

**Cultural Imperatives for Peace and Security in African
Drama: Ogonna Agu's *Symbol of a Goddess and Sunnie
Ododo's Hard Choice* as Paradigms**

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ABSTRACT

*Drama in its didactic function, serves as a pulpit where playwrights pour out their experiences, sermonize on the need for change and offer probable solutions to the ills that beset the society. It is on the performance stage that our traumas and laments are orchestrated freely without the censoring hands of the law. Thus drama has the potentials to serve as a veritable medium for the installation of peace and a functional national security system. The traditional society utilizes laid down customs, traditions, norms, taboos and other cultural idioms to enforce order and subsequently institute peace and ensure the security of lives and properties. In Nigeria today, the societal ills are horrendous – lies, charlatans, thieves, corruption, king makers and the associated election rigging, armed banditry, non-responsive governments, wasteful spending, kidnapping and the latest in the mix - bombing, suicidal or otherwise. Crimes were discouraged by the traditional society through cultural dictates; therefore, one is forced to associate the preponderance of these crimes to the absence or relegation of cultural and religious measures. On the premise of this therefore, the paper argues for a return to the African traditional mode of worship which bound people together and fostered peaceful co-existence among communities. Using the qualitative method of library research, this paper investigates modes of traditional worship in Igbo cosmology and their relationship to societal order through a religious and cultural analysis of Ogonna Agu's *Symbol of a Goddess and Sunnie Ododo's Hard Choice*. The paper concludes that a return to the traditional modes of worship*

would ensure national peace and security and institute order and value in the society.

Introduction

Drama is a potent medium that can orient or disorient, used for good or bad, and is capable of molding characters as well as achieving set targets. The revolutionary dynamics of drama and theatre makes them sacred, influential and oftentimes, controversial, which may be why Iji, has observed that “such revolutionary potentiality of theatre is among the reasons why dictators and anarchists as well as democrats abhor as well as revere it respectively” (37). Some perceive drama as trivial; believe it as reality; and see it as too critical or threatening while capitalists see it as the poor people's advocate. Though make-believe, drama is sort of a controlled experiment deliberately used to capture selected scenes of everyday life or human experiences. Culture and drama are in one word 'life'. Drama is life. Culture is the way of life of a people. Thus, drama is the re enactment of the way of life of a certain people, it embodies culture. This therefore makes drama an appropriate tool to canvass for the peace and security of a people because the peace of a nation starts from the peace of its component unit. The selected scenes of everyday life in families, villages, communities, social structures, micro and macro societies in African drama reveals that there are lessons to be learnt from cultural tenets embedded in such dramatic pieces. The utilitarian art of the dramatic arts are encompassing, and because of its capacity to communicate, teach and make social comments, visionaries manipulate the medium as a change agent. Hence, the dramatic medium is an effective channel to canvass for peaceful co-existence and meaningful reconciliation amongst Nigerians and in the process, advocate for national peace and security.

The way of life of a people manifests in their day to day activities and interactions with others. Traditional African societies have in the past maintained codes of conduct which hitherto shaped their existence. Violations of these norms, values and codes attracted sanctions and disciplinary measures. Hence each man knew the traditional ethos and respected it. But colonialism came with its attractions; civilization, development, technology and amalgamation of varied cultures and triggered the trend for Africans to abandon traditional African values, beliefs and norms for imported western culture. The admixture of western and African culture is the Achilles heel of the contemporary Nigerian youth who seem to have grasped only the Western ethos and is yet to come to terms with what is African and what is sacred. Consequently, African youths including the elites now see African culture as inferior. Scholars such as Kerker perceive the present state of affairs as resulting from several factors, beginning from the crisis period of “Arab-Islamic penetration between the 12th and 18th centuries to the Christian Missionaries penetration from the 18th to the beginning of the 20th centuries and finally to the colonial conquest at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (120). The ever growing apathy towards African tradition, culture and religion by Africans is alarming and worsened by the “mass drift from African traditional religion into Christianity and Islam in which Western cultures are highly packaged” (Kerker, 121).

