

LARGER THAN HIS FRAME II



Further Critical Studies and Reflections on
Olu Obafemi

Edited by:
Duro Oni
Sunday Enessi Ododo

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Department of English,
University of Ilorin

'Larger than his Frame II: Further Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi'

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DEDICATION

To

The eternal memory of
Pa Emmanuel Buraimoh Obafemi

and

In enduring salutation to
Mama Hannah Omorewo Obafemi,

for

Begetting 'Jagun-Gogorogo' -
A literary riddle of all times.

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POSTHUMANISM AND THE POSTHUMANIST PROTOTYPES IN SELECTED PLAYS OF OLU OBAFEMI



By

AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye, Ph.D

Introduction

The various unexpected and deliberately orchestrated subcultures and refractions which are often negative are constantly affecting our humanity. They have led to the assumption that our humanity is dead. Whether this is a fallacy or not, the desirability or otherwise of the theoretical construct of Posthumanism will continue to be a subject of discourse. Indeed, the death of our humanity remains a clear affirmation of the eroding essence of Humanism which remains at the epicentre of human codes, ethics, freedom, progress, rights, values, and so on. Humanism rejects extremism, dogmatism, superstition and validating in the process, man's power for rationalism. Humanism is philosophical as well as ideological. It is psychological as well as political. Humanism also has its firm root in literary studies since "its coinage in the 19th century by Friedrich Niethammer" (Marbaniang, 2009: 474) although the origin of Humanism can be traced to the 13th and 14th centuries Northern Italy, where it later spread through continental Europe and England (see Grudin, 2019: 1).

Certainly, to humanise is very good and if de-humanisation is now happening at local, national and global levels, the various negations, contradictions, and paradoxes within the praxis of Humanism make the birth of Posthumanism inevitable. Hence, a study on Posthumanism cannot be ruled out in literary studies. In spite of the essence of Posthumanism and its accompanying intellectual successes in the Euro-American literary studies, much attention has not been given to Posthumanism in the Nigerian literary studies. This chapter, therefore, examines the main themes and tendencies of Posthumanism and the posthumanist prototypes in Olu Obafemi's *Suicide Syndrome*, *Naira Has No Gender*, *Scapegoat and Sacredcows*, *Dark Times Are Over (A Topical Drama)* and *Ogidi Mandate*.

The Essence of Humanism and its Pitfalls in Local, National and Global Spaces

It is important to trace the core essence of Humanism and the factors that led to its pitfalls. First, is Lamont's (1997: 1) critical submission on the notion of Humanism which is seen as, "a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science and democracy". Lamont (1997: 1-2) further provides ten propositions in the Humanist philosophy which are summarised below:

- (1) Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics of attitude toward the universe that considers all forms of the supernatural as myth.
- (2) Humanism draws especially upon the laws and facts of science; believes that humans are an evolutionary product of the Nature of which we are a part; that our minds are indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of our brains; and that as an inseparable unity of body and personality we can have no conscious survival after death.
- (3) Humanism, having its ultimate faith in human beings, believes that we possess the power or potentiality of solving our own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision.
- (4) Humanism, in opposition to all theories of universal determinism, fatalism, or predestination, believes that human beings, while conditioned by the past, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action, and are, within certain objective limits, the masters of their own destiny.
- (5) Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships.
- (6) Humanism believes that the individual attains the good life by harmoniously combining personal satisfactions and continuous self-development with significant work and other activities that contribute to the welfare of the community.
- (7) Humanism believes in the widest possible development of art and the awareness of beauty.
- (8) Humanism believes in a far-reaching social program that stands for the establishment throughout the world of democracy, peace, and a high standard of living on the foundations of a flourishing economic order, both national and international.
- (9) Humanism believes in the complete social implementation of reason and scientific method; and thereby in democratic procedures, and parliamentary government, with full freedom of expression and civil liberties, throughout all areas of economic, political, and cultural life.
- (10) Humanism, in accordance with scientific method, believes in the unending questioning of basic assumptions and convictions, including its own.

experimental testing, newly discovered facts, and more rigorous reasoning.

Almost in all facets of human endeavours, Humanism and its positive features can no longer protect the core values that sustain human beings. There are several pitfalls which are happening globally, nationally and locally, and which call to question the destruction of human lives and values. It is important to examine some of them:

- (i.) In an experiment carried out in India and presented in a film titled *Humanity Experiment in Public* (2014) by Varun Pruthi, the place of humanity and its values are questioned. The lead character in the film purportedly turns himself to be an accident victim. He wears make-up depicting that he has been hit by a careless driver who ran away. Curiously, vehicles are passing by him, an ambulance equally passes by him and passers-by also ignore him. His emotional shout of "Help! Help! Help!" can still not make people to offer assistance. No single person offers to help. The passers-by are all pretending and as he bleeds on profusely, showing blood stain all over his body, he feigns death and a minute later, he "resurrects", cursing and insulting people that they are wicked, and that shame should be upon all of them for refusing to offer him assistance. This experiment has shown that we offer no assistance to our neighbours and it re-echoes the reality of the fact that our humanity is dead (Pruthi, 2014).
- (ii.) In India also, a woman is married to five brothers of the same father and mother and in turn, she sleeps with them and even celebrates the pleasure of doing that. Recalling that her mother was also married to three brothers and this ancient Indian tradition of polyandry in Northern India can be viewed by others as barbaric yet, it is an expression of culture by them (Sokoya and Adeoye, 2013: 41).
- (iii.) Polyamory is a term that is used to describe a situation where couples openly share lovers through acceptable terms and conditions. This term also accommodates other variants such as bipoly, cellular family, clan, compression, condom contract, cowboy, ethical slut, exclusion jealousy, handlasting, metamour, pansexual, polyfidelity, primary, relationship anarchy, triad and wibble. Polyamory is operational in the Euro-American axis. Indeed, polyamory has a website – openminded.com and as at 2016, UK alone has 36,002 members out of the total membership of 180,000 (Appleyard, 2016: 8-9).
- (iv.) Among the nomadic Tuareg tribe in the Sahara Desert, there is a culture that allows spinsters to discreetly have several lovers before marriage (*Sundaysun*, 2015: 30). This culture has called to question the place of

morality in the 21st century Humanism.

- (v) Technology has also condemned man's claim for decency and sanity. For example, sex toys are now used frequently by women for sexual satisfaction despite their religious, medical and cultural prescriptions. Halim (2016: 12) has written extensively on the health implications and purported sexual satisfaction posed by sex toys. This is also extended to fake buttocks, fake breasts, fake hair, fake eyelashes and so on, which Oyetimi (2013: 18-56) has also contextualised.
- (vi) In Huangluo village, South-west China, women are allowed to cut their hairs once in a lifetime. On this, Oyeleke (2016: 23) concludes that, "a woman in China holds the Guinness World Record for the longest hair. The world's longest documented hair belongs to Xie Qiuping which measured 18 feet and 5.54 inches in May 2004".
- (vii) Okonoboh (2016: 2) examines various dangerous happenings and "Oddities in the Houses of God" such as slaps, physical assault, sexual perversions, bodyguards'/bouncers' parade, sale of holy water/handkerchief/anointing oil and charging money for special services. It is important for us to examine the bizarre as well as the unexpected behaviours happening in the houses of God in and beyond Okonoboh's (2016: 2) examination:
 - (a) congregation of people eating grass in the name of God;
 - (b) underwear anointing mechanism;
 - (c) holy water/handkerchief/anointing oil and preaching for sale;
 - (d) cleric impregnating 20 women;
 - (e) pastors sucking women's breasts to ward off evil;
 - (f) a Muslim cleric being begged, and in turns, by women seeking children to impregnate them;
 - (g) pastors preaching from the casket;
 - (h) an alfa engaging women in 3-day sex deliverance;
 - (i) a church member being made to eat a snake; and
 - (j) stepping stone: a pastor standing on members while preaching.
- (viii) The menace of underage betting in the manifesto of "Baba Ijebu", the popular lottery syndrome in Nigeria and the world at large. Akintoye (2017: 35) has expressed her disgust on the seemingly lazy attitude of underage bettors who are destroying the very best of the African culture.
- (ix) The poetics of bloody art in which an artist from Western Sydney, Australia, Rev Mayers uses human blood to "paint animals, imaginary creatures and also families and had sold them at good prices" (Osinusi, 2016: 24). Rev Mayers is also notorious for using his blood to draw a tattoo on the buttocks of ladies and this has, indeed, demeaned our humanity.

- (x) In South Africa, the nine-year-old Sanele Masilela claims that he has been instructed by his ancestors to get married to a sixty-one year old Helen Shabangu. Molloy (2014: 2) reveals that, "in spite of his tender age, Sanele's family acquiesced to the marriage, gifting £500 to the bride and a further £1,000 for the wedding day itself".
- (xi) Gayism, Homosexuality, Lesbianism and Trans-gender conditions are beginning to be celebrated and adjudged as acceptable norms in our society. In Nigeria, the popular Snapchat celebrity, Bobrisky is an example that cannot be ignored. Nwaeze (2018: 2) reveals that prior to his complexion transformation, the Snapchat celebrity's skin colour was just as dark as most Nigerians until he suddenly turns snow white... everyone believes he is gay as he continues to mention his mysterious boyfriend who has been his sponsor. The same situation is rampant in America and Europe where Gayism and Lesbianism have been legalised.
- (xii) In Nigeria, human beings are being used for rituals on a daily basis while kidnapping has become the order of the day.

