

A portrait of Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah, a Black man with a warm smile, wearing a traditional patterned cap and a light-colored garment with a dark collar. The background is a solid blue color.

**LANGUAGE, PERFORMANCE
AND ORAL DIALECTICS IN
AFRICAN LITERATURE**

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**A Festschrift in Honour of
Professor AbdulRasheed Na'Allah**

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SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN FEMI OSOFISAN'S *MOROUNTODUN* AND *WOMEN OF OWU*

AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye & Femi Yinka Atteh

Abstract

Man utilizes war as a tool for enforcing change and redefining territorial boundaries. In fact, war obstructs the development of any society, and emasculates and limits the socio-economic, political, and cultural values guaranteeing the development of the weaker settlements. These anti-social activities are capable of reshaping the conquered geographical areas. Consequently, this study examines the socio-historical context and political consequences of war in Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu*. The theoretical framework for the study is Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism which is complemented with content analysis to evaluate the main themes and tendencies in the two play-texts. Interestingly, it has come to the fore in this study that; war thwarts the progress of human beings and also emasculates man's unguarded desire to unleash pain and terror on their enemies without thinking about the deadly end. As a negation, the study also found out that; war, has some advantages. Therefore, this study recommends that; leaders of communities, groups, and societies should engage in proper

analysis and sensitisation before embarking on war. For example, Titubi in *Morountodun* shows that; dialogue and amicable solutions can be proffered, instead of the force-for-force situation as ably represented in *Women of Owu*. This study concludes that positive characters like Titubi, Marshal, and Anlugbua should be emulated in our societies while the lecherous tendencies of negative characters like Superintendent, Okunade Maye, and Geshinde should be shunned. Certainly, individuals and leaders should not allow their ambitions and dispositions to inflict war on their community or society but utilize historical events as mirrors that will deconstruct the evils of war while promoting social change.

Introduction

War has been observed in a variety of contexts through its role as an independent variable in the growth process of any given society. Man employs war as an instrument of enforcing change and redefining territorial boundaries. The development of any society emasculates the socio-historic, economic, political, and cultural values guaranteeing the growth and interaction of powered states with less developed ones. This anti-social action is highly profitable to the stronger parties involved in the commotion. It is also regarded as an instrument capable of constructively or destructively reshaping the conquered geographical areas. However, its influences are mostly detrimental. According to Steins and Russett (1980, p. 399), "historians, for example, generally focus on the origins of war or the diplomacy of wartime and the immediate postwar period." More attention has been paid to war times and the gains of war as it conversely emphasizes the postwar effects on the target society and the world at large.

The art of waring is a force aiming at benefits and achievements associated with societal enlightenment. Howard and Paret (1976, p. 75) express that, "war is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will. Force, to counter opposing force, equips itself with the inventions of art and science." The perspective above notably explores the dramatic arts in Femi Osofisan's selected plays, rooted in Nigerian cultural and traditional history. The theme and tendency

of war transcend a duality of aesthetics as it attempts to proffer a solution to the effect of war in all its predisposition. The veracity ably represented in historical drama is the treatment of the people's unavoidable realities. According to Azeez (2013, p. 103), themes, treatments and having purpose are;

the reason for advancing a sub-genre of historical drama nominally referred to as "Factual Historical War Drama." The underlying factor behind this categorisation is that certain salient issues in the dramas could be overlooked if the plays under consideration are read basically as historical drama.

Subsequently, the socio-historical, economic, and political consequences of war in Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu* are examined. Traditionally, the causes and consequences of war are central concerns to writers writing on history and culture. Scholarly discussions are documented as kinds of literature correlating man's relationship with his society, and against the inevitable dynamics of social change.

War is a strong tool capable of developing and destroying nations across the globe. It acquires necessary materials for its use in demanding and expanding man's territory. Both man-made and natural material resources required to develop a given state are mostly scarce within needed proximity. Interestingly, expeditions remain an easier root to locating and exploiting human and natural materials resources such as iron, oil, stone, and other raw materials. When an expedition meets obstacles in their natural form like water, rocks, forest, and others, people find a way around or through it. However, if such obstruction happens to be people in their own transverse, without sensible compromise, all will lead to war. Knowledge acquired in war and beyond it is the gain of looting, newly acquired territorial boundaries, suffering, and devastation of the people's flesh, blood, and properties inflicted with various assumptions as the war unfolds.

