

**DRAMA AS A LITERARY RESPONSE TO AFRICA'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL
REALITIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED KENYAN AND
NIGERIAN DRAMAS**

BY

POMAK FRANK TENGYA

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JULY, 2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other higher institution of learning for academic credit.

Signature**Date**

09. 9. 2016

Pomak Frank Tengya, M.A., B.A.**M88F/21839/2010****Supervisors**

This thesis has been submitted for review with our approval as university supervisors

Signature**Date**

05.10.16

Professor Wangari Mwai**Department of Literature****Signature****Date**30th September, 2016**Dr. John Mugubi****Department of Film and Theatre Arts**

DEDICATION*Numbers 14 v 28*

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother Mrs. Josephine Tengya, though you are gone but your light and teachings still shine on in my life. I sincerely wish you were here to see how your boy has grown. Rest on in the bosom of the Lord till we meet again.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the roles and functions of drama as an instrument of social commentary in Nigeria and Kenya. Drama has been widely acclaimed as a positive medium for mirroring society hence the popular belief that drama is a representation of life. This powerful attribute of drama has been deployed by playwrights across different epochs to make constructive commentaries on the happenings within their various societies with the view of effecting positive change. As a result of the significant role of Drama in the society, it has become increasingly important to write and act drama using a method that is understood by the people. The study sought to investigate how Francis Imbuga's The Successor, Ngugi wa'Thiongo's The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, David Mulwa's Redemption, in comparison to Wole Soyinka's A Play of Giants, Ola Rotimi's If...Tragedy of the Ruled and Ken Saro-Wiwa's Madam No Go Quench Again serve as utility carriers of literary responses to the problems concerning the African continent. This study was premised on the supposition that social, historical and political realities in Kenya and Nigeria form a creative reservoir of the two countries' drama. A close examination of the leading playwrights from the two countries reveals the socio-political temper in the two societies. The research sought to highlight the extent to which the playwrights successfully use drama as a means of communication, even though there are different forms of literature in existence. This is important because, the work of an artist in whatever form usually has a universal appeal. The theoretical framework for this research was based on the Theory of the Avant-Garde and Political Theatre Theory. The theories added impetus to the work as it aligns with the concept of social drama. The methodology that was employed in this research basically revolved around the analyses of the primary texts and library and internet research to add depth to the line of thought. The choice of the playwrights is purposive and is based on fact that three of the playwrights are Kenyans and the other three are Nigerian. The choice was also on the fact that all the playwrights had experienced colonial and post-colonial governance in both countries. The period of the writings also is a factor that influenced the choice. The methodology also included systematic application of content analysis of related literatures.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Drama as literary commentary is a major theme in modern and contemporary art. The artist assumes the roles of reporter and analyst in an exploration of the nature of society. Subjects range from historical events to everyday activities. Always at stake is the artist's wish to uncover the workings of society and draw conclusions for understanding it more effectively. Drama that falls within this theme is often critical of individual and political structures seen as harmful, but it also celebrates the achievements of human communities and can poeticize everyday life. Its ultimate ideals are to preserve what is good and to condemn what is threatening in hope of a better society. Jayifo (1985) opines that:

...the general theoretical basis for the sociology of drama surely comes from what, perhaps, is its most irreducible generic peculiarity: the fact that more than the other literary arts, drama deals at a highly concentrated, more intense level with the contradictions of social existence....(p.7)

The above quotation concretizes the notion that most times, drama gets its raw material from the immediate social events. Alluding from the point of view above, it is critical for us to note that most literary dramatists use the surrounding events in their society as raw materials when they are writing. To be able to write vividly about the society, the artist must be able to mediate between social norms, and the true position of things within that society. Bertolt Brecht adds to the

responsibilities of the artist within the society when he posits in his Writing the truth: Five difficulties that it takes courage because;

...times of extreme oppression are usually times when there is much talk about high and lofty matters. At such times it takes courage to write of low and ignoble matters such as food and shelter for workers...when all the talk is of perfect and imperfect races, it takes courage to ask whether it is not hunger and ignorance and war that produces deformities...(p.125)

Brecht is of the opinion that as a social commentator, the writer should consistently document the occurrences within his society. By that status therefore, he must continually write the truth about his society. Using clear and crisp imageries that the people would easily understand, the deployment of form and subject matter in drama is vital to the success of any dramatic piece. The basic aim of all art is to communicate to the audience, because the message therein is for the audience. Therefore, the subject of discussion in art must appeal to the audience. The template of the modern period is characterized by divisions, uncertainty, and confusion. Man in this era is caught in a quandary most times bemused and perplexed by the events that characterize his existence. Because of the unsure and erratic nature of the society in this period, even the dramaturgy of the era is correspondingly unsure. It is full of an ever-escalating metaphor as its central social motif. This is because in the midst of the chaos and hyper social combat, the artist must find some means of documenting issues that permeate discourse and give it a social meaning.

The dramatist must document the issues constructively, because for everything an artist writes about, he is writing about his social surrounding. We posit so because

drama in most societies is a dominant mode of communication. Hence, for the people in any society to feel the impact of the message in any artwork, it must be written in a form that they can easily relate to; it should reflect the subject matter that embodies their social and cultural banners. This research work is based on the study of Drama as a literary response to Africa's ever-expanding social and political realities. We shall discuss the playwrights' choice of theme, and how they have been able to de-construct the different themes in their plays such that the plays can make meaning to most of their readers and at the same time capture the social realities that have consistently hindered the development of the African. According to Dhlomo (1977),

The African dramatist has an important part to play. In the story of African travail, birth and progress, lies an inexhaustible source of African literary and dramatic creations. We want African playwrights who will dramatize and expound a philosophy of our history. We want dramatic representations of African oppression, emancipation and evolution. (p.7)

Certainly, a lot has been written on the social and political realities on the African continent. Many scholarly works have been written on the social values of drama in Nigeria and Kenya. This research, however is a comparative study aimed at espousing the abilities of these playwrights in using drama as a conveyor belt for carrying entertainment and championing socio-cultural norms and political reforms. The selected countries have almost similar colonial experiences, both having been colonized by the British.

It is important to note that though writers use the themes that are dominant in their societies as the source materials, it is a fact that most times the subject matter becomes the centre of the drama because it has been influenced by the cultural and social mannerisms of that society. To be able to use these elements effectively, the writer must understand the people, their society and their culture; this therefore means that the writer has to be in tune with the sociology of the society he resides within. Dhlomo in Drama and the African (1977) opines that:

...the African dramatist cannot delve into the past unless he has grasped the present. African art cannot grow and thrive by going back and digging up the bones of the past without dressing them with modern knowledge and craftsmanship. If it is true that the past should form the background of African art, equally true it is that African art must deal with the things that are vital and near to the African today...(p.7)

From the foregoing, it is only through this understanding that the playwright can be able to write and co-exist with the creative nature of that society. The reason for this is that the writer in any society tries to locate the centre of stability between man and his society: the relationship between man and his society and how his actions are affected by his social affiliations. To back up this assertion, Emma Goldman in The social significance of the modern drama (1914) opines that:

...the artist being a part of life cannot detach himself from the events and occurrences that pass panorama-like before his eyes, impressing themselves upon his emotional and intellectual vision...(p.i)

August Strindberg further qualifies the work of the playwright when he says that the artist is a preacher whose work it is to “popularize” the pressing issues within his society. This is true because the playwright mirrors his society in his drama.

This is because drama has its roots in the depth of human nature and social environment. Fashina Nelson in Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies (2009) opines that:

...drama creates changes in economic, social, and cultural relations in the world. The interface of drama with African society has consigned its activities to more relevance in influencing human social behaviour and the transformations of human thought and reason. It does this through the redefinitions of its theory and practice as an instrument of social enlightenment and transformation... (p.4)

This means that the playwright uses his art to interrogate history and relate it to the present for the purpose of building a better society and also challenging the target audience to pick up the task of ensuring social and political correctness in their societies.

1.2 What is Drama?

Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance. The term comes from a Greek word "dran" meaning the representation of man in action. The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception (Dukore, 1974). The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception. The

classical Athenian tragedy *Oedipus the King* (c. 429 BCE) by Sophocles is the masterpiece of the art of drama by which Aristotle (c. 335 BCE) based his *Poetics*. Drama normally comes in three basic forms. These are: Tragedy, Comedy or Tragi-comedy. Drama is often combined with music and dance: the drama in opera is generally sung throughout; musicals generally include both spoken dialogue and songs; and some forms of drama have incidental music or musical accompaniment underscoring the dialogue and melodrama, for example. In certain periods of history-the ancient Roman and modern Romantic epochs- some dramas were written to be read rather than performed (Wilson, 2010). The above is in line with Aristotle's pronouncements in *Poetics* when he said that thought is an important part of the elements of drama because the speeches of the characters enunciate the subject matter of the play texts and add value to the message of the text. Furthermore, most playwrights gather their source materials from their immediate environment. As a result of this, the ideology of the social environment and that of the playwright mostly informs the direction of the play and how it is written. To add credence to this, Trotsky (1923) believes that:

...in this large sense of the word, art is a handmaiden. It is not a disembodied element feeding on itself, but a function of social man indissolubly tied to his life and environment...(p.5)

As a social commentator, the playwright most times writes about the situations that inform daily life within his or her society. A work of art is aimed towards creating a communication link between the artist and his society; therefore most times playwrights choose to use subject matters that can easily create a positive

debate within their target communities. Augusto Boal in his Theatre of the oppressed (1985) posits that the aim of drama in any given community is to create awareness among the people and bring them to the realization that they can change their ways of life and solve the problems confronting them. Exclusively, this is the cardinal aim of most playwrights; to serve as mouthpieces for their communities and also to write social commentaries about the society within which they reside with the hope that the people will learn from it and make the society a better place. Trotsky (1923) opines that:

...from the point of view of an objective historical process, art is always a social servant and historically utilitarian. It finds the necessary rhythm of words for dark and vague moods, it brings thought and feeling closer or contrasts them with one another, it enriches the spiritual experience of the individual and of the community, it refines feeling, makes it more flexible, more responsive, it enlarges the volume of thought in advance and not through personal method of accumulated experience, it educates the individual, the social group, the class and the nation...(p.1)

The above quotation from Trotsky's The social roots and the social function of literature has summarized the basic and most sincere functions of social drama. It is as a result of the above that most playwrights dwell on the use of drama as a means through which they can comfortably educate their societies.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Drama in sub-Saharan Africa has come a long way from the era of independence to the present. Nigerian and Kenyan playwrights have successfully mutated from the use of British storylines. However, to what extent can we argue that these

playwrights have successfully invented African themes and styles in their writings? As African drama continues to add positively to the repository of African literature, African drama scholars have made very little effort towards promoting regional comparative studies in the field of comparative drama research. Furthermore, in an era of universalism in terms of communication, can the Nigerian and Kenyan dramatic themes be able to communicate the problems of the two countries to other people? Can we equally say that the themes in the works of these playwrights are a true reflection of the socio-political issues in their societies or are they just a reflection of the imaginations of the playwrights? The study sought to find out the extent to which African drama can be said to have invented African themes and styles through the investigation of themes and works of the plays and if these themes are a true reflection of the social and political issues in the two countries.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to compare how Nigerian and Kenyan playwrights respond to social and political realities in their countries and the continent as a whole. To achieve that aim, we dug deep into the contemporary and historical issues that led to the adoption of this form of literature as an option for social communication. The research therefore sought to:

- i. Investigate how dramatic craftsmanship operates to interpret the Kenyan and Nigerian social experience and political realities.

- ii. Establish the stylistic choices of the playwrights in response to the selected thematic dispositions.
- iii. Carry out a comparative study of Kenyan and Nigerian plays from a socio-political perspective.

1.5 Research Questions

To aid the researcher in shaping the objectives of the research work, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. How does the dramatic craftsmanship of Kenyan and Nigerian playwrights reflect the social and political experiences of the two countries?
- ii. What stylistic choices do the selected Kenyan and Nigerian playwrights make to capture the events within the two social and political entities?
- iii. How does Kenyan and Nigerian plays compare from social and political perspectives?

1.6 Research Assumptions

- i. Kenyan and Nigerian playwrights have clearly captured the social and political experiences in their countries.
- ii. Kenyan and Nigerian playwrights utilize their stylistic choices to reflect the social and political occurrences in the two countries.

- iii. Having shared almost similar colonial experiences, and being regional powers in East and West African literatures, Kenyan and Nigerian plays share similarities socially and politically.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is to investigate the strength and the depth of Drama as a means of communication in African societies and also as an art form that can be used to communicate development and social change. The study was done with a view at attempting to add to the already known functions and potentials of drama. It is believed that some of the suggestions proffered in this regard might be found thought provoking enough to stimulate more studies in this noble art form so as to achieve a standard indigenous African art form that can be used to portray the culture and values of the people and also to bring development closer to the people. This is because knowledge is power, and so we must endeavour to be in total control of the form of artistic and cultural communication that can make sense to our people.

1.8 Justification of the Study

A lot has been written on drama in sub-Saharan Africa. However, not much research has been carried out in terms of a comparative study of dramatic literatures between Nigeria and Kenya. Historically speaking, these two countries share the same colonial administrative experiences. In terms of colonial literatures, they had almost similar experiences. It is therefore essential that a comparative

study be carried out between the two countries to analyze the literary dramatic sector of these countries since independence. The chosen playwrights have placed their dramatic creativity as a means of creating conscientization in their societies. They operate in corresponding spatio-temporal spaces in the two countries. Most of the playwrights are contemporaries and wrote their plays about the same period. This study was done with the aim of adding to the body of already existing research in this noble field of human study.

1.9 Scope of the study

The scope of the research borders around how Nigerian and Kenyan playwrights have been able to adapt the use of drama as a form; and also as practical means of communication in their plays. This is based on the fact that drama being a source of meaning generation is a powerful tool of communication in any society. The borders of this research therefore start and end within the circumference of the chosen works of Francis Imbuga, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo, David Mulwa, Ola Rotimi, Ken Saro-Wiwa and Wole Soyinka. The study sought to explore how the playwrights have been able to mid-wife the use of drama as a social weapon to create meaning and to successfully build socially interactive and interpretative scenarios as well as discuss the socio-political issues bedeviling the African continent. The research sought to espouse how these writers have been able to create social metaphors signifying the early colonial contact, and also as a signifier to the present level of relations between the peoples resident in these societies.

1.10 Limitation of the Study

This study has been placed on the scale of objectivity as could be said of any research work. However, the issue of study seems to have been over-flogged. As problematic and difficult to handle as this may appear to be, this study confronts the issue squarely with some useful suggestions in spite of the limitations that were encountered. The major problem has to do with the comparative analysis of Nigerian and Kenyan plays, and also getting specific materials on Kenyan drama in literary dramatic arts. It is clear that a lot has been written on African literature, but then very little study is done in comparing Nigerian and Kenyan drama.

1.11 Review of Related Literature

1.11.1 Literary Writers in Context

Comparative literature is a noble field of knowledge that deals with the study of the literature of two or more cultural or national groups. Though it is most times seen as a study of two or more literary works from different national origins written in different languages, it can also be a study of literatures written in the same language but from different nations and cultures among which that language is spoken. Some researchers in this field of study are in tune with the literary traditions and works written in the affected countries.

The interdisciplinary nature of this field of research shows that oftentimes practitioners study literatures across national borders, across epochs, languages and genres. They research across the thin boundary between literature and the

other arts. For most researchers in this field of study, it is the desire to integrate literary experience across borders and continents with other enticing phenomenon like historical change, political and social movements that has endeared them to the field of study. Because of the eclectic nature of comparative literature as a field of study, most critics claim that it lacks a definitive definition. It is inherently a difficult term to define.

The difficulty arises from the vast and uncertain territory the discipline is covering and from the already controversial nature of the two words constituting its name. The two (or more) elements of a comparison can be contained exclusively within the realm of literature, but some of them (not all) can also be part of another field of study. Moreover, each scholar has his own understanding of “literary” and “comparison,” in determining the final meaning of the concept. Some scholars of comparative literature have defined the term. Campbell (1926) defined comparative literature as:

...comparative literature...endeavours, in the first place, to discover general laws which transcend any one literature, such as the development of types and forms under the progressive relationships of different literatures....Finally, through the discovery of similarities and differences by means of comparison, it endeavours to explain the inception and growth of individual works. That is, like all scientific studies of literature, our methods are primarily investigations of the processes by which a work has come into being and appraisals of the forces which produced this result... (p.12)

According to Wellek and Warren (1942),

Comparison is a method used by all criticism and sciences, and does not, in any way adequately describe the specific procedures of literary study. The formal comparison between literatures – or

even movements, figures and works – is rarely a central theme in literary history... the term “comparative” literature has covered and still covers rather distinct fields of study and groups of problems. It may mean, first, the study of oral literature, especially of folk-tale themes and their migration [...] Another sense of “comparative” literature confines it to the study of relationships between two or more literatures. [...] A third conception... identifies comparative literature with the study of literature in its totality, with “world literature,” with “general” or “universal” literature....(p.20)

Remak (1961) defines comparative literature as:

...the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts(e.g., painting sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc, on the other hand. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression... (p.1)

Ramey (2012) adds to the definition of comparative literature when she opines that:

...it is a field that examines the overlaps, differences, interactions, and oppositions among national literatures, individual works of literature, and the theoretical foundations driving all of their creations. Most simply put, comparative literature is the study of literature at the international level, with particular emphasis on how the varied and circumstantial origins of its subjects affect them and how they relate to other works because of that variation... (p.1)

As the preceding paragraphs demonstrate, the concept has undergone a few ideological mutations from its beginnings until present times. Also, it becomes evident that no definition has managed to cover in a satisfactory manner all the aspects and theoretical details of this complex field called comparative literature.

A brief summary of the above definitions would have to point out several common

elements as well as the essential differences between their perspectives. First, they all envision the relating of a limited literary domain (national literature, genres or trends) to a literary or non-literary factor, each of them including in some manner the ideas of its predecessor.

Remak's and Ramey's definitions clearly represent the line of thought of the German school of thought in comparative literature studies. However, the French School believes that instead of comparing literatures from different nation states, there should be factual evidence that such literary works are written in the said countries. They exclude literary criticism from the domain of comparative literature. Carre and Guyard (1961) warned against influence studies and posited that literature studies of comparative note should concentrate on questions of reception, intermediaries, foreign travel and attitudes towards a given country in the literature of another country during a certain period. In response to the observations of the French school, the German school of thought believe that Carre and Guyard with some of the French scholars that hold the above view as 'excessively cautious' that the study of literature must synthesize unless it wants to relegate itself (literary studies) to eternal isolation:

...if we have any ambitions of participating in the intellectual and emotional life of the world, we must, now and then, pull together the insights and results achieved by research in literature and make available meaningful conclusions to other disciplines, to the nation and to the world at large. The dangers of hurried generalizations, real as they are, are too often advanced as a shield covering up the all too human temptation of playing it safe...even if a single generation succeeded in assembling all the data on a given author or

topic, the same facts will and should always be subject to different interpretations by different generations...(p.4)

From the above, it is clear that if literatures are to be compared the way the French school of thought wants it to be done, then comparatists across the world will have little to work with. However if we compare literatures across national and international borderlines, then we will not only add to the knowledge of literary history but to our understanding of the creative process and the social and political influences that led to the development of such art works.

1.11.2 Historical Origins of Comparative Literature

Influential cultures as the Ancient Greek already imposed the comparison of their features on the artistic institutions of other civilizations. Early scholars wrote about Hellenistic and Babylonian literature (Berossos) or Hellenistic and Phoenician literature (Philon of Byblos). These early works may look closer to what we call today ethnographical research, rather than literary studies, according to contemporary standards. The resemblance between some comparative analyses and ethnographies remains manifest to the present day. Boldor (2003) states:

...the act of comparing national literatures originated long before it was established as an academic domain, individual theoretical works and considerations emerging in several national literatures before "comparative literature" became an "institutionalized" discipline...
(p.25)

The historical origins of comparative literature dated back to the late 19th century as in the works of Hungarian writer Hugo Meltzl who was the founding editor of the journal Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum (1877) and the work of H.

M. Posnett titled Comparative literature (1886). Before them, Johann Wolfgang Goethe's book World literature had led the foundation for the discipline. In the early part of the 20th Century, the years leading to the Second World War, empiricists and positivists known as the French School championed most of the researches that were done in the field of comparative literature. The scholars of the French school examined literatures looking for forensic evidence of 'origins' and 'influences' among works from different nations (Stallknecht, 1961). As a result, they tried to trace the relationship of ideas between nations and how the ideas travelled over time from one nation to another. They were more concerned with the study of mentalities and influences (Edel, 1961).

The German school of thought had its origins in the late 19th Century, predominantly in the works of Wolfgang Goethe. However, after the Second World War, Peter Szondi's work in general and comparative literary studies opened up the study of transnational literature at the Free University of Berlin to the rest of Europe. Szondi invited scholars like Jacques Derrida and Lucien Goldman from France, Paul de Man from Zurich, Gershom Scholem from Jerusalem and Theodor Adorno from Frankfurt to come and deliver lectures and speeches (Seeber, 1961). Through this European network of scholars, Szondi was able to build a methodological canon and concretize the conception of comparative literature. While Szondi focused on building scholarly relations with the west, his concepts were greatly influenced by studies from eastern European literary

theorists of Russian and Prague schools of Structuralism (Remak, 1961). These syntheses and scholarly relationships are what have given birth to what today we refer to as comparative literature.

Oliver (2006) states that the American school of thought on the other hand, reacted to post war scholars and the French school of thought by seeking a return to the critical study of literary criticism. The American school was more closely aligned with the original international visions of Goethe and Posnett, searching for universal examples of human truths that can be closely related to the literary archetypes that had appeared throughout literatures from different places.