The above shows some typical examples of the pitfalls of Humanism and these pitfalls are re-inventing themselves, wearing different approaches and molds across cultures.

The Contexts, Forms and Brands of Posthumanism

Posthumanism is, in the critical context, neither the death of Humanism nor the celebration of its non-existence. However, Posthumanism celebrates the pitfalls noted in the sub-section above and our main concern is to examine this in literary studies as it concerns drama. Cudworth and Hobden (2017: 5) support the notion that, "Posthumanism has been used in three principal ways: in the sense of a world after humanity; as forms of body modification and transhumanist 'uplift'; and, our own usage, in the sense of a world comprised of the more-than-human". Braidotti (2013: 23), another critical voice in the Posthumanist Studies, also traces three important and inescapable relationships of the posthuman to Posthumanism.

These are:

- (1.) Moral philosophy
- (2.) Science and technology
- (3.) Anti-human philosophy

It is difficult for the philosophies of morality, science and technology to be at par, yet, the danger of ignoring science and technology will make the entire world to be

dull, uninteresting and redundant. The researcher also agrees that, Posthumanism which is a fall out of Humanism, is indeed, an anti-human philosophy. An extensive context of Posthumanism, its forms and brands has also been researched into by Ferrado (2013: 26) who also considers various sites and silos to arrive at the following seven variants:

- (1) Antihumanism – critical or condemns traditional ideas about humanity and the human condition.
- (2) Cultural Posthumanism – condemns archaic concepts of human nature to develop – technoscientific knowledge.
- (3) Philosophical Posthumanism – examines the ethical implications of expanding the circle of moral concern and extending subjectivities beyond human species.
- (4) Posthumanism Condition – the destruction of human condition.
- (5) Transhumanism – develop the technologies that eliminate aging and enhance human intellectual, physical and psychological capacities in order to achieve a “posthuman future”.
- (6) AI Takeover – a variant of transhumanism, that human will eventually be replaced by artificial intelligences. Humans should accept eventual demises “Cosmism” – building and supporting strong artificial intelligence.
- (7) Voluntary Human Extinction – seeks a “posthuman future”, that is, a future without humans.

In his continuation of the essence of Posthumanism, Ferrado (2013: 26) avers that Posthumanism

has become an umbrella term to include (philosophical, cultural, and critical) posthumanism, transhumanism (in its variants as extropianism), liberal and democratic transhumanism, among other currents), new materialisms (a specific feminist development within the posthumanist frame), and the heterogenous landscapes of antihumanism, posthumanities, and metahumanities.

After periodizing and historicising Posthumanism through the essence of geopolitics of the Posthuman, Francis Fukuyama's non-posthuman future, critique of Humanism, the technological culture of Posthumanism, the cyborg rights and wrongs, ethics of undecidability, Miah (2007: 21) concludes that:

The history of posthumanism has no obvious beginning, middle or end point in philosophical thought. Indeed, the current stage of theoretical interventions on this topic seems comparable to where postmodernism was located in the early 1990s. Indeed, this analogy extends to the potential divisiveness of the concept within and across

disciplines... posthumanism is understood as a critique of humanism.

Ecological and environmental issues, in the metaphor of “nonhuman others” that housed various animals, their behaviours and man's relationship to them have also been researched into by Evan Maina Mwangi. He conducts a research on the Postcolonial animal and evaluates this within the Posthuman ethics, calling for, “a call for the humane treatment of nonhuman others”. He analyses “texts that imagine a world where animals are not abused or used as sources of food” and also expands his submission that:

The Postcolonial Animal becomes, then, a way of refiguring both the animal and the human, in a postcolonial context, against European traditions of humanist thought. I view postcolonial African writing through a posthuman lens to reject humanist ideals that failed to incorporate the African subject. Instead, posthumanism allows us to take a position that rejects anthropocentrism and the attendant human hierarchies. (Mwangi, 2019: 1-5)

The above submission demonstrates that the treatments meted to animals also vary from one continent or culture to the other. Thus, animals are also accommodated within the expanse of the Posthumanist manifesto in which trees in the forest have also been appreciated as heroes and kings of all time in the fight against climate change.

This brief theoretical overview has indeed, shown that Posthumanism:

- (1.) has a clear link to the unending innovations and discoveries in the sciences;
- (2.) is cultural and its variants can be seen in the dynamism of culture, its structure and superstructure;
- (3.) celebrates unrestricted freedom;
- (4.) negates Humanism and at the same time, it is a fallout from it;
- (5.) cannot guarantee moral excellence for morality itself remains a subjective castle in philosophy; and
- (6.) evaluates the changing nature of our environment and its inhabitants.

However, this theoretical summation has also shown that, much critical work has not been carried out on Posthumanism and its relationship to African literature. Nonetheless, this chapter is going to use the work of Obafemi in applying Posthumanism to literature from Africa.

