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1.

THE THESIS AND SYNTHESIS OF PRODUCTION PHILOSOPHY IN THE AFRICAN LITERARY THEATRE DIRECTING

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Abstract
What type of production is this? Is the performance a tragedy or comedy? Is this performance a revival of the neo-classical theatre or a little to classicism? This production to me has no clear-cut directorial concept or am I wrong? The director calls his performance a theatre of the absurd but we see the development of good plot laced with sensational conflicts and a resolution in the total theatre tradition, where then are the absurdist's elements? From the 'general' to the 'specifics', endless questions are being asked in the theatre after performances and most of the time, replies usually come with unsatisfactory comments and remarks. The five questions above are not 'arrant nonsense' but they are the product of dramatic curiosity and theatrical dissatisfaction on the part of the critical theatre audience. The failure of, and lack of good production philosophy in play directing, an art humbly led by the play director is, therefore, partly responsible for bad and artistically unsatisfactory performances. Considering the dramatic and theatrical relevance of production philosophy in the theatre, this paper, through the deductive and analytical methods examines the thesis and synthesis of production philosophy in the African literary theatre directing. We observe that a performance will make meaning to members of the audience if it is critically articulated within a well – thought out

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11.

WOMEN AND GLOBAL PEACE IN CLARK'S *THE WIVES' REVOLT* AND KOFOWOROLA'S *QUEEN GHASENGEH*

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Abstract
Breakdown in peace and tranquillity in our society has been found to be exacerbated by men's approach, which has been observed to be heavily laden with force. This paper presents a position that if women were given a slice of the opportunity that was available to men in the governing process, the world would be a better place to live in. In this direction, this paper appraises the roles played by women in J. P. Clark's *The Wives' Revolt* and Zikky Kofoworola's *Queen Gashengeh*. It also explores their laudable and invaluable contributions to the advancement of peace in our society. The paper observes that inequality and restricted political opportunities granted women globally is the bane of the lost peace in our society. This paper concludes that readdressing and correcting the imbalance, as well as harness the untapped reservoir of wisdom deeply seated in our women is what our nations need for the attainment of global peace. This we found in the antecedents of some women who have served our nation in various capacities in the past. Consequent upon this, this study recommends women participation in the attainment of global peace.

Keywords: Global Peace; Women; inequality; Participation; Empowerment.

Introduction

Female gender participation in governance and in all spheres of human endeavour is invaluable for the achievement of peace in any society. This is premised on the fact that our process of achieving peace is lope-sided. A lot of premium is placed on the notion that the pursuance and achievement of peace is the singular business of the male gender. This mono-thought is largely why we have continually been enveloped in perpetual conflict and unresolved crises. The value of peace cannot be overemphasised in development especially as involves both men and women. This work examines the relativity of peace to development, using activities and contributions of some women in the achievement of peace and tranquillity in various endeavours, either in their past or present areas of operation.

This paper observes that global peace can be achieved, even better, through the advancement of the participatory roles of women, hence this effort to examine the irreplaceable role of women in the achievement of global peace. However, most of our examples are drawn from African sub-region, using J. P. Clark and *The Wives' Revolt* and Ziky Kofoworola's *Queen Ghasengeh*. This paper underscores how the two literary giants have used their play to advance the capabilities of women in development and promotion of global peace.

Operational definition of terms and concepts

Gender is a broad concept that has been used to classify many human endeavours. It has been used in relation to the grammatical classification of languages, while anthropologists have also adopted it in classifying cultural categories. Gender is defined in Encarta Dictionaries (2009) as: "the sex of a person." This indicates that it could be either male or female. Lorber (2006, p.115) posits that: "Gender creates the social differences that define "woman" and "man." In the context of this paper, however, gender classification refers to women.

Peace has been variously defined as a situation of freedom from war, conflict or crises; a state of calm, quietness from noise, freedom from anxiety and disagreement among people or groups of people. Ikenga-Metuh (1999) cited in Okoli & Akpa (2009, p.4) submits that: "Peace means beneficent adjustment of harmony between the individual and his creator on the one side, and his fellowman on the other." Mala (1992) also notes that peace means:

> ...freedom from or cessation of war or hostilities, freedom from civil commotion and disorders, public order and security, freedom from disturbance and perturbation; quietude, tranquillity, undisturbed state; freedom from quarrels or dissension between individuals; a state of friendliness, concord, amity; freedom from mental or spiritual disturbance or conflict arising from passion, sense of guilt; absence of noise, movement or activity; stillness, etc. (cited in Okoli and Akpa 2009, p.3)

Conflict is described here as serious disagreement occasioned by differentiation in opinion that is detrimental to peaceful co-existence in any society while Soanes (2008, p.128) describes *'crisis'* as: "a time of severe difficulty and danger." An environment that is crisis ridden is obviously doomed.

