

**DRAMATIC LITERATURE AS INSTRUMENT FOR PEACEBUILDING: AN
ULTRA READING OF AHMED YERIMA'S *PARI* AND FEMI OSOFISAN'S
WOMEN OF *OWU***

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Abstract

Nigeria's social environment is crime-infested as crime is elevated above virtue with criminals having a field day. Violent crimes such as kidnapping, assassination, armed violence and other acts of terrorism are committed with impunity. The nation's instability nurture high growth of insurgency terror groups in the society and other conflict related issues. Thus, this lack of socio-political, religious and ethnic harmony in the society has put a lot of communities into conflict and war situations. This generally can be linked to ignorance, negligence and lack of awareness. This study points at the impacts of dramatic literature in creating effective awareness on the need for environmental stability and peace, as drama affects individuals, physically and psychologically in all ramifications. Hinging on Pierre Duhem's Instrumentalism Theory (IT), this article X-rays the potency of dramatic works in creating awareness and making adequate corrections that could bring unity, peace and stability in society, using Yerima's *Pari* and Osofisan's *Women of Own* as textual referents of analysis and discussion. The paper adopts the historicocritical and content analysis methods of research to engage the selected texts. The conclusion reached is that peacebuilding is the responsibility of every member of society that demands eschewing insincerity, lawlessness, social insecurity/inequalities and religious extremism.

Keywords: Dramatic literature, Conflict, IT, Peacebuilding, Stability

Introduction

The existence of drama depends on its ability to reflect the transitions that characterize human society and also educate the people. Looking at the relevance of drama in human society, it's quite enormous. Drama has been a means of creating awareness, pushing propaganda, debating controversial issues, remembering important events and people. Enekwe claims that, "drama has been an 'instrument of socialization and cultural validation, drama is used to address issues that touch the whole community

and to ensure that the messages are understood and internalized by the members of the community” (7). In dramatic literature, the depiction of character, feeling, action, thought and setting must be established through language. The voice of dramatists is deciphered in choices of words that serve as agency for the characters; they create characters that talk to the reader and make great impact in him through the play.

Through dramatic literature, the dramatist reflects on conflict issues, oppression, anger and disillusionment of their present environment and seek to find solutions to various issues and other experiences through dramatic creativity. Hence, it is time for new generation dramatists to tackle unnecessary ethnic, religious and socio-politically inspired violence and conflict situations through awareness and information that can foster positive attitudes and tolerance. It is therefore, on this premise that the objective of this study is mainly pointed towards laying bare the efforts of two Nigerian dramatists – Ahmed Yari and Femi Osofisan in this regard, with the intent of propelling other existing and upcoming dramatists to key into the noble act of creating works that can engender national-environmental stability, peace and security. It is only when the environment is stable and peaceful that artists including dramatists, can effectively and functionally practice their art cum trade. Beyond the dramatists, other disciplines/fields of endeavour would find it comfortable to operate optimally without obstructions in a peace environment. Hence, the need for scholars to engage works of this nature with the intention of fostering a peaceful environment.

The study adopts an eclectic approach of Historical and Dialectical research. Historical study entails the examination of historical events. During the process of determining the extent of historical events, historians may uncover multiple interrelated aspects that led to the occurrence of a certain event in a particular context of time and space. In order to comprehend social phenomena in the past as well as the present, historical studies uncover background information and emphasize some causal linkages of past occurrences. It suggests that by comprehending our past, we might improve our ability to see the dynamics of the present (National Open University of Nigeria [NOUN] 92). The study of communicative language in all its forms, including books, essays, newspaper stories and headlines, historical documents, speeches, advertisements, dramatic texts, and more, is possible through content analysis (NOUN 74). By reading and analysing texts, a researcher may quickly identify the key elements of social contact, relativity, and textual intervention—each of which is crucial to this study (NOUN 77).

