

**CURBING THE MENACE OF MIGRATION THROUGH
THE THEATRE: A STUDY OF TONI DURUAKU'S
*A MIRAGE FOR A DREAM***

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Abstract

This study examines the root causes of migration issues and its consequences with a specific focus on Toni Duruaku's *A Mirage for a Dream*. In a society battling with the challenges posed by mass migration, this study seeks to investigate the potential of theatre as a tool for raising awareness and initiating social change so as to address this widespread global concern. This study employs close analysis of the play in order to undertake a comprehensive exploration of the theatre's efficacy in curbing the menace of migration. Findings highlight the role of theatre in fostering a sense of empathy and collective responsibility, prompting audiences to critically engage with the root causes of migration. Based on these findings, this study recommends that the theatre should be utilized as a potent tool in broader migration discourse.

Keywords: Migration, Theatre, social change and Menace

Introduction

Migration, is best defined as the movement of people from one place to another. According to Marie Mcaulife and Martin Ruh, migration "stretches back to the earliest period of human history" (Mcaulife and Ruh 1). This implication of this is that migration, dispersal, and other forms of

mobility have always been essential aspects of human existence. Acknowledging this, Susan Friedman states that “movement whether forced or sought out is the foundation of human evolution and history of change on a global landscape”. Migration is considered a powerful force of globalization, representing just one of the numerous methods by which the human population moves around the world.

Migration has become a growing global phenomenon that has created many challenges for both the migrants and the communities they leave behind. Kufre Akpan and Monica Udoette say that:

Although Migration has become a global reality, given some sociopolitical upheavals that characterize almost all nation states in the world, Africa is still very much in the centre of a new world emergency. The situation has degenerated into a situation where a typical African at the moment sees the Europe, America and other Asian countries as destinations of survival, carrying the promises of a blissful life and not minding the package (Akpan and Udoette 64)

In a similar vein, Charles Adeyanju and Temitope Oriola says that “some extra economic factors like the presentation of lives overseas by African migrants as alluring and fascinating and the tendency to portray themselves as sophisticated upwardly mobile and people exposed to *savoir-faire* of modern life have also been responsible for the mass movement of Africans (Adeyanju and Oriola 945).

Sadly, migrants tend to hide the harsh realities of their lives, such as unemployment, racism, loneliness, and other unpleasant experiences. It is as a result of this that Onyerionwu says that “It is mainly the overestimation of the characters’ chances of survival and opportunities for the realization of their dream life (or life dream) and the tragic disillusionment that comes with it that engages the new African transatlantic novel” (Qtd in *The Guardian*, October 22, 2016)

Migration often results from factors such as economic opportunities, political instability, environmental degradation, or conflict. United Nations Human Rights Commission sees Migration by humans as “a systemic condition driven by economic underdevelopment, severe social fragmentation, weak state, migration policies that shape interaction between sending and receiving states and colonial ties” (4-3). Additionally, Everett Lee, through his Push-Pull theory, explains that “place of origin,

place of destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors lead to spatial mobility of population (Qtd. in Dick, 21). In line with the views of Lee and Friedman, it is appropriate to suggest that every human society has been influenced by migration. Migration can take place within a country's boundaries, known as internal migration, or it can extend beyond national borders, referred to as external migration. Akpan and Udoette says that "In the recent decades, migration has not only been made convenient and possible through advances in transportation technology, but has also received prominence in socio-political, economic and literary discourses around the globe" (Akpan and Udoette 64). Recently, for instance, the large-scale migration of individuals from African nations and other developing countries, as noted by Brobbey "led to politically-charged debates about the building of walls to keep irregular migrants out of the United States and Europe" (Brobbey 1). This equally aligns with Soren Frank's view when he says that "the large-scale migration has then led to the globalization of the local and the localization of the global, so much so that 'the global permeates the local, while the local dissipates into the global; and the production of human identity is informed by new coordinates'" (Soren 2). According to Akpan and Udoette "Of all those who involve in external migration, only a few purposefully and legally migrate through the instrumentation of visas and transmutation of citizenship and lotteries. Others defy all migration protocols and cross the Mediterranean Sea and the Sinai Peninsula, not minding the oddities and fatalities associated with the movement" (Akpan and Udoette 65). In a similar vein, Brobbey says that "In October, 2013, the world was shocked by the death of three hundred and sixty-six African migrants close to the Italian Island of Lampedusa. Only a few African migrants survived this tragedy" (Brobbey 366). In support of this view, Ajibola Opeyemi says that, "the recent migrant crisis has especially forced scholars and laymen, artists and critics to engage in the migration discourse to ascertain the dialectics of migration, migratory patterns and its consequences on people, spaces, and contexts" (Opeyemi 65).

