

PLAY PERFORMANCE AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM: PRODUCTIONS OF SOME SELECTED NIGERIAN PLAY TEXTS AS PARADIGMS

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Abstract

In recent time the Nigerian society has been bedevilled with avalanche of problems engineered by Nigerians themselves. One of such negative activities that have posed threats to Nigeria's peaceful co-existence is terrorism. The Nigerian space has witnessed different forms of terrorisms such as tribal, ethnic, religion, and political terrorisms. Efforts are being geared towards countering this menace through different means of counter-terrorisms and one of such means is play text. There are so many plays that captured the menace of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Nigeria. But because reading culture is dead, or the little who read, their reading has no effect on curbing this peril in the society. It is against this backdrop that the paper looks at the effectiveness of such plays on the populace and the campaign for the production of such plays as paradigm shift. The paper adopts the content analysis of the qualitative research methodology by appraising the content of the productions of Musa Salifu's *The Rebel Soldiers* and Amade and Salifu's *The Revenge Mission* in Owerri and Anyigba, respectively, with audience reactions. The research findings show that if plays like these with such serious thematic preoccupation on terrorism and counter-terrorism are left for the readers, much meaning may not be made from the plays. The paper recommends that there should be paradigm shift from play reading to performance. It concludes that if performances of plays with such thematic preoccupation are taken into cognisance meanings would be made and applied to curbing the menace of terrorism.

Introduction

Playwrights or dramatists over the years have made and are still making tremendous efforts in writing plays that copy the follies of their ages, their society and other societies. Whether the playwright is aware of it or not, he presents the society as it were or tries to

weave into the quest to correct the society. This is because, "...a playwright writes for or against any subject matter he sets to discuss in his play depending on his stand point, and perception of the issues under discourse..." (Mohammed-Kabir & Yunusa 81). Plays or dramas have been used over the decades to discuss the society or correct the society. Arguably, there is no play or dramatic piece that is written in a vacuum. The essence is, either to be read or to be seen on stage.

However, it has been observed that reading culture is "dead" or "dying" among the Nigerian youths. Thus, no one or some persons seem to be interested in reading, talk less of reading the avalanche of plays that have the follies of the society as their thematic preoccupations. The issues as presented in the numerous plays are very essential to the existence of the people. But what do we do now that little attention is paid to reading culture? Do we have to leave the avalanche of plays in the libraries and individual's study? There is need to intensify effort to take the contents of these plays to the people, if the people have refused to read and come to the theatre to watch the plays on set. Efforts must be geared towards performances of such plays in the theatre or found spaces. Play performance has been used to solve societal challenges. Hence, "Drama is one out of many other instruments used in resolving the Niger Delta crises" (Embu 147). If drama therefore, had been used to solve the avalanche of challenges of the Niger Delta crises, then it can be adopted as a viable instrument against the cankerworm called terrorism. According to Canice Nwosu, "creativity in conflict resolution enables the creative writers reveal the dangers of religion to the nation in their works" (243). Thus, we can explore the potentials of drama in curbing the menace of terrorism and not only religion. The threat of terrorism to Nigeria's peaceful co-existence is real and enduring. It has become a persistent and permanent feature of Nigeria's security environment.

For adequate and sustainable development of any nation, there must be peace. The great nations of the world are succeeding because they put peace in the front burner of their activities. This is aptly captured by Nwosu as he submits that, "peace and security are important variables sort after by most nations of the world" (239). Corroborating this, Reuben Embu says, "the peace and stability of any country can only be guaranteed when its citizens are living in peace with one another and in such an atmosphere where the machinery of government is allowed to function effectively for the common good of all" (146). Thus, for the peace sort by the Nigeria nation-state to be reached there must be togetherness and for the togetherness to be attained; there must be equitable distribution of the state resources and apparatuses for sustainable developments.

Performance on the other hand, is seen as spectacular presentation of plays or dramas before an audience. According to Richard Schechner, "... a performance is any activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group" (30). Corroborating this, Robert Cohen opines that, "theatre is performance..." (19). Cohen goes further to define performance as, "an action or series of actions taken for the ultimate benefit (attention, entertainment, enlightenment, or involvement) of someone else" (19).

