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MISSION & PURPOSE

Research is about the creation of human knowledge and understanding; how this knowledge is advanced, expanded, and extrapolated or spawned into multifarious and variegated ways and strategies directed towards mitigation and solution of the problems humanity faces in its existence. In this regard, therefore, research may be regarded as particularistic. On the one hand, research may be focused on matters of social and contemporary concern to a particular group of people, or it may be deemed as irrelevant or of peripheral importance to the same group. Yet on another hand, research may be couched in paradigms and practices that are removed from the knowledge and system of development of a group; in this case, research may be confusing, confounding, and of no practical applicability to those it is meant to educate and benefit.

Research in Africa and about Africa has always suffered this bifurcation of (ir)-relevance. This is because African society encountered alien influence in its intellectual and social transformation; this encounter with the west has had its ‘ghosts,’ as well as its ‘graces’. African intellectuals and philosophers must seek to cut out an authentic African niche in scholarship, so that our knowledge and ways of knowing be identified and respected for what they truly are.

RUWAZA is derived from Kiswahili Language and cultural discourse to mean ‘vision and direction’ for Africa. The Journal is targeted at the development of research in *Humanities and Social Sciences* in Africa, about Africa and for Africa; it is hoped that by an incessant engagement of African scholars in academic discourse new ideas, ways and means will emerge through which to address Africa’s myriad issues and problems.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

RUWAZA AFRIKA: Journal of Contemporary Research in Humanities & Social Sciences is a formal representation of the academic generation of knowledge and ideas on the basis of socio-scientific research in the academies and Universities of Africa. The mandate of this journal is to nurture authentic and original African ways and paradigms of knowing and thinking in order that Africa's place in human civilization is finally fully realized and recognized.

The Journal is currently housed by the *School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Pwani University, Kilifi, Kenya*, and has its board of editors and scholars drawn from across Kenya and Nigeria; our aim is to include scholars from every nook and cranny of Africa so that our scholarship is inclusive.

Articles and research reports are welcome for submission from all areas of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and, if accepted, will be included in the relevant section of the cognate discipline. The sections are formally recognized through an informed categorization of the accepted articles into relevant disciplines and sub-disciplines which fall in different parts; it is our hope that these parts may in future be distinct issues of the journal. Currently, the areas included are: *LINGUISTICS & COMMUNICATION & MEDIA, LITERATURE & THEATER STUDIES SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WORK, and RELIGION*

In order to qualify for inclusion in *RUWAZA*, articles must be original; they must deliberate on particular theoretical premises, and deal with replicable data to advance the said premises. In addition, the conventional formatting and style of presentation should be either the APA or MLA, but both must NOT be mixed. Submitted articles must also be in font size 12, Times New Roman, and should not be more than 20 pages A4 size FS, should have an *Abstract with Key Words, Introductory Background, Theoretical background, Methodological Approach, Discussion and Summary*.

Articles may be submitted for consideration any time of the year; however, articles submitted not later than **30th March** of any year will qualify for inclusion in the **April-May** issue, Vol-1, while those submitted not later than **31st October** will qualify for inclusion in the **November-December** Issue, Vol-2.

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FOREWORD TO THE ELEVENTH EDITION, VOLUME 1

RUWAZA AFRIKA XI, Vol. 1, APR-MAY, 2024 is still on its developmental path. Currently the edition in situ has SIX papers. ONE paper is in Language and Applied Linguistics, Kiswahili studies in particular; the second paper is in Educational Curriculum and Instruction, the third is in Environmental Conservation, while the fourth is in Philosophy and Political Science. The fifth paper is in Literature and Theatre Arts, while the sixth paper is in Art and Design.

Lena Nyandwaro, Sangai Mohochi and James Ontieri's paper reports the results of an investigation of the teaching and learning of Kiswahili as a second language in Masaba South Sub-County of Kisii County; this is following the basis of the newly launched Competence Based Curriculum, CBC, and its pedagogic philosophical orientation.

Adidja Nyiramafaranga, Hellen Mondoh, Jacinta Kwena, Namasaka Fred Wafula and Maniraho J. Francois report on the effect of code-switching in a multilingual context where the learning, acquisition and practice of basic Mathematics concepts and skills by lower and upper primary school children is at stake; they are able to authenticate and confirm that a person's source language or 'Mother-tongue' is directly connected to concept and skill development, and that code-switching is the best strategy in second language learning and acquisition situations, especially where Mathematics as a learning area is concerned.

