

PLAYMAKING AS SOFT POWER APPROACH TO INTERROGATING NIGERIA'S COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGY

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Abstract

Nigeria's security landscape has changed since the heinous crime of kidnapping seeped into the system. As efforts were made to clamp down on kidnapping insurgency, Boko Haram emerged in a grand style, surpassing the kidnapping activity. With the notorious hit that took away 276 Chibok girls on 14 April, 2014 in Borno State, series of bombings, and the 'Underwear Bomber'- Nigerian terror suspect in Flight 253 attack, it is not surprising that Nigeria became prominent in the list of the world's most fragile states. Again, the recent pogrom unleashed in Benue and Plateau States reveal that terrorism in Nigeria is far from being a hate speech. The Nigerian government has been strategising in order to counter terrorism mainly through military-centricism. The establishment of a Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC), and the release of a national strategy named National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in March 2014, and the systematic operations of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch (JTAB) show the level of government's attempt at countering terrorism in Nigeria. But how effective have these been? Insurgencies fuelled by ideology or structural imbalance can be quelled through kinetic approach or the deployment of soft power. This paper interrogates approaches at countering terrorism and suggests a theatre approach to ameliorate acts of terror in Nigeria through playmaking. The researcher relies on Joseph Nye's *soft power theory* for theoretical backing and canvases for playmaking as a soft power concept. The researcher's findings reveal that terrorism has eaten deep beyond political aims to delve into the realms of religion, culture and social conditions. The paper concludes that playmaking as a soft power concept can help re-orient the citizens and counter terrorism in the long run.

Introduction

The relationship between insurgency and terrorism differs by their aims and operative models. While insurgents are military-centric and not media or revenge inclined, terrorists attack non-combatants and bring attention to themselves and their cause; eventually attacking the population indiscriminately. Beyond the objectives of terrorists, their actions have far-reaching psychological effects on the victims and the society at large. Harsh economic realities orchestrated by bad governance have introduced enormous agitations laced with ingredients of fear and terror in Nigeria. The government

has developed policies and strategies tailored to ameliorate the situation but the efforts seem pale in comparison to the continued insecurity. Factors behind insurgencies and terrorism in Nigeria may not be far from structural imbalance as well as deprivation and negligence as contained in a statement made by Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro in 1966:

Year after year, we were clenched in tyrannical chains and led through a dark alley or perpetual political and social deprivation. Strangers in our own country! Inevitably therefore, the day would have to come for us to fight for our long denied right to self-determination (cited. in Ugochkwu 22).

Today, most Nigerians feel as Boro felt more than fifty (50) years ago. Without adequate educational opportunities, infrastructure and empowerment; bitterness is bound to brew. Ogbonna observes that with “lapses in health policies, educational policies and total neglect of welfare schemes, the masses are left to bear the burden of one ill-fated policy, tax/ task force, or the other. It appears the only avenue for the citizens to survive is crime” (1). Crime, therefore, has seeped deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society.

It is within the scope of drama and theatre to interrogate human and social issues. Unfortunately, the stage has failed in addressing social issues majorly due to security concerns and the dearth of theatre culture; little wonder the Nollywood film industry thrives. The absence of government owned/private theatre houses has not helped in any way, but the social construction of knowledge in the classroom through playmaking and the promotion of citizenship education via theatre performances are ways of reaching out to inform and conscientise the masses on vital issues even as this platform would outline counterpart citizenship responsibilities.

It is also expected that the Nigerian government will make efforts to orientate the masses on how to obey laws by enforcing them without the prejudice of selective justice. In this circumstance, crime will abate. Following the extremist action of some groups/sects and the events of 14 April, 2014 (the Chibok girls event) as well as the ‘Underwear Bomber’ Nigerian terror suspect in Flight 253, the government has had to grapple with terrorism. Hence, policies were developed and implemented that would have consequences on the citizenry directly or indirectly. It is glaring that, “conflict is an integral and inevitable part of the life process and a continuing reality of the social existence of man” (Ihentuge and Ogbonna 55). Consequently, the society is in a continuous flux and the dynamics of government may not cater for the needs of the citizen. As such, violent reactions predicated on governments inefficiency and failure of the policing system give rise to conflicts. Akpuru-Aja asserts that, “conflict involves two or more parties that have, or perceive incompatibility in either interests or values, or in strategy of achieving the ends desired” (12).

