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Abstract

This paper expounds on the nature and features of Drama. It exploits Adeoye's The Killers, a socio drama, to assert drama as a model and a tool for exerting and mediating peace in a conflict and crisis riddled society. The paper expounds that Drama by its characteristics has its strengths in conflicts and an undoubting sway in proffering solutions to them. Stemming from this, the study employs the analytical descriptive approach to explore and unearthing some of the societal ills identified in the play under examination and the theatre-inclined solutions proffered therein. The findings revealed that drama is a didactic and a fearless instrument that is pungent in pinpointing societal vices, cautions and suggest ways forward. The study also revealed that, in theatre, resides the entertainment power, which soothes, warns, educates and chastises perpetrators of evil in the society as clearly shown in the text The Killers. Arising from this, it is recommended that when society is confronted with knotty and cantankerous societal problems, the option of Drama should be explored for the solution.

Key Words: Voice, Conflict and Peace, Theatre, Drama

Introduction

Every society, irrespective of its geographical entity, ethnic or cultural affinity is conflict-prone and therefore, potential battlegrounds. Reasons for this are not far-fetched. Personal study reveals that; personal interests, social interests, and communal interest to religious, political and economic interests have been the bane that exacerbates conflicts. It is an obvious fact that man disagrees with one another not only because of hatred against one another but largely because we differ in our areas of bias and opinion. In our desperate efforts therefore to protect our interests, we hurt one another. However, when any society observes that conflicts rear up its head, peaceloving individuals make concerted efforts towards resolving them. Many of those efforts have proved abortive because of man's unwillingness to surrender his right.

Some of these conflicts to be observed take its root from institutions of higher learning, which are supposedly training grounds for future leaders. Some of them have turned to potentiality conflict brewing grounds, where gangsters in the garb of student union

leadership superintend over the Student Representative Councils (SRC). More worrisome is in the fact that most of our Higher Institutions in Africa are institutionalized cultic societies, with their Student Affairs Unit serving as Corporate Affairs offices, where secret societies covertly registered as students' social organizations.

Another issue that encourages conflict is the nature of our politicking in Africa, which are laced with *mafianism*; only those who can play the game according to the 'rules' belong. The political situations that we contend within Africa are enmeshed in fearful connotations that only the strong-hearted can venture into it. Little wonder why Osofisan (14) describes it as "game of death". To buttress the fact that it is a game of death, sometime on Friday, 5th June 2009, a local Television in Ghana, Metro Television, reported a case of the gruesome assassination of a political leader in Guinea Bissau. I quote as it was reported: "Armed men shot down a government Minister who wants to be a candidate in the next election" (Metro TV 2009). Isn't this a pointer to the fact that our politicking is dangerous?

This paper sees these worrisome dimensions as a situation that perhaps would continue to defile solution, because, there is no longer subsisting respected laws that check activities of lawbreakers in the land. More disturbing is the situation that starred stark naked on our faces, which paints a gloomy scenario that our society no longer has seers, clerics nor clergies or true councillors who would call people to caution. It is not far from the fact too, that most of the revered counselling institutions that we look up to have lost their efficacies but merely present the appearance of being in control. Indeed, our society is enveloped by large clusters of misdemeanours, where perpetrators pretend to be unaware that they are in the full glare of people. Whether the society knows or not, the lassitude of our state, the theatre is not oblivious of the state of decadence that we are enmeshed in. Evidence of the watch-dog nature of the theatre is what is demonstrated in AbdulRasheed Adeoye's *The Killers*, a socio drama, as a seer's voice in a conflict riddled society. We examine the play text to expose the barrages of the social ills, which are artistically encapsulated in the play text that pervade our society. We also try to bring to the fore, solutions that are suggested, which will ameliorate them.

This paper, therefore, carries out a holistic literary analysis of the text *The Killers*, to showcase the detector, prosecutor, mediator, and the judicial functions that are portrayed in the dramatic text. The paper also elucidates on the notions of Drama and Theatre, not because it is a new concept but as it relates to the context of this work. It also draws from some scholarly literary contributions, works that explicate on conflicts and measures taken to resolve them in our society.