As mentioned earlier, In Africa, numerous adverse factors contribute to migration, particularly among the youth who leave the continent in large numbers every day. Nigeria, specifically, has been afflicted by insurgent wars that have significantly reduced its population. James Okpiliya and Kufre Akpan say that: "For close to two decades now, Nigeria has been faced with a worrisome security challenge as orchestrated by the faceless Islamic fundamentalists known as Boko Haram, a sect

driven by the desire to Islamize Nigeria such that Nigeria will be governed by Sharia laws” (Okpiliya and Akpan 50). Sociopolitical issues such as social inequality, insurgency, wars, unemployment, and other severe socio-political issues plaguing African countries have been the primary push factors driving many Africans to renounce their homeland.

Regardless of the reason, the impact of migration can be felt by both the migrants and the communities they leave behind. Theatre, as a form of art, has been used to address societal issues for centuries. Its ability to convey powerful messages through the characters and other element of drama has made it an effective tool for raising awareness and bringing about social change. Thus, using theatre as a means of curbing the menace of migration has become a growing trend in recent years. Through the lens of Toni Duruaku’s *A Mirage for a Dream*, the complex issues of migration, its impact on individuals, families, and communities would be analyzed. This study also raises awareness about the root causes of migration and advocates for policies and programs that would address these issues.

Nigerian Theatre and its Commitment to Social Change

Historically, drama has played a profound and transformative role, serving as both a reflection and an agent of social change. From ancient Greek tragedies to modern plays, the stage has been a dynamic platform where social narratives unfold, challenging norms, questioning power structures, and fostering conversations that reverberate beyond the confines of the theatre. Greek drama was an integral part of religious festivals, particularly the Dionysia, where citizens gathered to watch performances. These theatrical events were not only a celebration of artistic expression but also a communal experience that reinforced social and moral values. Tragedies, such as those by the prominent classical writers such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, often encompasses complex moral dilemmas, ethical choices, and the consequences of hubris, serving as cautionary tales for the audience. This aligns with Nkiruka Akaenyi’s view when she says that:

Sophocles' *Antigone* explores the moral conflict between obeying the laws of the state and adhering to a higher moral duty. These ancient plays are deeply rooted in religious and ethical inquiries, setting a precedent for the moral discourse unfolding on the stage. Even the comic plays of Aristophanes often comment on moral issues with the aim of

making society better. Aristophanes' comedies, which date back to the 5th century BCE in classical Athens, primarily sought to entertain and satirize the political and social aspects of his time. Aristophanes frequently targeted prominent political figures and institutions in Athens. By exaggerating and ridiculing the flaws and vices of politicians, he aimed to bring attention to the moral shortcomings of those in power. This indirect critique encouraged the audience to reflect on the state of their society. His comedies, especially *Lysistrata*, often addressed contemporary social issues, such as the role of women, the effects of war, and the consequences of wealth and power. By exaggerating and parodying these issues, he provided a humorous lens through which the audience could view and question their own societal norms and values (Akaenyi 15)