Culture shapes a man, for it is reflected in the totality of human kind from his food, clothing, festivities, dance and songs, to buildings, beliefs and worship. Invariably, the recent outbreak of violence, kidnappings, thuggery and bombings in the nation are signs of alien cultures which are indications that Africans have lost their authentic identities. A call for the rebirth of African culture and religion is borne out of the need

to fall back on the past heritage which had fostered communal living amongst the people and made man the center of humanity. Such past heritage that encouraged peaceful co-existence, sacredness and sanctity of life above material acquisitions, established controls, norms and values that guided society appropriately. African society had its normative patterns, leadership structure, beliefs and worship modes but these were deconstructed by Colonial instruments, Missionary propaganda and Western education. It is this propaganda that Kerker in quoting Metuh observes that “soon this propaganda caught most Africans both educated and uneducated, and they accepted their traditional culture as primitive, paganish and devilish” (124), thus, the apathy and drift off of African religion and culture into an amalgamation of what can now be described as conflict of cultures.

This paper seeks to establish that traditional African culture and religion are African legacies that should be cherished, recalled and embraced because of their unique components in achieving peace, stability, spirituality, morality and above all their concern for the sanctity of human life. Although a total return to its original state may be unachievable due to civilization, education and high level of awareness of other cultures, but a retention of those African religious forms and cultural ethos that foster nation building, peaceful co-existence and restore our value system has become imperative. The socio-political angst pervading Nigeria presently has raised tension in all quarters, especially in the area of individual and national security. The place of the dramatic arts in ameliorating the tension and/insecurity through measures that can be taken to forestall future occurrences is a dramatic weapon that Bamidele speaks about when he opines that:

Drama more than any other literary genre, and because of its opportunity for staging or performance, could serve as

a cultural data, or as a mine of information on both the material and non-material culture of the people. (56)

Bamidele in quoting Weales who opines that plays are artifacts and aesthetic objects, concurs with the assertion that dramatic works are “Historical materials of the society” (56), and can be used to understand the society for which they represent. Hence dramatists use their art as an interface or an engagement into the cultural, socio-political and economic life of the people they write about. Two plays are here advanced as thesis to elicit cultural ingredients that advocate for peaceful co-existence of communities and peaceful resolution of issues and act as cultural mediums that are capable of stabilizing troubled minds. It is hoped that the analysis of Ogonna Agu's *Symbol of a Goddess* and Sunnie Odo's *Hard Choice* will buttress the imperatives of cultural ethos as paradigms to formulate strategies for peaceful reconciliation of national conflicts.

Cultural Imperatives in African Drama

Culture is generally seen as the way of life of a people, but scholars and social anthropologists have advanced elaborate definitions and characteristics of culture. According to Ukeje, “culture can be defined as the fabric of ideas, beliefs, skills, tools, aesthetic objects, methods of thinking as well as customs and institutions into which each member of the society is born” (4). Suffice it to say that culture distinguishes a people from a people. It carves a unique lifestyle that is peculiar to a people. It is the cultural ethos and values of a society that marks them differently from others. Culture permeates the lifestyle of an individual, how he makes a living, his festivals, language and food. It is indeed a complex configuration of the social institution which includes beliefs, laws, customs, morals, worship and habits that are peculiar to a people. Thus, culture embodies the aspirations of a people,

their attitudes and belief, spiritual, emotional and material alignments. Duruaku observes that:

This collective expression of a people's way of life is recorded in their hopes and aspirations; practices and beliefs; their creative output, language and traditions; all which make that society different and distinguishable from other societies. (25)

However, there are basic patterns that all cultures adopt. These include the universal cultures of marriage, clothing, agriculture and sexual relationships. Mussen opines that all cultures must “cope with universal problems and events. Every culture makes provisions for perpetuating the group and maintaining its solidarity; for establishing an orderly way of life, and for satisfying the biological needs of its members”(79). From the fore going, it is evident that each individual's social personality is a stamp of his culture, or a reflection of a borrowed culture. Therefore, culture molds character, it is the “matrix and guiding spirit of the social structure and life of any given society” (Ojuah, 5). The social engineering and peaceful reconciliation of conflicts stem from the fact that “cultural contact leads to social and cultural change” (5). However, Ojuah identified uniformity in cultural universalism which outlines a need for “a set of controls for both means and violence” (7). He goes further to say that:

This relates to defining the legitimate means of attaining individual and societal goals. There are in all societies systems of social sanctions and judicial controls. Every group has a system of rituals, and the means for peace and work are broadly recognized. (7)

These rituals, peace and judicial controls are substantive ingredients that make up the culture of the people. The traditional African system hitherto maintained peace and order within its communities through these controls;

examples abound in Igbo cosmology where the age-grade system acts as a watch-dog within its peers. Esiaba Irobi in his play *Nwokedi* (1991) characterized the Ekumeku as a group of youths who see to the maintenance of peace and ensures that the yearly ritual and sacrifices are carried out accordingly.