The Notions of Drama and Theatre

The potency of dramatic works as voices of seers is what we showcase in this work. We can cite literary works of the like of Femi Osofisan, Olu Obafemi, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Amiri Baraka, Ojo Rasaki, Akanji Nasiru and host of other theatre scholars, numerous to mention here, who have lent their voices to the misnomers that pervade our land. To pretend is to undermine the contributions of these theatre gurus. The choice of *The Killers* is to further underscore the relentless efforts of theatre scholars' and their dispositions to continue to call the society's attention to attitudes that have to demean our social progress.

So far we have examined the notion of Theatre and Drama. However, the two concepts have been described to mean the same thing. It is our commitment to clear the ambiguity that pervades the usage of the two concepts. Wilson & Goldfarb (1) refer to the theatre as: "A living art form". Wilson posits that: "theatre is art, and as such it mirrors or reflects life" (4). Whereas the two scholars see the theatre as an art form, the Greek simply refers to it as 'Theatron' a seeing place". Scholars, and particularly Barranger (2) argues in his contribution in the Encarta (2009) that "it is not a building that makes the theatre but the use of space by actors to imitate human experience for audience". So largely, theatre is a seeing lay as well as the use of space by actors to imitate human experience.

On the other hand, Drama as described by Soanes Catherine (167) in (ed.) *Oxford English Dictionary* is "a play...plays as a literary form... an exciting series of events". Summarily, the drama is referred to as a literary composition performed by actors. Brockett (15) ascribes to the strength of theatre and drama when he describes them as "the art that comes closer to life as it is lived day by day." Which means theatre/drama essentially address the issue of life. A critical examination of the definitions of the two concepts shows some similarities, but more importantly, we summarise the two concepts as exciting art forms that imitate human experiences. Giving the fact that there is no dispute in the contextual meanings of the two concepts, in this work, we will use the two concepts interchangeably.

Explication of Terms and Concepts

In the play *The Killers*, there are few concepts, terms and acronyms used that we feel obliged to explain. This is because some of them are universal terms commonly used within the Country-Nigeria, but which, to non-Nigerians are capable of many interpretations. To put paid to any ambiguity, misinterpretations or misinterpretations, we shall illuminate on them. Such terms include: 'WAZOBIA', 'Niger-Delta', 'Conflict', 'Crisis', 'growth' and 'development'.

'WAZOBIA' is an acronym, coined by Nigerian to describe the three major ethnic groups in the country. 'WA' which means 'come' in Yoruba is symbolically used to represents the Yoruba race, 'ZO', which also means 'come' in Hausa language represents the Hausa

speaking race in Nigeria while the 'BIA', which also means 'come' in Igbo represents the Igbo speaking race in Nigeria. The playwright adopts the acronym to suggest that the sociological setting of the play is Nigeria.

'Niger-Delta' is a name coined for the people that reside in the oil-producing states in Nigeria i.e. Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers in Nigeria. Because they are Nigerian oil-producing areas situated around the Niger coast. It has been areas that have been vulnerable to conflicts and the environments where different kinds of heinous activities have been perpetrated.

'Conflict' is a direct result of a disagreement that arose from opinion or idea of two individual or a group while 'crisis' on the other hand is what we describe as a period of confrontation, confusion, emergency or catastrophe. Conflicts manifest in diverse ways. It could be in the monolithic form; where it arises from a 'single ideological difference' and the 'intractable' one. Intractable conflict is defined by Bercovitch (3) as "a process (not just a single violent episode) of competitive relationships that extend over a period of time, and involves hostile perceptions and occasional military actions." We noted that man cannot avert conflict/crisis as long as he continues to interact. This is so because there is no one single way any group would perceive issues. From the description of the two concepts, we will observe that there is a thin line of difference between them, therefore in this work; the terms shall be used interchangeably.

