against the community and their leader. They fire gunshots into the air, scaring people away and are able to declare Maku-Maku as the elected Youth Chairman. Tafa canopies the election experience this way:

**Tafa:** It was outright daylight robbery! You need to be there to see the charade when almost everybody had lined up behind me, the hoodlums brought out guns, yes, real guns, AK47 and chased everybody away! They carried Maku-Maku shoulder-high and danced round the community, claiming victory (19).

After the election, Maku-Maku and his friends kidnap Obobo, a ‘mulatto’, thinking he is a white man not knowing that he is one of them. Tafa is contacted since none of them could read nor write to help them draft a letter to the oil company demanding for ransom. Tafa agrees, but instead writes a letter expressing gratitude for all the company has done for the Esidi people. In a community interactive session with a development organisation, Obobo comes in time to expose the deeds of Maku-Maku, Jugunu, Pelele and Aluta and how he escaped from their captivity and he explains it this way:

**Obobo:** ...I am a mulatto, half caste. But these youths (*pointing at them*) kidnapped me one week ago from where I dey hustle for my daily bread...thought I was a proper white man who they could hold for ransom. They wanted the company to come and pay 50 million naira to free me... It was cigarettes I went to buy ... when they kidnapped me... (80).

Tafa corroborates his story and reveals how he with assistance from Amparo created an escape route for Obobo. In shame and humiliation, Maku-Maku and his gang leave the interactive session with the plan to return to oil bunkering. Tafa finds out their plan and alerts the community chief, the community members and the security agents. The school pupils are evacuated to Warri as they all prepare to stop the gang. Unfortunately, Tafa and his followers did not succeed in their attempt to stop Maku-Maku and his men. The bunkering leads to fire outbreak that engulfs Maku-Maku and his men except Pelele who left the crime scene after hearing the sound of a gunshot before the fire outbreak. The inferno razes down the entire Esidi community, leaving just few survivors. After the incident, the survivors including those living on the outskirts of Esidi such as Keni, his wife, Tahisha and Mama Jugunu return to the land of Esidi to rebuild it and start a new life, and they gave all the dead people from the inferno a mass burial. As Nnamele avers, “the contention in the play is focused on communal responsibilities and the need for peaceful existence, the devastating effect of oil exploration by companies in the region and government negligence” (23). Maku-Maku, Jugunu and their followers display gross disrespect for the tradition of the land and its constituted authority. The playwright reveals the first instance of such disregard for tradition through Jugunu in the election scene:

**Chief Huri-Huri:** From what my eyes witness, I announce Tafa as Youth Chairman of Esidi community.

**Jugunu:** Stop am! (*Brandishing an Ak-47 riffle*). Stop the nonsense at once! Na we dey on ground. Pelele! (18).

Being an accepted traditional ruler, Chief Huri-Huri embodies the customs and traditions of the people as ordained by the ancestors. It is through Western influences that many of these sacred African beliefs lost their relevance, especially among the youths as portrayed in the characters of Jugunu and his cohorts. In terms of combat, the bandits also proved to be the stronger team as they are all armed with guns to withstand any form of opposition. Tafa who suffers the loss in the election attests to this thus:

**Tafa:** It would have been madness to stay back, unarmed, to engage a band of drug addicts, cultists and rapists who are armed to the teeth and ready to kill (19).

The Esidi community through the activities of these few youths becomes a community where only the strong survives at the detriment of the weak majority. Chief Huri-Huri also affirms this state of helplessness in the hands of Jugunu and his gang when he says:

**Chief Huri-Huri:** No be lie even the youths get power pass me wey be them chief. Imagine the other time wey NDDC carry big generator come dash us Kamala, the youths drive the contractor wey e bring am. Dem say contractor must give dem ₦250,000.00 as “deve” before dem go allow

am install the generator for our community. We beg dem tire say the generator go improve our lives but dem no gree! (61).

The proliferation of arms in contemporary Nigeria has led to an increase in armed minority groups terrorising the majority of the people as witnessed in the play. The play, *The Scent of Crude Oil* explores a storyline cast in vivid images of the insurgency that ravaged the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. The template for these conclusions could be found in the youths' brazen disrespect for tradition and recourse to use of terror and violence. The play also mirrors the façade of young people fighting with a tradition that is impeding their chances of being gainfully employed or having a source of livelihood.

### **Conclusion**

In the words of Chijioke Agbasiere, "the contradictions, absurdities and cruelty witnessed on the global scene today have necessitated the need for a rethink and reconciliation" (143). As socially committed artists, many playwrights have equally attempted to highlight many of the social problems bedevilling the nation in their works without suggesting the possible and probable ways of solving them. Many post-colonial societies across the globe are embarking on various measures with a view to counter terrorism. The researcher is of the view that it is time we look at the ultimate threat in the Pandora box (terrorism and conflicts) and recommend that an indispensable evaluation should be done by scrutinising and strengthening the regulatory mechanism with a view to contain terrorism through various modes which the researcher has enumerated here to create awareness about the effects of arm proliferation, suicide bombing, insurgency among others.

As Nigeria grapples with the worrisome issue of inadequate security and its antecedent consequences in a nuclear age under globalisation, it must be however pointed out that Africa's relative security in the global security system remains precarious to say the least. Currently, Nigeria is fast becoming one of the havens for global jihadist terrorists who are leveraging on the nation's security lapses to bring untold hardship to the nation. Thus, this study attempts to constitute an indispensable clarion call to engender security consciousness through the employment of the theatre. The imperative of fighting terrorism hinges on exposing the intricacies of violence and the impediments to global and national peace and stability, as can be discerned from *The Scent of Crude Oil*.

Many people erroneously still view terrorism and counter terrorism as a western or middle East challenges and policies, but this is no longer the case as this notion has been set aside by the activities of religious fundamentalists of apocalyptic bent and nihilistic disposition. We should not therefore be under any illusion that this scourge will cease or abate too soon. The study recommends that the Nigerian government should tap into the expertise, neutrality and professionalism of the theatre for peace and conflict resolution initiative, such intervention and sensitisation must have a comprehensive road map and realistic timelines and agenda.

For theatre to succeed, it must be insulated as much as possible from the vagaries of politics and fortified with both official courage and sincerity of purpose. The resultant

effect of terrorism if not countered and checkmated will lead to wanton destruction of more innocent lives and property. The theatre can be an effective tool that can be used to blow out the embers of terrorism and violence in contemporary Nigerian drama. The play x-rays the problems and challenges fuelling ethno-religious crisis, and recommends the use of the theatre for effective, balanced and more socially responsible intervention in issues bordering on religion, politics, ethnicity and cattle rustlers' incursion beyond their boundaries and scope among others. The use of the theatre will lead to the recognition of local peculiarities in the application of political and economic ideals fashioned in our society. The study also identifies the need to harness the rich vein of traditional folklore, stage performance, films among others in tackling some of the intractable social and political problems that confront our nation.