The relationship between drama and social change is deeply entrenched in the ability of arts to capture the complexities of man's daily life experiences. Theatre, as a reflector of the socio-cultural values in society, not only mirrors the prevailing social values, norms and ideologies but also has the power to influence and challenge them. Playwrights, actors, and directors, especially in the historical times, have harnessed the emotive and empathetic potential of drama and theatre to engage audiences in profound dialogues about social injustice, inequality, and the general human condition. This study does not merely deal with the entertainment value of drama; it explores the potential of drama as a tool for social change. Dramatic works have been effectively utilized in addressing the social problems marginalization, exposing societal issues, and fostering empathy among various communities. Whether through poignant narratives that highlights the struggles of marginalized groups or through avant-garde performances that challenge conventional ways or thoughts, drama has proven to be a formidable force in shaping societal attitudes and promoting a collective consciousness.

Roman drama and theatre, in the ancient period, especially comedies, are often used for social commentaries. Roman playwrights like Plautus and Terence used satire to ridicule societal absurdities and criticize the political and social elite. By lampooning prevalent customs and behaviors, these plays provided a platform for Romans to reflect on their own society.

Roman tragedies, inspired by Greek models, explored political themes and power dynamics. Seneca's tragedies, for example, depicted the consequences of tyranny and the moral challenges faced by political leaders. While the primary purpose of Roman comic drama was entertainment, it inadvertently contributed to discussions about governance and ethics.

During the medieval period, the influence of the Church on theatrical productions was felt. Mystery and morality plays, often performed in public spaces, aimed to teach moral lessons and amplify religious teachings. While these plays were not explicitly rebellious, they contributed to shaping communal values and reinforcing social norms. In Renaissance Italy, *Commedia dell'arte* troupes introduced improvisational comedy, using masked characters to satirize societal stereotypes and class divisions. This form of theatre had an outstanding impact on European drama, providing a humorous yet stark commentary on social issues. The 19th century saw the emergence of realism in drama, with playwrights like Molière, Henrik Ibsen, and George Bernard Shaw using their plays to address social injustices, inequalities and challenge prevailing norms. Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, remarkably questioned traditional gender roles, eliciting discussions on women's rights.

Theatre and drama played a role in various socio-political movements, including the abolitionist movement and labor movements. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, adapted for the stage, contributed to anti-slavery sentiments, while works like Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* shed light on labor exploitation. The 20th century witnessed an intersection between theatre and political activism, particularly during the civil rights movement and anti-war protests. Playwrights like Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and August Wilson's *The Pittsburgh Cycle* addressed racial issues, contributing to scholarly discussions. The latter half of the 20th century and beyond saw the emergence of experimental and postmodern forms of theatre. Playwrights like Samuel Beckett and Tom Stoppard challenged conventional narratives, while contemporary works explore issues such as identity, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental concerns. Contemporary theatre embraces a global and diverse range of perspectives, allowing the marginalized groups to be heard. The intersectionality of themes, including gender, race, and socioeconomic status, is explored through plays like Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* and Lynn Nottage's *Sweat*.

Within the dynamic array of Nigerian plays, the exploration of morality unfolds as a rich and intricate narrative. Playwrights address the complexities of societal values and cultural traditions, crafting stories that not only challenge and stimulate thought but also mirror the ever-changing nature of morality in a nation undergoing rapid transformation.

Amidst the widespread bitterness, animosity, poverty, disease, illiteracy, chaos, socio-political biases, sectarian violence, unemployment, youth unrest, criminal inclinations, and similar challenges afflicting Nigeria, the theatre emerges as a means of reconstructing the fractured foundations of national unity. Through entertainment, the theatre offers crucial emotional catharsis to its audience. Theatrical performances elicit laughter and entertainment, pushing the concerns of the audience into the background and offering them a comforting reprieve. Beyond its entertaining role, the theatre also creates a favourable space for harnessing human capabilities toward the sociopolitical and economic progress of the society. It plays a significant role in promoting democratic principles in an evolving democracy like Nigeria. Christopher Akachukwu says this is because “it facilitates effective flow of accurate and adequate information across the social strata. Such unimpaired exchange of information increases the chances of success of democracy” (Akachukwu 54).

