

# HUMANITY

## JOS JOURNAL OF GENERAL STUDIES

### ISSN 1595-4072

- A Christian Response to *Sharia* in Nigeria - D. Gwamna  
The Profile of Political Corruption in Nigeria Since the Colonial Era - M. Jibo  
Media and Democracy in Nigeria: The 4th Rep. Experience - R. Embu & J. Galadima  
The Continued Relevance of Strike as a Form of Industrial Action in Nigeria - S. Isiaka  
Human Rights and Economic Development: A Perspective - I. Ogboru  
Industrial Development & Rural Nigeria: A Strategic Approach - A. Abimiku & E. Anzaku  
Globalisation & Identity Formation: The Place of Historical Playwriting - E. Idegü  
Towards a Successful Retirement Life - N. Bot & R. Jat  
Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurship Qualities: The Nigerian Terrain - D. Jambol  
Business Information: Its Availability, Knowledgeability ... - G. Ugwuanyim  
Sociological Analysis of Gender Discrimination - O. Olujobi  
Towards an African Womanist Poetics - A. Akoh  
Women Movement & Democratic Change in Nigeria: An Assessment - N. Bot  
Analysing Style in Nig. English: Some Models & Theoretical Considerations - M. Azuike  
Standard Nigerian English or Wounded Nigerian English? - N. Ngochal  
Theatre & Conflict Management: 2 Experimental Nig. Plays Considered - R. Musa  
Repertory Theatre in an African Setting: A Case study of Sowande's ... - A. Akinwale  
Democratising Playwriting in Contemporary Nigeria - T. Iorapuu  
Qualitative Sustainable Employment: A Panacea for Genuine Development - D. Jambol  
The Effects of Pumpkin Leaves on Red Blood Cells - S. Odeh & M. Oluagbakan  
Asymptomatic Rotavirus Infection in Children in Jos - Nimzing, *et al*  
Electron Microscopic study of Liver Morphology in Acute Alcohol Toxicity - Ibu, *et al*  
A Review of the Various Applications of Ionizing Radiations - E. Ike & I. Sambo  
Reproductive Rights-Based Approach to Population Dev. in Nig. - A. Dashe & G. Dashe  
Cloning and Human Ethics - Umar, *et al*  
The Nature of Speech According to African Proverbs - O. Ojoade.  
Rhythms of Riddles - D. Musa

**VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2.**  
**NOVEMBER, 2001.**

**Editor**

Dr. D. E. Musa

**Editorial Board**

Dr. (Mrs) R. Aliyu

Dr. (Mrs) A. F. Miri

Dr. V. A. Adeula

Dr. J. A. Adeiyongo

Dr. S.G. Best

Mrs S.I. Onwukeme - Secretary

**Editorial Assistants**

Jeff G. Doki, B.A.(Hons), M.A. (Jos)

Ameh D. Akoh, B.A. (Hons), M.A. (Ibadan)

Victor A. Anyagu, B.A. (Hons), M.A. (Jos).

**Editorial Advisory Board/Consultants**

Professor J. O. Ojoade

Professor C. O. Onwuliri

Associate Prof. M. L. Ango

Associate Prof. J. S. Illah

Dr. A. O. Adelakun

**Editorial Address**

The Editor,

Humanity

Division of General Studies,

University of Jos,

P.M.B. 2084,

Jos,

Nigeria.

# HUMANITY

## JOS JOURNAL OF GENERAL STUDIES

### ISSN 1595-4072

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2, NOVEMBER 2001.  
(CITATION: (2001) HJJGS, VOL. 3, NO. 2).

Published By:

**DIVISION OF GENERAL STUDIES**  
**UNIVERSITY OF JOS**  
**P. M. B. 2084**  
**JOS**  
**NIGERIA.**



© DIVISION OF GENERAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF JOS.

Published: November, 2001.

ISSN 1595-4072

*All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted without the prior written permission of the publisher.*

**Printed in Nigeria By:**

Mono Expressions Ltd.,  
Y 316 Laranto Road,  
By Katako Bridge,  
P. O. Box 1591,  
Jos.