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# THE STATE AS TERRORIST: A PICTORIAL READING OF THE VISUAL THEATRE PLAY, “HARVEST OF GHOSTS”

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## **Abstract**

Terrorism as a phenomenon finds expression in diverse forms and is located within varied spheres of the human population. There are contestations, however, as to what exactly qualifies as terrorism and who fits the profile of a terrorist. These contestations arise principally because of how certain acts and persons are perceived, depending on what side of the divide one stands. A terrorist to one person is a freedom fighter or social crusader to another. An act seen as terrorism by one person may be seen by another as legitimate response and protection of one’s interests/rights. Beyond all of these, however, is the perception that terrorism can only be perpetrated by individuals and groups/organisations. Many persons do not acknowledge the fact that governments and states can also be terrorists. Worse off is the fact that such governments and states may in fact carry out such terrorist acts against their own people that they swore to protect. It is this thesis that propels this study, to determine at what point the state becomes culpable of terrorism, particularly against its own people. This investigation shall be embarked upon using the instrumentality of a pictorial reading of the play, “Harvest of Ghosts”, co-written by Sam Ukala of Nigeria and Bob Frith of the United Kingdom.

## **Introduction**

Terrorism as a phenomenon has continued to gain currency and more relevance in our contemporary existence. News about one terrorist group or the other, about one terrorist activity or the other, intrude into our otherwise tranquil lives and assault our sensibilities almost on a daily basis. From a historical perspective, terrorism has always been with the human race. This is because one can hardly reference any epoch of human evolution that terrorism (or terrorist activities) did not feature in a certain way. This is eloquently posited by Ariel Merari and Nehemia Friedland in their essay, “Social Psychological Aspects of Political Terrorism”.

At the early beginnings of human history, when man lived in wondering gangs, there was always the need to compete for space and scarce resources. In addition to this was the mutual suspicion that existed among different gangs of humanity. To survive in such an environment, therefore, it had necessitated the sabotaging of the efforts of opposing gangs. Under such circumstances, some form of crude and somewhat non-deliberate form of terrorism was perpetrated. We can say non-deliberate, in this context,

because the objective was not to deliberately cripple the opposition but to fight for more advantageous positions in order to eke out some form of existence.

When human communities became more formalised and the concept of clanhood began to take shape, which eventually led to statehood, terrorism became more advanced and began to acquire a more deliberate intent at dispossession and, ultimately, annihilation. History books and books that deal with politics, governance and inter-group relations are replete with innumerable examples of such terrorist activities. To be conceded, however, is the fact that such terrorist activities were driven more by economic considerations. The English economist and journalist, Walter Bagehot gives us an insight into inter-group terrorist acts in his book, *Physics and Politics*.

Bagehot, who was a major exponent of what came to be known as the struggle school, traces the evolution of groups on the journey to statehood or nationhood; and in this journey, different kinds of conflict arose, which were targeted mainly at sabotaging opponents with the intent of advancing one's group. Such imperialistic disposition of certain nations that led to the conquering of other people and the establishment of colonies all across the world by colonial masters is nothing short of terrorism. Till date, even after virtually all of the former colonies have gained independence, states continue to engage in terrorist acts against others with the intention of advancing their own interests even if, in most cases, such acts are not designated terrorism. This is the crux of the matter. What exactly can be termed terrorism? Who are the persons that can be called terrorists? Finding answers to these questions is not as easy as it might seem.

### **Conceptual Evaluation of Terrorism**

Terrorism is one term that is very difficult to pigeonhole because of the many meanings and interpretations that are given to it. This difficulty arises principally because of the emotional and other lenses with which the term is viewed. We find, therefore, that a terrorist to one person may be a freedom fighter to another. In the same vein, an act viewed as terrorism by one person may be seen by another person as protecting one's interest and dignity. In this light, political, economic, social, religious and such other considerations underlie our perception of terrorism and our reaction to it. This difficulty in defining terrorism is so pervasive that even the United Nations (UN) has not been able to come to an agreement on how it should be defined, what precisely should be labelled terrorist acts, and who should be called a terrorist. Several resolutions have been taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the UN, as well as Conventions passed and entered into by Member Nations of the UN; but in all of these, what we find are condemnations of terrorism and resolves to protect persons affected by terrorist activities without a clear agreement on who the terrorist is. The UN is unable to reach such an agreement because virtually every country wants to protect its national interest, and so has an understanding of terrorism and who the terrorist is, different from those of other countries. In the same way, adherents of different religions also protect their religion and would not want terrorism to be associated with it.

Given the scenario above, and in spite of resolutions, such as, *Res. 49/60 – Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1994; *Res. 54/109 – International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of*

*Terrorism*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999; and *Security Council Resolution 1566* of 2004, which essentially was a call on Member countries to cooperate in the war against terrorism, amongst many others, the UN has failed to be clear cut in agreement on who the terrorist is. Scholars of terrorism themselves have battled the issue of definition and what precisely terrorism means.

We can refer to Alex Schmid, who gives a compendium of definitions and comes up with 109 ways in which terrorism may be defined, as gleaned from questionnaires he sent out. This gives credence to the belief of lack of consensus of what the term actually means. In “The Challenges of Conceptualising Terrorism”, Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoefler discuss the difficulty in defining the concept terrorism. They posit that this difficulty arises on account of a number of factors: What parameter(s) does one use in labelling someone as either a terrorist or a freedom fighter? How does one draw the line between terrorism and other forms of violence, like guerrilla warfare, assassinations, etc.? What is the physical and emotional distance between the act of violence and the observer? (Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoefler 778-779). These factors, and others, make the attempt to define terrorism not very easy. To help surmount this challenge, Weinberg et al. have recourse to Alex Schmid’s discussion of terrorism in which it is broken down into four arenas: academic, state views, public and media views, and views by outlaws and anarchists (779). Dwelling on the academic arena, they attempt to construct a modest definition of terrorism thus: “Terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role” (782).

This modest definition, however, does not seem to cover the whole gamut of the concept as some components are not captured. Other scholars have also looked at the term from several other perspectives in order to attempt an understanding of terrorism. Richard Couto, in making reference to Brian Jenkins, notes that violence is an inevitable component of terrorism, even if this violence could simply be a threat or the actual perpetration of it. Couto also refers to Walter Laqueur, who avers that the threatened or actual violence as pointed out by Jenkins above is usually deliberately targeted at civilians (72); because they are usually easier to hit and such hit would inevitably draw great weepy and psychological response from the citizenry. The objective then is to instil fear in the populace as a way of drawing attention to a course championed by the perpetrators of the violence.

The discussion thus far appears to convey the impression that violence associated with terrorism is usually, or only, carried out by non-state groups that are out to destabilise a country with the aim of compelling the state to do their bidding. Available information, however, does not support this view as there is ample evidence of terrorist acts linked to particular governments. These are done either directly by agents of the state or by groups that enjoy official or clandestine support from a country. Officially, every country can be said to engage in one form of terrorism or the other through their different intelligence organisations. In the same way, these terrorist acts are either done on an international level, which is one country against another, or domestically, that is, against its own citizens. Our focus in this essay is the terrorism that a state carries out against its own citizens.

