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on African Literature and Theatre (ObafConfab)

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From Knowledge to Wisdom

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Preface from the Convener



Olu Obafemi, Ph.D.
Professor of English and Drama
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

When the Professor Olu Obafemi International Conference on African Literature and Theatre, christened **ObafConfab**, was announced in May 2009 to celebrate the 60th Birthday of Professor Obafemi, it was with deep and firm conviction that the subject of the conference has made immense contributions to literary studies and theatre practice in Nigeria and deserves a gathering of eggheads, in his honour, to discuss his passion on literature and theatre. The positive reception the idea to celebrate this Bunu-born scholar received across the globe is a product of this journal, which is the second in three volume editions arrangement from the stable of David Publishing Company in the United States of America on the platforms of their journals: *US-China Foreign Language* and *Sino-US English Teaching*.

The theme of “Cultural Construction and Re-invention for Global Peace Agenda” for the Conference was conceived to interrogate the intricate nexus of culture and peace through literature and theatre. These are two artistic enterprises that have positive bearing on societal transformation. From orature to literature and theatrical elocution, the values of virtues, justice, equity, liberty and fairness are extant in the African worldview. It is the subversion of any of these values that threatens peace and thus becomes a crisis worthy of literary and theatrical explorations. For what is literature or theatre without a crisis to resolve? This is why real and imaginative scenarios are created to address human issues within plausible contexts. Literary and theatrical elements are then deployed to construct a resolution for the prevailing crisis. In Africa today and indeed the entire globe, there is socio-economic and political instability as a result of the erosion of social security, justice, equity, fair play and liberty. Prevalent everywhere, even in unsuspecting guises, are cultures of oppression, exploitation, corruption, agony and the tyranny of exclusion—marginalization. All of these conditions are inimical to peace. It is against this background that the ObafConfab was convened not only to celebrate a distinguished national of world literature and theatre, a humanist and profound social thinker who personifies and embodies peace, but to also use our critical and creative proficiency to construct new cultural pathways and reinvent existing ones to get out of the labyrinths of social dislocation and to engender peace globally. In order to encourage varied and multidisciplinary contributions, sub-themes were introduced to cover range of discourses in literature and theatre. All of these are reflected in the contributions that make up this volume of the journal and the subsequent volumes.

For us, this set of journals is an enduring legacy of ObafConfab which is envisioned to live and grow addressing cultural, peace and strategic matters through literature, theatre and allied disciplines. This journal is also a fulfilment of our commitment for participants to have a post-conference peer-reviewed publication to reflect the texture and concreteness of the scholarly contributions of the ObafConfab. To arrive at this point, unfortunately not all the papers presented passed through the peer-reviewed process successfully; quite a number were rejected. For those who scaled through, we say congratulations! And for those who could not, we appreciate your enthusiastic participations.

Let us seize this medium to express our profound gratitude to all the members of the Local and National Organising Committees headed by Prof. Charles Bodunde and Prof. Duro Oni respectively; all the friends, associates and colleagues of the subject for their varying degrees of support; the keynote presenter, Prof. Tanure Ojaide, whose sense of friendship and scholarly commitment was impeccable; Prof. Martin Banham who at very short notice insisted to make a contribution in honour of his former student at Theatre Workshop in Leeds; Prof. Kurt Eisen, Associate Dean at Tennessee Tech University and a friend of the subject who got personal sponsorship to come and present a lead paper and also be a part of the experience. We appreciate all the corporate institutions and individuals that identified with ObafConfab; my dear wife, Mrs. Monica Sunnie-Ododo, who found time to leave the domestic frontiers to join us on the field to play a role; Prince Dayo Akanmode who committed time and resources for grassroots/funds mobilization; the mama of the house, Mrs. Grace Dupe Obafemi who sat at the background with the LOC to ensure that all went well; and importantly Prof. Is’haq Olanrewaju Oloyede, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, my Alma Mata, for his goodwill and practical involvement to assist us host the world conference. We are immensely grateful to David Publishing Company and their editorial team for the remarkable interest shown in publishing the conference papers and the smooth working relationship we had to get this volume out. Peace!