Otterbein (1973) cited in Steins and Russett (1980, p. 400) categorizes studies on war into eight pairs where "for each pair, the variable that is responsible for warfare is essentially the same variable that is affected by warfare." The pre-planning process of wartime demands socio-economic and political requirements needed to

embark on the fund-gouging expeditions of war. However, after the war is over, the outcome is directly proportional to the losses and gains achieved through looting and annexation of the defeated state. Strand and Hegre (2021, p. 4) agree that “several multi-ethnic countries were dissolved or experienced large-scale conflicts in the 1990s, but remain peaceful” in this growing world of globalization.

Finally, war is a major agent of social change as it's generally acknowledged and should be studied to obtain an adequate and complete understanding of how it ignites social change itself. Adeoye (2018, p. v) informs that it

(supposedly) sink, abysmally, reliving in the process, the Thomas Hobbes' “State of Nature” in which contradictions to the normals are celebrated in the mantra of life is short, nasty and wicked or the inevitability of *vellum omnium contra omnes* – the war of all against all.

Adeoye (2018) reflects the need for a critical interrogation of warlike situations around the globe. The is to help growing societies across the globe understand the impact of their actions. Contradictions to the normal becomes the reason behind unexpected warlike situation across the globe. This study therefore interrogates the socio-historic, economic, and political consequences of war in Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu*.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the theoretical predisposition of Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism as modified by Veenstra (1995). History, culture, and tradition are communicated as cultural poetics with ideologies rooted in historicism. Interestingly, general interpretations of new historicism insist that it is indebted to Marxist ideologies. This perspective is professed as a conventional trend capable of utilizing literature, art, and culture of a given people as historical events, documentable as historical drama. New Historicism generally mirrors a literary concept that views history through the lenses of literature, and literature through the canons of cultural disposition. Veenstra (1995, p. 174) infers that:

Much acclaimed critic, Stephen Greenblatt deals extensively with the New Historicism he developed and for which he coined the name "Poetics of Culture." Contrary to many older interpretive methods and schools that tend to see historical and literary texts as autonomous entities, Poetics of Culture seeks to reveal the relationship between texts and their socio-historical contexts

In the appraisal of the notions and modifications of New Historicism, factors motivating human choices are engrained in uncondusive situations or conditions that may occur through struggles and imbalances in the socio-cultural, economic, and political realities of the moment.

Some of the key assumptions that continually reoccur in this study are identified by Veaser (1989) cited in Lyu (2021, p. 1077):

1. Every expressive act (including literature) is embedded in the network of material practices;
2. Every act of unmasking, critique and opposition uses the tool it condemns and risk falling prey to the practice it exposes;
3. Literary and non-literary "text" circulate inseparably;
4. No discuss, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truth nor expresses inalterable human nature; and
5. A critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism, participates in the economy they describe.

Femi Osofisan's plays are dramatic explorations addressing challenges in the socio-historic, economic, and political tendencies of modern times. *Morountodun* explores two distinct historical accounts; the Agbekoya uprising and the mythical representation of Moremi. Moremi's undaunted spirit helped in arresting the ugly socio-economic crisis of the Agbekoya's militancy. Interestingly, within and outside Nigeria, situations in socio-cultural glitches can rely on Titubi's tactics in *Morountodun* in breaking any age-long class struggle within sensitive proximity.

Women of Owu on the other hand, captures the destruction of

the ancient city of Owu. A lack of understanding among a group of people can delay progressive development, nation-building, and political unity within growing societies. The revengeful attack by Okunade Maye against Oba Akinjobi, the king of Owu, who forcefully takes Okunade's wife from him is a socio-cultural reality in the play-text. Femi Osofisan also challenges the undue loyalty usually given to the gods or deities of the land by the people. Remarkably, human problems across the ages are mostly resolved through practical approaches which mostly lead to war and destruction.