Society has been variously defined as a conglomeration of groups of people who decided to co-habit for the purpose of achieving an objective. Encarta Dictionaries (2009) define society as: "a structured community of people bound together by similar traditions, institution or nationality...customs of a community and the way it is organised."

Global refers to 'worldwide.' ***Globalisation*** is the emergence of a global society. It is described in *Microsoft Encarta* (2009, p.1) as: "the growing economic, political, technological and cultural linkage that connects individuals, communities, businesses and governments around the world." John Fien in his contribution to UNESCO on globalisation posits that globalisation as an "ongoing process that is linking people, neighbourhoods, cities, regions and countries much more closely together than they have ever been before."

If there must be the kinds of rewarding linkages that were enumerated above, then the world needs peace. Thus, achieving peace should not be a mono-gender burden but rather, a bi-gender affair (males and females). Perhaps this is the reason why male involvement, which has been a dominant one, is fast becoming boring and counter-productive. The need to redirect our approach by looking in the direction of the female gender explains why this paper strongly advocates women participation in our global activities for the attainment of global peace.

What is the essence of Peace?

Our society needs peace for progress; progress being forward movement and improvement. We need peace for development; development being the evidence of improvement in the condition of people of a given community. The world has become a global village, what affects a particular society has a chain effect on the others. Peace in a given community and lack of it in another is an indication of lack of global peace. Therefore, we need peace for growth, forward movement, development and improvement in our society for the achievement of global peace.

Factors militating against Peace in our Society

A number of factors have been identified to be responsible for the breakdown of peace in our society. These factors range from ethno-religious differences, as is the case in the current impasse in Jos and among the Tiv and Jukun in Nigeria to political misconception, which manifests in corruption, maladministration, nepotism, ethnocentrism and embezzlement.

Another factor includes social misplacements; these are visible in armed robbery, lies, prostitution, broken marriages and some more that are found in Galatians 5: 19-21. All these breakdowns abound on a daily basis in our societal activities. A flip through pages of our daily newspapers reveal boundless of reports of criminal activities. These criminal occurrences have been identified and traced mostly to man's negative attitudinal tendencies towards things that are kept in his custody. Accusing fingers are pointed at men as culprits in these multifarious dislocations; hence men were seen as the cog in the wheels of our peaceful co-existence. This is why this paper advances an alternative conduit (women) to achieving global peace. Overtly, this alternative has been treated with less attention in the past; women have always been the stones rejected by the builders, but we say here without fear of contradiction that they are reliable cornerstones as we shall later observe in this work.

Women in history

The existence of woman is dated back to the period of creation. The Biblical account of the creation gives a vivid description of how women came to be. Genesis 2: 21-23 states:

> And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh

> thereof; [22]And the rib, which the Lord God has taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man. [23]And Adam said this is now the bone of my bone, and the flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

The above gives an account of how the first woman was created. But one is very surprised that in spite of the fact that the creation of women was not that which in any way placed them in the position of a subject but of a helper, nothing should therefore exclude them from being part of the global process.

After creation, women started to face hostilities, peradventure, because of the purported role the first woman was said to play which led to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. A deep theological examination of the said role, considering their position as at the time of the incident obviously exonerated them from any blame. Man, as the head and to whom the directive to stay away from the tree of life was given, carries the guilt than the woman.

From this standpoint, let us do an historical overview of the place of women in our society by examining the barrage of hostilities that the societies have meted to them.

The place of women when examined from the historical angle, places them within the society on a lopsided pedestal. In history women were treated as mere chattels of men, properties and more ridiculously, instrument of sin. Musawi (1997) elucidating on the place of women in the traditional society, quoting from the temped version of the divine book, before the advent of Islam, observes how women are described thus: "Among every thousand men appears one beloved of God; but amongst all the women in the world there is not to be found one who is included in God's grace and favour" (Abdulahi 1999:46). This shows that from the point of that history, women were never placed in the position of honour and respect. They were even regarded as beings that fall out of the favour of God.