Obviously, Nigeria in the past ten years is one of the most conflict-ridden countries in Africa and government’s lukewarm attitude towards abating crime has left a question mark in the hearts of the citizens. This affirms the assertion of a former Nigerian Head of State, General Sani Abacha that, “if insurgency lasts in a country beyond twenty four (24) hours government is involved” (cited in Iginla para. 2), thus corroborating Ugochukwu Achonwa’s observation that, “insurgency and terrorism are both politically

motivated violence” (1). That is why this research is in tandem with the notion that terrorism is a fundamental component that should be addressed through the writing of plays.

It is not within the onus of this paper to discuss crime in Nigeria, but having identified terrorism as a horrible crime that has blacklisted Nigeria, it is necessary to take urgent proactive steps to curb it. The questions that come to mind therefore are: What are the contributory factors of insurgencies in Nigeria? Why is it difficult for the government to arrest the situation? Can drama and theatre be of any help in countering terrorism in Nigeria? This paper answers the above questions even as it interrogates the approaches that the Nigerian government has strategised for countering terrorism. The paper develops playmaking as soft power concept using Joseph Nye’s *soft power approach* as theoretical background to engender behavioural and attitudinal change.

Theoretical Framework

Leaders of thought have agreed that insurgencies and terrorism cannot be fought in one direction. They propose a balance between the hard approach and a soft approach. During the Australia Special Summit (ASEAN), President Jokowi emphasised that, "hard approach alone is not enough to tackle terrorism and radicalism threats. It should be balanced with a soft approach" ("Counter-terrorism Needs..." para. 3). The theory of politeness as proposed by Brown and Levinson is also relevant to this study. Politeness theory deals with "the expression of the speaker’s intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts towards another" (Mills 6). Brown and Levinson presented this theory as abstract models of communication using rationality and face as basic attributes. It highlights the positive and negative aspects of face as it exists in human culture. The theory maintains that these types of face exist in human communication and are basic wants in any social interaction. In countering terrorism, politeness strategies, such as, Bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness and off-record/indirect can be used when face-threatening acts are inevitable.

De-radicalisation is another concept that is relevant to this research. To "de-radicalise" a subject, means a complete shift in the subject’s mindset, sympathies and attitudes. It suggests that de-radicalising terrorists – "requires changing their mindset and ideological beliefs – is exceedingly difficult, and it finds that disengagement is likely a more realistic outcome" (Silke, para. 2); adding that the concept of de-radicalisation as exemplified in the "Sri Lankan rehabilitation program for former members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (a terrorist organisation that operated in Sri Lanka until their defeat in 2009)" show "evidence that de-radicalisation efforts that provided beneficiaries with sustained mechanisms for earning personal significance significantly reduced extremism after one year" (Silke, para. 18). Thus, de-radicalisation programme is another option at countering terrorism because it reduces extremism, re-directs interests and offer alternatives. According to Andrew Silke, experimental programmes on de-radicalising jailed terrorists reveal that, "findings highlight the critical role of personal significance in de-radicalisation efforts, offer insights into the workings of de-radicalisation, and suggest practical methods for improving de-radicalisation programmes worldwide" (para. 23).

However, this research adopts Joseph Nye's soft power approach as a suitable and subtle way of abating terrorism in Nigeria. The soft power approach encourages the education of the mainstream culture and core values of the people. Soft power consists of all other facets of power, such as ideology, foreign policy, culture, stability, prosperity, and membership in international organisations" (Li Lin, para. 8) The theory is implicitly, and explicitly, founded on cultural and moral values. According to Li Lin, the soft power theory, postulated by Joseph Nye is a supplement and extension of traditional hard power ideology, and a return to classical realism, as well as a criticism about the fact that neo-realism rely overwhelmingly on hard power. Joseph Nye proposes that,

soft power is a kind of ability which can realise the goal through attraction instead of the violence or the temptation. The attractiveness arises from a country's culture, political ideals and foreign policies. When the policy is seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, the soft power is enhanced (Li Lin, para. 9).