Deviation of the people's thoughts which had strayed away from the need to look up to heroes or gods as the case is in *Women of Owu*, unsuspectingly leaves Anlugbua, the defender of Owu disappointed, saddened, and heartbroken. This is because his people were under a siege for several years without remembering to call upon him, the god of war. Generally, New Historicism is writing a Foucauldian history of the people. According to Paulo Freire, translated by Ramos (2005, p. 18), "I have been in many contexts where the over-celebration of one's location and history often eclipses the possibility of engaging the object of knowledge by refusing to struggle." Therefore, the crucial issues Osofisan discusses in his plays, create a more diverse interpretation of the socio-historic, economic, political, and tribal/ religious impact of war on the landscape of Nigeria, Iraq, Libya, Russia, Ukraine, and many others.

Literature Review

War affects witnesses as well as participants in the systemic change fashioned to upset people's mode of living. This invariably distresses all communities in the system regardless of whether they participated in the war or not. The long-term effects and after-effects of war are key points in literature debates today. However, the wartime period disrupts international trade and harms the economic welfare by diverting economic resources away from their most efficient uses. According to Atteh (2018, p. 46), "the causes and consequences of war have been the central concern of playwrights and culture-based play-texts." Societies across the globe are composed of different

human attributes as cultural entities exhibiting knowledge, art, ideas, custom, tradition, language, folktale, and other distinct personalities ably represented in their theatre practices. History, theatre, and drama are indispensable efforts at representing human intricacies and recognizing these intricacies as uninterrupted dynamics of social change. No wonder Dimitriu (2020, p. 646) avers that:

dramatic historical changes act to challenge our understanding of reality and lead to debates on existing sociopolitical concepts and theories. The fall of the Berlin Wall, '9/11', the revelation of Stuxnet and the Russian occupation of Crimea were all such significant events.

According to Dimitriu (2020), occurrences in human interaction are capable of motivating war simply because they expose man's unguarded desires as socio-political players within society. Significantly, war is motivated by man's unguided desires to dominate, protect, and defend his territory.

Incidentally, war also restructures social order by sending society into a dysfunctional illusion of events past, with indirect or anathematised reasons to go to war. Coccia (2019, p. 118) states that, "causes of wars are due to a high demographic pressure generated by nations having a different ratio between population and wealth (economic resources)". The cause of war is either an ambitious or a personal reason for which the initiator utilizes force in inflicting and insisting on social change. Socio-historic happenings are inevitable dynamics of social change simply because they rewrite history as "conceptions of change appear to have mirrored the historical realities of different epochs in large degree. (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992, pp. 2-3).

From the precolonial period till date, people have had issues like boundary disputes, disagreement, location features, cultural disputes, expansion theories, and many other psychosocial reasons associated with man's uncontrollable need to war and make necessary benefits from it. Also, Lyons (1973) cited in Stein and Russett (1980, p. 418) further emphasises that; "there have been three main waves of new state-making since the late eighteenth

century,” and “each wave has come with the collapse of empires.” The First World War (1914-1918) and Second World War (1939-1945) are the world’s most recognized of the three waves expressed by Lyons (1973). Currently in the world today, the situation between Russia and Ukraine is growing with the tendency to escalate into a global phenomenon. Strong and united world bodies are making an effort to stop incessant attacks ongoing in the war today. World leaders and peacekeeping bodies are reuniting and re-strategising on how to stop the war.

Furthermore, different historical accounts capture Africa and Nigeria in particular, as a breeding ground for minor, but very dangerous hegemonies. Subsequently, Adeoye (2018, p. v) confirms that “the re(mapping/imaging) of Nigerian hegemonies have all contributed significantly to the advancement of ideological cum theoretical leaning of counter-discourses or contrapuntalism and all, for evils and all saturated within the long narratives of the current Nigerian social realities.” Changes in ancient Yoruba histories are built on numerous war situations and psychological attachment to human feelings in the process of managing state affairs. According to Omolewa (2014, p. 124), major wars in Yorubaland lasted for “about twenty-eight years but these years of war were interspaced with a long period of peace. The wars were broken into phases, namely; The Owu war, 1817-1824; the Ijaye war, 1860-1865; the Kiriji or Ekiti Parapo war, 1877-1893”, battle of Dahomey (1729), Agbekoyaparapo revolt (1968-1969) and many other sensitive war situations in Nigeria.

