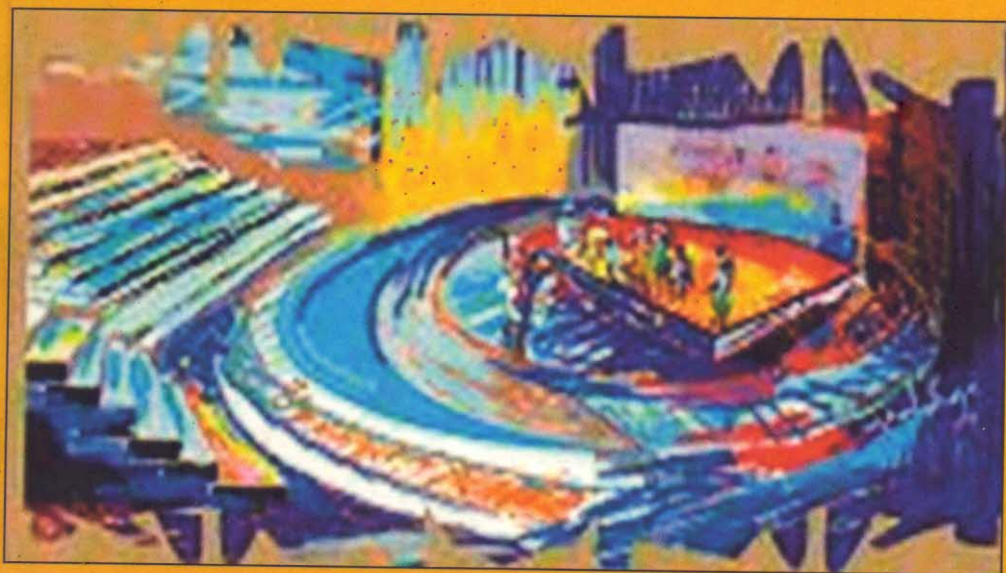


UNCOMMON ARTISTRY

UNDERSTANDING BAKARE, OJO RASAKI'S DANCE, DRAMA AND THEATRE



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Tropes of *Pax - Nigeriana* and *Pax - Yorubania* in the Selected Plays of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki

By

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Introduction

There is no need for unnecessary mingling of suspense with illusion in a linear plot structure: Bakare, Ojo Rasaki is an important archetype in the Nigerian postcolonial theatre and culture. Our initial rationalism on Bakare, Ojo Rasaki is as a result of his critical investment in dance, music and drama, responding frequently to the trope of total theatre. Within the third generation of Nigerian playwrights and theatre practitioners, Bakare's new vision and admirable courageous exploration are also expanded to acting, theatre management and cultural administration. Bakare, Ojo Rasaki; the ebullient pacesetter of the Nigerian postcolonial theatre storms the Nigerian stage to redefine, very materially and critically too, our inept live performance of the early 1990s by daring to challenge existing themes and tendencies.

Certainly, the conspiracy of the West and its clearly defined hegemony of globalisation and high culture drove the African cultures into the state of comatose. In this state, we live the culture of hybridism by borrowing from the Blackman's culture (our culture) which nature has endowed us with and partly too, we are in cloud nine with various imported cultures from Asia, Europe and America. What is at play in this type of state is the gradual extinction of our culture and ideology. It is this parlous state that most plays of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki appear to celebrate the oxymoronic 'multicultural culture of Nigeria and the connectivity of Yoruba culture within other cultures in Nigeria. The Nigerian ideology that defines this essence are also celebrated in most of his plays. With Bakare, Ojo Rasaki, the polemics, paradoxes and contradictions in culture have been used as interfacing and interacting factors in our changing Nigerian societies.

Flowing from the above, this chapter examines the thematic and dramaturgical essence of *Pax -Nigeriana* and *Pax - Yorubania* in the selected plays of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki. The selected plays are *Drums of War* (1995), *Once Upon A Tower* (2001) and *The Gods and The Scavengers* (2013). Our pedagogical style in this chapter is to examine culture and the dramatist's obsession with it, to explore the theoretical tropes of *Pax - Nigeriana* and *Pax - Yorubania* within cultural divides, and importantly, to examine the culture of *Pax - Nigeriana* and *Pax - Yorubania* in the selected plays of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki.