A number of studies have documented such domestic terrorist acts. Indeed, history is replete with documentations of how states use terror to hold their people hostage. The story of Josef Stalin and his co-travellers in the defunct Soviet Union is quite popular. In several publications, among which we have *Terror and Progress USSR...* by Barrington Moor, *How Russia is Ruled* by Merle Fainsod, and *Political Terror in Communist Systems* by Alexander Dallin and George W. Breslauer, we are given excellent exposé of the terror that the Soviet Union and other Communist states unleashed on their own people. This state of internal terrorism was undeniably accentuated by the Cold War between the East and the West that existed then. But it was not just the Cold War that helped to breed authoritarian governments, nor were authoritarian regimes restricted to communist countries, regimes which turned around to harass their own citizens. Joseph L. Scarpali and Lessie Jo Frazier, in their essay, “State Terror: Ideology, Protest and the Gendering of Landscapes”, discuss the suppression of citizens by authoritarian regimes in the Latin American countries of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, what they call the Southern Cone, between the late 1950s and the early 1990s. They posit that state terror was used by the regimes to try to legitimise their hold onto power, to keep the citizens in perpetual state of fear and subject them to the whims of the regimes.

Within the African continent, and particularly in Nigeria, we have had our own share of dictatorial and terrorist regimes that promoted free reign of terror on the citizens. In fact, for the better part of the 1960s, virtually the whole of the 1970s, most of the 1980s and 1990s, Nigeria was held hostage by a succession of dictatorial military regimes. Of the lot, perhaps two stand out as the most brutal and terrorist inclined: the General Muhammadu Buhari regime between 1983 and 1985, and the General Sani Abacha regime between 1993 and 1998. These regimes could be compared to those of Augusto Pinoche of Chile between 1973 and 1990; Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc) of Haiti between 1957 and 1971; Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) also of Haiti between 1971 and 1986; Manuel Antonio Noriega of Panama between 1983 and 1989; Mobutu Sese Seko of Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) between 1965 and 1997; Hissene Habre of Chad between 1982 and 1990; and Charles Taylor of Liberia between 1997 and 2003, amongst others.

The Buhari and Abacha regimes prided themselves in unleashing the utmost terror against the Nigerian populace. Journalists and human rights activists were indiscriminately arrested and killed; the judiciary was muzzled; critics of the government simply disappeared or were brazenly killed; and communities were indiscriminately razed down. Indeed, these two regimes could be considered the darkest in Nigeria’s checkered history. This essay draws inspiration from and focuses on the fallouts of the activities of one of these regimes: the Sani Abacha regime with regards to its terrorist activities in the Niger Delta, as captured in the play, “Harvest of Ghosts”.

### **The Play, “Harvest of Ghosts”**

The play, “Harvest of Ghosts”, was given birth to at the Horse and Bamboo Theatre, Waterfoot, Lancashire, England, in 1998, when Sam Ukala, who was then a Commonwealth Fellow, collaborated with Bob Frith to co-write and co-direct it. The play

toured England, Ireland and Holland in 1999. It was reworked and produced as part of the activities of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Convention of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), at Grand Hotel, Asaba, Delta State; and then at the Theatre Arts Studio, Delta State University, Abraka, all in 2002.

“Harvest of Ghosts” dwells on the sorry state of the Niger Delta as the region that produces the bulk of the financial resources that keep the wheel of Nigeria running, yet gets next to nothing from her God-given resources while at the same time suffers deprivation and despoliation of the environment. It chronicles the reprehensible actions of the Nigerian state and the International Oil Companies that exploit the oil and gas resources of the region. The play uses the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight Ogoni compatriots by the General Sani Abacha regime in 1995, as paradigm to discuss the wider Niger Delta question.

In specific terms, the play starts with a festival, a festival that has spirits, ancestors and humans involved in one huge communal engagement of togetherness, merriment and propitiation of the elemental forces. In the midst of this festival, however, Kika, an environmentalist and writer, is bitter about the destruction of the environment as a result of oil exploration and exploitation. These oil exploitation activities, of course, lead to ill-health, poor agricultural harvest and ultimately poverty and death in the land. Kika writes and campaigns to change the course of the tide. Meanwhile, the façade of a festival procession re-appears and this time the king is in attendance. A sacrifice is conducted as part of the festival but the gods reject it and rather pitch their tent with Kika. This sets the stage for the first confrontation as Kika takes the complaints of the people against Shellbottom and the activities of his company to the king. Shellbottom, however, bribes the king, urges him to discountenance the complaints and, in fact, to transform himself into a military Head of State.

The problems do not abate; Shellbottom and his company continue to destroy the environment and impoverish the people, and Kika is further drawn into the plight of his peoples. He writes and takes their complaints to the newly transformed military President, but Shellbottom is ever there to bribe and turn the king against his people. Issues come to a head when Kika mobilises and goes to stop the drilling of oil that ironically impoverishes his people and destroys the environment. In the melee that follows, Kika is killed and his blood flows into the earth which sprouts ghosts to continue the struggle. These ghosts whip the President and Shellbottom until they capitulate.

All of the foregoing in performance was achieved through visual means, the performance of which was accompanied by instrumental music and some dance steps as the occasion demanded. In the Nigerian version of the play, this writer was Scenic/Technical Director and the aesthetics of that production have been well documented in the essay, “A Tidal Wave of Ghosts?: A Reading of Sam Ukala’s ‘Harvest of Ghosts’”. We shall, therefore, not go into a detailed discussion of that production here. However, as pointed out in “A Tidal Wave of Ghosts?..”, apart from the very evocative visual background that was designed and executed, other visual elements deployed included puppets, letterings and icons in the form of characters and props (124-126). These helped to convey the message of the play in very clear and graphic terms to the audience. This is because the visual elements deployed clearly represented identifiable

signposts of the travails associated with oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta, and the attendant destruction of the environment, coupled with the poverty foisted on the people.

The play is quite paradigmatic of the Niger Delta situation and in particular of the events that led to the killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his compatriots. It mirrors very eloquently the terrorist disposition of the General Sani Abacha administration and the Nigerian state against the Ogoni people in particular and the Niger Delta as a whole. This terrorism against the Niger Delta is very evident in the seizure of the oil found in the region for the development of the rest of the country while the region suffers. It is instructive to note that of all the mineral resources (solid, liquid and gas) found all over Nigeria, only the oil and gas found in the Niger Delta region have been so seized by the Federal Government and jealously guarded with all the crude instruments of state power. This situation, inevitably, led to agitations and resistance by the Niger Delta people, which the Federal Government of Nigeria has always quelled with utmost terror.

G. G. Darah, in *The Niger Delta: Resource Control and the Quest for Justice*, gives a graphic narrative of the Niger Delta deprivation story and the brutal way the Federal Government of Nigeria has responded to agitations coming from the region. Darah paints a picture of the Federal Government of Nigeria as a thief, whose sole aim, as it were, is to deprive the Niger Delta of the benefits of her resources. He argues that the quest for justice by the Niger Delta has been met with terror and bloodshed (31, 35). To give fillip to our discussion, it might be enlightening to make this extensive quote from the book:

All the regimes have employed violent means to terrorise and brutalise innocent people in the oil-rich states in order to ensure the continuous flow of oil and dollar revenue. The ferocious manner the Nigerian government responds to oil-induced protests and complaints shows that the country is more interested in the oil money than in the welfare and safety of the people. It is instructive to note that the government never employs similar hard tactics against the oil companies even when they commit atrocities against the communities and the environment. The companies are never held to account for their actions that cause wanton abuse of human rights (19).

