

ECOTHEATRE AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Climate change has de-ordered an ordered society through ecological problems. It is nature and man at work. Consequently, an interdisciplinary re-reading of the main theme of ecocriticism can be seen as its extension and fascination with the reality of ecotheatre. Ecotheatre itself is the dramatist's creative interpretation of the essence of nature where causes and effects of climate change are seen as a core thematic motif among the opulent lots. Using Jonathan Levin's Theory of Ecocriticism as our theoretical foundation, this paper examines the poetics of ecotheatre through a new model of ecotheatricalism (textual imagination, total theatre articulation, performativity of adaptation, culture of creative interpretation and others) in relation to climate change in Nigeria and elsewhere with related experience. It is argued that theatre artists should play more central role as the voice of humanity on climate change and environmental degradation through film production, radio drama, dance theatre, television drama and stage performance. Furthermore, governmental and non-governmental organisations such as NESREA (National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency), NIMASA (Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency), Friends of the Earth, Environmental Rights, Meteorological and Environmental Agencies in Nigeria should to promote and expand their activities to accommodate the aesthetics of ecotheatre and the newly created model of ecotheatricalism within the parameters of climate change.

INTRODUCTION: NATURE, ART AND SCIENCE

A DISCOURSE ON CLIMATE CHANGE should be seen as an interdisciplinary discourse on the reconstruction and reinterpretation of nature and the place of man in it. Certainly, climate change is real and its lyric is no longer melodious. It is now dirge-like. Sadly enough, climate change is threatening human existence and whether for good or bad, scientific innovations have tampered with natural climate and gratuitously; we have all come to accept the vexed issue of climate change.

Fundamentally, climate change has de-ordered an ordered society through ecological problems. It is nature and man at work. Consequently, an interdisciplinary re-reading of the main theme of ecocriticism can be seen as its extension and fascination with the reality of ecotheatre. Ecotheatre itself is the dramatist's creative interpretation of the essence of

nature where causes and effects of climate change are seen as a core thematic motif.

Interestingly, neo-Darwinists' scholars such as Bate (1991 and 2000), Fromm (1996), Scigaj (1999), Murphy (2000), Mazel (2000), Schuaub (2002), Levin (2002) and Aghalino (2005 and 2010) among several others, have evaluated and validated the importance of culture workers, environmentalists, dramatists, novelists and the poets in their conscious efforts at creating awareness, giving information, providing knowledge and promoting sustainable development about cultural location of nature, and the negative forces fighting to dislocate it.

Consequent upon the above, this study examines the poetics of ecotheatre through the new model of ecotheatricalism (textual imagination, total theatre articulation, performativity of adaptation, culture of creative interpretation and others) in relation to climate change in Nigeria and elsewhere. Two play-texts, Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* (2011) and Greg Mbajiorgu's *Wake Up Everyone (A Drama on Climate Change)* (2011) that have celebrated the advantages of preserving nature and the dangers inherent in climate change are analysed in this paper. Other play-texts such as Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963), Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi* (1971), and Femi Osofisan's *Many Colours Make the Thunder King* (1999) are also minimally referenced. Our contention is that the theatre artists, who are the voice of humanity, should recover the local and global societies from climate change and environmental degradation through film production, radio drama, dance theatre, television drama and stage performance by dramatising the problems posed by climate change for meaningful sustainable development to take place.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

The theoretical thrust of this paper is based on Jonathan Levin's Theory of Ecocriticism. In his critical work entitled "Beyond Nature? Recent Work in Ecocriticism", Levin sees Ecocriticism as:

A term used primarily by scholars trained in literary studies to describe an interdisciplinary approach to the study of nature, environment, and culture... Despite its explicit engagement with environmental politics, ecocriticism has seemed to some an extension of a basic and dubious pastoralist impulse, a nostalgic escape from the challenge of urban life, modernity, and even the intellectual and theoretical tools that have been most influential in fostering their critique.¹

The above definition of ecocriticism is apt for this study. We will also discuss some of its features subsequently. The implication of doing a study

on the environment and by extension, on culture can further find theoretical solace in the interdisciplinary nature of climate change, which can be communicated better, we hope, through what Adeyanju sees as “ethnography of communication... an empirical description of the socio-cultural rules governing speech in different communities.”² The importance of climate change calls for clear and unambiguous interpretation and communication of its main theme and sub-themes because obscure, complex and overtly eclectic modes of communication will further compound the problem of climate change to the human race.