The historical development of comparative literature later gave rise to literary works by comparativists in different parts of the world. Some of these works include Alamgir Hasmi's The commonwealth comparative literature and the world (2000) Gayatri Spivak's Death of a discipline (2003), Pascale Casanova's The world republic of letters (2004), Charles Bernheimer's (ed) Comparative literature in the age of multiculturalism (1995), Rene Wellek's The crisis of comparative literature (1958). Most of these writings in comparative literature were written in different continents by scholars of comparative literature. The writings are signs that this field of research, according to Jonathan Culler, is "going global and going cultural"(p.239). One thing that serves as a unifying factor in most of these works is their belief that comparative literature should serve as a field that aims at

creating avenues for cross breeding of ideas that were hitherto nurtured in different geographical and national environments. Shamsuddin (2012) states that:

...Comparative literature is a study of national literature in its historical relations with other foreign literatures on the scope of the languages, which are drafted for the literatures. This concept of comparative literature was prevalent in the literary circles since its inception. Comparative literature is characterized by other branches of literary knowledge, particularly by history of world literature, national literature, general literature, theory of literature and literary criticism. Several terms appeared to explain the key concepts of comparative literature in the modern age...(p.1)

Oscar James Campbell, was among the first to establish a long succession of scholars who attempted to answer a question remaining the brainteaser for many a researcher in contemporary literary studies: What is comparative literature? At the time, the concept evoked a tradition introduced by a series of writings dating back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, opening the perspective of a vast, unexplored area where like every other branch of human knowledge, comparative literature underwent continual shifts and changes during its development from its early stages to its present form, in concordance with the knowledge and cultural norms of the times.

However, the discipline always seemed to be confronted with “identity crises” leading its prospects in blind alleys in a larger number of occasions, if compared with the related, “traditional” areas. At the turn of the century, scholars like Posnett or Texte warned their lecturers about the necessity of a well-defined methodological frame to validate comparatist studies. The response to this demand

materialized in a plethora of articles trying to offer possible solutions to the problem. Post-war overviews started to speak about “crises” because of similar reasons, and most of the contemporary studies agree about the need for a comprehensive reconsideration and re-definition of the fundamental principles underlying what is called today “comparative literature.” This peculiar and unfortunate status quo seems to be emerging from several causes, but the most important is probably the extraordinary versatility of the domain. Conceived as an interdisciplinary field since its very beginnings, “comparative literature” as Boldor (2003) opines:

...evolved from an initial philological and historicist enterprise involving vast bibliographical knowledge to an omnium-gatherum for every study expanding outside the limits of a statutory humanities program - becoming eventually a place accommodating everything unfit for one of the “classic” areas of study: history, national literature, philosophy (p.7)

Despite its early problems of definition and lack of proper placement, comparative literature has a place in universities across the world as a strong and eventful field for human and social studies and research. It has evolved into a field of social and academic comparison among scholars on issues of national, regional and international importance.

It is therefore from the writings above that we find a niche for scholarly materials that are written about African literature and its development. This is because most of the writings involve comparing literatures from different African countries, and in some cases, the writings are meant to serve as a clarion call to African writers to

focus on social and political issues that abound within the continent. It is in response to this that Victor Dugga in A window on Africa: Times and epochs of Eckard Breitingner, (2008) states that:

...Africa has always been a continent to be deconstructed; the question has been who is doing the deconstruction. The second important question is perhaps where such deconstruction is being done...(p1)

Eckard Breitingner in an interview with Dugga (2008) opines that:

...African writers don't write fiction; they write faction; that is fiction that is based on administrative facts, social facts and political facts essentially atmospheric facts. The artistic interpretation and representation of reality is something useful and indispensable even if you are working on the so called empirical disciplines....(p.9)

In the development of most modern societies across the universe, playwrights, novelist and artists have always been in the forefront of ensuring social and political equality. The work of the writer in any society revolves around ensuring social stability through his/her work. The playwright and indeed most writers in the modern African societies are crusaders of social equity and national development. The works of most of the sub-Saharan African playwrights are influenced by the colonial experience and most importantly by the postcolonial experiences.

The social and economic conditions of most post-colonial African societies mandated the playwrights to stand up and write in defense of their people with the aim of creating awareness and restoring accountability and social order among the

leaders. Most of the playwrights and literary theorists that have written about African literature in the years after independence have been clear on the need to have a vibrant theatre culture that would serve as a bastion for social and political change and awareness on the African continent. Bakare Traore, in his incisive work The Black African theatre (1972), analyzed the importance of African literature to the development of the African continent. Michael Etherton, in The development of African drama (1982), traced the origins of drama on the African continent and its contributions to the development of modern literature. Biodun Jayifo in The truthful lies: Essays in a sociology of African drama (1985) analyzed the social and political importance of African drama, African playwrights and African societies in transition.

Kerr's African popular theatre: From pre-colonial times to the present (1995) details the origins of African theatre before and after the colonial experiences. Karr details the developments in African theatre and Drama, specifically explaining the processes, problems and successes of the popular theatre and its influence(s) in the development of theatre and drama in Africa. Martin Banham also gives an account of anthropological growth of theatre on the African continent in his book A history of theatre in Africa (2006). Arne Zettersten in East African literature: An anthology (1983) provides a comprehensive survey of post-colonial literature in East Africa and how various personalities within East Africa helped in the development and expansion of the theatre medium as a means of education and entertainment in East Africa.

1.11.3 Playwrights Ideology in African Drama

Ideology is defined as a set of conscious and unconscious ideas that constitute one's goals, expectations and actions. Althusser, the French philosopher, defined ideology as the way we live and express ourselves in our social and cultural practices. Althusser also opines that education and family systems help in entrenching the values of the dominant ideology in any given society. Terry Eagleton (1976) explains that the work of an ideology in a writer's work is to help in explaining the overt and covert messages in the work. The ideological perception of the writer helps the readers to grasp the form, style and general meaning in a written work of art. This is because the greatest work of art is that which transcends all historical conditions. Therefore, the originality of ideology in the written work lies not only in understanding the writing styles or form of presentation but ultimately in the understanding of the social, historical and political processes that were obtainable at the time of writing that work of literature. Sartre (1990) refers to the attributes above when he states that:

...each book proposes a concrete liberation on the basis of particular alienation. Hence in each one there is an implicit recourse to institutions, customs, certain forms of oppression and conflict, to the wisdom and folly of the day...to a whole world which the author and the reader have in common. It is this familiar world which the writer animates and penetrates with his freedom....(p.85)

Marx and Engels in The German ideology (1845) assert that:

...the production of ideas, concepts and consciousness is first of all directly interwoven with the material intercourse of man, the language of real life....(p.6)

This means that the social relations of men are greatly influenced by the way they produce their material life. Therefore, a writer's work is greatly influenced by his/her social relations and how he/she relates to events within his/her immediate society. To understand any written work of art therefore, we need to understand the social process of the society from which it is written. Plekhanov (1970) opines that:

...the social mentality of an age is conditioned by that age's social relations. This is nowhere quite evident as in the history of art and literature....(p.ii)

Plekhanov above opines that the model carrier of the tools of social relations and cultural progression in any age and society is the art and literary endeavour that are produced within the society as of that point in time. It therefore means that the literature of an epoch defines and tells the story of human experience and social existence in that period. Literature therefore exposes and challenges the dialectics of human existence in any form that it is written or presented. This is because any literature or art form emanating from human experiences normally holds the perception of its writer or creator about the social and human interactions within his/her society. Plekhanov (1970) further states that:

...I have already said that there is no such thing as a work of art which is entirely devoid of ideas. And I added that not every idea can serve as the foundation of a work of art. An artist can be really inspired only by what is capable of facilitating intercourse among men. The possible limits of such intercourse are not determined by the artist, but by the level of culture attained by the social entity to which he belongs....(p.187)

From the preceding quotation, it is clear that literature is a product of the society from which it emanates. The roots of all art forms are the cultural and social order that nurtures and feeds the creator of that art form. This therefore qualifies drama as a literary art form that feeds on the social and cultural experiences that shapes the imagination and thought process of the playwright. Durosimi-Jones (1980) alludes to the potential of cultural and social events within the writer's environment serving as base of influence in the thematic expressions of any written literature. He believes that most writers dwell on historical and cultural sources as materials for their artistic endeavours; that oftentimes, the legends and myths that formed the social, cultural and material foundations of the society serve as the inspiration and most influential foundation for the works of the artists. Durosimi- Jones opines that literature is shaped out of constant human encounters and experiences; therefore the society always has a direct influence on the work of the writer. This is because the written work of art no matter how creative it may seem, is often a commentary about the society, this commentary may either be social, cultural or political but most times it is an eclectic mix of all the problems of that society.

An ideology is a comprehensive vision. It is a set of ideas that explains and lends legitimacy to actions and beliefs of social, religious or political nature. The term was established during the French revolution by Destutt de Tracy. He termed it as the science of ideas. His aim was not just to look at the shortcomings of the social world but also to seek ways towards improving the society. Its mission was to

change the world; it wanted a democratic, rational and scientific society which liberated man from prejudice. The ideologues viewed education as the key to social change. Althusser (1971) states that;

...a dominant system of ideology is accepted as a common sense view of things by the dominant class and thus the interest of the dominant class are secured. Art however, achieves a retreat from the very ideology which feeds it. In this way a major literary work can transcend and critique the ideology in which it is nevertheless bathed....(p.13)

The issue of instituting an ideology in drama has been one of the major fulcrums in the minds of most critics. However, for most dramatists ideology has no place in their works, they rather insist that their works are written based on their social vision. This is because most times, writers' sensibilities are shaped by the changing fortunes of the society. In discussing the ideological base of a playwright's work, we try to refer to what the plays mean, what values they represent and what they stand for. This is because every playwright has an arrow head that he or she wants to represent. Most of the arrow heads are pointers to events that are pre-dominant within their societies. The ideology that a play postulates most times is a manifestation of the consciousness of the playwright about his understanding of events within his/her society and how he/she feels these events should be addressed. Eugene Ionesco in a reply to Tynan (1958) states that

...every work of art (unless it is a pseudo-intellectualist work) is outside ideology, is not reducible to ideology. Ideology circumscribes without penetrating it. The absence of ideology in a work does not mean an absence of ideas; on the contrary, it fertilizes them....(p.11)

Ionesco's view is that for most artists, writing ideas are spontaneously generated. He believes that creative ideas are mostly generated at the spur of the moment. As a result, they represent the creative feelings of the writer propelled by the societal forces within his environment at that given period. Wa Thiong'o (1981) posits thus:

...literature results from conscious acts of men in society. At the level of the individual artist, the very act of writing implies a social relationship: one is writing about somebody for somebody. At the collective level, literature, as a product of men's intellectual and imaginative activity embodies, in words and images, the tensions, conflicts, contradictions at the heart of a community's being and process of becoming....(p.5)

Wa Thiong'o further states that;

...The writer as a human being is himself a product of history, of time and place. As a member of society, he belongs to a certain class and he is inevitably a participant in the class struggle of his times. As a writer in a given society, it does make a difference whether he is allowed to write or not; whether what he writes is controlled or not; and whether he is espousing this or that class outlook. (p.72)

Ossai Enekwe is alluding to this fact when he said:

...the arts are major instruments of socialization, often employed to encounter stressful factor in life...to address issues that touch the whole community...songs and dances put the people in the right mood...

The above statement captures the philosophical position of most of the post independence African writers who strongly believe that for whatever type of art that they indulge in, they are writing, or creating for the benefit of their immediate

and wider society. Ikiddeh (1975) as cited in King and Ogunbesan (1975) opines that every artist is an unconscious historian, that the work of an artist is always influenced by the social, cultural and political factors that abound within his society. In relating with the events in their society, most African playwrights are trying to paint the society that led them to start writing in a way that metaphorically represents the multi-cultural nature of the African society. Ikiddeh (1975) opines that the writer in any society writes as a result of the impact of the events around him/her. Wa Thiong'o (1981) shares the same view when he states that:

...a writer after all comes from a particular class and race and nation. He himself is a product of an actual social process...a writer is trying to persuade us, to make us view not only a certain kind of reality, but also from a certain angle of vision often, though perhaps unconsciously, on behalf of a certain class, race or nation...(p.6)

Ikiddeh's and wa Thiong'o's views are timely interjection unto the role(s) of an artist within /her society. It gives vent to the philosophical position of most of the post-colonial African playwrights. This is because most of them prefer to align their ideologies in line with the thinking of the masses. That is why they write about events that are understood by a majority of the people. It is in support of this assertion, that Kolawole Ogunbesan in New West African literature (1979) opines that:

...they no longer address themselves to a foreign audience, but have dealt with the basic problems that confront Africa; more than that, they have addressed Africans in African voices. Indeed each writer must finally be judged by how

successful he has been in carrying over his message to his people... (p.viii)

The above explains the position and mind set of most African playwrights. They have taken to addressing their immediate communities with the message in their works. The reason for this is because the answer to the issues within the societies can only be found with the occupants of those societies. The playwrights believe strongly that as members of any given society, they are attached to the very soul of that society. So it is their duty to write about the events that have over time shape the course of existence and development of the society. Wilson (2005) in "The ground on which I stand" states that:

...we are too long along this road from the loss of our political will, we are too far along the road of re-assembling ourselves, too far along the road to regaining spiritual health than to allow such transgression of our history to go unchallenged...(p.497)

Wilson believes that the playwright has the capacity to engineer change and write about history in such a manner that the creative works can be used to correct the present. Wilson averred that it is the duties of the playwright to challenge the mistakes within the society, with the aim of correcting the ills that have hitherto overpowered the voices of the people, through the use the drama as the weapon to engineer that change. This is because the major responsibility of the writer in the society is to serve as a custodian of the history, present and the future. He further states that:

...theatre can do that, it can disseminate ideas, it can educate even the mis-educated...because is art, and all art reaches across that divide that makes order out of chaos

and embraces the truth that overwhelms with its presence and that connects man to something larger than himself and his imagination....(p.503)

The quotation above is evidence to the fact that through their individual works, playwrights can help their societies to uncover the truths that they have constantly wrestled with social and political forces to unveil the issues that need changing in the society. All art is a search for ways of living life more fully. It is therefore within the purview of the playwright within any society to shine the light and lead the way, in the fight against the forces that have deprived the ordinary people of social and political development. Wa Thiong'o (1981) again opines that:

...because literature cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life, here a writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society. What he can choose is one or the other side in the battlefield: the side of the people, or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics? (p.ii)

The above assertion reaffirms the position that all writers write for a particular cause or a specific purpose, all writings exist for a purpose within the confines of a society. It is therefore safer to say that most works of art are written for the promotion of social order or the introduction of new ideas within the society. Therefore, a writer must take a stand on what he /she chooses to write about and how he/she wants the artwork to be perceived within the society. A writer's work must be reflective of his/her ideology and its application in society. The reason for this assertion is that the writer is resident within the society. It is therefore

important that he/she writes the truth about the society with the aim of providing an outlet towards attaining social freedom or social change. The playwrights try to create a reflection of humanity in their plays. It is as a result of this line of thought that most African playwrights recreate a reflection of the social, historical and political histories of their societies. Emenyonu (2012) refers to the duties of the African writer (playwrights inclusive) when he states in his review of Achebe's

There was a country that:

...no one can tell 'our story' for us, and when a story touches an issue of communal destiny and identity, everyone who has a stake in it has a right, a duty and, indeed, a responsibility to tell his/her side of the story...besides, if you do not tell your story others can distort and tell it to your discomfiture....(p.190)

Wa' Thiong'o (1981) concurs with the above when he states that:

...it follows then that because of its social character, literature as a creative process and also as an end is conditioned by historical social forces and pressures. It can elect to stand above or to transcend economics, politics, class, race or what Achebe calls "the burning issues of the day" because those burning issues with which it deals take place within an economic, political, class and race context (p.6)

Marx (1859) agrees when he says that:

...the mode of production of the material means of life determines in general, the social, political and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of human beings which determines their existence; it is their social existence which determines their consciousness... (p.145)

This therefore goes a long way to say that within the lived histories of the people there is a rich repository from which playwrights constantly gain access to

materials for use in their dramas. These materials shape the social, political and historical data of artistic endeavour. This is because the artistic endeavour is a reflection of the social existence of man. Critical to the existence of African drama therefore is the fact that African playwrights in all periods have always converged at the junction of social and political histories of their societies. It is from this historical cauldron that they gain access to the roots of the social and political issues that have held the continent in a firm grip. Marx (1859) alludes to the struggles of the playwright for social reflection and change when he states that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle” (p. 146). This quote is a direct reflection of the class struggles that have engulfed the African continent right from the era of colonial rule through to the post independence era. It is from these many struggles for economic, political and cultural freedom that playwrights constantly get their source materials.

1.11.4 Historical Perspective of African Drama

Historically, all drama developed from the performances of indigenous people, from the Grecian, Roman, Medieval, and English theatres down to the history of theatre among the colonised nations. The history of African theatre and drama started with the creative efforts of the Africans during the communal rituals and festivals. The imitative nature of the story telling performances, the heavy involvement of the audience who are purely members of the community, forms the early beginnings of theatre and drama among the African people. In sub-Saharan African theatre, an art concerned almost exclusively with live performances in

which the action is precisely planned to create a coherent and significant sense of drama, started long before the coming of the colonist. Povey (1967) alludes to this fact when he states that:

...we have long known, from the reports of anthropologists that a kind of dramatic tradition exists in Africa. From their observations we have learned of the mime and dramatic portrayal that is an inherent part of traditional religious and social activity in Africa...the fact that our knowledge of these demonstrations has been filtered through the researches of anthropologists has given an interpretation of these ceremonies heavily slanted towards the assumption that they have primarily a sociological function....(p.110)

The origin of African drama was a combination of religious or magical ritual, rhythmic dances and the song. These ceremonies were based on what anthropologists call Sympathetic Magic (Crow, 2002). Imitation which is the basis of drama, played a large part in these African tribal dramatic ceremonies (Barba & Richard, 1998; Crow, 2002). If the people wanted to precipitate rain, to kill and conquer in battle, or cause pain to their foes, they had to "imitate" these things. Since they believed in the principle of Sympathetic Magic, they were extremely careful to imitate and dramatize whatever result they desired to accomplish, and their dramatic representations of battle, pain and other things, were vivid, artistic, realistic performances (Dhlomo, 1977). This, then, was the origin and the basis of African Drama. Many of these tribal dramatic representations were results of the desire to have much food, many children and to conquer in battle. Some tribal dramas were actual, others symbolic and imaginative. That is, some of the

dramatic festivals were commemorative of some important event - e.g. a successful hunt or raid.

In such ritual representations, the people acted the actual experience that had taken place. These performances are of interest and value to modern writers and students because they are historical, showing what actually happened in the past. There is also what one may call anticipatory dances or ceremonies based on the principle of Sympathetic Magic. In these ceremonies, the people "act", not what had happened, but what they wished to happen. In this respect, the tribal performers, like the directors of the cinema, are careful about details of every description. The ceremonies are psychological and imaginative: psychological because they show us the thoughts and the desires of the people; imaginative because the people pictured what would or should happen.

The content and styles of urban African drama are influenced by both African dramatic traditions and Western theatre. The influence of Western styles is the result of a colonial presence, education in European languages, and the training of artists abroad. However, the degree and manner of foreign influence differ greatly from one country to another. Such influence has hindered the development of African theatre in Zimbabwe, for example, where a minority continues to produce predominantly commercial Western theatre (Mda, 1993). The accent on Negritude in the theatre of French-speaking West Africa in the 1960s, on the other hand, was a reaction to the control of French directors, who clearly left their mark on

production style. Traore (1974) in The Black African theatre gave examples of some of the styles to include the Daniel Surano Theatre in Senegal, the works of Aimé Césaire and other leading playwrights are staged. The plays of Bernard Dadié of Côte d'Ivoire reflect French comic traditions. Jean Pliya of Benin is one of a number of playwrights with Francophone colonial history. The texts of Western-educated writers have built a literary style of theatre, appealing to an elite audience, in which dance and music play, if anything, a subsidiary role.

On the other hand, at a popular level, village theatre throughout Africa is based on the traditions of music, song, dance, and spectacle and has offered a rich platform for the development of contemporary urban theatre. Theatre innovators built onto village traditions of storytelling, some borrowing production styles from the colonial music-hall entertainment staged in most African countries.

1.11.5 Dramatic Style and Literary Techniques in Kenyan and Nigerian Drama

When the reader or audience members have knowledge of dramatic style, it helps them to differentiate between different plays which have the same basic form. 'Style' is the word that is used to describe a drama that is created from a distinctive mode of expression or method of presentation. For example, a particular style may come from qualities pertaining to a specific period of time, an ideological movement or a certain author. Dramatic style has been influenced throughout its history by certain social, political and economic pressures. That is,

social pressures including religion, philosophy, and socio-economic constraints have helped to create specific theatrical constructs. The importance of historical events to the creation of dramatic style is the fact that all drama bears the imprint of the historical epoch that it emanates from (Eagleton, 1976). If a reader can identify some of these specific traits, he/ she will be able to make distinctions between different plays. For example, it is possible to discuss the characteristics of an eighteenth-century theatrical style.

Dramatic style of a given period or an ideological movement is generated by a number of different influences. Firstly, a reader can identify a particular style based on information that is presented in a play. A reader can assume that a play captures some of the essence of truth about a particular period. That is to say that those writers from different periods or with different ideologies construct the dramatic world in different ways. What is 'truthful' about the world to one generation may not be so for successive generations. Often, through their plays, writers attempt to answer specific existential questions about their societies and humanity. The answers to these types of questions differ depending on scientific, religious, and cultural beliefs of the periods in which they are being asked.