Dr. Sunday Enesi Ododo,
ObafConfab Convener and Editorial Resource,
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5th December, 2010

Drama as a social re-engineering: A study of Olu Obafemi's *Naira Has No Gender*

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Abstract: This paper is an attempt to show that in a failed nation like Nigeria, literature which is an exploration of human life is an indispensable or inevitable tool for changing the social order. This is because the literature of a people is directed and shaped by the socio-economic and political order of the society. Writers all over the world daily weave their tales around the various events that have become their countries second self. The tyranny of the moment is great. Perhaps none in human history could be equated with the present calamity that has befallen humanity. The "nowness" of the content and form of the works of our literary artists make literature not only an instrument of change but a constant and persistent tool for an inevitable re-ordering of the psyche of a people whose mindsets have been greatly damaged (Idegwu, 2009). Happenings in socio-political spheres such as disinheriting the fatherless, political and religious killings and tyranny of all sorts usually impose great burden on the literary artist. The committed dramatist finds it difficult to keep silent in the face of such tyrannical acts. That these socio-political occurrences are clays in the hands of the dramatist makes drama a very powerful learning medium for shaping the young ones in preparation for their leadership roles, as change-makers. This is why drama is a social re-engineering therapy, rebranding the people's mind-set, making them always develop the tendency to do good (UNESCO, 2002). And what Olu Obafemi tries to do in *Naira Has No Gender* is condemning the act of looting push treasury by public officers, and life sapping societal weddings among other things.

Key words: drama; social re-engineering; *Naira Has No Gender*.

1. Introduction

Happenings in the social-political sphere often impose a burden on the dramatist especially the one who is conscious of social responsibility of art and the artist. A practitioner of engaged art finds it difficult not to speak up... (Yerima, 2007, p. 347).

The above postulation by Adeoti (2007) in his introduction to an interview he had with Ahmed Yerima in 2000 is a good anchor on which the author's discourse, "Drama as a Social Re-engineering for a Failed Nation", will be based. The dramatist as a wordsmith pens from the social milieu of his immediate environment (Ngugi, 1982; Camus, 2000; Nwogu, 1978). These writers affirmed that a writer who is on the side of the masses is over-burdened by the happenings in the society. This is because literature which is a fictive exploration of human actions is both educational and a morally edifying field of knowledge, as Jenkwe (2007) would put it.

Adeniyi (2007) also gave credence to the issue raised above by saying that "Drama, like other literary genres, is a product of social life... the dramatist selects materials for his creative outputs from happenings in real life" (p. 97).

Clement Chukwuka Idegwu, lecturer of Department of English, School of Languages, College of Education; research fields: drama, prose.

Having established that the writer's social milieu is the society in which he lives, and that because he remains a part and parcel of this society, his craft becomes an instrument with which he checkmates his society to make it habitable for himself and others, it becomes necessary to state that literature, which appeals to the mind more than any other discipline becomes a tool for the re-engineering the corrupted mind. And the genre of literature for this urgent task is drama. This paper, therefore, examined dramatic literature as an inevitable tool for the task of re-engineering or re-ordering a failed nation, repositioning the mindset of the constituent human elements that constitute Nigeria for meaningful development in all realms of human endeavour. Olu Obafemi's *Naira Has No Gender* will be handy enough to serve as the litmus test to validate the postulation that drama is an "engineer of the human soul", apology to Skvoreck (1985), who tilted his work *The Engineer of Human Souls*.

2. Nigeria today

The Guardian (2009) in its editorial of October 1, 2009 titled Nigeria at 49 posited that:

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is 49 years old. Today as an independent nation. But most Nigerians and the Federal Government itself celebrate the anniversary. The country faces numerous failures ranging from collapsed economic and social infrastructure through closed and dying factories to cascading workers' strikes. It is unnecessary to attempt to enumerate the shortcomings here except to admonish that the list of woes continue to lengthen in the prevailing situation. Doubtless the last 49 years provided practical lessons on how not to govern the Nigerian federation and how not to run her economy (p. 18).

The above editorial is an apt explanation of a failed nation at 49. Taking the above into detailed considerations and the effects on the economic and socio-political aspects of Nigerian society, one will understand why Captain Morusa Dadis Camara, the Guinean Military leader who ceased powers from a failed leader of a failed nation should be angry with his people. According to *Captain Camara* (2009), in an interview he granted Eric Osagie of Saturday Sun, November 21, 2009 titled "I Am Ready to Hand Over".