On the other hand, by examining concepts and viewpoints, dialectical inquiry will help the study uncover realities contained within the texts under consideration. As it concentrates on the creation of new or innovative understanding, including the further dissemination of existing ones which are less understood or known, this technique of inquiry excludes all forms of hypothesis testing. It is completely the opposite of empirical research in this respect. Dialectical research is concerned with arguments and concepts created through adequate logic, whereas empirical research is primarily concerned with the analysis and interpretation of evidence. It can be used to solve various types of problems in a number of academic areas, including the arts and liberal studies, despite the fact that it is not a widespread technique of study (NOUN

81). Hence, its choice in combination with the former in arriving at plausible conclusions and suppositions from the study.

The Nigerian socio-political temperature has over the years continued to rise to an unbearable peak due to increase in terrorism and unprovoked violence on innocent people. The fight against terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and sectional insurgencies have not yielded any significant result as reports of killings of members of armed forces and innocent people are on news on daily basis. This has left many Nigerians devastated, hopeless, and disinterested even more in the oneness of the nation. Some Nigerians seem to have resigned themselves to fate, believing there is no option to hold on to, to keep afloat. Thus, the need to leverage on dramatic literature for creation of proper awareness and ethical re-orientation geared towards the sustenance of peace, tolerance and oneness which culminates in national security. In doing so, they will aid in building the sense of integrity and selflessness in individuals and society in general.

It is clear that dramatic works have been used to creatively point at facts, document issues and push towards lasting peace and stability. It also provides a framework of right and wrong perceptions and attitude expectations. Dramatic works are inevitable to human existence as they reflect almost every aspect of life, and point at the dangers and negative implications of such disorganizing situations like terrorism, war and any violent conflict situation. Otite asserts that the Nigerian society is a social system compounded by contested demands on access to scarce resources especially in the political and economic fields. It is a society defined by natural cleavages and man-made conflicts. The natural membership of ethnic groups or occupational specialization threatened by expanding interest of other multiple users, provide grounds for the emergence of conflicts. The scale and dimension of conflicts vary according to the issues involved in relation to the culture concerned (138). Furthermore, accusations of victimization, neglect, oppression, dominance, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism, and bigotry are a significant factor in the current ethno-religious disputes in Nigeria.

Over time, there is never a total agreement on how income, power, and status should be distributed among individuals and groups in any country. Additionally, there is no consensus on how to implement the required reforms and modifications. This is so that certain organizations' goals can be achieved while others are not, as different groups and people have different interests. This indicates that conflicts typically arise when underprivileged groups and individuals try to get a larger share of income and power or alter the prevalent values, norms, beliefs, or ideologies. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of ethno-religious confrontations that are currently being seen all throughout the nation in an effort to combat any perceived oppression, dominance, or marginalization. Important to notice is that Nigerian authorities have failed to create effective institutions, foster national unity, and advance what may be described as real economic progress, which has resulted in widespread poverty and unemployment. Conflicts of a communal, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic nature have now come to characterize Nigeria as a nation.

Given that Nigeria currently has a stock of poor individuals who warmonger as mercenary soldiers, poverty and unemployment have thus served as a nursery bed for various ethno-religious conflicts in the nation (Salawu 348). Therefore, a reconsideration of issues of security instability, violence and conflict resolutions while using dramatic works in creating a panacea can go a long way in this regard. This viewpoint is motivated by the debilitating impact of these aforementioned monsters on the psyche of the society. There is need to further the course of such works that redirect the attention of society on extreme need to foster ethnic, religious and tribal oneness, harmony and acceptance. This is what Yerima's *Pari* and Osofisan's *Women of Owu* stand for as these works depict recreation of life's experience in order to aid the society reflect on it positively and emulate ways of peace and social stability in our environment. These dramatic texts also argue for positive human attitudes and morals that can avert reoccurrences of such socio-political, economic and religious issues.