Among several other useful advantages, ecocriticism allows researchers to describe the link between nature, man, science and arts through literary works (poems, novels, drama and others). It further permits the researcher to engage with literary and or workers in the culture industry to bring “cultural mediation” with the reality of “natural world”; and its users to relate their findings or observations about nature to go beyond “conventional boundaries between nature and culture” to reflect, in the most possible ways, the challenges posed by global warming through climate change.

As a minor weakness, ecocriticism as a literary theory does not celebrate the much expected linguistic and or language sophistication in literary works. However, it is indeed a good theoretical framework in literary studies, which “has been grounded in the naturalistic foundation common to the scientific ecology and environmental studies.”³

NOTION, CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN NIGERIA

Climate change is the metaphor of man’s wounded heart with which he has to contend. How we manage this wounded heart will equally determine whether we will survive the injury or not. Balogun sees climate change as “a short term or long term shift in the climate of a specific location, region or planet. Climate change is a long time composite of weather patterns.”⁴ This “abrupt change in climate” is also partly regarded as global warming and it is universal. This is because climate change has altered the natural world for an inevitable artificial world.

So many factors have been advanced as the causes of climate change. For example, Niyi Jonathan Bello has argued that climate change is caused by “astronomical, extraterrestrial, terrestrial and human activities”⁵ However, nature and certainly, man are the two main causes of climate change.

Away from the above is Balogun’s evaluation of the causes of climate change. He concludes that, “human factors associated with climate change are sometimes referred to as climate forcing since they force climate parameters to shift to new values. Among the probable natural causes of

climate change are, “movement of continents (plate tectonics), solar output of radiation, variations in the orbit of earth and around the sun, volcanism and ocean variability.”⁶

It is of equal importance to note the generally accepted UNO/World Meteorological Organisation and Five other International Agencies' - United Nation Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, United States Environmental Protection Agency, The PEW Center on Global Climate Change, Union of Concerned Scientists, US Department of Energy, and *Climate Change Information Kit* that contains the “Ten Things You Need to Know about Global Warming.” These “Ten Things,” which are further titled “Teachers’ Guide to High Quality Educational Materials to Climate Change and Global Warming” by NSTA (2001), note that:

1. Global warming is caused primarily by carbon dioxide from burning coal, oil and gas.
2. Earth’s average temperature has risen about 1 degree F in the past 100 years and is projected to rise to another 3 to 10 degrees F in the next 100 years.
3. Climate change is caused by human activities.
4. There is difference between weather and climate.
5. The ozone holes do not cause global warming (this is a different problem).
6. Climate change impacts on people and nature.
7. Sea level has already risen due to warming and is projected to rise more.
8. Saving energy and developing alternative energy sources would help.
9. An international agreement known as Kyoto Protocol has been negotiated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and that
10. The protection of the world climate by stabilising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases will require enormous reductions in current emissions⁷.

The effects of climate change are enormous. This is because climate change has practically, physically, technologically, environmentally, biologically, socially and culturally affected our agriculture, transportation, water resources and ecosystem, weather, military operations and security, health, electricity and power generation, culture and tourism in Nigeria.