'Growth' is a process of improvement while 'Development' is a sign of growth. These two concepts like 'conflict' and 'crisis' has many things in common because both of them are about improvement. Aside from development, which may be measured in term of tangible (physical) and intangible (abstract), growth manifests intangible forms. For instance, we can measure growth in terms of size, height, width or breadth. Understanding these terms is germane so that we can appreciate the role that conflict or crisis can play in affecting the growth and development of a nation and individuals.

Review of Related Literature

Recalling the situation in the ancient African society, before the advent of the Europeans, a lot of value was placed on developments, which manifests in communal efforts; the spirit of sharing within and among Africans and co-existence of people with zero degrees of conflict and tolerance. This is not to say that conflict does not occur at all but the ideological concept of communality and the concept of common sharing among Africans overshadow any crisis that may want to rear up its head. Gyekye explains that:

Communal values are those values that express appreciation of the worth and the importance of the community, those value that underpin and guide the type of social relations, attitudes, and behaviour that ought to exist between individuals who live together in a community sharing a social life and having a sense of common good (35).

Most, unfortunately, Africans soon lost the spirit of communality, its culture and values due to many factors, amongst which is technology. Technology, which is introduced into our society, imported Western culture- mode of dressing, ideology, language, food, etc. These imported ideas played a very significant role in conflict and crises that we witness in our land. Although, we appreciate the fact that the occurrence of conflict in any development prone society cannot be averted. Suffice it to say that conflict is a necessary phenomenon. Even though it may be described as a bitter pill, more often than not it is an antidote for development, barring negative tendencies and cynicism.

Uwazie, quoting Uwazie et al, (5), provides the foundation on which we build our understanding of what conflict means. He says: "conflict is a competition of interest satisfaction, often expressed through positioning". Similarly, Gbadegesin cited in Sekoni (7) identifies the point at which conflict would become inevitable by stating that:

The object of Federation is therefore to preserve the diverse character of a political society. The idea is that each compliment unit- ethnic Nationality- no matter how big or small desires the strength in the number provided by the union with others, but not a uniformity that can retard its growth or swallow it up.

That, in essence, stresses on equality and even distribution of resources amongst beneficiaries. In contrast to promotion of mutual understanding, one observes that crises are let loose when resources in a Federal or Regional units are unevenly distributed or the activities of the leaders are heavily tinted with corrupt practices in the gab of impunity, such as the ones witnessed some time ago in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Oman, Bahrain, and a host of other countries of the world.

Uwazie identifies five different types of disputes to include: "Data disputes, Structural disputes, Value disputes, Relationship disputes, and Behavioral disputes" (7). 'Data disputes' he describes as conflict created by information while 'Structural disputes' is that which arises between institutions. He describes 'Value disputes' as one that arises from a clash of ideas; and relationship and behavioural disputes as that which arises from the personal commercial relationship, habit, custom and culture respectively. All the disputes enumerated above occur at the levels of human interactions and more often than not when some negative factors such as ethnocentrism, egoism, negative criticism, selfishness and several others negative tendencies are allowed to infiltrate and negate man's peaceful co-existence.

It is pertinent to observe that, resolving most of the conflicts have posed a lot of problems than one would ever imagine. Efforts of Governmental, Non-governmental Organizations, private individuals and civil right activists' have turned out to be a cosmetic approach. Considering the various defilements, holding the view that as good as some of the effort may be, approaches applied to resolving conflicts in most parts of the world and Africa, in particular, are more of a curative measure than a preventive one.

thereby rendering the wise saying that 'prevention is better than cure' inconsequential. Up till March 2011 when the intuition to write this paper was conceived, ECOWAS and UN are yet to resolve Cote d'Ivoire, Ouattara/Gbagbo power tussles. This is because some of the countries that are involved in mediating peace in most of the troubled areas are in themselves interested parties, hence the failure that trails their efforts.

Earlier on, we elucidate on the notions of drama and theatre and stressed on the weights and the strength of the art and why they are recommended as a mechanism for ameliorating the effect of conflicts. Because we need a preventive proactive approach, we find this rightly in drama, hence our choice of Adeoye's *The Killers*, a socio drama, as a dramatic piece that call our attention to some of the crises that we live with, which have constantly demeaned our society and perhaps, which we have been treating as normal phenomena.