This unfortunate position was/is held by African men too. This explains why women are barred from some serious traditional events that involve rituals and some rites. They were also excluded from decision making processes. In most African societies, the long held position by men was that women are mere chattels, subordinates and slaves who must obey men directive. Adu's lamentation reveals thus:

> To begin with, one will state that society's concept of womanhood is negative. The reason behind such conception can be found in customs, traditions and beliefs which have, over the years contributed in keeping woman under subjugation and to make them generally inferior to men: the institution of marriage with its related issues of bride-wealth, child marriage, polygamy, purdah, widowhood and inheritance of property, fertility and puberty rites with specific reference to female circumcision. (1999, p.5)

In India, among the Hindus, women's rights were completely obliterated. In fact, women were described as creatures that are not to be found in the society where success is the watch word. Malik, in his paper 'Wives of the Holy Prophet, Women leadership: An Islamic perspective' describes the perception of the Hindus about women. His paper reveals the perception that: "There is no creature more sinful than woman. Woman is burning fire. She is the sharp edge of the razor. She is verily all these in a body...Men should not love them" (Abdulahi 1999: 46).

The position of Islam with regard to women's place in the society was ambiguous. Ambiguous in the sense that they make one feel that the place of women in the society as far as Islamic ethics is concerned is that which keeps women in perpetual confinement, whereas their clerics claim otherwise. From the Holy Qur'an we capture this directive, which says:

> And stay quietly in your homes, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former time of ignorance (period before Islam) and establish regular prayer and give zakat and obey Mohammed his messenger. And Allah only wishes to remove all abominations from you, ye members of the family, and to make you spotless. (Qur'an 33: 33: 1251)

A critical examination of the above statement presents a clear picture of religion roadblocks on the way of women, a strategy that some Islamic religious faithful have used to ostracise their women from public view as well as their participation in any communal developmental activity. Although, some Islamic scholars argue against the statement above, they describe it as an instruction meant specifically for the wives of Mohammed, but the use of the plural word 'houses' in the text referred to more than the abode of the wives

of the prophet. In the like manner, the statement 'obey Mohammed h messenger', left no one in doubt that the statement is a general one to Muslim women, more so, when Mohammed is considered as the model to l emulated.

If these were some of the positions held by some people against tl womenfolk under the cloak of the law, religion or tradition, and for th reason they were ostracised from occupying leadership positions, then the is much to be desired. If this position represents that of the larger society, the the desire to achieve global peace will suffer some jeopardy. A socie witnessing a lopsided peace is best described as a society without peace. It against this backdrop that we are advocating repositioning of women for tl achievement of unmitigated global peace.

Setting aside the earlier observed negative tendencies against wome we tried to find out implicitly the positions of the orthodox religio (Christianity and Islam) with regard to the place of women within tl religious ambience. Our investigation shows clear and unambiguo positions of the two major orthodox religious groups. It is clear that wome are not relegated in totality but suffer exclusion in the hands of male religio advocates. For instance, in the Holy Qur'an 49:13 Allah says:

> O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female and have made you nations, and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.

In the same vein, Genesis 2:24 of the Bible states that: "Therefore shall man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they sha become *one flesh*" (KJV 1994:4) (emphasis mine). One flesh connotes equalit

Overtly, all the evidences contained in the orthodox religious quotatio above show clearly that women were never to be relegated by any religio Considering the foregoing, it is our candid opinion that women do n deserve to be relegated and they should not, because they are by no mea inferior, given their level of intelligence and capabilities.

Tobrise-Evwierhoma (2001, p.1) in her introduction in Salami's *Emota* (A Benin Heroine) (2001), a play elucidates on some salient reasons why may look as if women were unassertive. She illuminates that:

> Women fight or quarrel amongst themselves because they want to keep their homes. Dedication to husbands is at the root of most of their disagreements. Most women are not entrepreneurial because they want to be available to serve their husbands when he needs them. Even a woman's greetings in praise of her husband acknowledge his lordship and infinite a control over her life and destiny. Even when the woman desires to be enterprising, it is in order for her help meet her domestic needs at home and for a peaceful co-existence.