For example, the Nigerian people in 1988 learned hard history through the confirmed dumping of 4,000 tons of toxic waste in Koko. On May 20th, 2010, the Nigerian Customs Service also seized a Gumel Panama Ship carrying eight containers of waste at the Tincan Island Port, Lagos. Hazardous goods such as second-hand motor rate parts, car-stereos,

cars that are older than eight years, finished textiles products, and second-hand clothing are also constantly being imported to the country.⁸ Deforestation, mining/dredging, emission, e-waste at Alaba Market, Lagos State, the yearly disaster caused by windstorm and rain, hazardous patricides, coastal erosion, wrong weather forecasts and other factors are also part of the man-made and nature-caused climate change problems that have sent thousands to the grave in Nigeria.

It should be noted that the well-advertised acid rain of March 2010 also contributed in no small way to the fear of climate change in Nigeria. The Acting Director, Weather Forecasting Services, Nigerian Meteorological Agency, Ifeanyi Nnodu says of the acid rain that this is possible and it is "a result of nitrogen, sulphur that is being injected into the atmosphere from the activities of factories. And a rainfall brings with it, those deposits, but they do not cause cancer. It means that a rainfall comes below the normal and such rain becomes acidic."⁹ The tension created by the rumour of the impending acid rain was palpable in 2010. So many text messages were flying to give the Nigerian people wrong or genuine information. In fact, one of the text messages informed the people that, "there is a possibility of acid rain. The dark circle appeared around the moon on March 17 and this was an indication of acid rain. Apparently, this happens once in 750 years. It rains like normal rain, but it may cause skin cancer if you expose yourself to it."¹⁰ After receiving this text message, people were fasting, mosques and churches were bubbling with prayers, and men of God giving contradictory sermons and predictions.

Scholarly works exist on the impacts of climate change on food production, military operations, security problems, erosion, deforestation and coastal oceanographic problems in Nigeria. Explored also are the problems of noise pollution in Nigeria, the impact of traditional medicine on the people and environment in Nigeria, and the problems of human exposure to noise in Nigeria.¹¹ Although we concede to the fact that much scholarly works have been done in the sciences, engineering, social sciences and agriculture on how to tackle the problems associated with, and posed by climate change; much attention has not been paid to climate in the humanistic studies in Nigeria. Tourism, theatre and cultural studies have also suffered the same fate.

THE AESTHETICS OF ECOTHEATRE IN NIGERIA

Richard Schechner, the American playwright, director and performance theorist is the first known theatre scholar to have written extensively on *Environmental Theatre* (1973), and environmental issues and the problems they posed to the human race. In fact, Richard Schechner submits that, "environmental theatres-built in cheap hit-and-run spaces, often in 5 t-of-

the way neighborhoods – exemplify a resistance and alternative to the conglomerates. But environmental theatres exist only in the creases of contemporary society, living off the leavings, like cockroaches.”¹² Nigerian dramatists such as Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Sam Ukala, Ola Rotimi, Ahmed Yerima and others have also benefited greatly from the works of Euro-American theatre scholars and dramatists such as Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner, David Garrick, Peter Brook, Constantin Stanislavski and others to create a hybrid kind of theatre that celebrate “Africanisms”, Nigerianisms” and their medley with Western theatrical aesthetics on the context and content of ecotheatre.

Conceptually, ecotheatre can be seen as a theatre whose motif and aesthetics are dedicated to the exposure of environmental problems and the dramatist’s conscious efforts at providing solutions to the problems posed by climate change. In fact, Leader’s Theatre (2011, March 25), a Western theatre Group based in London, defines ecotheatre as “performances that tackle the crucial environmental issues of our day with humour, song, and heart.”¹³

For creative interpretation of environmental issues in Nigeria, we are, therefore, proposing a model, which we have titled ecotheatricalism, a core motif within the larger expanse of the aesthetics of ecotheatre. Ecotheatricalism has four modules— The Theatricality of Mythopoetic Culture, The Content of Textual Imagination, The Dramaturgy of Total Theatre Ecological Idiom, and The Performativity of Adaptation—and each of the modules is rooted in the indigenous, literary and popular theatre traditions prevalent in the African theatre.