In Environmental science, erstwhile traditional psyche of grove 'sacredness' amongst the Mijikenda communities at the coast of Kenya is interrogated as a Kaya Forest conservational tool, and is compared to state forest management efforts. This is accomplished through a graduate study undertaken by **Michael Chidzao Nyanje**, supported by **Saeed Mwanguni** and **Tsawe-Munga Chidongo**.

In Philosophy and politics, **Oyoo Yaye** reviews the history of the development of Kenyan democracy since Flag independence in 1963, and interrogates why it apparently has totally failed to create a cohesive, functional system of government. The paper draws a line between the Westphalia model of a State functional democracy and an Afro-Centric democracy which recognizes the Ethnic group as a socio-political and cultural unit which must be integrated within a larger political union so that certain group rights may not be infringed upon. This is based on the fact that conventional democracy is premised upon a socio-cultural uniform and cohesive society—which is non-existent anywhere on earth!

Arinde Tayo Simeon's paper is a literary critique and appreciation of Olu Obafemi's theatrical masterpiece, *Running Dreams*, which draws the history of Nigeria's political leadership and direction on a poignant canvas of disillusionment and regret. Through art, Nigerian political issues are revisited and history is 'revalidated' through a picaresque or dithyramb of dreams in which the departed leadership is engaged in cross-generational fora.

In Art & Design, **Kennette Dickens Nwabuo** and **Ogochukwu Shirley Ejiofor**

introduce the concept of body-art as an avantgarde, emergent and trending form which has serious roots in Africa, but which has died out as a result of foreign influence. In a well-illustrated explication, these authors show that there is really nothing averse with the practice, and that indeed the practice is currently in vogue in many affluent and advanced societies. They strongly recommend that African societies must seek to protect and preserve body art as a way of self-definition, actualization and determination in a world where cultures and sub-cultures are getting submerged by the internet.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

• RUWAZA AFRIKA: MISSION & PURPOSE	2
• EDITORIAL PREFACE	3
• EDITORIAL BOARD	4
• FOREWORD TO THE ELEVENTH EDITION, VOLUME 1	5-6
• TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
1. KISWAHILI: UFUNDISHAJI, UJIFUNDISHAJI NA UMILISI WA LUGHA	
• MIELEKEO YA WALIMU WA SHULE ZA MSINGI KUHUSU UFUNDISHAJI WA KISWAHILI KATIKA MTAALA WA UMILISI KATIKA GATUZI-NDOGO LA MASABA KUSINI	
Nyandwaro K. Lena, Sangai Mohochi, and James Ontieri	8—24
2. EDUCATION: CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION	
• THE EFFECT OF CODE-SWITCHING ON GRADE FOUR PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS IN RULINDO DISTRICT, RWANDA	
Nyiramafaranga Adidja, Hellen Omondi Mondoh, Namasaka Fred Wafula, Jacinta S.A. Kwena and Maniraho J. Francois	25—41
3. ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE/CONSERVATION	
• SACREDNESS AS A CONSERVATION TOOL: FOREST COVER LOSS IN COMMUNITY AND STATE MANAGED FORESTS – THE CASE OF THE KAYA FORESTS IN KWALE COUNTY, KENYA	
Michael Chidzao Nyanje, Saeed Mwanguni, Tsawe-Munga Chidongo	42—60
4. PHILOSOPHY & POLITICS	
• TOWARDS AFRO-COMMUNITARIAN DEMOCRACY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF <i>LEGITIMACY</i> AND <i>EFFECTIVENESS</i> IN KENYA'S MULTI-PARTY ERA	
Oyoo Yaye	60—75
5. LITERATURE & THEATRE ARTS	
• REVALIDATING HISTORY IN THE DITHYRAMB OF OLU OBAFEMI'S <i>RUNNING DREAMS</i>: THE DIRECTOR'S EYE VIEW,	
Arinde, Tayo Simeon	76—87
6. ART & DESIGN	
• BODY ART AS AN AESTHETIC MODE IN HUMAN CULTURE: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS DEVELOPMENT, DECLINE AND RE-EMERGENCE	
Kennette Dickens Nwabuoku and Ogochukwu Shirley Ejiofor	88—97