Impressively, the process of dealing with and restructuring the reality of wartimes is expressed in *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu* by Femi Osofisan. These play-texts also position women at the centre of national crises. Sesan (2018, p. 183) further explains that “the history of wars in Yoruba nationalities reveals different experiences and challenges faced by women in times of war. In some social, historical, and literary texts, women have been presented as the primary cause of some of these wars.” The long-term consequences of war are indescribable because complete detailing of events in war is difficult. People always die eventually and so; it is possible to argue that war only hastens one’s certain fate. It is only pertinent

to emphasize that lives taken during wartime are not given by war but rather, by the creative ingenuity in human nature. War has a dual identity but it is mostly recognized with its destructive capacity rather than it being productive.

Morountodun

Synopsis

Morountodun explores the ancient myth of Moremi, an Ife queen. She is recognized as a resilient freedom fighter for the entire Yoruba race. Moremi embarks on a lifesaving action to liberate the Ife people from the death claws of the Ugbo people. She volitionally allows herself to be captured by the bandits to learn the secret of their conquest. However, Titubi (a protégée of Moremi) is the central character who decides to assist the government in suppressing the incessant attack from the farmers. The farmers take up arms against oppression and extortion being meted out by the ruling class. These farmers became thorns in the flesh of the police who could not suppress the uprising. This is why, Titubi volunteers to be captured to learn the war tactics of the farmers and assist the police to subdue and conquer them. Despite the strong opposition of Alhaja Kabirat (Titubi's mother), Titubi follows the armed farmers and contrary to the plan, she discovers that the government is equally ruthless and unfair to the downtrodden farmers who cannot eat what they produce. They extort the people in the name of taxation by government agencies. Sympathetically, Titubi renounces Moremi's spirit because she fought for the state and not the suffering masses. She initiates a peaceful negotiation between the farmers and the government and in the process, all detainees are freed from the police net. Marshall proposes to Titubi and they both serve as the symbol of peace and continuous linkage between the state and the masses.

Women of Owu

Synopsis

The ancient city of Owu is destroyed in the hands of the allied forces of Ife, Oyo, and Ijebu warriors. An encounter between two women and Anlugbua, a deified Owu war leader explains the destruction of Owu. Anlugbua is a deified god of war for the entire Owu race. Legends rhythmmed about him are that he (Anlugbua) protected the ancient city of Owu from war in ancient times. Ife/Oyo warriors waited outside the gate of Owu for more than seven years, anticipating the right time to attack. The cause of war is revealed in a conversation between Lawumi (mother of Oba Asunkungbade) and Anlugbua. Anlugbua wonders why Lawumi could allow enemies of Owu to open fire and raze the city of Owu into ashes. Lawumi emphasizes that the people of Owu are arrogant and disrespectful to the cradle of their existence (her father's town). She bitterly asks for the support of Anlugbua in avenging what she calls disrespect to the presence of her shrine within the walls of Owu. She alleges that Ife/Oyo soldiers should have spared indigenes of Owu when they ran to her shrine for protection. Gesinde, an Ijebu soldier compounds the women's suffering by announcing the sharing formula on how the women will be distributed to the war generals as slaves. Erelu and other women therefore conclude that the gods have failed their worshipers. The women are moved away from the ancient city of Owu as Anlugbua discards the effect of war, rendering it the destroyer of the universe including the gods.

