

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

Clement O. A. AJIDAHUN, PhD

Department of English Studies
Adekunle Ajasin University
Akungba Akoko, Osun State, Nigeria
Email: jideajidahun@gmail.com

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 proletariats. 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

Gbonka: 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.

WORKS CITED

- Abrams, M. H., and Harpham, Geoffrey G. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Wadsworth: Singapore, 1999.
- Ajidahun, Clement O. "Orality and Word Construction in Ahmed Yerima's *Iyase*: Conceptual Metaphor Theory Perspective". In *The Crab: Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, 13(2018): 146-157.
- Ajidahun, Clement O. "The Cohabitation of Oral and Written Forms of Verbal Art: A Study of Some Contemporary Nigerian Plays". In *EKSU Studies in Language and Literature (ESILL)*, 62.1(2018): 94-103.
- Bjørge, Tore (Ed.). *Root Causes of Terrorism*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Crag, Sandy (Ed.). *Dreams and Deconstructions: Alternative Theatre in Britain*. Bath: Amber Lane Press, 1980.
- Fugard, Athol. *My Life and Valley Song*. Johannesburg: Wits UP, 1996.
- Habib, M.A.R. *Literary Criticism from Plato to the Present: An Introduction*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.
- Kani, John. *Nothing But the Truth*. Johannesburg: Wits UP, 2003.
- Nassar, J. *Globalization and Terrorism: The Migration of Dreams and Nightmares*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.
- Norries, P., Kern, M., & Just, M. *Framing Terrorism*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Ochu, Michael C., and Otlogetswe, Thapelo J. "The Study of Terror, Terrorise, Terrorism, Terrorist in Two Nigerian Newspapers". In *Marang: Journal of Language and Literature*, 30(2018): 34-49.
- Ochuwa, Omorodion M. "Theatre, Terrorism and the Society: A Study of Revolutionary Violence in Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die*". In *The Crab: Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, 13(2018): 177-187.

- Ogunbiyi, Yemi. "Nigerian Theatre and Drama: A Critical Profile". In Ogunbiyi, Yemi (Ed.), *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigerian Magazine, 1981: 36-37.
- Olaniyan, Tejumola. "Femi Osofisan: The Form of Uncommon Sense". In *Research in African Literature*, 30.4(Winter 1999): 74-91.
- Osofisan, Femi. *Recent Outings I Two Plays: Incl. Tegonni, An African Antigone and Many Colours Make the Thunder-King*. Ibadan: Opon Ifa Readers, 1999.
- Osofisan, Femi. *The Chattering and the Song*. Ibadan: Ibadan UP, 1976.
- Osofisan, Femi. *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1993.
- Richardson, Louise. *What Terrorists Want. Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York: Random House, 2006.
- Ritzer, George and Stepnisky, Jeffrey. *Sociological Theory*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill, 2014.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Kongi's Harvest*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1967.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Soyinka, Wole. *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Culture, Drama and National Ethos*. Ibadan: Ebony Books and Kreations, 2015.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Iyase*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Ltd, 2016.
- Zimmermann, Ekkart. "Forms and Causes of Political Terrorism: What Do We Know?" Paper presented at the 21st International Political Science Association World Congress, Santiago, Chile, 12-16 July, 2009. Institute of Sociology, Dresden University of Technology, Germany.