REVALIDATING HISTORY IN THE DITHYRAMB OF OLU OBAFEMI'S *RUNNING DREAMS*: THE DIRECTOR'S EYE VIEW

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ABSTRACT

*Understanding what, where and how about the past, present and the sustenance of humanity's future in the current space can only be made manifest where the blueprint of such existence subsists and is protected for posterity. This underscores the importance of history as a compass in locating the root and route of human existence. This important phenomenon was almost lost in Nigeria when, sometimes ago, History as a course was substituted with Current Affairs in the academic curriculum at the foundational level of education. This, perhaps, is what disquiets the muse in Olu Obafemi to write the play **Running Dreams** that chronicles Nigeria's history. In this paper, effort is made to examine Obafemi's artistic representation of Nigerian past and its juxtaposition with the present political somersault. The paper employs a deductive approach in the establishment of a priori hypotheses that guide a textual analysis of the play. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the tool for good governance is in the leaders' respect for history as a pathway and a navigation tool from where they are coming from to where they are going. The ensuing discussion also leads to a foray into how theatre may be employed as a guide, and a compass in the route of life as epitomized in the play text under scrutiny. Theatre is uplifted beyond entertainment, which the play director may use as a didactic apparatus employed by the playwright to remind Nigerians of her historical past. Consequently, playwrights are encouraged to explore more and write plays invoking public discourse in areas such as Education, Sociology, and the Politico-Economy of the nation for the benefit of our society.*

Keywords: *History, Dithyramb, Director and Theatre*

• **Working Definition of Key Terms and Concepts**

History: Occurrences in the past that comprise of social, political and economic episodes that may or may not impact policy decisions and directions in Nigeria.

Dithyramb: According to Wilson and Goldfarb (2000 :26-29) is "a lengthy hymn sung and danced by [a] group of fifty men...similar to a modern-day choral presentation... a literary form detailing heroic stories." Also *Marriam-Webster.com*, an on-line dictionary also defines dithyramb as "a statement or writing in an exalted or enthusiastic vein." For the purpose of this work, wherever the word dithyramb is used, it means: "...a literary form detailing heroic stories and/or a writing in an exalted or enthusiastic vein."

Director: A person responsible for harnessing the bits and pieces of theatrical elements for a presentation to the understanding of the audience.

Theatre: a form of public entertainment that enacts the day-to-day interaction of people, specifically bringing to the view of the people what they do in their conscious and sub-consciousness.

Introduction

Studying history in theatre is studying socio-ethnic composition of man and his relationship within the cosmos. While History, according to Wilson and Goldfarb (2000: vii) “is a chronicle, a recapitulation of events from the past.” Theatre on the other hand is: “a contemporary, spontaneous occurrence ...event (that) exists not in the past but in the present.” Examining these two disciplines; history and theatre justifies the connectivity that this study intends to underscore.

Again, the choice of the work of Olu Obafemi to foreground this study is hinged on his deep bias for history, which is earlier demonstrated in his work *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Cultural Heritage and Social Vision* (1996). In it, he chronicles the heroic contributions of doyens of theatre in Nigeria. The play text under examination: *Running Dreams* (2015) further demonstrates his penchant for history as a conscious way of bringing people closer to their cultural heritage and their political roots. This is underscored in the play text, where the past and the present political antecedents in Nigeria are juxtaposed with those in a few African nations.

This paper notes that in the historical heritage of any nation in Africa, especially for countries that have had their independence running over five to six decades, many of those presently in governance would be too young to have witnessed the political dynamics that led their countries to where they are, Nigeria inclusive. It is therefore instructive that for this avantgarde leadership, learning from history becomes key towards combating contemporary challenges.

It is needless to stress that many current Nigerian political leaders are ignorant of the past as it pertains to the economic, socio-cultural, political antecedents of the country’s history. This perhaps is why this playwright does a chronicling of the Nigerian political antecedents, using it to tutor citizens and aliens alike on the importance of history in governance. He makes it crystal clear that education without sense of history is ineffectual. In this paper, an effort is made to expound on how Obafemi craftily and artistically weaves a dithyramb of detailed heroic historical accounts of growth and development in Nigerian politics up to the contemporary political dispensation; this is put to effect through a surrealistic presentation.

1. Literature Review

Obafemi’s *Running Dreams* is definitely not the first dramatic work that x-rays the historical antecedents in Nigeria. We have had works of the like of Wale Ogunyemi’s *Ijaye War* (1970), Ola Rotimi’s *Kurumi* (1971), Femi Osofisan’s *Women of Owu* (2006), Ahmed Yerima’s *Attahiru* (1999), Iren Isoken Salami-Agunloye’s *Idia: the Warrior Queen of Benin* (2008) to mention a few. Unlike the aforementioned playwrights, Olu Obafemi explores a wider spectrum of political history that focuses on Nigerian heroes and heroines, who were major players in the activities of the past Nigeria political dispensation. Consequently, we found the play script apt to interrogate and juxtaposed between the past and the lacklustre political somersault in the present day Nigeria as well as the political and socio-economic historical antecedents in Africa. Notwithstanding that the play text’s historical contents span Africa, our scope shall be the political history of Nigeria. His artistic exposition gives credence to the fact that for a theatre scholar to communicate in this

contemporary world and draw appreciation from his audience, he has to foray into the past (history) so that the present can be meaningfully explored for the benefit of the future.