THE THEATRICALITY OF MYTHOPOETIC CULTURE

One of the greatest scientists to have lived in the two worlds (heaven and earth) is Òrúnmìlà, the Yorùbá god of divinity and the owner of the golden crown of the sixteen Ifá literary corpuses. Other gods such as Amadioha, Odinani, Ala, Alusi and Anyanwu of the Igbo people and the Bokaye and Bori spirits during the pre-Islamic period in Hausa land have protected, and are still protecting people and communities in various myths and folklores, our reference to Òrúnmìlà has to do with his interventionist’s role in salvaging the Yoruba universe from total destruction.

The following historical account about the appearance and disappearance of Òrúnmìlà will bring to the fore, our position on how Òrúnmìlà anthropomorphized to save the Yoruba universe after one of his eight children, Olówò refused to bow to him. Immediately after the departure of Òrúnmìlà, the earth was thrown into chaos and confusion. The cycle of fertility and regeneration both in nature and in human beings collapsed...

The state of confusion and uncertainty on earth, after the departure of Òrúnmìlà, is depicted in the following poem by Abimbola (1977):

Aboyún ò bímó
 Àgàn ò towóàlàbosùn
 Òkùnrùn ò dide
 Akeremodòówèwùiràwé
 Àtògbemoomokùnrinnîdí,
 Obìnrín ò riàséerémó.
 Isúpeyin ò ta;
 Àgbàdotàpé ò gbó;
 Erèéyojúòpòla.
 Òjòpáápààpáákánsílè,
 Adièsà á mì.
 A pónòbesílè,
 Ewúré mú un je

(Pregnant women could not deliver their babies;
 Barren women remained barren.
 Small rivers were covered up with fallen leaves
 Semen dried up in men's testicles
 Women no longer saw their menstruation.
 Yam formed small but undeveloped tubers;
 Corn grew small but unripened ears.
 Scattered drops of rain fell down,
 Chicken attempted to eat them up:
 Well-sharpened razors were placed on the flour,
 And goats attempted to devour them)...

When the earth no longer had peace, it was decided that the children of Òrúnmìlà should go to Òrun and persuade their father to return to earth. Accordingly, the eight children of Òrúnmìlà went to Òrun where they met their father at the foot of "the much-climbed palm-tree which branched here and there and had sixteen hut-like heads". They persuaded their father to return to the earth but here fused, and instead, he gave each one of them sixteen palm-nuts and said;

Bé e badélè,
 Bé e bafówóóní,
 Eníte e moo bínù un.
 Bébadélè,
 Be báfáyaání,
 Enítée moo bínù un.

Bé e badélé,
 Be ebáfómoóbí,
 Eníréé moo bínù un...
 Ire gbogbote e báfééníláyé,
 Eni tee moo bi nù un...

(When you reach home,
 If you want to have money,
 That is the person you should consult.
 When you reach home,
 If you want to have wives,
 That is the person you should consult.
 When you reach home,
 If you want to have children,
 That is the person you should consult...
 Any good thing you wish to have on earth,
 That is the person you should consult)...

When the children of Òrúnmìlà returned to the earth, they started to use these sixteen palm-nuts as instruments of divination to find out the wishes of the divinities. Òrúnmìlà replaced himself here on earth with sixteen palm-nuts known as Ikin and from that time those sixteen sacred palm-nuts became the most important instrument of Ifá divination.¹⁴

One can safely add that 'if we want to solve the problem of climate change, we should consult Ifá'. In one Esèlfá (partly the confirmed repository of Yorùbá tradition, heroes, myth, folklore, ethics, mores, religions and others), the following example shows the power inherent in Ifá literary corpus:

ìjìkìjà.
 Kógbódó.
 ìjìkìjà,
 Kógbólo...

The whirlwind does not blow
 And carry away the mortal.
 The whirlwind does not blow
 And carry away the grinding stone¹⁵.