Despite these ideological differences, all playwrights have the same means of expression available to them. Writers and performers rely on the codes of communication to reveal meaning. Sound and visual images are the two main communication modes used in the drama. It is the way playwrights and performers

manipulate these codes that generate different plays and different types of performances. Dramatic style results from the way in which a play is presented in the theatre. It is the way a play is written, directed and acted, as well as the types of scenery, costumes, and lighting that are used, which helps to influence the style of the production. The type of play structure which can be classical or episodic also helps in identifying the style of a writer in drama. Unlike other genres of literature, the dramatic structures are unique and serve as a medium for shaping the work of the playwright and re-organizing the thought process and message conveyance. The dramatic style of a playwright helps in re-affirming the ideological stance of the playwright and it also serves as a vehicle for the propagation of the thoughts of the playwright.

1.11.6 Historical Perspective of Nigerian Drama

Nigerian drama has come a long way, from the pre-colonial, traditional, unscripted performances of the griots and the village entertainers in the various villages and local communities, down to the structured and yet unscripted dramas of the colonial epoch where the performances of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, and their contemporaries held sway. According to the *West African Pilot* of 9th July, 1947; "no sooner had one man, ex-policeman Ogunde, started than other individuals joined the wake". Ogunde and his contemporaries succeeded in taking theatrical performances away from the concert halls to the community playgrounds that the ordinary people often frequent. Clark (1979) opines that:

...one of Ogunde's major contributions to the history of professional theatre in Nigeria is that he withdrew the theatre from the direct patronage of court and church and gave it to the people...(p.x)

Clark (1979) and Obafemi (2001) further add that, those years heralded the formation of what today has become a robust and multi-cultured bank of Nigerian traditional cultural reservoir. Apart from Hubert Ogunde, there were other native artists who started performing their craft long before Ogunde came on the scene. Artists like A. B. David, Dawodu and A. A. Layeni were all established performers of native music and service songs for different churches or native air operas. But the church songs and native operas were all devoid of dramatic action, in contrast to Ogunde's performance of his first native air opera titled The Garden of Eden and the throne of God. He included dramatic action and realism. The activities of the above mentioned performers gave rise to professionals like Duro Ladipo and Kola Ogunmola and later the new theatres of Moses Olaiya, Ojo Ladipo and Oyin Adejobi. All of the early producers made use of folk lore as the base of content production; they also used satire, history and politics.

For more than five decades, drama as a constitutive form has been a source of entertainment to the people. Nigerian dramatists have used their genre as a means of documenting historical materials and as a vehicle of creating social, economic and political consciousness among the people. The specific origins of Nigerian drama can be traced to the first pre-occupations of the Nigerian people. Ogunbiyi (1981) opines that;

...as an expression of the relationship between man, society and nature, drama arose out of fundamental human needs in the dawn of human civilization...which is to say, that Nigerian theatre and drama originated with the Nigerian himself, embodying his first pre-occupations, his first struggles, successes, set-backs and all....(p.3)

The above statement is a truism about the origins of Nigerian drama since drama evolved alongside humanity. It is also a testament to the sociology of drama and its mode of deployment in Nigerian drama and how it has evolved throughout the formative years of formal theatre in Nigeria up to the present time. The influences that prevailed to form what today is considered as Nigerian theatre are many; the most significant one is the early European variety theatre. This type of theatre influenced both individual theatre groups and institutional theatre practitioners. Performers like Duro Oladipo, Kola Ogunmola and Moses Olaiya founded their groups based on the structural ideologies that govern the European concert party theatre groups (Obafemi, 2001).

James Ene Henshaw, Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi and their contemporaries equally formed their theatre groups following the structural ideologies of the colonial concert party theatre. It should however be noted that most of these theatre practitioners used their art as means for political agitation for independence. They served as a stage through which the nationalist idea for independence was shared with the masses. As a result of this involvement in the mass movement for independence, the colonial authorities organized a clampdown on the activities of most of the theatre practitioners. The period from 1945 to 1950 saw most of the theatre groups actively involved in the movement for the political emancipation of

the country (Clark, 1980). This period coincided with the formation of a nationalist movement known as the N.C.N.C. (National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons). This was a nationalist group that was pushing for the political rule from the hands of the colonial government (Obafemi, 2001; Ogunbiyi, 1981). During this period, plays like Ogunde's Bread and bullet and Human parasite were used as means of creating awareness among the Nigerian People. Clark (1980) alludes to this period when she states that:

...theatre participated in the cultural renaissance in the forties so it did in the nationalist movement, and by so doing often clashed with the law. It was during this period from about 1944 to 1951 that there was, for the first time an attempt to organize a cohesive national front for the specific purpose of accelerating independence from colonial rule... (p.72)

After independence in 1960, the academic scholars mostly based in the University College Ibadan took to writing plays and forming theatre groups like Soyinka's "1960 Mask", Ola Rotimi's "Ori Olokun Theatre Company". These university based theatre groups helped with the formation of a strong base for what is today known as Nigerian Theatre and Drama. The National Arts Theatre is the primary centre for the performing arts in Nigeria. The monument is located in Iganmu, Lagos State. Construction was completed in 1976 in preparation for the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977 (Clark, 1980; Obafemi, 2001).

1.11.7 Historical Perspective of Kenyan Drama

Kenya gained independence from Britain in December 1963. By this time, theatre had established itself as a tool of entertainment among the settler community. It

was also seen as an agent of anti-colonial struggle among indigenous Kenyans. These two strands developed side by side during the development years of Kenyan drama (Mwangola, 2000). With over fifty ethnic groups, the country enjoys theatre in different indigenous languages, though there is an attempt to forge a national theatre especially through the Kenyan Schools and College Drama Festival (KSCDF), which brings performances from different parts of the republic (Kuria, 2002). Kenya's theatre since independence remained a site of constant exchange between local cultures and myriads of other foreign value systems. The 1940's had seen a rise in comedies ridiculing the Swahili spoken by colonialists. This kind of comedy continued after independence with slapstick comedies being shown on national television. This variety of slapstick comedies were used as a potent means of addressing social themes (Article 19, 2003).

The Kenya National Theatre opened on 6 November 1952. The core of Kenya's political and cultural activities is closely tied to the politics surrounding this institution. The other influential instrument in shaping the development of Kenyan theatre is the Kenyan Schools and Colleges Drama Festival. It was an initiative of British council and the East African Theatre Guild (Brown, 1999). The first national festival was held in 1959 at the Kenya National Theatre (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2012). The event was hosted annually by the national theatre until 1982 when the festival started being hosted by the eight provinces of the country on a rotational basis. The festival was initially run by the British Council. The Kenyan Ministry of Education took over the festival in 1969 (Brown, 1999).

As early as 1965, teachers expressed the need to incorporate performance into the English curriculum to enhance theatre. The sentiments were never put into practice. Despite criticism of published dramatic texts remaining core to language studies in secondary schools, theatre remains an activity outside compulsory schoolwork (Zettersen, 1983). The Kenyan National Theatre is under the aegis of the Kenyan Cultural Centre, the latter having been established in December 1950. The national theatre was charged with the responsibility of providing theatrical and literary forum for Kenyans without distinction of race or creed (Zettersen, 1983). Funding for the theatre came from government grants and financial assistance by Nairobi City Council. People associated with the establishment of the theatre were the Governor of Kenya, Sir Philip Mitchel, Brian Figgis, Kathleen Robinson, Sir Richard Woodley and James Master (Kuria, 2002). Theatre developments in the country revolve around the perceived failure of the Kenyan National Theatre as a space and facility to foster national interests (Kuria, 2002; Thiong'o 1981, Zerttersen 1983).

In terms of literary drama, Kenyan Drama was put on the map by the works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Francis Imbuga, Rebeka Njau and David Mulwa. Despite the energy that this set of dramatists have put towards developing the literary environment in the country, the development of theatre and drama in Kenya used clandestine tactics to spread the message of freedom. Kuria (2002) opines that Kenyan theatre is;

...like the Mau Mau movement that employed overt and covert subversive activities to undermine the colonial government, only this time the target has been a post-colonial black government....(p.47)

In spite of the lack of international acclaim, theatre activities in Kenya have continued to thrive locally even in the face of brutal opposition and repression from government agencies. It was as a result of the repression from government that Ngugi wa Thiong'o was incarcerated in 1977 as a result of his involvement in the Kamiriithu project (Zettersten, 1983). In the 1980s, theatre activities were strictly under censorship by the government. There was near total clampdown on performances even within the academia. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, Kenyans became increasingly vocal about their dissatisfaction with the Moi regime. They paid a heavy price because many of them were arrested and imprisoned (Zettersten, 1983). In 1992, Kenya changed from a one-party state to a multi-party state (Karr, 1995). This gave birth to increased freedom of speech and association. As a result of the new-found freedom of speech, artists started performing in different forms and a lot of satirical plays were staged in night clubs and bars where the activities of the government of the day were brought under the microscopic lenses of the general public. By the turn of the century, political satire had moved from the bars and nightclubs to the television screens. During this period, the vernacular theatres of the early 1980s gained currency once again. It is also very important to note that Kenyan drama has its roots deeply buried in the academic institutions, most especially the universities because they served as the hotbed of the struggles against the repressive post-independence regimes. In fact,

Nairobi was the hotbed of literature in East Africa at a point in time. According to Zettersten (1983),

...the literary scene in East Africa has undergone considerable changes during the last few years. In the 1970's Nairobi emerged as East Africa's literary centre; several Kenyan authors established themselves there and were soon joined by some exiled Ugandan writers...(p.1)

Zettersten (1983), in the above quotation lays credence to the importance of the Kenyan capital to the development of literature in East Africa. It was about that period that notable writers like Francis Imbuga, Kenneth Watene and Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Ugandan John Ruganda showed their literary class. Imbuga wrote The fourth trial and Kisses of fate in 1972, Kenneth Watene wrote My son for my freedom in 1973 while Wa Thiong'o wrote The trial of Dedan Kimathi in 1976.

From the historical explanations above, it is clear that the development of both Nigerian and Kenyan dramas is made possible as a result of the shared colonial histories and the colonial education and nature of leaderships that the two countries experienced at independence. The histories of drama in the two countries showed how the various playwrights were able to develop their source materials from the happenings within their societies (Ogunbiyi, 1981; Zettersten, 1983).

1.12 Theoretical Framework

For purposes of this research, we shall base our discussions on Bernard Shaw's Political Theatre Theory and Peter Burger's Theory of the Avant-Garde as the

foundations for our theoretical framework. The reason for this is because the two theories share some similarities, and also because both theories have influenced recent developments in modern theatre and the avant-garde movement. According to Piscartor (1935):

...political theatre is drama or performing art which emphasizes a political issue or issues in its theme or plot...political theatre can also be define as exploring themes more universal and central to society itself, especially when that society defines itself as politically conscious...(p.25)

Piscartor' comment sets the pace in the discourse of Political Theatre Theory; he believes that all theatrical performances that discuss political and social issues as subject matter are inherently political in form and nature. Patterson (2003) also supports Piscartor's statement in his definition of political theatre. He opines that:

...given the sense of a changing world and the apparently very real possibility of restructuring society along socialist lines, it was predictable that these writers would turn to the most immediate forum for expressing their concerns and aspirations...(p.7)

From the above quotations, Political Theatre Theory is aimed towards giving voice and form to the dramatic works that are didactic and socially explosive in nature. Most of the playwrights who live in transient societies always prefer to use this form of theatre as a means towards representing the social and political realities of that epoch to the people. For the purpose of this research work, this theory is well placed in creating a niche for the justification of the themes and artistic commentaries of the playwrights. The theory helps in forming the foundation for the analysis of the thematic approaches of the playwrights and also aids the discourse on the ideologies governing the choices of the playwrights.

The onset of modernism necessitated the appreciation of the relationships that subsist between the people and the state. The concern of the state in different aspects of human life is realized. The state's control is specified by social roles rather than by personal characteristics of the individual, which is always subjected to periodical constituency legitimating (Boal, 1985). Boal believes that individuals have citizenship rights that they can claim against the state, which made humans political. The rise of Marxism in the late eighteenth century led to a radical change in human thinking. The relations between the state and the people are redefined and both mutually perceive themselves as binary oppositions. Every branch of knowledge underwent change and theatre is one among them. Slowly a separate branch of theatre started developing throughout the world in the name of 'political theatre'. The main purpose of political theatre according Shaw (1923) is to transform the self-consciousness into group consciousness and to initiate active political struggle for propagating their ideologies.

Many theatre groups in various countries appropriated political theatre as a weapon to fight against all sorts of social imbalances and exploitation of the weak. Erwin Piscator (1893 - 1966) used the word political theatre for the first time to describe his efforts to create a theatre that would champion the cause of the proletariat in its battle against the bourgeoisie. Later, many theatre practitioners and writers, from Brecht to Augusto Boal have subsequently pursued similar matters and put to discourse different aspects of relations between theatre and politics. Theatre performances are considered as means by which

discourses on ideology and politics are represented and popularised. After the Second World War, a thorough discussion took place throughout the world on whether the theatre can be used for political purposes or not. Boal held that since all the activities, of men including theatre are political, then theatre is necessarily political.

Most scholars used political theatre as a synonym for left wing theatre or the theatre of the socialists. However, the term political theatre need not necessarily represent only theatre of the left. This is because the other parties of right wing also appropriated 'political theatre' for propagation of their respective party ideologies. The Marxist theory is based on the primary principles of social change through the initiation of ideology. Ideology for the Marxist is a conscious effort to transform the lives and environment of the people. This consciousness is due to the relationship that develops between the forces of production and its relationship with that of production. Innately, the dialectics that develop and operate between the forces of production and relations of production leads to the emergence of power structure and social hierarchy. Those who have the say over the forces of production veiled the power and formed into a political system. The power structure in a given political system represents the social consciousnesses, of the people that are outside the power structure for their own advantage. Arts and literature of the people become the areas wherein power structure of a given political system, would choose to operate and represent its innate political agenda through them (Plekhanov, 1977). Therefore, political theatre innately corresponds

to theatre that represents the people at large upon which they survive for political gains.

Avant-garde theatre is a term that justifies the various movements in modern theatre. In the late 19th Century, most playwrights and theatre practitioners propounded new theories to accommodate their styles of writing and acting. Most of the theories that were propounded by the new practitioners are reflective of the present realities of the epoch and society. The theories were aimed towards creating individual, social and political change in the society this is in response to a generally perceived social crisis. The focus of the Avant-Garde Theory has changed over time, as mainstream theatre world has adopted many forms that were once considered radical. One thing however remained constant in the avant-garde theatre according to Saint Simonian Olinde Rodrigues in his article "The artist, the scientist and the industrialist" (1825) he states that:

...the power of the arts is indeed the most immediate and fastest way to social, political and economic reform....(p.3)

Olinde Rodrigues clearly sees the arts as the major channel through which social and political changes can be done in the society. Richard (2008) also avers to that when she opined that:

...theatre should fulfil a didactic and enlightening role-identifying political realities and essentially judging them, while simultaneously offering alternatives to current situations....(p. 14)

The above quotations signify the importance of Avant-garde Theory and practice in drama most especially in ever changing societies like Kenya and Nigeria and

the African continent as a whole. That our playwrights should not only craft plays for entertainment, but the underlying motif of their plays should be to educate and create avenues for social and political developments. The Avant-garde Theory is the framework through which the style and metaphoric imageries that the playwrights use to recreate their stories are formed.

This study prefers to define the avant-garde in terms of opposition and rupture. While most writers and thinkers believe their writings and theories belong to their epoch(s), the revolutionary playwright feels he is running against his era. An avant-garde man is like an enemy inside a city, which he is bent on destroying, against which he rebels; for like any system of government, an established form of expression is also a form of oppression. The avant-garde man is the opponent of an existing system. He is a critic of, and not an apologist for, what exists now (Ionesco, 1963). It is easy to criticize the past particularly when the prevailing circumstances encourages you to do so; but this is only to sanctify ossification and kowtow to tyranny or convention (Ionesco, 1963). The word avant-garde in fact is used with various meanings. It can quite simply be identified with the "art theatre," that is the theatre which is more literary, exacting and daring (Burger, 1974). It is the vehicle through which playwrights, actors and directors find the freedom to express themselves without been held in contempt of the classical laws of drama. It is a new form of expression for the dramatists in the modern era (Harding, 2000). Avant-garde theatre accommodates all known forms of dramatic expressions in the modern and post-modern era.

The main thrust of both the Political Theatre Theory and the Avant-garde Theatre Theory is to expose the contradictions within society via the individual and social consciousness. The aim is to manoeuvre the readers and audience towards a critical appraisal of self and the society in general. The proponents of the Political Theatre Theory aim to create a critical awareness about the social and political beliefs of the individual and his society. While on the other hand the proponents of the avant-garde theatre aim to give the playwright alternate means and style of writing and performance that is not in the mould of the Aristotelian dramatic theory. Drama as an art form in this view is an ideological intervention which is aimed towards the creation of a comfortable society for all people. The two theories try to realign social perspectives through the use of the drama form.

The two theories were applicable to the research work in terms of creating theoretical frameworks that can accommodate the styles of the chosen playwrights and also create a background for the discourse of the themes and ideologies governing the works of the playwrights. This means that while the Political Theatre Theory helped in exposing the themes and styles of presentation of the storylines in the dramas, the Avant-garde Theatre Theory served as a theoretical platform for the discussion of the dramatic structures and styles through which the playwrights have achieved their goals. The two theories added more impetus to our stylistic and ideological discussion on human experiences in Kenya and Nigeria.

1.13 Methodology

The systematic analysis of the research methods applied in this research formed the basis for this section of the work. This research employed the content and textual analysis model as a theoretical method towards arriving at the desired result for this research. This method of research helped in providing the theoretical underpinning, for getting the best possible research result. The method of content and textual analysis enables the researcher to include large amounts of textual information and systematically identify its properties, such as the frequencies of most used keywords by locating the more important structures of its communication content. Such amounts of textual information must be categorized to provide a meaningful reading of content under scrutiny.

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis is a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text material, through systematic process of coding and identification of themes or patterns of analysis. Mayring (2000) sees it as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within the context of communication, which follows analytical rules "step by step". It means that qualitative content analysis emphasizes an integral view of speech and text and also follows specific contexts (Yan Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). This methodology goes beyond investigating objective content from texts to examine meaning, themes and patterns that may manifest in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. This method of research is inductive, it examines the topics and

themes and inferences drawn from them in the body of the researchable material. This methodology uses purposively selected texts which can inform the research questions being investigated.

1.13.1 Population and Sample

One of the basic facts in any form of research is inductive reasoning, this move from individual to general principles. If a researcher can observe a characteristic that is key to the research study in members of the selected population, one can confidently base the conclusions about the population on these observations. Though there are a lot of playwrights in Kenya and Nigeria, for the purpose of research and analysis, we chose three playwrights from each of the countries for sampling. The reason for this choice is because of the historical and social similarities in the periods when the chosen playwrights wrote their plays. These playwrights also existed in the same generation though they are from different geographical and national entities. It is therefore imperative that in a study of this nature we carefully choose playwrights that share common, purposive and generational traits. The playwrights and plays that served as sample to represent the two countries are: Francis Imbuga's The Successor, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo's The trial of Dedan Kimathi, David Mulwa's Redemption, Wole Soyinka's A play of giants, Ola Rotimi's If...Tragedy of the ruled and Ken Saro-Wiwa's Madam no go quench again.

Though the selected playwrights have written different plays across the years, it is important to note that these plays were chosen because of their similarities in terms of thematic discourses and how the playwrights were able to relate the issues in the plays to their societies and by extension to the levels of development and portrayal of the African world view by African leaders across the continent.

1.13.2 Data Collection

The methodology is employed in this research basically revolves around the following data gathering approaches that would help in the study. Basically we considered materials from the following sources:

- i. Primary research data in the form of text materials written by the selected playwrights and also from the chosen play texts.
- ii. Secondary research data in the form of written materials on the same topic and other relevant materials that can add to the depth of the research.

1.13.3 Data Analysis

The primary source of information deployed in this study is that of textual analysis, while the secondary source of gathering data is the dependence on information in already published works.