The soft power approach is a relevant theory that can be used in countering terrorism because of its strategies in

...engaging in the politics of legitimacy, credibility and attraction, many countries have utilised several approaches at winning and or forcing others to lose. But the significance of the soft power resources and tools are human friendly as against the exercise of hard power to achieve desired objectives (Li Lin, para. 1).

Also, Shin Wha Lee explains that,

Soft power has been referred to as a form of national power that is based on ideational and cultural attractiveness, which is intentionally or unintentionally utilised by actors in international relations to achieve strategic imperatives (Li Lin, para. 1).

The application of the soft power theory in countering terrorism in Nigeria will rely heavily on Li Lin's analysis, stressing on the need to "guide them to set up the correct sense of value, develop the ideological and political education healthily and enhance the national soft power" (para. 2). Evidently, the terrorists are either fighting against a people, the government or an ideology. There is a disconnect that requires to be fixed, controlled or stopped. Oftentimes, unlike the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) that is military-centric and has not produced visible results, playmaking as a soft power concept certifies a risk-free process that is worth investing in. Playmaking can be used as a weapon of instruction or reorientation even as it entertains. Such plays will embody the right ideology, functional education and the mainstream culture as well as the core values of the people. Through playmaking as soft approach, these values are passed down to the youths and the wider public thereby de-radicalising the 'radicals'.

Counter-Terrorism

Terrorism as the unauthorised use of violence especially to pursue political aims was hardly part of the agitation models in Nigerian. But things have since changed. Dianne Gereluk defines terrorism as, the “violent act or event against innocent individuals to incite fear or anxiety among a citizenry” (8). Also, the aim of terrorist activity is always political “the goal is to attain political objectives; changing the regime, changing the people in power, changing social or economic activities” (Gereluk 8). Thus, extremist views or behaviours or physical actions that elicit fear among the general public could be termed terrorism.

Terrorism is not accidental, but purposeful attack directed at the citizenry. Certainly, the degree of terror that besiege Nigerians today is more intense compared to the wars between diverse cultures that pollute the Nigerian terrains. Laqueur affirms that, “terrorism and extremism are not new phenomena-far from it in fact. Terrorism and extremism have been effective and widely used techniques throughout history” (cited in Gereluk 13). But, while much conflict is expected from a pluralist society, Osita Ebiem acknowledges that when “peoples of unrelated cultural worldviews were forced by the force of fiats and herded as animals, they became compelled to become bound by sets of rules and customs, which are alien to them” (35). Thus, before Nigeria’s independence, the cultural socialisation of most of the people that make up Nigeria, upheld human life as sacred and the people lived with considerations for each other’s socio-cultural leanings. Gradually and steadily, crime seeped into the fabric of the Nigerian society thereby destroying the peace and the seaming co-existence. Like every other society that encounters civilisation and the mingling of ideas and culture; crime is expected, but the corruptive and porosity of the Nigerian law enforcement agencies have not in any way abated crime; rather, crime has increased to a new and frightful dimension.

Nigeria’s security landscape has changed since the heinous crime of kidnapping seeped into the system. As efforts were made to clamp down on kidnapping insurgency, Boko Haram emerged in a grand style, surpassing the kidnapping activity. With the notorious hit that took away 276 Chibok girls on 14 April, 2014 in Borno State, series of bombings, and the ‘Underwear Bomber’ – Nigerian terror suspect in Flight 253 attack, it is not surprising that Nigeria became prominent in the list of the world’s most fragile states. Again, the recent pogrom unleashed in Benue and Plateau States reveal that terrorism in Nigeria is far from being a hate speech. Baba Jibrin Ndace agrees that terrorism, violence and kidnapping activity are threat to Nigeria’s unity as he observes that:

There is no doubt that Nigeria is currently facing threats from various criminal groups that is clearly derailing its difficult but promising journey towards prosperity. Defence and security experts have admitted, and consistently warned that ‘not since Nigeria’s independence with civil war in the 1960s has it been confronted by an existential threat so determined to shake the foundation of its unity (2).