Theoretical Mooring

Pierre Duhem's Instrumentalism Theory is the thrust of this work. The theory has been relevant in a number of fields. In the field of arts, instrumentalism is basically concerned with the context of an art work rather than the structure and composition. Through the lens of instrumentalism, the best art works are those that convey a message or shape how we see the world. Instrumentalism posits that art is good when it functions as a tool to influence or change society (Ruiz and Woollard 322). Hence, the relevance of this theory to the paper can never be emphasized. As a result of instability and conflict situations, the Nigerian nation has been faced with increased rate of insecurities, agitations, riots, terrorism and high rate of poverty. Therefore, this paper points at how well creative dramatic works can be used as a communicative force and instrument to re-shape and re-direct the society towards national integration, stability and peace.

Dramatic Literature as Instrument for National Peace and Stability

Nigeria, in this contemporary period has been bedevilled with a number of challenges. It has faced with burning social issues such as corruption, tribalism, terrorism, kidnapping and other insecurity related activities. There has been increase of conflict situations and young groups that resort to the use of unconventional tactics of traditional warfare. This situation most times caused worrisome destruction of lives and properties in various parts of the nation. The psychological impact of terrorism is even stronger than the physical damage. In Nigeria, issues cum problems of unprovoked violence and terrorism have come from activities of different militant groups. Most of these organizations in different parts of the nation carryout series of kidnapping, murders, assassinations, jail break and coordinated bombings. Thus, it is necessary for the society to be enlightened or re-directed through drama. Such process enables the people to pay more attention to similar issues/situations, rethink, observe and emulate positive attitude. This can be possible through the impacts and effective motivations from the exposures, revelations and awareness nature of dramatic literature. The playwright through his dramatic expressions and creativity is not only

the eye of the society but also the trumpeter and indeed the heartbeat of the society. Corroborating this, Austin Anigala states that, Playwrights use drama as a medium of re-enacting prevailing issues in the society in a bid to instigate public debates and aimed at creating the foray for mind-rubbing awareness amongst the populace in order to trigger a positive communal quest for solution to varied societal maladies (285).

Dramatic literature has always been at the forefront as a vehicle of orientation and information to a given society. It requires an experience that is passed from the playwright to the reader. This goes with the feeling of mental and physical action. This is vital and impactful especially in this contemporary period where conflict, agitations and insecurity are on the increase within the society at large. The true impactful nature of dramatic literature consists in its exposure of contradictions viewed as such, in the reconciliation of the force of human action. This alternately strives to negate one another in their environmental issues and socio-political conflicts.

Furthermore, Nigerian playwrights like Wole Soyinka, Zulu Sofola, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, Esiaba Irobi, Emeka Nwabueze, Alex Asigbo, Uche Nwaozuzu among others, have over the years used an avalanche of socio-political, socio-economic, cultural events and situations to create plays that address the issues of nation's problems for better integration and national peace. Lucky Ukperi, argues that Nigerian dramatic literature stands at the forefront of literatures that highlight the nexus that exists between art and society. This interconnection continues to emerge through various styles and modes adapted by playwrights as they address socio-political and socio-economic neo realities in their environment (458).

Indeed, dramatic literature can make a vital difference in the context of the society in which they operate. It is a tool with the capacity to compel the resolution of situations, in such issues as sensitive as violent conflict situations. Dramatic dictions and plots should be constructed to feature prominently the need to promote unity, oneness, tolerance in ethnic, religion, and political relations. Thus, plays must be created to project themes that preach national integration, respect for other people's contrary views, opinion and religious beliefs. This in line with Anigala's thought that the dramatist should make sure that themes must be made to appreciate the beauty of the unity in diversity; projecting the multi-cultural, multilingual, and multi-ethnic nature of society that must be cherished as a unifying factor. Dramatic themes must be made to reform the police, other military and paramilitary work force to redeem public love and confidence in them (287).

This is very vital as at present, aggressive behaviours seem to be on the rise without adequate control. When the youths get deviated from the acceptable norms and values, various forms of social challenges arise. Without proper awareness such issues manifest into extremism, religious fanaticism, and other issues which develop to massive destruction of life and property. Hence, there should be more effort at making the people to appreciate the literary art which could effectively lead to positive re-direction and conscientization of the society. This clearly shows that dramatic works and theatre in general are powerful and effective means of solving issues and sustaining peace/stability, through the impactful nature, educational and informative functions of arts.