The observation presented above by Tobrise-Evwierhoma, though an emotional outburst, captures the true societal cage in which women were enveloped. However, deeper than the scenario presented above, women contributions, holistically, even though we seem not to value them, presents an undisputable fact that they have contributed more to peace processes in our society. They have been seen to bring more happiness, peace and tranquillity to a larger number of homes than the disintegration which many people have perceived their contributions to be. In fact, Akoh (2015, p.165) underscores that: "the women's potentials for revolutionary and proactive leadership are not in doubt..." In the same direction, Acholonu (1995, p111) cited in the works of Yacim (2015, p.192) describing women from the motherist perspective describe their weapon as: love, tolerance, mutual cooperation of the sexes, not antagonism, aggression, militancy or violent confrontation..." All these underpin the organisational qualities that are embedded in women as harbinger of peace.

In term of intellectual endowments, some U.S researchers; behavioural scientists in 1995, conducted a research into the IQs of males and females, they came up with a stunning result that would surprise any person who has been treating women as inconsequential elements. The research, which was specifically to find new support for differences in brain function during language processing between men and women, churn out the result culled from Archive articles Encarta Yearbook (for events of 1998 and later) is reproduced below:

> Hypothesis holds that women use both halves of the brain to process language, whereas men's language processing is focused in the brain's left half. The researchers measured brain activity in 19 men and 19 women as the subjects took tests that

> demanded different language skills. A scanning technique known as functional magnetic resonance imaging, which makes it possible to measure changes in blood flow, allowed the researchers to see precisely which parts of the brain the tests stimulated. On some of the tests male and female brain activity was similar, as, for example, on a test measuring visual skills, which asked the subjects to determine whether two strings of letters had the same pattern of upper and lower case letters. On a test that required the subjects to think about the sounds of words, however, male and female brain activity differed dramatically. When the men were asked to judge whether two nonsense words rhymed, they all showed a surge of brain activity in the left half of the brain, in a region of the frontal lobe. For 11 of the women, performing the same task boosted frontal lobe activity evenly on both sides of the brain. In the remaining eight women, left-brain activity was higher, but not as high as for the men.

The above buttresses the intellectual capabilities of women. The demonstrations of some of these capabilities are what we shall examine in the literary texts that we have selected in the preceding segment of this work. We will then see the merit of our position in advocating women inclusion in the advancement and achievement of global peace.

Women in the quest for Peace in *The Wives' Revolt* and *Queen Ghasengeh*

In this textual focus, a critical re-appraisal of the peace role that women played in the literary works under review, which buttresses the fact that women have proven to be role models in the advancement of peace will be brought to bare. More importantly, the nakedness of the fact that women are more meticulous, decisive in the pursuance of their peace missions and that they are less susceptible to corruptible overture that men easily fall prey to will be highlighted as we voyaged into the theatrical expedition and the literary works of Clark and Kofoworola. Let us consider the synopsis of the two plays.

Synopsis of *The Wives' Revolt* and *Queen Ghasengeh*

The Wives' Revolt

Erhuwaren is a community that is peaceful with all the citizens peacefully co-existing until the elders (obviously men) of the land came up with an obnoxious law that erodes the fundamental rights of their women. The

women protested against how some money, given to the community by an oil company operating in the land is shared unevenly into the three major categories within the community; women, males and elders. However, their protest did not go down well with the elders who describe it as repudiation against the constituted authority. The elders to come up with stringent laws, banning from roaming the streets goats, which are the domestic animals kept by women. The women of the land feel humiliated by the decision and decide to stage a walk-out on their husbands. For the number of days that the women were out of the village, men are left to carry out, in addition to their responsibilities, all the household chores including the care of the children, duties that are hitherto performed by women. After a while, men could no longer cope, so they have to abrogate the law and seek for the return of their women. The women return and they live in peace thereafter.

Queen Ghasengeh

The king of Ghasengambi Empire, King Ghasen who is known for his desire for the expansion of his empire expects from his wife, Queen Ghasengeh an heir apparel to the throne (male child) who will succeed him. The Queen has a baby boy right, but she goes into an oath of secrecy and promise with the mid-wife who takes delivery of the baby, to announce that, the baby is a girl. The Queen takes the baby away to her parents and ensures that the baby, Prince Ghasengashen is raised and trained in her parent's kingdom; Bateyazinga land, under the tutelage of her parents whose lineage is matriarchal and are more peace loving. As a result of the Queens action, the Ghasengembi Empire is thrown into confusion and uncertainty. The Queen's intention is to change the blood-letting orientation and the overbearing chauvinistic attitude of the king of the Gashengambi Empire, a patriarchal society to a peace embracing society. In accordance with the Queen's plan, the boy is raised and trained for twenty years in her mother's parents kingdom before he is returned to his parent's empire obviously, trained to shun violence. On his return, three women groups from the three regions of Ghasengambi land, the Queen and the elders of Ghasengambi land requests King Ghasen, the lion of Ghasengambi Empire to abdicate his throne for his son, Prince Ghasenghasen. The enthronement, which is masterminded by women of the land, mark the beginning of era and a new down for the entrenchment of peace and promotion of peaceful co-existence among the people within and around the Gashengambi Empire.