Again, Nigeria's former president; General Abdusalami Abubakar corroborates Ndace's assertion by affirming that "since the return of democracy in May 1999, Nigeria has been battling a raft of security challenges" (cited in Ndace 3). The accelerated increase in ethno-religious conflicts, kidnapping, human trafficking and assassinations has reached a worrisome dimension and have changed Nigeria's security landscape. Hence, Abubakar informs that:

The frequency and extent of damage and destruction brought about by the outbreak and persistence of insecurity and violent criminality, have partly contributed to the classification of Nigeria as a fragile state, by assessment reports and by scholars including Smith and Vivekanada who ranked Nigeria among the seventeen countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, that are on the list of the world's most fragile states (cited in Ndace 3).

Former National Security Adviser, Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd) admitted in 2013 that,

Nigeria realises that military action on its own will not counter terror if not accompanied by a robust public diplomacy aimed at defeating the ideology of hate and building consensus against violent extremism (Ndace 3).

In this regard, countering terrorism in the classroom through playmaking is a soft approach that can be result-oriented. There is need to explore the potency of storytelling, revolutionary skits and folk dramas, by burlesquing and addressing the emergent ethno-cultural, socio-political, religious and economic challenges that affect the unity of Nigeria. A parody of core values in playmaking may be more result-oriented than the hard approach that is harsh and military-centric. Through playmaking, the artist conscientises the populace; brings to their knowledge the intending tensions, intending dangers, the malignity and may give insightful information on how those that perpetrate crime can be fished out. Again, playmaking can open the eyes of the elite and the government on valuable information and strategies.

There is urgent need for the Nigerian Government to reckon the full gravity of the recent killings and bombings and how their policies and approach on countering terrorism have negatively affected the citizens and the society at large. Uche-Chinemerem Nwozuzu observes that,

Nigeria's current democratic environment yearns for new values, and national rebirth. The nation is witnessing an upsurge in social disaffection throughout the length and breadth of the nation. The strong united peace laden nation is unconsciously heading towards disintegration and anarchy with the current wake of insurgency and political jingoism from all the ethno-cultural corners of the country (94).

The response from the government on the fear, grief and anxiety inflicted on the citizens is the establishment of agencies and policies to counter terrorism albeit military-

centric. The establishment of a Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC), and the release of a national strategy named National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in March 2014, and the systematic operations of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch (JTAB) show the level of government's attempt at countering terrorism in Nigeria. But how effective have these been?

On the establishment of NACTEST, Sambo Dasuki, explains that, "...the strategy was developed taking into account the root causes of terrorism, adding that the approach was to understand the problem in order to apply appropriate solutions..." (Shuaib, para. 11). He went further to explain that, "NACTEST focused on key points including increasing the capacity of government institutions and relevant agencies in handling extremists. The strategy was developed to offer a key blueprint for law enforcement agencies to combat terrorists" (para.12); and assures that:

What we have learnt is that there is not one particular path that leads to terrorism; rather, there are many often complicated paths that led to terrorism. The NACTEST seeks to prevent attacks before they happen by preventing our people from becoming terrorists in the first place (para. 15)

However, the reviewed National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) "underscores the fact that terrorism has numerous ideologies, not static and response must be constantly dynamic and versatile" (*Metrowatch 1*). This approach to countering terrorism has been seventy percent (70%) military-centric. For a better comprehension, Maj-Gen. Babagana Monguno (rtd) explains that,

The revised strategy explains what organisations and individuals can do to help in its implementation in order to reduce the risk of terrorism and ensure that people go about their lives freely and with confidence... NACTEST is organised around five streams aimed to forestall, secure, prepare and implement with key objectives and indicators to effectively ensure monitoring and evaluating successes at each stage (*Metrowatch 1*).