The Pre-text, Text and Post-text of Culture

Since the establishment of the first University in 1088 AD at Bologna in Italy (Umukoro, 2011, p. 137), culture has been intellectualised and theorised. Several scholarly perspectives have also been advanced to foreground the essence of culture. Beyond the clear transmission of culture in the Universities and other institutions of learning, the home has always served as the place where culture is placed on a canvass of reality. It is at home that objections to culture and objections to cultural detractors are hemmed down. In a discourse on culture, there is no abstraction - the codes, ethics, mores, values, and institutions that define its inclusiveness are not matter of conjectures. In fact, there is no sublimity on a discourse on culture.

Culture is a pillar of our corporate essence but why are we always hysterical about culture? The convivial nature of culture has opened to us, rooms of possibilities but why are promoters of culture seen as ethnic champions? Culture is a pillar that guides the totality of our way of life, a golden symbol that tells us our dos and don'ts. But why are we dragging our feet to accept our own culture and quickly too, we run cap in hands, compete and even attempt to undo one another as we embrace foreign cultures? What is our collective mantra on our culture? How do we re-live our good but forgotten cultures?

Certainly, we do not have all the answers to the questions above, but we should note that we need culture so that we can re-order

our disordered society. We need culture so that our people may not go into extinction. We need culture so that our people will not be enslaved by living the culture of other people. We need culture so that our people will be role models to others. We need culture so that we can cure deceit and tame the flourishing culture of disrespect among us. We need culture so that we can fight corruption and tame people who love materialism targeted towards territorialism.

Wallace (1970, p. 16) also captures the positive organic values and the positive symbolic values of culture to celebrate the inevitability of culture in the social process:

- A. Positive organic values
 1. Eating and drinking
 2. Sleeping, rest, relaxation, absence of discomfort or bodily tension
 3. Sexual satisfaction
 4. Optional temperature maintenance
 5. Elimination of wastes
 6. Breathing
- B. Positive symbolic values
 1. Testimonials of love, administration, and respect from human objects
 2. Enactment of behavior-sequences satisfying "in themselves", or satisfying because they are instrumental to other values
 3. Presence of objects associated with organic and symbolic consummations (including human and non-human objects)

Adhering to one's culture may be seen as obeying the clarion call of nature. Accommodating other people's cultures without allowing them to swallow or destroy one's culture is the reality of the postmodern age which should be embraced.

Advancing the concept of culture, Aime Cesaire, the prodigious Martinican poet and politician in (Ojo-Ade, 1989, p. 252) says that "culture is everything. Culture is the manner of dressing, of carrying one's head, of walking, it is the manner of tying one's

tie – it is not just the fact of writing books, of building houses. It is everything". The metaphor of culture as everything that we do is not an exaggeration but the true reflection of culture in our life. We should, therefore, strive to guide our culture jealously instead of pointing to the superpowers as responsible for the state of inertia in which most African cultures are.

As we attempt to fight back, and write to re-locate our dislocated cultures or decolonise the decolonisers of our culture, let us not be afraid of the charges of Afrocentricism as we also come home to appropriate Post-Afrocentricism. As a passing comment, Afrocentricism is the Blackman's revolutionary weapon of seeing slavery, colonialism and re-colonisation as responsible for our underdevelopment or the 'seizure of our own technological development'. Those who, therefore, invest their energies to proclaim the reality of the Africans as pacesetters in arts and in the sciences, and the race as the beginning of the universe are thus seen as Afrocentrics by Americans and Europeans. On the other hand, Post-Afrocentricism is a satiric jibe for us in Africa to move and think beyond slavery, colonialism and re-colonialism as we empower our people and charge them to stop dancing like whether beaten chickens to history that has happened, and that we can only learn from that history and move on. We are in support of the main themes and tendencies that Post-Afrocentricism offer.

The nature of culture and its proximate doctrine of dynamism has made it incumbent on researchers to rethink the link between the pre-text (the very formative period of any culture), text (the current wave of culture) and the post-text (the expected place of culture in the future).

Foregrounding the Tropes of Pax – *Nigeriana* and Pax – *Yorubania*

The ideology, strategy and nationalism that define Nigeria as a nation have great import on the definition of Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the redefinition of the African Union (AU). In spite of our diversities, the Nigerian initiatives are

pillars that have sustained our dominant role in Africa. This acknowledged atmosphere of "Big Brother" has indeed made other African nations to accept our unique identity and even attempt to allow our initiatives to define African political ideology and diplomatic direction.