Pari

The play explores the form and pattern of agitation, terrorism and military that engulfs the Northern region. *Yerima* depicts the level of heart break and suffering faced by *Pari's* parents. The play *Pari* opens while *Pari's* mother emotionally laments the loss of her only daughter to kidnappers in her school. She prays and vows to do anything, including abandoning the Christian faith of which she had been a strong adherent, to have her only daughter restored back to her alive. In her hopelessness, she tried to switch to Islamic faith believing that the god of the religion would be more sympathetic to her worries and sufferings and answer her prayers. The play *Pari* revolves around the escape of one of the kidnapped Chibok School girls called *Hyelapari*, (*Pari* for short) through the assistance of her forced husband while in the detention camp of the Boko Haram insurgents. The adopted husband *Ibrahim*, for the safety of his own life escaped with *Pari*.

The plot takes an anti-climax dimension when suddenly *Hyelapari* shows up in her parent's home. *Pari* was returned home wrecked, physically and psychologically, and also a mother of one at early age. The long-term dream and aspirations of her parents shattered. Things got worse when suddenly the adopted husband *Ibrahim* shows up at *Pari's* parent's home. In the wreck that *Pari* has become, the only reality and hope she now knows is that emotional attachment to her child and husband (*Ibrahim*). All efforts by parents and relations of *Pari*, to stop her from leaving with *Ibrahim* again failed, she insists that they are both inseparable and can move on together in peace. *Pari* and the husband finally leave with their child, leaving her parents and other family relations in shock, hopeless and confused.

Pari, clearly is an emotional and heart touching dramatic work literally representing the common day to day life of people. The play shows the suffering, pains and untold trauma of violence, terrorism and conflict related situations for us to reflect on. It points to the level of dehumanization, rape, degradation and violent experiences to which the kidnapped school girls were subjected to. They can never be same having been disoriented by their horrible experiences and act of wickedness associated with instability and conflict situations. The play is a creative contribution towards bringing to fore the negative issues related to instability, war and terrorism, for a rethink and social adjustment that can foster more unity, stability and peace in society.

Women of Owu

The play established the combined forces of the armies of *Ijebu* and *Ife*. Two Yoruba kingdoms in the South-West of Nigeria, along with mercenaries recruited from *Oyo* refugees fleeing down from the Nigerian Savannah land, sacked the city-state, one of the most propitious and best organized of those times. The allied forces had attacked it with the pretext of liberating the flourishing market by *Apomu* from *Owu's* control. *Owu* in defence closed the gates of its formidable city walls, but it soon had to face the problem of drought when the rains stopped in the third year of siege. The allied forces in the seventh year finally entered the city of *Owu*, and it was all over. These allied forces, determined that the city must never rise again, reduced the place to complete

rubble and set fire to it. They killed all the male, adults and children and carried the females away into slavery, Owu was never rebuilt.

This notwithstanding, the victorious army eventually ran into trouble with the gods and goddesses. In their effort and determination to wipe off Owu people completely from the face of the earth, they incited the anger of the deities whose shrines had been violated. The deities inflicted on the returning allied armies' terrible pains and sufferings. For many years, they wander in the bush, pounded by lightning, thunder bolts, and self-inflicted wars. They were confused and ending up miserably in the stomach of wild animals. The goddess Lawumi, whose shrine was burnt, says that all hope is not lost for Owu, it will surely rise again but not as a single city but little community, that now constitute the Egbas, a Yoruba tribe in present day Ogun State.