Olufemi Obafemi and his Dramaturgy

This chapter concerns itself with a major area of Olu Obafemi's writing: his plays

and the defining moments of their conventions, and the mechanics of their dramaturgies. This author directed and served as Assistant Director to Olu Obafemi in the direction of some of his plays, as well as taking on roles as directorial consultant and supervisor (at artistic level) of some of the plays of Olu Obafemi, apart from being a member Ajon Players.

The metaphors of the chameleon, eagle, rainbow and tortoise are apt in describing the dramaturgy of Olu Obafemi. This is because a new play from Obafemi is not a reinvention of the main themes and tendencies of an existing play but a deliberate creation of a new style, a new dramaturgy – the mechanics of which relate to local, national and international dramaturgies. For example, *Suicide Syndrome* in a play where class struggle, a fight for the Proletariat, the resistance of the bourgeois and celebration of the ideology of Karl Marx's Marxism is privileged; while *Dark Times Are Over?* (A Topical Drama) relates the actuality-reality dramaturgy to us and dramatizes our daily worries through “dramatic summation of various situations”. Adaptation and the social relocation of D. O. Fagunwa's *Àdìitú Olódùmarè* into the global space of the English Language through Yorùbá myth, folklore and ethics take centre stage in his *Love Twirls of Àdìitú and Iyúnadé*. This play of love, betrayal and power is a synergy between Yorùbá culture and its place in the postcolonial and posthuman sensibilities. Olu Obafemi presents a different dramaturgy in *Scapegoats and Sacredcows* with his aesthetics of subversion, in which human and materials objects cohabit and alternate to advance the plot of the play. Without legislating for theatre directors, human beings are expected to be transformed to animals – Tortoise, Hare, Fox, Antelope, Leopard, Elephant, Chimpanzee and others, the zero sum game of which relate dialectically to the human animals, the dictators that the play ultimately attacks. Unfortunately, the social justice, democracy and orderliness that the play anticipates fail to materialise and this failure relates to the essence of Posthumanism. Interestingly, Obafemi's *Naira Has no Gender* treats a supposedly trivial issue – a wedding to expose the psychology of the capitalists, the love for money and the ruthlessness attached to its accumulation. This character-driven play graduates slowly from the traditional African setting to celebrate contemporary impunity and disequilibrium between “the haves” (rich) and “the have nots” (poor). Re-writing to preach the essence of re-living, Olu Obafemi's *Ogidi Mandate* is a manifesto for peaceful co-existence among warring parties. Historical subversion is the core essence of the dramaturgy of *Ogidi Mandate* because losers and winners of war are reminded that living together peacefully will be beneficial and that love and forgiveness will resolve many socio-cultural and ethno-religious crises, engulfing and tearing neighbours apart.

Posthumanist Prototypes in the Selected Plays of Olu Obafemi

In this section, Posthumanist prototypes (objects, metaphors, human beings and so on) are discussed in relation to the selected plays of Olu Obafemi.

(a.) Posthumanist Inhuman Condition of Retention Camp and Reformation Centre

Olu Obafemi makes use of two types of prisons in two of his plays. In *Scapegoats and Sacredcows* for example, the retention camp is a place where innocent union leaders, justice crusaders and human rights activists are detained. The prison becomes a retention camp of mockery by characters 221 and 222 in the play. The dialogue below, which is in pidgin, demonstrates this:

221: My brother... Na di only history many people here fit remember.

Na so. Dat na why dem call this place retention camp.

222: Retention what?

221: (*Makes a musical rhythm out of it*). Retain your body; you go retain mind. Retain your mind; you go retain your life. (*Goes on laughing*) My brother, life na retention camp o.

222: (*Exasperated, but a little less tense*) So, you must like it a little here then?

221: (*Surprised in turn*) Like it then? Like what then?

222: This place. This rotten, stench plank in this damned notorious ditch of a camp. This verminous maggoty dump. This dungeon! This hell of a place. This...

221: Haba! Make you no hate-hate so. One time, na only small difference. If it worse pass this oh, na we we. From under the bridge with small konkere on your roof you fit move to nowhere from your crowded street one day. With one single bulldozer you fit no get even bridge over your head. One time, this place fit be paradise o! (*Pronounced*) Pa-ra-dise? (Obafemi, 2003: 3)

The simplicity of the interaction between 221 and 222 points to the fact that we are all living in the prison and this is an antihumanist manifestation in which man, unsure of what will happen the next moment, is actually in the retention camp of insecurity, kidnapping and money ritual.