In conclusion, the literatures reviewed above would serve as a pedestal upon which the discussions in the succeeding chapters would be based. The scholars in the different works used in chapter two created a basis for the interrogation of drama as an instrument for the portrayal of social, political and cultural realities

that are common within the African continent and also prevalent in other parts of the world. The literary and dramatic arguments and comparative arguments in the preceding chapter would aid our understanding of the comparative commentaries of Wa Thiong'o and Mugo in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi and Saro-Wiwa in Madam no go quench again. The comparative and dramatic theoretical discourses in chapter one would serve as the conveyor belt upon which we would discuss the events highlighted by the playwrights in terms of social and political reflections of society in Africa. It would serve as the benchmark upon which the discourse on social and political experiences in Africa will be based. The reason for this line of thought is because the story and its teachings are often products of the immediate society or community of the playwright and most times the stories and the teachings remain even after the playwright is long gone from the society. Achebe in Morning Yet on Creation Day (1975) refers to the above when he avers that literature whether passed on from generation to generation or via word of mouth or through the print medium serves as a second window through which we can view reality. That it gives us another critical opportunity to weigh our actions and educates us on social, political and cultural issues. Achebe states that literature (Drama inclusive) grants us the opportunity to view via make believe the threats and destructive issues that affects humanity in real life. It is with this in mind that we shall look at the discourses of wa Thiong'o, Mugo and Saro-Wiwa in their portrayal of social and political issues in their plays.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL EXPERIENCE AND POLITICAL REALITIES IN WA THIONG'O AND MUGO'S THE TRIAL OF DEDAN KIMATHI AND SARO-WIWA'S MADAM NO GO QUENCH AGAIN

2.1 Introduction

The epistemic and social well being of any society is measured partly based on the social, political and cultural writings and representations from the lived experiences of members of such societies. There are different ways through which writers and historians can capture the milestones of development(s) within any given society; one of such is through the vehicle of playwriting. Most playwrights used either historical or recent events within their societies as a means of chronicling the social, political and cultural happenings within their societies and the world at large. This is because drama as an art form has the ability to project through different dramatic conventions, the various stages of the evolution of any human society. This is most prevalent among playwrights because they (playwrights) use the different events across the world, as the template upon which their plays are written. This basic feature of playwriting can be found among African playwrights, because they are citizens of a continent that is constantly in a state of social and political transition. Breitinger in an interview with Dugga (2008) opines that:

...African writers don't write fiction; they write faction; that is fiction that is based on administrative facts, social facts and political facts essentially atmospheric facts. The artistic

interpretation and representation of reality is something useful and indispensable even if you are working on the so called empirical disciplines....(p.9)

Breitinger's statement above is a testament to the fact that most African playwrights get their subject matters from the happenings within their societies and also from other events across the continent and the world as a whole. The reason for this is to create instances of self-reflection and avenues for social change, using drama as the sole weapon; it is towards the achievement of such goals that one of the characters (Woman) in The trial of Dedan Kimathi admonished the boy thus:

...and you call yourself a man! What is it you don't understand? The things I talk about are written all over, written like large signs everywhere...the day you understand why your father died: the day you ask yourself whether it was right for him to die so; the day you ask yourself: "what can I do so that another shall not be made to die under such grisly circumstances?" that day my son, you become a man...(p.19)

She further added that:

...your words contain wisdom son, Kimathi was never alone...will never be alone. No bullet can kill him for as long as women continue to bear children...let a thousand bullets be shot through our heads, but this I believe: one day, the soil will be restored to the people. Our land shall one day be truly ours...(p.21)

This chapter is based on the comparative analysis of wa Thiong'o and Mugo's The trial of Dedan Kimathi and Saro-Wiwa's Madam no go quench again. It discusses the points of convergence and differences of the two playwrights and how they have been able to use their plays, as mediums through which they can reach out to the majority of the people in their countries and to the rest the world. The two

plays are socio-political statements of historical revolt in terms of the socio-historical, political and cultural experiences within Kenya and Nigeria and also the experiences of the playwrights as citizens of those countries, the African continent and the world at large.

We investigated the mechanics of the theatre of the absurd and why the two playwrights decided to use absurdism as a theoretical approach for exposing the social ills within their societies in their writings. As a major backdrop upon which the modern avant-garde movement is founded, the playwrights (Saro-Wiwa, wa Thiong'o and Mugo) used the absurdist form as a means of expressing their displeasure about the political and social experiences within the Kenyan and Nigerian societies. From the choice of characters to the execution of the storylines and the use of language in the plays, the playwrights succeed in creating absurd imageries of the human condition on the African continent and a metaphoric representation of their lived experiences.

Both plays present a reflection of the social environment(s) as seen by the playwrights; these social environments are influenced by the political landscape of the two countries as of the time of writing the plays. This is because every playwright writes based on the experiences of people that are found either within his/her immediate society or the wider society from which he/she is a part of. This chapter is therefore based on the metaphoric representations of the social and

political dialogues in the two plays. Wa Thiong'o (1981) avers to the above when he states that:

...literature results from conscious acts of men in society. At the level of the individual artist, the very act of writing implies a social relationship: one is writing about somebody for somebody. At the collective level, literature as a product of men's intellectual and imaginative activity embodies, in words and images, the tensions, conflicts, contradictions at the heart of a community's being and process of becoming...(p.5)

From the quotation above, it is clear that the writer in African literature (drama inclusive) uses the experiences and daily occurrences within his /her society as raw data, for the crafting of his/her needed craft. The two plays in this chapter are indicative of the above line of thought. The playwrights are all concerned with the nature and form of development within their respective societies; a result of which they felt obliged to document the issues for posterity and also to serve as a means of effecting the needed changes. Saro-Wiwa (1989) in the author's notes to his four farcical plays opines that:

...the plays represent my early concern as much with the social problems of our time as with an adequate language of communication of a Nigerian theatre aimed at the broadest possible public... (p.7)

Wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo totally agreed with the concerns of Saro-Wiwa when they state that:

...in this we believe that Kenyan literature...indeed all African literature and its writers are on trial. We cannot stand on the fence - we are either on the side of the people or on the side of imperialism. African literature and African writers are either fighting with the people or aiding imperialism and the class enemies of the people. We believe that good theatre is that which is on the side of the people...without making mistakes and weakness gives people

courage and urges them to higher resolves in their struggle for total liberation....(p.ix)

From the above we can safely say that though the playwrights have utilized social, political and historical events found within their social environments as source materials for writing the plays, it is also crucial to observe that the existence of the playwrights as members of their societies has triggered the drive for urgent communication with their social and political communities on the need for social, cultural and political developments that would collectively enhance the outlook of the people.

2.2 Background of the Playwrights

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, originally named James Thiong'o Ngugi (born Jan. 5, 1938, Limuru, Kenya), is East Africa's leading novelist, whose popular Weep not child (1964) was the first major novel in English by an East African. As he became sensitized to the effects of colonialism in Africa, he adopted his traditional name and wrote in the Bantu language of Kenya's Kikuyu people.

Wa Thiong'o received Bachelor's degrees from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, in 1963 and from Leeds University, Yorkshire, England, in 1964. After doing graduate work at Leeds, he served as a lecturer in English at University College, Nairobi, Kenya, and as a visiting professor of English at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., U.S. From 1972 to 1977 he was senior lecturer and chairman of the department of literature at the University of Nairobi. The prize

winning Weep not child is the story of a Kikuyu family drawn into the struggle for Kenyan independence during the state of emergency and the Mau Mau rebellion. A Grain of Wheat (1967) generally held to be artistically more mature, focuses on the many social, moral, and racial issues of the struggle for independence and its aftermath. A third novel, The River Between (1965), which was actually written before the others, tells of lovers kept apart by the conflict between Christianity and traditional ways and beliefs and suggests that efforts to reunite a culturally divided community by means of Western education are doomed to failure. In a novel written in Kikuyu and English versions, Caitani mutharaba-ini - Devil on the Cross (1980), wa Thiong'o presented these ideas in an allegorical form. Written in a manner meant to recall traditional ballad singers, the novel is a partly realistic, partly fantastical account of a meeting between the Devil and various villains who exploit the poor. Mũrogi wa kagogo (2004; Wizard of the crow) brings the dual lenses of fantasy and satire to bear upon the legacy of colonialism not only as it is perpetuated by a native dictatorship but also as it is ingrained in an ostensibly decolonized culture itself.

The Black Hermit (1968; produced 1962) was the first of several plays, of which The Trial of Dedan Kimathi (1976; produced 1974), co-written with Micere Githae Mugo, is considered by some critics to be his best. He was also co-authored with Ngũgĩ wa Mirii, of a play first written in Kikuyu, Ngaahika ndeenda - I Will Marry when I Want (1977), the performance of which led to his detention for a year without trial by the Kenyan government. The play attacks capitalism,

religious hypocrisy, and corruption among the new economic elite of Kenya.

Matigari Ma Njiruungi (1986) is a novel in the same vein.

Wa Thiong'o presented his ideas on literature, culture, and politics in numerous essays and lectures, which were collected in Homecoming (1972), Writers in politics (1981), Barrel of a pen (1983), Moving the centre (1993), and Penpoints, gunpoints, and dreams (1998). In Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature (1986), Ngugi argued for African-language literature as the only authentic voice for Africans and stated his own intention of writing only in Kikuyu or Kiswahili from that point on. Such works earned him a reputation as one of Africa's most articulate social critics. After a long exile from Kenya, Ngugi returned in 2004 with his wife to promote Mũrogi wa Kagogo. Several weeks later they were brutally assaulted in their home; the attack was believed by some to be politically motivated. After their recovery, the couple continued to publicize the book abroad. In 2010, Wa Thiong'o published Dreams in a time of war, a memoir of his childhood in Kenya.

Micere Githae Mugo (born Madeleine Mugo in 1942) is a playwright, activist, instructor and poet from Kenya. She is a literary critic and professor of literature in the Department of African American Studies at Syracuse University. She was forced into exile in 1982 from Kenya during the Daniel Arap Moi dictatorship for activism and moved to teach in Zimbabwe, and later the United States (Zettersten, 1983). Mugo teaches Orature, Literature, and Creative Writing. Mugo's

publications include six books, a play co-authored with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and three monographs. She has also edited journals and the Zimbabwean school curriculum (Mda, 1993). The East African Standard Century listed her among the most influential people in Kenya in 2002. Mugo was born in 1942, in Baricho, Kirinyaga District, Kenya. The daughter of two progressive (liberal) teachers, she received a solid primary and secondary education in Kenya, attending Alliance Girls High School. She became one of the first black students to be allowed to enrol in what had previously been a segregated academy. She later attended Makerere University (where she gained her B.A. in 1966), the University of New Brunswick (gaining her M.A. in 1973) and University of Toronto (where she gained her PhD in 1978). She took up a teaching position at the University of Nairobi in 1973, and in 1980 became Dean of the Faculty of Arts, making her the first female faculty Dean in Kenya. She taught at the University of Nairobi until 1982, and has also taught at the University of Zimbabwe (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Nov-2013).

Mugo was a political activist who fought against human rights abuses in Kenya. Her political activism led to her being harassed by the police and arrested. Mugo and her family (including two young daughters) were forced to depart Kenya in 1982, after the attempted coup of the Daniel Arap Moi' government (Zettersen, 1983). She was stripped of her Kenyan citizenship but eventually obtained Zimbabwean citizenship. She has worked, written, and taught from abroad since she left Kenya. Since 1984 she has been a citizen of Zimbabwe,

though with the passing of 2010 constitution in Kenya, she can now claim dual citizenship.

Mugo is a distinguished poet, and the author or editor of fifteen books. Her work is generally from a traditional African, Pan-African and feminist perspective, and draws heavily upon indigenous African cultural traditions. She has also collaborated with the Zimbabwean writer Shimmer Chinodya in editing plays and stories for adolescents in Shona (Kuria, 2002).

Ken Saro-Wiwa, his full names are Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, born Oct. 10, 1941, Bori, near Port Harcourt, he was executed by the repressive Abacha government on Nov. 10, 1995, in Port Harcourt. He was a Nigerian writer and activist, who spoke out forcefully against the Nigerian military regime and the Anglo-Dutch petroleum company Royal Dutch/Shell, for causing environmental damage to the land of the Ogoni people in his native Rivers state. Saro-Wiwa was educated at Government College, Umuahia, and at the University of Ibadan. He briefly taught at the University of Lagos before joining federal forces in the civil war of the late 1960s. Afterward, he worked as a government administrator until 1973, when he left to concentrate on his literary career (Dunton, 1992). His first novels were Songs in a time of war and Sozaboy (both 1985); the latter, written in pidgin English, satirized corruption in Nigerian society. He reached his largest audience with Basi and Company, a comedic television series that ran for some

150 episodes in the 1980s. He was also a journalist and wrote poetry and children's stories (Eshiet, 2000).

From about 1991, he devoted himself full-time to the causes of the Ogoni, a minority ethnic group that numbered about five hundred thousand (500,000) people. In mid-1992 he broadened the reach of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, an organization he led. In particular, he focused on Britain and criticized the destructive impact of the oil industry the main source of Nigeria's national revenue on the Niger delta region and demanded a greater compensatory share of oil profits for the Ogoni. As a result of mounting protest, Shell suspended operations in Ogoni lands in 1993 (Saro-Wiwa, 1993).

Saro-Wiwa was arrested in 1994 after the deaths of four Ogoni chiefs at a political rally. In a trial by special tribunal that was denounced by foreign human rights groups, he was found guilty for alleged complicity in the murders (Okome, 2000). His execution by hanging, along with those of eight fellow activists, aroused international condemnation and led to calls for economic sanctions against Nigeria, which was suspended from the Commonwealth a day after the executions. Shell later announced its commitment to a natural gas project worth nearly \$4 billion, one of the largest foreign investments in Nigerian history. In 2009, Shell paid \$15.5 million in an out-of-court settlement intended to resolve a lawsuit brought against it in 1996 on behalf of members of Saro-Wiwa's family and others.

Shell, accused in the lawsuit of being complicit in human rights abuses in Nigeria and in the 1995 executions, denied any wrongdoing (Guardian, 8/06/2009).

2.3 Summary of the Plays

2.3.1 Summary of Saro-Wiwa's Madam no go Quench Again

The play is a satirical master piece about the Nigerian situation. It revolves around two housewives (Waale and Ledu) whose husband (Dona) died mysteriously. They vowed to die and follow him to the grave because of his good nature. However, the moment another man (Kopol) came into the house in search of food to eat, and they both forgot about the dead husband and started a fresh rivalry over him (Kopol). Written in the era when the military leadership was in administration in the mid 1980's, the story also touched on the recklessness of the military and the lack of respect for the people. The choice of using the dead shows Saro-Wiwa's expansive use of the dark metaphor to qualify the human situation which is reflective of the nature of human suffering in Africa.

2.3.2 Summary of Wa Thiong'o and Mugo's The Trial of Dedan Kimathi

This play is a historical rendition of the Mau Mau struggles against the repressive colonial occupation in Kenya. It revolves around the trial of the fearless Dedan Kimathi the leader of the Mau Mau. The play is a metaphoric and satirical rendition of his trial by the colonial administration in Kenya. Ngugi captured the details of the trial and the futuristic effect of the struggle on the Kenyan society through the use of the Boy and Girl as characters in the play. The trial of Dedan

“arrangement of the incidents” that means the way the events in a story are been crafted to create the element of cause and effect so that the story line can make sense to the audience. That the outcome of a play, should be determined by the chain like reaction that is tightly constructed on the cause and effect chain of actions, in the drama. The plot according to Aristotle must have a beginning, a middle and an end, and that it must be complete having the “unity of action” and it can either be simple or complex in nature, although he (Aristotle) feels that the complex plot is better. However since both the plays in this chapter are written in the avant-gardist mode, the playwrights have used their poetic licenses to choose the plots that they felt would give their various plays the best structure and can equally carry the storylines to a logical conclusion.

The plot structure of The Trial of Dedan Kimathi is in three evenly balanced movements that are carefully tailored to dissolve into each other. As the conflict in the story and the three trials unfold so does the evolution of the storyline. It is totally anti-conventional in nature; it has the basic features of a linear or simple plot. The storyline does not involve any twists and complications. As a satirical play it confirms to the Avant-gardist drama of revolt because it is not a tragedy but rather a parody of the colonial and neo-colonial administrations in Kenya. The playwrights also used historical material as the basic source of their data.

The plot structure of Madam no go quench again, on the other hand is also linear, with minimalist characterization and a simple satirical storyline. Saro-Wiwa treats us to a one act play, which is highly potent imagery and straight structure. The expert combination of the three unities of time, place and space adds more density to the structure of the work. The simplicity of the storyline further makes the qualification of the plot structure linear and Avant-gardist in form and nature.

Both play structures typify the identities of the playwrights as radical playwrights who have chosen to use satire as a technique to enhance their revolt against the existing norms within their society and also a crusade against hitherto established dramatic conventions (i.e. use of three act play structure and making the plays or dramas strictly tragedy). Subliminally, the refusal to use complex plot structures and the choice of historical and social story lines shows that determination and drive on the part of both playwrights to forge their artistic enterprises into the national and international consciousness of their generation and other generations yet to come.

2.5 Thematic Depiction of Social Experiences in the Two Plays

According to August Strindberg in Emma Goldman's Social significance of modern drama (1914:3) the modern playwright is "a lay preacher popularizing the

pressing questions of his time” not necessarily because his aim is to proselyte, but because he can best express himself by been true to life. Most of the modern and post modern dramatists use their works to reflect a part of the spirituality and the revolt of the epoch. Their creativity is reflective of the compelling creative imagery that their works exude. It is however unfortunate that some members of the society often fail to grasp the vivid message in the drama. This is because they have failed to understand the language of art which often times encompasses the totality of the human experience. In the words of Goldman (1914), ‘it often sounds meaningless to those whose hearing has been dulled by the din of stereotyped phrases’. Ogunbesan (1979) added his voice to it when he stated in New West African literature that:

... soon after political independence was won, African writing entered a new phase; its mood became totally different from, and in some was diametrically opposed to, the pre-independence mood of affirmation. Disillusion quickly set in when the writers discovered that the ruling elite was more interested in conserving its own dominance and in monopolizing the continents resources than improving the abject conditions of the common people....(p.vi)

It is as a result of such excesses of the new African leaders like the one mentioned above that African writers are writing to challenge the status quo and the excesses of the leaders across the different African countries. The writings are mostly concerned with the present situations though they are often reliant on past events as precursors to the future. Jones (1980) referred to this attribute when he opined that:

...the contemporary writer in Africa is primarily concerned with the African present; but in getting to grips with it, he – like every social being around him- is heavily dependent on his past...(p.1)

It is in tandem with the above that Wa Thiong'o and Mugo reflected on the historical event that led to the execution of Dedan Kimathi and his stance for what is right and salvation of the Kenyan people from the grip of the colonial powers. The two playwrights collaboratively used the Dedan Kimathi story as a historical material aimed towards beaming a reflection of the present suffering and struggle of the people in post independence Kenya. The events in the play are symbolic of the nature and form of leadership in post independence sub-Saharan Africa. Throughout the play you would find instances of revolt by Kimathi and other subversive elements against the colonial regime. This subversion can be transposed to the present situation in neo-colonial African societies where leaders are constantly spewing policies that are anti people and anti growth and development. It is therefore the role of the playwright in any society to fight against the subversion of the freedom of the people using the instrument of Drama.

In The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, wa Thiong'o and Mugo look back at history in an effort to revise it and to expunge deliberately propagated falsehoods. Emenyonu (2012) is referring to the duties of the African writer (playwrights inclusive) when he states in his review of Achebe's There was a country that:

...no one can tell 'our story' for us, and when a story touches an issue of communal destiny and identity, everyone who has a stake in it has a right, a duty and, indeed, a responsibility to tell his/ her side of the story...besides, if you do not tell your story others can distort and tell it to you discomfiture....(p.190)

Wa Thiong'o (1981) avers to the above when he states that:

...it follows then that because of its social character, literature as a creative process and also as an end is conditioned by historical social forces and pressures. It can elect to stand above or to transcend economics, politics, class, race or what Achebe calls "the burning issues of the day" because those burning issues with which it deals take place within an economic, political, class and race context (p.6)

It is because of such basic features of drama and literature that playwrights attempt to help their countries cast off legacies of oppression. Bentley (2007) as quoted in his critique of Brecht's treatise Writing the truth: Five difficulties (1935) posits that the major paradox in writing historical storylines is that it is only when the historical personage has become legendary that he or she becomes a good subject matter for a historical play. The reason for such an assertion is that most historical dramatists are concerned with the bits of history that have stuck in people's imagination. In the case of Wa Thiong'o and Mugo however, this analysis will look at the historical figure of Dedan Kimathi from the angle of a freedom fighter who is representative of the everyman character archetype that is predominant in people who are constantly fighting against the oppressive nature of their fellow men. Though Wa Thiong'o and Mugo used the historical trial of Dedan Kimathi to canonize the leader of the Mau Mau and document his story for future reference, it

should also be noted that the choice of this storyline at that period borders on issues of period-dialectics because of the situation of oppression that was prevalent within the Kenyan society as of that time. The subliminal message of the play is applicable to the events currently happening within Kenya, Nigeria and other parts of the African continent.

Brecht (1935) states that, for a playwright to write the truth about his society and humanity in general he needs to be having the outstanding courage to write about the deceitful and decaying nature of the society. Also the playwright needs the skill to manipulate truth as a weapon, such that the truth can be spread widely among many people. One of the easiest ways through which the truth about any society can be spread cunningly and wisely is through the medium of drama. The line of thought above the reason for the choice of the genre of drama by the playwrights becomes apparent for all to see, apart from the fact that both plays were written in the same year (1977), it is also apparent that both playwrights were sending a subliminal social message to a people and a continent in transition. A continent that is locked in a fierce battle to free its soul from the choking grip of neo-colonial leadership, a testament to this can be found in what is been said by some of the characters in both plays. To further shed more light on the social imageries in the two plays, we are going to analyze them from the point of view of plot, characterization and use of language in both plays. This is because the way a

playwright creates his characters and gives them attributes is normally a huge determinant in how he wants to navigate his storyline in the play.

2.5.1 Thematic Issues in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi and Madam No go

Quench Again

Playwrights are conversantly conscious of the developments that shape their immediate and wider societies. It is these events or developments that provide the raw materials that the playwright uses when writing the play text. Most of the events form the basis for the subject matter or the theme that the playwright comments about in the play text. It is based on this point of view that we shall compare some of the themes that wa Thiong'o, Mugo and Saro-Wiwa discussed in their plays.

2.5.2 Theme of Oppression and Deceit

Wa Thiong'o and Mugo have explicitly captured one of the major problems of the modern society which is man's inhumanity to man and the constant feature of deceit which the oppressors of the people have mastered overtime. From the advent of modernism in human history to the present time, oppression and deceit have constantly been employed by leaders across most spectrum of social governance. This theme is succinctly captured in the play. Saro-Wiwa also

justifies the theme of oppression and deceit in the absurdist characterization and the constitution of the storyline. The oppressive tendencies of Henderson in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi and Waalu in Madam no go Quench Again, is further captured by Saro-Wiwa through the level of fear exhibited by Kopol the Soldier who is sent to shoot the armed robbers and also to guard the dead bodies at the shooting range. Kopol paints the grim picture of the absurdity of killing a fellow man and guarding the corpse throughout the night on empty stomach. This absurdity is further exposed when he sneaked into the house of the two grieving widows (Waalu and Ledu) to steal some food so that he can survive the hunger. The picture of oppression and deceit cannot be overly stated considering the fact that they are a clear reflection of recent happenings across the continent and the world as a whole. Some examples of the issues of oppression and deceit in the plays include the exchange between Kimathi and Shaw Henderson in pages 32 and 33 of The Trial of Dedan Kimathi:

KIMATHI. Who are you?