After 50 years (of independence), I need to give something to my people. After 50 years of darkness, 50 years of serpents, this is the only capital city in the whole world that has no electricity in the 21st century. In eight months, I started giving them water and electricity. All these political party leaders today that are talking; they were past ministers and prime ministers. They were all ministers at very important posts and even within five and 10 years, they were ministers. Why didn't they take care of the nation? They betrayed the nation. But in eight months, I've done more than they did and at the service of the nation. Guinea was a state of drug dealers. From a general to a Prime Minister, they were all in conflict. In eight months, I got rid of this. That's what the country wants. It's service and restoration of the state (pp. 11-12).

That is the Captain's anger; 50 years after independence, Conakry could not have electricity, "the only capital city in the whole world that has no electricity in this 21st century" (Camara, 2009). There is no difference between Nigeria and Guinea except that people have had several changes of leadership batons, both the military and civilian and all have treated the populace with absolute disdain.

3. Wanton destructions

There is a high degree of assassination in the country. According to Onayoado (2009), "Bayo Olu; the mystery of assassination":

The gruesome assassination of Bayo Olu, *The Guardian's* Assistant News Editor, is shocking. Not those other murders involving journalists or social-political activities were less disturbing. But unlike others which motives could be

traced to activism of "Nuances" of the victims, the motive behind Bayo's killing is difficult to fathom. Save for his by-lines in *The Guardian*, he lived a near anonymous life, even neighbours in his Egbeda suburb of Lagos where he lived attest to this (p. 71).

That was a harmless journalist killed for nothing. Few years ago, Bola Ige, a serving minister of Justice was assassinated right in his house and up till date no trace of his killers. This is why Soyinka (2002) talked about Ige's death, thus:

The murderers are among us. Let no one be in doubt—they are among us, right within the sombre gathering that honours the passage of a hero. There are the unwilling collaborators whose blind politics brought this moment to be, whose primitive motion of contestation offered up the land of sacrificial platter. Perhaps they are contrite perhaps now, they realize that they have been mere tools in the hands of diabolically far-sighted, deeply calculating partners. Those letters are the gloating presences in the assemblage mocking, ever cynical, triumphantist cold bloodedly, they have begun to debate who shall be the next on the list of those whose social resolve will always plague their walking hours, those who stand between them and their notorious ideologies, their internal obsession to expropriate and waste people's material heritage and their immaterial palpable will (p. 16).

Soyinka (2002) in his fearless manner explained the truth behind the various killings or assassinations in the country—"The unwilling collaborators whose blind politics" are responsible for the evils.

Barbarinsa (2003), in an article "Ige and the Meaning of Time" succinctly expounded Soyinka's postulation above, thus:

Shortly after Ige's assassination on December 23, 2001, his security detail was arrested and detained with other suspects. But after spending some weeks in detention the man was quietly freed and restated on his job. He was later re-posted by his boss to join the guards of President Olusegun Obasanjo at Aso Rock Villa. It was only after some protest by those close to Ige that the man was re-arrested (p. 5).

Yet, Bola Ige was a serving minister of Justice when he met his untimely death in the hands of these terminators.

Soyinka was right when he posited that they, the killers must have begun a debate on who was to "fall" next to the assassin's bullet, those whose social resolve will always plague their walking hours, those who stand between them and their nefarious ideologies... (2001, p. 16).

Dele Giwa of blessed memory, "one of the foremost and forthright Journalist, a founding father of *Newswatch Magazine*, was killed in a letter bomb, the first in Nigeria's and second in Black Africa" (Idegwu, 2007, p. 175). The judicial murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa (1994), the writer and environmentalist during Abacha's reign of terror is the indication of a failed nation that needs a re-engineering. For Ken (1994), his piercing words are in his piece "Before I Am Hanged":

My Lord we all stand before history. I am a man of peace, of ideas. Appalled by the damaging poverty of my people who live in a richly-endowed land, distressed by their political marginalisation, and economic strangulation, angered by the devastation of their land, their ultimate heritage, anxious to preserve their rights to life and a decent living, and determined to user to this country as a whole a fair and just democratic system which protects everyone and every ethnic groups and gives us all a valid claim to human civilization. I have devoted all my intellectual and material resources, my very life, to a cause in which I have total belief and from which I cannot be blackmailed or intimidated, I have no doubt at all about the ultimate success of my cause, no matter the trials and tribulations, which I and those who believe with me may encounter on our journey. Neither imprisonment nor death can stop our ultimate victory (p. 23).