But terrorist activities have persisted alongside governmental efforts to curb it. Monguno insists that,

ONSA has developed a benchmark framework for the evaluation of the implementation of the NACTEST, which has now been reviewed to include salient areas like the Nigeria countering Violent Extremist programme, which are two very critical pillars in the fight against terrorism and engendering sustainable peace (*Metrowatch 1*).

It is within the Countering Violence Extremism (CVE) programme that the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) has adopted the soft approach consisting of three streams with different layers of partners. The involvement of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) within the three tiers of government at the federal,

state and local governments, in order to stem the tide of terror, is an applauded approach but has failed to yield reasonable result. Although the NACTEST strategy contains elements of the soft approach and efforts are made by ONSA to unite Nigerians, hence, they have assured that:

At the heart of this new approach is the deployment of narratives that demonstrate that terrorism is un-Islamic; counter terrorism is not against Muslims and encourage and empower Muslims to speak out against terror. It is also an effort that would foster Muslims Christian relations; and show that counter terrorism is apolitical (Ndace 7).

In spite of the efforts put in place by the government to reduce violence and terror in Nigeria, recent developments show that the acts of terror and violence is gaining prominence amongst the youth, and to nib it in the bud, there is need to develop and implement programmes that is youth-friendly. Government's effort at 'preventing our people from becoming terrorists in the first place' through NACTEST can be augmented with job employments, empowerment programmes, rehabilitation centres with a skill acquisition component, and de-radicalisation programmes.

Concept of Playmaking as Soft Approach

It is an aberration to voice out the perception that theatre is merely a profession that centres on entertainment. According to Stuart Brown,

Play leads to creativity and innovation which, in turn, leads to invention and growth. Likewise, Work can lead to creativity and innovation. In addition, work gives us a sense of purpose and helps us develop competence (para. 4).

Theatre engages itself in careful study and analysis of human relations through playmaking. Thus playmaking is an art that is deliberate and purposeful. "Playmaking is the act of transforming work through play. It's play with a purpose, what I call, "Deliberate Play". It is a simple idea that requires a desire for fun, great courage and respect for people" (Brown, para.1). Theatre is an art that studies social and human actions. As a place of the eternal present, theatre happens. Throughout the ages, it has been the one transcendent collective experience of the community. So, "theatre has been an exercise for making visible the invisible worlds within and without us. It has been a laboratory setting for creating an experience of the ineffable" (Lysaght, para. 1). Theatre is a dramatisation of action, not an idea or theme but of action, of want and of conflict. It is a combination of physical motion and psychological tension in order to engage the deeper sensibilities of the audience. Before now, theatre required only a platform and a person or people but the modern theatre with its emphasis on appearance exerts financial pressure to cater for sets, special effects, props and costumes.

Consequently, the concept of playmaking as a soft power approach to countering terrorism, extremism and other social malaise is an initiative that is cost effective and ethical. It may require provocative and emotive techniques, but the availability of a

platform and people help to interrogate and intervene ‘uncertain times’ with expedient action. In the refracted world of playmaking as a concept the exercise centres on arts for the occasion’s sake.

Storyline of Ogbonna’s “Yesterday”

The making of the play, “Yesterday” featured games, storytelling and dramatisations. It is within the game environment that the characters portray, scene by scene, the mysterious deaths, violence and betrayals that exist between the people of Umuala and Umuelu. “Yesterday” contains multi scenes with captions, such as, The Exercise, The Festival, The Present, Yesterday and Tomorrow. The play begins with the entrance of the Director, down stage centre clapping her hands as she beckons on the audience. The characters leave the audience and take their costumes from the Director. Marauders interrupt the festival and argument ensues between Youth Leader and the director. Suddenly, a Warrior storms in to announce the death of a formidable warrior; Jamike. The Director steps aside and encourages the people to pursue their *Want* and explore their *Stakes*. Action intensifies as the people of Umuala refuse to yield to the demands of Umuelu; the youths of Umuala maintain that their Ama-Ukwu is sacred and cannot allow the people of Umuelu acquire Ama-Ukwu as access road to the Cameroons. The plotline reveals that the people of Umuala now live in fear because they have been frequently attacked by the people of Umuelu. Hence the youths of Umuala wants to embark on a revenge mission. Efforts to calm the youths down by some of the elders result into a disagreement as the youths change tactics in order to achieve their revenge mission. But the arrival of the Ezedibia at their hideout in the bush changes their mindset as he tries to open their eyes to reasoning by revisiting some of the ancient values. Festivals, values and norms are re-enacted revealing ancient jurisprudence, betrayals and consequences. As the Youth Leader, Ugo, Obi and Azuka realise that their entire problem is not the handiwork of the people of Umuelu, they become sober. The youths agree that it is time to look inwards and revisit correct family values. “Yesterday” is spiced with songs and dance.