Peacebuilding Lessons from the *Pari* and *Women of Owu*

In line with the objective of the paper which is essentially to draw lessons from the creative narratives of Osofisan and Yerima in view of fostering peace within the Nigerian society and peradventure any other clime threatened with loss of peaceful co-existence. Analysis of the two text whose synopsis are provided in the preceding section would be unavoidably imperious in this segment. *Pari* is an example of contemporary dramatic works trying to bring to notice the dangers, dehumanization and negative effects of religious, ethnic or politically inspired conflicts on the nation. The issues of terrorism, kidnapping and corruption have been the cog in the wheel of the Nation's stability, growth and development for years. Yerima's *Pari*, tries to reflect on the nation's terrorism history wherein more than 250 innocent school girls of the Girls Secondary School, Chibok, a village in Borno state, were violently kidnapped by Boko Haram insurgents to an unknown location inside the vast Sambisa Forest. Sanni Oluyemisi, states that "In northern Nigeria, Boko Haram terrorist actions and activities have resulted in the deaths of numerous individuals, the destruction of communities and displacement of families, closure of schools and abduction of teenage girls as part of their fight against western education" (51). Therefore, it would not be improper to enunciate that lack of peace is man-made. These terror activities are perpetuated by human beings as reflected in the submission of the Chorus Leader's in *Women of Owu*.

Chorus Leader: No, stop wailing and brace yourselves my dear women. The lesson clear. It's us, not the gods, who create wars. It's us, we human beings, who can kill it.
(15)

This same view is reiterated in *Pari* as Ama says,

Ama: ...when they broke into the Chibok school, dragged those poor girls out, loaded them into trucks and drove them out like prized princes. (15)

Hence it becomes imperative to ensure that ways be devised to reorient and the minds of the actors whose actions are blameworthy in the loss of peace in the society. Though, efforts are being made by various individuals, government and non-governmental agencies, the results are reflective of the need to diversify approaches to attain sustainable peace. In addition, lawlessness breeds insecurity that results in absence of peace and order. Affirming this point while reacting to Anlugba's inquest

into the state of Owu, Lawuni states that, ...it was a law, wasn't it? Laid down by your royal uncle and my son Sango. That no Yoruba should ever sell other Yoruba into slavery! But the Owus would not listen! Flagrantly at Apomu, they broke the law, and they only way to stop them was by force (19).

In this case, there is no vacuum of law, but a wrong self-seeking choice that disregards social cohesion leads to a reaction that leaves others with no option but to resist any form of subjugation and defiance by the others involved. This results into what an avoidable conflict. Laws cum regulations are meant to keep the society and individuals in check, which contributes to rein in several extremities and when enforced, help to promote peaceful co-existence. Strikingly, Yeri's effort does not neglect this observation when Luke laments that, "the dreaded boys attacked, burnt and killed thousands of our church members in Mubi and Uba. The burnt down churches... killed even the pastors" (19). The boys here are symbols of the absence of rule of law and order. Where individuals dish out despicable treatments to the extent of flagrantly committing arson and murder without restraint and fear of being caught up by the law. Thus, creating a picture of larger-than-life individuals who are above the law. Regrettably, whenever and wherever this is prevalent, there must be obvious absence of peace. In this regard, Anushiem opines that there is no question that peaceful existence, security and the rule of law are inextricably linked. The goals of security and the rule of law are maintaining peace and public order.

Here, public order refers to a prerequisite, here there is equitable enforcement of the law, protection of people's rights, liberties, and property, a decrease in violence, and the pursuit of criminal activity through a system of due process (18). This leaves a big question for those entrusted with the tasks of maintaining and enforcing law and order in the Nigerian state as incidents of this nature have continued without abating. In addition, the texts depict that peace building advocacy would end up a mirage when parties involved are unable to learn from the mistake of the past and thereafter seek means to correct those errors that breed and culminate in societal breakdown. Besides, these texts provide that as a result of the breakdown, the victims are left with traits of negative psychological impact which is a very important experience that must not be neglected. This is palpable in the Chorus' description of the Erelu's state of mind after the invasion of Owu. They say, "She's out of her senses. Insanity is the during of misery" (28). Even Erelu notes same in the case of her daughter and this is manifest as she says, "Ah poor you! So, you can be so easily frightened by a little fire! What you think is a human body set ablaze is just my daughter Orisaye, running around with a torch. The war has affected her badly and she's... well, no longer in control of her senses" (26). Same is reflected in Yerima's *Pari* as Ama says,