Today in Nigeria, both the highly placed and the down-and-out are daily eliminated. The number rises

astronomically every day.

Oliomogbe (2009), in an article "Family Petitions I. G over Father's Murder" moved further in the author's discourse, thus:

Citing foul play, the family of the Late Jerome Atusiaka, who was kidnapped and later buried in a shallow grave in Agbor, Delta State has petitioned the Inspector General of police Ogbonna Onovo over the incident...

They could only let him go if the family paid a ransom of N50 million which was subsequently lowered to three million naira as a result of the inability of the family to raise the initial amount. ...even when the three million was eventually paid, the kidnapers refused to release the old man until a search party found him in a shallow grave (pp. 1-2).

Ebiri (2009), in an article "Gunmen Killed Amaechi's Aide" helped in articulating the ugly state of Nigeria, thus:

An aid to the River State Governor and member of the State Public Procurement Bureau, Mr. Charles Nsiegbu was on Friday night, shot dead by unknown gunmen, who dressed in police uniform.

The Guardian gathered that as soon as he came down to open his boot, the gunmen opened fire on him and later vanished leaving him in a pool of his blood.

It was gathered that, in a bid to escape, after killing their victim, the gunmen had removed their uniform and jumped into a waiting car, shooting sporadically to scare away onlookers? (p. 1).

The dilemma Nigerians have found themselves is the dexterity with which these kidnappings, killings and all other forms of evil are committed. That they are on police uniform is shocking. From where do they get these police and army uniforms? There is a state of anarchy. Things have fallen apart and "mere anarchy is loosed upon the earth" (p. 89) as Yeats (1920) would put it. There are a lot of cases of this kind of killings in the country. Where do people go to? The judiciary?

The decay of the Nigerian judiciary makes this unwise. Just recently, the Minister of Justice was touring foreign country—London—to defend the indefensible. The following dialogue in the Guardian of October 1, 2009 explained the lawlessness of the Federal Ministry of Justice.

My dad is very powerful. When he had a court case he got four barristers to defend him.
That's no big deal. My dad got 20 senior advocates to defend him when he had a court case.
That means my dad is more powerful than your dad.
When he had a "419" case in a magistrate court, he got an attorney general to defend him (p. 18).

The above dialogue is the state of judiciary, the federal Minister of Justices who shuttle from one Western country to other defending political chieftains of the ruling party charged with money laundering. This is Nigeria at 49. This is not different from the state of the nation in Gowon's regime when late Gani had to defend a poor factory worker whose wife was abused by the then Benue State SSG (Andrew Obeya). Gani's success, though, gave succour to the factory worker who costed him one year of his freedom. He was placed in gaol for one year for embarrassing the then Federal Military Government.

Obasi (2009) posited that Gani's

ordeal in the hands of government started in 1969, when he was arrested for challenging the then Benue/Plateau State government. He had sued Andrew Obeya, then secretary to State Government, to court, for snatching the wife of Bola Abashe, a factory worker. The state government got involved on behalf of its official Joseph Gornwalk, then military government governor made efforts to get Fawelumi to withdraw the case. When that failed, attempts were made to kidnap him without success. He was later clamped into jail under a detention decree that allowed people to be detained without trial. To ensure he was kept away, the military government charged him to court for illegally bringing arms to a local

government area. Fawehimi was beaten up by more than 13 security men. His pair of prescribed glasses was smashed to smithereens and he had blood-shot eyes, before he was locked up. He was not tried but moved from place to place in Northern Nigeria. He was detained in Jos, Ilorin and Kaduna prisons for seven months. All these happened during the regime of Yakubu Gowon, then head of state (pp. 18-19).

In a situation where the state protects every corrupt political chieftain from the long arms of the law and goes about barring others from moving freely is bad. According to *Sunday Punch* October 11, 2009, "FG Stops New Passport for Ribadu, el-Rufai" (p. 1), her reason was reported by Olusola Fabiyi:

Meanwhile, a decision has been taken at the highest level not to grant any consular assistance to the duo by our missions abroad as doing so will further facilitate their tendency to continue to undermine Nigeria's image abroad. "Consequently, you are hereby directed not to re-issue the former FCT minister with a new passport. Above is for your information and compliance by all" (p. 6).

This is injustice. And where injustice reigns hate and all forms of wickedness are usually the order.