The play text under examination interrogates the lacklustre political activities in the present-day Nigeria, detailing their attendant socio-economic and political ramifications in Nigeria. This is what we refer to as dithyramb, or ‘...literary form that detailed heroic and villain stories’, invoking Wilson and Goldfarb’s (2000: 26-29) critique. Consequently, credence is given to the fact that history is of essence in the description of the existence of mankind, of which theatre remains a conduit for understanding.

2. Why study History, in Theatre in Particular?

Studying history enables people to understand their roots, and the heritage that is attached to their existence. The war of yesteryears, which forced people to migrate from one settlement to another, the slave trade that separated wives from husbands, children from their parents and vice versa, is one of the reasons why we study history. Studying history therefore, enables people connect the dots of their existence. Succinctly put, Joel (2018: np.) aptly states why it is necessary to study history thus:

If you are intrigued by our past and want to learn how it will shape our future, you should consider studying history. History is a multifaceted discipline that will increase your cultural awareness and moral understanding of the world we live in. By studying history you’ll gain a range of transferable skills, from informed citizenship and critical thinking, to research and general awareness.

The above elucidates the reason why we study history in clear terms. In furtherance to the above, a philosopher, Santayana (2013), who is quoted on a military plaque at Veterans Memorial Park in [Rhome, Texas](#), states uneconomically the aptness of history when he submits that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. This, in essence, underlines the tangible and intangible benefits that are accruable to anyone who considers the study of history a worthwhile expedition.

On the other hand, studying theatre history provides a wide range of benefits, which according to Wilson and Goldfarb (2000: 16) “serves a multitude of functions... helps professionals understand their artistic heritage...presents techniques, conventions, and ideas which can be borrowed by contemporary practitioners... and also gives an insight to the society of the past” More apposite is Wilson and Goldfarb’s further elucidation that: “We can learn significant information about the major issues and concerns of a historical period by studying its theatre; ...learn about the conventions and norms of a society by analyzing its theatrical presentations.” A critical consideration of all the reasons enumerated above, gives credence to the relevance of this study vis-à-vis the proficiency of the theatre in interrogating history.

Disaster would have bedeviled education in Nigeria, should her leaders have finally turned a deaf ear to the public outcry from scholars and well-meaning Nigerians, who were critical of the removal of History from the academic curriculum of secondary school in Nigeria, to substitute the subject with Current Affairs. One of such educational seers is Obafemi who, in the play under examination; *Running Dreams* underscores the importance of history in education in his artistically chronicled details of Nigerian political history. What Obafemi sees is stressed in the warning of

Santayana (2013, np.) who admonishes us to: “learn from our past mistakes so as to prevent future occurrence,” This is what this study unequivocally underscores.

To navigate and validate the contextual style of this work, this paper adopts the theory of *Surrealism* by André Breton (1896-1966) (Co-founder, leader, principal theorist and chief apologist of surrealism.) He enumerates its features to include: the relevance of dreams in man’s life. He goes further to explain that Surrealism focuses on tapping into the unconscious mind to release creativity. In furtherance, Andre Breton expanded on the theory of surrealism and came up with two documents called the Surrealist Manifestos.

He states that surrealist art is characterized by dream-like visuals, the use of symbolism, and collage images. Hence, he submits that Surrealism is a journey into the subconscious with the movement that began in the early 1920s. Its main focus rejects logic features; the element of surprise, unexpected juxtapositions.

3. Brief Biography of Olu Obafemi

Olu Obafemi, popularly referred to as Omo Ajon by his admirers, hails from Akutukpa Bunu, Kabba, in Kogi State of Nigeria. He is a Professor of English at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. His elementary education was in Kabba, after which he went to the Provincial Secondary School in Dekina, and later to the Titcomb College, Egbe. He studied English for his Bachelor of Arts at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and later proceeded to the University of Sheffield for his Masters’ Degree and the University of Leeds for his PhD. He returned to Nigeria in 1981. He is an erudite scholar of international repute, a playwright, a poet, a world class writer and a notable critic of the Nigerian contemporary theatre.

Obafemi started his career at the University of Ilorin as a graduate assistant in 1976. He embarked on writing as an undergraduate student at the Ahmadu Bello University, becoming the editor of a literary magazine. His first play, *Pestle on the Mortar*, was produced in 1974 and also broadcast by the Kaduna Broadcasting Corporation. He has published a number of plays, which are: *Nights of a Mystical Beast and The New Dawn* in (1986) and *Suicide Syndrome*, and *Naira Has No Gender* in (1993) and *Running Dreams* (2015). *Nights of a Mystical Beast* employs mythological devices to address the social problems confronting post-independence Nigeria, while *The New Dawn* recommends solution to the multifarious problems in the Nigeria society. His works reflect the social consciousness and activist tendencies that have characterized the writings of the generation of writers and scholars who came to the fore in Nigeria in the 1980s.