The prominent role of the theatre in fostering a lasting democratic culture has garnered a substantial attention in numerous scholarly studies on Nigeria's democratization. Ingrid Bjorkman relates this to the fact that “The theatre sharpens the discriminatory capacities of man and this brought to bear on the processes of democratic participation and choice it empowers the citizens to understand the conclusion of his being, question it and seek to exchange it when the need be” (Bjorkman 38). The theatre serves as a potential safeguard against tyranny, societal problems, and lack of development. It achieves this by fostering an objective understanding of authentic national political interests, particularly in a diverse, multi-ethnic, and multicultural country like Nigeria. The art of theatre is adept at reaching both the literate and illiterate audiences alike. This is because, according to Olamide Johnson “drama communicates orally, aurally and visually. If the audience does not understand the language due to illiteracy, they can at least appreciate its visual and aural appeals” (Olamide13).

The central theme, position, and core of drama revolve around humanity and its surroundings. The theatre serves as a good platform for the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of social awareness. It has the ability to spark national discussions on important political matters that

might not be suitably addressed in traditional political arenas. Due to its nature as a social art that relies on cooperation, consensus-building, and shared experience between the playwright, actor, and audience, drama becomes a catalyst for democratic transformation. The theatre utilizes satire to mock undesirable governance. Tunde Awosanmi says that “Curse, poison and damnation are the weapons of the arts of satire. The first is the saliva on the satirist; the second is the arrow in his quiver while the third is his paradigm of the essence of dualism. The satirist is an inverted demon, puncturing the balloon of pomposity – the over bloated intestine of the predated elephants... (Awosanmi 1).

In Wole Soyinka's play *From Zia with Love*, the Nobel Laureate presents the audience with a satirical depiction of military dictatorship, forcing them to recognize the familiar notion of acquiring political power not through consensus but through force. The satire in the play helps to rekindle the democratic spirit of the people. Similarly, in Femi Osofisan's *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest*, the democratic aspirations of Nigerians are portrayed through the anti-illusionistic elements of Brechtian epic theatre and the participatory aesthetics of indigenous art forms such as songs, dance, music, and storytelling. The theatre plays a key role in challenging the authority of political leaders, capable of demystifying the totalitarian ideologies inherent in contemporary struggles for geopolitical and territorial dominance, which pose a serious threat to national unity. The theatre can play an important role in forming a new social and political ideology in replacement of the existing ones rooted in partisanship and ethnic nationalism.

Drama is capable of engaging and maintaining the interest of children at various educational levels, including schools and colleges. Utilizing role-playing as an instructional method enhances knowledge acquisition in the learning process. By incorporating theatrical arts into the teaching of different subjects, such as reading and writing, learners' comprehension of these subjects can be improved, and their interest in drama can be ignited. Rising literacy rates and growing interest in theatre can make the democratic values and ideas portrayed in drama more accessible to a broader audience. This increased awareness can greatly aid in fostering a genuinely democratic Nigeria. In its popular form, theatre can reach even the most remote rural areas, bringing the theatrical experience to the grassroots. This empowers the original holders of political power by encouraging them to challenge the current system. By taking theatre to the

grassroots, the gap between the audience and the radical dramatist's community can be bridged.