The making of “Yesterday” is tailored towards spontaneous dramatisation of the circumstances within the society. In order to achieve this project, the researcher/facilitator created groups of six into five groups. Each group represents a particular age group in the refracted world of the play. For instance, Groups 3 and 4 are elderly men and women, group 2 is made of unmarried females between the ages of eighteen to twenty five (18-25), while group one and five are male youths between eighteen to twenty seven years. Since playmaking is all about showing and role playing, the researcher/facilitator involved the selected groups as community members for the making and dramatisation of “Yesterday” while the researcher/facilitator played the Director.

Before embarking on this project, the researcher asked the following question: What are the needs of the selected community? Again, during the role play section, the facilitator started by asking: is there anyone amongst us who is a victim of the on-going violence in our community. The diverse opinion of the five groups is replete with harsh economic realities, insecurity, rape, marginalisation and abduction. These experiences and analyses informed the storyline of “Yesterday”. Findings reveal that their problem

ranges from restive youths, armed robbery, and killings, disruption of the people's moral order and violent acts/clashes. These have resulted to distrust, anarchy and insecurity. Hence, in creating a drama for the refracted community, the researcher/facilitator established that this exercise is not art for art's sake but art for the occasion's sake. We also identified the components of drama as:

- A protagonist;
- An antagonist;
- The want;
- Stakes; and
- A tickling clock

We jettisoned a descriptive narrative of how their problems can be solved and rather adopted prescription which equals dramatisation of the ingredients capable of solving the impending problems in the community.

The Facilitator (Director) gathers the people together in a storytelling format, telling the story of the Dog and the Tortoise, she exclaims: "Oh! Now I remember that while bathing, I heard the sound of the Ikoro, Ada, Uzondu, please accompany me to the village square, the Ikoro does not speak for nothing" ("Yesterday" 1) Then, a scene, titled, The Flash, opens with two factions dragging a portion of land, called, Ama-Ukwu. The dramatisation is borne out of the experiences of the community as they are the active participators. Thus dramatisation of the exercise is captured vividly in the stage direction thus:

The director enters the stage, walks to Down Stage Center, claps her hands and beckons on the audience. Young and old, men and women begin to troop out from the audience. The director hands out costumes and props to each of them as they enter through Stage Right and Stage Left. In choreographed movements they adorn their costumes as the drumming initiate the required background. Suddenly, young men and some females storm in shooting and harassing the people. The stage is littered with bodies and broken items as the marauders kidnap a man and woman. The director claps her hands again ("Yesterday" 1).

Director: (*Calls.*) Actors! Come out from your hiding place.

Youth Leader: What is the meaning of this? (*Gradual rising of the drums.*)

Director: Patience!

The making of this play situated at Umuobasi village square is a pilot project to reach out to the community's problems psychology and seeming solution. Audience participation is necessary in order to understand the people's ideology, sentiments and perceptions. The response, 'War' by the youths demonstrates that they are tired of the tensed environment. This is evident in the dramatisation below:

Director: At this point in time all that you need is patience...

Youth Leader: Patience nothing! A toad does not run in the day for nothing! We agreed to hold a sacred festival but you and your people have turned our festival into a sacrilege. The marauders kidnapped Jamike and his wife. Everyone here is a suspect. (**Ezeala** stands and tries to leave.) No! Ezeala, no one leaves the arena until we have been told what just happened here (*Drumming increase in tempo.*) Quiet! Why should the festival continue as if nothing happened?