Phone: 073:611098.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

A Christian Response to <i>Sharia</i> in Nigeria	1
The Profile of Political Corruption in Nigeria Since the Colonial Era	14
Media and Democracy in Nigeria: The 4th Republic Experience	26
The Continued Relevance of Strike as a Form of Industrial Action in Nigeria	36
Human Rights and Economic Development: A Perspective	45
Industrial Development & Rural Nigeria: A Strategic Approach	53
Globalisation & Identity Formation: The Place of Historical Playwriting	60
Towards a Successful Retirement Life	70
Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurship Qualities: The Nigerian Terrain	82
Business Information: Its Availability, Knowledgeability and Usability: A Case Study of Small-Scale Enterprises in Plateau State, Nigeria	97
Sociological Analysis of Gender Discrimination	126
Towards an African Womanist Poetics	136
Women Movement & Democratic Change in Nigeria: An Assessment	144
Analysing Style in Nigerian English: Some Models & Theoretical Considerations	154
Standard Nigerian English or Wounded Nigerian English?	164
Theatre & Conflict Management: Two Experimental Nigerian Plays Considered	179
Repertory Theatre in an African Setting: A Case Study of Sowande's Odu Themes Meridian of Nigeria	189
Democratising Playwriting in Contemporary Nigeria	202
Qualitative Sustainable Employment: A Panacea for Genuine Development	213

## THEATRE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: TWO EXPERIMENTAL NIGERIAN PLAYS CONSIDERED

RASHEED A. MUSA

### Introduction

Irrespective of the sweeping criticism and limitations facing theatre, the utility functions of theatre are glaringly legion. Flowing from the above, this paper discusses the nature, causes and management of conflict and examines the social, transformational and experimental roles of theatre in conflict prevention, management and resolution. The two experimental plays under review are Osofisan's *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage* and Akanji Nasiru's *Come Let Us Reason Together*.

This paper concludes that the theatre is a social institution which can be effectively used for conflict prevention, management and resolution. Disunity, disaffection, hatred, rage, intrigue and deceit, ethnic, religious, political and economic crises and all incidences of social disorder can be managed through theatrical productions. Also, the dramatic prescriptions and descriptions of the two experimental plays, nonetheless, are veritable tools at providing solutions to the phenomenon of conflict especially in Nigerian societies.

### Theatre, Causes and Management of Conflict

Conflict is as old as man. It is also a global phenomenon which affects the social order. Problems associated with the nature, causes and management of conflict are often multidimensional and various scholars have contributed positively towards the proper management of conflict.

Ekong (1988:175) defines conflict as:

*...That form of social interaction in which the actors seek to obtain scarce rewards by eliminating or weakening other contenders. This may take the form of a fistfight, threats, legislation or total annihilation.*

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* also defines conflict as:

*... opposing forces that determine the pattern of events, or plot, of a literary work. The simplest form of conflict is the struggle of the hero (protagonist) against another person (antagonist). But conflict may involve, an individual struggle against nature, society, fate or conflicting forces within himself (Benton, 1977:77)*



Conflict is struggle for 'ascendancy' and it is the reality of human existence whose end product might be negative or positive. Interestingly, we have numerous theories of conflict which are propounded with a view to solving the phenomenon of conflict: economic and political theories, social and psychological theories, theory of deviant behaviours, industrial theory of conflict and protracted theory of conflict. All these theoretical positions explain the disequilibrium, disintegration, incompatibility, frustration, and disillusionment between two people or groups of people.

Conflict is so complex a concept that it can easily lead to war if not well managed and resolved. Thus, protracted conflict situation is what Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld (1989:3) define as:

*.... hostile interactions which extend over long period of time and sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity. These are conflict situations in which the stakes are very high.*

The First and Second World Wars, the Gulf war the Nigerian civil war, the Somalian civil war were all protracted conflict situations because the opposing forces lost human and material resources that cannot be accounted for.

Although it is not easy to categorize the types of the conflict in our organization and society, Ekong (1988:179) identifies three types of conflict which are village conflict, retaliation conflict and individual conflict. Scholars have also tagged conflict depending on the situations and events of such conflict. We have ethnic, religious, cultural, economic, moral, territorial, social, political, industrial, international, regional, national, emotional and psychological conflicts, among others.