Popular theatre acts as a tool for conscientization and renewed awareness, enabling rural communities to understand their societal dynamics and instilling confidence in them as agents of change. The theatre's awareness campaigns can inspire the Nigerian public to question various issues, such as why the Federal Government's Poverty Alleviation Programme seems limited to media announcements, why educational institutions cannot accommodate the children of the political elite, why Nigerian graduates struggle with unemployment, why politicians' savings overwhelm Nigerian banks, why there are persistent fuel shortages, and why the global economic downturn disproportionately impacts ordinary Nigerians. The theatre, alternating between diplomacy and defiance, addresses national issues. For example, Esiaba Irobi's play *Nwokedi* exemplifies the rebellious nature of the theatre in confronting unacceptable conduct and norms. Irobi vies for outright rebellion as a means of combating social ills like tyranny and exploitative leadership. According to him "this is our moment, when we must gather our strength and energies into the demands of a revolution... this is the moment of revolt, of rebellion. We must revolt against those disembodied godheads (politicians) those spotted scavengers of Sahel Savannah ..." (Irobi 28).

Drama as a potent tool for addressing the problems of migration: A study of Toni Duruaku's *A Mirage for a Dream*

The play, *A Mirage for a Dream* revolves around the protagonist, Chimdi, a greedy, and zealous Motor Park tout who is illiterate. His desire to make quick money makes him to take a risky journey through the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to get to Europe. Chimdi's father was wealthy but died while he was still in primary school, leaving his handicapped mother with very little after his two stepmothers took all the property. As a result, Chimdi languishes in poverty, dropped out of school, and became a conductor for his uncle, later becoming a motor park tout. Chimdi hoped to solve his illiteracy and poverty issues by marrying an educated woman, but his wife Berna proved to be a burden to him. Despite this, he worked hard to provide material comfort to her in every possible way.

The play's starts when Chimdi spotted a passenger on board whom he identified as Mike, his former classmate from primary school who is now a barrister and is running for a position in the State House of

Assembly. After a very long conversation between them, Mike strongly urges Chimdi to visit him in his office.

A Mirage for a Dream by Toni Duruaku opens with two prominent characters, Chimdi and his friend, Mike is seen in a rowdy place-- a motor park. The playwright introduces Chimdi, a barely literate motor park tout, during the first episode. As a bus conductor, his occupation often involves grimy tasks. This occupation typically requires working in environments where cleanliness is a challenge, and the work itself can be seen as unglamorous or undervalued by society. Chimdi says “Grease is the mark of that profession...No respectability, very bad conduct. No! Something is wrong” (17)

The visitation of Egondu, his sister-in-law vividly sheds light on his dire circumstances. Egondu says “Don’t be rude. (sternly) I see your motor park touting has ruined your home training. (As Chimdi picks up his bag and leaves) Better look for a real job o. Even political thug is better than this thing you’re doing” (18). Chimdi’s frustration over his inability to secure a decent job manifests in several ways. One of these ways is that he looks for the slightest opportunity to vent his anger on Berna, his wife. Even the wife complains of his restlessness, even while he’s asleep. She says “ Last night you were tossing around in your sleep like a fish out of water (pause) Speak to me, Chim. Chim, my husband. Did you lose your job? (16). She also tells him “Talking to yourself is a bad sickness. (*taps her forehead*) (16).

Chimdi’s constant fight with his wife, illustrates the challenges of a man who is going through serious mental turmoil, while grappling with the harsh realities of financial and social responsibilities. As time goes on, the ties of friendship between Chimdi and Mike's grow stronger, and Mike convinces Chimdi to attend an adult class to prepare for his Primary Six Common Entrance Examinations. This is necessary for Chimdi, so that he can adapt to the current situation and be able to manage the new bus that he planned to purchase. So as to help Chimdi achieve this, Mike assigned his Personal Assistant, Charlie, to assist him.