Although his works have been performed in Britain as well as in Nigeria, he writes primarily for Nigerians, seeking not to denounce those responsible for the country’s privations but to explore ways to correct the problems. Although he considers himself a dramatist, he has also published a volume of poems; *Songs of Hope*. His critical works include: *Nigerian Writers on the Nigerian Civil War* (1992), and *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Cultural Heritage and Social Vision* (1996). He also edited *New Introduction to Literature* (1994), and, in collaboration with Wole Ogundele and Femi Abodunrin, put together *Character Is Beauty: Redefining Yoruba Culture & Identity* (2001).

Humble, simple but firm as a principled man, many of his students regard him as a great mentor and an eloquent speaker; Prof. Obafemi made the study of literature exciting. He would start each author's work with his biography, creating a nexus between the text, the writer or the context. He held the office of the Chairman of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Kwara State, and in 2004 he became the National President of the Association. He was also a Director of Research at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. He was the president of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL). In October 2018, the Governing Board of the Nigerian National Merit Award (NNMA) declared Olu Obafemi, a sole recipient of the Nigerian National Order of Merit (NNOM) in the Humanities for 2018.

4. Synopsis of *Running Dreams*

The story revolves around a young man, Yohanna who in a progression of dreams goes through a journey of conflicts, struggles, self-rejuvenation and self-fulfillment in quest for social, economic and political renovation around some past political actors in the Nigeria polity. The dreams also reveal the roles of multi-national organizations, Western capitalist exploitative tendencies and colonialist avarice directed at the Nigeria wealth. The play also casts a glimpse at some topical issues like terrorism, military incursion insurrection, nationalism and struggle for independence.

4.1. Nigerian political history in the *Running Dreams*

Earlier in this paper, the import of history as a blue print or a guide into the unknown has been highlighted. Olu Obafemi makes this important role more noticeable in that the theatre is able to perform the play, *Running Dreams*. Ohenhen (2019, p.31) also corroborates this when he submits that: "...dramatists have continued to interrogate the contradictions and imbalances in the society through their works." How Obafemi copiously underscores these words in the play text under examination is what is illuminated upon in this paper. Consequently, the travails in various segments of the Nigeria economy, as they affect the socio-economic and political activities are unequivocally revealed.

It would have been unimaginable if eventually the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria did as it had done some years back when it removed history from the Secondary School curriculum in Nigeria. This was referenced in the text under examination as contained in the first cry of Aminu. Aminu who in this play is meant to be the Late Mallam Aminu Kano, a Northerner from Kano State in Nigeria, the founder and the Presidential flag bearer of People Redemption Party (PRP). He, as one of the characters in the play, fired the first salvo in his reaction to the question asked by Yohanna thus:

YOHANNA: You sought to use politics to create an egalitarian Northern Nigeria society. You backed these actions up with many memorable quotes. (RD: 16)

Aminu's response to Yohanna's question, which amongst others underscores the importance of History as a tool for a sustainable national development, is produced hereunder with the intent to make obvious where our problem as a nation starts from:

AMINU: Thank you, thank you. I am happy that there are youths who read up the history of our little effort- before your government cancelled history from the schools... (RD: 16).

Obviously, the problem caused by the temporary removal of history from the education curriculum in schools was a premeditated plan to blindfold the young elites of the North. It was with this clandestine negative proactive groundwork intent of the Northern oligarchies, acting upon the advice of their colonial imperialist mentors to ensure that they defend power with the last drop of their blood and never allow it to slip off their hands. It is in holding tenaciously to this that they turn the youth willing tools for executing some of the meaningless protests on our streets. Aminu's submission below validates this:

AMINU: Haka ne. The social discontent of today, the creation of an idle mass of youth called Almajiri, is the outcome, and meaningless wars in the streets, the mindless killings in the name of hatred for Western education.

This latent plan was later to come to pass in the saga of Boko Haram that plunged Nigeria into untoward wanton killings and destruction of property that made some nations to refer to Nigeria as a terrorist nation.

4.2. History of the Brutal murder of Leaders as punishment for Maladministration

Four years after Nigeria became a Republic, precisely in 1966, when Nigerians were still basking in the euphoria of freedom, Nigeria witnessed the first bitter experience of immature politicking. Nigeria was hardly nurtured into running a Parliamentary system of Government that she inherited from its erstwhile colonial overlords when it graduated into assassinating its leaders. The first casualty of the political immaturity was the brutal murder of Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the first Premier of Northern Nigeria, then Ahmadu, the Sadauna of Sokoto, and later, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister.