It is also important to add that, "Ifá is more than a Yoruba system. Traces of this fascinating system could be found in several other cultures of West Africa, namely among the Edo, Igbo, Ewe, Fon, Nupe, Jukun, Borgu and other ethnic groups of West Africa."¹⁶

In ecotheatricalism, the theatricalism of mythopoetic culture will allow dramatists, playwrights and performers alike to make use of folklores, Ifá literary corpus, praise poetry, mythological figures, anthropomorphized gods and goddesses (Ògún, Sàngó, Oya, Òsun and others) in their creative enterprise by considering the didactic, and or cultural intervention of the protagonists and the antagonists concerned for modern day theatrical celebration of the inherent problems posed by climate change. Despite the dangers of the industrialized world that has turned the African landscapes from green to brown, African culture offers the best in solving the crisis of climate change. The culture of cleanliness, like the Western world, is also the African man's accepted culture. African forebears devised various ways of tackling the problems of famine, flood disaster, whirlwind and thunderstorm and many more. The celebration of all these under the theatricalism of mythopoetic culture will help to control the problems of climate change. This will also lead to sustainable development, which has been defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as the "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."¹⁷

THE CONTENT OF TEXTUAL IMAGINATION

In modern theatre, textuality is expected to lead to theatricality. As such, what playwrights, novelists and poets inscribed in their works as leitmotiv will definitely influence the output of what is known as theatre. The content of the text is an important aspect of knowledge that should not be ignored. While it is not possible to legislate on what writers should write, committed writers should note that climate change is, and should be a viable thematic option after politics.

One important postmodern play-text that celebrates ecological and environmental problems and which reflects the engaging dialogue of ecotheatricalism is Ahmend Parker Yerima's *Hard Ground* (2011). Ahmed Yerima needs little introduction in the Nigerian theatre. This is because he has written exceptional play-texts whose themes have defined our essence and being. Also, his creative inventiveness is a recurring decimal of excellence in adaptation, history and historicity, social contact, self-appraisal and social renewal. To date, Yerima has published over thirty play-texts; and his work, *Hard Ground* republished in 2011 won him double awards in 2006: the NLNG, the Nigerian Prize for Literature and the ANA/NDDC J.P. Clark Drama Prize.

Hard Ground (2011) is the first play, in a trilogy on the Niger Delta, written by Ahmed Yerima that includes *Little Drop* (2011) and *Ipomu*

(2011). The three plays have, however, been published separately before the 2011 edition that contains the three as a single book.

In Yerima's *Hard Ground* (2011), nine dramatic characters are used to internalise and externalise the problems of environmental degradation, gas flaring and deforestation in Niger Delta. In fact, the main reason why Nimi, a character on a revenge mission and his group organise a guerilla-like war through violence agitation for the rights of the minority is set as the play evolves. Nimi speaks to Mama in a pensive but clear analysis of their plights:

NIMI: God created a fine life for us, Mama, but a few people say no, we must live a hard life. We are natives, and they, the well-to-dos. So we have to survive. The deadly swamp, the murky water, the heavy rain forests. The pockets of little village separated by salty water. The black oil under the ground. One thing we know is that if we die fighting or accepting the way we find ourselves, it is six feet down the hard ground that we go.¹⁸

Although Nimi's mother, Mama attempts to convince Nimi to run away from violence agitation, Nimi's realistic assessment of what the people of Niger Delta is going through cannot escape the minds of lovers of earth and the protectors of environment. Nimi's resolve makes Mama to conclude that:

MAMA: I need to know what happened to my son. When I lost him. At what point did my voice became noise to his ears, and the wise counseling of his uncles and big oil chiefs became wise sayings and music to his ears? When? Heen? At what point?¹⁹

Certainly, it is at the point where injustice, suppression and destruction of the basic means of livelihood take over. It is at a point where true federalism is not operational in Nigeria. It is at a time where the resources of the Niger Delta people are given to others and they are made to wallow in abject poverty. It is at a time when fishing (their main business) is impossible to do. It is at dangerous time when they drink oil as water and when rich soil turns into oily black soil. It is a bad time because they inhale hazardous flame through gas flaring and watch, as their own natural resources that drive the Nigerian mono-cultural economy are being mismanaged through embezzlement and corruption by the political lords at Abuja, the Nigerian Capital and at home through the kleptomaniac tendencies of their politicians in collaboration with the emperors heading oil companies. It is certainly at the point where soft ground is simply turned into hard ground.