The brief profile above is to foreground the essence of Nigerian culture in the social, political, economic and religious directions of most African nations in the tropes of *Pax – Nigeriana* and its new creation by us, the *Pax – Yorubania* which has been tactically entrenched in the Nigerian socio-political landscape.

Arguably, the Yorùbá people are the most urban, cosmopolitan, communal and homogenous ethnic group in Nigeria. We, therefore, speak now of the symbol of *Pax – Yorubania*. This is not to foist Yorùbá cultural hegemony on the Nigerian nation. It is not an attempt to claim that the Yorùbá culture is superior to other cultures in Nigeria but to defend the material and immaterial elements, and features of the Yorùbá culture. To preach Yorùbá concepts of peace, custom, tradition, ethics, mores, proverbs and to stop the race from losing her heritage. *Pax – Yorubania* is aimed at negotiating the Yorùbá ideology, vision and mission within the Nigerian multicultural and multi-religious society. Also, *Pax – Yorubania* is a creation from *Pax – Romana*, *Pax – Britannia* and *Pax – Nigeriana* which Bolaji Akinyemi has written extensively on. In fact, the concept of *Pax – Nigeriana* in the view of Akinyemi (2005, p. 1) does "not imply the imposition of a Nigerian peace on non-Nigerians" but that the search "for norms of behavior to guarantee peaceful relationships" among people of Africa. Hence, *Pax – Yorubania* is a critical factor as we re-invent the Nigerian nation. Also, to bring our cultures home is to counter "the boredom of Western culture, a refuge from its hyper-technological posture" (Ojo-Ade, 1989, p. 248).

Our culture is our pride and we have spoken about *Pax-Yorubania* in this sub-heading to energise us to defend our lost

cultures. We should also add *Mutatis mutandis* for the Nigerian and Yorùbá cultures. *Mutatis mutandis* for Africa is "the desired African renaissance...the transformation of the people or peoples of each African country into upstanding and modern societies" (Babalola, 2002, p. 10). *Mutatis mutandis* for the Nigerian and Yorùbá cultures should be seen as calculated attempt of seeing to the development of our old culture within the reality of the postmodern age.

Tropes of *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* are friendly cultural aesthetics that allows for negotiation, re-definition and emulation of good things in Nigeria by other African countries and the acceptance of the beneficial concepts and ideas of the Yoruba people by the rest of Nigerians. The symbolic relationship between *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* is linked to the inspiration and the open agenda of any culture to learn from the other and without the fear of foisting and imposition.

Tropes of *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* in the Selected Plays of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki

One clear dramaturgy used by Bakare, Ojo Rasaki in the three plays selected for this study is his Prologue – Movement style. For example, *Drums of War* has a Prologue and Four Movements, *Once Upon a Tower* has a Prologue and Nine Movements while *The Gods and The Scavengers* has a Prologue and Nine Movements. Curiously, the text of this kind of style has hitherto defines the modern theatre. This choice is a rebellion within the laid down artistic conservatism which Bakare is known for. The tropes of Prologue – Movement is in itself the poetics of free will which Bakare has made use of in his essential postcolonial theatre to define the place of *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* tropes in the larger umbrella of a well – made play which William Shakespeare and few others are reputed for.

Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's pedagogy of *Pax – Nigeriana* can be found in his *Drums of War*. Beyond the tragic vision of the play, *Drums of War* is a critical celebration of multicultural identity which is

one of the main hubs of *Pax – Nigeriana*. Multiculturalism is the main metaphor of many cultures living together under one nation. The import of this to other African nations is that we should imbibe the culture of tolerance, give and take and the ubiquitousness of the entire world as a global village. In *Drums of War*, the twenty-two songs used in the play are from Hausa, Igala, Yoruba, Edo, and Ibira ethnic groups. This makes the discourse on the setting of the play a controversial one. However, this controversy is unique because it is a setting that can be described as 'Nigerian multicultural setting' which is articulated on the trope of *Pax – Nigeriana*, the clear preaching of using different ethnic songs to arrest the attention of the mix – grill Nigerian theatre audience. The playwright script is unique because he allows one ethnic song to dovetails into the other as subject of war and the counter – discourse to it are celebrated and expanded in the play.

For example, songs 7, 8 and 9 in the play are moralisers for Nigerian unity and a clear sermon that other African nations should emulate:

A song in Igala

Nigerian cho okete kane oo (2ce)

We only have one Nigeria (2ce)

Ukwe Hausa ukwe doma

Dagba kechi igbo kpa

No matter your tribe

Yoruba and tongue,

Chio-okete kane

Nigeria is only one.