Obafemi in this dream epic crafted around Yohanna (the dreamer) reminded us of another historical dithyramb on the abyss of a political wipe-out in the early Nigeria polity. In his substantiation of the germane posture of history to any society, Obafemi elucidates on this historical episode which is artistically credited to Yohanna on sighting Ahmadu, the Sadauna, in his dream-world:

YOHANNA: (*In total awe and reverence, with clenched salutary fists.*) Ranka dede, Sir. I never guessed you would be coming. I never met you. I was not even born before the soldiers struck and took things far back. (RD: 18)

Paying attention to the concluding part of Yohanna's dialogue, one would further see the importance of history as a tool for guidance – "I never met you. I was not even born before the soldiers struck and took things far back."

Ahmadu's response also endorses the usefulness of history in his submission thus:

AHMADU: No, you were not, you could not have been. What you know is through your present dream state. Dreams have their limits... (RD: 18)

In a critical analysis, the foregoing speech could be interpreted to mean that dreams may sometimes be a figment of imagination, but a written account of history gives a better illumination of the past.

In the play under focus and review, Ahmadu intends to embark upon the historical efforts and programs of action for the benefit of the Northern youths, which amongst others include education. His lamentation orchestrates his bitterness on the sudden cut of his dream in its plume as enacted below:

AHMADU: Allah Sarki. I believed and still believe in a workable nation. But I saw the North, uneducated and underdeveloped, was in no position of equality to compete and thrive in a nation whose south was far in advance of us. I need to work; I need to build education. Build infrastructure, road, pipe-borne water, hospitals trade and business. I need to create wealth and autonomy for my people so that the nation's business can make sense to them and they can find themselves in it.

According to him, his effort to make the North relevant within the Nigeria nation was without prejudice to Christians, and other socio-cultural and tribal groups within the North. However, rather than his vision to be applauded, he was accused by Nigerians of planning to build his educational programme around the Fulani elites only. He emotionally expressed his pain thus:

AHMADU: the schools were not for the children of the elites. The development was all over, even among Christians of the middle belt. The closest people to my administration were Christians from the so-call northern periphery- the Yorubas, Igalas, Plateau people. Most of them are with you there. You should have asked them... (RD: 18)

Nothing would have revealed these, if not history and the theatre that is ever alive.

In addition to these historical submissions, the play also presents a dithyramb, (heroic stories) of Nigeria past political heroes; Obafemi Awolowo, who in the play is Awo. Awo, to some people till date, remained a controversial fellow, especially, among the Igbo people of Nigeria. Their hatred for him remains as fresh as he remains the man whose advisory role led to why the Biafrans had to surrender in the last and the only civil war fought in Nigeria. He was believed to be the brain behind the inability to achieve cessation of the Igbos into Biafra nation. Although the agitation ranges on but Awo, from the dream still affirms the logic behind his advice thus:

AWO: O kare. A child mistakes a frog for a snake! The war would have dragged on endlessly. The death toll would have been unimaginable. I would do the same if I came back to your earth again. Never mind, the war is on you now, isn't it? Militancy at the creeks, insurgency in the North-east, raging armed robbery, gbomogbomo (kidnapping), ritual killing. Are those also acts of genocide too? Innocent children, especially girls languishing in the forest! (RD: 22)

What sounds like an unconscious prophesy made by Awo was contained in one of his speeches in (1968), which actually come to pass. His lamentation was that:

A, corrupt, and evil administration is bound to wither, sooner or later in the greedy face of obsessive desire and mounting clamour on the part of the masses of the people for a welfare regime which will benefit all equally. In the course of time there will be a clash of desires and wills between the exploiters and the exploited. The clash of desires and wills will stir the universal mind into action, and a situation will then arise which will bring about the termination of or radical change in the greedy, and evil regime.

Nnamdi was not less bitter with his conceived ideas orchestrated by the Socialist-Zikist movement, which were aborted at the stage of envisioning. So is the perversion of his diverse and broader struggle. Nnamdi here no doubt refers to Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria. His vituperations came clearly in his submission below:

NNAMDI: ...I had broader, more urgent ideals. We had the struggle for independence to contend with. Anyway, the movement had its uses, its foundation for the revolution of the future-which never came, had not yet come while we lived (RD: 25).