4. Religious crisis

Akaeze (2009) in an article titled "From Maitatsine to Boko Haram" cited Mohammed Abdul-Azeez, a onetime Maitatsine henchman as saying: I was a bigot, a fanatic and an ignoramus of man fighting tirelessly, maiming and actually sending the innocent to the great beyond prematurely, all in the name of religion" (p. 12).

That was a grave confession from Mohammed Abdul-Azeez showing how lives and property have been wasted unnecessarily in the name of religion. Akaeze (2009) also moved on to talk about one Mohammedu Marwa who in December, 1980, "shot their way to notoriety... and in the process initiated an orgy of violence that claimed human lives and property". Akaeze (2009) went further to say that:

Reflecting on the incident, Halimzah Adesola Dawood, in an article "Maitatsine Magneto again", noted that the city of Kano was shaken to the marrow, pandemonium erupted and the whole country under the leadership of the first executive president, Shehu Shagari, was gripped with fear "outbreak of civil war". He further noted that although the maitatsine saga lasted ten days, the "uprising was believed to be the only incidence which led to serious loss of lives and property since the civil war" (p. 13).

These are but a few cases of religious crisis in Nigeria (See Demola Abimboye, 2009, Ademola Adegbamigbe 2009 Pulpit Radical. *The News* Vol. No. 20-23 November, 2009, Newswatch Nigeria: Riches & Rags October 5 1987, Henry Umghi 2009, Bomshell in God's House).

5. Drama as social re-engineering

Anigala (2008, as cited in Basi Obi, 1972) talking about the role of the theatre artist, thus:

The artist is a visionary who makes articulate analysis of various situations—political, religious, social etc., in any country. His analyses should be propelled by political set up. In his quest, therefore, the artist must understand the problems or issues at stake, understand their genesis, and with his prophetic eyes be able to project into their future consequences. Through the artistic medium, he should offer solutions which are capable of uplifting the nation from its crisis-ridden situation. It is only in this way that the artist can prick the conscience of the people and awaken their sense of reaction (p. 162).

✓ Drama as a social re-engineer, X-rays the society, analyses the state of the nation like Nigeria, points out the problems of the state that make it a failed nation and proffers solutions which if carried about moves the

country forward in terms of development. In other words, drama not only mirrors the society but proffers solutions which will help the country to solve her problems and develop. Olu Obafemi (2003) in *Naira Has No Gender* looks at the issue of politics, the corruption of the political elites and religion among others.

Abeke: One people, yes. You worked hard on them and won the election with a landslide. O yes, my bedroom was a sole witness to it. Overthrown by ballot boxes. All for the sake of landslide

Chief: Shut up. Dat na democracy. Na to win before voting. Ka wai. Finish. I tell you, na the will of the people. Our people, one nation

Abeke: Yes, the will of the people. Wheeled away with wheel barrows and trucks. You won and many of the people got temporary pregnancies of ballot papers.

Chief: Commot. Power to the people (orchestra: power to the people: one people...)

Abeke: Yes through thuggery and house burning, all to achieve bandwagon effect. Victory via rigging (pp. 23-25).

Olu Obafemi's (2003) *Naira Has No Gender* keeps people in tune with the revolutionary nature of the dramaturgy by stating the problems of a failed state as well as proffering the solution. Above all, he told people of the political class and her dirty ways of "winning" an election, a situation where men and women become pregnant with ballot papers. This ugly state of things call for worry. Every right thinking Nigerian¹ should have. This is why Soyinka (2003) spoke about the ugly state of our so called democracy thus:

I shall not even bother to remind us that the 1999 election were held and the present government sworn into office without public knowledge of the contents of the enabling constitution. It is sufficient to demand, do we or do we not need a radical shift that restores our stolen voices? Does the call for a national conference not ground itself in the illegitimate antecedence of our current democratic pretensions (pp. 4-5).

Still on politics, Obafemi (2003) went further to show how womanhood is debased just to get government contract.

Chief: Wayo woman, which past be dat?

Abeke: I mean the past of the contract by kind. The sacrifice of my daughter, Shola. That is the past.

Chief: (Still very angry), look, I beg you make you no remind me of that one you hear. This na happy moment. After all, na who reap the benefit of data kontan? I say na who? Na who enjoy the money? No be your little girl, your Shola? (to the audience), 4.5 Baby Benz for her little daughter, white Benze. Cool. You no even hear the sound as she dey crooze the beautiful car.