The scenario painted above is nothing short of terrorism against the very people that the government owes a duty to protect.

### **Pictorial Reading of the Play**

As we had advanced earlier in this essay, visual theatre is a wordless performance that makes use of mime-like actions accompanied by music. It uses a generous dose of puppets and icons that the audience can identify with to pass across its message in a lively manner. Thomas Butler Garret, in an attempt to define visual theatre, traces the evolution of that form of theatre practice from avant-garde performances, to puppetry and physical theatre. He argues that visual theatre is a mixture of mime, puppetry and cinema. This is so, he says, because, unlike mime in which the actor is animated against a more or less

static environment, the visual theatre actor lives his/her life in an animated environment where the scenery and props can come to life. Garret says in this shared animation between the actor, scenic environment and props, puppets also play significant roles because they assume lives of their own and also interact with the human actors, the environment, the props and the audience. The interplay of all of these elements, he says, gives the performance a cinematic quality (66-80). Of course, in all of this, the absence of verbal language is conspicuously noticed. Music takes its place and accompanies the action of the performance from beginning to the end.

Dean Robert Wilcox discusses the symbolic value of visual images in a performance and contends that such signs, symbols and icons, are able to convey specific messages to the audience, particularly if they are able to make emotional connections with the visual images principally on account of such images being familiar (143-147). Familiar in this context refers to being able to identify with the images and what they symbolise. Focusing on the works of Robert Wilson, Wilcox argues that Wilson relies extensively on articles and images in his performances because the performances are inherently visual. Going further, Wilcox posits that Wilson structures his performances around visual codes because linguistic communication is only one way of perceiving the world around us (214-216); and this may not carry the right emotional impact for the specific message(s) intended for the audience. This point gives validity to the relevance of visual theatre in contemporary theatre practice.

A pictorial essay is a piece of writing that combines textual and pictorial elements in the discussion and presentation of a particular subject. It is akin to the visual essay. The visual essay, however, has a broader scope in that it embraces a wide variety of media, including pictures, drawings, slides and films and can be presented in text based format with generous dose of media content or in a filmic context also with other media and text content. The pictorial essay, on the other hand, is essentially text based but with a good dose of pictures and other drawings.



***Fig. 1: A Drummer during the Festival***

The pictorial essay has its roots in journalism, in photo essays published by magazines and newspapers. Of late, it has started to make inroads into the academia as a way of visually discussing and presenting works of art and other sociological issues. Admittedly, its potentials have not been fully appreciated in academic circles because of a somewhat lack of understanding of its form and style. A number of academics also query its perceived lack of theoretical depth, although this accusation is not altogether correct.

Scholars would generally want to see a more robust discussion of concepts before an essay is illustrated with pictures and drawings. It is on account of this that this essay has not adopted the more common format for the pictorial essay of a brief introduction followed by the presentation and discussion of pictures. We have opted for a detailed discussion of the conceptual ingredients of the topic in order to more properly situate our observations and findings and to give the essay a truly academic quality. Having done that, we now present the pictorial illustrations for this essay.

The opening montage of the play is a festival procession that involves the living members of the community, spirits and ancestors. It is a pulsating and engrossing festival as can be seen in the countenance of this drummer who is completely drawn into the spirit of his drumming and of the festival. The festival is supposed to be a communal affair that is meant to promote harmony and wellbeing in the community. This is exemplified by the sacrifice that is conducted to appease the forces that control the elements. This sacrificial exercise, however, does not go as planned because the gods reject the sacrifice and the chief of the sacrificial rites, the king, and rather show inclination to identifying with the struggle of Kika. This sets the stage for the crises in the play.



*Fig. 2: The King Sitting in State*

The king in full regalia sitting in a state organised function. He is ostentatiously dressed in a manner that belies the suffering of his people. His countenance also shows that he does not care about the predicament that his people go through because of the God-given resources of their land. He typifies a leader who would rather terrorise his people than to seek for ways to improve their lives.



***Fig. 3: Destroyed Environment***

The picture above depicts an environment that has been destroyed by oil exploration and exploitation. The destruction is so pervasive that farmlands are damaged and rivers polluted. Because of this, the farmlands cannot bear produce and the rivers do not have fishes. This translates to poverty. The poverty is worsened by health complications that result from polluted sources of drinking water, polluted agricultural produce, acid rain, heat from gas flaring among other aberrations that arise from oil production activities in the Niger Delta.



***Fig. 4: Boma and Destroyed Fish***

Boma is seen in the picture above holding a fish whose flesh has been eaten up by the oil that spilled into the rivers. The fish has no flesh again, only a bony head. This symbolises the complete devastation of the land such that it can no longer sustain the people. What we have left are bones that may end up hurting the people even. The symbolism of the fish goes even beyond the agricultural sustenance of the people. Looking closely at the fish would reveal a human leg attached to it. This shows that humanity, as it were, is being destroyed. And this is the reality in the Niger Delta. Lives are wasted because of the evil manner in which oil is exploited in the region.



***Fig. 5: The Mother Icon***

The Mother icon represents not only the human beings in the land but the Niger Delta itself as a mother that is supposed to nurture her children. The reverse is, however, the case as she watches helplessly as her children are maimed and killed. She supervises the burial of her children against the natural order providing for their sustenance. The Mother icon is depicted here wailing and shouting for the whole world to hear about the plight of her children even as she holds yet another one that has been killed at the prime of youth and is in procession for the burial.

### **Conclusion**

The essay has brought to the fore the reality that terrorism is not an activity that is associated with non-state groups only, that governments all over the world engage in one form of terrorism or the other, but most painfully, that many governments engage in terrorist actions against their own people, people that they swore to protect and to provide for. We have thus far tried to show that the Nigerian state is equally guilty in this regard. Given that scenario, we tried to construct a narrative of the terrorism that is carried out against the people of the Niger Delta. We have shown that the Nigerian state is more

interested in the wealth that it can make from the Niger Delta, and that because of this interest and greed, it has seized the oil and gas resources of the region. We have also shown how with the aid of the visual theatre performance, “Harvest of Ghosts”, this terrorist disposition of the Federal Government of Nigeria is made manifest. More significantly, we have demonstrated that visual theatre is a veritable means of presenting and discussing issues that are of relevance to us because pictures tell more than words and the audience is able to relate emotionally with scenarios depicted in visual form, particularly if those visual stimuli are such that they can identify with and that reverberate with their sensibilities.