His expression of optimism below gives one hope that Nigeria will be good despite the barrage of violence that has taken a toll on her polity according to what he states thus: "I fear still, but I know the nation can still become. It can still make it as the hub of Africa's rise to greatness in world politics. I believe it can." (RD: 26)

The genuine, visionary and patriotic disposition of the Nigeria nation's founding Fathers, if replicated in the current leadership is enough to enlist Nigeria among the developed nations of the world.

4.3. Where we begin to paddle it wrongly

Basking in the euphoria of self-independence in Nigeria would have been an everlasting joy, if not for the greed among those in the forefront of the governance: Front-runners, who suddenly became proper go-go game hunting Executives. Some of them, prior to the adornment of their new garbs of irresponsibility were as Yohanna describes them: "...became a normal human being, shunned all prudish morals and took life as something to live in and enjoy, not a monkish cottage sorts." (RD: 29)

This perhaps accounted for why our leaders in a bid to please the multinational companies that profit from our God endowed resources, turned our cities to what Yohanna describes as: "...so hi-tech, so well built, so plastic, so unreal. Far out there in the valleys, there is so much difference and so much squalor all within the same city." (RD: 30) He describes the multinationals as companies that:

YOHANNA: hire at near-slavery wages to work under dehumanizing conditions
...the oil companies (that) do wantonly pumping toxins into the rain forest
rivers. They deliberately kill people, animals and plants, and committing

genocide among innocent cultures all over the developing world like my country. (RD: 31)

The scenario above paints the very inhuman disposition of the multi-national oil companies that evade the oil rich Niger Delta areas in Nigeria through their agent, Mariam, an African-America seducer. She is contracted to engage nationals to lure world leaders to look in the direction of our wealth. Her specific assignment Mariam unapologetically states in the dialogue that is presented here: “Our job, you and I, is to motivate world leaders in those countries you talk about to join the vast network which promotes global commercial interests.” (RD: 31)

Promoting global commercial interests mentioned above is not for the benefit of the nation and her citizens but “to feed their (western multi-nationals) political and military desires.” (Miriam: 31) This, unfortunately, was the beginning of Nigeria dependence on the foreign multi-national companies and the bane of internal slavery that benefits a few. It was also the beginning of ‘militocracy’, which deprived the nation of full self-government. Nevertheless, the emergent but brief stint of the leadership of Muritala Mohammed would have been forgotten if his lofty antecedent is not underscored in the play under examination. His short but eventful leadership stint would have been a forgotten dream had it been not written down in history as Yohanna observes: “Memories are so short. We need books to be written for our children all on our history. Mohammed ran a dynamic, decisive, forthright, purposeful, action-packed and pragmatic regime...” (RD: 51).

This is to further validate the essentiality of history in the codification of a nation’s various occurrences. If not, the relationship that exists between countries would have gone unremembered. This Yohanna brought to the fore in the speech below:

YOHANNA: ...I read a lot you know. I read the story of those enviable revolutionaries that have made huge sacrifices... People like Tom Paine, Che Guevara, Allende, Cabral, Fidel Castro and other war revolutionaries, even pirates, frontiersmen. These were men who stood firmly, at the edges; not in no man’s land...

5. A Society whose Leaders are enmeshed in Vices

Nigeria’s history is full of events of varied shades, colour and degrees, and blessed with people of diverse capabilities (men and women alike), hence, Nigeria is referred to as the giant of Africa. Unfortunately, in spite of this acclaimed garment, Nigeria dwarfs in the eminently bestowed status among nations of the world, in terms of development, socio-economic and technological breakthrough. This is because the nation is deeply enmeshed in brigandage and unrepentant criminality; vices of colourful embellishments. This perhaps is the reason why, amongst the committee of nations, she is referred to as giant in misdemeanour, a nation that lacks direction and directors. The *Running Dreams* presents to us, stark nakedly, how our land is crippled by multi-faceted vices. It is metaphorically enumerated hereunder in the imagery of Yohanna:

YOHANNA: I am the one with a milestone of guilt tied around his neck-like the albatross. I am the Running Dreams...In all these spaces, Arab world, Latin America, Africa, Okigbo echoes... (*in a mesmeric spasm to drumbeats and gongs*) The smell of blood floats in the lavender mist of the afternoon, The death

sentence lies in the bush along the corridor of power...a night of deep waters. The drum of curfew ponders to a dance of death. (RD: 67-68)

Evidently, the above presents a clear picture that our intellects have been hypnotized and reduced to mere stooge by their heart desires. They are full of selfishness, cut down and reduced to anonymity because they could not think outside the box of the mental power from the fountain where they should draw their astuteness. How great it would have been, if all the historical information highlighted above are mere dreams. Alas, they were real occurrences that Nigeria had and is still witnessing. Before it turns to 'dreamfullery', we need to wake up into the reality of a new morning.