HENDERSON. Bwana Shaw Henderson. All your people know me I'm a friend

KIMATHI. Shaw Henderson! Friend and killer of Africans, ugh!

HENDERSON. The trouble with you, Dedan, is that you are too suspicious. Look, I come peacefully. I'm not armed

KIMATHI. No not with firearm. Only with words, speeches, sweet promises, save your breath

HENDERSON. Look here, Dedan, your people trust me, they have sent me to talk sense into your obstinate head

- KIMATHI.** You lie! Which people? Loyalist? Home guards? Traitors! Simpletons! These people are your people...Shaw Henderson friend of the African you cannot deceive me even in your many disguises. Just as you came in I had seen you in my dreams. All the slaves you have deceived in the past. Raider of slaves!
- HENDERSON.** Your dreams again? Do you remember the letter you once wrote your brother Wambararia?
- KIMATHI.** Why tire my ears with names of traitors?
- HENDERSON.** You never liked him, did you? He too is helping us.
- KIMATHI.** He sold out for his stomach
- HENDERSON.** You feared his rivalry...for leadership? You feared everybody's rivalry. General China, Stanley Mathenge.
- KIMATHI.** Rivalry? I have never feared anybody's rivalry. I have only sought to protect the struggle from betrayal, opportunism and regional chauvinism.
- HENDERSON.** Listen Kimathi, I come to make a deal
- KIMATHI.** Deals! Pacts! Treaties! How many nations have you wiped and later said: Well, according to this treaty and that treaty, they have ceded their land and their lives?

From the dialogue above, we can now see the kind of deceit that runs throughout the three mini trials in the play, from this one above by Shaw Henderson who is an agent of the colonialists, to the second trial by the Businessmen and the Priest and the third one by the politician. All the trials are different levels of oppression and deceit engineered by the colonialist to lure Dedan Kimathi to their fold. The

playwrights used it as a technique that helped in exposing the injustices, lies and oppressive tendencies of the colonialists and their loyalists.

2.5.3 Dramatic Representation of Political Issues in the Two Plays

One of the most important influences on any work of drama across time is the nature of governance within the society within which that drama is written and how the playwright(s) view the development of the social and political institutions within that society. It is based on this premise that we will look at the representation of political issues in the plays. This is because of the didactic nature of the plays.

Saro-Wiwa in the political satire Madam no go quench again paints an absurd picture of the Nigerian political situation and how they always intend to cling to power and political ideologies even when the political ideologies are not going to benefit the society. An example is seen in the attitude of Wa'alu the first wife to the late Dona (the dead husband); her insistence that she must die and follow her dead husband became a thing of the past when she came in contact with the Soldier Kopol. She immediately fell in love with him even when her husband's corpse is still lying in the centre of the room and yet to be buried.

Her insistence and quick change of heart is a metaphoric representation of the character of Nigerian politicians who quickly abandon their political parties to join the new government for the sake of their personal gains against societal or communal progress. The play is reflective of the bandwagon effect of political policies and how they affect the people; it is a pictured representation of the happenings within the Nigerian society and a microscopic representation of the political rascality of African leaders. It also paints a metaphoric representation of the incessant nature of military coups across the African continent in the late 1970's and the 1980's when elected African leaders were toppled in different countries across the continent. The play is a political commentary on the rude entry of the military into governance across the African continent.

In The Trial of Dedan Kimathi on the other hand, it is clear that wa Thiong'o and Mugo used the historical heroics of Dedan Kimathi as a metaphoric way of reminding Kenyans on the journey that the nation has embarked upon. That though they have achieved political independence from the colonial masters they need to be politically aware of the intrigues of their leaders and the trials that religion, economics and political masquerades can bring upon the nation. It is for this reason that the play is technically divided into three parts. The sublimation of the Mau Mau in post-independence Kenyan society is a prime example of this phenomenon. By bombarding the Kenyan people with an anti-Mau Mau

perspective, Kenyatta's government successfully marginalized Mau Mau sympathizers. Only a radical shift can undermine this power structure. Colonized people could only achieve true freedom with the birth of an entirely new world order, one in which they were no longer the subjects of empires, but citizens of their own nations. This utopian desire for absolute freedom from the past requires total revolution against the source of colonial oppression; a process marked less by compromise than violence.

It is precisely this kind of revolution that we see enacted by the Mau Mau. Parallel to this historical event, wa Thiong'o initiates a quiet revolution, one imbued with its own implicit violence. At first, a revolution fought with paper and ink may appear as an ineffective – perhaps, even cowardly- imitation of real social change. Yet, one cannot ignore the power of knowledge. By endowing the peasants with their own narrative, Wa Thiong'o and Mugo's play acts as a bulwark against the political marginalization of Mau Mau sympathizers. In the preface to the play, Wa Thiong'o explains that writing The Trial of Dedan Kimathi caused him to realize that Dedan Kimathi "was still a hero of the Kenyan masses". Here, Wa Thiong'o follows the same logic applied by Zinn (1980) in his A people's history of the United States. According to Zinn, people should not accept the conditions of official state histories. States will never be more than the artificial communities, whose official histories conceal barbarism in the name of strategic interests. Like

Zinn, Wa Thiong'o chooses to lift this veil, less a balanced account of a historical event than an exercise in populist myth-making; Wa Thiong'o offers a total rejection of the then dominant historical narrative.

The Trial of Dedan Kimathi is an excellent example of Agit-prop theatre which is a strand of the political theatre. This kind of theatre first emerged in 1920 in Soviet Union with the aim of instigating people into changing their society through collective human action. One of the devices which are used as a revolutionary tool to is the incorporating of many trials in the play. According to Basu (1998), through the trials the play intends to "question the very basis of large economic, political and social systems.

Wa Thiong'o and Mugo have played uween the linespon the word 'trial' investing many meanings in it. The most significant trials are Kimathi's four trials in which Kimathi deals with all social structures against him and also overcomes his personal doubts. In the first trial Shaw Henderson tries to persuade Kimathi, "Plead guilty. We spare you life." Shaw Henderson's as well British government's double-standards are brought to the fore here. One moment Henderson talks as a 'British Gentleman' and the next moment he says, "I am a Kenyan" in order to persuade Kimathi to give up his struggle. Kimathi is very strong-willed and can see through the falsehood.

In the second trial, an African banker tries to persuade Kimathi to give up his struggle and plead guilty. He is only interested in his selfish interests and talks about opening seaside resorts, international hotels, casinos etc. at the time when people of Kenya were starving. When Kimathi questions, "where do our people come in partnership for your progress", the banker replies that there will always be toilers. The author is condemning neo-capitalism through this trial. Kimathi comes out victorious through trial too when he call the African businessman-"Judas". In the third trial Kimathi has to face influential people from Africa from economic, political and religious spheres. This trial is slightly more difficult from the other two. The business executive informs him that there is no more racialism and any African who works hard can make it to the top and also that they could now.

2.6. Language Deployment in the Two Plays

One of the major tools for creating imagery in drama is the nature and the form of deployment of language by the playwright. This aspect of the dramatic elements which is one of the crucial in terms of communication is duly employed in both plays to enhance the level of communication and to stamp the origin of the playwrights on the plays. In The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, Thiong'o and Mugo deploys a mixture of English language and Kiswahili to help in the establishment

of the locale, and characterization. In Madam no go quench again Saro-Wiwa used the Nigerian Pidgin English as the vehicle of communication. This language style strengthens the satirical nature of the play and brings an informal nature to the serious issues on discourse. The deployment of language in Madam no go quench again started with a fine orchestration of the Nigerian pidgin English. Saro-Wiwa deliberately used that form of language throughout the play including the writing of the stage directions. Below is a part of the stage directions which is written in pidgin English;

...na for inside dis room wey dis concert dey hapin. As dem pull kotin, we go dey hear de kin song wey dem dey sing wey person die. Small time, Ledu and Waale go enter. Dem carry dei-man box or coffin. Dem put the coffin for middle of the room....(p.81)

From the above quotation, it is clear that the choice of language quietly and quickly betrays the ideological position of the playwright. In the preface to the play, Saro-Wiwa made it clear that his choice of language is in consonance with the popular language of day to day communication among the rich and poor in Nigeria. Saro-Wiwa states that the play:

...represents my early concern as much with the social problems of our time as with an adequate language of communication of a Nigerian theatre aimed at the broadest possible public....(p.7)

The choice of the day to day Nigerian pidgin English helps in espousing the issues in the play to the ordinary Nigerian on the street and at the same time it gives the play some form of style that makes it concretely Nigerian in Thought and conception. The language style in Madam no go quench again helped the

playwright to address issues of social and political repression of the under privileged within the Nigerian society and it also serve as a tool for creating mass awareness among the people in dealing with issues that pertain to the survival of the society.

It is equally important to note that wa Thiong'o and Mugo equally used traditional songs and some local languages (Kikuyu and Kiswahili) as part of the dialogue by the characters in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi. This is because the model of characterization in the two plays are reflective of the social disparity that is evident within the societies and nation states portrayed by the playwrights. The fusion of local songs and proverbs and English language dialogue in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi is an ideological representation of the mixed nature of struggle that was obtainable in the Kenyan societies as of that time.

The choice of language is instructive and reflects the social allegiance of the playwright; in this case the language choice in both plays tells us a lot about the intentions of the playwrights. That the playwrights have written, to correct the historical injustices in their societies but also informing the people on the need to become custodians of their societies. This is because language is power and so if a playwright gets a firm hold of the language of the people, then he has solved a

major puzzle in the cultural ability of his work getting wider acceptance among the target audience. Soyinka (1982) speaking on the dynamism that language brings to the play as a text and also as a dramatic performance states that:

...for language does not operate simply as communication but as matrices of discrete activities including of course those of articulation and meaning...and when we talk about the language of literature or criticism we assume multiple levels of internal operations of basic cognitive and their triggering social agencies...(p.2)

The researcher views the above to mean that apart from the ability to produce meaning, language in a play also has some cognitive abilities. That different words and phrases may mean different things to different people at different social, political and cultural levels because language is central to all human communication and human literature.

2.7 Characterization in the Two Plays

Characterization is the second major element in drama according to Aristotle in his Poetics, that is, in a perfect drama, characterization will support the plot. That means, personal motivations will be intricately connected to give vent to the cause and effect chain of actions producing pity and fear in the audience. There are different levels at which this analysis can be done. However, for the purpose of this research, the analysis would be done at the level of Messianic, social and Existential characterization (Brustein, 1969). The reason for this choice of character analysis is because it gave the researcher the impetus to critically analyze the characters along the lines of social, existentialist and messianic metaphors.

A messianic character is that character in a play that according to Robert Brustein in the Theatre of revolt (1967) chooses to revolt against all known Godly ways and moves against the known traditions and so challenges the supremacy of God. In both plays, the researcher identified some messianic tendencies in terms of characterization, in The trial of Dedan Kimathi, he (Kimathi) is been portrayed as an ideological saviour of the people in the fight against the colonizers. The scenes of his three trials are reminiscent of the three times that Jesus Christ was denied by his disciple Peter in the Biblical account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The messianic tendency of the character can be seen in the following conversation between Kimathi and the Priest on pages 48 and 49...

Kimathi: (continues by quoting from Ecclesiastes Chapter 4, verse1): " So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter". Why? How did you - (p.48)

He went on in page 49 to concretize the messianic tendencies when he states that:

Kimathi:... I have spoken with the God of my ancestors in dreams and on the mountain and not once did he counsel me to barter for my soul. One day, looking at the mountains, listening to the murmurings from Gura river, thinking about the braves of our people I thought I saw a glimpse of Kenya to come: workers joining hands from the coast to the lake, making rivers, volcanoes, thunderbolts in the sky, making all these power monsters of nature to administer to their needs and desires....and I felt the granite power of Kenyan people...(p.49)

Also, in Saro-Wiwa's Madam no go quench again, we are presented with the character of Kopol the soldier who is wrapped in the imagery of a mighty soldier who can kill an accused person mercilessly, meaning he can take away the life of a

fellow human being and not feel any remorse. This aspect can be found on page 85

where he said:

Kopol: oh, yes. Every time dem dey shoot person- wheder arm robber or general or colonel wey plan coup, na me dem dey choose....and na me dey shoot them...true true I don see dead body tire. Det no mean nuttin to me again. Life and det na de same (p.85)

The quotations above show how the two characters in the plays have shown the messianic character trait that is prevalent in the avant-gardist plays of the modern epoch. Though the two playwrights existed separately and in different countries, they have successfully captured the daring nature of man and his society in their plays. They created characters that are reflective of the revolutionary nature of man in the modern period, characters that are reflective of the newfound combative tendencies of the post-independent African.

Still on the character analysis, the social characterization of the characters in the two plays is very important because every drama has considerable links with the society within which it exists and also with the larger universal society. Social characterization therefore is important because it gives the researcher the opportunity to analyze the characters from the point of view of how the various characters rebelled against established laws or norms within their societies. How the characters are in constant combat with their communities and how the playwrights used the characters as sum totals of the struggle(s) that humanity is

constantly facing. Some aspects of the combative nature of the characters against social order and constituted (though illegal) authority can be seen in the actions of the Woman and the Boy and Girl in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, wa Thiong'o and Mugo successfully created an imagery of a social, familial and personal onslaught against the colonizers when they deliberately used the three characters (Woman, Boy and Girl) as members of the freedom fighters who are trying to free Kimathi. The bravery shown by the woman in trying to get the "Bread" to Kimathi is phenomenal, it is a statement by the playwrights that the fight was not exclusively carried out by the men within the society but that it was an all comers affair within the society. If we are to look at it from the point of view of the role(s) that women play in building the home cum society, it becomes clear to us that for any revolution to become prominent it has to be holistic in nature, therefore all members of the society would have to play their different roles in achieving a successful revolution. Some examples of the collective struggles are captured below:

Woman: The trail of our strength, our faith, our hopes, our resolve. The loyalty of our cause I must find the fruit seller quickly, I must watch out for more enemies' traps... (p.14)

She further concretizes the reason for the struggle in her conversation with the Boy in page 19:

Woman: the call of our people. the humiliated, the injured, the insulted, the exploited, the submerged millions of laboring men and women of Kenya

Boy: I don't understand

Woman: (impatiently) and you call yourself a man! What is it you don't understand? The things I talk about are written all over, written like big signs everywhere...the day you understand why your father died: the day you ask yourself whether it was right for him to die so;...that day my son, you will become a man...

From the quotations above it is clear through the characterization and the dialogue of the characters that the social nature of the struggle for independence from the colonizers in Kenya was an all comers affair. The struggle was not left for the men in the society alone but also the women and the children. The imagery of the Woman and the children (Boy and Girl) depicts a generational struggle for equity and justice. Taking the characterization out of the comfort zone of the historical struggle for independence, the involvement of the women and children creates a metaphor of constant struggle among the Kenyan people even after independence. The sub textual analysis of social characterization in this play is indicative of the constant struggle by the people across the Kenyan social set up. The characters of the woman and the children are representations of the social struggles of the Kenyan people across all generations.

Similarly, in Madam no go quench again, Saro-Wiwa deliberately moulds his characters in a manner that cast a satirical eye on the society and general human relations. He specifically deployed the use of the everyman archetypal

characterization as a means of ridiculing the existing social order. The empowerment of the down trodden was apparent in the development of the characters. This is manifested in the characters of Waalu and Ledu the two widows in the play. Saro-Wiwa presents a set of dynamic characters who at every turn in the play offered challenges on constituted authority, from Ledu fighting with the Older wife even though her husband had asked her to always be submissive to the Older, to Waalu's connivance with the soldier Kopol to get rid of the death body of her dead husband Dona. Another strand of characterization that is revolting against constituted authority in the play is Kopol's refusal to stay at his duty post, as a result of which one of the dead bodies was stolen.

In terms of existential characterization, both playwrights explore the theme of hopelessness among the characters. The readiness of Dedan Kimathi for example to die without renouncing the rebellion, and the insistence by Waalu to die and follow the dead husband are pointers to the absurd and existentialist stance of the playwrights in terms of the suffering that is prevalent within their societies. From the dialogue of some of the characters we could visualize the hopelessness of their conditions; the boy in page 19 of The Trial of Dedan Kimathi made a timely statement when he said:

...Aaa Nairobi, I have fought with dogs and cats in the rubbish bins, for food. And I also remember this bakery it belonged to an Indian. Periodically, he would throw away the rotten bread. We all ran for it. This pit is mine. This pipa is mine. Dogs, cats, girls, boys all. But we also learnt how to live and we became men and women before our time,,,(p.19)

To add to the existentialist nature of humanity in both texts, Kopol in Madam no go quench again interjects as follows:

...oh God, I beg make you sorry for me. Why I come dis house today? I get woman wey dey beg me make I come chop for him house. I get woman wey like me because I get two rope. I get woman wey love me well well. God, why you come send me for dis place Madam go dey vex with me come write G.O.C? suppose dem sack me, wetin I go chop? I no get handwork. I no sabi book. I beg, Madam, make you no vex...(p.87)

From the aforementioned dialogue of the characters and what the other characters have said about them, and from the stage directions in the plays, we can safely relate the characterization in both plays to social characterization most especially for the characters of Kopol in Saro-Wiwa's play and the Boy and The Woman in Wa Thiong'o and Mugo's play. It is equally noticeable that Wa Thiong'o and Mugo moulded the character in the everyman character archetype meaning the characters of the Boy, Girl and the Woman not to mention that of Henderson and the corporate types in the play are all a reflection of Kenyan people who had struggled for the independence of the country and others who are currently struggling for one form of liberation or another. At the same time, the characters can equally be seen as a reflection of the mass of people who are daily struggling universally for personal, social or communal liberation from all corners of the world. The absurdity that is painted in the archetypal characters in Saro-Wiwa's play is a timely reminder of the abject poverty of ideas and followership that is currently been witnessed around the world. It is therefore important to note that though both plays were written in the late 1970's, they still remain valid and

didactic in character representation. It means that humanity has not really changed despite technological advancement.

In conclusion, the issues addressed in this chapter evolve out of the social and political observations of the playwrights (Wa' Thiong'o, Mugo and Saro-Wiwa); whereby all of them were able to reflect the social and political realities of their societies in the plays. Eagleton (2012) opines that all literatures whether imagined or real are borne out of the interactions of the writer with his/her society. This therefore means that the two plays in this chapter are products of the refraction of the social and political realities in Kenya and Nigerian societies.

It is an open secret that most playwrights and other literary writers get their source materials from their immediate environments and other issues that affect the generality of humanity. It is in line with this phenomenon that writers like Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Micere Mugo and Ken Saro-Wiwa's plays are seen in different lights by literary commentators as discourses on the social and political realities of Kenya and Nigeria and by extension the issues bedevilling the African continent as a whole. To add more verve to the discourse above, Soyinka and Mulwa in the next chapter also beam their search lights on the social and political realities facing the African. They interrogated the African leaders, their international collaborators and the question of leadership on the African continent.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL EXPERIENCE AND POLITICAL REALITIES IN SOYINKA'S A PLAY OF GIANTS AND MULWA'S REDEMPTION

3.1 Introduction

African playwrights like other writers on other continents have over the years battled with the difficult social, cultural and political narratives that have held the vortex of the African continent in a firm grip. Different writers from the continent have found ways of re-writing the complexities that define Africa as a continent and Africans as a people in their written works. Achebe (2012) in There was a country opines that the writer often has two choices; to either face the daunting task of struggling to write about the inequalities and problematic issues that define our world or to turn a blind eye to the many problems that are constantly stifling humanity. Achebe goes further to advocate that writers most especially those from Africa cannot afford to shy away from the social, cultural and political dynamics affecting the continent. It is in line with this assertion that we look at two plays by Wole Soyinka and David Mulwa and their mastery and depiction of the social and political issues that have become a constant source of worry to commentators and scholars on the African continent.

Wole Soyinka and David Mulwa have written great works of drama whose styles of deployment are of tremendous literary and social significance (Iji, 1996; Outa,

2010). They have contributed immensely to the development of African literature especially in the areas of African drama and theatre and a lot of critical attention has been paid to their works by African and European critics (Obuh, 2009). However, little research has been done in terms of comparing the distinctive dramatic styles of these playwrights in Africa drama. The researcher deliberately chose the two plays mentioned above, in order to examine the satiric themes and styles treated by Soyinka and Mulwa, so as to highlight the social perception involved in those plays and their perspective(s) about the events that are continually reshaping the African continent. This chapter therefore concerns itself with the etymology of the dramatic styles and thematic preoccupations; this is a comparative analysis of the two plays and their stylistic approach.

The style of drama has been influenced throughout its history by certain cultural pressures (Turner, 1979). Some of these cultural pressures are influenced locally or nationally while others are external pressures that have helped to shape the cultures as a result of constant human interaction (Chatterjee, 1987). That is, social pressures including political, religious, philosophical, and socio-economic constraints, have helped to create specific dramatic constructs. If a reader can identify some of these specific traits, she or he will be able to make distinctions between different plays. For example, it is possible to discuss the characteristics of an eighteenth-century dramatic style. This discussion could be further refined by differentiating between French and English plays of the period or by

distinguishing the dramatic traits of romantic plays, from the expressionist or the absurd plays.