The Place of History, Culture and Tradition in *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu*

History or events in history are situations in times past, documented, researched, and reflected upon as a guide toward positive societal change. The mental and physical behavioural pattern of a given people is reflected in inter/intra-personal relationships among the people. The identification of behavioural patterns being institutionalized as canons motivating societal growth remains capable of gravitating the people's cultural entity. The selected plays

are rooted in the cultural heritage of Yorubaland with language codes and behavioural patterns. The cultural and traditional heritage is a trans-generational order inherited through proper observation and participation by concerned people. Tradition like culture, remains the identity of the people simply because they keep religiously to the dos and don'ts of the tradition. Fascinatingly, Ododo (2014, p. 4) observes that human society is "defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine social habit, music and arts." Culture is susceptible to change, especially in this global age of civilization even though Okodo, (2012, p. 131) expresses that: "One principle of culture states that no culture is inferior to the other so far it can solve its problem within its environment." History, culture, and tradition are sensitive psychosocial realities in Femi Osofian's *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu*.

In *Morountodun*, Femi Osofisan utilizes two historical events in communicating the people's societal realities and these histories are: the myth of Moremi, an Ife queen who through her wisdom and attitude to take a risk, saves the entire Yoruba race from death claws of the Ugbo people; and the Agbekoya Parapo Revolt of (1968-1969). As a historical drama, it discusses the farmers' actions against the government of the day in Yorubaland. Moremi's undaunting spirit saves the entire Yoruba race from the dreadful hands of the Ugbo people. Titubi uses the same tactic as Moremi in solving the Agbekoya uprising of the 90s as the people resist the government officials turning the farmers into slaves in their land. In *Women of Owu* on the other hand, the ancient formidable city of Owu is destroyed because selected individuals agreed to send Owu into ruins for personal reasons.

Morountodun and *Women of Owu* are cultural play-texts with artistic flavour in narrations. The folkloric tradition of storytelling as modernized dramatization techniques of ancient times is employed. Moremi's mythical story is extracted with allusion to her courageous perhaps heroic deeds to save Yorubaland. Titubi exemplifies her courage by falling on the side of the oppressed farmers, rather than the state who commissioned her. No wonder she tactically denounces Moremi:

Titubi: And that was it. I knew at last I had won! I knew I had to kill the ghost of Moremi in my belly. I am not Moremi! Moremi saved the state; was the spirit of the ruling class... (p. 70).

Interestingly, throughout the play, the folkloric tradition of songs and dances is extensively reflected. Call and response in songs continue, to project the cultural codes of Yoruba storytelling art.

In *Women of Owu*, the destruction and agony experienced during the Owu war cannot be overemphasized. Erelu, Queen of Owu mourns the death of her five sons and the brutalization of her daughters by the warriors. The women continue their lamentation about their ill-fated reality. The two women encounter with Anlugbua only express what their eyes have seen and what their ears have heard:

Woman: we have seen the ancestor, Anlugbua!

Woman: what!

Woman: just now, over there! It's true

Woman: Both of us, we saw him! Spoke to him

Women: Ope o, Anlugbua! Salvation's arrived at last

Chorus leader: Come out there, young women of Owu! pole, all you who have lost your husbands and your innocence come out and....!

Woman: no, listen....

Chorus leader: cast off your despair, I say and with a song of defiance dare to look at the burning wreck, and salute our fallen men

Woman: No! No!

Women: no what?

Woman: we saw him but It's no salvation yet! (pp. 14-15).

The women tell others not to get excited over anything simply because there is no salvation for them. They are rendered helpless by the deity they worship. The women refuse to believe that their god of war can abandon them. She expresses that:

Woman: Anlugbua came out, but he has returned to heaven. We are on our own

Women: lair! impossible!

Woman: it's true ...

Women: he cannot abandon us like that, not him! Not our ancestral father!

Woman: he has! he left in defeat. We are on our own. (p. 15).

The women accept their fate since both their physical and spiritual belief system has failed them. The reality on the ground is that war has come and they (the women) have become the spoils of war.