Other than the first "purchased judgement" in *Dark Times Are Over?* (*A Topical Drama*) by Judge in the play, who ensures that his Nephew is released and flown abroad, the People of Odajuland changes the corrupt Judge and the old judicial order through "the People's Court", appoints a new Judge known as Agbe to try the Cultists and Rapists and this restores order in Odaju land:

AGBE: Ladies and Gentlemen, we are in a democratic era; this is the people's court and you are the people. I can deduce from the majority that you want Yepa I to be taken to an institution where he can be reformed. So, you and you (*pointing to the policemen*) take him. Yepa I is hereby sentenced to 21 years in prison. (Obafemi, 2015: 45)

The prison literally represents a reformation centre during the democratic era, becoming a retention camp during the military era. The retention camp and the reformation centre are instruments that harbour the innocents while the accused are left on our streets to commit other crimes, all celebrating the antihuman tendency of Posthumanism.

(b.) The Posthuman Ruthless "Officers"

A character known as ITS – Inside-of-the-Stomach, who is a supposed Lieutenant Colonel, the Chief Interrogator and another character, Officer in *Scapegoats and Sacredcows* are repressive characters and agents of the military junta. They terrorise prison inmates, kill them and are enthusiastic in carrying out the instruction of the State in their own little dark corner. The stage instruction and dialogue below, which show the conversation between ITS and Officer describes the posthuman ruthless officers:

He paces up and down the narrow corridor, slapping his shinning black shoe with his swagger stick... He begins to shake his head as the inmates roar with laughter. ITS is taken aback. He then fixes his eyes on Gafa. He hisses in total disgust . . . He moves swiftly and pulls Gafa. The withdrawing inmates make to move, but Gafa restrains them with a signal. They retreat to their bench standing. They increase ITS' sense of mystery about Gafa with the Gbongborokun Song...

ITS: Korofo

OFFICER: Yessah

ITS: Wet am small (*Pointing at Gafa. He makes funny motions around Gafa's neck as if to creak it. 222 winces, but shows no fear. The inmates grumble very loudly*). Okay Korofo, small-small. Na big man, alright. (*To Gafa*) Are you now ready to co-operate?... And it was not my fault I luckily escaped ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Now, I have five years more to retire. Haven't I tried? Haven't I? I will be Forty next year. Many Generals left at Thirty-Five. But me, (*Exhausted. Panting*) I... me... no title. Meritorious service for nearly twenty-five years. At the end of, just towards my last term, you want to ruin me with accusation. I, a killer, a killer. Soldier job is to kill. But I never kill off the battlefield. Even, I have NEVER been on the battlefield. And it is

not my fault you hear? I cannot stage my own war, just because I am a brave soldier. All these years, hoping four or five stars will come than another tribe will secede. Then, ahen! A war... (Obafemi, 2013: 16-26)

Such is the life of the Nigerian military officers whose anxieties rest squarely in tormenting and maiming prisoners instead of fighting at warfronts. The DPO, Corporal and Officer in *Dark Times Are Over?* are conspiratorial agents of state brutality even as they use that opportunity to “help themselves” and subvert criminal investigation while punishing the innocent citizens in the process.

(c.) **Anti-cultural Posthumanist Exploitation, Killing and Raping**

Humanism condemns exploitation, killing and raping. These crimes negate or violate human essence and can be described as the manifestation of anticultural behaviours. *Suicide Syndrome* is the reality of the unchanging syndrome of exploitation between the capitalists – the oppressors in governments and the voiceless majority (market women, unemployed graduates, artisans and workers). Exploitation often leads to dehumanisation and eventually to the rape of humanity. The dialogue among Son, Daughter, Director, Graduate and the Workers in *Suicide Syndrome* captures the suffering that man is subjected to through exploitation:

SON: Don't know. But Father left the job before they finally threw him out of his wretched job. He said he was no longer willing to be used for nothing while we remain poor, and hungry. He grumbled aloud about how his energy wanes; his back groans without reward from the factory. All sorts of things. He said he would just like to end it up, quietly and stop humiliating his children. He talked about suicide.

DAUGHTER: (*Re-emphasises to drive the point home*). He fixed his eyes on the bowl of 'gari' and the 'kulikuli' served by mama. His eyes, red and bulging like those of a frog. Next. He looked in steady turn at all of us, Mama, my brother and I (*acts out to downplay simulation*). He called out names, one by one: each after the other with pained affection. Then, suddenly, he shook his head, and hissed. He sat down, carried the plate of 'gari' delicately. Then suddenly again, he smashed it (*Relay this in action*). Yes, father talked about suicide. (Obafemi, 2012: 36-37)

Optimistically, Obafemi makes use of suicide to expose the “symptoms of suicide” affecting the Nigerian nation in the 1980s. Unfortunately, his exposure, subversion and metaphor are now real if the rate of suicide is considered nationally and

globally. Nigeria has the highest rate of suicide in Africa and now ranked 6th globally. The figure below confirms this malady:

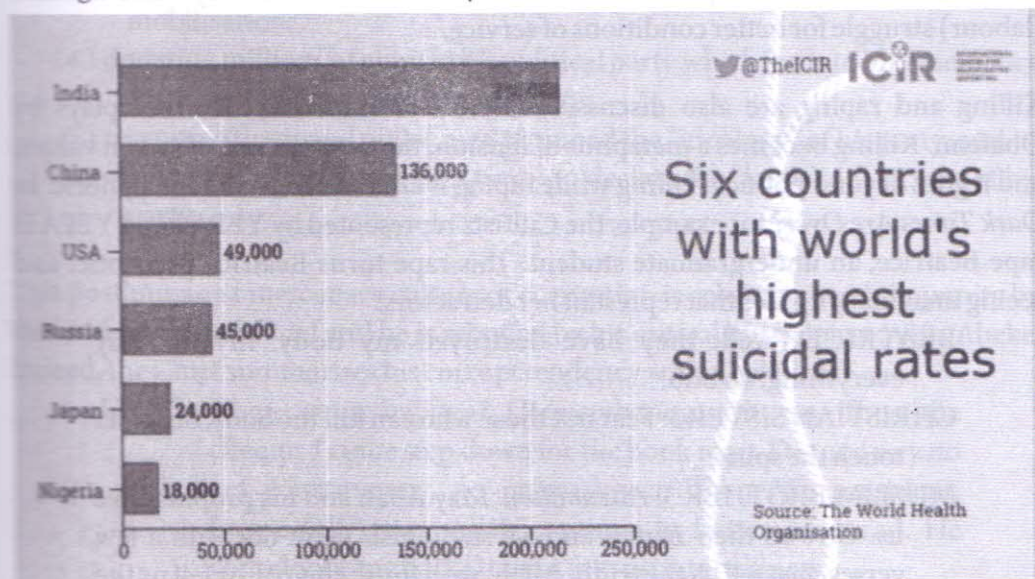


Table 1: Table showing that Nigeria has the highest rate of suicide in Africa and now ranked 6th globally (Source: Akinremi, 2019: 1).

The figure above puts Nigeria as the leading country in the Africa. Ethiopia and South Africa with 7,323 and 6,476 cases respectively come second and third.

The character Director, a voice of justice in *Suicide Syndrome*, also captures, very poetically, the vices of exploitation, killing, robbing and so on in the play:

DIRECTOR: That is the reality.

A man hanging

A woman crashing under the burden of existence

Men maimed and mangled

Men physically disabled and mentally disparaged roam the streets;

People turning to kainkain (local gin) or to cocaine;

People restituting themselves

People robbing;

People killing

People deceiving others and deceiving themselves

People uncaring

That is reality. The suicide syndrome. (Obafemi, 2012: 10)

A realist assessment of the causes of suicide will inevitably show that poverty through exploitation is a key factor. We should also remind ourselves that labour

and capital are antithetical to human survival. The capitalists (capital) have their interest fixed on labour exploitation and the malady of more money while workers (labour) struggle for better conditions of service.

Killing and raping are also discussed directly or indirectly in other plays by Obafemi. Killing becomes a metaphor of illusion, the destruction of human values, and it goes beyond physical killing while raping is also both real and metaphoric. In *Dark Times Are Over?* for example, the Cultists represented by YEPA I and YEPA II rape Beatrice, an undergraduate student. This rape turns Beatrice psychotic, and seeing imaginary figures that represent her detractors:

BEATRICE: Well, they have destroyed my body, my life, my everything, oh ooo!

CHRISTIAN SISTER 3: Fear not those who can kill the body, but can't touch the spirit.

MUSLIM BROTHER 3: *Auzubillahi*. May Allah and his prophet save us. Give us their names and we shall flush them out with a few verses. Just tell us the truth, Allah, we'll finish them. Just tell us the truth.

BEATRICE: Please forget it. It is all my fate, my destiny. I don't want to worsen my misery. I cannot even tell my parents. Oh those bastards ... with all that blood, all the thick smell of alcohol mixed with blood ... that smelly concoction of spirit and smoke. Oh horrible, horrible. (*Evidently scared stiff and still hysterical*). Ah! They are here, see them they are there, everywhere. Please leave me alone. Leave them alone; they are so powerful. Please let me bury my head in shame. But I don't want to die. They have vowed to kill me, if I tell. They will know. (Obafemi, 2005: 18-19)

Our public space is now replete with cases of rape and this anticultural behaviour often results in suicide, unwanted pregnancies, destruction of human values and exploitation.

(a.) Posthumanist Mercenary Culture of Corruption

Apart from Obafemi's *Suicide Syndrome* that devotes critical attention to labour exploitation, *Naira Has No Gender* also presents the details and forms of posthumanist mercenary culture of corruption. In the play, Chief, the protagonist uses the following methods to develop his burgeoning empire:

- (1.) the use of political connections to disconnect the masses from benefiting from the money meant for the public;
- (2.) sacrificing of Shola, the Chief's daughter as sex object to Alhaji, the Chief's

benefactor so that Chief can win undeserved contract;

- (3.) collecting cheque when contract has not been executed under the guise of mobilisation;
- (4.) donating millions of naira to his political party which leads to his emergence as the campaign manager of his party;
- (5.) recruiting thugs and police men to spread the "ideology" of his party; and
- (6.) stuffing and stealing of ballot boxes to declare the "landslide" victory of his party.