Director: Because we are all victims (*Exit Ezeala.*) A tsetse fly perched on the scrotum is killed with extreme caution. We must not accuse anyone...

Most Nigerian youths lack the requisite information and this affects their sense of judgment. The play provides the needed information and the correct values and communal expectations. The youths begin to rationalise:

Director: Because we are all victims (*Exit Ezeala.*) A tsetse fly perched on the scrotum is killed with extreme caution. We must not accuse anyone...

Youth Leader: Who gave you the voice to speak for us? And who are you?

Director: I am you and you are me... Together we can make a difference...

Youth Leader: Youths! Arrest him! (*As youths pounce on the Director, a male warrior rushes in screaming.*)

Warrior: *Aru Aru emela* (Abomination has taken place!)

Youth Leader: What is it? What happened?

Warrior: Jamike and his wife have been murdered! They dropped their bodies at the Afor market junction! (*The youths storm out.*)

The Director claps her hands again. The characters on stage form an arc. She signals them to exchange their costumes.

Director: (*Declares.*) This land is blessed. You are a people that should be called blessed. But, like Chinua Achebe said, 'Things have fallen apart and the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world' But I cannot berate the youth because indeed, it is not totally their fault...neither can I exonerate the elders; for their silence is loud. I am here because the thunderous rain that has today left us roofless and soaked met us somewhere. It is time to locate where. The why, we already know. But the link between where and who holds the puzzle we have been trying to solve. (*Bows.*) You know what to do. (*Drums increase in tempo as they take their positions.*)

Audience Analysis

There are different kinds of audience. Some come to the theatre to laugh and ease out their minds while another category visit the theatre in order to mirror themselves and look for possible answers. There is a third category of audience that sees the society through

the theatre. The authorial audience is non-gender specific because the play speaks to both male and female and targets youth and children. Based on the technique of scenario formation and shifts in character, the audience did not see each character develop into substantive characters. Hence, it was difficult to achieve complete empathy or alienation effect. During the presentation of “Yesterday”, these categories of audience were thrilled. A Focus Group Discussion after the performance revealed that, “Yesterday” touched on emergent contemporary issues that have besieged the Nigerian society and has become a source of worry.

According to some audience members, “Yesterday” is a new and entertaining approach that not only entertains but is laced with historical and cultural ingredients, as well as provides valuable and valid information. For instance, ABC Duruaku said that, “the scenarios are lifelike and offers valuable information”. Another perception of a theatre scholar/audience is that, “the play reads well and conveys appropriately... the model is refreshing”. Questions from the audience ranged from: Could this approach be explored in the rural areas? Can this approach be used to fight other issues, such as, HIV/Aids, rape, battering and bad governance? The explanation given by the facilitator shows that playmaking as a soft power approach can be applied anywhere including the classroom.

Conclusion

This research notes that complicated paths, such as, ideologies, bad governance, youth restiveness as a result of unemployment, marginalisation and hegemony, lead to terrorism. Hence, they should be traced back to history/source, re-valued and attended while such sources, information and possible consequences are to be broached in the classroom. Again, incorporating history and the common culture of the people will help to emphasise our differences, what unites us over what divides us. Historical facts help to put the record straight over distorted facts and propaganda. Through playmaking the values of the nation can be preserved. A national identity is sought, sources of terrorism and extremism are identified and options of countering terrorism are outlined. Information is subtly provided to guard government and its security agents. It is through a graphic burlesquing of ideas that most sensitive information are encoded.

However, it is unavoidable to have a tension free environment in a pluralist society where fundamental human rights are upheld. But in order to foster collective values and cohesive co-existence, swift arbitrary action that affect individual liberties such as looking at personal bank accounts, surveillance and tapping of phones are infringed for the safety and stability of the society. Hence, the suggestion to include playmaking as a soft approach in countering terrorism is because extremism and terrorism are difficult topics to negotiate. It is a difficult and sensitive issue to broach. But through playmaking, what is left unsaid can be said and what shouldn't be said can be broached, and tensed issues and moments can be dramatised with thrilling innuendos and spectacle.

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