The causes of conflict can easily be deduced from the nature of conflict itself. However, individual differences in perception of realities, difference in seeking solution to issues, difference in goals, objectives and social interest, lack of proper communication flow, religious, political and ethnic differences, economic inequality, industrial disharmony, difference in man's social order and so on, can cause conflict.

There are also various methods that have been recommended and adopted for conflict management. Some of these methods can be combined together or applied individually. Sumner (1906:18) has suggested:

*...the process of accommodation or antagonistic co-operation in which a high action of the reason is allowed to overlook lesser antagonisms in order to work together for greater interest. Truce, displacement (replacing one conflict with another); scapegoating, superordination (defeat or total submission of one of the forces), segregation, toleration and third party roles in compromise.*

A closer examination of the above inevitably tallies with the traditional ways by which African societies often resolve their numerous conflicts. For instance, the elders are often engaged in truce by holding meetings with different parties on issues of dispute. They can also segregate totally or relocate groups which are contending with each other. At this level, they serve as third party interested in conflict resolutions.

Assimilation process is another method of conflict management. According to Gordon (1964), assimilation is "the process by which group differences disappear completely. Mutual cultural diffusion ... reduces group conflict by blending differing group." Although assimilation is a slow process, it can easily lead to acculturation - changes in culture arising from constant contacts with other cultures. Nigerians have since imbibed the European mode of dressing. The Hausas, Yourbas, Igbos and even the minorities are now integrating culturally and this might go a long way to reduce perceived conflict and animosity between various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Conflict is inevitable in all human undertakings and it keeps groups alert to members' interests and such awareness helps to prevent future conflicts. Conflict would have positive effect on the society, organization and individuals if it is curtailed within reasonable limits or when it is well managed. Conflict could also increase group cohesion and make problems known. It is again an avenue for social interactions where misgivings can be corrected.

### Theatre and Conflict Management

Theatre as a social institution is one of the numerous institutions for conflict management. Before the development of literary drama in Nigeria, various traditional theatre forms had evolved among Nigerians in their various ethnic nationalities. In most villages, the sunset period was mostly used for story-telling sessions. All these narrative sessions have in them radical stories about human transformation and mutual co-existence. Among the Yoruba people, the Alarindo Travelling Theatre was widely accepted by the Yoruba and was even developed by many travelling theatres. The Tiv Kwagh-hir of the Benue people, the Yankamanci of the Hausa people, the festival of the Igbo people were and are still traditional theatre forms that unite, entertain and educate the people. They are also grand occasions for cultural exhibitions.

On the other hand, the development of the literary tradition has become contentious among literary and theatre scholars. However, Gbilekaa (1997:2) traces the origin and development of literary drama in Nigeria to the church. Equally too, the University of Ibadan, musical and school concerts and the 'Onitsha Market Drama' constitute major literary traditions of the Nigerian theatre. Onitsha Market Drama was even unique because of its dramatic productions which have pamphlets, novelettes, playlets and stories.

Literary tradition became popular in the 1950s and 1960s with the works of notable playwrights such as Ene Henshaw, J.P. Clark, Wole Soyinka and many more. The thematic preoccupations of most of these plays are again relevant to the audience and are crucial as conflict prevention strategies to Nigerians.



Alongside Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* for Nigeria's first independence celebration, Hubert Ogunde's *Song of Unity* strongly condemns crises and conflict. Instead, the play rhythmically preaches unity, love and brotherhood. This message runs through his pre-independence and post-independence plays.

The transformational role that Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Miri's play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I will Marry When I Want)* played in Kenya cannot be forgotten. The play was performed in November, 1977 at Kamiriithu Community Educational and Cultural Centre in Limuru town in Kenya.