Conceptual Issues in Adeoye's *The Killers* (a Socio-Drama)

The Killers, a socio-drama by Abdurashheed Adeoye, x-rays the prevalent multi-dimensional criminal phenomena that envelope the economic, social and political integrity of the land of WAZOBIA. WAZOBIA here is a metaphor of a nation that is referred to as a land that flows with milk and honey. Unfortunately, in the land, criminal tendencies are the order of the day, one of it is the students' act of gangsterism, perpetrated under the guise of Students' Unionism, in Institutions of Higher Learnings in the land. The land also plays host to various degrees of crimes, which ranges from kidnapping, killing for money rituals, corruption and nepotism to a desperate quest for power in the land of WAZOBIA. The many unchecked misdemeanours eventually lead to the murder of the Director of WAZOBIA Merit International. However, the law of karma caught up with all the perpetrators of evil in the land of WAZOBIA, as they all died mysteriously one after the other.

Instances of Debauchery in our Society in *The Killers*

It is an undisputed fact that our society is saturated with a barrage of unrestrained, self-indulgent and immoral behaviours, which range from ethnocentrism to acts of hooliganism, cheating, gangsterism, corruption, love of money and quest for power in the land of WAZOBIA. In this paper, an attempt is made to elucidate on these numerous social ills, which are identified in *The Killers* and their negative tendencies on the society. The first amongst them is 'ethnocentrism'.

"Ethnocentrism" is one act that makes a man vulnerable to conflict because it bothers on ego. Ethnocentrism could be a belief or an assumption of the superiority of the social or cultural group". This is the first misdemeanour that Adeoye's *The Killers* first draw our attention to in the epilogue of the play, which he theatrically tagged "Beyond the calculated rhythm of the drum". He presents the exposition in the metaphor of drummers, represented by Drummers One and Two in the play. The introduction of drummers in the context of the scenario is a deliberate act by the playwright to orchestrate the role of

drummers as harbinger joy and their synonyms with festivals. Coincidentally too, their appearance is at the event of the Celebration of the Annual Independence in the land of WAZOBIA. A supposedly joyful event, which reflects in the announcement made by drummer two thus:

Drummer Two: Join the amicable dancers on stage to celebrate our annual legacy, the Annual Independence Competition with a short dance. Before we begin to untie the riddles in today's night...." (1)

Ironically and rather than the call being for genuine celebration, it turns out to be an invitation to conflict. The language of the drum below confirms this:

Awa lagba x2ce: We are the elders-the leaders x2ce
Adire funfun lagba adire. White fowl is the leaders of all fowls etc. (1)

In the Yoruba tradition, the above quoted language of the drum is an expression of ego, laden with selfish and provocative vitriol, which simply connotes ethnocentrism. As if that is not enough, the drum goes further to beat another drum of war:

Kowokowo x2ceLet it fall x2ce
Araba owo mo Araba tree is no longer falling...(1-2)

'Kowokowo araba o wo mo' in this context, literally interpreted means: 'Your plan that we should fall, has come to nought, therefore, you have been put to shame'. It is a bare fact most of our political leaders employ this kind of language to spite their political foes. This explains why most political gatherings are fora that many politicians use to launch vengeance attacks on their political enemies. Such gatherings often end in riots and bloodbath. Again, the use of drummers here, from our point of view is to achieve two purposes. One, it is to promote interaction between higher agencies and the people. Two, we consider it artistic creation of the playwright to extol and brings alive the storytelling theatre tradition that is synonymous to Africans in the narration role that the drummers perform in the play. Here, the playwright employs the metaphor of the drummers perhaps to remind us of the roles of union leaders as an intermediary between the government and the people, intermediaries who call peoples' attention to realities or otherwise on the ground. While some of them have played this kind of role with fear of God, some of them were mere double-dealers. In the scenario below, we see a genuine call to reality:

Narrator One:

Those metallic smiles must stop... I want those pretentious dances and music to stop... Why must you dance in the face of agonies and crisis?... why must you laugh and hiss when the nation is on fire? (4)

In furtherance to the above, we found pleasing a call to genuine reasoning in the dialogue that we have below:

Narrator One:

...Talk to my people about the evil called violence. Let them know that peace radiates progress and prosperity while violence is a noxious stench of destruction, the last call to death. (5)

At this juncture, the questions are: How many of our leaders make genuine contributions to national issues? How many of them direct their followers to toil the path of resolving crises devoid of violence? The above approach, from all intent and purposes, either as a Trade Union leader, or political leader, should be adopted. It is a model that encourages followers to embrace violence-free approach as the best option to prosecuting peace and resolve crises.

In further demonstrating the seer trait in the text, it calls attention to some other negative acts that permeate the land of WAZOBIA. These include acts of hooliganism, ruffianism, and gangsterism, which are common to our Institutions of Higher learning in many countries in Africa. Painfully, those acts are no longer regarded as anti-social but rather civilized trade-marks in our citadel of learning. These acts are particularly traceable to the activities of Students Union Leaders; otherwise, refer to in various institutions of Higher Learning as the Students' Union Government (SUG). A caricature of such force laden and violent inclined vituperation is contained in the dialogue below:

SUG President:

The time has come. The moment is today. We have to decide today. Change our destiny today and continue to live happily today. Everything must be done today. Reasonable time has been wasted on consultations with the university administrators. So, after the consideration of our positions... confrontation is the only way out. We will damage vehicles and create general pandemonium in the university community "Aluta continua, Victoria Ascerta" (7)

The scenario above is nothing but an approach to make a demand that is laden with inciting words. In most cases, the kind of words used in the address above rather than ameliorate conflict, blows issues of little magnitude out of proportion. Such issue, they weave around a slight hitch on the part of school management in the provision of one or two social amenities on campus; even though the reason behind such failure is beyond the capacity of the school authority. Facts abound that overzealous and unserious students' executives engineer most of the crises, just to score cheap publicity and attract undue

recognition. We dig into practical examples of some of such unpleasant occurrences that some African nations had witnessed in the past. One of them is the 1969 Kenya Students protest against the Kenya Government, and the 1990 Kenya students protested on equity. (Omari n.p.). Another was the 1978 "Ali must go" episode in Nigeria universities. Then the 1981 Ahmadu Bello University Students religious and rice deal protest (qtd in Aluede et al. 3).

This issue that has almost debased our institutions calls for a serious reflection. This is because, as parents or guardians, can we say we are not guilty? Are those students shouting 'Aluta Continua' not our children, possibly the last born of our mother or even a sister of our wife? Haven't we taken notice of the fact that some of the crises in our institutions are politically motivated? Should we not call our wards to reason and take a position? The suggestion made by Narrator one in the submission below seems to be a thought-provoking advice:

Narrator One:

Whenever these students sing "Aluta! Aluta! To energize their zest for destruction, don't join them but rather sing a newly created and progressive song to cool their restlessness and unnecessary radicalism. (8)

The advice above sounds simple 'sing a newly created and progressive song to cool their restlessness'; to us, it is a subtle way of calming frayed nerves.

Another misnomer attitude that *The Killers* calls our attention to in this play text is the problem of unequal distribution of State resources, which is very rampant in most African countries and Nigeria in particular. The Niger-Delta issue in Nigeria is a case in point. The Niger/Delta crisis in Nigeria has been on now for the past nine or ten years. Even now as this paper is being put together, the remains of the issue are yet to be cleared. In fact, the dimension the issue is taking and the role of players- the Militant Ijaw Youths, who are the major actors in the protracted crisis, is the worrisome aspect of the matter. Bothersome too is in the fact that the restive Ijaw youths who have taken to arms are those that we look up to as our future leaders. Where then is the future in this country, when the land that has been known to flow with milk and honey now flows with crises and conflicts? Adeoye in *The Killers* took notice that government's intervention has yielded little or no dividends hence, he conceives this theatrical approach, to draw the attention of our leaders and followers alike to see the alternative in drama, as a mechanism that is quick in appealing to peoples' emotions. This explains why this bold artistic initiative, which is used to unveil some of the hideous and deadly activities such as kidnapping, killings, abduction of nationals and foreigners that occur on daily basis in Nigeria in general and the Niger-Delta, in particular, is commended.