Women's role in achieving Peace in Erhuwaren in *The Wives' Revolt*

Women in *The Wives' Revolt* are critical in showing their displeasure against the law promulgated by their men, which banishes goats that are reared by women from the town, under the pretext that the women in the community are using their goats to perpetrate witchcraft by merging with their herd in a vanishing act (p.5) The reason behind the decision to banish the goats is in reaction to the protest against the unequal sharing of the oil money that is given to the community by an oil company, which is launched by the women in the community. In actual fact, the women of Erhuwaren observe that their men are greedy. They express this thus: "We know who has the money has the title in this land. That is why you men are today keeping to yourselves a great part of the money that belongs to everybody" (p.6). This shows the level of mistrust and the general negative view that women hold against men. Their position simply shows that men are corrupt and should not be put in the position of governance. This is why the women in Erhuware voice out their displeasure in the unequal sharing of the money that is meant for the community and the decision to ban their goats from the community as an impingement on women's rights, which they view as pure injustice. In registering their protest, they decide to stage a walk out of the town protest.

Peradventure, if the women of Erhuwaren, who staged a workout, had failed to return to the community, life would have been boring, miserable and problematic for their men. The Erhuwaren women's protest led to the repeal of the obnoxious law, banning movement of kinds of domestic animals around the city, the decision which drove the women out of the city in the first instance. In the situation that we are examining in the Clark's literary work, we see men acknowledging the fact that women are vessels for the maintenance of peace in any community. Hence, they repealed the law that led to the breakdown of peace in the community. Excerpt from the decision of the community leaders is abridged below:

> ...To bring peace and harmony back to town, back to the home,...the obnoxious law banning all manner of goats from our city and anywhere near its precincts is hereby revoked and consigned to the place where all unhappy things are better left and forgotten...By the same token, our womenfolk whose insight into these matters passes the understanding of all men, deserved the specially fatted cow...no award is too much for this singular set of women who in fearless opposition to an

> unjust law, staged a walk-out on all their men, bringing life to a standstill, not even sparing their children. (p.59-60)

A surreptitious study of the way of men in resolving crisis or solving any knotty issue, reveal dint of force. This we observe leads to loss in relationship, wherefore peace is put in jeopardy and development hampered. One feature of peace is that it is feminine in nature. Peace is never achieved by force. We therefore see women's approach to the cause of peace, which has been noted to be devoid of force, rancour or acrimony as soothing and worthy of adopting.

Clark's style, using a community crisis as a hypothetical example underscores the fact that problem solving is an exercise that should commence from the grass root. The playwright being a Nigerian and a Niger-Deltan, uses the play as a metaphor to reveal the current socio-economic and political situation in the Niger-Delta, Nigeria, where the issue of uneven distribution of oil money and neglect has been causing furore. The protest voice, of a woman in the play, perhaps, represents that of the Ijaw Militant Youths as voices of the down trodden Ijaw people of the Niger-Delta, who, like the Erhuweren women protest loudly against uneven distribution of their community wealth. Comparatively, men who are the accused in Erhuweren depict the leadership style in Nigerian, which fingers men as the major culprits in various kinds of mismanagement. The situation where women protest loudly the discrimination and injustices meted to them by their men are what Emenyonu (1980) cited in the works of Chukwukere (1995, p.6) describes as "...apparent imbalance in the portrait of [the] woman...in fiction."

Women's role in achieving Peace in Ghasengambi Empire in *Queen Ghasengeh*

In Kofoworola's *Queen Ghasengeh,* women's effort at bringing peace to the Gashengambi Empire is launched by the Queen, an approach that we describe as feminism. Queen Ghasengeh in applying her peace mission arranges with the Mid-wife who takes the delivery of her son to inform the crowd of the loyal citizen, courtiers and members of the royal family who came to rejoice with the Queen of the birth of a baby girl as against the baby boy she has. The reason for her action is: "to protect the sovereignty of the empire; to keep our empire strong, united peaceful and economically viable" (p5).