Although the performance of the play was banned and one of the playwrights (Ngugi wa Thiong'o) arrested, the people have been reformed and transformed because the play:

*Attempted to interpret some aspects of modern Kenyan life to the average villagers in terms which the government authorities on the scene thought too provocative*  
(Cook & Okenimkpe, 1983:10)

The villagers really understood the play and took to the streets of Kenya demanding dialogue with the ruling government; thus, the transformative relevance of the theatre was felt. The passive and inactive observers of the government then became active and conscious of all government actions. Dialogue and truce were reluctantly resorted to by the Kenyan government.

Theatre for Development (TFD) is also another form of community theatre which has been effectively used especially in the Northern part of Nigeria for many social reasons such as entertainment, education and conflict resolution.

All plays most often through their playwrights set the dramatic actions of their plays through the deliberate use of dramatic conflicts to establish the positions of the contending forces (the antagonists and the protagonists), and towards the end of the play, the audience or theatre enthusiasts often ask the question: "what then is the dramatic resolution?" Theatre is essentially a conflict prevention and management institution. Ezra Pound recognises the utility of the artists when he posits that, "the artists are the antennae of the race, but the bullet-headed many will never learn to trust their artists" (*Punch*, 2000:30).

### Conflict Resolution in *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*

Since the Restoration period in the history of the theatre, morality plays have been trying to modify the need for human beings to understand the negative pedagogy and the natural effects of hatred, disunity, disaffection, dehumanization, persecution, war, crisis and conflict. These plays preach the joy of love and the unity of progress which are essential ingredients for man's development. Femi Osofisan's *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage* falls into the above category. It is also an experimental play due to the technical nature of its dramaturgy. The play is about a prospective couple whose marriage is seriously threatened by the conflict between their parents.

They are caught in the web of a growing disapproval to their marriage proposal.

Akanbi and Olabisi meet in the city and as lovers, they come back to the village to request the blessing of their families to marry and perform the traditional rites of marriage. However, Adigun, Akanbi's uncle is the one that starts the storms that nearly consume the two lovers:

- ADIGUN: Like twins they were.  
Then, suddenly, they quarreled, quietly, of course, like men.  
Only a few knew. Only the close ones.  
But no one could reconcile them again  
Not even me.  
We did not even discover the cause.  
And underneath. The quarrel grew and  
Festered like a hidden cancer, alas:  
Watching them closely, I knew disaster  
Was bound to come ... soon.
- AKANBI: And it did?
- ADIGUN: One dawn, your father was found on Iloto dead
- AKANBI: Dead? How? (Osofisan, 1986:14).

The above is the sarcastic way the story of the death of Akanbi's father, Afolabi, is recounted. Atanda, Olabisi's father killed Afolabi.

Akanbi becomes temporarily insane, and he explains very aggressively to Adigun the depth of love that he has for Olabisi. He becomes a love poet and a nightingale. Adigun cuts in and recounts how he, as Afolabi's brother, revenged by killing Atanda to atone for his sin so that the spirit of his brother would bless him.

- ADIGUN: Perhaps I grow old...
- AKANBI: And Atanda? What happened to him?
- ADIGUN: I killed him.
- AKANBI: Did he confess!
- ADIGUN: It was not necessary. I killed him, that was proof enough...  
(Osofisan, 1986:15)

Adigun represents Akanbi's family through his narrations. Titi, Olabisi's mother also presents the view from Olabisi's family after Babasoye's long story of Simbi and the handsome stranger, a story in the Yoruba myth.

- TITI: Alright, I will tell you then. The reason is blood.
- OLABISI: Blood?
- TITI: Do you recollect the manner of your father's death?



OLABISI: You've never told me.  
 TITI: He was murdered?  
 OLABISI: Murdered?  
 TITI: By the wild beast over there. By one blood-drinking hyena  
 Whom they mistakingly called Adigun.  
 OLABISI: Adigun, who is he?  
 TITI: You wouldn't see him. Not in the daylight, for his time is  
 spent in the forest mostly with other hounds and I wish he died there  
 I wish his body rot and rot in the forest.

(Osofisan, 1986:51-52).

This pensive recollection is about the dark trying period for Titi when her husband was killed by Adigun and she warns Olabisi to stay clearly away from the family of 'hyena'.