Anlugbua's reaction to the situation on the ground is based on the fact that little or nothing can be done to revert the destruction already meted on his beloved land Owu. Interestingly, he preaches that Owu will rise again because there is nothing the gods can do about the level of destruction already inflicted. *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu* show the cultural positioning of women in Nigerian traditional society as they remain almost powerless against male prejudice. The women are powerless in the war situation against the city of Owu. Their voices become a significant tool for expressing their plight in the play-text. The war takes everything away from them except for their words and other communicative codes like proverbs, idioms, and figurative expressions rooted in Yoruba cultural heritage.

Textual Interrogation of the Socio-economic Issues Reflected in *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu*

Morountodun dictates policies of economic disparity between the rich and poor of the society. It mirrors the unfavourable condition of living within a capitalistic environment, and this grievously upset the peasants in the community against the blood-sucking tax policy of the day. Hence, the farmers live in perpetual hunger despite they are the producers for the rich exploiters. Rather than succour to the un-friendly socio-economic policy inflicting suffering on the farmers, they become thorns in the flesh to the government. The farmers represent the larger part of the society as they wallow in all forms of socio-economic injustice meted by the government, and its agencies. Eshiet (1989) cited in Ajidahun (2014, p. 148) infers that:

Morountodun makes a clinical exploration and analysis of the process whereby the masses are alienated from the wealth they create. It addresses itself centrally to class stratification and other satellite themes such as conflicts arising from the exploitative social structure, and the prurience and arrogance of the privileged class.

The socio-economic situation in *Morountodun* escalates because the ruling class in the society assumes a generic position in the running of the society.

Furthermore, the farmers are trampled upon and segregated as slaves working for the wealthy and controlling power of the ruling class. According to Olafisayo (2015, p. 44), these decisions reflect "the intrigues and betrayals of people's expectation by the government and its functionaries like the police, tax collectors and sanitary inspectors, who hold the people down in a terroristic grip." They provide no amenities to cushion the socio-economic hardship of the people. This is stated when Mama Kayode narrates her encounter with the governor:

Our roads have been so bad for years now that we can no longer reach the markets to sell our crops... your council officials and the Akodas harass us minute to minute and collect bribes from us. Then they go and build mansions in the city. Sanitary inspectors like Bamsun are Bloodsuckers... we have no electric and we still drink tanwiji from the stream. Many of our children are in jail for what your people call smuggling... (p. 65).

Indeed, the reflection above requires the influence of the dynamics in social change as a tool for positive revolution. Actions are to be taken against the government which insists on inflicting heavy strains on the meagre income generated by farmers. After taxation, the little they have left is still destroyed or taken by other government collectors. Mosun reacts in her encounter with the government agency thus:

Mosun: could my father tell the bullets to by-pass through our FARMLANDS, trampling our precious CROPS and our hand work harvest ... (p. 45).

The destruction of the farmlands, growing crops and harvests is inimical to the economic buoyance of the people simply because; "we said we couldn't pay tax, that harvest was poor, that we could hardly feed our children" (p. 51) Despite these situations, the government refuses to put up palliative measures to cushion the effect of the economic hardship. The socio-economic situation in *Morountodun* relates to current trending social issues like the Fulani

herdsmen, Boko Haram, and others in Nigeria and across the world today.

In *Women of Owu*, on the other hand, the people of Owu have a buoyant socio-economic system, strong enough to properly fortify themselves. However, the enemy warriors were not in a hurry to leave, believing that; the sieged village would eventually run out of resources and they (Ife/Oyo, Ijebu allied forces) would find themselves some sort of weakness to finally penetrate the city. Interestingly, the opening stage instruction in the play-text narrates the day after allied forces had taken over the land of Owu. The economic situation is properly defined in the first few lines of stage instruction as "an open space close to the city gate, which used to serve as the market but has now been demolished" (p. 1). The stage instruction emphasizes a destroyed socio-economic system left to be loot-able. A town without a trading place has little or no source of income left. The storage houses of the marketplace turn into prisons for the captives. The allied forces gave the market space a new economic purpose with political intentions. Subsequently, the allied warriors loot and sack the treasury of Owu town after the city is conquered. The warriors acquire resources like gold, iron, food, human and other raw materials. The war renders Owu town into a state it cannot recover from. The socio-economic capacity of a given geographical location depends on the territorial boundaries set around it.