I feel all alone and afraid tonight. Where is my God? Where is your face, God? ... I don't believe God exists anymore. He must be really angry with us. See how he allows evil to triumph. Even on the day we chose to honour and remind him of our plight, he allowed them to kill Sister Vero's young husband. Get up, my dear husband, don't waste your supplications. God has since walked away from here, and our madness manifests. All hope is lost on Him now (22)

The absence of peace is most times manifest in violent conflicts with wanton destruction of lives and properties which leaves a bitter taste in the mouth of victims with examples herein Ama, Orisaye and Erelu. It does not end there, as some may not be able to recover from the trauma which leaves them in a state of psychological hiccup. As seen with these individuals, there's loss of mental coordination with one questioning her Christian faith and both becoming shadows of themselves. One tactful but roughly the most socially neglect lesson from the creative submission of Yeriam and Osofisan is that the need to soothe wounded inflicted on the victims of insecurity. Where lip service is paid to creating and implementing measures to thorough mollify these victims, deadly revenge becomes inevitable. The ensuing conversion from the news of the burning and killing of churches and members in Mubi and Uba reflects this.

Hannah: Those who killed him said that he was slaughtered after he was asked to recite Faiha, and instead, he recited the Lord's prayer.

Tada: Jesus!

Luke: Right there, he was killed.

Ama: I swear, the whole world has gone mad.

Tada: When will Christians fight back? (19)

Tada's opinion mirrors the state of mind of many who have suffered losses in the absences of peace especially the lives of loved ones. This idea is not lost in Osofisan's writing as Orisaye says,

Orisaye: ... To his household, to his city and his people that the wreck the have caused here will seem in the end like a joyous feast. I will destroy them totally, totally, without remorse! They will rue the day they set out to conquer the city of Owu! All our dead will be avenged! (29).

Erelu's effort at dissuading him is met with a pill of stiff resistance coated with anger and vengeance as he further says, Orisaye: And I'll watch his blood flow, gurgling like fresh wine from the palm tree! I will be singing, mother! Then of course they will seize me, and hack me to death! Ah what happiness is waiting for me! (29). They see them as victims of a failed system where justice may never be served if left to the hands of social systems in-charge of doing so. Hence the resort to self-help becomes imminent which is driven by a strong desire to obtain recompence by taking laws into their own hands at whatever cost.

The propensity of the belief that the family is the nucleus of the society in Africa is not in doubt even with the current wave of post-normal tendencies, hence the need to ensure that it is preserved through peace building and sustainability. Unfortunately, when peace is forced to take a time off from the society, families and social organizations are left unrecognizable as an aftermath of such experience. Thus, leading to complete absence of propriety. This is what Cheche sees as he describes the state of Tada's family saying, "I heard it all. How you left the Church and became a Muslim. How Tada, your poor husband turned to drinking again. The fights... the quarrels..." (23). Therefore, one sure way for any society to be free of breeding disillusioned people in the state of Tada and Ama is to engage in all practices that

engender peace. Reasons for this all not far-fetched. From this above scenario, disillusioned persons are not in control of their minds which is the generation point of inactions, actions and reactions.

They are unpredictable and could resort to any ploy that tends to agree with their state of mind at any given moment without recourse to what may be the consequence. When families that make-up the society are forced to this state via the absence of peace, no force may be able to manage the chaos that could ensue from it. One other lesson that could be derived from the artistic master pieces under study is that lack of sincere and equitable social security programmes that are designed to cater for the needs of the average citizen is tantamount to anarchy and social cohesion Ibrahim while narrating the reasons for his foray into terrorism points to this as he says,

It started the night my mother was buried. I regretted her death more. I balmed myself for her death because it wasn't that I was away when she died. I was there...useless... but I was just a dead person there. She needed food and medicine... and none was within my reach... so I watched her... with tear-filled eyes. I watched life ebb out of her veins... then her eyes closed... her heart stopped beating... and she was gone. After her burial, I tried to find a taste to my mouth. I did not cry; I could not cry and I did not even try. Even if I had, there would be no tears. My friends, Zaki and Yakubu, had begged me to join them (46).