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# REDEFINING 'RELIGIOUS TERRORISM' AND THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN PLAYWRIGHT

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## **Abstract**

In our nation and in the world over, terrorism today is a subject of major concern and discourse affecting every aspect of human existence, be it political, religious, economic, sociological etc. Terror without a gun is now our present day religious reality, just as the popular axiom “stealing (without a gun) with the pen” has been the bane of our national politics for some time now. Terrorism has left the periphery of arms and ammunition and graduated into a more conducive atmosphere that masks its ugly face in our religious groups and organisations. Religion in which man is supposed to take refuge and consolation in the face of life’s anomalies has become a subject of disillusionment as it has followed the path of terror, orchestrated by religious leaders who often smartly twist and turn until they find justifications in the holy writs to steal and milk their unsuspecting victims all in the name of God. The upsurge of religious businessmen in our societies has championed the corresponding emergence of a litany of churches and worship centres littering all the nooks and crannies of our streets. In view of these, this paper seeks to highlight the masked terrorist tendencies prevalent both between and within religions, to re-assess the role of playwriting and the Nigerian playwright in countering this menace, and to chart a much sought course. In achieving these ends, this research utilises the literary and artistic research methodologies.

## **Introduction**

Terrorism is a phenomenon that has punctuated human existence for some time now. Being a universal phenomenon, it is a threat to humanity that no culture of the world is immune to. Little wonder why many nations of the world have dedicated whooping chunks of their national economies to the fight against this monstrous menace. The historical 9/11 terrorist attack of the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and the Pennsylvanian country side in the United States of America in 2001, orchestrated by founder and one time leader of al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden is indeed a blow that shook the world. Many lives were lost in this devastating experience that still stands as the fieriest terrorist attack on the American soil, and one of the fieriest terrorist attacks in recorded history. In the discourse of the impact of terrorism, this experience cannot be overemphasised.

Again, Nigeria, in particular, has had her fair share of this universal headache, especially with the activities of Boko Haram and other such groups operating within her

sovereign space. The 9/11 attack on America took the format (physical violence) which the attacks on Nigeria are taking presently. This perhaps contributes to one of the reasons why terrorism is typically situated today within the restrictive circumscribes of physical and psychological violence. However, this work takes a look at another dimension that terrorism has begun to take; a dissimulative dimension domiciled within the religious circle, which is not really physical.

### **An Overview of Terrorism**

Terror in simple terms stands for violent action(s) which create or result in extreme fear. Violence here is not restricted to the use of physical force to hurt or inflict injury or pain. Cindy Anene Ezeugwu, in her PhD thesis, titled, “Shades of Violence in the Works of Three Selected Nigerian Playwrights”, categorised those that fall within this circle as, *Physical Violence*. Ezeugwu is of the view that;

hate speech, hypnosis, gestures, manipulations, body shamming, threats, charms, forceful oath taking, favouritism and all those situations that do not involve physical contact “using parts of one’s body or harmful objects” were categorised as non-physical violence (30-31).

In the same vein, it is worthy of note that terror as a violent action, does not mean that terror is restricted to just physical actions since the subtlest of words or gestures can do the most gruesome of damages by drilling the largest of holes in the hardest hearts.

When we hear the word ‘terrorism’, unconsciously, our minds often begin to paint gloomy pictures of blood and death, with surviving victims either moving or being moved to and fro dilapidated houses and streets. We begin to imagine about gruesome pictures of bombs, guns, grenades, bullets and many other instruments of physical violence. We begin to paint mental pictures of lifeless bodies littered all over the places, paramedics and care givers at work, the sirens of ambulances blaring, displaced children crying, the badly injured dying, news agencies writing and reporting, security operatives digging and investigating, intelligence officers analysing intelligence reports and specimens, government representatives blaming and assuring, sympathisers lamenting and so on. This is because our minds are hugely conditioned to the primary type of terrorism which is embodied in physical violence.

### **Defining Terrorism**

Terrorism is derived from the Latin word, ‘*terere*’, meaning, ‘to frighten’. It is one of the activities that top the chart in the list of violent crimes in the wake of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a concept that is not easily defined, probably because a single definition cannot wholesomely do justice to its ever changing and ever evolving dimensions. C. U. Ugwoke speculates on two possible reasons behind this difficulty in defining terrorism. He states that:

terrorism as a concept is not easy to define. Two major factors are perhaps responsible for this. First, terrorism has different meanings for different people.

In other words, it is a relative concept. Secondly, the concept is elusive and as such has not been static in meaning. It has experienced a number of definitional modifications (*Criminology* 193).

He further outlines seven typologies of terrorism which includes:

- a) Political terrorism (use of terrorist tactics in actualising political objectives);
- b) Criminal terrorism (used to advance criminal objectives);
- c) Narco-terrorism (related to drugs);
- d) Nuclear terrorism (nuclear warfare in pursuance of objectives, especially political);
- e) Biological terrorism (employment of biological weapons such as anthrax and other poisonous gases in pursuance of terrorist objectives);
- f) Religious terrorism (use of terrorist tactics to achieve religious aims); and
- g) Cyber terrorism (use of the internet technology in accomplishing terrorist goals) (194).

Many attempts have been made towards an all-encompassing definition for terrorism, but none of these definitions have been able to capture its aspects wholesomely. Like earlier stated, many definitions existing in the public domain tilt their focus on violence as the watchword in defining the concept of terrorism. Stephen Jones defines terrorism as, “an emotive word designed to emphasise the extreme fear caused by apparently indiscriminate violent actions of individuals and groups claiming to be operating on behalf of some particular cause” (*Criminology* 50). The United Nations, however, has provided a definition of terrorism as acts of violence resulting or likely to result in major economic loss, when the purpose of the conduct, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act is terrorism according to the 2001 United Nations interim draft of the definition.

But terrorism in this context is not entirely hinged upon ‘acts of physical violence’ as is the case with many perceptions of the concept. This work therefore tries to present a paradoxical redefinition of the concept of terrorism as not being strictly restricted to physically violent actions, but also encompassing the subtleties in non-violent actions, especially those perceivable in the area of religion. Therefore, of all these typologies of terrorism earlier outlined herein according to Ugwoke, this paper shows particular interest in religious terrorism since it is the type that seems interwoven into the fabrics of human existence and its multi facets may not be immediately recognised as terrorism by the faithful.

### **Perspectives on Terrorism and Religion**

On the other hand, when we hear of “religious terrorism,” we begin to relate it with certain religious sects, fundamentalists or extremist groups that see physical terrorism as a means of actualising their set objectives. Notwithstanding the fact that examples abound of such groups, religious terrorism has since broken the walls of physical

violence and has swerved into other very sensitive areas of life. The scope of terrorism has often been restricted or thought to be restricted to the unleashing of mayhem through the instrumentality of violence, especially with arms and other weapons of mass destruction, but it has widened to accommodate other non-physical aspects of terror which are often not considered terrorist in inclination.

Sometime in May 2016, I lost an uncle who in his days was a devoted and an active congregant in one of the present day churches in Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. He gave virtually all he could, including time, money and energy to the service of a church that turned her back on him in his death because he was not financially up to date. The church refused to accord him his final respects by burying him according to her traditions because of a paltry sum he could not pay up before his death. This led to a little misunderstanding between my family and the church which was later resolved by the both parties. Had my uncle known that this was going to be his fate after such a long period of service to his church, it is inconceivable to think that he would still have stuck around with the church. If he had any inclination of what transpired in his death, he would be lying in his grave today with loads of regrets. This is quite irreligious and unfair of a religious group. Although this seems subtle, it is fearful and worrisome and thus, isn't too minute to pass as a dimension of religious terrorism.