In another vein, Grahame Thompson posits that, "... 'performance' is the mode of assessment of the 'textual/character/actor' interaction. Performance is interestingly placed at the intersection of the text, the actor/character and the audience" (138). Perhaps,

it is the effectiveness of play performance that the people of Niger Delta have enjoyed relative peace as captured by Embu thus: “The region has also benefited from stage as well as community theatre performances from non-governmental organisations and from the academia in sensitising the people on impact of the crisis” (147). That has made the region to enjoy a relative peace.

If the above is the case, then peace should be sorted out through performance to avert the psychological trauma of terrorism as Chikerenwa Ihekwe me submits on the psychology of war that, “the psychology of war and terrorism in Nigeria is insidiously portraying a devastating trend as are the challenges faced in understanding the dimensions of human trauma and suffering that are involved” (43). The devastating condition of the people as a result of the catastrophic nature of terrorism which leave the people in a sorry condition would never permit them to think straight. The trauma affects every facet of human endeavour as it was captured accordingly:

The ravaging health effects of war and terrorism on victims and casualties around the globe have continued to be a distressing phenomenon. Incidents probed against the psychological costs of war and terrorism has shown an alarming human psychic disconnect (Ihekwe me 43).

It is in this light that efforts have been geared towards the eradication of the menace of terrorism. It is against this backdrop that this paper stresses that paradigm shift to play performance as effective instrument of counter-terrorism may be the answer.

Theoretical Framework

Behaviourist theory

This theory also known as empiricism and behavioural theory stands among the major theoretical perspectives within the field of first language acquisition. According to Digham, Dembo and Driscoll, “the most influential version of the behaviourist theory was put forward by B. F. Skinner in 1959” (cited in Dada 9). The theory is useful because it emphasises that environmental control of human behaviour comes through learning. Skinner is of the opinion that, “teenagers behaviour is controlled by manipulating their environment which is the first link that influences their behaviour” (Sanni, Ayedun & Omede 10). Sanni, Ayedun and Omede posit further that behaviour is based on the “reward and consequences from the environment” (10).

The implication of this theory for our study is that there is a truism in this statement and it has a close relationship with theatre approach which is focused on negative transformative change in attitude and behaviour. This theory is further relevant to the theatre approach because its underlying logistic statement is that “it is important to observe behaviour to be able to understand an individual” (Akinboye 10). Using the behaviourist theory closely with the theatre approach towards improving the practice of attitudinal change in youth is sure to go a long way in achieving the desired change overtime.

Consequently, as terrorists are making compelling efforts to change the attitude of the people, especially the young adults, play performance should be making concerted

effort in bringing or teaching the people, young adults the effects of belonging to a terrorist group and underlying repercussion if one tend to associate with one. This was the case when the two plays: *The Rebel Soldiers* and *The Revenge Mission* were performed at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Theatre and Kogi State University Theatre, respectively, with audience interactions and feedbacks. There was also production of *The Rebel Soldiers* at Kogi State College of Education Theatre in September 2018. Effects of these interactions on the audience would be better felt than when a member of the audience stays to read the play texts individually.

Conceptualising Terrorism and Counter-terrorism

Terrorism is the use of violence by groups or individuals pursuing political, religion, economic and social objectives. Terrorists are frequently indiscriminate in their attacks and can deliberately target civilians and non-combatants, often seeking to inflict mass casualties in the name of fighting government. Terrorism can be seen as a process of communication aimed at manipulating political, social and religion attitude and behaviour of the people, especially the young people in a violent manner. A wife can terrorise the husband and the husband can terrorise the wife. The definition of terrorism is relative. As the poor masses especially the youth see the activities of terrorists they termed to be copying the inhuman attitude of the terrorists.