Kidnapping in the recent time in Nigeria has assumed a rampant dimension that those who perpetrate the act have shown a lack of respect for any person. They kidnap with

impunity, both nationals or foreigners and male or female, especially influential people. One of such kidnap *The Killers*, brings to fore, where some American Nationals are kidnapped and their abductors threatening to kill them if the ransom demanded is not paid within a stipulated time. This scenario is brought to forepart the gory psychological torture that the kidnapped victims experience in the hands of the kidnappers as contained in the voice-over of the kidnapped foreigners: "please don't kill us. We will pay the ransom demanded" (8).

Although reasons like neglect, deprivation, environmental degradation, political suppression, and systematic elimination of vocal Ijaw community leaders, as well as uneven distribution of resources, were some of the reasons for the Ijaw Militant Youths' actions. To us, it appears a pitiable condition, when one hears the pathetic stories like the one below:

Azome: ...They know that we are the third class citizens in the Wazobia project, the natural owners of their main source of income. (9).

Notwithstanding, should their approach continue to be as just and right? Agreed that they have suffered some kind of deprivation, as pathetic as the above statement may sound too, we should allow that old adage that says: "two wrongs don't make a right", to speak to our conscience. What seems to be wrong today may be put right tomorrow or are we going to be able to recall lost souls or mend the strained bilateral relationship when conflicts subside?

It is observed that, the Nigerian Government's efforts towards resolving the impasse were not swift enough. The resignation of one Tonye Princewill, a member of Yar'dua 2020 Committee who resigned as the Chairman, Sub Committee on Niger Delta sometime in June 2009 on the complaint that government allowed military invasion of Ijaw communities in Delta State is a confirmation of the government's lackadaisical attitude towards the issue. In another Newspaper report credited to one Mirki in the *Niger Delta Standard* of Thursday, June 04, 2009, he laments Government's slap-dash attitude thus:

...the griping poverty level, unavailability of social infrastructure and soldiers' invasion of Niger Delta communities showed the insincerity of the President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua-led Federal Government to solving problems of underdevelopment in the region.

Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1945), former American President's address written for Jefferson which states that: "More than an end of war, we want an end to the beginning of all wars", should be a peace line to toil. In the same vein, David Lloyd-George (1883-1945), a former British Prime Minister, who also sees the implication of war emotionally in his submission that: "This war like the next war is a war to end war" should occupy the mind of every individual who wants to make peace inevitable. They are undoubtedly

words of wisdom, which outrightly condemn wars, conflicts, and crises in clear terms. Hence we join our voices to eulogise the artistic skill that Adeoye displays, replicates the Roosevelt and Lloyd-George peace ideology is contained in the metaphor of Narrator two in the dialogue below:

Narrator Two: (Moving through the auditorium, sober) Can't reason prevail? Two wrongs can never make a right, never!...

Narrator One: (Joining narrator Two) Has any war ever been fought and won on the battle-field? My message is clear, violence begets violence and we say no to violence. (Rumbling in the house)

Our interpretation of the stage direction in narrator Two's lines "Moving through the auditorium", is provoking interactive process that is more rewarding. We have been contending with one or two problems, which has been why we don't combat our problems collectively and headlong, and that is we grumble instead of taking steps. The stage direction after the narrator one's speech above reminds us of the trait. We grumble and rumble as a sign of our discontentment all days of our life but we hardly take a step.