Obviously, the Queen's stratagem as presented by Kofoworola in this play is a portrayal of the potent powers of women reproductive mechanism as a weapon for the enthronement of peace in the land that was hitherto known for blood-shedding in the name of empire expansion. Also, Queen Ghasengeh's use of 'word' in the text to replace 'war' ostensibly describe that peace is enthroned not through war and blood shedding but through dialogue (word).

The playwright's creative instinct presented in this work showcases one of the notable subtle methods that women have been employing in pursuing their peace mission; no violence, no destruction. This shows that when it comes to resolving knotty issues, women's tactics are better. Coincidentally, the choice of the 'word' which is contained in the Queen's directive to other women through her maid in her speech: "Tell them Zainok (Queen's maid), they should instruct their family member choose the WORD" (p.73) as a preferred alternative weapon to war for the enthronement of peace is in tandem with the power of the word that is described in (John 1:1 KJV). The Queen Ghasengeh's directive passed to the womenfolk of Ghasengambi Empire demonstrates the subtle approach of women to the enthronement of peace.

Another dynamic approach that women adopt in achieving their missions is calling attention to reasoning. Queen Ghasengeh demonstrated this when she calls the attention of the king to give ears to the voice of reasoning that opposed war. She says: "...The life that is lived in pain and agony as a result of war and bloodshed is not worth it. (p17) Obviously this in contrast to the king's position that: "if you want peace, prepare for war" (p.17). King Ghasen like every man would only pretend to be oblivious of the fact that avoidance of war is the antidote to sustainable peace. Most unfortunately, the position of King Ghasen has and is always the ideological standpoint of our political leaders. They believe that blood-shedding and wanton killings are the only way to protecting political dynasties.

It is fascinating to note that the way women go about pursuing their peace mission is always neat. They are ever very organized, tactful, and subtle devoid of obfuscation. Unlike their men counterpart whose approaches to crisis resolution are always laden with force. Women's congregations are normally devoid of any serious ceremony or undue official protocol that characterises men's organisation. They hold their meetings in the market place, in the farmland or any open place where they have little space; in most cases where they carry out their daily activities. We capture this in *Queen*

Ghasengeh as contained in this stage direction that is reproduced here: *"(In appearance with Zainok (her maid) on a farmland with women labouring on the various aspects of farming occupation)"* (p.63). This shows that the women met in a farmland where Queen Gashengeh herself, who in this case is the leader addresses other women. Her word was not violence but full of hope:

> My dear fellow women folk; I, Queen Gashengeh of the Ghasengambi Empire; the lioness of the Lions; the womankind of the mankind; I am here to grant you the knowledge by which we shall put an end to the woes of womanhood from time immemorial. (p.63)

Women in their characteristic manner, approach issues in a sharp, witty and straight to their business way whenever they have any issue to pursue. This explains why their action produces quick result, because they are always resolute. In most cases too, when they protest, you observe an instantaneous result. A case in point was the Aba women riot of 1929, where the women protested the imposition of tax by the colonial masters and the revolt popularly referred to as "The "Aba women riot", a protest of the colonial taxation policy" (Wikipedia, 2010). In going about the protest, women of Aba walked naked through the streets of Aba and the colonial masters had no option but to repeal the tax law against women.

Coincidentally, a similar scenario was witnessed in Nigeria when a female Minister, then Minister for Information and Communications, charged members of Nigerian Federal Executive Council to toil a line of honour by doing what was right. This bold initiative brought about the turnaround action that led to the swearing in of the then Vice President as the Acting President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria when the absence of the then President occasioned by ill-health created a vacuum in governance. This singular action speaks volume about what women are capable of doing.

In the like manner the Gashengambi women tactically put an end to the high-handedness and blood-letting reign of King Ghasen who was asked to open the "calabash of character and destiny" which in African traditional means that the incumbent king must commit suicide. The king, who is well aware of the implication of asking him to open the calabash of character, seeks the intervention of womankind for him to live. He pleads with Queen Ghasengeh thus: "Ghasengeh! Queen Ghasengeh. The Lioness of Ghasenghambi Empire, deliver this mankind through your womankind" (p.149).