Dramatic style of a given period or an ideological movement is generated by a number of different influences. Firstly, a reader can identify a particular style based on information that is presented in a play. A reader can assume that a play captures some of the essence of truth about a particular period. That is to say, writers from different periods or with different ideologies construct the dramatic world in different ways. What is 'truthful' about the world to one generation may not be so for successive generations (Brecht, 1935). Often through their plays, writers attempt to answer specific existential questions such as 'What is truth?', or 'How do we construct reality?' (Trotsky, 1923). The answers to these types of questions differ depending on scientific, religious, and cultural beliefs of the periods in which they are being asked. Despite these ideological differences, all playwrights have the same means of expression available to them. Writers and performers rely on the codes of communication to reveal meaning (Akanji, 1994). Sound and visual images are the two main communication modes used in the theatre. It is the way that playwrights and performers manipulate these codes that generate different plays and different types of performances. Dramatic style results from the way in which a play is presented in the theatre. It is the way that a play is

directed and acted, as well as the types of scenery, costumes, and lighting that are used, which helps to influence the style of the production.

Playwrights are affected, consciously or unconsciously, by the conditions under which they conceive and write, by their own socio-economic status, by personal background, by religious or political position, and by their purpose in writing. The literary form of the play and its stylistic elements are influenced by tradition, a received body of theory and dramatic criticism, as well as by the author's innovative energy. Auxiliary theatre arts such as music and design also have their own controlling traditions and conventions, which the playwright must respect. The size and shape of the playhouse, the nature of its stage and equipment, and the type of relationship it encourages between actor and audience also determine the character of the writing. Not least, the audience's cultural assumptions, holy or profane, local or international, social or political, may override all else in deciding the form and content of the drama. These are large considerations that can take the student of drama into areas of sociology, politics, social history, religion, literary criticism, philosophy and aesthetics, and beyond (Benjamin, 1936).

To qualify the above paragraph is the statement of Wa Thiong'o (1981) when he avers that the literary works of any writer is most times influenced by his environment, and the social powers that govern that society. In other words, he is saying that no writer writes or exists in a vacuum, and that every work of art is

influenced to a greater extent by the society from which the writer of that work originates. This goes to say that the style upon which a playwright deploys while writing is most times influenced by the events that permeates his society and therefore his worldview. Brecht (1935) in his seminal work Writing the truth: Five difficulties alludes to this fact when he states that the playwright must arm himself with the truth at all times because he is a citizen of a society that is always in combat with itself and with other forces that make up the components of that society. Brecht encourages the playwright to possess the courage to write the truth in a manner that it would sound pleasurable to the oppressors within the society; this can only be possible based on the style of writing that the playwright chooses to use as a means of hiding the truth in plain sight. It therefore goes to say that style as a basic component in writing is very important in the realization of the aims of the playwright (Bennet, 2005).

3.2 Summary of the Plays

3.2.1 Summary of Soyinka's A Play of Giants

The drama is a social commentary about the nature and form of postcolonial African leadership. Soyinka created a play of four messianic characters. It is a social commentary on the political and social confusion that thrives at the highest level of governance on the African continent. The play also highlighted the hypocritical nature of the western powers and the international organizations. It is an absurdist play that satirizes the despotic nature of African leaders and their western cronies. The playwright did not make any effort to hide the identity of the leaders in question as he explained in the preface to the play (Soyinka, 1984: iii).

The real life characters include:

- (i) Benefacio Gunema: Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea
- (ii) Emperor Kasco: Jean-Baptiste Bokassa of Central African Republic
- (iii) Field Marshal Kamini: Idi Amin of Uganda
- (iv) General Barra Tuboum: Mobuto Sese Seko of Zaire

Kamini the host is the central character in the play. Soyinka focuses on the abstraction and absurd nature of the character of Idi Amin. The play also points an accusing finger on some Western sycophants and apologists. Most of the characters are satirical caricatures; Soyinka did not spare any of the leading world powers of the cold war era in this satirical master piece. He points out the total lack of decorum and abuse of trust and power by the western nations who intentionally sustain their puppets in power across the African continent. The play

is a disparaging statement about the true character of the western world powers as established through the characters of their representatives and also through the depiction of the Western journalist (Gudrum) and the Professor.

Soyinka depicts the African leaders in their complete absurdity, drunk with power; mad men with no concept of politics, economics or diplomacy and worst of all, no bearing on the ideals of leadership. The play mirrors the inhuman nature of some leaders and their lack of understanding of political and social economics and problems. The treatment of the Chairman of the Bugaran Central Bank by the monstrous security personnel loyal to Kamini is a pointer to the excessive abuse of power by most African leaders.

Soyinka also paints in another light, the shameful role(s) of the American and Russian diplomats as cold war realists who are scrambling for the soul of an innocent continent. He paints an imagery of greedy western diplomats who do not care about the plight of the African people and nations, as long as their political and economic interests are served. The play is an absurdist trademark with very little humour; the use of satire as the driving style was aimed at exposing the excesses of these real life personalities. In terms of the techniques and the structure of the play, it is a play that is written in two parts; a clear avant-gardistic trend of moving away from the conventional method of acts and scenes.

3.2.2 Summary of Mulwa's Redemption

David Mulwa wrote Redemption as a commissioned play for the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK). The play is targeted at the church, the family and the nation generally he challenged the members of the society to embrace the message of change, growth and trust in the values of the church, the community and the power of the individual to invoke change in the community. It is a play that centres upon the issues of religious hypocrisy, political power and misuse of religious and parental authority. The play reflects on the role(s) of the youth in a world that is torn apart by greed and selfishness. The play reflects the quest of the playwright for a redemptive force among Kenyans and Africans alike for unity and good neighbourliness.

The story in the play revolves around the hypocritical activities of Archbishop Muthemba and the autocratic and uncompromising attitude of Pastor Mutema. The conflict between them evolves as a result of the unscrupulous activities of Muthemba who ordained himself an Archbishop and formed his own congregation to the chagrin of Pastor Mutema an orthodox Evangelist and a faithful crusader of the old church. The two of them (Muthemba and Mutema) are locked in a battle to win the congregation from the valley; their children on the other hand are in love with each other (Rebecca and Antonius).

Mulwa introduces a new dimension into the conflict of the story when the mother church sent a young and rather well educated Pastor Manela to take over from the old crusader (Pastor Mutema). The coming of the young pastor ushered in a new era in the play. It created an imagery of the New Testament whereby sinners were once again not banished but welcomed back into the household of God upon repentance and deliverance from their old ways. This we see in the character of Katika the gravedigger who was banished from the church by Pastor Mutema. The introduction of the young pastor (Manela), also serve as a new challenge to the Archbishop Muthemba.

The play is set structurally in three movements with scenes to attach to each movement so as to help in organizing the storyline as it unfolds. It is a drama of emancipation, introduction of the redemptive power of truth and liberation and a message to the Kenyan and African people at large that for progress and unity to take place in our communities, we need to stop fighting among each other, and allow progressive ideas to take root in the "valley".

3.3 Dramaturgic Analysis of Soyinka's A Play of Giants and Mulwa's Redemption

In analyzing the dramaturgic aspects of the two plays, the researcher considers the setting of the plays, and prominent events around the world during the period of writing the plays and how these events might have influenced the direction and style of writing by the playwrights. The researcher looked at how the characters and events in the play are shaped by the predominant forces within the social and political environment of the playwright during the period of writing the various plays. Nnolim (2009) believes that the issues and presentation style(s) that a playwright or any writer in the literary world adopts as his method(s) of creative presentation are greatly influenced by the predominant socio-cultural and political factors in his/her immediate society.

Based on Brecht's concept of period-dialectics, it is important to note that both plays were written within the period when the whole world was still trying to recover from the effects of the cold war. As a result of this the tussle for power and control that was a major feature of the cold war era could still be felt in many other ways of human endeavour, and since drama as an art form thrives on the representation of social issues and discourses, the template of most of the plays written within that period were influenced by the effects of the cold war and the

subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and the shift in economic and cultural indices of humanity (Esslin, 1980).

The playwrights (Soyinka and Mulwa) relied a lot on the use of dramatic elements to create imagery and expand the metaphoric relevance of their plays. In terms of deployment of language, both plays were written in plain English language. The use of English as the language of communication is a deliberate act of accusing the role(s) of the imperialist and their educated African partners of exploiting the African continent both in terms of natural and human resources.

Wole Soyinka's A play of giants reflects a savage portrait of a group of dictatorial African leaders in an embassy in New York City, close to the United Nations building. The play is written to show the resemblance between the recent historical characters/African leaders who were known for their authoritarian rule. These include Macias Nguema (Late) of Equatorial Guinea, Emperor for life Jean-Baptiste Bokassa of Central African Republic, Life President Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo and the Hero of Heroes, Field Marshal El-Haji Dr Idi Amin of Uganda (Soyinka, 1984).

It is true that no African play has ever carried such a large cast of archetypal anti-people characters (Soyinka, 1984). They are ruthless and find no room for freedom of human expression and rights. They mismanage the resources of their various countries with the aid of their western imperialist friends. The playwright makes

no pretensions about the focus and intentions of the play, to write back about the illegalities of African leaders and their partners in foreign lands. Through the dialogues, we see a true picture of the atrocities and injustices that leaders unleash on their followers. Soyinka creates the insensitive nature of the African leaders. This trait is seen in reality in all the African leaders, as portrayed in the character of Kamini and the other characters in the play, Each has his own peculiarities and idiosyncrasies. The metaphor of having four major characters is a pictorial reality that tells the absurd story of leadership in sub-Saharan Africa.

What happens at the end of the play is that the central figure, Kamini, becomes an individual hero suffering by himself through his own lusts, faults and excuses. Each of the leaders is seen in the light of Kamini's plight and tragedy, in a desperate attempt to hold onto power they all fall out with their followers and international allies. The plot is a linear plot that develops as the events in the play unfold and it is further developed through the use of satire. From the choice of style and the use of language it is clear that the post-civil war popular political satires of Soyinka are clearly in response to the cries of the critical agency and of the readers thus debunks the earlier defence of "bourgeois situated literature" by Soyinka.

In the political satires, Soyinka moves away from the extreme intellectual use of English language and intimidating dialogue to an accessible English and

penetrable dialogue. The popularity of the satires is attested to by Soyinka (1981) in his description of the reactions of the Military Governor, the representative of the Visitor, to a performance of Opera Wonyosi that he thought was attacking the military, on the occasion of a convocation ceremony of the University of Ife. Contained also in the account is the identification of the university cooks and staff of Parks and Gardens with the preoccupation of the play and the play itself. We also must note the reaction of General Sani Abacha to the play The beatification of area boy and the declaration of Wole Soyinka as wanted in Nigeria (Soyinka, 1999) as attesting to the popularity of the play. Beyond this, there is a clear wall of difference between the canonical plays and the post-civil war political drama in terms not only of language but also of plot structure, setting, figures and motifs from oral tradition and *mis en scene*. The only thing that audience members enjoy in the canonical plays is the spectacle and not the knowledge of the meaning. In the case of the post-civil war plays, readers are now able to gain access into the primary level of meaning of the plays. In other words, they could make headway with the ordinary meaning of the texts without the service of the critics. With the understanding of the primary level of meaning of texts, they could on their own go about processing the deep and deeper connotative meaning.

Mulwa on the other hand has equally written a number of plays that are largely satirical in form and content. As an accomplished stage and screen actor who started acting at the tender age of 7 years in 1952, he has grown in leaps and bounds since then. Mulwa is also a stage director per excellence who is well

known across the Kenyan nation as a man of the theatre. His reputation as an actor made him one of the prominent adjudicators of the Kenyan National Schools Drama festival. He has been on the bench of adjudication since 1975 up to 2005. As a prominent playwright, he has written a lot of plays among them Redemption, Glass houses, Master and servant, Buriani, Ukame, Mkimbzi, Daraja, Champion and a host of other plays. Most of the themes in his plays revolve around issues of good governance, social change, greed and injustice.

3.4 Thematic depiction of Religion and Hypocrisy in the two plays

In most plays, the underlying reason for writing is to pass a message to the society. Most times the playwright uses a coded means of unveiling his message to the target audience. Soyinka and Mulwa have used drama as a means of heading and passing the coded or subliminal messages in their plays. It is therefore left for us to decipher the themes from the plays. A theme in drama simply means the underlying message, the subject matter or the issues that the writer is trying to project to the readers using the vehicle of drama. From the reading of the two plays the following themes seem to have formed the crux of the discussions in the two plays though there are some sub themes like those of greed and human suffering, corruption and human suffering.

3.4.1 Struggle for Power and Control

The quest for good leadership is one of the key issues in both plays. As playwrights who are both resident in two regional super powers in sub Saharan

Africa, it is almost certain that the issue of leadership would feature prominently in their plays. Soyinka's play A play of giants revolves around the theme of leadership and the quest for power, authority and recognition by the four super characters; these are basic features that most leaders are always willing to acquire. He (Soyinka) is questioning how and why the characters have been able to entrench themselves in power for so long after they have been exposed for the monsters that they are. He observed in the introductory notes to the play that at different points during their rulership, these leaders were supported by western super powers because of the economic gains that they (Western powers) stand to gain from the continuous stay in power of the said rulers. He opines that:

...this certified psychopath was sustained in power at various periods by group interest and ideologies as varied as those of Great Britain...the United States, the Soviet Union, the Organization of African Unity, Cuba, Libya, the PLO and Israel not to mention the vociferous support accorded him by the cheer leaders among the intelligentsia of the African continent and the Black Caucuses of the United States...(p.vi)

Riding on the crest of such support from the continent and beyond, the leaders misuse the trust of their followers and want to gain total control over the people in all aspects of their daily lives; one of the characters Gunema sums it all when he says:

...but I have not finished. Beyond la responsabilidad, beyond politics lies- ah – power. When politics has become routine, organized, we who are gifted naturally with leadership, after a while we cease to govern, to lead: we exist, I think, in a rear space which is –power....(p.2)

To further add to the arrogance with which these leaders rule over their countries he (Gunema) goes ahead in another conversation with Kasco when they said:

...impossible! Jamas, never! My friend, you are not unhombre ordinario. Like me and our comrade the emperor Kasco, we are not ordinario. Why you think we rule our people? Some people are born to power, others are—cattle they need ring in their nose for us to lead....(p.11)

Emperor Kasco then supports Gunema by saying:

...there are persons, individuals who are born with the imperial sign here (he taps his forehead) on head. Me, I think – de Gaulle, Robespierre. But the prime, the leader of them all in history, in all the world history—the sans pareil of all time is Napoleon Bonaparte!...(p.11)

Looking at the same theme of leadership and the misuse of power and trust in Mulwa's Redemption, he (Mulwa) has been able to use the political skirmishes within the church as a way of creating imagery about the leadership struggles within the larger Kenyan society and Africa as a whole Mulwa captures the deceit of the leaders through the word of one of the characters Archbishop Elton Muthemba in Page 43 when he says:

Take this thing about the superstition in this valley. These poor people believe in witchcraft and their infernal traditions. So how do you get them to church? Get them paying? You stand there and encourage them. Let them go to witch doctors as long as they are in church tomorrow and singing and dancing in expiation: you see you let them leave their lives and come to you on Sundays for a little spiritual uplift and everybody is happy. It is this that that fool of a pastor didn't see. Every Sunday it was thunder and brimstone...so I saw the crack in Mutema's citadel and I moved through the wall and right into the heart of his congregation: I offered them a new spiritual lease!!...(p.43)

Mulwa continued with his expose of the crooked ways of the leaders when

Muthemba says:

...genius is seldom understood. What I mean is, in this battle for the pockets, purse and souls of men, you must allow these fallen creatures certain religious fringe benefits. Okay, so a man has gone and sinned. What do you do? You hold a private confessional and tell him it's alright. That's why our Christ died. Go and sin no more, if you can help it...(p.43)

The passage above sheds light on the activities of some of the leaders across the African continent who most times fails to invoke the laws of the state for the development of the society, simply because they are calculative and looking for how the breakdown of law within the society would benefit them. Mulwa concretizes the corrupt nature of leadership in the conversation between the Archbishop and his sly political accomplice Mr. Chilulu:

CHILULU: Especially for men like you and I, Archbishop. You never know when some disgruntled element of mortality might pop up from the darkness and demand retribution.

ELTON: Retribution from an archbishop!! Are you out of your political head?

CHILULU: My friend, when I used to be a lawyer I used to think it is impossible. And then your good tongue and prayers put this political cane of authority into my hands in that grand alliance...what did you call it now?

ELTON: The marriage of the opposites, earthly Caesar hand in hand with the One Above!

CHILULU: Yes. And now I know. You and I are yoked together in common fortune. My political enemies are your religious enemies, my friends, likewise. It is not safe to assume that your collar will always protect you. Take that as a warning...

From the conversation between the two characters above, the playwright has been able to create an imagery of the dirty connivance and corrupt activities that goes on between the political leaders, and their partners in the religious circles, at the detriment of their political and religious followers, the main textual understanding of the conversation and the specific choice of the religious and political personages is that the social, cultural and political ways of the people in any society are most times controlled by the religious and political leadership found within that society. Therefore the choice of the prominent institutions (religion and politics) is a clear pointer to the thematic message in the play.

Between Soyinka and Mulwa's plays, we can clearly see an insightful link between the sensitive institutions within the society and the problem of leadership. Nguema one of the super characters in A play of giants tries to explain to his fellow leaders that he uses voodoo to control the minds of his people, therefore engaging in the dark religious arts for the sake of accruing unwanted control and power over his people. Archbishop Muthemba in Redemption on the other hand, connive with the lawyer turned politician (Chilulu) to rob the poor people in the valley of their lands while hoodwinking them in the name of religious redemption. In essence, the two playwrights used the imagery of leaders who are ready to go the extra mile to acquire excess powers at the expense of their followers. They are therefore using their art form and different styles of presentation to create the imagery of bad governance and the quest for excess power and total control.

3.4.2 International Conspiracies

Most of the major African writers (novelist and playwrights alike) from the era of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi aa Thiong'o, Ola Rotimi, Francis Imbuga, Ayi Kwei Armah, Peter Abrahams, Ebrahim Hussain, Athol Fugard, Nadine Gordimer and a host of new playwrights writing out of the African continent have constantly reflected the theme of international conspiracy in different forms. Most of these playwrights are seen as postcolonial writers because they have constantly protested against the issue of imperialism and neo colonialism on the African continent. It is for this reason that most of what is considered as African drama or African literature in general is viewed as protest literature; protest against colonial invaders, protest against African leaders, protest against imperial or neo colonial forces and also protest against the lived experiences of the human condition within the continent and the activities of the outsiders who have decided to remotely control the activities of the various African leaders. Ogude (1988) alludes to this when he stated that:

...but to the African writer, "protest" implies something much more sinister than the mere human act of confronting normal human existential problems. The painful memory of slavery, the humiliation of colonialism, the disarming but invidious power of neo-colonialism, the whole sense of impotence, of total impotence, these are the historical realities that have inspired, or rather tortured the African imagination...(p.7)

Bates Besong (1993) agrees with Ogude when she opines that:

...the power of the writer is not always enough to change the political and social situation of his time but his art can become a fighting literature; he can write works which are artistically

profound and politically correct. He can write works that show how his world is and could be... (p.18)

From the above, it is clear that there is a quest upon which most African writers have embarked upon because every literary work is a protest literature from the character of Tom Stockmann in Ibsen's An enemy of the people, to Hamlet in Shakespeare's Hamlet and Okownkwo in Achebe's Things fall apart, The Sculptor in Soyinka's A play of giants and Pastor Mutema in Mulwa's Redemption. All the writers are trying to breach a gulf between the various experiences of the universal human condition. In the same vein the two playwrights in this chapter are protesting against the uncompromising choices that have been placed before the African by the western governments in cohorts with their African conniving partners who masquerade in the cloak of leaders and redemptive saviours of the suffering masses across the African continent. Such acts of defiant protest can be seen in the bold representation of the western journalist and diplomats at the Bugaran Embassy in Soyinka's A play of giants. The depiction of the cold war scramble by the American and Russian diplomats and the appearance of the Secretary of the United Nations at the embassy is a clear depiction of the neo-colonial or imperialist scramble for the soul of independent African countries. Soyinka captures the behaviours of the western powers clearly in the play and how they conspire with western educated African academics to set the various African leaders who have fallen out of favour with them on the path of destruction. The conversation between Kamini and the Russian and American Diplomats is a testament to that fact:

2nd RUSSIAN. Dr Life President, I wish to assure you, at all times...

KAMINI. Yes, always you assure Kamini. Always you assure life President of Bugara, but still, you stage coup. Your KGB take care of my security, not so?

US DELEGATE. Perhaps I may come in, Field Marshal Dr El-Hajj. You need be in no fear that the US government will recognize these rebels who have taken over- whoever they are. As far as my delegation is concerned, the head of state of Bugara is right here in this embassy standing before me. My delegation will certainly make sure that Your Excellency address the Assembly tomorrow as planned and of course, the proposal which we were bringing to Your Excellency regarding your life size statue, remains in force, we have given it our unqualified support. The only condition we attached to our support was that the statue of our own nation-founder, George Washington be given appropriate...

KAMINI. (Swinging the gun dangerously to and fro). You hear? Always... you Plan coup, you telling World Bank, no loan for Kamini. Is the fine trick of superpowers, we know, when you call conference and everybody is making talk at conference tables, you are undermining talk and giving weapons to all sides. When you are making disarmament talk, you are making more atom bomb...you think Kamini big fool...

The dialogue above from page 61 of A play of giants sheds some light on the theme of international conspiracy, that is, how the super powers consistently conspire to bring down leaders from the third world. To add to this level of conspiracy Soyinka goes ahead and exposes the role(s) of the international academics in the whole saga in the following dialogue between Professor Batey and the Russian diplomats:

2ND RUSSIAN. Yes. A common butcher, we knew him. We had close studies of him sent regularly by our own men, not just western reports. But in any case, we did not create him- the

British did. They sustained him in power, backed by the Americans. Then they disagreed. The pupil had more than mastered the game of his masters. So we stepped in to fill the vacuum...but you sir, what about you?