Damian Oyata, in the introduction to his book, *Faith, Culture and Individual Freedom*, notes:

Were the Catholic Faith ever to wane in influence in Nsukka Diocese, it would not be because Christ is not a model of true spiritual living. It would also not be that the Catholic Faith is not dynamic enough to accommodate modern and traditional cultural experience and exigencies.... If ever Catholicism wanes in Nsukka diocese, it would be a result of the miscarriage of Christ to the people by some propagators and defenders of the faith (13).

This position is prompted by the way his (Oyata's) family was treated during the funeral of their parents by the Parish priest who asked parishioners not to attend the funeral ceremonies because they "were to be done in the traditional customary manner" (16). The priest in question went as far as punishing offenders by prohibiting them from receiving the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion). But to Oyata, the truth remains that:

in his earthly ministry, Christ never for once intimidated people to accept a belief system. Christ never penalised any people for holding onto a different belief... Indeed, to date Christ stands tall as a true ecumenist who condemned many condemnable practices, especially hypocrisy, but never banned people from freedom of association... (13).

If Christ and his disciples had remained within their comfort zones (amongst believers alone) in the first place, how would Christianity have spread? If Christ had not mingled with the unbelievers, how would the good news have spread across the world? Is

it possible for pills to heal without making contacts with the afflicted? This is another instance of religious terrorism as is obtainable even in the contemporary times. Some men of god ban members of their congregation from certain activities that define their faith because of some issues that are more or less personal, forgetting that the Christian faith is built upon the bedrock of love, acceptance and understanding even for the unbelievers. These illustrations are necessary to point out the fact that religious terrorism does not just begin and end with physical violence. Again, it is not just domiciled in one particular church or religious denomination, but cut across different religions of the world.

It has made its way into shrines, churches as well as mosques and other worship centres, and now dwells among priests, pastors, reverends, Imam, custodians and their congregants. In the battle for supremacy and survival, we see another dimension of terrorism between religions. In other words, religious terrorism has gone both inter and intra, that is between religions and within religions respectively. This work focuses on the non-physical aspects of terrorism in the religious circle, which are often not perceived or seen as such, but felt undoubtedly. Terrorism within the given context has gone both inter and intra.

### **Inter-Religious Terrorism**

Religion and terrorism seem to have forged a dastardly chemistry in our world today. Nigeria particularly is made up of various religions of which three: the African Traditional Religion, the Christian religion and the Islamic religion are the most prominent. These religions have always launched criticisms and counter criticisms about themselves, with each arguing and seriously marshalling justifications as to why their doctrines and perspectives should be the adopted and the preferred. The ATR adherents would never agree to the supposition that their religion is inferior to those of their Christian or Islamic counterparts, and so would stop at nothing to prove it, even if it means exploiting the extremes. This feeling is common among all religions and so is not peculiar to one. Perhaps that is the reason why Ken Wear maintains that, “we all have a natural preference for people like ourselves. That was, after all, the origin of society as our numbers grew from the cave man days...” (*Christian and Muslim Extremism*). With this being the case, the members of each group would resort to slander, defamation, shaming and other irreligious practices against the other groups, in order to score some points.

Many times we hear some religions making such suppositions about Islam being driven on the wheels or doctrines of violence and terrorism. Many assume that Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab, Isis and even the much dreaded Boko Haram that have ravaged our very own Nigerian society for more than a decade now all have their roots in Islam, and this is probably the reason why Islam as a religion is considered by many to be terror oriented. Jihads (holy wars) have been fought over and over in defence of religious dogmas and faith, claiming countless number of lives and property. Again, non-Muslims (and Muslims converting to other faith) are regarded as infidels, (the unfaithful) meaning they are candidates for the sword.

But the truth still remains that no religion on earth can lay claims to having a clean slate in the discourse of terrorism. The Christian church cannot say, for instance, that the Muslims are terrorists since the Christian religion on its own part is not devoid of bloodstains from the past (history), owing to its great record of bloodshed during the era of the “crusades” (fighting for lost holy lands). This period was characterised by battles and killings carried by the Christian faithful in attempts to retake lost holy lands. There were fierce Knighted warriors of Christ who waged wars against the Muslims with the conviction that their cause was just. The history of Knighthood today in the Church can be traced to this period in history. Even in the Christian bible, instances abound of a series of battles and wars fought and won or lost between the “people of God” (Israelites) and other nations.

Same goes for the African Traditional Religion and many other religions of the world. In the African Traditional Religion, there have been instances of terror in the way or manner it had been practiced in the past. In the past before the Christianisation of Africa, twins under the auspices of the African Traditional Religion were considered a taboo in some parts of Africa and Nigeria in particular. They were therefore, candidates for destruction and specially meant for the evil forests. Human sacrifices were also rife in “cleansing the land” of evil spirits in order to avoid the wrath of the gods. The burial of a dead king in some areas was characterised by head hunts in order to procure human heads that would accompany the king to the great beyond. These head-hunters terrorised communities until they get the required number of heads for the funeral. These are a few instances of terrorism in the African Traditional Religion. Even if any (religion) at all would still insist that it is clean, then what happens to the subtle gestures that are suggestive of terrorism of which this work is inclined to review? Even in religious denomination, terrorism still exists.

### **Inter-Denominational Terrorism**

Even within religions, terrorism manifest in various ways between members of different denominations of a particular religion. For instance, in Christianity, we see church pastors and reverends mounting the pulpits and making very sensitive statements about other churches they perceive as threats to their own existence, all under the umbrella of Christianity. The Catholic Church over the years have been accused of idolatry by other groups who think their doctrines are based on idol worship because of their use of materials such as holy pictures, statues, chaplets, the crucifix and other items of worship and veneration, and they in defence of themselves would most times go political by using the phrase “mushroom churches”, as a derogatory remark to describe these other churches that they think do not really have strong bases. These priests and pastors make all manner of image threatening remarks about themselves in trying to dissuade their members from pitching their tents in those directions.

The Muslim religion is not free from this inter-denominational conflicts and battles for supremacy which constitutes a kind of terrorism which is not typically physical, but has the propensity of translating to physical terrorism with the passage of time. Islam is undoubtedly one of the many religions of the world that has splintered into many sects. It is a religion that is multi-factional, with different Nigerian Muslims

belonging to different factions, such as, the Sunni, the Shi'ite, the Izala, and so on. In Nigeria, the Shi'ite Muslims headed by Ibraheem El-Zakzaky occasionally clash with other factions all in the unending battle for supremacy. Considering other non-Wahhabi Muslims as infidels, they are regarded as people doomed by Allah, and so are potential candidates for the sword. In reassuring their members of their ingenuity, they make destructive statements about themselves to the applause of their members. This is a form of terrorism, although not physical.