Queen Ghasengeh being aware of the peace mission that women have been planning springs into action, an action which ignited the flame and down to heart passion of womankind in bringing about the needed peace in the land. In her enthusiasm she says:

> I will, my dear King Ghasen, I will not allow you to peep into the calabash. It is full of blood. But you must abdicate your throne for your son Ghasenghasen. It is for this purpose we shall sacrifice the wicked desires of human heart to break the course of death and sorrow. (p.150)

This statement, even though a theatrical enactment, attests to the power of women as the vessels of peace. Queen Ghasengeh, here as the leader of the womenfolk in Gashengambi land, accepted the responsibility, using the might of womanhood to save the Empire from the impending communal calamity. This same feat was performed by the Amazon women of Dahomey and Queen Amina of Zauzzau, in Nigeria did in the time past.

As a rider to the above literary works, we cite here some pragmatic examples that attest to the activities of some women who have occupied positions of leadership in the past and at present. But first let us consider the roles of women in development.

Women in the global service to humanity

Citing works and lives of some women who have excelled in their areas of endeavours are the pragmatic examples that we will be unfolding next. Who are these women and what are their contributions to the development in their various societies? We will classify them into the milieu during which they existed i.e. the traditional milieu, which we classified as historical and those that lived in the recent centuries we are in.

Historically, we recall with nostalgia the heroic roles played by Moremi, a legendary Queen in Ile-Ife, Western Nigeria who brought peace to Ile-Ife by surrendering herself to be taken as captive by the Igbo who has been tormenting the Ife community. In the captivity, she studied the antics that the Igbo warriors have been employing to defeat the Ife warriors whenever their town was invaded. After she had been sufficiently educated she fled from the Igbo Kingdom to teach the Ife warriors how the Igbo could be defeated. This was how the Igbo warriors were defeated by the Ife warriors and the peace, which had eluded the land for long, came back through the intervention of a

woman. This account is contained in Ogunbiyi Yemi's paper 'The Popular theatre: A tribute to Duro Ladipo in the Ogunbiyi Yemi edited works; Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A critical source book.' There he quoted copiously Samuel Johnson's historical account of the legendary history of Moremi.

Queen Amina of Zauzzau whose historical state is Kaduna in the Northern part of Nigeria, in the 16th Century, was described as a woman who: "was noted for stepping where men dared not. As the ruler of Zauzzau she made conquest and waged battles against her neighbours" (courtesy Sister City Commission 2008). The Amazon of Dahomey and Emotan, a Benin heroine, from Benin kingdom in the southern part of Nigeria, would not be forgotten in a jiffy for their roles in bringing the much needed peace and joy to their various communities. This is just to mention a few of such legendary heroines whose antecedents we learnt through oral literature - the story-telling literary/theatre tradition that was predominant in Africa.

Other living and late women legends of our century who contributed to the sustenance of global peace include Indira Ghandi (1917-1984) of India, who ruled India as a Prime Minister for 11 years (1966-1977), Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister who served from 1979-1990, and Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia, who assumed mantle of political leadership in Liberia from 2006 to date.

Indira Ghandi was part of the India National Congress that spearheaded and fought for independence from British rule. She coordinated all defence activities during a border war with China. Some of her peace mission include: resolution of a bilateral dispute with Pakistan when she ordered the withdrawal of troops on the 25th of February, 1966. She wrote to President Johnson of America, requesting him to end air strikes against North Vietnam on August 12, 1966. One of the very inspiring and a valiant speech, that depicted her as a dogged fighter was the speech she made the night before her assassination, cited in Encarta Premium (2009). She said: "I don't mind if my life goes in the service of the nation. If I die today, every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation." This definitely is a statement from one who laid down her life so that her nation can witness peace.

Margaret Thatcher, the first female British Prime Minister who served for three consecutive times in Britain was not of less a valiant quality, she demonstrated that what a man can do a woman can also do, if not better. One statement she made in one of her speeches, quoted in one of the London newspapers; Daily Mail, shows the type of substance she was made off. She said: "I am not hard. I am frightfully soft. But I will not be bonded" (Encarta

Premium2009).

One of her numerous achievements was the lowering of the direct income tax, reduction of unemployment rate from the year 1986 and her emphasis for the encouragement of free market economy and many others that space may not allow us to enumerate.

Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia, who is the first female President in any African nation, has as part of her achievements the enthronement of the much needed peace in Liberia since she assumed as the President of Liberia in 2006 till today. Because of this feat, she was honoured with the highest civilian award in US Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2007.