A song in Hausa

Nigeria daya ne muke dachi,

We only have one Nigeria (2ce)

Nigeria daya ne muke

No matter your tribe

Da, koke bahausha

tongue,

Ko Igala, ko Iyamirin

Nigeria is only one.

and

Ko beyerbe, Nigeeoo

Eee Nigeria daya ne

Muke da.

A song in Yoruba

Nigeria kan n lomi wao

We

only have one Nigeria (2ce)

Nigeria kan n loniwa

No

matter your tribe

Hausa ni e tabi

and

tongue,

Ibo Yoruba ni e tobi

Nigeria is only one.

Idoma. Nigeria ooo

Eee, Nigeria kan

Nio ni wa (p. 80).

Songs 10, 11, 12 and 13 in the play are also placating. They are meant to tame the rebellion and the war mongering King in the play. These types of placating songs have the emotional essence of changing the heart of listening leaders notwithstanding the disaster that the King in *Drums of Wars* leads himself and his people into.

The protagonists of war (King, Akogun in the beginning of the play and Orighoye) and the antagonists of war (Beleku, Gbeje, Jeje and the Women) also reflect the oppositional stance between the breakers and makers of Africa. The play, *Drums of War*, has shown that most African leaders fight to support territorialism using all forms of tricks and deceits available to them while the script, succeeded admirably to celebrate feminism and the collective power of women that can lead to success in any course of action that they believe in. The conversations below and the attendant cross-fires drive home the fact that collective struggle, even if crafted under the yoke of monomaniac heroism will still succeed:

Akogun: (A sarcastic but hysterical laughter) We thought those we gave guns to were

men, we thought we had human beings whose heads were full of brain, whose chests shelter strong hearts pumping with the rhythm of patriotism, whose bodies could boast of tough muscles with which to defend the integrity of our father land. I never knew how we deceived ourselves until now that the truth has stared us in face. Have your brains vacated their abodes for rotten tomatoes that you can no longer put your heads to use? Have your hearts become so tendered that they can be melted so easily by women? Like the plantain tree that kisses the ground before the bluntest matchets, have your bodies become so hallow that you allow the bastards of Ibuji to go back unhurt? Is it unforgiveable that not a single matchet of yours has tasted blood?

1st Woman: Go and quench the thirst of your matchet with your blood, Akogun. We put you there, the chiefs and the king, to be our light, to lead us aright and make the world a better place. But what do you do as our leader? You set us against our neighbours and make us fight senseless wars, instead of concentrating our efforts on meaningful development. We wake up every morning suspecting our neighbours, preoccupying our minds with the next strategy to use in bringing our so called foes on their knees, we live in perpetual fear, our hearts now live in our throats, we live in perpetual fear because we know not who the next arrow will hit. Akogun, go and tell your

king and his chiefs that we, the people of Abakpa say we no longer want war.

All: Yes

1st Woman: What we now demand is peace and love with our neighbours and meaningful development for our land.

All: Yes! Yes! Yes!... (pp. 60-61)

As a smart General of Abakpa's army, Akogun accepts the will of his people in a clear demonstration of loyalty although this later cost him his office. In Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Rwanda, Somalia and other troubled spots in Africa, women are always the major victims of war and they shared most, in the unmitigated disaster that wars have caused. Sharing their resolve to put an end to war as shown in the play is Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's *Pax – Nigeriana* of peace as the drums of war roll incessantly.

The observed *Pax – Yorubania* in *Drums of War* has to do with the playwright's use of Yoruba proverbs, idioms and metaphors and their relevance in the larger multicultural setting of the play. These linguistic icons contribute to the overall success of the play. Some are: "water from the snail's shell..." (p. 58), "smearing dungs at the pride of our land...", "opening their mouth like he-goats when savouring their mother's urine", "bleating like sheep with pepper in their mouth" (p. 59), "the dog loves breast feeding its child, but also loves devouring the child of the grass-cutter", "the son of the lion must have claws", "the chick explores the thorny bush and returns home unscathed", "the eye of the battle" (p. 72) and the King's diplomatic oratorical display that drives home the wise saying of Yoruba people as important factor in the larger Nigerian society:

King:...This is Abakpa. Defend its people, restore its honour... Chiefs, go with Origboye and at once and recruit more soldiers to join the ones already at the battlefield. Get them immediately to resume the war immediately. If they refuse, cajole them, if they say no convince them. If they are

stubborn confuse them: If they refuse to be confused, confront them. Give me words in few courses... (p. 73)

Names of characters in the play such as; Akogun, Eriokan, Gbeje, Jeje, Origboye also have deeper meanings that bother on courage, conscience, peace, war, patience, royalty and power that eventually celebrate the main themes and sub-themes of the play. *Pax – Yorubania* through the above is the agelong perspective of art in culture and culture in art. In fact, Johnson (2014, p. 30) concludes that “art and culture are inseparable. It is often used synonymously. For example, the art of the people is the culture of the people showcased”.

In *Once Upon A Tower* by Bakare, Ojo Rasaki; death is used as a purgation of emotion in the fictious but familiar story of Marrapinto University. This is a play in which a dialogue is instituted by a playwright for his other colleagues lecturing in Nigeria and elsewhere to face their works and avoid engaging in destructive tendencies such as bootlicking, recruitment of incompetent and unqualified staff, admission racketeering, corruption and profiteering. In content and context, the play historicises the glorious past of our university education in Nigeria and also, dramatises its destruction.

The point of connection between this play and *Pax – Nigeriana* has to do with the fact that the Nigerian University system of the 1960s to 1970s remains the pride of Africa. The song below which is in the Prologue of the play, *Once Upon a Tower* captures the past success and of course, the present decay in our universities:

Once Upon a Tower

Solo: Once Upon a Tower
In our country Nigeriana
the tower upon an ivory
on a gold on the mable000

Chorus: Later but later ... the tower on the
silver eee
Later but later the tower on the
bronze/x2 a
Solo: Once upon a'tower
the Ivory upon the marble
na the citadel of learning
a place for civilization
Chorus: Small by small the tower
on the stone ee little by
little the tower on the wood/x2ce
Solo: Once upon a tower
the Ivory upon the gold e dey
shine e dey glitter
a place for the high and mighty
Chorus: Now but now the tower
in the dust eee now but
now the tower in the mud.
The high and the mighty
they are crawling they are
sleeping...(p.1)

Universities of Ibadan, Lagos, Benin, Nigeria, Ife and Ahmadu Bello, represent the best legacies of the Nigerian intellectual power in the 1960s and 1970s. This was a time that education was taken serious by all (the students, the university administrator and the government at all levels). This culture of total education made some African universities to adopt the University of Ibadan model in teaching and learning and it was a period that foreigners set serious foundation for studies in Education, Arts, Sciences, and Medicine. Their Nigerian colleagues were also creative as names such as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, J.P. Clerk, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan and others indeed made lasting statements to foreground the culture of scholarship in literature. This success extended to almost all the existing fields of studies then. It was a period of fairness, equality and justice. It was a period where religion and state of origin or

ethnic background had no place in placement, staff recruitment and admission.

Once Upon a Tower reveals the crisis of confidence between Professor Kurumbete who remains the genius of intolerance, pride, and the academic gadfly to intellectual weaklings such as Drs. Yemi and Ugolo in the play. His antagonist, the radical and brilliant Dr. Akitikori also reveals his search for freedom and disrespect for elders in the revenge tragedy. The following carefully selected lines indeed celebrate Kurumbete's pride and dictatorship:

- ❖ But I have instructed him that you must not fail the course (p. 17)
- ❖ Impunite insubordination!... Okay, don't worry, I am the Provost here. My command must hold... (p. 17)
- ❖ Be sorry for yourselves. The Vice – Chancellor cannot even talk to me this way. The VC, even the VC prostrate for me each time I enter his office... (p. 20)
- ❖ Impunite insubordination! If a University can take you back on contract three different times after retirement, then you are a genius... I am a genius... yes... God has created very few geniuses into this country... and I am one of those few. And all of us, we were created between 1935 and 1954. Since then, God has never created any genius, so small boy Akitikori I wonder the source of your confidence... (p. 20).