Definitions of terrorism are usually complex and controversial, and, because of the inherent ferocity and violence of terrorism, the term in its popular usage has developed an intense stigma. It was first coined in the 1790s to refer to the terror used during the French Revolution by the revolutionaries against their opponents. The terms, “terrorist” and “terrorism”, originated during the French Revolution of the late 18th century (Stevenson 199), “but gained mainstream popularity during the U.S. Presidency of Ronald Regan (1981-1989) after the 1983 Beirut barracks bombings” (Heryanto 375), “and again after the 2001 September 11 attacks” (Faimau 298), “and the 2002 Bali bombings” (Heryanto 375). Although terrorism in this usage implies an act of violence by a state against its domestic enemies, since the 20th century the term has been applied most frequently to violence aimed, either directly or indirectly, at governments in an effort to influence policy or topple an existing regime.

“There is no commonly accepted definition of ‘terrorism’. Being a charged term, with the connotation of something ‘morally wrong’, it is often used, both by governments and non-state groups, to abuse or denounce opposing groups” (Feiler 67). Broad categories of political organisations have been claimed to have been involved in terrorism to further their objectives, “including right-wing and left-wing political organisations, nationalist groups, religious groups, revolutionaries and ruling governments” (Feiler 56). There is no universal agreement as to whether or not “terrorism”, in some definitions, should be regarded as a war crime. In Nigeria, terrorism can be said to spring from political organisations, ethnic groups, religious groups and others.

There have been efforts by various scholars in their innumerable capacities to give meaning to terrorism even, as it has been argued in other quarters that there is no specific definition of terrorism. However, “terrorism is, in the broadest sense, the use of intentionally indiscriminate violence as a means to create terror among masses of people;

or fear to achieve a financial, political, religious or ideological aim” (Fortna 520). “It is used in this regard primarily to refer to violence against peacetime targets or in war against non-combatants” (Wisnewski 230). Terrorism, according to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, is:

the systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective. Terrorism has been practiced by political organisations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and religious groups, by revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police (Ultimate Reference Suite, n. p.).

Encarta World English Dictionary defines terrorism as, “... violence or the threat of violence, especially bombing, kidnapping and assassination, carried out for political purposes” (1841); and caps a terrorist as, “somebody who uses violence or the threat of violence, especially bombing, kidnapping and assassination, to intimidate, often for the political purpose” (1841). Also, *Merriam Webster’s Deluxe Dictionary*, defines terrorism as, “...the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion” (1906).

The main source of international terrorism and the primary terrorist threat to Nigeria and Nigerian interests is from a global violent jihadist movement; extremists, who follow a distorted and militant interpretation of Islam that espouses violence as the answer to perceived grievances. This extremist movement comprises al-Qa’ida, groups allied or associated with it, and others inspired by a similar worldview. The Boko Haram Islamic sect, in Nigeria, ISIS in Syria, Talibans in Afghanistan exemplify lack of reason in defence of religious faith. The callous destruction of America’s World Trade centre and Pentagon by the Islamic terrorist group, al-Qaeda, led by Osama Bin Laden on 11th September, 2001 is indelible marks inflicted not only on Americans but entire Western world by religious fanaticism. Despite total condemnation of the Arab world and Islamic society for the perpetration of this heinous crime, there is also need to look beyond it effect and address some of the remote causes of these fatalistic acts (Nwosu 242).

However, there is need for concerted efforts in combating terrorism through counter terrorism, no matter the factor or factors that breed terrorism. The Australia Counter-Terrorism White Paper of 2004 asserts that:

...while there have been counter-terrorism successes (most notably pressure on al-Qa’ida’s core leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and action against terrorists in South-East Asia), these successes have been offset by the rise of groups affiliated with, or inspired by, al-Qa’ida’s message and methods, with new areas such as Somalia and Yemen joining existing areas of concern in South Asia, South-East Asia, the Middle East and the Gulf (2).

One of such groups which may have risen out of the successes in affiliation with, or inspired by, al-Qa’ida’s message and methods could be Boko Haram, herdsmen and others in Nigeria.