Textual Interrogation of Political Effects of War in *Morountodun* and *Women of Owu*

Politics is the house of power, game, and conquest among interested individuals or a group of people at different levels of society. Societal strata, power struggles, and counter-reaction are great motivations for war. The political reality in *Morountodun* swivels around the need to bridge the social strata that engulf the glorified ruling class against the oppressed class. According to Uwadinma-Idemudia (2016, p. 6):

Femi Osofisan in this play down plays the political aristocratic Alhaja Kabirat from the lofty height in a seemingly public sphere

where she and her archetypes in the society are commonly found, to a private sphere of immobility where her voice and power are subjected by the whim and caprice of the superintendent of police.

Interestingly, Titubi (Alhaja Kabirat's daughter) springs into action by using Moremi's tactic to redress the Agbekoya uprising. She let herself get captured by the farmers just like Moremi by the Ugbo warriors. The risk taken is to eradicate the fire of the farmer's insurgency against the state as initially motivated by a political instrument in the person of the Superintendent.

Titubi's initial intention is to replicate Moremi's courage and tricks to sell out the farmers to the state. However, the plan changes drastically when she discovers her mother and the police contribute greatly to the continuous suffering of the masses over the years. She reacts by stating, "I have lived in the fire among simple folks, sharing their pain and anguish..." (p. 66). Alhaja, the market leader in connivance with government officials in person of the police superintendent deprived the suffering downtrodden farmers of required social amenities. The farmers rise to say no to such suffering as seen in the discussion between Superintendent and Alhaja:

Superintendent: ...The peasants are strong, and seemingly invincible because they are solidly united by the greatest force in the world: HUNGER. They are hungry, their children die of kwashiorkor, and they have risen to say no, no more!

Alhaja: It's a lie! No one has ever died of hunger in this country!...

Superintendent: They claim that you and your politicians have been taking off the profits of their farms to feed your cities, to feed your throat and buy more jewels... (p. 24).

This situation is eventually continued after Titubi returns with Marshal to the police station. She narrates her experience with the downtrodden farmers and juxtaposes it with her own opulent experiences as the daughter of the market leader who inflicts so much suffering on the people. She says:

I began to ask questions. I saw myself growing up, knowing no such sufferings as there. With always so much to eat, even servants feed their dogs... Yet farmers cannot eat their own products... and when returned weary from the market, the tax man is waiting

with his bill... it could not be just... in our house, mama, we wake to the chorus of lighting coins. (p. 66).

She therefore warns that fair justice must reign if the parties are serious about ending the war. "For there is no way you can win a war against a people whose cause is just..." p. 70. This implies that negotiation at the roundtable meeting helped in resolving the militancy of the Agbekoya uprising against undue injustice perpetrated by the government and its agencies. Titubi, instead of supporting the capitalist, links the two sides (bourgeoisie and proletariats) together in peace. She finds a means of ensuring harmony by strategically agreeing to peaceful settlements roundtable discussions while Marshal and other selected farmers break out arrested farmers in police custody across Yoruba states.

Unlike the internal crises described in *Morountodun*, *Women of Owu* celebrates the politically motivated war of hegemony championed by the Ife, Oyo/Ibadan, and Ijebu soldiers who insist that they must reduce the city of Owu to rubbles. The war situation is a revenge mission by General Okunade Maye, the Ife General, who lost his erstwhile wife to the harem of King Akinjobi the King of Owu. According to a woman in Queen Erelu's court, Okunade, "Maye besieged our city for seven full years because of a woman, and would not go away!" (p. 7). Okunade Maye takes up arms and unleashes loads of terror on the city of Owu. The allied force kills all the male folks in the land, both warriors and peasants. They destroy the shrine of the gods, loot the state of its treasures, and distribute surviving women among interested chiefs. The land of Owu is sent into extinction as survivors cannot remain a single entity anymore because they are now the casualties of war. This is reflected in Anlugbua's lamentation as:

... War is what will destroy you! As it destroys the gods. But I am moved and I promise, Owu will rise again! NOT HERE. Not a single city again but in little communities elsewhere within other cities of Yoruba land. Those who are going into slavery shall start new kingdoms in those places.... (p. 62).