This posthumanist mercenary culture of corruption is celebrated with impunity by the loud-mouthed Chief and he is rebuffed by his critical but helpless Wife, Abeke. Indeed, the Chief summarises his corrupt tendency with Abeke that:

CHIEF: Then wetin happen? (*Remembering*) Oh yes. Then the cheque. I come step down for the book man. Dat one wey no get constituency, no naira power. Then Mr. president, (*prayerfully*) may Allah continue to butter im bread. He come lobby me back straight into private business.

ABEKE: (*Eagerly*) How did he do it?

CHIEF: He wire me straight. Telephone message. He say "Chief, you no be small weight for the party. Not to worry. E get many ways for to kill one snake. The thing be to get money, to get power". So, I go just tanda for outside government and all the contract go dey come to me (*In utter admiration and her-worship*). Make Olodumare prolong Mr. President in throat. (*Orchestra laughing: A-min*).

ABEKE: I now understand. All the same, the speed of this cheque removes the headtie from my head. (*She collapses with laughter. Chief chases her furiously all around the room. She sinks into the sofa as they both pant from exhaustion*). Okay, I'm sorry dear. I know we deserve everything, including winning the money-bagging race before the referee has blown his whistle for starting.

CHIEF: Not to worry, we go soon celebrate our own first billion naira anniversary. We don say final bye bye to the cold outside. We be bush rat.

ABEKE: Jumping inside our hole before daybreak.

CHIEF: Na so. Wetin go be my own gain from our party? I no sabi book. I no sabi hold big big office. Make I no fit make money again? I be Mr. Eunuch, wey no dey suffer two times . . . (Obafemi, 2003: 26-27).

There are so many posthuman chiefs in the Nigerian society deliberately spreading the ideology of Posthumanism.

(b.) Posthuman Voluntary Extinction

Ogidi Mandate is a drama of war and power, overtaken by peace, love and unity. The play discusses the celebrated Okun-Nupe ethnic war in which the two groups lost human and material resources. The playwright, however, re-writes the history of the war and situates it within our postcolonial reality. This war destroys the cherished culture of the Okun people while tasking the aesthetics, resilience and courage of the Nupe people. In the beginning of the play, two Brothers, Zaki and Masaba, the flag bearers of the Fulani Jihad speak about the necessity of a "posthuman future" where wars will destroy the human race:

ZAKI: Then, the battlefield decides. The guns and calvaries determine who rules the land. An empty mouth dares not make watery sound.

MASABA: (*Happy, dances round.*) Yes! War!! War is my favourite game. Whoever commands the hearts of the people rules them. Whoever possesses the might rule the heart, ascends the throne.

(*The Orchestra raises a song. Iwere Mej!!² In rather low, mournful and apprehensive tones.*)

ZAKI: From now on, keep away from me. I go now to Raba to build my force. May the better warrior win.

MASABA: Save your prayers for yourself alone. Let each of us seek political power from the barrel of his gun. Let each count his blessings from the number of heads we cut down from the enemy forces. I, Masaba, shall go to hoist my strength in Lade. And your force shall be the enemy force to be mown down. (Obafemi, 2010: 15).

Certainly, Ferrando's seven variants of Posthumanism (2013: 26) find clear link to war because war is antihuman, it destroys culture and man's philosophy, it destroys human condition and validates the uselessness and meaninglessness of human experience.

The human race can be wiped off within a day because of war. Artificial Intelligence (AI) takeover is real because chemical or nuclear weapon is also capable of putting a stop to human existence. Although Transhumanism is seen as positive, it can as well be negative with technologies that can annihilate humanity. The excerpt below is an eloquent testimony to this:

OBA 1: Let us also remember that one reason we lost previous wars was not just divisions or squabbles. We lost, also because the Ibons had superior ammunition. We are making, feeling noises with empty mouths. We

lost because we had poor weapons. They came with cavalry, with guns. Our shakabulas, every few as they were, with machetes, were no match for their cavalries.

OBA 5: We need guns. If you agree, I shall go on your behalf, with the Commander, to purchase arms and ammunitions from Lagos. That is if we all contribute the money. (Obafemi, 2010: 54)

The hegemony of the Nupe people is broken in the play by Okun people but sooner than expected, the hegemony is replaced with the colonial administrative system. Although Tsobaza (Nupe) and Seye (Okun) eventually marry each other in the play, the devastation of the two worlds of the Okuns and Nupes have been permanently altered while the cultures of the two ethnic groups negatively affected. Seye and Lekan share this eventual but forceful cultural accommodation:

SEYE: Yes, *Baba*. Look at some of our names all over our land. It is difficult to separate some Okun names from their Nupe origins – Iyekolo, Gefu, Denki. Igunnu is an Okun name but it derives from the Nupe masque, Igunuku.