Surmising from the above, it could be stated that terrorism is part of a broader insurgency, if terrorism is then part of a broader insurgency, counter-terrorism may employ counter-insurgency measures. There should be programs or measures that attempt to suppress insurgency, lawlessness, or subversion or to reduce the conditions under which these threats to security may develop. And if the threats to security have developed like the Nigerian situation, there must be suppressed for peaceful co-existence, hence the need for counter-terrorism.

Counter-terrorism incorporates the practice, military tactics, techniques, and strategy that government, military, law enforcement, business, and intelligence agencies use to combat or prevent terrorism. Counter-terrorism strategies include attempts to counter financing of terrorism (Wisnicki 87). Counter-terrorism forces expanded with the perceived growing threat of terrorism in the late 20th century. Specifically, after the 9/11 attacks, Western governments made counter-terrorism efforts a priority, including more foreign cooperation, shifting tactics involving red teams and preventive measures.

Thus, counter-terrorism comprises measures designed to combat or prevent terrorism. It consists of activities that are intended to prevent terrorist acts or to get rid of terrorist groups. Thus, activities that are intended to prevent terrorist acts or to eradicate terrorist groups. In the same vein, a counter terrorist is one who practices tactics, strategies and techniques to prevent or respond or avert the acts, intent, move, mission, vision, strategies, motive and motif or threats of terrorism by terrorists. Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt, and respond to terrorism. action intended to prevent violence for political purposes. The concept can continue as long as one keeps thinking.

Counter-terrorism encompasses “activities and operations taken to neutralise terrorists, their organisations, and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instil fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals” (*USA Joint Publication* vii). The document also defines counterterrorism as, actions and activities to neutralise terrorists, their organisations, and networks; removes countering root causes and desired regional end states from the definition (*USA Joint Publication* iii).

At times of extraordinarily serious terrorist threat, many governments have accorded law-enforcement authorities special powers of arrest and detention. These powers have generally been temporary and were meant specifically to aid the government in capturing and prosecuting terrorists and eliminating extremist threats to society, while avoiding the imposition of unjustly severe measures that might infringe on civil rights and civil liberties. These expanded powers, however, have generated public concern and criticism of government, especially when coupled with the suspension of long-standing and cherished democratic protections such as due process of law.

Does theatre fit into this terrain? And many other questions are raised by family, the educational terrain and the society at large. They hold that the objective of theatre is just entertainment. Beatrice Onuoha succinctly maintains that,

...when one talks about theatre in the ground of conflict transformation or resolution, people simply wonder what theatre would be doing with the serious

business of ‘blood, death and anger,’ when it is supposed to be essentially an instrument of entertainment; they even wonder if theatre has the vocabulary in use in this terrain; and so; theatre’s usefulness in the social arena is weaved to the winds (Onuoha 231).

This is the challenge faced by the theatre in Nigeria. But this study intends to prove that beyond entertainment, theatre has great potentials to educate, communicate, impact and impart and above all, inform. Theatre has enormous potentials to serve as effective instrument of counter-terrorism.

Synopses of the Selected Plays and Interpretations and Discussions

Adamu a stranger (herdsman) comes into a community to enable his herds graze and feed well. In his quest to succeed he seeks the help of Azala the farmer and Opele the flutist to get the Onu (the king) to approve his stay which he got. At the beginning everything was moving smoothly. But things started going wrong as soon as the herds/cattle start grazing on crops instead of grazing on the grasses. Audu, Adamu’s son heightens the already tensed situation by killing Usuma’s mother on her farm land and this terrible situation leads to bloody invasion of the Ruga (Herdsman) settlement by the youth of the community. In return, the escaped and only surviving son of Adamu returns to their home town and reports the ugly situation to his uncle, Hassan. Hassan and Audu plan a revenge attack in the intent for revenge mission. The revenge was bloody, which lead to the death of many people in the community.

The Rebel Soldiers beams its searchlight on the current situation of the Nigerian society that is bedevilled by avalanche of violence and terror attacks. This attacks ranging from Boko Haram in the North East, Niger Delta Avengers in the South, and Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East to mention but just a few.