Not long after Mike and Chimdi re-unites, Charlie discloses to Chimdi how he went to Europe after leaving Mike's law firm and the great opportunities for meeting up there. Chimdi was excited by Charlie's revelation and his newfound wealth, and asked for more information about how to travel to Europe. As soon as he receives the necessary information, Chimdi abandoned the new bus that Mike had bought for him for commercial purposes, as a symbol of his academic progress. He quickly

made known to his pregnant wife Berna about his intention to travel to Europe, and convinces her to borrow Two Hundred Thousand naira from her sister, Egondu to supplement the funds needed for the trip. However, Berna and Egondu were concerned about Chimdi's ambitious plan, as they know that many people who pursue such dreams never make it to Europe or survive to narrate their experience. Despite their warnings, Chimdi was determined to go to Europe, and convinced Mike to lend him money for his wife's business. Chimdi and two other travelers, Obinali and Ginger, embarked on a journey through the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean Sea to get to Europe. Unfortunately, due to exhaustion, hunger, and dehydration, Chimdi and one of the travelers were captured, killed, and had their organs harvested by human traffickers in Libya.

The play ends with Berna being physically assaulted by Chimdi's people who blame her for his death. They accuse her of always nagging and pressuring him to leave for Europe through illegal means, which finally led to his death. Here, the issue of maltreatment against widows is being dramatized. Nkiruka Akaenyi says that:

The subjugation of women is pervasive across various communities and ethnic groups in Nigeria, where women are perceived as mere extensions of men, occupying a subservient status. Traditional institutions strongly reinforce gender differences, seeing women as inconsequential, the "insignificant other." This stereotypical view of women, to a large extent, influences the mindset of women, who often internalize and accept this position. Any effort to challenge this norm is met with resistance, with such women being seen as competing with men or trying to disrupt the natural order of things. Consequently, they are frequently labeled as stubborn, out of control, or ill-mannered (86)

The norm cultural perception is that she's a strange woman, a husband murderer, stirring up the superstitious belief that any man who marries her would die before she could bear children. The maltreatment of widows is not a theme peculiar to Toni Duruaku's play, *A Mirage for a Dream*. In Akachi Ezeigbo's *Hands that Crush Stones*, the playwright condemns the oppressive widowhood practices which is so entrenched in the patriarchal society. This harmful widowhood practices is also opulently

dramatized in Zulu Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods*. Ogwoma, the female lead character is accused of killing Adigwu her husband. In retaliation, her mother-in-law uses strange powers to kill her. In Julie Okoh's *Our Wife Forever*, Victoria, the female lead character in the play, who is also a widow is subjected to all forms of psychological and emotional abuse by her by in-laws. She goes through excruciating experiences in the hands of her in-laws to the extent that she laments sorrowfully. She says "I was made to sit on a mat on the hard ground throughout the period. Moreover, my hands were crossed, tied in front of me. That means I couldn't use them for anything. If I had an itch in any part of my body, I called on someone to help me scratch the itching spot" (21).

On a different occasion, Victoria cries out "Oh what a life ! Suddenly I have become a prisoner. An outcast! I shouldn't go here or there. I shouldn't do this or that! No one should come near me. No one should reach out to me. All types of laws are heaped on me. Just because I am a widow (p.23). All these harrowing experiences by Victoria aligns with the notion of feminists that women oppression is rooted in patriarchal tradition. Ezenwanebe says that:

Women as widows are recreated in the plays as an expendable commodity. If women as wives are twice oppressed, then women as widows are thrice oppressed because they are women, were wives and then widows. I therefore argue that wifeness is the greatest burden of womanhood in Nigeria and the most volatile gender space in dire need of social transformation. When women as wives lose their names and acquired names symbolizing their roles as wife and mother, they lose the right to self-definition (21-22)

The sense of helplessness Aetu is subjected to, is similar to the struggles experienced by African women, particularly widows. Examining gender issues in his play, *Aetu* Ahmed Yerima's portrays widowhood practices as an oppressive tradition deeply rooted in patriarchy, where women are debased. According to Ezenwanebe "The women as widows are products of cultural degradation" (Ezenwanebe 268). Aetu as a widow in the play under study has gone through much cultural degradation associated with the widowhood rites. Again, Ezenwanebe says that:

Some widows are required to sit in the ashes confined in the house for months like Ogwoma in Sofola's *Wedlock of the Gods*, shave their hair, howl for three days, etc. to prove their innocence of their husband's death. For instance, Eaglewoman in Ezeigbo's novel, *Children of the Eagle* (2002) has to howl for three days to display public grief for the loss of her husband, Josiah. In the same novel, her daughters stage a protest against the patriarchal myths that inform widowhood rites (p.269).