While concluding the play, the playwright through Akanbi and Olabisi, condemns the cannibalistic actions and stories of the past that often lead to division and disunity. The two lovers resolve to marry and begin a new life.

OLABISI: ...Happy my heart was as fresh as waterfall and I know at last  
 where I belong. Not to the blood of the past but the world of the  
 present, no, my life could not be lived for this one's sake or that one's  
 sake but for myself, for my happiness... (Osofisan 1986:56).

Akanbi also cautions Adigun to accept the reality of love, a moving spirit of reconciliation and peace, the adorable atmosphere of growth and unity as against the drumming for war- the relic of the deadly past:

AKANBI: Give up old man, your time is gone. Look! The sun's falling in the  
 West and in the Eastern sky, the new one is rising. Old man! The night  
 has come down for us. Your days were days of blood, violence and  
 death. With war cries, with hate, you fought to conquer lands, to  
 blood, to broadcast your manhood, to die leaving your names behind  
 like echoing thunders. You, Adigun, you were faithful to the law of  
 your age...

(Osofisan, 1986:66:67).

The new law of our age should be peace instead of war. The two lovers marry each other and another process of re-union is nurtured. The play preaches love and the need for humanity always resolve conflict, farewell indeed to the firing rage!

Both the readers and the audience who have read and watched the play performed have reacted positively to the positive dialectics of love the play preaches. Importantly, the overbearing

and parental influence on marriage, religious disharmony caused by religious fanatics are unnecessary conflict actions which have destroyed the peace and unity of human existence especially in the Third World nations.

Beyond chanting praises or singing old familiar melodies of war, this play conscientizes us and wants us to make the society a habitable place for all to live irrespective of race, tribe and religion. The concern of the playwright about love is a global phenomenon worthy promoting.

### The Dramaturgy of *Come Let Us Reason Together* on Conflict Situations.

Akanji Nasiru's *Come Let Us Reason Together* is another experimental play that falls within the precinct of agitprop. The play re-examines the lingering crisis on the Nigerian citadel of learning and its effect on the Nigerian nation. The play describes the antics and strategies often employed by the law enforcement agents, the university authorities, the students and all players in the academic environments, especially during crisis situations.

As a protest drama, the play calls on all and sundry to have a sober reflection on the violence in our higher institutions. The playwright captures the theme of the play:

*Come Let us Reason Together does not pretend to have a cure to the problem. But the play does invite us all- students, lecturers, university authorities, law enforcement agents - to pause and reflect in a sober objective manner. Recriminations cannot provide the answers: we have all got to work towards an end to the vicious circle* (Nasiru, 1987:7).

Perhaps, objectivity is a difficult thing to maintain during crisis period because each of the parties or groups will want even the dissenting voices to believe that they are fighting a just cause. The experimental play has six characters (One, Two, Three, Four, Five and Six) and each of these characters are the dramatic personae that act as press men, Vice-Chancellor, President of a Students Union Executive, Policemen and members of the crowd act as soldiers, protesters and students in most of the flashbacks of the play.

The play is creatively episodic and has five episodes. Each of these episodes has a touching title that helps to remind ordinary readers of the need to be cautious during conflict situations:

HOW MANY TIMES

THE FIRST TIME IT HAPPENED.

"CONSCIENCE IS AN OPEN WOUND ONLY TRUTH CAN HEAL IT"

THIS SEASON OF VIOLENCE



## VIOLENCE IS ONLY GOOD FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE

In the first episode, the play recounts in historical manner the numerous crises in the Nigerian universities with captions such as:

FEBRUARY 1971:	TRAGEDY ON UNIVERSITY
APRIL 1978:	UNDERGRADUATE KILLED
OCTOBER 1982:	MISTAKEN IDENTITY: FOUR STUDENTS KILLED

Character Four captures the mood of this episode by his lamentations:

FOUR: When a nation goes burying the cream of its youths at such alarming rate, it is time to speak intimately to one another (Nasiru, 1987:14)

This episode starts with the familiar song of "Blowing the wind" and ends with character five's melancholy: "How many deaths will it take till we know that too many students have died?"