In counter-reactions, Dr. Akitikori also shares in the same pride that he accuses Kurumbete of. He is impatient and rash. Though he is oppressed and obviously, Akitikori fails to understand that in Africa, the patient dog eats the fattest bone. Now, Akitikori's infantile and counter reactions in *Once Upon A Tower* deserve to be considered:

- ❖ No way, if you lilly-livered blokes have nothing to say, I Akitikori ona ofun ogbeegun eja, have something to say...
- ❖ Don't Kitikori me Mr. Head of Department. And you Prof. if you have rats and roaches as staff members, I am definitely not one of them... (p. 19).
- ❖ Yes Kurumbete's dog I will go on. Prof... if a university has given you contract appointments three different times after retirement, it shows two things. One is that the place has decayed and two is that you are a local champion... (p. 21).
- ❖ In spite of his pathological dullness, and despite scoring a shameful 200 in JAMB, Professor Kurumbete ensured his admission... (p. 26)

The narrative of the rise and fall of the Nigerian university education system has also drawn the attention of Jacob Kehinde Olupona, the Harvard double Professor of African and African American Studies and African Religious Traditions when he concludes rather paradoxically that:

Countries that once looked up to our higher educational institutions as models to emulate are now places where our children flock to receive their education. It is certainly becoming a national disgrace and international embarrassment... (Olupona, 2013, p. 14).

The Nigerian university education before was indeed dependable for it to pass the acid test of *Pax – Nigeriana* and for now, it has lost that sport and this paradigm shift dwarfs the initial revolution as the essential Bakare, Ojo Rasaki reflects in *Once Upon A Tower*. Again, the play integrates in its dramaturgy, the muse of *Pax – Yorubania* through the magical wand of spine metaphors of names – Kurumbete, Akitikori senator Ikeanobi and other hidden Yoruba treasures of diplomacy, love, courage and law of revenge.

The Gods and The Scavengers is Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's manifesto for deconstruction and Marxist dialectics. This play is also

allegorical and didactic, hiding scavengers who are professor, healer, farmer, technician and agent of multi-religiosity (the fifth scavenger). One other remarkable factor that defines this play is the aesthetics of hiding and deception, two skills that the playwright used successfully in the play. The two aesthetics lead to heroism and anti – heroism in a play about the gods and the destruction of the belief in them. For example, Anago, the Local Government Chairman and his Councilors start as heroes and end as anti – hero. The scavengers start as anti - heroes and end as heroes. This oppositional stance to their purported intention is what can be aptly described as the aesthetics of hiding and deception.

The Prologue of the play sets the deconstruction of the gods rolling through a song from the Lead:

Why do we shout Gods as if He never gave us brain? Why do we shout the devil like we are zombies? In the scriptures all things were put in our hands. When we do nothing the gods do nothing (p. vi).

There is another refrain from the scavengers that takes the gods to the cleaner and insists that we make them and that we should be able to decide their fates. The gods here are the corrupt political class. The refrain goes thus: “We make them our gods and they loot our treasury” (p. 2-3).

Linked to the above common refrain is the need for us to smoke the gods out of our hearts. Therefore, the conversation between Scavenger 4 and Andy, the repentant and principled Political Adviser to Anago, the Local Government Chairman should be instructive:

SCAV 4: Exactly, the gods will be angry if we fight their anointed...

ANDY: We chose Anago with our votes and prayers. Leave the gods out of this. We never ask them to give us who they desire. We limited the options and prayed specifically for

Anago. We made the gods and they gave us the desire of our heart (p. 48).

Bakare, Ojo Rasaki's anger against seeing the gods as the final deciders of our fate also comes to the fore in the play through his deconstruction of Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to Blame* in which he makes a choice for Odewale in his *The Gods and The Scavengers* other than Odewale's initial fatalism:

ODEWALE: Who wanted those things to happen?

CROWD: The gods

ODEWALE: Why then do they blame me for an act plotted by the gods? The gods are to blame, not the son of man. I choose to live and reign and be happy. Hold the gods responsible for your ailments. I choose to be free and I'm free indeed (p. 54-55).

The last conversation is still from Andy who ventilates his anger in the play and calls us to think and condemn the gods:

ANDY: Damm the gods, screw their will. When our ignorance, slot, greed, and inertia hold us captive, we mutter “the will of the gods”. We are either victims of our choices and thinking or the gods are mere robbers whose pre-occupation is to kill, maim and destroy. And let brothers and sisters tell one another that when men think right and rise in action, their lives are affected and miseries flee. I say dam the gods, and choose to be free (p. 61).

The *Pax – Nigeriana* in this play is the fact that Nigerians should jettison the contraption of fatalism to embrace self determinism.