A one-time Speaker of Ghana National Assembly, Joyce Adeline Bamford Addo is praised always for the way she has been conducting the affairs of the Ghana parliament. In the same country Ghana, is another woman of substance, Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Mrs Betimould Idrisu, whose judicial activities has been commended and the first female Vice-Chancellor in Ghana, Professor Nana Jane Opoku-Agyeman, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, did a lot to turn around the institution.

Grace Alele-Williams was the first female Vice-Chancellor appointed in the 80s in Nigeria. Her administration was commended for restoring the peace that had eluded the troubled University of Benin, Nigeria during her tenure as the Vice-Chancellor of that institution. Late Professor Dora Akuyili, the former Director General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (*NAFDAC*), and a one-time Minister for Information and Communication in Nigeria was commended for her tireless role in *NAFDAC* and during her ministerial disposition when she advised the Nigeria Federal Executive Council members to take a morally right and constitutionally correct decision by empowering the Vice President to function as the Acting President pending the return of President Yar'Adua whose absence then was occasioned by ill health. This is to mention just a few.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Giving the antecedents and the roles that women have played and are still playing (both dead and living) as enumerated in this discourse, it has become crystal clear that placing women in sensitive position of leadership is an antidote for the achievement of peace in our society. This however is not to say that there are no corrupt-minded and conflict exacerbating women, whose exploits are inimical to peace process, the fact remains that those who

are good are in the majority. It is therefore stemming from this that it is suggested that women should be better repositioned in our society for the achievement of the much desired global peace. Women's activities and involvement should no longer be limited to activities at the home front, our orientation has to change. Hence, I shared the emotional concern of Mazrui (1993, p.103) who notes that:

> ...women have always paid the price of war and the sacrifice of patriotism. Women have always paid the higher price of peace and compassion. Even in death there should surely be female empowerment... the strategy of redemption needs to go beyond liberation and beyond centring and move towards genuine power-sharing between the two halves...male and female.

Against this backdrop, our society should start the process of re-positioning women for the promotion of global peace. This is evidenced in the fact that women have proved to be the last resort when the society derails. They have at all times served as the fortress that the men run to for refuge whenever the outside world becomes impossible and choking. They have been noted to have provided the needed comfort and succour for the men when the society has hurt them so badly. Undisputable facts have presented women as dependable ally when charged with the responsibilities of governance. They have been seen to be less prone to manipulation, they are wittier, pragmatic, credible, believable, team-workers, risk-takers and emotionally considerate. There is human face in their dispensation of justice. They do not harbour rancour and acrimony. In addition to this, women who have occupied positions of leadership have proved beyond reasonable doubt that they are more than capable to execute effectively, competently and flawlessly any assignment given to them.

Given the foregoing, we recommend that our society should start thinking of re-invigorating, re-energising and re-positioning women for the promotion of global peace, using the following criteria:

- Empowerment of women from the grassroot; elevate them from the status of mere caregivers to professionals.
- We should give a boost to the feminist crusade by obliterating from our thinking gender bias and promote gender equity in all spheres of our lives.
- Women must be given opportunity to have access to higher education.

- Offering scholarship for women to pursue higher education should not be limited to indigent females.
- We should put in place vibrant legal reforms that will make women to enjoy gender equality.
- Ensure greater participation of women in politics and governance in terms numbers and quality.
- We should imbibe the political culture of men getting used to and accepting woman leaders.
- Give greater consideration to women's views in decision making.

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12.

GENDER EQUALITY AND THE NEED FOR AN EGALITARIAN SOCIETY: A STUDY OF TRACIE-UTOH'S *OUR WIVES HAVE GONE MAD AGAIN* AND J. P. CLARK'S *THE WIVES REVOLT*

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Abstract
Feminism has taken different forms at different times. Some are sympathetic to the women fold, hence seeking to bring some sort of changes in the position of women. This form of feminism challenges the idea of male dominance and the oppressive tendencies experienced by women. Other forms aim to correct the misguided notion of fight for gender equality as propagated by some bourgeois women. These forms of feminism candidly indict the oppressiveness of some materialist women who like their male counterparts have taken to segregate, marginalize and subdue both the common women and men alike. These capitalist women only aim to make a career out of feminism. They misplace the priority of womenfolk for selfish aims. Using *Our Wives Have Gone mad Again* and *The Wives Revolt*, this paper seeks to highlight the different forms taken by African playwrights in their presentation of female characters in their fight for liberation. It looks into these two different forms of feminism in order to determine the factors which propelled playwrights to take a particular side in their fight for gender equality. It weighs the actions taken by the culturally propelled patriarchal men and