The Killers also calls our attention to an unprecedented situation where religious leaders incite their followers against one another. Osofisan in *Once Upon Four Robbers* (1980) brings to fore that kind of social menace that some of our clergies constitute by showing us the kind of danger our Clerics and Clergies, the like of 'Afaa' (Osofisan, 15) in our society. That is the same action, which *The Killers* describes as "Killing to sell God" (11). We have come to a stage in our countries that all religious groups must join hands to make our nations great. *The Killers* also draws our attention to another way through which conflict creeps into our society, he refers to it as 'cheating'. The scenario of two drummer friends who float a joint entertainment business, but end up cheating themselves is the description through which act of cheating is illustrated. The dialogue below explains this:

Drummer One: All I know is that you cannot take all the money given to us...

Drummer Two: Why? Don't you know that I entered the professional market before you? (13)

This dramatic scenario educates us on what cheating means. It also warns us to be wary and notes that it does nothing, but puts a spanner in the wheel of peaceful co-existence, which in turn breeds unpleasant relationship.

In another development, play, *The Killers* exposes other social vices that encapsulate our society; it tags it as the 'love of money'. This is enacted in the metaphor of the office Messenger WAZOBIA Merit International who in his search for quick wealth meet a diviner who sets stringent condition as contained in the dialogue that ensues below:

Messenger: Just tell me. I will perform all the rituals better than you think. I am ready to say bye-bye to poverty.

Diviner: Can you get a fresh dead body?

Messenger: (Taken aback) A ... fresh dead body? ... I will get it.

Diviner: It is done more secretly. Parley with those mortuary attendants. you will get a fresh dead body even at cheaper rate.

The above statement confirms the story that people are being kidnapped for money rituals is true. This also confirms buttresses that the much publicise Okija saga story in a part of Anambra State in Nigeria sometime in 2004 is true. Other vices manifest in our society 'over-ambition'. *The Killers* uses the metaphor of an army officer who rose to the rank of a Major General without fighting a single war and yet wants to become a Field-Marshal as a hypothetical analogy. The dialogue below confirms presents the story:

Major-General: - I am eyeing Lieutenant General, then General and finally, Field Marshal, the ultimate.

This is a pointer to why many African countries witness, on regular basis, ill-motivated Military coup d'état as well as the sit-tight-on power attitude of African political leaders. It will be recalled that before Mubarak of Egypt was forced out of powers in February 2011, he had ruled Egypt for over thirty years; a sit-tight-on power attitude on display. Laurent Gbagbo of Cote d'Ivoire ruled his country for over ten years, yet, he was unwilling to go. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Eyedema of Togo, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia Muammar Ghadafi, of Libya are but a few of such sit-tight-to-power leaders. This goes to show that in Africa, we are found of engaging in political activities that are deceit filled and embellished with lies as we are shown in the dialogue below:

Major General: The era of meritocracy is gone. The period we are now is, a period of social pretensions. For corruption is now a stigma to the poor and a way of life for the rich. Most of those who are fighting corruption are themselves agents of corruption. So don't be deceived. (50)

In this dramatic text, *The Killers* also admonishes us to be wary of the danger inherent in 'caucus' syndrome, a system that we use in our daily political dispensation. It is a system

that requires that you must belong to be relevant caucus group before you can make progress. This may be the reason why the Director of WAZOBIA Merit International is exterminated. Perhaps because he refuses to play the game according to the rule of the caucus as it is enacted below:

- Major General:** (Business-like) You received two letters from the caucus. You ignored them... Have you deposited the money into those accounts?
- Director:** No
- Major General:** Why?
- Director:** It is not easy. My religion. My conscience. My God will...
- Major General:** In two days time, you will give a thorough definition to religion, conscience and God.