BATEY. What about me?

2ND RUSSIAN. Come, come professor you are not naïve. You have visited Bugara. An intellectual, you have met many Bugaran colleagues. Progressives, committed to the cause of socialism- authentic socialism, not rhetorical. You have spoken with them. Sometimes, surely you speak to them one day, only to learn that they have disappeared the next?...did you really believe it was all western propaganda?

BATEY. You claimed it was! You shouted it loud enough in the United Nations.

2ND RUSSIAN. What was the word you used, professor? Opportunism. It is our duty to discredit the western press when it tries to discredit the instrument of our policies. The western powers do the same- why not? But what about you? You are here to write a speech for this er...heroic leader. But what of the peasants and workers he has destroyed at will? You write speeches on their behalf?

BATEY. He is a product of the economic and historical conditions of our people on the continent. There is no such thing as monster- you, if nobody else, should be the first to acknowledge that. You know it is colonial history which must bear full responsibility for all seeming aberrations in African leadership.

2ND RUSSIAN. I see, you have promoted these views among the survivors of the Kamini's policies in Bugaran villages and towns?

BATEY. No, I had no opportunity to...

2ND RUSSIAN. On your next visit perhaps, You see, professor, we also believe that there are no eternal virtues. Like honesty, it is fiction, or intellectual honesty, its later, bourgeois refinement. But our position and yours...what shall we say?..

From the ensuing conversation, it is now clear that both the international academic community most especially African intellectuals in Diaspora and the leaders of the super powers have all in one way or another conspired to keep the dictators in power across the continent for their own economic and socio-political gains at the expense of the suffering masses across the African continent.

Mulwa makes the same sad analysis on the roles of the international organizations in the continuous suffering of the African people in his play Redemption when he silently linked the activities of Bishop Muthemba and his political friend Chilulu to a Donor agency outside the shores of the African continent. Unknown to the Donor agency (the mother church) the money they sent was used by Muthemba and Chilulu as a means of generating more income and power for themselves at the expense of the poor and wretched souls of the people of the valley. It can therefore be safely said, that the international donor were hoodwinked into financing a criminal scheme against the majority of the innocent landowners in the valley. We can therefore say that metaphorically, the international organization means all foreign donor agencies who usually send money to their African counterparts money under the supervision of the governments for development projects that are never carried out, rather the government and their political allies share the money among themselves while the primary beneficiaries suffer. An example of this conspiracy can be found on page 51 of Redemption:

ELTON. Remember how I started? Plan A

CHILULU. ...how can I forget? You, a leading elder of the church holding the old pastor to ransom, telling him you had to be paid for advisory services rendered.

ELTON. The man flew into a rage! Called me names and grabbed me, well he bit the dust!

CHILULU. It was you that bit the dust!!

ELTON. We both rolled on it and after that, parted ways. I did my research; found there's no branch of Church of Christ Reborn anywhere in Africa. So I applied abroad to the Mother church, received an enthusiastic license and started Christ Reborn...but I needed money. And that's how you came in.

CHILULU. It was simple. Had the Mother Church publish our poverty and the malnutrition of the Children abroad with S.O.S blazing across the headlines!! Well the money came rolling in.

ELTON. Lots of it!

CHILULU. Rags today-

ELTON. Riches tomorrow! (they laugh, pause)

CHILULU. That money never got there! The poverty and malnutrition are still there, Archbishop.

ELTON. My friend Chilulu I'm surprised at you!! Rome was not built in a day! I have no intention of transforming my congregation of peasants into millionaires over night! That way I will lose the congregation. At least not until plan B is completed.

CHILULU. Plan B?

From the conversation above, we could see a clear indictment of the political class and the religious leaders, in the race to get international grants or aids in the name of development interventions yet none of those monies are ever used for the development of the common people in the society. It shows the greed of the African religious and political leaders who act in line with their foreign donors and sometimes cohorts. The playwright (Mulwa) use the play as a way of highlighting

the sufferings of the people across the continent, how development funds are been diverted to individual pockets at the expense of the people. This aspect of social injustice and human pain and suffering are major thematic flags in African literature, they create the automatic lifeline upon which the imagination of the playwrights get the essential materials for the production of their art. Soyinka and Mulwa have both tapped into this reservoir of human sufferings and experiences to get continental and universal themes for their plays.

We can see that though the two writers lived and wrote their plays on different axis and corners of the continent (Africa); they still have a way of connecting through the social, political and cultural issues that they discussed through their dramas. This is because they are all custodians of the cultural and social lives of the people, meaning their custodianship is not only to their immediate social environment alone but also to the wider environment. As a result, a playwright can write his/her play using social, cultural and political resources from other countries as subject matter. Therefore, it is possible to relate the various themes to events across the African continent and also to events across the world.

3.5 Dramatic representation of Political Issues in the Plays

One of the major issues in modern and postmodern drama is the representation of political issues by playwrights. The popular style of writing in terms of political drama most times is satire. Most plays written in this epoch are targeting specific political-social issues that need to be addressed by the political elites within the

given social context. In the case of A Play of Giants and Redemption, both plays are a subtle political commentary on the African situation as the playwrights informed us in their prefaces to both plays. As social commentators, they used their plays to write the truth in a satirical manner, for both writers having written in different literary genres, drama remains their preferred mode of communication and this is because of the flexibility that the dramatic art form gives to them to give life to their imaginations for the benefit of changing their societies.

Soyinka and Mulwa have both provided a template for discourse on the issue of political responsibility and development both by the followers and the leaders in any given society. Using Africa as a focal point of origin, developed as a result of their knowledge of the political experiences and histories of countries on the continent, they separately choose to highlight the travails facing the continent in terms of poor political leadership using different styles and writing approaches in their plays. From Soyinka's classical ambiguity in terms of use of language which seems surprisingly simple in this text, to Mulwa's direct satirical approach, they have dissected the issues of political greed, to international conspiracy and human suffering. The major reason for writing is to create a high level of political and social consciousness among the people so that they can see the dialectics of political change and demand for improvements in the way(s) they are being governed and also so that they can challenge the international community to stop playing politics with the fate of the African but rather stand up and be counted.

We can therefore read the plays as political commentaries because of the political undertones that formed the foundations for the subject matters of the plays. From the monstrous assemble of four African dictators and their lapdogs in the Bugaran embassy overlooking the United Nations building in downtown New York in Soyinka's A play of giants, to the cold yet wilful struggle for power between the Aged one and Archbishop Muthemba at the beginning of Mulwa's Redemption and the subsequent conflicts between the young Pastor Manela and Pastor Mutema and Archbishop Muthemba, it is clear that the stage for a high political drama is set and the playwrights both gave us a beautiful interpretation of the existing political climate across the continent in both plays. Both of them showed us, distinct political situations of leaders who feel they are untouchable and are therefore willing to hold on to power even when it is clear they have fallen out with the people. A case in point, is the struggle by the four dictators in Soyinka's A play of giants to hold on to power and be remembered by all means and so the idea of the Statue to be placed at the United Nations Gallery for public display.

We see flashes of the political commentary and scathing satire throughout both plays, an example is the sudden political outburst of Professor Batey at the Bugaran embassy when he joined issues with the coup plotters:

BATEY. ...you slave, you sacrifice. You devote your entire existence, day after day, hour after hour, with no rest, no let up, no distraction. From a hundred tribes, tongues, cultures, religions, animosities and suspicions, you weld a single, united people. Deprived, reviled, sabotaged and subverted by outside forces, from whose hands you have wrested your people, put an end to their centuries of

domination sometimes through force of arms...the invader is driven out, but is the battle over? No. you discover that the greed is still in their eye and they bring new, camouflaged weaponry to bear wresting from your hands the fruits of your people's labour. Eternally vigilant, sifting through the deceptions of diplomacy and traps of preferred friendship, you ensure that the wolf of yesterday does not parade before you as the sheep today. And sometimes even the people you serve must betray you; that is the unkindest cut of all...

The long winding speech by the professor is a political statement on the irony of political struggle and betrayal that has become a constant feature in the political circles across the African continent. He painted the sordid imagery of the various stages of political and socio-economic struggles of the African, the diplomatic conspiracies that have become a permanent characteristic of most African governments.

In Redemption, we equally find dramatic imageries of the political commentary that runs unhindered throughout the play. Mulwa discusses the political scenario from the church to the family and the larger society using the simple imagery of the conflicts within the church as the template for the discussion. Mulwa have craftily created imageries of political conflicts and lobbying between individuals in the work place as can be seen between The Aged one and his ambitious assistant Bishop Martin, we also witnessed the same politics between Pastor Mutema and Archbishop Muthemba. The playwright constructs different conflicting scenarios that are laden with heavy political innuendoes for the readers to grapple with. A deep look at the conflicts within the play-text reveals a sarcastic laugh at the

political situation in Kenya during the Moi era and also the laughable political and military dictatorships that had taken hold of the African continent.

3.6 The Plays as Statements in Social Revolt

The different movements and theories in modern theatre constitute a revolt. Revolt, although looking to overthrow a particular political or cultural movement, does not intend to disrupt the notion of society as the primary organization of human existence. Some excellent work has been done exploring the relationship between revolt and modern drama. Robert Brustein's classic The Theatre of Revolt: An Approach to Modern Drama (1964) explores three different types of Modern Theatrical Revolt; Messianic revolt occurs when the dramatist rebels against God and tries to take His place—the priest examines his image in the mirror. Social revolt occurs when the dramatist rebels against the conventions, morals, and values of the social organism—the priest turns the mirror on the audience.

Existential revolt occurs when the dramatist rebels against the conditions of his existence—the priest turns the mirror on the void. Brustein (1964) points out that each of these revolts takes place within the play's content, not necessarily in the relationship between the playwright and his text. A play's protagonist enters into a battle with conventional notions of religion, culture, or self. Brustein finds examples of his theory by tweaking traditional interpretations of modern classics

and does not regard a play's experimental style as a prerequisite for a certain type of revolt.

It is therefore along this line of thought, that the two plays in this chapter would be discussed as revolt plays, because of the styles that the playwrights used and also because of the activities of some of the characters in the plays. In terms of the structural styles of writing, the two playwrights used two different approaches in structural construction for the plays. Whereas Soyinka divided the play into three parts instead of Acts and Scenes as advised by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, Mulwa used movements for his own play. This goes to show that the negation of the conventional acts and scenes by both playwrights is actually a deliberate act. Considering the epoch when both plays were written, the strand of structural revolt in the dramaturgy can be explained. Both plays were written in periods when both countries were under repressive regimes. In Nigeria, General Mohammed Buhari had just toppled the democratically elected government of Shehu Shagari hence political structures within the country were all suspended. In the case of Kenya, the country was still under the repressive rule of the Daniel Arap Moi's government and so most playwrights and writers generally had to find softer methods of advocating for a better society. From the two plays, one could see the subtle objection to the problems within the two societies, the advocacy for change and pure satire that is evident in both plays is a testament to the revolting nature of the playwrights who are both on a quest for change within their societies.

One of the major features of a social revolt is the ability of the writer to write in a manner that would not belittle the efforts of the present regime. Brecht (1935) opines that in such situations the writer should adopt the following method to get his message across to the target audience:

...Nowadays, anyone who wishes to combat lies and ignorance and to write the truth must overcome at least five difficulties. He must have the courage to write the truth when truth is everywhere opposed; the keenness to recognize it, although it is everywhere concealed; the skill to manipulate it as a weapon; the judgment to select those in whose hands it will be effective; and the cunning to spread the truth among such persons. These are formidable problems for writers living under Fascism, but they exist also for those writers who have fled or been exiled; they exist even for writers working in countries where civil liberty prevails... (p.1)

It is therefore clear from the above advice by Bertolt Brecht that for the writer to write the truth in a repressive environment or state, he/ she needs to develop the means of concealing it from the claws of the agents of the oppressive regime. For Soyinka and Mulwa as writers in a postcolonial era in Africa, they had to find a means of writing about their frustrations with the leadership and the followers in their respective societies. The creation of imagery and metaphoric representation of the events in the plays presented them with the best means of “concealing” and passing their coded messages across to their target audience.

Both playwrights (Soyinka and Mulwa) employed the use of satire as a style of writing; this helped them in concealing their social and political messages in the open (Eagleton, 2012). Their stylistic choices aided the development of the story

lines and the deployment of the messages. Like most playwrights and literary writers, the two playwrights, used drama a literary device as the platform upon which to demand for social and political change in their societies.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the playwrights though from different societies have written about the peculiar problems that have remained inimical to social and political growth on the African continent. They have projected the social and political issues of leadership, international interference and corruption among the various African leaders. They have alluded to the connivance of the African leaders and their western collaborators. Other playwrights also exploited the ideas of political and social realities on the African continent. Playwrights like Francis Imbuga and Ola Rotimi have also written plays that question the nature and ideologies of leadership on the African continent. In the next chapter we shall analyze the portrayal of African political realities in Imbuga's Successor and Rotimi's If...

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL TRENDS IN IMBUGA'S THE SUCCESSOR AND ROTIMI'S IF...

4.1 Introduction

Drama is believed universally to be an imitative narrative of the cultural, religious, social and political lives of a people (Turner, 1979). It is an artistic documentary of the daily occurrences within the community; Eagleton (2012) believes that the playwright is vested with the responsibility of capturing the metamorphic periods of change within the society for future reference and guidance in the society. How the playwright goes about documenting such issues determines how serious the people within the society would view his work. This therefore goes to say that the artistic work of a playwright is a reflection of the society from which he/ she emerges from. Wa Thiong'o (1981) sees the role of the writer (playwrights inclusive) as that of the seeker and guardian of the truth within the society. That it is incumbent on the playwright to always tow the side of the truth no matter how dangerous it may be. Ruganda (1992) on the other hand believes that the style of the playwright should form the basis upon which he hides the truth in the open, that the playwright should hide the truth behind the mask of laughter. It is in line with Ruganda's postulation that Brecht in his seminal article 'Literature will be scrutinized' opined that the artists who write about the problems of the people and the injustices within their societies would be seen as the vanguards of true justice and saviours of humanity.

In this chapter therefore, we look at the representation of political trends in the plays of Ola Rotimi's If... and Francis Imbuga's Successor, how both playwrights were able to write the truth about the political realities in their societies in the form of drama and how their writing styles helped them in creating awareness among their target audience. To be able to shed more light on the above, we shall use the Political Theatre Theory as the backdrop upon which our discourse would spring forth. Both plays address prevailing social problems, but have a vein of comedy which makes their stark themes more palatable. Issues which engaged the attention of Rotimi and Imbuga are education, marriage, religion, political and social governance, health care, and class privilege(s). From their plays they are most angered by what they perceived as the exploitation of the working masses. Both playwrights have a serious socialist inclination in their writings, showing a clear refraction of their political ideologies and how they covertly or overtly intend to use their plays as tools to stir a political evolution in their countries and the continent as a whole. Rotimi and Imbuga therefore fall in the same class with other politically conscious playwrights like, George Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Jane Littlewood among others. All of whom used their plays to effectively demonstrate the need for social change and fairness within their societies and the world as a whole.

Political drama traced back to the ancient Greeks, stage satires about those in authority was banned in the Greek republic after The birds and Iysistrata, since

then playwrights have used stages to convey messages, demand political action or change government policy and public opinion. Sophocles' Antigone is political: quoted by Aristotle on the loyalties of a citizen, adapted in 1944 by Anouilh setting it in the French resistance against the Nazis, while Brecht in 1948 made it more radically anti-Hitler (Potter, 2013).

Political Theatre Theory is the expression of strongly held beliefs, protesting at society or promoting a particular belief system. As politics is present in every corner of people's lives, political theatre includes party, gender, racial, sexual, animal, environmental and economic politics (Brecht, 1951). Brecht was so influential through his theories of estrangement; his works illustrate the effectiveness of staging politics. The parable of Hitler's rise to power is told through The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (1941), a small-time gangster in 1930's Chicago who takes advantage of economic turmoil to seize control of the greengrocer trade. In the same vein it is clear that the dramatic style deployed by Rotimi and Imbuga in most of their plays have a hidden smack of symbolic political commentary. From Kurumi a historical political narrative of the Yoruba war General, to Betrayal in the city and all other plays written by this two (Rotimi and Imbuga) the constant under pinning message has been that of the desire for a politically balanced and people friendly society. To add credence to the above, Bracco (2012) opines that:

...the most rewarding piece of theatre is one that stimulates thought, opens dialogue and leaves people talking about the play for hours, days and even years. Revered playwrights- Shakespeare,

Bertolt Brecht, Arthur Miller- all wrote political plays that jarred audiences. Political work will continue to be found on the stage because the theatre is an ideal place for compelling stories about the complexities of the world in which we live... (p.1)

The two playwrights (Rotimi and Imbuga) have constantly relied on historical events and sources as a wealthy avenue from which they can draw their story lines from Rotimi in Gbilekaa (1997) posits that:

...historical resources offer possibilities for matching human concern of the past with issues that pre-occupy us today. In drawing these parallels, the crucial question with which one is concerned is this. If despite obvious debilitating handicaps, our forebears were able to grapple with certain socio-political problems that threatened their survival why can't we their off springs, do better (sic)...(p.37)

The above quotation therefore enables us to see the perspectives of the playwrights, their reliance on historical happenings as a source for materials that they can use to reconstruct the present and the future. The worldview of the playwright and his class is recaptured in his dramatization of events within his society (Gbilekaa, 1997). The interpretation and choice of material(s) by the playwright would help the audience and readers of the play-text to understand the message in the play through the ideological visage of the playwright. Ambanasom (2010) claims that most African playwrights are influenced by the political lines and tensions that have become a permanent feature in the continents road to greatness, He states that the story lines are subtly charged to pit the masses against the greedy political oppressors or "exploiters against the exploited".

From the above, it is clear that no playwright writes from the void, Rotimi and Imbuga's plays therefore maintain their contemporaneity in terms of their

immediate African setting and commentary as well as their timelessness within the world of responsible universal drama. The two playwrights wrote the plays on different ideological pedestals that have conveniently conveyed their message(s) to their target audience. Both playwrights have showed a firm commitment towards espousing the social, political and cultural inadequacies that have held the African continent in a choking grip (Gbilekaa, 1997). The reason for this approach in creating awareness through drama is because political theatre gives room for intellectual convenience, according to Kirby (1975) it deals with political ideas and concepts usually in an attempt to attack or support a particular political position it therefore dwells on the various elements of dramatic performance to reinforce the symbolic meanings and message for the benefit of the audience.

4.2 Summary of the Plays

4.2.1 Summary of Rotimi's If...Tragedy of the Ruled

In this play, Rotimi recreates the Nigerian situation using the imagery of a tenement building where the tenants share amenities. The Landlord comes to visit the tenants only when he is seeking re-election, the action centres around the activities of the Tenants in the compound. Rotimi confronts his readers with the social and economic tensions engulfing the Nigerian Nation, this approach enabled him to make fundamental dramatic statements on the conduct of politics by Nigerian nay African politicians and how their brand of politics affects the poor and the oppressed. The setting of the play is in a multicultural compound in the

neighbourhood of Duobi a community in Port Harcourt. The major character is Papa, a retired primary school headmaster whose wife of forty years (mama) is dying of breast cancer. Other characters in the play who are also tenants in the house include Hamidu alias Che Guevara the young doctor, Akpan alias One God, Sister Chinwe, Betty, Onyema, Garuba and Banji; All of them tenants in a house that is owned by a political thug whom they call Landlord. It is a dramatic picturization of their struggles, and their bland optimism for a better future not just as individuals but as a people in a nation that just came out of a bloody and senseless civil war. It is a story that is built on the artistic creativity that dwells on multiple imageries, from the brilliance and optimism of Papa the Sage, to the dramatic bravado coated with academic adventures of Hamidu and Banji, the story line tells the tragic escapades of the tenants and the eventual death of Onyema the young boy through whose eyes they all see the bright future of the nation and its eventual collapse. It is a satirical master piece on the story of the Nigerian Nation and the suffering of the people; it is also a reflection of the story of most post independent African nations. Rotimi tells the sublime truths about the neo-colonial attitudes of the newly crowned African statesmen. He creates a metaphor of a people who are suffering and yet smiling in the optimism that their future would be brighter and better than their present woes.

4.2.2 Summary of Imbuga's The Successor

This is a play about the personal ambition of courtiers and the struggle for power in a fictional African state called Masero. The state is ruled by a troubled emperor

who has no son and has not named a successor among the courtiers. The drama centres around the dubious activities of Chief Oriomra an ambitious and scheming courtier who wishes to eliminate all the other courtiers so that he can become the successor in the event of the death of the emperor. He creates an alliance with Chief Sasia to eliminate Chief Jandi who many in the State see as the possible successor to the throne upon the demise of the emperor.

Together, Oriomra and Sasia plotted against Jandi using the beautiful Zira who agrees to discredit Jandi by claiming he is the father of the baby she is expecting. The emperor is highly disappointed in the shameful act of Jandi and so he banished him from the state, it is then rumoured that he has committed suicide. Oriomra then tries to eliminate Sasia and Zira to clear the way for him but the two naïve lovers quickly dictated his plot and it backfired against him. Diviner See through on the other hand has helped Jandi and the Emperor to solve the disturbing trend and Oriomra was brought to justice while Jandi was restored to his position.

Imbuga wrote a play that strikes at the centre of the problem of leadership struggle in Africa and the wider world as a whole. It is a pure political commentary about the activities of power mongers across the world. Written in 1979, an era when most African states were still trying to understand the dynamics of self-independence and the need for selfless development, Imbuga's play discusses the issue of leadership and the continuous, contentious struggle for absolute power among the political class. At that epoch, it was a contagious

problem among African nations as coups and counter coups reigned supreme across the continent. It was also the period when the issue of dictatorship was becoming a reality in Africa. The play though written by a prolific Kenyan playwright can be seen as a sad commentary on the power struggles that have besieged most of the continent and a refraction of the cold war struggles among the international super powers.