Abeke: (Cutting in by standing up to him). Yes, Chief. We didn't hear the sound. We didn't hear the sound of her tiny body on the hospitality couch of your benefactor. We didn't care to listen to her bitter complaints about weeks of lecture hours lost on protocol trips to London and Paris with Alajaji, the Chief Whip for export—import licenses (in nostalgic remorse), yes, it is easy to forget, you who ate the meat but I who cracked the bones; I who ate the vomit and shame of motherhood. How can I forget?

Abeke: A great shame, watching my daughter turned later into an election doll (pp. 20-21).

Olu Obafemi showed that Nigerians can do anything just for money and position. For a husband and wife to decide that their daughter should have sex with Alhaji, the chief Whip for Export-Import Licenses just to get paid for a badly executed contract; for their daughter to accept such animalistic arrangement, and for them to talk about the shameful act later on "a jug of wine" celebrating the debasing of motherhood show how rotten the nation is morally and otherwise. Olu Obafemi indeed magnified the rottenness of Nigeria as a failed nation beautifully well. It is in tune with Soyinka's (1988) view that "...art should expose, reflect, indeed, magnify the decadence, rotted underbelly of a society that has lost its direction" (p. 298).

Osofisan (2001) also corroborated Soyinka (1988), stating that "drama reflects the agonies of the time, the

hopes of the time, shows a way out of all the problems and condemns negative force" (p. 49).

These are explanations on how drama reflects the happenings in a society sensitising and conscientizing the people towards changing their mind-set for good. Nigerian leaders deliberately fool the citizenry:

Aina: Ehen? What about that? Can't you supplement your salary with hunting bush rats? Or home pigs? Or what is the purpose of Operation Feed the Nation which Government people are shouting about?

Otanla: (He roars with laughter) Fool the nation you mean?

Indeed, a feature of a failed nation is a catalogue of unfulfilled promises made by successive regimes and governments. In Olu Obafemi's great mastery of craftsmanship, he talked about "operation feeds the nation—Fool the nation you mean?". Which the government in power relates to the people at regular intervals on radio and televisions? The word "shouting about" is a clear indication of the inaction in the actions of the deceptive government of the failed nation. Drama usually explains why things are what they are. This helps to put things right.

According to Osofisan (2008),

We all agree that one of the causes, as well as one of the consequences, of the current mismanagement of our economies, is the appalling ignorance of our peoples. Because of illiteracy, negative propaganda, improper information, our people are retained in a position of feeble or false consciousness, unaware of their options, and continuing to serve as ready fodder in our barren intra-elitist squabbles. This means that the vast majority of our people are often deliberately shielded from the kind of knowledge that would help them to liberate themselves, to recognize and identify their real enemies, as well as their authentic destinies. But this was precisely one of the motivating impulses of our radical dramatists—that is, to serve as a means of enlightening our people, to help increase their awareness, to wean them away from the dark pit of false consciousness (p. 18).

This deliberate attempt by radical dramatist to "wean" our people "away from the dark pit of false consciousness" is the essence of Olu Obafemi's drama—*Naira Has No Gender*. This is why his characters speak and act in the following way.

Dokun: Yes, before we could ask any questions, she began to undo the little child's diapers, nappies tied around the baby's waist. Inside the rubber pant was the monster; the silent god, mute, as night. Quiet in its presence.

Debby: Neatly folded in an envelope, brown envelope. She took it out, slipped it in her bra, and retied the baby's nappies.

Otanla: Clearer batch. Thank goodness she didn't slip it in her "thing" as we hear it is done these days. A beast, tuning her own baby into a carrier of the agent of death.

Aina: Unnatural instincts, the end of shame. She has ruined the moral of the future. All for the sake of Naira. Who knows will she even have the courage to let the child into the story? (pp. 54-55)

What Olu Obafemi has done in these few lines is to sensitize and conscientise a people who have over the years been living on falsehood that "the end justifies the means", which makes them do all sorts of unimaginable evil on earth. There is the issue of a woman who killed her child, removed the entire intestine and stocked the child with hard drug. Thank God she was apprehended in the West. The means should justify the end. This is why Nwamuo (2008) affirmed in the above that writers can turn "their pens into political grenades" (p. 72). The writers awareness of the state of things in the society and the zeal to let the world know the truth of the matter compels him to embark on the herculean task of enlightening those who must have drunk deep of the enticing wine of falsehood. To educate the masses then is what Olu Obafemi does in his works. Osundare (2009), in an article titled "Education and Sustainable Development", delivered at the Amoye Grammar School's Golden Jubilee posited that:

Education is to the society what the eye is to the body, what the rain is to a land in a fit of drought. It is the supreme

light-giver, the breezy dawn after a night of suffocating, darkness. It is what clears a path through the jungle, the compass that takes us ashore from the rough and clueless waters. Oftentimes, it is what makes the difference between the human being and the beast, between civilization and barbarism (*The Guardian Sunday*, March 1, 2009, p. 89).

Osundare here talked about drama as a social re-engineering (Austin Ovigie Asagba, 2008; Obafemi, 1982, p. 119). It is people's belief that by the writer's ability to raise the level of awareness of the masses, the-down-and-out, one would have put in place the machinery for the social re-engineering of the masses whose fate has been heinously tampered with for a protracted period. Boal (1979) posited that "The truly revolutionary theatrical groups transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should use it" (p. 62).

Bakare (2007) corroborated the above when he explains the magical power of drama as a social crusader, thus, "To us, it is not enough for arts to mirror the society. Arts should be part of the process to make life bearable. In this regard, it should be involved in the generation of alternative ideas towards an overall social change" (p. 335).

Bakare above talked about relevant arts which is the arts that is on the side of the oppressed. Emmanuel (2007) posited that:

There is that type of literature by which the writer rebels against societal values. He is the one that is sensitive to what is going on around him, one who wants a better deal for everybody. This is the kind of literature that becomes an instrument for social transformation. Its basic aim is to awaken the revolutionary in the revolutionary consciousness in the majority of group of the society who are oppressed, exploited and deprived of good social living condition (p. 87).

Many writers have given their minds to the task of re-awakening the consciousness of the downtrodden. Their writings are expressions of human struggles that account for the era in which they live. These writings crystalise the spiritual and other spheres of the life of the people. They act as an insight into the past, and the future, helping to shape the peoples hope and aspirations. The literature of a people to a great extent determines the future of the people. This is why when the literature of a people declines, the people, and their nation decay. The writer's intention is to change the country for the better. This is why Emmanuel (2007) tried to define social advocacy to enable people appreciate the works of their dramatists. According to him by "social advocacy", people refer to works in which the writer's social vision is preoccupied with the welfare of the common folks and with waging a moral campaign against social ills (p. 167).

Obafemi, the social advocate of the Nigerian masses, showed an in-depth exploration of the human mind in the following dialogue.

Otunla: I say will the couple eat after the honeymoon? I am talking of Semovita, essential commodities, staple food items like rice, yams, garri? Or is the wedding reception the same thing as the feast of the Passover, the eternal menu of the spirit? (p. 13).

The author in the above passage criticised the expensive wedding ceremony in Nigeria which impoverished the couples and made them barren financially all through life simply, because they wanted to impress the society. Olu Obafemi further posited, thus:

Otunla: Aha, Cutting the sacred knot. Cracking the forbidden apple. Oh yes. And what will happen after the marriage ceremony? We will open our mouths to the wind after wedlock? (p. 12)

Otunla: We have before us a dream world, Aina, yes, the past is part of that dream. Aina. But be serious. Not in this way, you know it. The reality of those demands in the world of today is air-thin, Aina (turns to the audience). All this pay pay, paying for marrying a woman, a virgin, yes it used to have its values, when the world was sane, and it was only a token. These days, it is an invitation to armed robbery, and you don't want that... Listen. Will the bride eat after the

wedding? Tell me (p. 11).

Obafemi frowned at the way society wastes money in the name of church wedding which impoverishes the couples, as well as the hyperinflation in the country. These things are signs of bad leadership in a country. Nigeria is a county that has lost her value system. Obafemi in his anger towards the existence of these negatives moves further said,

Otunla: Believe me, I am dead serious. Have you forgotten the forbidden price of a kilo of beef, even pork and frozen fish, Oku Eko? (p. 13)

Aina: (Renewing her anger), I know some millionaires with less than my qualifications. Yes, very many millionaires who can't write their names or sign their signatures... Yes it is true millionaires who can't read their names. Connections. That's all their qualification. Connection is their certificate. Connection to win feat contracts to supply equipment which they know nothing about. Connections to build bridges and roads and become millionaires (p. 14).