As valid as the struggle of the Niger Delta is, their main problem is disunity. Divide and rule tactics, a repeat of the Lugardian doctrine on the Nigerian nation often orchestrate this. Inyigifaa's lamentation in the play on this cannot be ignored:

INYIGIFAA: ...The chiefs could not be trusted. And too much money was passing from hand to hand and nothing was being achieved. There was no trust anywhere. The air of mistrust was choking, and the toll of dead bodies was mounting. One could smell it, and also touch it. The stream of blood was beginning to mix with the oily black soil.²⁰

The death of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the executed environmental and human right fighter re-echoes in the play to underscore the evil that disunity can pose to any genuine struggle. We should not forget that Ken Saro-Wiwa was hanged in 1995 during the regime of Late Sanni Abacha for championing the liberation of his people, the Ogoni people of Niger Delta. In our estimation, the play, *Hard Ground* (2011) has succeeded because it brings to the notice of local and global societies, the plights that the Niger Delta people are facing as a result of the destruction of their ecosystem and the health hazard posed by oil exploration.

In 2011, another play-text that celebrates the concept of ecotheatricalism was published. This is Greg Mbajorgu's *Wake Up Everyone (A Drama on Climate Change)*. Unlike Yerima's trilogy, *Wake Up Everyone* (2011) is a reflection on the larger-than-life problem of ecological and environmental hazards. The havoc that flood disasters have caused at Calabar, Lagos, and Ibadan did not escape the dramatist's pen through Prof. Aladinma, a character in the play who says that flooding "lead to a rapid increase in disease and poverty."²¹

Wake Up Everyone (2011) is a Three-Acts play. Act one has two scenes; Act two has three scenes; while Act three has three scenes to complete the episodic style of the play. The beauty of this play lies in the fact that all of us must wake up to fight the problems posed by the destruction of our ecology. In fact, the main theme song of the play is a metaphor worthy of recalling:

Wake up! Wake up! Everyone
To build our world anew
No burning down our bushes
No polluting our rivers
No more deforestation
To guaranty our future
No green house gas emission
No heating up our planet

Wake up!

Lets stop oil pollution
No more flaring of gases
No cutting down our forest
Wake up!

Wake up wake up everyone 2x
For new green world agenda
Lets plant some trees today
Lets save wildlife from dying
Wake up!

To cut one tree today
Let's plant two trees tomorrow
Let's save our streams and river
Wake up!

To bring our dreams to life
Let's turn these words to action
Let's join our hands together
Wake up!²²

Mainly as passing phrases, some playwrights, through their plays, have attempted to discuss the problems of climate change, and or ecological problems in their plays. For example, Baroka in Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963) bribes the Surveyor so that the railways and motor roads will not be constructed near his preying eye and serene environment. In a wit of traditionalism versus modernism, Lakunle, the half-baked school teacher in the play responds to Baroka's "backwardness" and "incivility" by calling him:

Voluptuous beast! He loves this life too well to bear to part from it. And motor roads and railways would do just that, forcing civilisation at his door. He foresaw it and barred the gates, securing fast His dogs and horses, his wives and all his concubines... ah, yes..., all those concubines Baroka has such a selective eye, none suits him but the best.²³