### **Intra-Denominational Terrorism**

Many terrorist tendencies rear their ugly heads even within a religious denomination. They are made visible in the way that pastors, priests and reverend gentlemen construct their preaching around particular areas for their personal interests. Of course, they have to find biblical support to these even where they are non-existent, so as to make the pills more digestible to their congregations. Pastors and reverends for instance mostly prefer to dwell on areas dealing with tithing, seed sowing and, first fruit offering, alms giving to the church among others. They keep terrorising these members who are constantly in pursuit of eternal life until they succumb to their pressures. Even members who live below the income line of ₦400 to ₦500 per day and consequently cannot afford three square meals daily are not left out in this religious extortion. In fact, they are the most susceptible since according to the gospel of Luke, the measure you give is the measure you will receive.

The implication is that these religious businessmen start to live big and flashy while their victims remain impoverished, believing God for a miracle one day, while still pumping the little they have into the coffers of the church. Many of these pastors today have big schools, water plants, banks, universities, bakery, bottling companies and other establishments that only the bourgeois can afford. Most members of these churches can only attend these expensive institutions only in their dreams and wildest imaginations. Although this does not involve any form of violence, it can be rightly captured as terrorism. Their religious leaders fly in expensive jets and move in exotic fleets of cars while most of their congregants trek until their shoes and sandals wear out. These same men mount the pulpits to the awe of their faithful who have grown to become hypnotised and brainwashed by their kind of sermons. It is no longer news in contemporary Nigeria when we hear that an Imam, pastor or man of God is caught pants down with a member of his sect who has to succumb to his manipulative “prayer and deliverance” sessions. The victims in these instances bend to these deceptions not out of their personal volitions, but due to these “men of God’s” expertise in brainwashing them in the name of God and Allah.

### **The ‘Whistle-Blowing’ Role of the Playwright**

The playwright has always remained and must continue in all diligence and focus in commenting on the ills of the society, even in the face of adversities. By this, it is clear that the task of the playwright as a creative artist is a dangerous affair that must be undertaken if he is to remain the voice of the voiceless, the mirror of the society, the societal watchdog, and the social cum moral activist. He digs, pokes, pries and risks

getting hurt, all in his zeal to expose the ills of the society with a view to help recreate a better society for mankind.

In the colonial times, playwrights such as Ngugi Wa Thiong’O of Kenya, Hubert Ogunde and his Nigerian contemporaries like Moses Olaiya, Duro Ladipo, Wole Soyinka, and a handful of other dedicated dramatists, refused to cower in the face of colonial oppression. They continued to push back circumscribes of colonialism until they fell apart. Till this present day, the playwright has not stopped in the fight for a better society. After this battle for religious freedom had been fought and won, the fight continues as other challenges emerge. Every finish line is indeed the beginning of a new race, and for each new issue, the playwright must brace up to confront the challenges ahead.

Today, the issue of terrorism is one of those challenges that have become as persistent as a cankerworm, piercing, sucking and eating deep into the security of the society, causing a lot of division and harm in the homes and the society at large. Religious terrorism is holding sway in our various denominations manifesting in different shades and dimensions, and many playwrights have taken the centre stage to address these anomalies. Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Emeka Nwabueze, and a host of other playwrights have taken the forefront in the move against the non-physical aspects of religious terrorism. In his play, *The Trials of Brother Jero*, for example, Soyinka presents us with a typical representation of the lives and activities of many Nigerian and African self-acclaimed men of God. For a play written in 1972, it is a visionary recreation of present day religious realities.

### *Trials of Brother Jero*

Brother Jero is a fake prophet who is merely in the prophetic business to survive. His whole being is built on lies, deceit, manipulation and craftiness. The excerpt below from the play reveals him as a religious businessman:

**Jero:** ...I am glad I got here before any customers—I mean worshippers – well, customers if you like. I always get that feeling every morning that I am a shop-keeper waiting for customers. The regular ones come at definite times... (55).

He helps his master the Old Prophet get the Beach side land by leading a campaign against other prophets, but later with his craftiness, he collects the land from his master. With his prophet deception, he becomes indebted to Amope, Chume’s wife who sells him a velvet cape he cannot pay for. Again, this excerpt reveals this:

**Jero:** I don’t know how she found out my house. When I bought the goods off her, she did not even ask any questions. My calling was enough to guarantee payment. It is not as if this was a well-paid job... this velvet cape which I bought from her. It would not have been necessary if one were not forced to distinguish himself more and more from these scum who degrade the calling of the prophet (54).

Chume, his most loyal congregant, on discovering that he is a fake prophet tries to kill him; but with the help of a politician, who becomes his next victim, he gets Chume into an asylum.

*Trials of Brother Jero* is an embodiment of the happenings in our society all in the name of religion. The extortionist tendencies in present day pastors, betrayal, character defamation/assassination, futility and a world in need of miracles are some of the realities in the play that parallels with the religious realities of our present day. Extortion can be seen in Brother Jero's dealings with Amope. With his prophetic guise, he is able to get Amope to sell to him even though he has no money to pay. Amope on her own part sees it as a privilege to sell to a prophet of the Lord.

This is how many self-acclaimed pastors and men of God use the name of God to extort money from members of the society. Betrayal is seen in Jero's dealings with his Master the Old Prophet from whom he collects the beach side land for his own church. Before then, he had carried campaigns against the other men of God who wanted that piece of land at the beach; defaming and assassinating their characters and slandering them until he is able to help his master secure it. A world in dire need of miracles can be seen in Jero's encounter with the politician who wants a place as minister in the nation. It is also evident in the case of Chume who the prophet has promised and prophesied that he will be promoted soon in his place of employment. All these constitute another shade of terrorism which can be categorised as non-confrontational, subtle and time wasting.

#### *I Will Marry When I Want*

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is a foremost African playwright. Even though he is not a Nigerian playwright, his work, *I Will Marry When I Want* has become very important to the context of our discussion since it tackles this issue of religious terrorism in Africa. In the play, we are presented with a similar situation when the members of a church who claim to belong to the sect of the poor visits Kiguunda and his wife, Wangeci, for alms. They claim they want to build their own church, and so they resort to religious terrorism to raise money. The excerpt below captures this:

**Leader:** We belong to the sect of the poor.  
Those without land,  
Those without plots,  
Those without clothes,  
We want to put up our own church.  
We have a haraambe.  
Give generously to the God of the poor.  
Whatever you have put aside.  
To ward off the fate of Ananias and his wife (8).

From this excerpt above, we see terrorism come to play in the conduct of these religious businessmen who hide under the cloak of the poor to extort the masses in the name of God. This is seen in the way they craftily attached a warning to their plea when

the leader says: “Whatever you have put aside, to ward off the fate of Ananias and his wife” (8). This is the kind of situation that has beset us today. They attach these subtle threats in order to intimidate their victims and leave them with no alternative but to comply. And when the owner of the house tells them that they could hardly afford to feed their bellies, talk more of giving for a haraambe, the group immediately raise a song thus:

**Soloist:** *The devil of stinginess  
Must be crushed!*

**Chorus:** *Hallelujah lets crush him  
And press him to the ground,  
For the second coming is near (8).*

They label Kiguunda a stingy man because he tells them he cannot afford to contribute to their cause. This again highlights the subtleties that constitute terrorism as they are obtainable in our societies today. Ahab Kioi tricks Kiguunda and his family into using their title deed which represents their only hope of land ownership while still hiding in the guise of religion. They accuse Kiguunda and his wife of not having a proper wedding and gets them to use their only land to obtain a loan for the wedding, a loan which they were unable to pay back. They make a whole lot of noise about the church and holiness, singing hymns and praising God, (just as pastors, Men of God, Reverends, and so on, in our society do to create the impression of godliness and holiness) terrorising these poor people until they take possession of their only land. This represents the reality of the countless number of churches in our society, making noise and terrorising the populace with their deafening loudspeakers.