The eclectic nature of African drama juxtaposes it with culture; hence drama “exists within society, and its statements are invariably interpreted by the audience as being about society” (Utoh, 214). From images of masks, masquerade and festivals, to the mobile theatre of Hubert Ogunde and the emergence of scripted dramatic literature, traditional and cultural norms have formed the basis for which stories are told and woven into tales. With Wole Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest*, Fred Agbeyegbe's *The King Must Dance Naked*, and the likes of Ojo Bakere Rasaki's *Rogbodiyan* following, cultural ingredients as strong dramatic statements are dramatic metaphoric elements of change. Dramatic “literature is an art by which the people recreate their environment and live in it”. (Ogbonna, 39). That also accounts for kalu Okpi's *Echoes* (1995), a dramatic construction of cultural ethos and strong value system, rich with idioms and normative patterns that set controls against theft, corruption and anarchy. The dramatist in *Echoes* uses the elders as the mouthpiece of the people to apply the traditional codes and rituals so as to stop King Ezeogo from giving Chieftaincy title to Prophet Innocent, a man of questionable character. This piece of art reveals that in traditional African society, there are societal sanctions even against an erring king.

Obviously, African drama is a compendium of the people's tradition, religion and culture because according to Traore, quoting M. Leiris, “this art whose roots are emotionally grounded in the African soil forms a link with the peasant, the family and the cults, aiming to perpetuate the vitality of the community” (13). This is so because “features of

culture so recorded and preserved engender deep interest and become objects or experiences to be appreciated or relived" (Duruaku, 25). In another submission,, Duruaku maintains that "one of the planks on which culture rests is language" (4) because of its potency to display the cultural heritage of its people. For instance, communication is a common index in all cultures all over the world and when one narrows it down to Nigeria, communication is one of the common cultures that bind people together especially as each tribe or ethnic group has its own language. But dialogue and monologues are dramatic vehicles in the world of drama with which the society also communicates and builds. Mbata highlights the cultural importance of language as "a major vehicle for self expression...a mark of personal and group identity...as well as a product of culture" (15). The African drama is rich with cultural images that appeal to the sensibilities of its target audience.

The African drama is saturated with cultural elements. and "since culture is regarded as a way of life of a group of people, which is embodied in their language, dressing (costume), body designs (make-up), religion and norms of behavior, belief system, art, morals and general worldview" (Utoh, 130), hence, "the Nigerian playwright took a trip to the past, with the aim of unearthing the rich culture, philosophy, folktales, poetry and other art forms, which the colonialists had tried to bury under the guise of colonization (Utoh, 216), to comment on national issues. From the corpus of African drama are historical, cultural and mythical stories of the people which informs on the people's past and present. These give insight into how the people co-existed in pre-colonial and post-colonial times and their contemporary challenges. Most Nigerian drama tell the story of the people; politically, religiously, economically, socially and culturally. Pre-and post-independence plays like *Kong's Harvest* (.....), *The Song of*

a Goat (...), *Ozidi* (1966), *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963), *The gods are not to Blame* (1975) *Ikhama* (...), *Nwokedi* (1991), are embedded with "abundance of spectacle, song, dance and magic, the characters who represent social units instead of individuals" (Okpi, 211), bear the stamp of the people's belief system. These dramatic outputs "portray the need to retain the people's culture, and recreate from it, a new set of living values" (Utoh, 216), to ensure social understanding and interaction amongst tribes and ethnic groups.

Peace and Security as Essential Ingredients in Nation Building

The peaceful co-existence of family units, communities, tribes and ethnic groups is a sure insurance that the nation is safe, secure and geared towards improving its socio-political and economic challenges. The importance of cultural tenets as building blocks in socializing children and the entire society stems from nurture, the family, because "through socialization, children learn gradually the rules and regulations of what is expected of them" (Akpa, 237). The humanbeing usually passes through a family which cultures him or her on how to function responsibly at home and the community. Fafunwa observes that "character training is the cornerstone of African traditional education" (68), which validates Akpa's assertion that the family serves as the avenue for the cultivation of the values that guarantee national stability and development. (237). Basically, it is from the family/cultural nurturing that man imbibes through folklores, myths and legends, songs and dances, norms, values and taboos; positive attitudes that foster responsible life styles as well as patriotic stances.