The Nigerian state is faced daily with one form of upheaval or the other. In the North, it is the religious crisis orchestrated by the Hausa-Fulani, while in the South currently, the Niger Delta youths have made the region unsafe for residents demanding for their rights (Embu 146).

Even then, Embu’s position is not quite correct because the religious crisis in the North is not orchestrated by Hausa-Fulani alone. Bornu and Yobe States are not Hausa-Fulani. We have had many violent incidences in the past like the Oodua People’s Congress and other political and ethno-religious violence. The ones mentioned by Embu above have degenerated that Nigerians cannot go to bed with their two eyes close and, the most recent among them is Herdsmen attacks which has spread from the North, to the South and right now in the North Central region (the Middle Belt).

Through a multi-media approach, the playwright via Professor Samuel reveals the secrets behind violence and terrorism. Professor Samuel centres the light on the warring communities; Angwa, Ogwugu and Omogwu. These wars were presented as flashbacks through the mind of Professor Samuel and aired through television programme. When the play finally returns to the stage a different and modern dimension

to violence and terror was employed through Mayor the leader of a terrorist group and his boys who have been terrorising the people. Mayor tries to justify his action and that of his boys after he was caught at the court of law but the court takes it over through the Leading Counsel. The prosecutor takes it over and debunk Mayor's claim by nailing it that no reason is justified enough for a man to take a man's life.

The Revenge Mission is set in the Middle belt/North Central (Igala Land), where Adamu, a herdsman, comes to settle. This is glaring from their exchange:

Adamu: I am a stranger in this part. My name is Adamu. I am from Toungo.

Azala: Oh. I see! What can I do for you?

Adamu: My herdsman and our herd are at the waterside over there.... We want to settle in your forest for a while. Like a good slave, we shall be loyal to you if you grant us this opportunity (*The Revenge... 2*).

That is always the trick they set forth to settle on a community's land. One could feel the audience reaction as the play was on-going on set. Although at the beginning both parties were enjoying the togetherness but things took a different dimension which requires urgent attention but was not given by the leaders and security agents. The herdsman and the herds keep destroying the crops for the people as can be seen from the following dialogue:

Osuma: Good morning, Obe.

Obe: Morning, Osuma, my friend.

Osuma: You are returning from the farm this time, any problem?

Obe: yes, there is a problem. Go to my farm and see what the cattlemen have done to it. (*Lamentatively.*) These people have ruined me this year.

Osuma: The cattlemen again? Just three years ago they destroyed Oniolo's farm and... (*The Revenge...27*).

At this point Onu (the king) should have intervened in the matter to disallow it from degenerating. "The audience member began to exclaim and saying that their leaders are their problem". The trend of destroying people's farms continued until Osuma's mother's farm was destroyed and the old woman killed. The killing of Osuma's mother aggravated the whole thing. Like the leadership of Nigeria who instead of taking a proactive measure would look at issues until they degenerate, Onu is a replica of the Nigeria leaders; he was busy collecting gifts from the herdsman as token instead of tackling the scenario head on. The Old woman came to her farm and saw the way the herdsman destroy her farm and she exclaims:

Old Woman: Hie... Hei... Hei... my crops! Our ancestors will curse these people. Ukwu, the god of death will destroy your herd, cattlemen for what you have done to my farm.

(*Now, Old Woman enters.*)

Old Woman: (*Looks at Jemilu surprisingly.*) Oh, young man, this where you are smoking your bad weed, while your cattle are there destroying my farm! You child of evil world, all the dangers in the forest henceforth shall hunt you to death for what you have done to me.

Jemilu: Then, you must see the land of the dead before me. (*Rises and brings out a knife.*)

Old Woman: (*Stammers.*) What... What... What are you trying to do?

Jemilu: Just wait and see.

[**Jemilu** rushes towards the **Old Woman**, stabs her to death, looks here and there and takes her corpse away...]