In a play partly dedicated to the Palm Trees of Ìjàyè, Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi* (1971) is a tragic account of the eponymous character, Kúrunmí, in relation to heroism, tradition and change in the Yoruba's famous Ìjàyè war of 1860. In the play, the roles that palm trees and river Ose play in ensuring defense and victory for the people of Ìjàyè and Ibadan respectively

cannot be over-emphasised. The Ijàyè people, and Kúrunmí in particular, lost the battle because of his warriors' wrong decision (this is through a spell) to cross-river Ose against Kúrunmí's instruction. Crossing the river has thus decided the winners and losers of the war. The following encounter between Kúrunmí and Anóba/Sómóyè (two Ègbá warriors supporting Kúrunmí) will help to reinforce our submission:

Kúrunmí: To cross where?
 Sómóyè: Ose River
 Anóba: We cross the River Ose to reach Igude
 Kúrunmí: No
 Anóba: Why 'no'?
 Kúrunmí: The gods forbid it. Risky, that. Too, risky.²⁴

At this point, Egbá warriors threaten not to fight for Kúrunmí again for "mocking their thinking." Kúrunmí, however, obliges them against his own superior logic and the rest is now history. He lost all his children in a battle that has been referred to as the first Hiroshima of Africa due to the fact that the spot of the war has refused to grow weeds to date.

Another play, *Many Colours Make the Thunder King* (1999) by Femi Osofisan captures the essence of a soothing environment. Alagemo warns human beings in the play that, "whatever you do, and whatever choices you make in your lives, the Earth is older than all of us, and after we are gone, she will be there."²⁵ The Earth is a mother according to Osofisan in the play. How Oya and Òsun, Sàngó's wives in the play anthropomorphized to become rivers Oya and Òsun is also captured in the epic drama.

Other plays that have been dramatised as propaganda weapons to solve the problems posed by the destruction of our ecosystem include; J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's, *All for Oil* (2000), Barclays Ayakoroma's *A Chance to Survive* (2002), Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen also Die* (1989), Tess Onwueme's *She Said it* (2003) and *What Mama Said* (2004).

Writing on what he termed "ecology of justice", Ojaide (2010) also celebrates African writers' poems and fictions, which are dedicated to the "harmony in the relationship between humans and their environment for respective wellbeing in the interconnected cycle of life". He concludes that, "there can be no peace in a place without clean land, water, air, and surroundings for farming, fishing, and a healthy life."²⁶ Several novels have also been dedicated to environmental issues.

The content of textual imagination within ecotheatricalism will allow ecopoets, ecodramatists, ecoplaywrights, econovelists and core image-makers in the creative enterprise to consider climate change in the content of their works through literature, the undying living weapon.