When the family fails in its responsibility as a socializing agent, consequently it speaks in the scenes of violence and spate of killings that are on-going. The place of

culture as an instrument of change begins from the family which is a fundamental agency of socialization. To achieve peace and security as well as enhance national development, Akpa, affirms that:

The family reproduces cultural patterns in the individual, imparting ethnic norms, social values and shaping character, modes of thought and action. The family therefore forms the conscience of the child and inculcates the social skills to the offspring to increase the interpersonal, emotional support, which is essential to personality development. (240)

However, a failure in cultural orientation and family socialization function amounts to a disoriented society, one whose citizens are not abreast with their cultural norms and ethos and are therefore projectors of alien cultures. The present propensity to violence, acts of terrorism and loss of lives and property in Nigeria is alarming. Also, it is of a truth that lack of developmental programmes breed insecurity, “tribal bigotry, nepotism, religious fanaticism, intra-class conflicts, greed, avarice and lack of purposeful leadership” (Utoh, 217). The threat to peace and security is as a result of failure in leadership. But violence and lack of security deepens poverty and reduces the rate of economic growth; accruing from these are “physical violence by armed bandits and armed robbers. There is physical and psychological violence by kidnappers. There is physical, sexual and psychological violence by rapists” (Igbuzor, 5), the gradual acceleration of violence from militancy to kidnapping and now bombings have raised questions as to what should be done to curb the mayhem? The need for peace and stability as sustainable measures towards nation building is apt; this is because peace and security are primary conditions for progress and sustainable development. Hence, Igbuzor, quoting Chambers, opine that:

Scholars are in agreement that for there to be sustainable peace, society must evolve ways of addressing the root causes of conflicts by helping to foster participatory democracy, just and accountable governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and a balance and equitable distribution of resources, among a host of others- all issues the neglect of which often results in instability within states (4)

Suffice it then to say that the roadmap towards the attainment of purposeful nation building is for the government to assess causes of conflict, make policies and strategies towards rebuilding the lost credibility in governance and leadership and to transfer these laudable ideas and policies into practice using participatory democracy (as in the case of participatory theatre) where the people governed are involved in the policies and programmes mapped out for them. The concept of nation-building is to maintain peace and gain accelerated economic development, institute poverty-reduction programmes which possibly reduce conflicts within communities, tribes and ethnic groups. **Ogonna Agu's *Symbol of a Goddess* and Sunnie Ododo's *Hard Choice* as Imperatives for National Peace and Security**
Symbol of a Goddess

Ogonna Anaagudo-Agu tells the tale of Emenike, a veteran Biafran soldier whose embattled mind refuses to settle down even after the war comes to an end. Emenike's belief in Biafra is further shattered by the betrayal of his own people, who instead of believing in his cause, reports him to the Nigerian army commander and his men. The frustrating efforts by Emenike's mother; Iluka, his uncles, Igbonekwu and Ide to get him married and settled down hits the rocks when Emenike informs all that he is already married to the water goddess; the “lady of the red eyes” (p.19) with whom he is obsessed. Emenike goes to the river everyday to meet with his

dream, he calls her on his drums, he calls to her to come back, but Agbogho *oke ego* is a dream, a memory, lost. Torn apart by the war, Emenike terrorizes himself and the villagers, he torments himself with a dream and each time he visualizes the water goddess the dream keeps him alive. Emenike lives for the goddess, the goddess incubates his dreams. But his relations and villagers do not understand why Emenike refuses to put down his guns. With drums, songs, masquerades and myth, Emenike puts his emotional and intellectual strength into meaningful expression. But Okobe warns Emenike that his mission is dangerous and that Emenike may not marry any earthly woman. Emenike's dream becomes effectual as his obsession with the goddess and masquerades, revives his dream to convert a traumatized nation with spectacles of magnificent experience. But Emenike has to die in order to actualize his dreams.

Hard Choice

Hard Choice is set in Nigeria with the Igbo and Yoruba community dominating the world of the play. Sunnie Ododo provokes a royal traditional marriage ceremony between the families of an Igbo king and a Yoruba King into a dagger-drawn arena as miscreants obstruct the ceremony by seizing the royal crown of King Iginla. Unknown to both royal kings, the act is masterminded by one of the Chiefs, Chief Ubanga. But each kingdom suspects the other, and while King Iginla of Igedu kingdom, the father of the groom, and his entourage are being hosted by Eze Okiakoh of Emepiri kingdom, the father of the bride; each kingdom prepares for war against the other. Both kings accuse each other of foul play; Chief Ubanga furthers his plot, and gains the Queens support to marry the Princess when the issue gets resolved. But love always has a way, for while the Princess pines for Prince Oki, Prince Oki involves himself with investigations to find the missing crown

before Bashorun and the Igedu Kingdom launches a war against the Emepiri kingdom. The treacherous theft of a royal crown uncovers series of atrocities perpetrated by the Queen, cabinet members, trusted chiefs in the palace and the selfish vow made to Oguguru shrine at the expense of the Princess' life. To achieve Peace and reconcile issues, the Princess of Emepiri Kingdom gives her life.