4.3 Classification of Characters in the Plays

Although they often seem like real people, dramatic characters are actually created in the mind of the playwright, who has wide latitude in how to present a character and in what to emphasize in projecting a character. A stage character can be drawn with a few quick strokes, as a cartoonist sketches a political figure; given the surface detail and reality of a photograph; or fleshed out with the more interpretive and fully rounded quality of a portrait in oils.

According to Wilson (2005) several major types of characters have proved effective in theatre. These include extraordinary characters who are in some way "larger than life"; representative or quintessential characters who are in many respects typical or ordinary, but who are significant because they embody an entire group; stock characters who are not complete or three-dimensional and who exemplify one particular characteristic to the exclusion of virtually everything else; characters with a single dominant trait, or minor characters who appear briefly and serve chiefly to further the story of the major characters; narrators or

choruses who comment on the action of the main story; and nonhuman characters. Characters are placed together by the playwright in certain combinations to obtain maximum effectiveness, and sometimes they are orchestrated to reinforce a theme in different manners.

In another sense of the term, the treatment of the character is the basic part of the playwright's work, conventions of the period and the author's personal vision will affect the treatment of character. Most plays contain major characters and minor characters. The delineation and development of major characters is essential to the play; the conflict between Sasia and Jandi in The successor or between Landlord and Garuba in If... depends upon the character of each. A minor character serves a specific function, to inform and aid in the development of the storyline. The distinction between major and minor characters is a vital aspect of the development of a storyline and the unravelling of the conflict in drama.

Basically, we divided the characters into groups for easy analysis and for the sake of dramatic aesthetics and symbolic representations. Playwrights use the traits of characters to help readers identify with the protagonists and the antagonists, to appreciate central themes, and propel the plots dramatic storyline. While it is easy to pass over the identifying features of the characters, there's usually a good reason the author included them in the text. Though all characterization is really about a character's personality, writers use two basic types of characterization to serve varying purposes. An astute reader is able to pick up on both forms and

transform the written words into a deeper awareness of the nuances of the characters. It is based on these basic characterization methods that we can further analyze the character traits into Existentialist, Social and Messianic characters. For the purpose of our research in this chapter, we looked at characterization base on the two basic forms of characterization Direct and Indirect.

Direct characterization is mostly done by the playwright using deliberate means either through the character description in a stage direction or through the use of a narrator. The narrator directly tells the reader the character's personality. In order to qualify as direct characterization, the narrator must say something specific regarding the character's disposition and nature. This type of characterization is not found in dialogue, but rather in the stage direction and narration. Also, it only occurs when the playwright through the stage direction or the narrator identifies, without a doubt, the personality of a character. This type of characterization usually removes all doubt from the reader's mind regarding the said character. Therefore, if there is a biased narrator, then readers must be particularly cautious when considering the validity of the direct statement.

Indirect characterization, on the other hand, occurs when the stage directions or narrator does not come right out and tell the reader the personality of a character, but by reading between the lines an audience can guess the character's disposition based on certain criteria. It is actually far more common than direct

characterization, but also much more complex. Indirect characterization can be found in dialogue as well as narration, and it is often intermingled with direct characterization, which makes it difficult to locate and identify conclusively.

Based on the above, readers decipher a character's personality, but with indirect characterization it is never actually directly revealed. Stereotyping will certainly be used with indirect characterization, but most times that is exactly what the playwright wants the audience to imagine. Unlike with direct characterization, with indirect characterization there is no definitive revelation about a character's personality, so readers must rely on their own interpretation skills.

4.4 Use of Symbolism in the Plays

In 'Dialogue with a text' Probst (2007) explains, that if we accept the idea that literature ought to be significant, that readers have to assimilate it and work with it, that transforming it into knowledge is more significant than memorizing the definitions of technical terms, then we need to find some ways of bringing readers and text together, and of forcing upon readers the responsibility for making meaning of text. The best activities, then, is to encourage readers or the audience to make their own meaning out of what they read or watched and to discover for themselves the beauty of great literature. In practice, this procedure allows the readers or audience to choose objects and ideas on their own, and also to choose the significant symbols and themes in the play or text and are able to explore their meaning with little prompting or direction. Rotimi and Imbuga both used objects

as symbols in their plays, below are some of the properties in the plays that have symbolic meanings that helped in the creation of meaning and shaping of the two stories. The playwrights used different symbolic items in the plays for example While Rotimi deploys the use of the imagery of the dry water tap, Imbuga effectively deploys the imagery of the dream in his play.

4.4.1 The Imagery of the Tap

Rotimi made a symbolic statement in the play If... by creating an imagery of a dry water tap in the compound. The tenants daily harbour a distant hope that one day water would gush out of the tap. It further represents the failure of the Nigerian government and by extension other African governments to provide their people with the best in terms of infrastructural development. The symbolic meaning of the Tap most especially towards the end of the play when the little boy (Onyema) hung his shirt on the dry tap before he was eventually killed by the brutality of the state police creates a dramatic imagery of despair and stagnation. The symbolic usage of the Tap casts an unwanted shadow of indictment on the Landlord who is a symbolic representation of the political class within the Nigerian society. The fluid style and mockingly high symbolism questions the certainties that paraded themselves as pillars of a cohesive society in a post civil war recovering society like Nigeria. The same imagery can be seen in the selfish and greedy character of Chief Oriomra in Imbuga's The successor. There is no difference between the character build up of The Landlord and Chief Oriomra, though both characters exist in time and space. Based on the creative works of the playwrights (Imbuga

and Rotimi) we can still see the psychological shade of one in the other simply because they are both members of the African political ruling class.

4.4.2 The Imagery of the Dream

Imbuga employs the dream technique as a means of enhancing the storyline and creating the dramatic metaphor. The image of the Emperor's deceased father that became a constant feature in the dreams of the emperor has a connotative meaning; it suggests that the playwright is campaigning for a return to the roots. That he (Imbuga) is suggesting that the present crop of African leaders need to revisit the manifestos of the various founding fathers of the different independent African countries. The symbolic representation of the dream can equally mean the unknown change that is about to engulf the continent as a result of the constant romance between the African countries and the western and eastern world powers that control the political, social and economic activities across the world. Imbuga deploys one of the oldest methodologies in playwriting to achieve his aim; the dream sequence has been used by a number of playwrights across time for maximum effects in terms of creation of imagery. Playwrights like Shakespeare, Ibsen and Miller have all deployed the dream sequence to greater effect in some of their plays. Imbuga created a dreamlike drama of chastisement that equally serves as a warning about the future that awaits the African continent and the African people; a future that is marred by political corruption and social mistrusts of the leaders by the followers. The semi-modern African state of Masero is a symbolic representation of many a modern African semi-democracy, the personal struggle

for power by Chief Oriomra and the gullible chief Sasia clearly depicts the dubious scheming that has become the other of the day among most political office holders across the continent of Africa. It is this type of greedy and gullible attitude among the political class on the continent that Imbuga is trying to allude to in the play. Brecht in A short organum for the theatre (1949) in Brecht on theatre: The development of an aesthetics (1964) arrives at the same conclusion when he states that:

...for those who are constructing society it sets out society's experiences, past and present alike, in such a manner that the audience can appreciate the feelings, insights and impulses which are distilled by the wisest, most active and most passionate among us from the events of the day or the century. They must entertain with the wisdom that comes from the solution of the problems, with the anger that is a practical expression of sympathy with the underdog, with the respect due to those who respect humanity; or rather whatever is kind to humanity... (p.5)

From the above, it is clear that Brecht speaks in support of the ageless and timeless works of the playwrights who transcended time and epochs to write about the need for equity, justice and fairness to all people. He believes that any responsible playwright would never forget to draw from the historical accuracies or inaccuracies for the creation of solutions to the problems of the present and the enhancement of a better future society. His observations have been concretized in Imbuga's The successor. The futuristic symbolism of the seer (Dr. See Through) and the hunting night visions of Emperor Chonda, are warnings for the society to leave a peaceful live with one another.

4.4.3 The Tenants

Rotimi's dramatic choice of a tenement building as the locale within which most events in the play (If...) would take place has a symbolic connotation to it. The choice of tenants reflects the major tribes in Nigeria as we can relate their names (Chinwe to Ibo, Hamidu to Hausa, Ukot to Niger delta, Garuba to Hausa and Banji Falegan to Yoruba) to the major Nigerian tribes and Regions. It is therefore safe to say that based on the Marxist ideological position of the playwright and his vociferous commentary about the events in the country during the 1979 elections, he has used his poetic license to write a play that depicts the situation that was obtainable during the build up to the elections that gave birth to the third republic in Nigeria (1979). The silent revolt of the Tenants against the instructions of the Landlord and the tragic demise of Mama as a result of lack of medical facilities to treat her ailment, coupled with the death of the young and very promising Onyema as a result of the ruthlessness of the policemen paints a picture of the dissolution that engulfed the people as a result of the corrupt practices of the leaders. It also symbolically painted the picture of the inhuman nature of the post independent African leaders.

4.5 Themes in the Plays; If... and The Successor

The subject matter of most literary endeavours are deeply engrained in the socio-political and cultural sphere from which they are written, though most times it is also infinitely possible to relate the subject matters to the larger experiences of the

wider and more cosmopolitan universe that forms a bigger template for the writer (Brecht 1948; Darah 2008; Nnolim, 2009). The thematic preoccupations of most playwrights are normally born out of the ever-present experiences of the daily happenings within their local, national and international environment as a result of which, it is easy to associate the subject matters in the plays with the epochal events that were prevalent when the said play was written. It is as a result of such universality in terms of the themes that the plays can be meaningful to different readers or audiences across the universe (Iji 1996; Zettersten, 1983). To help our discourse in the issues of political and social issues in African drama, we will look at some of the remote themes in the plays of Ola Rotimi and Francis Imbuga. These include:

4.5.1 Leadership Problem

The subject matter of leadership has carved a niche for itself in the different genres of African literature. From the period of independence, most African countries had been bedevilled by different forms of leadership crises. As a result of this sad development, African writers have always found a way of prominently featuring the open and smelly sore of leadership in their various works. From Achebe's A man of the people, Soyinka's Death and the king's horseman, Ngugi's I will marry when I want, Fugard's The island and a host of other literary works by other prominent and new writers across the African continent, the issue of leadership has become a constant aspect in the art works. Rotimi and Imbuga have also spared some space in their works to make their contributions on the issue of

social, political, religious and other forms of leadership that are found on the African continent. A clear example of the struggle for leadership can be seen in Imbuga's play The successor when Chief Oriomra almost schemed his way to the become the Successor to the Throne. He connived against Chief Jandi, by forcing Zira to accuse him of impregnating her. Fortunately Zira and Sasia found out in time and turned the table against the greedy and evil hearted Chief Oriomra.

Imbuga used the character of Chief Oriomra to paint a clear picture of the greedy and dirty politics that runs round the corridors of power, and how it usually ends in a tragic way for the leader or the led. In tandem with Imbuga's depiction of selfish politicians and leaders, Rotimi's depiction of the Landlord who gave his tenants quit notices so as to force them to vote for his political party during the national elections equally shows that the issue of forceful and deceptive leaders is a common phenomenon across the continent.

To create a balance of dramatic forces, Rotimi and Imbuga also created protagonists who saw through the ruse of the two antagonists (Chief Oriomra and Landlord). Imbuga had Diviner See Through and Jandi as good characters in the play while Rotimi created a pious character in the person of Papa the Old Teacher and Hamidu alias Che Guevara. The postulation at the end is that there is still hope for the political and social leadership on the African continent. That not all leaders are bad and so the future of the continent and humanity in general is not very bad.

4.5.2 Social Justice

One of the major issues on the front banner in African drama is the continuous search for social equality and an end to all forms of injustices whether political, cultural or social. Most playwrights across the continent have made the issue of social equality and justice one of their constant subject matter. This is because of the different cultural and socio-political experiences that have made Africa as a continent and a people unique from the rest of the world. Femi Osofisan the Nigerian Dramatist Highlighted the issue of social justice in one of his plays Red is the freedom road, Ebrahim Hussein the Tanzanian, made an explicit commentary about social injustices of the colonialists in Kinjekitile. Like Osofisan and Hussein, Rotimi and Imbuga are repainting the issues of injustices that have become a permanent feature in their communities and the larger African society. The tragic aspects of social and political injustices that have become common place across the continent; are born out of the historical injustices that have become a constant feature around the continent over time. Adolfo Sanchez Vasquez in Art and society: Essays in Marxist aesthetics (1973) relates to the above when he mentions that all humanity is on a historical ground and that all conflicts are not waged among human beings and communities but differences in social ideas and statutes.

In conclusion, drama does change the way people think, as a result of which new ways of thinking and political and social relations in governance and public relations are born. The playwright who is seen as the vanguard of his society is

always quick to point out in his dramaturgic approach which systems of political relations needs to be changed. From the relationship between content and style, to the context in which the performance is delivered, the ultimate aim of most dramatic performances is to pose political questions and problems and attempt to change the beliefs and opinions of the spectator (Kirby, 1975). Arising from this analogy therefore, we can safely view the dramatic texts analyzed in this chapter as literary commentaries that are aimed towards changing or creating new perspectives to the spectator in terms of political and social relations within the immediate environment. Barber (1997) adds to the above position when she opines that:

Art forms do not merely reflect an already — constituted consciousness, giving us a window onto something already fully present. They are themselves important means through which consciousness is articulated and communicated. In times of rapid social change, it seems likely that popular art forms, with their exceptional mobility (whether through technology such as the radio, record, and cassette tape, or through physical transportation from place to place by travelling performing groups) will play a crucial role in formulating new ways of looking at things... (p.4)

Barber captures the essence of the politics of playwriting and the reasons for the evolution of the playwright as the vanguard of the society and the silent voice of constant reminder that the society relies upon. This is because one of the duties of the playwright in an ever evolving political society is to serve as the writer of truth and socio-political conscience of the society. From the foregoing it is clear that in the midst of the aesthetics of the playwrights craft, he /she would always find a way of reminding the society which he/ she serves of the need for constant

political and social balance. This therefore takes us to Ngugi's Decolonizing the mind (1982) when he opines that all writers are writers in politics it depends on what type of politics and the side of the divide that the writer chooses.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study set out to carry out a comparative study of representation of social realities in Kenyan and Nigerian Drama. From the standpoint of the research, it is clear that a lot has been written in the genre of drama on the African continent. The playwrights on the African continent just like other literary writers have engrained their works with the cultural, social and political manifestations of life in different forms as seen on the African continent. It should be noted that though the chosen playwrights are from two culturally divergent countries, the thematic preoccupation of their plays on the other hand are reflections of the social and political imageries of the African people and their daily socio-political mutations and manifestations. This research therefore stems out of the need for a continuous comparative discourse among African literary writers so as to form a niche for constant ideological and artistic comparative endeavours that would lead to the production of historical and intellectual materials that are a manifestation of the artistic means of production that are reflective of the daily social and political dynamics that have shaped and are shaping the African continent. For the specific nature of comparative analysis based on the generational relationships and period-dialectics; the researcher based the research on chosen plays of Francis Imbuga, Ngugi Wa Thiong and Micere Mugo and David Mulwa in Kenya while Wole

Soyinka, Ola Rotimi and Ken Saro-Wiwa made up the playwrights chosen from Nigeria. The comparative nature of the study places it at the front burner in terms of creating avenues for the study of regional literatures and cultural studies on the African continent. The use of drama as a means of literary commentary by the chosen playwrights to expose the social and political realities that have held the continent captive is an important means of starting dialogue among the people on the need to take action and create a new Africa.

The research dwells on the strengths of drama as a stylistic aspect of literature through which the nations and people can take note of developments in their societies through literary and dramatic actions (Williams, 2012). This means that the stylistic devices that the playwrights used in their plays help in enhancing and projecting the contents of the play texts to the intended audience. The aim of the playwright is to serve as a catalyst, for the remembrance of the historical and material realities, which have shaped the African and his continent. One of the basic functions of drama and the playwright is to artistically document social and political happenings within and without his/her immediate environment.

The dramatic narratives of wa Thiong'o and Mugo together with the satirical barbs of Saro-Wiwa succinctly capture the historical narrative of the social and political events that have shaped Kenya and Nigeria in terms of the histories and socio-political developments of the People in the two countries. Soyinka and Mulwa on the other hand question the nature and form of social and political experiences of

the African people in terms of leadership and material contestations in all spheres of the African way of life and social governance.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The research study did a systemic review of six play-texts; three from each of the two countries (Kenya and Nigeria) respectively. The six playwrights whose works were investigated in this study all existed in the same period; therefore, the dialectics of the two countries and the African continent within the period of writing their plays featured prominently in their writings. Their dramaturgies all have deep political undertones about the resident realities on the African continent. The nature and form of characterization, setting of the plays and dialogue are all pointers to the playwrights varied styles of presenting the grim realities of life that the African is faced with daily (Esslin, 1980; Nazareth, 1972).

From wa Thiong'o and Mugo's confrontational and radical political satire to Saro-Wiwa's delicate, combustional satirical approach, to Soyinka and Mulwa's ironical metaphors on the laughable state of leadership on the continent and Imbuga and Rotimi's straight attack on the inhuman quest for power by African leaders; the playwrights have successfully drawn our attention to the social and political realities of life on the African continent. Though it can be argued that the playwrights are referring to events that affect their immediate societies (Achebe, 2012; Esslin, 1980; wa Thiong'o, 1981) we can equally argue that the immediate society within which the playwright resides is a constituent part of the larger

African continent and so events within the society of the playwright are not in any way alien or different from the events in neighbouring countries.

In terms of characterization, all the playwrights created characters to suit their storylines, and they all located the characters within the locale of the stories. Mulwa's Ezeziel Katika, Soyinka's Carver, Imbuga's Jandi, Wa Thiongo and Mugo's Kimathi and Saro-Wiwa's Ledu are all characters that highlighted the characters of the down trodden in the immediate societies of the playwrights and are equally reflective of the symbolic oppression that is rampant within the social and political environment in Nigeria and Kenya. Apart from the depiction of such characters the playwrights equally created characters that captured in different moulds the nature of leadership that have become hallmarks of political and military dictatorships in Nigeria, Kenya and the rest of Africa.

Five of the plays are written in English language intersperse with some local languages and songs to help in buttressing the locale and origin of the playwrights and the target audience. Saro-Wiwa's play is the only play that is completely written in Nigerian Pidgin English, this language is a variation of the Nigerian English language that has been bastardized to suit local usage by Nigerians across cultural, social and political barriers. The choice of English language whether adulterated or pure English language is in testament to the fact that both countries consider the English language as their Lingua Franca though in terms of Kenya they equally consider Swahili as a second national language. This is evident in the

sparse usage of Swahili in the Kenyan plays. Overall, it should be noted that the choice and deployment of language in all the plays is strategically aimed towards passing the message across to both the immediate and distant readers of the play texts.

The playwrights used different playwriting skills and styles that dwell on the realm of the Avant-Garde and political theatre theories to successfully achieve their aims. This is because the two theories can comfortably accommodate all new forms of drama that are born out of social and political commentaries about the fate of humanity (Brecht, 1965; Brustein, 1964; Burger, 1974).

In the course of this research work, a lot of observations have been made most especially in terms of the key issues that would help in the development of African drama and literature. The research observed that though a lot has been written by scholars in terms of comparative studies; and specifically in comparative literary studies, very little materials exist about comparative literary studies that have to do with African literature or African drama. In terms of the specific area of research, there are no intellectually written materials in the comparative studies of Kenyan and Nigerian drama. This goes to say that there is the need for intellectuals in the field of African drama to channel more energy in terms of regional studies and comparative analysis of dramatic and theatrical materials in the two countries and also in other regions across the continent. African intellectuals need to publish academic books and materials in the field of comparative African drama so as to

enhance regional cohesion and also exploit the rich cultural dramatic histories of the African people. It is true, that most of the anthropological materials on African cultural and theatrical studies, which form part of the basis for this research work, are written by western anthropologists and academics. African intellectuals need to do more research work in terms of writing about the rich dramatic and anthropological cultures of the continent.

Another critical observation is that a lot of books have been written on Nigerian drama and not so much has been written on the various aspects of Kenyan drama. However, that is not to say that there are no playwrights who are actively writing plays from Kenya; however there is the need to write critical anthologies on the works of the Kenyan playwrights and the various thematic issues raised in the plays. This will aid in the creation of a very strong playwriting and critical culture among students and academics in the field of Kenyan drama.

5.3 Recommendations

After the interrogations of the play texts and other related materials in this study, the researcher wish to state that there are a few improvements that can add value to studies in comparative African drama. Some of the recommendations include the following:

- (a) Increase study of other dramatic texts from sister African countries in schools and colleges across the continent

- (b) The formation of all African theatre artists annual conference to serve as a bridge for sharing of ideas and a niche for comparative studies of drama on the continent
- (c) The inclusion of course units in comparative African drama in university curriculums across the continent.
- (d) The formation of an African theatre and drama studies centre. That can further enhance the visions and mission of the African Union Charter through the Arts.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research work has given birth to the desire for more studies in this branch of regional literary studies so as to enhance the understanding of African literary traditions from the point of view of African playwrights. It is equally true that very little work has been done by academics in terms of regional literary studies and so a new vista has been opened to intending researchers in this wide field of endeavour to aid in the development of an African drama comparative repository. It should also be noted that no knowledge is a waste and so all research works should serve as a window of opportunity for other researchers to investigate deeper into the new area of human and literary studies.

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