Elechi Amadi's novel, *The Concubine* revolves around a female lead character, Ihuoma, who remarries seven times and at each marriage her husband dies. The cultural perception is that she's a strange woman, a husband murderer, stirring up the superstitious belief that any man who marries her would die before she could bear children. In Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, the main character, Lejoka-Brown, inherits his late brother's wife, Mama Rashida. *A Mirage for a Dream* is a play that explores the issue of migration in Nigeria, which is a prevalent theme in the country in the 21st century. The play examines the root causes of migration such as economic hardships, globalization, social inequality, market economy, and discrimination. Other factors that contribute to migration even though they are not fully explored in the play are political instability, conflicts, wars, ethnic cleansing and other transformational processes that shape Nigerian society.

The play mirrors the situation of many Nigerian youths like Chimdi, Charlie, Ginger, and Obinali who flee to Europe in search of better opportunities. While some succeed in making the perilous journey through the Sahara, many like Chimdi perish due to dehydration, hunger, and exhaustion, with their body parts being harvested by human traffickers. *A Mirage for a Dream* highlights the dangers and desperation that drive many young Nigerians to take such risks. The Nigerian youths as seen in the play, chose to relocate to a foreign country because they feel that the government has let them down in several ways, both economically, politically, socially, and in other ways. As seen in the play, Chimdi is a bright young boy who was once in primary school, but unfortunately dropped out of school as a result of his father's death. His mother was unable to help him with his education, and the government did not provide any assistance. As a result, he decides to see Barrister Mike and was given a visitor's form to fill out by Ginger, Mike's confidential secretary. He was unable to read or complete it.

Chimdi's desire to leave the country was intensified by the mundane nature of society seen in the play. Similarly, numerous Nigerians have faced challenges and difficulties in European nations, with some being imprisoned, others losing their lives, and many facing deportation on a daily basis due to suspicions of involvement in criminal activities like drug trafficking, cybercrime, armed robbery, and human trafficking. Instances of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa, as well as the brutal killing of Nigerians in Libya and other regions, particularly in North Africa, serve as typical examples. A good number of Nigerians have lost their lives while attempting to migrate to European countries, either through drowning in the Mediterranean Sea or perishing in the harsh conditions of the Sahara Desert. Much like Chimdi, whose body was taken to his family with his lung and kidney, numerous Nigerian migrants following the same path often meet their death in foreign prisons or at the hands of human traffickers in the Sahara Desert. Following their deaths, their remains are either returned or unceremoniously disposed of, sometimes after the harvesting of their organs like lungs and kidneys for medical examination.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the urgent need to address the challenges associated with migration. The play not only exposes the grim realities faced by Nigerian migrants in their pursuit of a better life but also underscores the complex issues surrounding xenophobia, violence, and exploitation. Through the use of drama, Duruaku effectively communicates the multifaceted nature of this menace of migration, prompting the need for reflection on the social and systemic factors that drive individuals to embark on perilous journeys.

The power of theatre, as exemplified by *A Mirage for a Dream*, lies in its ability to evoke empathy and provoke thought. By engaging readers in the human stories behind migration, the play becomes a potent tool for fostering awareness. It promotes the need for a collective response so as to curb the menace of migration by addressing its root causes, advocating for policy changes, and promoting a more inclusive and compassionate society. As seen in the complexities given prominence in Duruaku's play, it is evident that tackling the challenges of migration requires a holistic approach involving governments, communities, and individuals. Through continued dialogue, education, and artistic expression, the world can become a better place, where the dreams of individuals are pursued within the bounds of safety, dignity, and respect.

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