Disturbances in the status quo often attract a reverse effect in human life, relationship, community, or a nation. The contexts contained in both plays provoke arguments that the angst situated in these dramatic parables, are synonymous with what is prevalent in Nigeria today. Emenike's war torn heart multiplied revolutionary tendencies in him. He could not function well again and has to bury himself with cultural myths, masking and masquerades. The goddess becomes the metaphor for his dreams, cultural images which helps him to visualize other means of fighting a continuous war for Biafra. The rebellious restless Emenike is tamed only when he invokes the goddess, like he tells Okobo:

Emenike: I will invoke her again, I will sing to her always, chant poetry to her, my song will give her body...she will come back to me, divine goddess incarnate.

Okobo: Aha! I get you now. You don't want Biafra to die? This is dangerous you know.

Emenike: I live for her and she for me. (Anaagodo-Agu, p.18)

Metaphorically, the goddess is his life, truth and essence. But the onus of the matter here is that Emenike only finds the reason to live-on in the cultural essence, in the magical realism which gives him hope and meaning. His continuous search for "his lost queen, a distant country, strong like the eagle" (Anaagudo-Agu, p.19) reinvigorates him to live, to hope and to wait for change to come. Drama as a change

agent here acts on the psychology of the character. The Igbo cosmology of the water goddess here illustrates that Emenike has united with the divine and is absolved of every earthly passion. The story woven around this character rebuilds his psyche and helps him to waddle out of muddy waters. Hope is restored. Also, when celebrations are cut short what follows will be grieving as Ododo records in a stage-direction that:

Thereafter merry-making continues with bridal dance. Suddenly, there are gunshots in the air; commotion ensues, three young men in masks rush in and seize the crown of King Iginla and leave. The King's chiefs surround him chanting incantations and shouting "ewo", "ewo", etc; the Eze escapes. (Ododo, p.14)

The entrant of the miscreants in a royal traditional marriage to obstruct and terrorize, sets off violent reactionary moves that would have wasted lives and properties of the people of Igedu Kingdom and Emepiri Kingdom. Suddenly, the two families about to be united in love as one, become enemies, dagger-drawn as the Bashorun warns prince Oki that "marital matters are over, the pride of Igedu Kingdom is at stake and actions must be decisive" (Ododo, p.20). Trust has been betrayed. It is a taboo for the king's crown to be stolen. King Iginla's crown stolen in a foreign land spells doom for the people of Igedu, which is why Bashorun laments that:

Bashorun: The Igedu aristocratic structure is about to crumble because of security breach in your domain. You betrayed friendship and humiliated the crown essence of Igedu Kingdom, why Eze Okiakoh, why?... if in three days it is not recovered and surrendered, we shall be left with no other choice but to match on your kingdom and recover the crown ourselves. In one word... WAR! (Ododo, p.23)

Every effort to recover the stolen crown failed and the host

king, Eze Okiakoh reports that the gods, "Oguguru imposed a stringent condition for retrieval" (Ododo, p. 34), but the embattled king Iginla "whose life hangs on the recovery of that crown" (35) threatens. The existing unity in diversity in the world of the play has been disturbed by close enemies of the kingdoms whose aim is to frustrate Prince Oki from marrying the Princess thereby inheriting the throne and kingdom of Emepiri. But the king of Empriri kingdom, Eze Okiakoh in his genuine search for the crown sets him on a pedestal to remind his royal friend that there are other paths to peace other than war when he cautions:

Eze Okiakoh: You will listen, enough of this contempt. This is one royalty to another; despite the crisis at hand, I still deserve some respect from you. It is peace I seek and not a reminder of war ultimatum. If it is going to be war, war it shall be...of what benefit is war if it can be averted? (Ododo, p.34)

History has proven that the marks of war are always indelible. Its streaks of blood spell desolation, anguish, grief, gloom and hatred on the faces of men, women and children. Anaagudo-Agu captures in his play the experience of Nigerians after the civil war and its ugly memories in the following picture:

Narrator: the sick, the hungry, they all came crowding into this one remaining place called Biafra. The maimed and deformed, they were all there, waiting to see when manna will fall from the sky...waiting for the final end of the war whichever way it went-good or bad; for despair and misery have taken their toll on them (p.8)

Horning for war has always led to disastrous ends. The playwright foresees the aftermath of war when he questions "what are we to expect? Armed robbers or what? What will happen when they get to their villages? All these angry men

we have today where will they bury their guns?" (Anaagudo-Agu, p.9). War inflicts pain and anguish on the people and when writers navigate towards these issues, it is because they have assessed the situation and have come out with probable solutions that will balance the atmosphere so as to build and not destroy.