This apparently is the kind of experience Nigerians are getting from the settlement of the herdsmen and their herds. What Jemilu did to the Old woman is a form of terrorism that requires so many methods of counter-terrorism to fight it and nip the menace in the bud. If not the act of terror that led to the old woman to curse Jemilu, ordinary sorry and seeking solution to the destroyed crops would have saved the woman from dying untimely death which is a way to counter-terrorism and ameliorate herdsmen attacks in Nigeria. This was part of audience reaction during the production at KSU Theatre. The killing of the Old Woman by Jemilu sparked the youth to prepare to avenge the demise of the mother of one of them. Osuma and Ode planned an attack which they did in the middle of the night and killed all the herdsmen except Audu who escaped and ran to their town to report the ugly scenario to his uncle, Hassan. The arrival of the police was late and the audience members attested to that: "Look at when they are coming? They are coming when people are already dead".

In the same vein, a critical mien into *The Rebel Soldiers* also shows that if such dramatic pieces can be prepared and performance before the people, Nigerians, both the herdsmen and other Nigerians will see the reason why we should accommodate one another for sustainable peace. In *The Rebel Soldiers*, one would read how different communities unleashed terror on one another and the repercussion of their actions. Prof. Samuel and Tom David try to give reason why there is terror wave in the society:

Tom David: (*Looks at the piece of paper in his hand.*) There is no smoke, they say, without fire. Prof. what do you think is responsible for the increase of criminal activities in our society?

Professor Samuel: (*Smiles.*) You see, like you have said, there is always reason for every happening on this earth and the case of our current challenges is not exclusive. (*Turns to Tom David.*) I hope you are with me?

Tom David: Yes, Prof...

Professor Samuel: The uncaring and selfish attitude of some of our land's ruling class, I strongly believe, is responsible for our problem (*The Rebel... 9*).

It is glaring from here that the reason why we have terrorism is bad leadership with selfish interest, uncaring attitude and kleptomaniac intent. The domineering tendencies of the ruling class as Nwosu rightly posits that,

The apparent fear of Westernism, either as a monolingual hypnotisation of the world or capitalism aimed at despoiling global victims or ideological dominion of the rest through international politics are obvious signs that trigger off religious violence (242).

A critical observation of the conversation between DPO and Mr. Mayor, the leader of the terrorist group, explains it all that the repercussion of terrorism and violence is good for any community:

D.P.O: We must not continue like this. Many people... Many innocent people have lost their lives and just few hours ago, a report got to my office that apart from the people that were injured, fifty people have died following the attack carried out by your boys. Please tell us your grievances and let's resolve this problem once and for all.

Mr. Mayor: What are you talking about? Have you so soon decided to drop your torturing tools? Go ahead and use them on me. But this you must know: the aim of my organisation must be achieved (*The Rebel...* 43-4).

Mr. Mayor reiterating this he emphasises in his line:

Mr. Mayor: Ha...ha...ha... the spirit of our struggle is powerful ...powerful than you and your law...your law, the enemy of the poor and bosom friend of the rich... (*Light fades.*) (44).

One of the pivotal causes of terrorism is discrimination and domination as opined by the playwright. Thus, leaning on Nwosu's submission above, it could be said that the domineering hegemony of the leaders is one of the causes of terrorism. Therefore, for the upright development of the society, the leaders must first be just and make equity their watch word. That is why Mr. Mayor uses parables to justify their actions thus:

Mr. Mayor: A hungry pig ate it child.
A hunter's dog bits its owner, a greedy hunter,
To death over a piece of bone.
Both, without doubt, are unlawful acts.
Oh, upright judge! Examine both sides of these cases
Before you condemn the pig and the hunter's Dog!
Is hunger not the maker of all evil acts?
Greed and injustice
Not the breeders of violence? (*The Rebel...* 45-46).

The policemen in *The Revenge Mission* and *The rebel Soldiers* are strong agent of counter-terrorism if truly they will do their work, as can be deduced from the audience members during interactions. While the policemen in *The Revenge Mission* like Mayor

recall the failed leadership, the ones in *The Rebel Soldier* plead with Mayor to stop the killing of innocents in the street. This is a form of counter-terrorism in that perspective. These plays can go a long way in cushion the menace of terrorism. Following the interactions with member of audience at the end of the play at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education (AIFCE) Theatre, the researchers deduced that play performance has the potentials to curbing terrorism.