The second episode of the play, *THE FIRST TIME IT HAPPENED*, dramatizes the tragic end of Jasper Koyo, a student in the Premier University. His tragic fall is as a result of the demonstration embarked upon by the students against the Republic Hall Catering Officer whom they accused of fraud. The negative effects of people's tongue of flame in a crisis situation as demonstrated by one of the students' leaders is also worthy of consideration:

THREE: ... Surely it is neither the intention nor the expectation of the nation that we receive education. Only to become "yes-men" and robots. We have spoken out boldly on matters of national and global significance in the past, and we dare say that one such action on our part helped to rescue the nation from selling its sovereignty through a dubious act (Nasiru, 1987:20).

The response that follows this speech is spontaneous as no student will want to be taken for a ride. This speech sets the fire that eventually engulfs the university community.

The third episode exposes the nonchallant attitude of the Vice-chancellor and the aggressiveness of the Police Commissioner in a crisis situation, while episode four further describes the recurrent violence in the larger Nigerian society:

**VILLAGE UNDER SIEGE**  
**SOLDIERS ON THE RAMPAGE AT AGEGE**  
**MASSACRE AT BAKOLORI** and the celebrated burning of Late Fela Anikulapo Kuti's house, are reported by Character Five:

Citizens Fela Anikulapo Kuti: His "Kalakuta Republic" razed to the ground- by "an unknown soldier" (Nasiru, 1987: 45).

Episode five continues with the conflict prevention sermon and the need for sober reflection on the part of all and sundry. Character One condemns the violent man and admonishes all to be wary of them because "the violent man is the desperate man, the man who has nothing to lose." This play ends with Character Five singing and supported by all the other actors:

FIVE: How many, deaths will it take till we know  
 That too many students have died?

ALL: The answer, my friends, it lies in our hands...  
 The answer lies in our heart...  
 The answer lies in our will (Nasiru, 1987:53-54).

This play has been produced in many higher institutions such as the Universities of Ilorin, Jos and Ibadan. The outcome of most of these performances were reflectively electrifying, and the play is one of the best from the Nigerian playwright. The theme of the play is accurately relevant and socially transformational: the language is excellent as it captures the metaphor of our existence, the dramaturgy is experimental as it changes the face of the Nigerian theatre due to its numerous technical possibilities.

## Conclusion

Conflict is inevitable in the social process and its destructive effect on human race is so great that it cannot be quantified. So, any weapon that can be used to prevent, manage and resolve conflict should be developed and adequately utilised. The theatre of conflict prevention, management and resolution is, therefore, another veritable way of checking the menace of conflict in our society.

In this paper, we have shown clearly and unambiguously the social, transformational and experimental roles of theatre in conflict situations. It is highly instructive for all governmental and Non-Government Organizations on conflict prevention, management and resolution to begin to introduce theatre as part of their programme of events during the course of preventing and resolving conflict. Such theatre could be the performance of an improvisational play, a playlet, a dance drama, a music concert, a published playtext and so on. Conflict consultants can also sponsor the production of the two plays discussed in this paper as doing this will help to theatrically and dramatically re-educate all stakeholders in conflict situations. We can watch, laugh and learn at the same time.



## References

- Benton, W. et al, (1977): **Encyclopedia Britannica**. Chicago: Oxford University Press.
- Brechter, M. & Wilkenfeld, J. (1989): **Crisis, Conflict and Instability**. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Cook, D. and Okenimkpt, M. (1983): **Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of his Writing**. London: Heinemann.
- Ekong, E.E. (1988): **An Introduction to Rural Sociology**. Ibadan: Jumak Publisher Limited.
- Gbilekaa, S., (1997): **Radical Theatre in Nigeria**. Ibadan: Caltop Publications (Nigeria) Limited.
- Gordon, M.M. (1964): **Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins**. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nasiru, A. (1987): **Come Let Us Reason Together**. Ijebu Ode: Shebiotimo Publications.
- Osofisan, F. (1986): **Farewell to a Cannibal Rage**. Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited.
- Summer, W.G. (1906): **Folkways**. Boston: Ginn and Company.
- The Punch**. (2000) Ikeja: Punch Nigeria Limited, October 10th.