Comparatively, both playwrights under study have harnessed ideas on how possibly issues can be resolved using cultural values, norms, and ethos as vehicles through which the minds of the people can be reached. The use of songs, chants, incantations, appeasements and sacrifices in worship and traditional festivals reveals that the people revere such and see such cultural mediums as sacred and effective in their lives. In Igbo cosmology of which both plays capture, ritual and sacrifices are spiritual modes with which the people commune with their ancestors and the gods who mediate in human activities for restoration and restitution. Ododo creates a scene of ritual between the two warring kings inter alia:

King Iginla and Eze Okiakoh defreeze; come together hand in hand and go into ritual posture of supplication; thunder and lightning rend the air once more; an interposed song in Yoruba and Igbo appealing to God for amicable solution fill the stage; occasional cry of a baby interjects the song. As they rise from their ritual stoop, Prince Oki and his men lead Chief Ubanga in, still in hood. (p. 38)

The path to nation building and peace is here woven in a ritualistic prayer that transcends the ethnic/tribal or religious barrier. Culture in diversity respects the sacredness of each other, and appreciates the uniqueness of the place of the omnipotent in all cultures as a vehicle through which light is shun into a dark tunnel. Also from the point of Anaagudo-Agu's resolution of the inner crisis within Emenike, the

playwright chose to occupy the young man's mind with songs, masquerades, chants, and a local dance troupe instead of Akudiri, the woman married for him. On Emenike, Igbonekwu confesses that "Biafra is alive in him, living in him. Who am I to impose a woman on him? Sometimes, I regret that action". (Anaagudo-Agu, p.64). The metaphoric representation of the water goddess is a cultural myth for Emenike, which is where he finds solace reliving the experience of Biafra. For Emenike, Biafra is the symbol of a goddess that placates his rebellious nerves. The playwright therefore speaks through Igbonekwu when he said that:

Igbonekwu: Now the guns are gone, and he is stirring the whole village with scenes of a magnificent masquerade. What a way to engage his mind, and pull it from its destructive tendencies. I myself have become his convert. (Anaagudo-Agu, p. 64)

Both dramatists talk about magical realism, communal co-existence and nation building. They opine that for meaningful purgation of evil, corruption, violence and instability, the /nation in turmoil must sacrifice something valuable so as to maintain peace. Hence in the *Symbol of a Goddess*, Emenike inspires, achieves and motivates the people to live on, using traditional Igbo worship as a means of purging himself; yet he sacrificed his life to the goddess; while in *Hard Choice*, the Princess understands the gravity of the vow the Queen made on her behalf, and its consequences if not fulfilled, and perceives that the only way for the two kingdoms to have peace and stability is for her to sacrifice her life to the Oguguru shrine. Both Emenike and the Princess's life were giving willingly by the characters who knew the magical magnitude of the actions they undertook, believing in the mythology that 'to die for a noble course is to live eternally'.

Conclusion

The power of drama as an interventionist weapon is further strengthened by the fact that “play scripts have the advantage of being 'brought alive' on stage” (Utoh, 32) which helps to drive the message to its targeted audience. Drama provokes people to social action, to inner reconciliation of issues within self and to a communal assessment of their values and performances. Hence cultural images as punitive measures embedded in dramatic action serve as deterrents. It is therefore imperative that dramatic literatures that are culturally embedded with traditional norms and values should often be orchestrated on stage and any found space for the people because of the ability of drama to “ignite the intellectual, mental, moral and even spiritual development of the Nigerian people” (32). However, to foster peaceful co-existence and national stability in Nigeria, it is germane that Nigerians should fall back on their heritage, arouse interest in what is African and Nigerian, improve on traditional African religion and culture, and be proud of those African values that redeem our authentic identity. To achieve this, it is imperative that African religion and cultural forms should be utilized as tools for instituting stability and national peace.

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