Otunla: Change the topic. You know he is one of us. Besides, his parents are contractors. They are parts of the mercenary culture which we condemn, which you seem to be admiring suddenly. The culture of kick forward, kick-backwards and kick sideways. The culture of contracts which has ruined the dreams of this land (p. 15).

Here, Obafemi makes a mockery of the society where people give and collects all forms of bribes, an act that has ruined their society. This is why in Nigeria today, the best brains are never given opportunity to serve while touts and "monkey tail" drinkers (concoctions) are holding various offices leading the country insane.

Otunla: (Sobering steadily, he moves away from her) I have to live with every step of my life. My own aborted dreams. My castrated hopes. My barren aspirations.

Aina: (Holding Otunla in an embrace to show that she is moved) Otunla, you know I don't mean to hurt you. Who says you are barren? How can the fountain of fertility be barren? Your vitality will be testified to by my pregnancies and deliveries in our immediate future. I am sorry...

Otunla: (Cutting her short). Don't be. Everything you've said is right. Dokun and I were mates... I remember he used to call me a coward, in a joke of course.

Aina: A coward? In jokes?

Otunla: Oh no. Not in that sense. He used to say that I have too much conscience, and that in a society like ours, it is not a virtue to be possessed in abundance. They will mistake you for a fool. A coward (p. 16).

See the argument put forward by Aina and Otunla above, one will see how Aina the wife-to-be offended her spouse Otunla and apologized the moment she realized the enormity of her actions. There is also the issue of having a conscience and keeping it alive in Nigerian society. Actors and people like these changing their mind-sets showing that people who begged to disagree and stand their grounds were able to make their mind. Drama in this case helps to bring to live the conscience in man, and ensures that it is domiciled in him.

6. Conclusion

Drama is an essential tool in the urgent task of re-ordering a failed nation in order to reposition her for development. It is something that will help to bring about attitudinal change in the lives of modern rogues called politicians. This position has been formed by clarion calls from the progressive schools who are apostles of positive changes.

Udenta (1993) posited his argument simply, thus:

The utilization of the dramatic medium as a means of propagating contrasting and irreconcilable ideologies, and the struggles for the control of the conscience of men have been noted by various commentators. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o sees drama... as the crucial and most decisive stage in the struggle against cultural neo-colonialism Africa... and as a weapon

of galvanising the broad masses towards radical socio-economic changes (p. 25).

The demonically possessed selfish rulers of Nigeria nation as well as the ignorant fools, the ruled, have to be cured of ignorance, a disease worse than HIV and AIDS. Emma Goldman as cited by Emmanuel Ogebe (2009) succinctly explained the dilemma, thus: "The most violent element in society is ignorance" (p. 51). There is a great degree of ignorance on the part of the selfish rulers and the gullible ruled. And this ignorance has occasioned the various riots and disturbances in Nigeria. None has grown to the stage of appreciating the nothingness of life. And to raise the level of awareness of the people as one of the functions of drama, Obafemi (1982) in an article "Revolutionary Aesthetics in Recent Nigerian Theatre" showed that "social change could come by the playwright's ability to raise mass awareness to a positive revolutionary alternative to social decadence" (p. 119).

This is what Olu Obafemi has done in *Naira Has No Gender*. Through this play, the author conscientises and sensitises the people of the need for attitudinal change, a change from evil to good. The task of sanitizing the nation is achievable. This is because as Traore (1972) would put that drama is:

A cohesive force that makes men conscious of themselves and one another. It enhances the lives of men, providing entertainment and invoking a sense of order. Arts, fulfils our needs for purification, for communal activities and an intense urge to commune with the artist. Its purpose is to awaken us to human needs not only in the present but also in the future (p. xvii).

The relevance of drama in the act of re-ordering the mind-set of any group of people for growth and sustainable development has been vividly explained. The author greatly believes in its effectiveness. It remains an effective tool for social re-engineering. Olu Obafemi has craftily employed *Naira Has No Gender* for this purpose. The author believes in the beauty of drama as an instrument for social re-engineering. This could be likened to William Wilberforce as cited by Essien (1985). The author is changed by fanaticism. If to be alive to the sufferings of his/her fellow, creatures is to be a fanatic, the author is one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large.

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