This brings to mind the current state of living of most Nigerians who are reported to be living under a dollar per day and wallowing in extreme poverty. Ucha contends that severe poverty is a common occurrence in Nigeria. A lack of clothing, food, education, and other necessities is depicted as a reality. Extremely impoverished individuals are so devoid of the bare needs in life that one may wonder how they manage to survive. Poverty in Nigeria is linked to several consequences and inadequacies. Nigeria's high infant mortality and short life expectancy are indicators that one of the main repercussions of poverty is poor health. Because they lack access to quality healthcare and basic facilities, Nigerians living in poverty encounter a number of health problems (47), and oftentimes, they are made to pay the ultimate price of death. Ibrahim's scenario depicts that when people are hungry, peace cannot be guaranteed. In the case that their state of hunger is met with lack of health care that leaves them with death staring to their faces, a response usually not far from being elicited. Responses in this situation are usually not palatable for the government and governed especially when there seems to be way out of their plight.

Okwuwada submits that, neglect and economic isolation lead to dissatisfaction, which will lead to anarchy and mayhem if policy and the legal system are not used to manage it. Nigeria is a prime example of a nation divided along so many lines. Certain unscrupulous mentalities have exploited this separation to commit atrocities, using this as a front for their heinous deeds. Nationwide hostility and violence have increased as a result of this (27). Ibrahim may not have fallen to whims and caprices of Zaki and Yakubu if his mother had not been lost to death as a result of lack of medical care. The state of anarchy being the opposite of unattained or un-sustained peace, it becomes imperative to consider another valued inclination of Yerima that insincerity of political actors, security agents and government in general fuels disharmony and conflict in the

society. This the playwright imbeds into Tada's conversation with Ibrahim thus: "and the government? They deny knowing about you..." (48). The following response reveals the underlying fact that must not be de-emphasized.

Ibrahim: (*Gives a wild laugh*) ...The irony is that they created us, nurtured us for their own good at first... and after, they dumped us. Where did we get the arms? Where? From them, the military and black. Where did we get the money, we spend? Who fueled our anger? Who? ... See how well they lie now that they do not know how to quench the fire, they selfishly lit. Pit (48)

Although Ibrahim mentions the illegal proliferation of arms as a source of weapons for terrorists and criminals, however he does not leave out the complicity of government, security agents and political actors in the breakdown of peace in the society. Closely related to this is unchecked religious extremism which permeates every facet of the society like Nigeria. It is impossible to separate the nation's socioeconomic and ethnoreligious unrest between the North and the South from the threat of violent crime that faces it today (Okwuwada 27). In this regard while expressing remorse reveals how many taken on regrettable actions that lead to breakdown of law and order as a result of religious fanaticism. He says, "pity. I am sorry. A thread of sacred faith lies which I believed would save me on judgement day derailed my sense and unwittingly, I became a harbinger of death... But with each passing day, it slowly dawned on me that I was the fool. A wild murderous joker... stupid fool" (51). The moment different ethnic groups with diversified interests in Nigeria begin to appreciate their various interests, religion, and cultural values to such an extent that such various interests receive peaceful acceptance and understanding. This process will be vital and easy, for the nation to develop, adapt or evolve a national unity/integration that will foster stability in the society. It is this peaceful co-existence, tolerance and understanding of one another, that the two plays *Pari* and *Women of Owu* want the society to embrace.

Conclusion

The key outcome of the ultra-reading of these dramatic texts is that lack of peace is the creation of constituents of every given society. Conversely, for peace to be built and sustained in the society values such as tolerance, trust, oneness and many other right values as imbibed in the plays under review if sustained over time, its impact on the audience will positively change the situation in the society. Leaders of religious, political and ethnic groups should stress on the importance of peace, unity and integration in their deliberations, teachings, preaching and advocacy as collective commitment to the need of one another and social stability. Within the education sector, plays that navigate the mind toward national unity and peaceful co-existence should top the list of selections for academic productions. Dramatic works should be used to incorporate and inculcate the necessity of tolerance, unity and peace in other to reduces the barest minimum vices that robs society of peaceful co-existence.

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