6. The Director's Eye view of the *Running Dreams*

Every playwright writes for the purpose of making his/her message clear to their would-be audience, but this intention is oftentimes not really achieved. The reason is not far-fetched, except a play director gives life to the lifeless concept in the written work, an enthusiastic reader may find the work half difficult and half easy to understand. The play *Running Dreams*, which chronicles mostly the travails of the Nigeria nation in the area of politics and a catalogue of heroic escapades of some notable past political juggernauts, obviously needs the intervention of a director. Obafemi, demonstrating an all-rounder prowess of a complete artistic expert, from the very opening page of the play to the end, gives a clear direction to his target audience and a would-be director. The stage direction in the opening scene of the play attests to this:

Play open in a restaurant of the best importation from Europe but assembled at home for the elite-government people in loose wear and 'mufti', camouflaged to be in their basest and 'loose cannon' moods, multinational corporation executives, businesspeople waiting to host powerful shots to weaken them for contract awards; cash-carrying and female enticements, in the era of due process. YOHANNA is in a certain level of epiphany and the NARRATOR speaks from his head, like an open book, but before the end of the narration, he will get out of the swoon and lend insight into where the play is heading. In all, it should be clear that all of this is acting, playing, no pretences about make-belief. The Narrator is of high taste and knows about all the varieties of the cuisine and the drinks and helps himself as YOHANNA 'snores' away.

The stage direction above presents a holistic picture of what is expected in the opening scene; it also shows a would-be director the path of presenting the play from page to stage. This attests to the completeness of the play as not just a play for reading pleasure but a play for the stage and for the film.

This artistic completeness ran through the entire play. Aptly demonstrating this is the stage direction in Scene Four. The stage direction epitomizes the given circumstances replete in environmental precision; a compact directorial presentation. Let's examine it:

In the dark street leading to the zone of eternal night. Here, life begins at dawn. Picture a space where it is not safe to work alone. Area boys rule, red light women on the roam, pace smoke and dance. This leads unto the sheds flooded with flashing neon lights. Music blasts from loud speakers in

a warring fashion-Rap, Hip hop, Fuji, Afro-beat, Reggae and some Jazz in a space out of common glare, reserved for the elite, local and foreign. Light spiral in myriad colours to suit the dream session of Yohanna, seated in the Jazz section –in a phantom conversation with Omar Torrijos. (RD: 36)

Yet another:

...Follow spot on Yohanna who is alone and doing a monologue. Probably in a trance, which slides into a dream as he gets a visitation from ROLUDO, by which time, a dialogue emerges and more light on the two and the background music changes to a contemporary one. (RD: 41)

Giving the foregoing, one is not bereft of bearing, guidance and focus towards the directorial realization of the historical message in the play under examination. Realistically, the play lacks scanty direction that usually sends directors and designers cracking; having to begin to construct abstract meanings to the true message of the play. This synergy Morgan (2012: np.) underpins in his position below:

Obviously, artistic directors are in this business to make artists happy: to serve their needs, to deepen the work, to enrich audiences with fresh and vibrant theatre... And obviously, directors are in it to support the work of writers; to get in there and get messy with collaborating.

Summary & Conclusion

Examining Obafemi's *Running Dreams* presents in clear term a star-studded artistic dithyramb of a nation struggling to develop its infant political, economic and socio-cultural trademark. Abubakar (2015: 7), in his director's note at the premier of the play observes that:

The playwright nudges the contemporary leaders to take a cue from the visions of the founding fathers and he implores Nigerians and other citizens of the Third World to be relentless in their search for apposite social alternative in their country.

It is also a theatrical chronicle of Nigeria and other Third World political, economic and socio-cultural history in a humorous but serious package. This evidently underpins the fact that history can be reenacted using Drama.

Obafemi has artistically weaved Nigeria political history in this play. He has brought the past to the present in terms of Nigeria and other third world political, economic and social pasts. The play text aptly interrogates the lacklustre political somersault in the present-day Nigeria. His work, no doubt, reminds us of the political and socio-economic historical occurrences that have bedeviled Africa. Even though the play text submissions are relevant to Africa, our scope is the historical contents that he artistically weaved in dramatic enactment about Nigeria. His artistic exposition gives credence to the fact that for a theatre scholar to communicate in this contemporary world and draw appreciation from his audience, he has to foray into the past (history) so that the present can be meaningfully explored for the benefit of the future. Thus, the paper concludes that history is very important to the development of any nation. Consequently, theatre should be explored as a tool for bringing history and other aspects of heritage to bear on the contemporary stage.

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