Again, the performances of these plays and other plays like Femi Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers*, which captures the terror and violence meted on the people, are significant. The Soldiers, the four robbers: Alhaja, Hassan, Angola and Major and even the supposed spiritual leader, Alfa, are caught in the act of terrorism. Though it is averred by Nwosu that the predicament of the four robbers in *Once Upon Four Robbers* are, "...products of the corrupt society took to robbery because of hunger and unemployment faced by the people in a society ruled by insensitive leaders" (248). This is in tandem with the position of Mr Mayor in *The Rebel Soldiers*.

Olu Obafemi's *Dark Times Are Over* equally beams it searchlight on terror and violence meted on campus by Yepa 1 and 2. If these are left on the pages of the dramatic texts they may have no or small effect on the people but if they are taken to the people in the theatre or in any found space. The people may be informed and educated while being entertained. When the two later plays were produced by theatre arts students of Kogi State University in 2007 and 2008, respectively, with the responses of the audience, they created indelible impact and impart in the people. These can be produced now that we are faced with avalanche of terrorisms to serve as an instrument for counter-terrorism.

Recommendations

- a) The first responsibility of government is the protection of Nigeria, Nigerians and Nigerian interests. So, a key government priority is to protect Nigeria from terrorism. Government should employ all available machineries of counter-terrorism to fight terrorism.
- b) The United Nation's strategy and measures to combating terrorism should be taken into serious consideration. They are:

addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism: measures to prevent and combat terrorism; measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard; measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism (*United Nation's Report 45*).

- c) Both government, civil organisations, non-governmental organisations should look into what theatre can do and what it has done in Nigeria and other countries beyond entertainment. Thus, it will enable them to explore theatre's potentials and prowess as an impeccable measure and verifiable and capable instrument to be used in the fight against terrorism.

- d) The youths should redirect their mind and focus towards amicable resolution of differences, than taken to arms and violence or terrorism in fighting for their right as there is no reason justifiable enough, for one to take a man's life because he/she needs something or fighting injustice in the land.
- e) Government on the other hand, should swiftly look into the causes of these violent actions and take proactive measures to avert terrorism and violence in the land. Hence incessant discrimination against the citizenry is important and our leaders should do away with greed, ineptitude and kleptomaniac intent and concentrate on providing social amenities and jobs for the teeming youth of this country to engage their minds.

Conclusion

One of the means of counter-terrorism captured by the playwright in both plays are the exploration of the police to curb the menace of terrorism. The audiences responded and reacted accordingly on the stages where the plays were performed. Thus, if this is left on the pages of the plays, they may not be effective in nipping the cankerworm called terrorism in the bud. Therefore, the current study calls for a paradigm shift from reading of dramatic texts to their performances to leave strong impact on the way to kill terrorism is the society. The area of the leaders being just and abolition of greed and uncaring attitude of the leaders are not left. This spurred the audiences into shouting and disrupting the performances as the leaders according to their reaction, are the problem of the people. These and many other ways raised in the plays can be explored for counterterrorism. If these are left on the pages of play texts with the "dying" or "dead" reading attitude of the youth, they may not have strong effect on the attitude of those indulging in the deadly act of terrorism and violence.

It is the stance of this paper that plays should be seen beyond reading to performance and not just performance, there should be interactions among the stakeholders – audiences, actors and actresses, even the crew members to drive the message of such plays home, for the attainment of counter-terrorism. The theatre can be a viable instrument and plays a vital role in the fight against terrorism, if properly utilised. The audience is shown the angle the police come into the scene of terrorism and played a concrete role in countering terrorism. The audience reacted to this too. These were the case when *The Rebel Soldiers* was performed by the Theatre Arts students, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, on the 20th February, 2017. The audience responses show that the play can go a long way in serving as counter-terrorism instrument in curbing the menace of terrorism.

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