Okunade Maye's warriors reduced the ancient city of Owu to nothing, forcing the remaining survivors to settle in Osun, Kwara,

Ogun and other states of the federation. The instruction on how the women will be distributed to interested chiefs is delivered by Geshinde, an Ijebu warrior. He defines the slavish journey of the women to them and this invariably sends the women into different deranged mental states. No wonder Orisaye displaces madness at the meeting with Balogun Kusa. This is a loss of the political power and strength enjoyed by Owu as a formidable city before the invasion by the allied warriors.

Struggle for Freedom in the Two Play-texts of Femi Osofisan

Mass struggle for freedom from the forces of oppression and injustice are unavoidable realities in the selected plays. The level of negligence, maltreatment, and dehumanization of the masses by the ruling or stronger class of society cannot be overstated. In *Morountodun*, every attempt by the downtrodden farmers to challenge the anomaly in the society is continuously met with force by the police who prevent the people's rights of movement and freedom of speech with impunity. It is as a result of this that Titubi switches sides and joins forces with the farmers to end the suffering and pain. Moremi and Titubi are characters interested in the freedom of the people. Moremi is caught up in between state conflict while Titubi is caught up in local struggles between peasant farmers and the state.

In *Women of Owu* on the other hand, the reaction of the women shows that they (the women) will be slaves to the reality and societal effects of war. There is no worthy new beginning to the effect of war experienced in ancient Owu. The women move out to pick up their shattered lives in realization of the fact that actual maltreatment, molestation, and abuse come from the recurring understanding of the situation at hand. Interestingly, Okunade Maye insists that the warriors unleash loads of terror on the city of Owu, leading the warriors to destroy shrines of the gods with people hiding in them. As survivors still struggling to survive, the women are distributed to interested chiefs and this is some positivity for the women still struggling to live. However, the pronouncement of death on Iyunloye (wife collected from Okunade Maye) helps to conquer old flames in the belly of the general struggling to free him from the traumatising effect of love's twirl.

Conclusion

In conclusion, destruction is the most frequent outcome of war perhaps, the most salient feature of it regardless of the gains in socio-economic and political acquisition by the stronger nation. Indeed, war kills people, destroys capitals, and damages the lands. War also destroys political and economic institutions at domestic, national, and international levels of interacting with a weaker society. War is responsible not only for the disappearance of states but also for the appearance of new ones. This is because war has a rejuvenating character. The demand of war and wartime mobilization increases productivity, and social coordination as it generates rewards for successful adaptation into rapid social change. The ancient city of Owu is one of the original seven cities of Yorubaland. *Women of Owu* showcases the destruction of lives and properties at both personal and state levels. The character of Okunade Maye should be shunned because he allows his emotions to guide and influence his use of power.

In *Morountodun*, the terrorist activity of the Agbekoya farmers is against the repressive attacks by the police. This inevitably paralyses the economic competency of the state and limits the politician's ability to grow the state. The need to find amicable solutions to situations and avoid circumstances leading to war cannot be overstated. War is antithetical to the growth of societies and it is important to employ nonviolent means of reaching compromise, rather than the destructive adventures of war as reflected in the selected play-texts. The character of Titubi in *Morountodun* should equally be emulated by relevant agents of the states as her mode of reasoning is effective in resolving the Agbekoya uprising. It is therefore recommended that the history of events past in Nigeria and across the globe be used to reform and redress different socio-economic and political challenges within ethnic groups in their war-sensitive situations today. Human management policies should not only shape the present reality of given societies but also reshape the thinking of world powers and the ruling classes. These inevitably regulate socio-economic crises like militancy in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram in the Northeast, recession, and global issues like Russia Ukraine war situation today. This study insists that humane

approaches should be employed in proffering solutions to issues rather than engaging in a war of attrition.

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