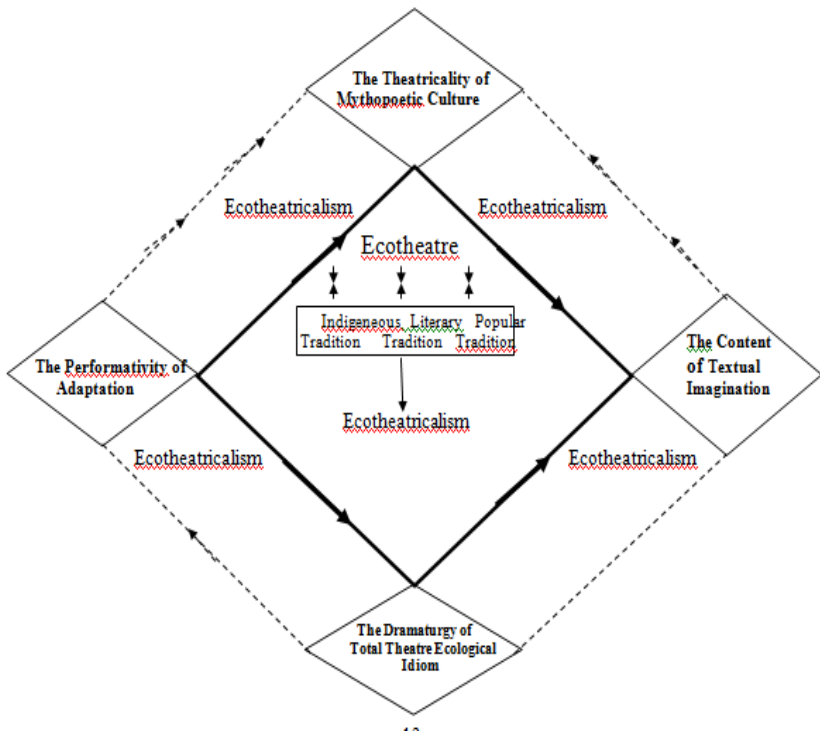
THE DRAMATURGY OF TOTAL THEATRE ECOLOGICAL IDIOM

Even though textual imagination is very important in the creative process, the total theatre idiom of (including dance, music, drama, pantomimic dramatisation, magical display, invocation, evocation, chanting, puppetry, masquerading and many more) has been accepted as the authentic theatre of the people of Africa. Our proposal here is that the multi-media aesthetics of total theatre should be considered and chosen as the style, and or platform in which ecological issues will be dramatised. A vote here is a vote for the theatre of performance where the audience will be captivated through series of realistic theatrical happenings on stage based on the thematic concept of ecology and environmental issues.

To realise this, however, the service of another important theatre image-maker, the artistic director who is enjoined to be in the experimental school is required. It is the duty of the artistic director to either use the workshop theatre (if he intends to celebrate the 'limit of textuality') or create total theatre aesthetics from a published play of the ecological school he intends to direct. If he intends to adopt the workshop style, everybody in his theatre is a creator. He will only serve as the coordinator of the series of theatrical activities created towards the whole. The researcher adopted this style when we produced a play-let titled, "Climate Change is Here" on 25th November, 2010 at the University of Ilorin Main Auditorium for the Nigerian Meteorological Society. The workshop approach for the theatricalisation of the dramaturgy of total theatre ecological idiom should thus be seen as a celebration of the triumph of performativity where the director is also expected to act as the *primus inter pares* among his other theatre workers.

THE PERFORMATIVITY OF ADAPTATION

Whether through the filmic tradition, radio drama, live theatre, and or the television; adaptation has come to stay in the world of the theatre. The Nigerian theatre has also benefited from the challenges of adaptation. Great novels and other fictional creative writings can be adapted into the theatre to effect corrections regarding environmental issues. Biblical and Quranic chapters and verses within the secular essence of environmental problems can also be adapted for use in the performativity of adaptation. The diagram below (Fig 1) captures the core concepts within the Dialectics of Ecotheatricalism, a new creation from the aesthetics of ecotheatre:



CONCLUSION

The dangers posed by climate change to the survival and healthy living of man call for an interdisciplinary approach and the commitment of all the stakeholders (scientists, artists, environmentalists, social scientists, educationists and others) to solving this difficult problem. When the environment is negatively affected due to ecological problems caused by man and nature, tourism and theatre practice are also affected through excessive heat in the theatre, endless drought, whirlwind, thunderstorm and general environmental insecurity.

As a soul-moulder and moral therapy, the theatre has proved to be an important instrument in tackling man-created and nature-caused ecological problems as we have shown in this study. We are, therefore, concluding that the theatre artists, who are the voice of humanity, should recover the race from climate change and environmental degradation through film production, radio drama, dance theatre, television drama and stage performance by dramatising the natural African imagination and the problems posed by climate change for meaningful sustainable develop-

ment to take place. Governmental and non-governmental organisations such as NESREA (National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency), NIMASA (Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency), State Environmental Protection Agencies in Nigeria, Friends of the Earth, Environmental Rights and others are also encouraged to promote and expand their activities to accommodate the aesthetics of ecotheatre within the threatening issue of climate change. Interested dramatists and playwrights are also encouraged to consider our model, the ecotheatricalism model if they find its features attractive in the theory and practice of the theatre.

NOTES

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