Definitely, the refusal of the Director of WAZOBIA Merit International to cave into the caucus group demand is the reason for his untimely death. That, in essence, means that it is only when one belongs and plays the game according to the rule of a powerful confraternity that one can live. The director of WAZOBIA merit international died, but one fact, however, remains that every deed that man perpetrates under the cover of the darkness will be brought to a reckoning, if not now but later. That means the law of karma, which is a reward and punishment for deeds done will always take its toll. This is the role that the ghost of the assassinated Director of WAZOBIA Merit International reminds us in the lines below:

- Ghost:** The truth will not die. In heaven there is no place for liars and traitors. No room for oppressors and aggressors but a place for the truth. Your masquerades has walked himself naked to the market, giving cloth to him is rumble. Wail for yourselves, your criminal actions now disturb your mental reasoning. That is why you don't walk again like dignified men but lament about like widows. Sadly enough, like locusts you selfishly conspired to kill me. Mr. Manager, we both underwent the same academic excursion and I helped you, still you killed me. I wriggled myself out of your modern stealing and I was dealt with. Officer, thank you. Your action will lead you to your anachronistic destruction. Mr Hangman, your love for money will end you disastrously. Remember that the truth will not die. (50-51)

By the dialogue above, we are brought to the bare truth that no evil is done against humanity shall go unpunished. This, in essence, means that one day, the General Manager (notoriety) in you will submit to the omnipotent power of the almighty God; to whom we are all accountable.

Findings and Deductions

So far we have examined in the theatrical piece, *The Killers*, a socio-drama and a play in two parts. The beginning being the Prologue, part one under philosophical cliché, of: "Those who have ears...", "Unionism as gangsterism", "Can't we reason", "Killing to sell God" and "Money, the root of evil". Part Two, which is sub-divided into nine movements is concluded with Epilogue and tagged "A parade of the killers". This makes the work a complete theatrical piece and a seer's voice of admonition. Just the same way Dopamu in his 'Farewell Lecture' at the University of Ilorin Inaugural Lectures, observes that:

The world today is in chaos. We live everyday of our lives in fear and uncertainty. The newspapers, radio and television give frightening reports of the happenings around us which create a state of uneasiness. We hear reports such as: Housewife kills husband over food allowance; Assistant Commissioner of Police leads armed robbery; Cultists kill Lecturer, Students, a woman passerby and others... Militants kill Soldiers and police; Foreigners abducted by militants (47-48).

These findings in addition to the above make it abundantly clear that arising from the above, one cannot but agree with the fact that security networks in various countries in Africa and Nigeria, in particular, have broken down. So also is the fact that sermons delivered on the pulpit and in our mosques no longer appeal to peoples' conscience. It is also untruth that judgments from courts are no longer respected or obeyed, because, such judgments are perverse judgments.

Giving the feat demonstrated in this work, it seems our only hope is in the theatre, using the medium of drama, because, in the play text we are reminded of some of the evils that have been shortchanging our life span. True Artists, therefore, are the hope of the world the performance arena is their pulpit as Sofola (21) posits that: "The performance arena is a place where all people, regardless of their status in life, their education, their religion, and their race visit to see human experience through the objectified vision of the artist for a better understanding of life and for man's own edification."

Conclusion and Recommendations

Adeoye's *The Killers* has shown us the seer qualities in the theatre. It has also shown that theatre is a visional mechanism, a thinker, the conscience of the society, and the society watch-dog. It has also further confirmed the words of Bruder et. al. (27) that: "The theatre can put forward simple human values in hopes that the audience may leave inspired to try to live by such values." It has also re-echoed the warning earlier advanced by Sofola that: "Our national household is occupied not only by rats and bats but also by heartless fleas and vicious ticks whose mission is to bleed the nation to death, leaving behind a dishonoured carcass" (21). It is clear from this dramatic piece that drama is the only mechanism that can point to the society the areas where it is drifting without minding whose ox is gored.

Certainly, the didactic role of the theatre as a phenomenon that shocks man in finding his real self is no longer in doubt. The need to throw our weights behind the mechanism, which has played the role of a seer, therefore, becomes apt. In this direction, this study encourages the consideration of drama as a society watch-dog. Therefore, the government and all non-governmental agencies should show interest in contributing financially towards constant play performances. In addition to the above, the government should build more theatre houses, give scholarship to students who are ready to pursue theatre education. In this direction, government should also review the university admission quota policy of ratio 40/60, which has made art courses (theatre study inclusive) a subordinate to other courses like; medicine, engineering, accounting and make it at par with other courses.

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