In many cities in Nigeria, it is not new to have more than one of such churches operating at the same time with their separate loud speakers terrorising the entire city with their noise. Even when the church is so small that it can only manage to take just a few people, these monstrous loudspeakers would still be mounted. The result is that these concurrent sermons rendering from separate units produce clashing sounds that constitute nuisances and becomes a problem to the society. If a hospital with patients for instance is situated close to these churches, the noise will be enough to intensify the conditions of the ailing patients. It is therefore not out of place to attribute such realities to terrorism, even though there is no form of physical violence but we can liken such acts to psychological violence.

#### *When the Arrow Rebounds*

In Emeka Nwabueze's *When the Arrow Rebounds*, which is a dramatic adaptation of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, we once again come face to face with instances of religious terrorism. Ezeulu, driven by pride as the chief Priest of the Ulu Oracle crosses his bounds when he decides to punish his own people for not reacting to his detention by the white colonialists. He refuses to eat up his remaining three sacred yams in order that the harvest of new yams could commence. The implication is that these yams are to be left in the fields to perish. This would undoubtedly translate to famine in Ulu.

But Ezeulu who is bent on revenge cares not about this. Instead, he seeks justification within their culture by insisting that he must follow due process (one yam per new moon) and will not go contrary to the traditions of their ancestors by speedily consuming the remaining three yams. The situation is captured in Ezeulu's words below:

**Ezeulu:** I welcome you all. Your mission is a good one and I thank you. But I've not heard that there's a disagreement about the New Yam feast. My assistants came here earlier and said it was time to announce the day of the next festival and I told them that it was not their place to remind me. But with you, I need not speak in riddles. You all know what our custom is. I only call a new festival when there is only one yam left from the last. Today I have three yams and so I know that the time has not yet come for the feast (62).

He does not care if the whole yet to be harvested yams in the fields rot away since he has more than enough yams from his previous harvests to sustain him and his family. But his arrow rebounds on him when his people, hungry and dissatisfied with his punishment harvests their yams in honour of the white man's gods (Christianity) after hearing that the Christian God can protect them from the wrath of Ulu.

This instance where a man decides to use his religious office to punish his own people illustrates religious terrorism in the African Traditional Religion. Although Ezeulu uses neither a gun nor a knife against his people, his decision to leave them to die of starvation while they had yams in the fields could be considered act terrorism. Another example of religious terrorism deducible from this play is visible in the clashes between the African Traditional Religion and Christianity in which one tries to outweigh the other by making efforts towards downplaying the relevance of each other to the people. This clash informed Oduche's imprisonment of the sacred python after being told in his Catechism classes that the python is barbaric and powerless before the Christian God.

The tussle between Ezeulu and Ezeidemili in this play is another pointer to the battle for supremacy which is also obtainable within the African Traditional Religion adherents. On the issue of the imprisoned sacred python, the excerpt below highlights the rivalry between these two priests:

**Azuka:** All right. Ezeidemili wants to know how you intend to purify your house of the abomination committed by your son.

**Ezeulu:** What? (*Jumps up*). Go back and tell Ezeidemili to eat shit. Do you hear me? Tell Ezeidemili that Ezeulu says he should go and fill his mouth with shit. (*Moves a step to Azuka. He begins to withdraw*). As for you, young man, you may go in peace because the world is no longer what it was. If the world has been what it was I would have given you something that would always remind you of the day you put your head in the mouth of a leopard. I would have taught you that you don't pull a tiger by the tail (26-27).

It parallels with those visible in the Christian religion between men of God who often try to outweigh each other in order to gain more followers, which often lead to activities and practices that could be considered irreligious and acts of terrorism within the given context. The role of the playwright in the fight against societal ills including religious terrorism remains indisputably indispensable. He continues to remain valid in the fight for a better society.

Africa as a continent believes so much in the influence of the supernatural. Her people believe so much that every activity of man on earth is overseen by a supreme being. Thus many African men consider it important to be in good fellowship and communion with this being, and that is why Africans have been tagged or branded as "too religious." This explains why the church business in Africa is now considered a lucrative enterprise with a good number of self-acclaimed men of God rushing into it to partake in scooping from the "honey pot" on a daily basis. This also explains why churches and worship centres are located at almost every nook and cranny of Nigeria cities and villages.

Religious businessmen have discovered this and are now exploiting this means for survival. At the same time, they have created more problems for the society than they have solved as rationality is slowly and steadily being slain on the altar of religion. Although Nigerian playwrights have done a lot and deserves some credit for their efforts in capturing religious terrorism within this context, more work still has to be done in this regard. More playwrights need to key into this societal menace as a matter of urgency. There is need for more playwrights to urgently delve in and address this issue of the African man's "over religiousness" that tends to make him susceptible to these "men of God". A more radical approach with radical texts as well as performances will aid in the salvation of the African man from the stranglehold of these modern day businessmen.

## **Conclusion**

This research has attempted to dig into the area of religion to see some types of behaviour domiciled within the religious circle that are suggestive of terror, although they are not violent in expression. The study identifies terrorism beyond the everyday kind of terrorism which we are familiar with. The researcher is of the view that this kind of terrorism which has done a lot of damages to the African and Nigerian society particularly has not received the much needed attention it deserves from playwrights. A pastor, who decides to excommunicate a member of his church for any reason whatsoever, is as guilty as that individual whom he or she has excommunicated because according to the scriptures, judgment is not for man, but for God. The playwrights whose works have been x-rayed herein have done a great job in the fight against religious terrorism, but more playwrights should, as a matter of urgency tilt their narratives towards this area of religion in order to salvage the teeming populace who have become vulnerable to these religious merchants in the wake of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A new definition of the concept of terrorism should be free to accommodate subtle instances and gestures that are not really physically violent (by mode of delivery or expression) but are terrorist (killing) in impact. They could be words or expressions and actions that do not connote violence in the primary sense of the word, but may have the

propensity of becoming confrontational and violent at the long run. On this note, terrorism can be defined as purposeful acts and expressions which could be violent or non-violent, resulting or likely to result in major economic loss, intimidation of a population and compelling a government or an organisation towards unfavourable behaviour.

Again, this definition cannot be said to have holistically captured its dimensions as terrorism is a relative concept that keeps evolving with the passage of time. The religious doctrines of this present day have taken terrorist dimensions, and the playwright as the societal watchdog, social critic and whistle-blower should brace himself and stand as a potent talisman to effectively match this trend in combat for a better society.

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