LEKAN: Even our kinship rites and cadres. The Shaba, for instance, is the vice king in Oweland. It is derived from the Nupe and people answer to the name, Shaba. Ejibunu is an Okun name. Eji is a Nupe world. Loads of our people in Egbe and Kirri still have Nupe marks on their faces. (Obafemi, 2010: 61-62)

War will continue to alter human culture and condition, and it may lead to human extinction. War is man working at his own destruction.

Recommendations

This researcher offers the following recommendations in relation to Posthumanism and the posthumanist prototypes in the selected plays of Olu Obafemi examined above:

- (1) there are many pitfalls of Humanism that have generally led to the development of Posthumanism which are yet to be incorporated into our literary culture. Pitfalls such as Polyamory, dangerous situations in the Church and Mosque, innovations in the creation of sex toys, fake and enhanced human anatomical organs, homosexuality, bloody art, gambling, and others are expected to be materials of literary engagement, making Posthumanism inevitable;
- (2) literary scholars in Africa especially in Nigeria must move out of their silos

dangers;

- (3.) future writings should also dwell more on the unending destruction of the human race as a result of the failure of Humanism and its overtake by Posthumanism; and
- (4.) the posthuman relationship of moral philosophy, science and technology and anti-humanism should be used as thematic concerns in the African literary writers' extensive reconstruction of the main themes and tendencies of Posthumanism.

Conclusion

This chapter is a negation of the generally held notion of constructing Olu Obafemi's plays within the Marxist or revolutionary critical space. In contrast, the chapter evaluates some of his plays within the praxis of Posthumanism by discovering five prototypes of Posthumanism in his plays. These are:

- (a.) Posthumanist Inhuman Condition of Retention Camp and Reformation Centre
- (b.) The Posthuman Ruthless "Officers"
- (c.) Anti-cultural Posthumanist Exploitation, Killing and Raping
- (d.) Posthumanist Mercenary Culture of Corruption
- (e.) Posthuman Voluntary Extinction

Posthumanism is not the end of the human race but it is gradually leading to its destruction. Man in history, and out of history, remains tied to his values and once these values are eroded, his humanity is gone and he now needs to do everything to survive the tensions posed by his new world – the posthuman world. The five plays of Olu Obafemi analysed re-echo the gradual decline of the philosophy of morality to remind us, and replace in our sensibility, the essence of living a posthuman life that places little premium of morality to celebrate man's survival instinct through the uncommon returns to philosophy of being – the essence of man's alter ego. The selected plays construct antihuman manifestations of exploitation, killing, robbing, raping, cultism and others in man's search for continuation of his existence. This existence will be technically (not totally) smooth if humanity embraces the reality of the posthuman world.

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titled *Larger than his Frame II: Further Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* are in honour of one of the most celebrated and most accomplished writers and administrators in Nigeria today. The contributions paint an image of the man that radiates more than the blossoming flowers. In all the contributions, the brilliance of Olu Obafemi's work, his generous nature, and administrative acumen are highly praised and admired. In all, they "reflect Obafemi as a student of life and reveal his scorecard in this instructional space called life". Also included in this publication is the Acceptance Speech by Prof. Olu Obafemi on his conferment with the award of Nigerian National Order of Merit.

Professor Olufemi Obafemi was born on 4 April 1950 in Akutupa-Bunu, Kogi State of Nigeria. With the best A Level result in Northern Nigeria in 1971, he attended Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and graduated BA summa cum laude in English. He later obtained an MA degree in English Literature at the University of Sheffield, England, and a PhD at the University of Leeds on *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Social Vision and Cultural Heritage*. Obafemi has held many academic and administrative roles in several higher institutions in Nigeria, including the University of Ilorin and the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru. Obafemi has written several plays, collections of poetry and many academic essays and books. This volume celebrates his life's work. It's a sequel to *Larger than his Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* (2000).

About the Editors

Duro Oni, *fsonta*, FNAL, a Professor of Theatre, is a former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Management) of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and a former Director of CBAAC. His other publications include *Larger than his Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* (2000), *Technical Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Trends and Issues* (2006), and *Developments in the Theory and Practice of Contemporary Nigerian Drama and Theatre: A Festschrift in Honour of Dapo Adelugba* (2011). Other publications include *Striking Expressions: Theatre and Culture in National Development* (2017) and *The Soyinka Impulse: Essays on Wole Soyinka* edited with Bisi Adigun (2019). He is currently the Vice-President of the Nigerian Academy of Letters.

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ESSAYS

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