Doing is to reflect dogmatism in religion, the battle cry of Scavenger 5 in the play and to once again, appropriates Marxist dialectic of seeing religion as the essential "opium of the masses". In the postmodern age, fatalism will lead to docility where men will resign to fate by refusing to query maladministration, injustice, corruption and social vices. In spite of our differences, the Nigerian democracy since 1999 has indeed offers us the platform for us to query maladministration, injustice, corruption and social vices that have attempted to pull us down.

The alluring reality of most African cultures is the dominance of the concepts of scapegoatism, ritual, sacrifice and godliness which are contradiction to critical thinking. The myth – culture cauldron should therefore be seen as a negation of the realistic assessment of men in culture, and the place of culture in man. No doubt, this play has accepted the notion that culture is real, the gods are in us and that "historical and politico – economic factors conditioned the evolution of African theatre" (Nwosu, 2014, p. 106). Interestingly, the appropriation of *Pax – Nigeriana* in *The Gods and the Scavengers* is a call on all African nations to think – out – of the box and come to term with the fact that we are the ones who should take our destiny into our hands. Indeed, there are several gods and the ultimate god is the god of the choice that we make.

Pax – Yorubania in *The Gods and The Scavengers* is a confirmation of social realism of *Pax – Nigeriana* in the play. In fact, the Yoruba gods such as Osun and Yemoja in the play indeed express their own limitations as well. Yemoja, the half fish, half human goddess says it all:

YEMOJA: The best of men, all soaked in filth. The best men cast stone if never your beaks sucked where your wings scatters no grain. Anago, you are the chosen one. Your past you have paid for, your

present we shall perfect and your future ye shall determine.

ANAGO:

Determine, how?

YEMOJA:

The experiences to come depend on how faithful you are from now on, not who you were. Anago, the cries of my children ring in my ears and I have chosen you to bear their burden. Your cheeks are rosy, add rose to theirs too (pp. 42-3).

We make the gods what we want them to be and the above is a reminder to other ethnic groups in Nigeria not to invest their destiny in the hands of their gods but rather to deconstruct and appropriate them within the reality of critical thinking and postmodernity.

Conclusion

The core of *Pax – Nigeriana* is the restoration of peace and order in sister African countries. It is the emulation of the gallantry, industry and efficiency which are noticeable attributes through the Nigerian spirit. These attributes cannot be divorced from the Nigerian cultures especially, the communion of multiculturalism and the literarisation of such in prose, poetry and drama.

Peace and order will lead to democratic order and democracy will produce good leaders and development will be envisaged. It is important to return to Bolaji Akinyemi once again as he gives examples to illustrate his own definitive notion of *Pax – Nigeriana*:

The most spectacular exercises in *Pax – Nigeriana* occurred in the 1990s when Nigeria led the forces of ECOWAS (the ECOMONG troops) into Liberia first to restore peace and to help re – start electoral democracy. The final result were elections in 1997, which returned Charles Taylor to power for a while in 1998, Nigeria more unilaterally took on the army in Sierra Leone,

which had overthrown the elected government of the president. Nigeria reversed the military takeover and restored the constitutionally elected government... It is arguable that one of the first exercises of *Pax – Nigeriana* occurred in Tanzania in 1964... it is arguable that the beginnings of *Pax – Nigeriana* lie in a voluntary partnership between Nigeria and what later became Tanzania” (Akinyemi, 2007, pp. 12-3).

Pax – Yorubania cannot be a rigid imposition of Yoruba culture on the larger Nigerian cultures. This is impossible. It is, however, the flexible and systematic preaching for the acceptance of Yoruba positive ideas and concepts of love, peace, order, democracy and civilisation by other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The acceptance of *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* is indeed the re-appraisal of the fundamentals that define the Nigerian and the Yoruba nations.

The tropes of *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* in the three plays of Bakare, Ojo Rasaki discussed in this study has thus brought to the fore, the need for cultural negotiation and re-negotiation of the African and the Nigerian nations. Bakare’s plays within the tropes of *Pax – Nigeriana* and *Pax – Yorubania* are indeed texts that have moved beyond mythology and fatalism to celebrate the need for cultural harmony, religious tolerance, social cohabitation, peace, love, democracy and development in Nigeria and Africa. Certainly, the moral therapy and social context of the three plays cannot be ignored. In fact, Nigerian and African nations, citizens, followers and leaders will learn greatly from Bakare, Ojo Rasaki’s experiment and innovation in his plays crafted on the tropes of *Pax – Nigeriana* and its new creation, *Pax – Yorubania*.

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